

Series: Questions

Title: Why Have Ye Done This?

Text: Judges 2: 1-5

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**Judges 2: 1: And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. 2: And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? 3: Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. 4: And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5: And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.**

The children of Israel disobeyed Christ. They disobeyed by making league—being yoked together—with the Canaanites who were the enemies of God and the enemies of his people. Furthermore, they disobeyed by not throwing down the idol altars of God’s enemies.

Christ gave them the charge to do that. It is a picture of what we do in our day through the preaching of Christ and him crucified. Christ gives us the charge to make no compromise with his enemies. He gives us a charge to break down their idols and their altars by preaching the gospel of Christ.

Through the gospel delivered by his angel, his preacher, Christ who is the Angel of the Covenant, comes in Spirit and gives his people life, granting us repentance from our idols to believe on Christ and rest in him. He continues to save us throughout the life of faith through this same means. It was the preaching of Christ crucified which was typified by his charge to the children of Israel to throw down the altars of the Canaanites.

When the children of Israel disobeyed this charge, the Angel of the LORD came to them with this question, “Why Have Ye Done This?” As we have seen over and over in this series of messages, when the LORD asks the sinner a question, it is not for the LORD’s benefit. Time and again we have seen the Lord asks the question to convict the sinner of his sin. When one of his redeemed children needs to be chastened and corrected Christ comes to us through the preaching which declares Christ’s wonderful works and he causes us to repent to him.

Is there anyone here who knows they have disobeyed the Lord? Then hear this question from the Lord to you, “Why Have Ye Done This?” Whatever our disobedience, there is no answer we can give to that question which justifies disobedience to the Lord.

Now, there is a disagreement amongst the commentaries as to whether or not this was genuine repentance in the children of Israel—the LORD knows. But whether it was real or not, what our Lord said to the children of Israel is full of instruction on how our Lord brings his children to true, God-given repentance.

Whatever our disobedience, this is a good summary of the things the Lord brings to mind to grant us repentance. One, the Lord reminded them what he had done for them. Two, the Lord reminded them what he had promised them. Three, the Lord reminded them what he commanded, how they disobeyed then he brought it all home with this question, “Why Have Ye Done This?”

The main point we see declared in this passage is that through the gospel the Holy Spirit reveals in us Christ's faithfulness toward us and our sin against him and this is how the Lord effectually works true repentance in his child.

## **WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR HIS PEOPLE**

First, the Lord reminds his disobedient child what he has done for us—**Judges 2: 1: And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers;**

At this time, the children of Israel have been delivered out of Egyptian bondage into the promised land of Canaan. Think how foolish it would have been if the children of Israel returned to Egypt and asked to be slaves once again. By disobeying their Redeemer that is exactly what they were doing. When you and I disobey Christ that is exactly what we are doing.

In the beginning, the Lord finds each of his elect in the same place: in bondage under the law, the slaves of sin, with no way of delivering ourselves. Even after Christ calls us, believers often find ourselves yielding to our sinful flesh. When we do so, we are not serving Christ our Master; we are attempting to return to our old master, sin. When we come back into captivity, if left to ourselves, we could never free ourselves. We could not free ourselves from the bondage of our depraved nature when we were unregenerate and we cannot free ourselves after we are regenerate. The apostle Paul was a believer when he said this:

Romans 7: 22: For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Captivity to the law of sin and death which is in the believers old fleshly members is captivity that we cannot deliver ourselves from. But Christ will not allow any who he has redeemed to be lost under the dominion of sin. Paul finished his statement with this good news:

Romans 7: 24: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notice, in our text, the Angel of the covenant, the Angel of the LORD came to them. The Angel of the LORD is Christ. The Angel does not declare, "The LORD said that he made you go up out of Egypt." He says, "I made you..[I] have brought you [and] I swore unto your fathers." The Angel of the LORD is Christ.

Christ gets all the glory for redeeming us, for teaching us and for granting us repentance at first, as well as for continually delivering us from us. He gave us a contrite heart to bow down before his face and he continually does so. Christ does grants us repentance by declaring effectually in our hearts that he is our Redeemer, "I made you to go up out—I redeemed you."

