

14.02 Establishment of Judges (Judges 2:1-23)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Thorns

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *stubborn*: very self-willed. Is being stubborn a good thing? Only if it is for righteousness, not self.
- *to forsake*: to abandon; to leave someone or something without help
- *mercy*: showing undeserved loving kindness instead of deserved punishment
- *cycles*: repeating pattern of events

Scripture (ESV)

Judges 2:1 Now the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, 2 and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? 3 So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.” 4 As soon as the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim. And they sacrificed there to the Lord.

6 When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. 7 And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. 9 And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. 10 And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. 15 Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

16 Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord, and they did not do so. 18 Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. 19 But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not

drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. 20 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did, or not.”¹ 23 So the Lord left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

Introduction/Review:

What did the people during the time of the judges not have spiritually that we have? They did not have the whole Bible, the Holy Spirit, or the death and resurrection of Christ.]

What did those people have spiritually that we don't have? They lived closer to the time when God gave the law, closer to the miracles God had shown to Israel, and closer to the time of God's direct revelation on Sinai. However, if the people were not reminded of these events, they would soon forget them. On the other hand, we today have the blessing of having this history recorded in writing in the Old Testament.

Story:

The Angel of the Lord

Even while Joshua lived, the people of God disobeyed God. We read about the Angel of the Lord going from Gilgal [locate], where Israel had first camped upon entering the Promised Land, to Bochim, a place so named because it means weeping. This place was likely Shiloh² [locate], and the reason it was named “Weeping” is that the Angel of the Lord there informed His people of something they already knew: They had disobeyed God by making covenants with the people of the land and by not breaking down altars to false gods. God said, “So now I will not drive out the inhabitants, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.”

By the way, it's important to know that the Angel of the Lord was no doubt Jesus Himself before He came to earth to become a human. Who but God could say, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers”? God alone had done this, and the Angel of the Lord, God Himself in the person of Jesus, declared this pronouncement that He would no longer fight for them..

The people who knew God

As soon as the Angel of the Lord spoke these words, all the people of Israel wept loudly. [Teacher, demonstrate by wailing, “Oh, no!”] So you can see, then, why the place was named “Weeping,” for they knew they were to be harassed by the people and snared by false gods. They sacrificed there to the Lord, but their ✓tardy trust was faulty. God had decreed what would come to pass: the people of the land would become snares and thorns to Israel.

After Joshua dismissed the Israelites, they all went to their inheritances but still didn't take full possession of their land. Not trusting the Lord, the people served Him only as long as Joshua lived and for the twenty-five years or so³ after Joshua died. During this period the elders were still living who had seen all the great miracles the Lord had performed in bringing Israel to this land. They remembered all that the Lord had done, and they worshiped Him.

The people who forsook God

But when the elders died, the people started to forget God and His mighty works and ways. The Bible states, sadly, “There arose another generation . . . that knew not the Lord nor the works he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10). So what did these forgetters do? “The people did evil in God's sight and served Baal, a god of the Canaanite people.⁴ They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt but bowed down to gods of the people” (Judges 2:11-14). Oh, no!

“We would never do that,” we say. Yet, let's look again at those spiritual advantages we have today. We have the written record of God's mighty works and wisdom. However, we, too, before we realize what we are doing, tend to forget the Lord and worship false gods.

False gods? Yes. I will name some gods of this world today. Money is a big one. For kids, Santa Claus is very much a false god. After all, according to the song, “He knows when you are sleeping; he knows when you’re awake; he knows whether you’ve been bad or good; so be good for goodness’ sake.” To know everything (omniscience) is the attribute of the true God and no one else. The Easter bunny can be a god. Video games often take the place of God in many lives.

The anger of the Lord

What do you think God thought of this forsaking of Him? God was angry!

“Oh, oh!” you say. “Being angry is wrong.”

Hold on! If the Bible says that God’s anger was provoked, do you think God did wrong? Absolutely not! “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psalm 7:11). It is not sinful to be angry with sin. God does not sin when He is angry. We, however, really have to watch our anger for it is often sinful.

Why was God angry? Because after all of His care and concern for His people, they did not obey Him but believed in and worshiped other gods that were not gods.

