

God's Lessons For His Lost Nation

From this point on, Israel's enemies are in the land because God purposefully leaves them there. Similarly, God chooses to leave us, His believers, in sinful bodies rather than freeing us from all temptation the minute we become Christians. We learned that God renders inoperative our flesh, however, each day we still have to choose between giving in to our flesh or obeying God. God is good and God is love so His plan to leave us struggling with our flesh must have a good and loving purpose.

Stop and pray - Lord, show me why it is good for me to do battle with my enemies daily. Help me to value my frequent struggles as a tool to help me better know You.

Reread Judges 2:20-3:6. Let's see if we can understand what God is trying to do in His people's hearts through this oppression. See last week's lesson for your marked text.

1. What do you need to know to wage war? List all thoughts.
2. When did God come up with this plan to leave the enemies in the land? Did God decide to abandon Israel to their enemies after He was provoked to anger by their idolatry, or did He know all along it would come to this? Support your answer from Judges and Deuteronomy 31:14-18.
3. What two reasons are given for God leaving their enemies in the land, according to Judges 2:22-3:4?

Testing - There are two words for "test" in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). One is to test something to prove it is pure and good – *dokimos*. The other is to test something to prove it is flawed and not pure – *peirazo*. The word for "test" in this section of scripture is the latter – to prove not pure.

4. Re-read Judges 2:21-23 and 3:4. From Judges 3:4, what do you think God meant when He said that the nations "were for testing Israel"?
5. What was the outcome of this testing and what did it prove (Judges 3:5-6)?

6. God foresaw this outcome – what did He intend for Israel to realize (Deuteronomy 31:16-18)?
7. In your opinion, what kind of a mistaken attitude had developed among the Israelites because they knew they were the chosen people of God (Deuteronomy 7:6)?
8. a. What part of God's Word had Israel forgotten?
Deuteronomy 7:6-10

Deuteronomy 9:4-6

- b. Why did God choose us (Ephesians 2:4-5)? Look up “mercy” and “grace” in a dictionary if you do not know their meaning.
9. How would the cycle, observed in Judges 2:13-19, deal with Israel's cocky, self-reliant attitude?

Warfare - The new generation of Israel had not learned war and, thus, now needed to be taught.

10. How was Israel's method of waging war to be different than the surrounding nations (Deuteronomy 20:1-9)?
11. How are believers instructed to wage war? Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-18 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Who is our Commander and Chief in battle?
 - b. Where can we find our battle plans?

- c. Who or what are we warring against?
 - d. What are our weapons of warfare to be?
 - e. What is our battle plan according to these Scriptures?
12. Why is it good for believers to be tested and to be daily engaged in warfare?
Exodus 20:20

Deuteronomy 13:1-4

Romans 5:3-5

2 Thessalonians 3:2-3

2 Timothy 4:17-18

Hebrews 12:10-11

James 1:2-4, 12

I Peter 1:6-7

13. Rather than feeling like a failure when we face trial after trial in our Christian lives, how should we view the tests and battles that will come our way?

14. If there is a peace at all costs kind of attitude so that a believer is not willing to do battle with an enemy, how will it affect their life, faith, and witness?

15. What does God know about how people will spend eternity that will make these tests and lessons of war necessary and loving for Israel and for us?

16.
 - a. How have you been tested in the past?

 - b. What did it prove to you or produce in you?

17. What aspect of waging war do you most need to learn and use (i.e. who the captain is, strategies, how to implement the strategies, etc...)?

Heart Check: Have you come to the point of seeing how hopeless you are to save yourself and how desperately you need a Savior? Are you willing to let God raise up a deliverer for you in His son Jesus Christ? God has a purpose in leaving you in a sinful body. Will you acknowledge your sin and cry out for a deliverer or will you let your sin plunder and oppress you all of your days?

Final Thoughts: God wants us to always live in radical dependence on Him so that our faith and trust in Him will mature. God will test us and teach us warfare in order to produce eternal fruit in our hearts.

Pray:

- God, remind me of my humble beginnings. Help me to remember there is only good in me because of You.
- Thank You that You do not deal lightly with my sin!
- Thank You that You love me enough to enter into the mess to show me my need for a Savior.
- Teach me how to wage war that I might always be victorious in You.

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