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law...

Like all sinners, every sinner who Christ redeemed was made a curse by Adam's one transgression. And we added to our curse by our willful transgression against God's holy and good law.

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...

For his great, unchangeable, everlasting love, the holy Lamb of God willingly gave himself to be made a curse for rebels like us. By doing so Christ “hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.” It is finished! He accomplished our eternal redemption!

Furthermore, Christ grants us repentance by reminding us that he not only delivered us from the curse of the law, Christ has redeemed us from the captivity of our dead flesh and shall deliver us from this world into the land of God’s promise—**Judges 2: 1:...and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers.**

We are looking for the day this will be complete but right now, every blood bought, regenerated believer has been delivered into his kingdom. In Colossians, notice the words “hath” and “have.”

Colossians 1: 12: Giving thanks unto the Father, which “hath made” us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13: Who “hath delivered” us from the power of darkness, and “hath translated” *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14: In whom we “have redemption” through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:...

So in the midst of our disobedience, Christ comes through the gospel, by the Spirit, and teaches us and reminds us that Christ is our Redeemer who has redeemed us and shall yet deliver us. He says in the heart effectually, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When [I, who am your life] shall appear, then shall ye also appear with [me] in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” (Col 3: 2-5) When we, as believers, turn again to the captivity of our members, Christ comes through the gospel through the Spirit, convincing us of our sin, speaking effectually into our hearts, “Why have ye done this?” He makes us answer in repentance, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom 6: 1-2)

This is the work only our Redeemer can accomplish. He not only redeem God’s elect Israel from the curse of the law but he also redeems us from the captivity of our flesh.

Acts 5: 31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Therefore, having experienced Christ’s power which caused us to repent and delivered us from our captivity through the proclamation of that one message which declares Christ is our victorious Redeemer, we go forth preaching this same gospel, waiting on Christ our God to grant repentance in all his people all over the world.

2 Timothy 2:25: In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26: And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

## **WHAT THE LORD HAS PROMISED HIS PEOPLE**

Secondly, in the midst of our disobedience, the Lord reminds his child that our salvation is by his everlasting covenant grace—**Judges 2: 1:...I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.**

He finds his lost sheep at first trusting in a covenant of works. Still, as believers, far too often we find ourselves in self-righteousness, looking to our works, looking down on others. If Christ allowed us to leave him and trust in anything we have done then we would be a debtor to do the whole law. But God used

Adam, then the children of Israel, to prove that you and I can never be saved by our keeping the old covenant law.

Romans 3:20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

But because we are self-righteous sinners by nature in need of continually deliverance, in the midst of our disobedience, Christ comes in his gospel and the Spirit reminds us once again, “I swear unto your fathers.” All our fathers were saved by the same everlasting covenant of grace: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, even every elect child of God throughout the ages. Through this gospel Christ speaks into our hearts saying, “Why have ye done this? Why have ye turned back to become entangled with the yoke of bondage?” He speaks effectually saying through his messenger, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12: 1-2)

Not only does Christ remind us that all our spiritual fathers were saved by his everlasting covenant of grace, Christ reminds you and I who are his today, personally saying in our hearts, “And I said, I will never break my covenant with you.” God will never break his covenant with those he chose in Christ by free grace. “This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life” (1 Jn 2:25) Christ turns us by reminding us there are no conditions to be met on our part. The conditions are fulfilled by the triune God in Christ.

2 Corinthians 1: 19: For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who [is] preached among you by us,...[is] not yea and nay, but in him [is] yea. 20: For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

When he finds us in self-righteousness, looking to our works, trusting in lies it is only by his everlasting covenant grace that we are not consumed. Christ says in grace and love “Why have ye done this? “I swear unto your fathers; And I said, I will never break my covenant with you.” I promised “I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Why have you done this?” And nothing melts the heart like unbreakable, everlasting covenant love. Nothing turns us in true repentance like the sure promises of God.

Christ said that he must fulfill all prophecy. What I am trying to show you is that this is how Christ fulfills the prophecy he gave in Jeremiah, this is how Christ puts his covenant word effectually in our hearts, making us willing in the day of his power.

