
Close Reading & Comparative Assignment

Soren Bjornstad



REL 222: The Biblical God

Prof. David Kaden

24 March 2015

Contents

Actions of God: Judges	2
Actions of God: 2 Thessalonians	6
Conclusions	7

FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO PRESS, MMXV

Actions of God: Judges

God speaks.

- The LORD *said*, "Judah shall go up. I hereby give the land into his hand." (1:2)
- Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim, and *said*, "I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you into the land that I had promised to your ancestors. *I said*, "I will never break my covenant with you." (2:1)
- *So now I say*, I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become adversaries to you, and their gods shall be a snare to you." (2:3)
- When the angel of the LORD *spoke these words* to all the Israelites (2:4)
- So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; *and he said*, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their ancestors, and have not obeyed my voice . . ." (2:20)
- The LORD sent a prophet to the Israelites, and he *said* to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt, and brought you out of the house of slavery . . ." (6:8)
- *And I said to you . . .* (6:10)
- The angel of the LORD appeared to him *and said to him*, "The LORD is with you, you mighty warrior." (6:12)
- The LORD *said to him*, "But I will be with you . . ." (6:16)
- *And he said*, "I will stay until you return." (6:18)
- *The angel of God said* to him . . . (6:20)
- But the LORD *said to him*, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die." (6:23)

- That night the LORD *said to him . . .* (6:25)
- Then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, *as you have said*. (6:37)
- The LORD *said to Gideon . . .* (7:2)
- Then the LORD *said to Gideon*, "The troops are still too many; take them down to the water, and I will sift them out for you there. When *I say . . . when I say . . .*" (7:4)
- *And the LORD said to Gideon . . .* (7:5)
- Then the LORD *said to Gideon*, "With the three hundred that lapped I will deliver you, and give the Midianites into your hand." (7:7)
- That same night the LORD *said to him*, "Get up, attack the camp, for I have given it into your hand." (7:9)
- *And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her*, "Although you are barren, having borne no children, you shall conceive and bear a son." (13:3)
- But he *said to me*, "You shall conceive and bear a son." (13:7)
- "Are you *the man who spoke* to this woman?" (13:11)
- The angel of the LORD *said . . .* (13:13)
- The angel of the LORD *said to Manoah . . .* (13:16)
- But the angel of the LORD *said to him . . .* (13:18)

God listens and answers.

- . . . so that God *may listen* to you. (9:7)
- *And the LORD answered . . .* (20:18)
- The LORD answered . . . (20:28)

God commands.

- . . . the commandments of the LORD, which he *commanded their ancestors* by Moses. (3:4)
- The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you. (4:6)

God intervenes in war and gives peoples into each others' hands.

- The LORD *said*, "Judah shall go up. *I hereby give the land into his hand*." (1:2)
- Then Judah went up and the LORD *gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand*. (1:4)
- So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he *gave them over to plunderers* who plundered them, and he *sold them into the power of their enemies* all around, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. (2:14)
- Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD *was against them to bring misfortune*, as the LORD had warned them and sworn to them, and they were in great distress. (2:15)
- The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD *gave King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hand*. (3:1)
- For the LORD *has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand*. (3:28)
- So the LORD *sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan*. (4:2)
- *I will draw out Sisera*, the general of Jabin's army . . . *I will give him into your hand*. (4:7)
- For the LORD *will sell Sisera* into the hand of a woman. (4:9)

- Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day on which the LORD *has given Sisera into your hand.*” (4:14)
- And the LORD *threw Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic* before Barak. (4:15)
- So on that day God *subdued King Jabin of Canaan* before the Israelites. (4:23)
- And the LORD *gave them into the hand of Midian* seven years. (6:1)
- And *I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you, and gave you their land.* (6:9)
- “Get up, for the LORD *has given the army of Midian into your hand.*” (7:15)
- That same night the LORD said to him, “Get up, attack the camp, for *I have given it into your hand.*” (7:9)
- The LORD *set every man’s sword against his fellow and against all the army.* (7:22)
- God *has given into your hands* the captains of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. (8:3)
- Gideon replied, “Well then, when the LORD *has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand . . .* (8:7)
- If . . . the LORD *gives them over to me, I will be your head.* (11:9)
- Then the LORD, the God of Israel, *gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel.* (11:21)
- So now the LORD, the God of Israel, *has conquered the Amorites* for the benefit of his people Israel. (11:23)
- And should we not be the ones to possess everything that the LORD our God *has conquered* for our benefit? (11:24)

- And the LORD gave them into his hand. (11:32)
- And the LORD gave them into my hand. (12:3)
- And the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. (13:1)
- You *have granted this great victory* by the hand of your servant. (15:18)
- God has indeed given it [the land] into your hands. (18:10)
- The LORD *defeated Benjamin* before Israel. (20:35)

God delivers the Israelites, or chooses not to.