What did God do in His anger? He sent enemies against the Israelites. What had happened before when enemies sought to fight against Israel? [City walls came down; hail destroyed enemy soldiers; hornets pursued enemies.] God had fought for His people, but now He was against them, for they had sinned against Him.

The cycles of the judges

Thus, the cycles of the judges began and continued hundreds of years. [Teacher, use the cycles of judges chart found below. Numbers in parentheses in this text indicate the numbered point on the chart.] (1) The people would practice idolatry. This word begins with the word *idol*, which is a false god. What two commandments were they disobeying? The very first two—“You shall have no other gods before me” and “You shall not make for yourselves an idol.” They sinned against God.

Because they broke these important commandments, the next part of the cycle (2) was bondage (servitude or slavery to an enemy). When this situation became unbearable, (3) the people would repent and be sorry for their sin. They would pray again to the one true God, asking Him to take away the enemy.

At this point, (4) God would again be merciful, not because the people deserved mercy but because God often is merciful. He would raise up a person, whom we call a *judge*, to lead the people against the enemy. By God’s strength the judge gave deliverance and salvation. The people were freed from the enemy by defeating it. Last, (5) there would be rest in which the people had no problem with an enemy.

However, sadly, the cycle would start all over again. Maybe the people would serve God a short time, but then they’d serve other gods again and sin even worse than before. Judges 2:19 describes how the people lived (and how we often act): “But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. *They did not stop from their own doings nor from their stubborn ways*” (emphasis added). The enemy would come against them; the people would repent; God would send a judge to ride them of the enemy; there would be peace. But, again, the people would forget God, and the cycle would start all over again.

Oh, let us beware lest we even begin to turn away from God. Let’s be true to Jesus.

¹ “[N]ot that the Lord was ignorant of what they would do, and so made the experiment; but that the sincerity and faithfulness, or insincerity and unfaithfulness of their hearts, might appear to themselves and others” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-2-22.html>).

² “[V]ery probably it was Shiloh itself since all Israel was gathered together, the tabernacle being now at Shiloh, and also because sacrifices were offered up” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition->

of-the-bible/judges-2-5.html).

³“[A]ccording to the computation of Ben Gersom, the time of Joshua and the elders were but twenty seven years; and there were no more than sixty seven years from their coming out of Egypt to this time; and no doubt there were men living of eighty years of age and more, but these might be but few”
(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-2-10.html>).

⁴“[T]he idol Baal, as the Arabic version, of which there were many, and therefore a plural word is used; to which the apostle refers (1 Corinthians 8:5); for the word signifies "lords", and there were Baalpeor, Baalzebub, Baalberith and who seem to have their name from Bal, Bel, or Belus, a king of Babylon after Nimrod, and who was the first monarch that was deified, the Jupiter of the Heathens. Theophilus of Antioch says, that, according to the history of Thallus, Belus the king of the Assyrians, whom they worshipped, was older than the Trojan war three hundred twenty two years; and that some call Cronus or Saturn Bel and Bal; by the Assyrians called Bel, and in the Punic or Phoenician language Bal” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-2-11.html>).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

The Angel of the Lord who went up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers,” is “the same that appeared to Joshua as captain of the hosts of the Lord, who was God himself. ‘Christ himself,’ says Dr. Lightfoot; who but God and Christ could say, ‘I made you to go up out of Egypt?’”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/judges/2.html>).

Activities:

- Play dough: thorns; a snare; swords
- Snack: “Crown of Thorns” snack at <http://www.freefuneaster.com/easter-recipes/crown-of-thorns-snack/>, using round crackers, peanut butter, and broken mini-twist pretzels. Instead of forming a crown, spread the pretzels over the top of the cracker.
- View the first 2 minutes and 45 seconds of The Bible Project’s video on Judges at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOYy8iCfIJ4>.
- Sing “The Christian Soldier.” The song sheet and visuals are found below.
- Sing “Let’s Be True to Jesus,” found below.
- Review questions: (Game: Play with two teams. Print two copies of the cycle of the judges chart found below. Back them with paper towel, cut out the sections, and place them on a flannel board. The object of the game is to stop the cycles by removing pieces from the board with each correct answer.)
 1. Who appeared to the people to scold them about not completing the conquest? [The Angel of the Lord, who is Jesus.]
 2. Since the people had not obeyed God, what would He not do? [Not drive the enemy out.]
 3. Name one of the two things God said the people and their false gods would become to Israel. [Thorns; a snare.]
 4. Why was the place where God spoke called a place of weeping? [Because the people wept when they heard God would not fight for them any longer.]
 5. After Joshua and the following generation died and another generation who did not know the Lord lived, how did the Israelites disobey? Name two things. [They did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; served the Baals; abandoned the Lord; went after other gods of the peoples around them; provoked the Lord to anger.]
 6. When God was angry because of Israel’s sin, how did He bring trouble to them? [He gave them over

