

“And They Called that Place Bokim” (Judges 2, 21:25)(1.24.21)

Judges 2 (NIV84) *The Angel of the Lord at Bokim*

2 The angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.’ Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? ³ Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.”

⁴ When the angel of the Lord had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, ⁵ and they called that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to the Lord.

⁶ After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. ⁷ The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.

⁸ Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. ⁹ And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

¹⁰ After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. ¹¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. ¹² They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the Lord to anger ¹³ because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. ¹⁵ Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

¹⁶ Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. ¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the Lord’s commands. ¹⁸ Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. ¹⁹ But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

²⁰ Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and said, “Because this nation has violated the covenant that I laid down for their forefathers and has not listened to me, ²¹ I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. ²² I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their forefathers did.” ²³ The Lord had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.

Judges 21:25 (NIV84)

²⁵ In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: **“And They Called that Place Bokim”**

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

On Monday, we celebrated the birth of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. Of course, he was not a king, but certainly a great man among men. And yet, he was just a man, a flawed man, like all people. On Wednesday, the United States of America had its version of a coronation. A new president and vice president were inaugurated. Some Americans are joyful, but some Americans are discouraged. The previous president had his shortcomings and so does this president. Every single president of the United States was a flawed human being.

One of my heroes was Ravi Zacharias. He was a great apologist, highly educated and able to articulate the truths of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, since his death last May, several allegations of sexual misconduct have been substantiated. It hurts my heart to think of the damage done and how it undermines his lifetime legacy of kingdom work.

The angel of the Lord went up to Bokim, but it was not yet called Bokim. It was named Bokim because of the peoples' response to the Angel of the Lord. The people wept aloud. Bokim means the weepers.

Who is the angel of the Lord? Why did the people weep? How does this passage apply to us? Where are the parallels between ancient Israel and our nation? Are we in a place of weeping today? Should we be?
BODY:

In the same way that Genesis gives two different perspectives on the creation (and the human race in particular), Judges gives two different perspectives on the creation of the nation of Israel. The first chapter deals mostly with the specifics of the military campaigns. This second chapter addresses underlying spiritual issues.

The whole book of Judges encompasses about 350 years. Chapter two is said to encapsulate the perpetual cycle of God's chosen people...Relapse into idolatry, retribution, respite and deliverance, and brief return to God. One commentator called it a pattern of apostasy, oppression, distress, and deliverance.

What is the root cause? Disobedience. The Angel of the Lord reminded them, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me."

Why didn't they obey the Lord's command? Can you hear the echo of the Serpent's question to Eve? "Did God really say?" Surely, a loving and merciful God would not call on us to destroy a whole people like the Canaanites. Maybe we should show mercy too. Or, maybe the battle was too hard. They tired of the holy conflict against the enemies of God, the worshipers of Baal and Ashtoreths.

Maybe they thought, we will be practical and put the Canaanites, whom we have conquered, into forced labor. That is a more humane, a better solution than killing them. My friends, I tell you that the core issue is human self-assertion over and against the will of God – even when it has been clearly conveyed. David Jackman wrote: "Incomplete victories are always dangerous because they so easily lead to complacency and compromise. Many an army that has not pressed home its initial advantages has been cut off in the rear by the pockets of resistance it failed to mop up. Old sins dog our footsteps and many of today's worries and pressures can be traced back to yesterday's disobediences."

So who is this angel of the Lord that brought the people to tears? Since the early days of the Church, the Church fathers have understood The Angel of the Lord to be the pre-incarnate Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Many times throughout the Old Testament The Angel of the Lord takes an active role. Here we see this Angel say, "I. I brought you. I led you. I swore. I will. Then He spoke of My covenant and you disobeyed Me." Clearly, the Angel of the Lord is calling himself God.

Why did I end the scripture reading with Judges 21:25? Our NIV translation says "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." You may be more familiar with the translations that say "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Four times in Judges, it is stated that Israel had no king. Twice we are told that people decided for themselves what is right and wrong. In fact, Judges 21:25 is the last verse of Judges. It is a summation. [pause] It is a condemnation.

