

Why Do Some People Abandon God?

International Bible Lessons

Judges 10:10-18

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“Yet you have abandoned me and worshiped other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more” (Judges 10:13—NRSV).

“Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more” (Judges 10:13—ESV).

“Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more” (Judges 10:13—KJV).

These words of God may be some of the saddest words to hear from His heart. How sad to learn that after God has done so much for someone (or for a church, a people, a nation) that they have abandoned God, the ultimate source of all true happiness. To add insult to injury, some have then turned to other gods, embracing the temporary pleasures and false promises that the servants of these false gods offered them. Yet, the Book of Judges teaches that God accused His chosen people, the Israelites, of repeatedly committing these heartbreaking sins.

To those who once trusted in God, but have turned from Him, these words of God might bring despair in troubled times: “I will deliver you no more.” How sad to learn that sometimes God must allow someone to suffer the unhappy consequences of their choice to abandon God and live contrary to His ways. In essence, the Apostle Paul also emphasized this fact about what can happen to those who turn from faith in God: “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done” (Romans 1:28).

When the Israelites finally cried out to God in their suffering, God replied, “Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress” (Judges 10:14). However, their false gods had no power to help them and their suffering increased. Nevertheless, whenever they turned back to the Lord and worshiped Him, God raised up leaders who obeyed Him and delivered His people from oppression.

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Thinking Further

1. What are some of the disciplinary actions that God took in the Old Testament so His people would not take His grace, forgiveness for sins, and deliverance from their enemies for granted.

2. What disciplinary actions might God take today to prevent people from taking His grace, forgiveness for sins, and deliverance for granted.

3. What are some of the sins that people seem to repeat today? What are some of the idols that some people worship today? How can God's people avoid being misled into following false gods and false promises?

4. What can happen to someone, or to some church, or to some nation, when God abandons them? What is the solution for that person, or church, or nation when they come to believe that God has abandoned them?

5. What are some events in your life or in your church or in your nation that God could point to as events He worked in because He wanted to bless or deliver you, your church, or your nation? Give thanks to God for these events!