to their enemies.]

7. What did the people do when their trouble became unbearable? [They were sorry for their sin; they repented and cried to God for help.]
8. Whom did God raise up to help the people? [Judges who rescued them.]
9. How long would the people be faithful to the Lord after the judge rescued them? [As long as the judge lived.]
10. How long did these cycles of sin, sorrow, and salvation continue? [Hundreds of years.]

Memory Verse[s]: These memory verses show the reason for the cycles in Judges.

- Judges 2:11, 12: And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. . . . And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger.

Handwork:

- Print the “stubborn” chart found below for each student. Students may place colored tape in an X over the stubborn child and place tape to underline the happy child. Instead of tape, a marker or crayon may be used.

stubborn

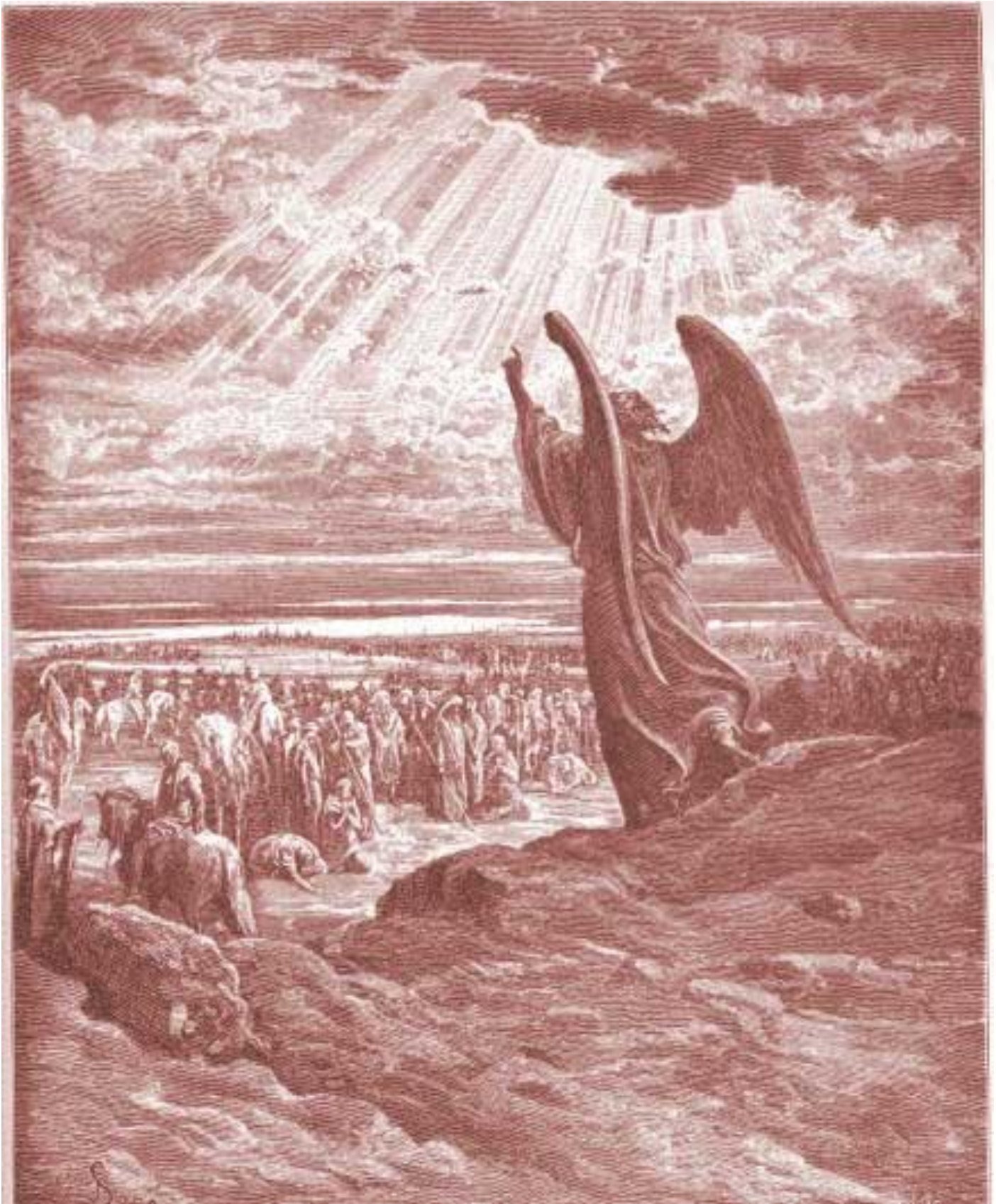
to forsake

mercy

cycles



"The people lifted up their voice, and sang."—*Judges ii. 4.*



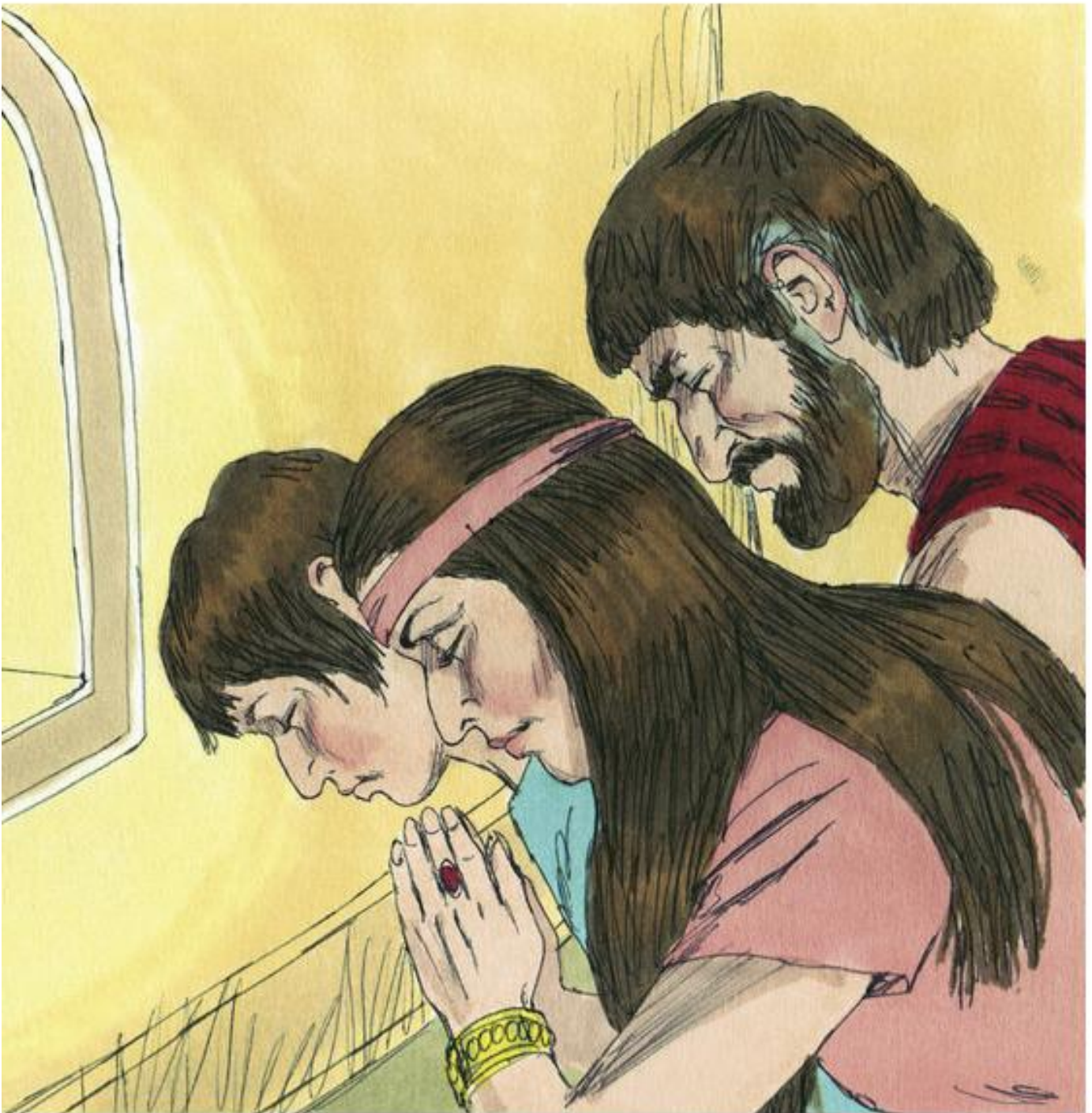
<https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/bible-images/hires/Judges-Chapter-2-An-Angel-Appears-to-the-Israelites.jpg>