- So now I say, “*I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become adversaries to you, and their gods shall be a snare to you.*” (2:3)
- Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he *delivered them from the hand of their enemies* all the days of the judge. (2:18)
- “*I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died.*” (2:21)
- And *I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you, and gave you their land.* (6:9)
- Then I shall know that *you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said.* (6:37)
- Then the LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred that lapped *I will deliver you, and give the Midianites into your hand. Let all the others go to their homes.*” (7:7)
- Yet you have abandoned me and worshiped other gods; *therefore I will deliver you no more.* (10:13)

God brings the Israelites into and gives them land.

- The LORD was with Judah, and he *took possession of the hill country.* (1:19)
- *Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said.* (1:20)
- And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, *who had brought them out of the land of Egypt.* (2:12)
- Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: *I led you up from Egypt, and brought you out of the house of slavery.* (6:8)
- And I . . . *gave you their land.* (6:9)

The spirit of God comes upon people.

- The spirit of the LORD *came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hand.* (3:1)
- But the spirit of the LORD *took possession of Gideon.* (6:34)
- Then the spirit of the LORD *came upon Jephthah.* (11:29)
- The spirit of the LORD *began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan.* (13:25)
- The spirit of the LORD rushed on him. (14:6)
- Then the spirit of the LORD rushed on him. (14:19)
- The spirit of the LORD rushed on him. (15:14)

God strengthens people.

- And the LORD *strengthened King Eglon* of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD. (3:12)
- Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "LORD God, remember me and strengthen me only this once, O God, so that with this one act of revenge I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes." [It is implied that God then does this.] (16:28)

God is with people (or not).

- The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel; and the LORD *was with them*. (1:22)
- The LORD *had left those nations*, not driving them out at once, and had not handed them over to Joshua. (2:23)
- And he said, "*I will stay until you return*." (6:18)
- But he did not know that the LORD *had left him*. (16:20)

God blesses and curses.

- *Curse Meroz*, says the angel of the LORD, *curse bitterly its inhabitants*. (5:23)
- The LORD blessed him [Samson]. (13:24)
- May my son be blessed by the LORD! (17:2)
- Now I know that the LORD *will prosper me*, because the Levite has become my priest. (17:13)

God travels, appears to people, and vanishes again.

- The LORD is indeed *going out before you*. (4:14)

- LORD, *when you went out from Seir, when you marched* from the region of Edom . . . (5:4)
- Now the angel of the LORD *came and sat under the oak* at Ophrah. (6:11)
- The angel of the LORD *appeared to him* and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty warrior." (6:12)
- Then the LORD *turned to him*. (6:14)
- And the angel of the LORD *vanished from his sight*. (6:21)
- Then the woman came and told her husband, "*A man of God came to me*." (13:6)
- God listened to Manoah, and the angel of God *came again* to the woman as she sat in the field. (13:9)
- The [angel of God] who came to me the other day *has appeared to me*. (13:10)
- The angel of the LORD *did not appear again* to Manoah and his wife. (13:21)

God chooses judges and rulers for the people.

- Then the LORD raised up judges. (2:16)
- Whenever the LORD *raised up judges for them*, the LORD was with the judge. (2:18)
- The LORD raised up a deliverer for the Israelites. (3:9)
- The LORD raised up for them a deliverer. (3:15)
- The LORD sent a prophet to the Israelites. (6:8)

God tests.

- In order to test Israel . . . (2:22)

- Now these are the nations that the LORD left *to test all those in Israel* who had no experience of any war in Canaan. (3:1)
- They were *for the testing of Israel*, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD. (3:4)

God gives signs.

- Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. (6:21)
- I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said. (6:37)
- So God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came from it. (15:19)

God rules and judges.

- Then the LORD said to Gideon, "The troops are still too many; take them down to the water, and I will sift them out for you there. (7:4)
- The LORD *will rule over you*. (8:23)
- And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD *will be witness between us*." (11:10)
- Let the LORD, *who is judge, decide today* for the Israelites or for the Ammonites. (11:27)

God gives offspring.

- And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Although you are barren, having borne no children, *you shall conceive and bear a son.*” (13:3)
- For you shall conceive and bear a son. (13:5)
- But he said to me, “You shall conceive and bear a son.” (13:7)

God accepts sacrifices.

