

## **Causes of Defeat**

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*A Study on Judges 2: 6-23 which portrays the causes of defeat in the lives of the children of God.*

### I. Signs of Defeat:

From Judges 2:15 onwards we can see things going wrong. The hand of the Lord was against them and they were defeated everywhere they set out for war. The people of Israel were in great distress. God in His mercy raised up 16 Judges to deliver these people from raiders time to time. But the people did not listen to them; prostituted with other gods and worshipped them; unlike their fathers, they disobeyed God's command and walked away; when they groaned in distress and defeat God in His compassion raised up a Judge to deliver them but after the death of the Judge, the people turned to even more corrupt ways than those of their fathers. So the anger of the Lord rose against them for their disobedience and the Lord left those nations without driving the enemies - the nations which Joshua left when he died.

The theme of the book of Judges is a depressing downward slide. In spite of God raising the Judges from time to time, still the downward slide continued. The book of Joshua which is called the Book of Victory is followed by the book of Judges which is called the Book of Defeat. We need to think of the progression of events which brought them from victory to defeat so that we may not make the same mistakes in our own life.

#### A. Four steps in the decline:

1. Death of Joshua: V6-15 has a catalogue of events of what happened after the death of Joshua. A generation which has known the Lord had passed away and this was the first step of the defeat and decline.

2. Ignorance of the next generation: v10- After the death of Joshua, there grew up a generation who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done for Israel. The generation of Joshua was followed by the double ignorance of the subsequent generations;

a. Ignorance of God Himself and personal relationship with Him

b. Ignorance concerning the factual knowledge – they did not know the God's redemptive dealings with them in the past

We need to be reminded of the fact that how important it is for each generation to personally know the Lord; to be informed of the truth and God's redemptive plan. Both knowing the Lord on a personal basis and the factual knowledge are essential in the life of a believer. People who know the facts, the Bible, the scriptures, the truth of God's redemption through history and don't know Him personally end up in serious trouble. Much of the apostasy of Northern Europe today has its roots in the Theological colleges of the Universities of North Europe, where man studied avidly, dissected and analyzed the scriptures but did not know the Lord in a personal way.

It is equally true that there can be serious problems when the people know the Lord in a personal and enthusiastic way but fail to know the facts of His redemption through out the history of people, as is recorded for us in scriptures.

3. Worship of false gods: V11- And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord; forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth – gods of the people who were around them. Nature abhors a vacuum. There is no such thing as spiritual vacuum. Everyone has a faith, belief and religious philosophy of life and has his own answers for the questions of life, death and what is beyond the grave. When the people are not taught the truth; do not know the scriptures and do not have a personal relationship with God, then other things come and takes the place of truth and in the absence of truth comes an era which doesn't know the truth or facts.

Joshua and his generation were too busy in conquering the land that they did not bother about teaching the children of their generation about the ways of the Lord. And these subsequent generations imbibed the philosophy of the nations around them, forming their own ideas and beliefs and serving other gods and goddesses. And that is exactly what happens to us in this generation if we don't take care of the younger generation. 'Paul exhorts in Colossians to live in Christ as we receive Him, to be rooted and built up and established in the faith just as the way we are taught; to see to it that no one takes us captive through philosophy and empty deceit through human principles and basic traditions of this world.' When we fail to give attention to the truth of God's word, philosophy of the world comes into that vacuum – empty deceit and lies are sowed by Satan in a skillful way; and we get filled by the human tradition and the basic principles of this world.

The basic principles, values and beliefs of the world that drive the people all through the week which we daily see in normal routine life are the principles, that drive the lives of our children and young people .If we don't do something deliberately to replace them with the truth and the word of God, these ideas will drive our own lives.

4. Experience of defeat and distress: V14-“in His anger against the Israel, the Lord handed them over to the raiders who spoiled them and he sold them into the hands of their enemies all around so that they no longer could resist their enemies; and wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said and as the Lord had sworn unto them and they were greatly distressed.” When we turn away from the Lord and when we seek to live according to the ideas other than the truth of His word we end up in slavery and bondage to sin.

Jesus exhorted his disciples, “Continue in my word; you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” The people said that they were descendants of Abraham and were not slaves to anyone, but Jesus said to them, “Any one who commits sin is a slave to sin.” When we neglect the truth of God's word, there comes a vacuum, and into the vacuum comes sin and an era of lies and we become slaves to sin as these people of Israel did. We enter into the realm of defeat which will be followed by distress and people's lives get into an incredible mess.

We cannot live and lead a life with the hand of God raised against us.

B. The root problem for the failure: Surely the root cause of the failure is in verse 10-“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them,

which knew neither the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.” It was the failure of Joshua and his generation to impart their faith and what they knew about their God to their children which led to a decline in the nation.

C. Spiritual Heirs: The book of Joshua which is called the book of victory starts with 5 words – ‘After the death of Moses.’ After the death of Moses, God chose Joshua the son of Nun, encouraged him and Joshua went ahead in conquest to take the Promised Land.

The book of Judges which is called the book of defeat starts with the 5 words – ‘After the death of Joshua’ the people said, “who will go up and fight for us?” Joshua left no spiritual heir where as Moses left a spiritual heir - Joshua. We read Moses pouring his life into Joshua where as we don’t find anywhere Joshua pouring his life into anybody. Neither do we read of any of the subsequent Judges investing in a spiritual heir until incredibly we come to two ladies. The book of Judges is followed by the book of Ruth and this book ends with a genealogy- who her son, grandson and great-grandsons were and the great grand on was David. The book of Ruth is followed by the Book of Samuel which starts with Lady Hannah. This lady believed in God and expected a son from Him. And when God gave her the son Samuel, she gave her son back to the Lord. And within a generation the fortunes of the people of the nation of Israel had completely turned around. This is because these two godly ladies seemed to care about leaving spiritual heirs. When the people of God leave spiritual heirs then the purposes of God move forward in victory. When the contrary happens on the part of God’s people, then the purposes of God slide into defeat.

In the book of Genesis chapter 15, the Lord appeared to Abraham and He said to him, “Abraham, fear not, I am your shield and your reward will be very great.” We all seek protection and reward most of the times. But Abraham replied, “Lord, what will you give me for I am childless and my heir is Eleazar; thou hast not given me an heir.” And Abraham pleaded with God for a spiritual heir. And the whole history of the unfolding of the God’s people and the blessing on the nations depended on Abraham’s faith in believing God for a spiritual heir. Are we pleading with God for a spiritual heir?

We see Jesus praying for the disciples in John 17:7, 8, & 9 – “I have manifested Your name to the men whom you have given me; they were Yours and You gave them to Me and they have kept Your word. I pray for them, I do not pray for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.” Jesus left spiritual heirs and through the generations since then till date the gospel has reached us through these spiritual heirs which Jesus left. The gospel is in our hands now and it is our responsibility to pass it on to the next generation.

**Application:** Who are your spiritual heirs? Who is the young man or young woman in whom you are investing the most precious thing of your life? What you know about God, what you learned about Him, and your relationship with Him and the understanding of His word are a precious treasure and please do not let this treasure lay somewhere; invest it . If you do not have a spiritual heir, begin to pray now that God will give you one. And don’t stop until you see that person really walking with God, living for God, really imbibing the things you believe in, and being ready to pass that faith to someone. This is our clear responsibility. Finally we need to keep a record of what God has taught us in our relationship with Him at least once a week and make sure that we pass onto others. It may be what God has taught us concerning His word, about prayer, experiences, concerning our relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ ; we need to jot these all down so that we can be able to share with others and pass on to the next generation. And God will bless all the efforts concerning the expansion of His kingdom.