Jeremiah 31: 31: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

## WHAT THE LORD HAS COMMANDED HIS PEOPLE

Lastly, the Lord turns us by reminding his disobedient child what the Lord had commanded us and what we have done—**Judges 2: 2: And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?**

All our disobedience is us making a league with God's enemies: be it the enemy of our lustful flesh, be it enemies in false-religion or be it unbelieving friends and associates who would turn us from Christ. Christ commands us in grace what he commanded the children of Israel in our text,

2 Corinthians 6: 14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God;

Not only are we not to be yoked with God's enemies, we are to throw down their altars. Every so often you see a news report where someone has burned down a church building, defaced a mosque or a temple. Believers are never to do that physically in this gospel age. Christ charges his people to throw down the altars of vain religion by preaching the gospel of Christ,

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We are preach the total depravity of all sinners. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." (Is 40: 6) This is the message through which Christ breaks down every idol and altar of man's will and works

We preach Christ crucified—the Redeemer who redeemed us from the curse of the law; the Redeemer who has, is and shall deliver us into that heavenly Canaan; our Covenant who saves us by his everlasting covenant promise. We do so by his grace working in us because he has made us to know this is the one message through which Christ breaks down all idols declaring them nothing.

But the children of Israel leaned to their own understanding rather than heeding the charge of Christ. They disobeyed the voice of Christ by compromising with their enemies, making leagues with them. They disobeyed the voice of the Lord by refusing to drive out their enemies. It is a picture of men compromising the gospel, who will not preach salvation by grace apart from man's works. Therefore, Christ caused them to reap what they sowed—**Judges 2: 3: Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.**

They sowed seeds of fleshly compromise therefore they reaped thorns in their fleshly sides; the very gods they spared became the idol gods by which they were snared. Christ is the only one who can grant repentance to helpless sinners. He only does so through the message that gives him all the glory. Therefore, though vain preachers may create a people who are outwardly moral yet by compromising the gospel, Christ does not grant their hearers true repentance in the heart. Where Christ does not receive all the glory and man is not abased as helpless sinners the only thing produced are outward, superficial, whitewashed sepulchers which are full of dead men's bones inwardly. (Mt 23: 27)

Today, in our nation we are reaping this very harvest because of what false preachers have sown for decades. A man does not sow beans and reap peas. We reap what we sow. Preaching man's worth, man's will, man's works instead of Christ's redemption brings a harvest of self-inflated, self-willed, self-righteous idolaters. Preaching salvation by man's old covenant law-keeping instead of preaching salvation by the everlasting covenant of grace fulfilled by Christ produces self-serving idolaters trusting in a covenant of lies. Preaching an idol Jesus who depends upon man while compromising with every false god instead of breaking down

their altars through the preaching of Christ produces a generation who compromise with every false way but refuse any mention of the true and living God. Is this not what our nation is filled with today? God said,

Galatians 6: 7: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8: For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Yet, our faithful heavenly Father chastens his children, turning us from every false way, that we might be partakers of his holiness. He does so through the same gospel by which he saved us in the beginning, the same gospel by which he edifies and comforts us—the gospel of our successful Redeemer, Jesus Christ and him crucified. Through this gospel he turned us from the dishonesty of our vain compromising idolatry. Having this ministry through this mercy of God having experienced this power of Christ, Paul said,

2 Corinthians 4: 1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God...5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

So Christ sends forth his angel—his preacher—to his people, preaching Christ our Redeemer who accomplished eternal redemption for all God's elect. Through that message Christ the Angel of the LORD delivers his lost sheep. We preach salvation by God's everlasting covenant of grace ordered in all things and sure in Christ, with no conditions left for the sinner to fulfill. Through that message Christ the Angel of the Covenant writes his everlasting covenant on the fleshly tables of our heart. He does it by speaking into the hearts of his people through this gospel, saying "Why have ye done this?" Thus he grants true repentance, making us willing to come to God through faith in the one sacrifice with which God is pleased—Christ the Lamb of God!

**Amen!**