A snare



Thorns



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fb/Book_of_Judges_Chapter_2-2_\(Bible_Illustrations_by_Sweet_Media\).jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fb/Book_of_Judges_Chapter_2-2_(Bible_Illustrations_by_Sweet_Media).jpg) (idol is cropped out of the picture)





<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/44/f1/22/44f122e15bb77987ae25b9960846536a.jpg>



THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

A. P. G.

ALFRED P. GIBBS

Harmonized by ELIZABETH HAYES

O fight the good fight like a sol - dier, Put on the whole

ar - mor of God, The belt and the breast plate and

hel - met, The shoes and the shield and the sword; Then pray as you

fight 'neath His ban - ner, And stand 'gainst the wiles of the foe, The

Sav - iour the vic - try will give you, And be with you wher - e'er you go!

Copyright, 1931, by Alfred P. Gibbs. Used by permission.

NOTE: Above song may be illustrated on the Flannelgraph Board with the Christian Soldier and his pieces of armor as described in Ephesians 6:13-18.

The Christian Soldier

Oh, fight the good fight like
a soldier;
Put on the whole armor of
God:

The belt of *truth*,



The breastplate of
righteousness,



Your shoes the
*preparation of the
gospel of peace;*



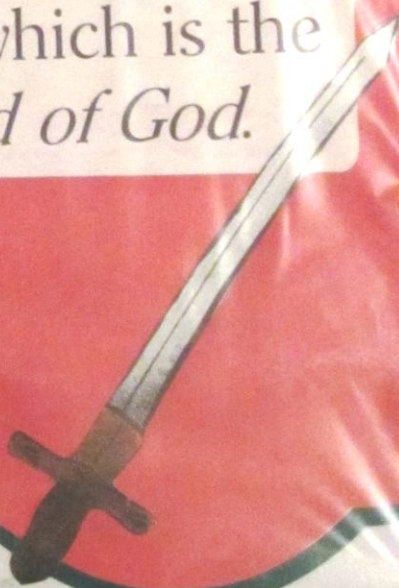
The shield of *faith* to
quench the devil's
darts;



The helmet of
salvation,



The sword of the
Spirit, which is the
Word of God.



LET'S BE TRUE TO JESUS

Annabelle McGill

Effective as a Duet

Old Tune

Harmonized by Robert Savage



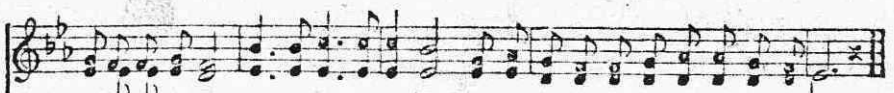
Let's be true to Je-sus, tho' a thousand voices from the world may call; 'Twas



He who died to save us, and demands our life, our loy-al-ty, our all. Since we'll



walk and talk with Him when our life on earth is o'er, Let us labor now to point the sinner



to the open door. Let's be true to Jesus, and we'll reap eternal blessing by and by.



"[The Israelites] ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn ways" (Judges 2:19).

Sinful

Troublesome

Unfaithful

Belligerent

Bowing to other gods

Out of God's ways

Repentless

e**N**emies of God



Let's be obedient to God!!