- The angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. (13:20)
- If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have *accepted a burnt offering and grain offering* at our hands, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these. (13:23)

God feels anger and pity.

- So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. (2:14)
- For the LORD *would be moved to pity* by their groaning. (2:18)
- So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. (2:20)
- Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. (3:8)

Miscellaneous

God pays people back.

- As I have done, so God has paid me back. (1:7)

God makes covenants.

- [The angel of the LORD] said, “I will never break my covenant with you.” (2:1)

God causes fear.

- The mountains quaked before the LORD. (5:5)

God sends evil spirits.

- But God *sent an evil spirit* between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem. (9:23)

God watches over people.

- The mission you are on *is under the eye* of the LORD. (18:6)

God creates breaches.

- ... because the LORD had *made a breach* in the tribes of Israel. (21:15)

Actions of God: 2 Thessalonians

God gives grace, peace, and relief.

- *Grace to you and peace* from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1:2)
- ... and *to give relief to the afflicted* as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels (1:7)
- Now may the Lord of peace himself *give you peace* at all times in all ways. (3:16)
- The *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.* (3:18)

God judges and does justice and destroys evil.

- This is evidence of the *righteous judgment of God.* (1:5)
- For it is indeed just of God to *repay with affliction* those who afflict you. (1:6)
- ... in flaming fire, *inflicting vengeance* on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (1:8)
- These *will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction*, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. (1:9)

- And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus *will destroy* with the breath of his mouth, *annihilating him* by the manifestation of his coming. (2:8)

God chooses and calls you.

- To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God *will make you worthy of his call.*
- ... because God *chose you* as the first fruits. (2:13)
- For this purpose he *called you.* (2:14)
- May the Lord *direct your hearts* to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ. (3:5)

God comes and is revealed.

- ... and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, *when the Lord Jesus is revealed* from heaven with his mighty angels. (1:7)
- ... *when he comes to be glorified* by his saints and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed... (1:10)
- As to *the coming of* our Lord Jesus Christ... (2:1)
- And then *the lawless one will be revealed*, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, *annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming.* (2:8)

God deludes the unfaithful.

- For this reason God *sends them a powerful delusion*, leading them to believe what is false. (2:11)

God fulfills things which ought to be.

- To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God *will... fulfill by his power* every good resolve and work of faith. (1:11)

God reveals.

- That day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and *the lawless one is revealed*, the one destined for destruction. (2:3)
- And then *the lawless one will be revealed*, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, *annihilating him* by the manifestation of his coming. (2:8)

God strengthens the believer to do good things.

- Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and *strengthen them in every good work* and word. (2:16)
- But the Lord is faithful: he *will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.* (3:3)

Conclusions

Throughout many parts of the Bible, God as a character guides events on earth. The ways in which he chooses to do this are many and varied, and the methods change significantly between the Old and New Testaments, including between Judges and 2 Thessalonians.

In the Old Testament book of Judges, God intervenes directly in his people's affairs in a great variety of ways, taking actions that have outwardly visible effects in the present. God communicates with his people, telling them what to do, listening to their concerns, and in some cases coming to visit them. Further, he influences the outcome of many battles and other events. In 2 Thessalonians, in contrast, God no longer takes an active, visible role in the development of the story. However, God is still there; in particular, his spirit is present with believers and provides them emotional support, and he calls them to be loving and do good things. God also continues to judge, and may take action to right wrongs, such as *repaying with affliction*. But more importantly, 2 Thessalonians talks incessantly about the future, a future in which God will again be more visible: God will come again, be revealed, and destroy evil. And even now, all people will have to face God's judgment and potential punishment when they die.

In Judges, God's character appeals to a sense of justice and righteousness, with respect to the "right" people, the Israelites. While indeed he only favors those people, and often deals quite harshly with others, when he favors them, he does so because they have acted rightly, and when he is angry, it is because they have (like clockwork) "again done what was evil in the sight of the Lord." When God sends evil spirits or causes destruction, he does it against the "wrong" people in order to accomplish something for the Israelites. In 2 Thessalonians, the dichotomy between the "right" and "wrong" people changes to *believers vs. unbelievers*, which is somewhat more comfortable for the modern reader: the

people who gain God's favor and avoid his wrath were not merely in the right place at the right time, they did something to deserve it (they chose to believe).

The impressions of God presented in these two books are not inconsistent with each other. However, they certainly present a God who has changed, who chooses to act in different ways in more recent times.