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**TRUE IDENTITY**

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## **Judges 2:8-19**

8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:

## Judges 2:8-19

12 And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

14 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

## **Judges 2:8-19**

15 Whithersoever 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.

16 Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord ; but they did not so.

## **Judges 2:8-19**

18 And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way

- Israel is typical of most cultures even as a people who have the benefit of a relationship with a covenant God.
- When we read the text, we see that it is now three generations later and the children of Israel have lost their identity as a people.
- Joseph secured the nation; Moses led the nation out of Egypt; and now Joshua has brought them into the promise land.
- We see that all of those influenced by Joshua, those that worked with him and saw the mighty workings of God are now like Joshua. They are gone from the earth and what is left is a generation that does not know the God of their fathers.

- They have begun to forsake their worship of God and began to serve other gods, embracing their form of worship and bowing before their gods.
- Notice that the scripture makes it clear that God did not forsake them, but they instead forsook God.
- Even in that, God did everything he could to keep them in covenant with him by raising up judges to lead them and direct them back to their relationship with God.
- It was important to God that his people identified with their covenant God through their worship, by the laws established for them, and forsaking the culture of those inhabitants of the land.

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- They only conformed to God's will for them as long as they had a strong leader, a judge to keep them focused on their obligation to serve the one and only true God. But once the judge was dead, they returned back to their old ways.

## **Judges 17:6**

6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

## **Judges 21:25**

25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes

- The overarching theme here is - in the absence of strong spiritual leadership, the people do what is right within their own eyes or interest, forsaking the guidance and wisdom of God.
- As the nation of Israel abandons the leaders and rule of God as though it was a bother, they drift off into the influence of the nations that serve and worship false gods.
- They are left to their own devices. They cry out to God not to have a relationship with him but to relieve themselves out of the circumstances they have made for themselves.
- I wonder how many of God's people see this pattern today in our own culture and society.

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- Is it not clear that when we turn our back on God and try to remove him as the centerpiece of our community, we end up in chaos and conflict.
  - Can we see that God only desired to be priority in the lives of his people? Yet many of us have forsaken what is important to God and abandoned those principles that he gave us to bless us.
  - Let us not think for one minute what we are seeing in America as I speak is not the end result of a people who have forsaken God, gone after other gods and doing that which is right in their own eyes.

- Yet I have hope that if God will have a remnant that will stay connected to his community and honor his word, God would hold back his judgement upon the earth.
- I want us to be the people that had an ear to hear God and stay true to our covenant with God.
- I want us to be the one that will be a testament to the fact that God honors his word even when the majority of people have gone their own way.
- I believe that there is enough of us who, like Joshua and Caleb, had another spirit and stayed in faith, refusing to give into the influence of the evil report.

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- I decree that no matter what takes place, we will live and not die and that God will prove himself faithful to those who keep the faith.
  - We are in a time where the true church will arise and shine, and bring glory to God our father.

## **John 10:14-18**

**14** I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

**15** As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

**16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

**17** Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

**18** No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

## **John 10:26-30**

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 I and my Father are one.