The last Judge appointed by God for Israel is Samuel. There are two books that cover his ministry, leading and guiding God's Chosen People. Again the people of Israel have succumbed to worldly wisdom. They want to be like other nations. They want a king and they believe by having a king their lives will be safe, secure, and serene.

So, they go to Samuel: 1 Samuel 8:5–7 (NIV84)

⁵ They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

⁶ But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

J.C. McCann wrote: “Then and now, the way of self-assertion seems so promising. As the book of Judges will point out by way of its recurring pattern, Israel was not able to resist, despite the efforts of the judges. As the subsequent books of Samuel and Kings will point out, the successors to the judges—the kings of Israel and Judah—were not able to resist self-assertion either.

In both cases, the results were tragic. The book of Judges ends in chaos, and the monarchy led both kingdoms to destruction. The lesson? Self-assertion and idolatry produce deadly consequences. From this perspective, the book of Judges is, like all the books of the Former and Latter Prophets, a call to covenant loyalty—a call to repent of self-assertion and idolatry and a call to honor, worship, and serve God alone.”

My friends, every person is flawed and needs a Savior. Therefore, every human king or person in authority is flawed and needs a Savior. The history of the world bears this out. You would have thought that God’s Chosen People, who had the oracles of God, would have been exempt. But they were disobedient and they fell into the snare, the ways, of God’s enemies. In God’s great mercy he appointed Judges and Kings for a time. Then in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, the Messiah.

Matthew 2:1–2 (NIV84)

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

And what happened? King Herod tried to kill baby Jesus by having all boys under the age of 2 in the region killed by soldiers.

Matthew 27:11 (NIV84) Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.

Matthew 27:29 (NIV84) and then [they] twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. Matthew 27:37 (NIV84) Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

And what happened? Jesus was mocked, beaten, and crucified on that Calvary cross. The ruling government of Rome and the Jewish religious leaders were both complicit and the crowd crowed, crucify Him, crucify Him.

Opposition to Jesus as King continued throughout human history. Hebrews 6:6 tells us that those that fall away from the faith are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Acts 17:5–8 (NIV84)

⁵ But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. **They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.**” ⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

Who has the last word? Humankind or God?

Revelation 19:11–16 (NIV84)

¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. (all caps)

CONCLUSION:

An old German scholar wrote, "Truly, when once the granite rock on which the church is reared has crumbled away, all other foundations crumble after it, and nothing remains but a nation of cowards and voluptuaries (which means people devoted to luxury and sensual pleasure.)"

[88% of The 117th Congress Identifies as Christian](#)

In a recent report titled "Faith on the Hill," Pew Research Center states that 468 out of 531 members of the United States' new 117th Congress describe themselves as Christian.

Do you believe they are really what they profess to be? Does their conduct support that profession? Does their legislation support that profession? To be a Christian, Jesus must be the King of your life. We are to be obedient to the scriptures because Jesus says that if you love me you will obey my commands and you will abide in my word.

Our nation does not look like [1 Peter 2:9 (NIV84)]...a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

My friends, it is time for us to repent and turn back to our King of kings and Lord of lords. We are to bend our knee and submit to godly wisdom and live in the fear of God. Let this place be Bokim, a place of weeping and repentance.

"Why, O my soul! why weepest thou?

Tell me from whence arise

Those briny tears that often flow,

Those groans that pierce the skies.

"Is sin the cause of thy complaint,

Or the chastising rod?

Dost thou an evil heart lament,

And mourn an absent God?

"Lord, let me weep for nought but sin,

And after none but thee.

And then I would—oh, that I might—

A constant weeper be."

Let us run the race to completion. Let us stand firm in our faith and we will reap our just rewards. For our Lord promises in Revelation 21:4 (NIV84) He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for **the old order of things has passed away.**"

Amen and amen. Let us pray.