

Judges Chapter 3 Part2

Read Hebrews chapter 4.

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Hebrews 4:3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, “As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest,”

Now, let us review the outline of the book of Judges. We are at the end of the first section.

Outline (based upon Thomas Constable & Robert Dean):

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Judges 1:1 – 3:6 | The reason for Israel's apostasy |
| Judges 3:7 – 16:31 | The record of Israel's apostasy |
| Judges 17:1 – 21:25 | The results of Israel's apostasy |

The first section (Judges 1:1-3:6):

1. Sets the context for the book of Judges.
2. Provides a paradigm scenario that will be repeated multiple times in the second section.
3. States God’s purpose(s) for leaving nations in the land.

With this in mind, let us look at the final verses of the first section again. The topic is testing as evidenced by the use of the word “to test” three

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times in these nine verses. Robbie Dean says about this word, “It means to test, it means to try, it means to assay something in terms of its value, it means to prove or to demonstrate and it means to train.”

The reason for emphasizing these verses today, is that the underlying principles apply to us today. What should we learn from them?

Judges 2:20 So the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to My voice,

Judges 2:21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations (goyim) which Joshua left when he died,

These two verses set the context for the following verses. Note that the speaker changes in verse 20 to a quote in the first person. God is speaking.

Judges 2:22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.”

Note the use of “to test.” This is the first “to test” in these verses (2:20-3:6). In this case, will they “keep” the way of the Lord?

Judges 2:23 So the Lord allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

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Note that this verse and the following verses are in the 3rd person. There is a change. How does this influence how we look at these verses?

Judges 3:1 Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan;

Note: the 2nd use of “to test.”

Judges 3:2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly).

Note the purpose is to be taught war. This involves the whole nation of Israel. Also note that a word has been left out of the translation: “to know.” It is in the Masoretic Text (MT) but not in the LXX, the Greek translation. It is not in the NASB nor the NIV. Here it is in the Young’s Literal Translation (YLT):

Judges 3:2 (YLT) (only for the sake of the generations of the sons of Israel's knowing, to teach them war, only those who formerly have not known them) --

Trent Butler in his commentary on Judges comments on the text. “MT reads, literally, “only for the sake of knowing of generations.” He also says that “the construction is awkward...” In the past, when I have encountered such a situation in which commentators suggest or even sometimes blatantly say the author of the Hebrew text doesn’t write Hebrew very well or as in this case that the Hebrew is awkward, there may be something they are missing. Here, the word “to know” in verse two seems out of place or awkward. Why? Could there be a reason that

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the author does this? Perhaps he and the Holy Spirit are emphasizing or flagging something that will be repeated in a subsequent verse. This is the inerrant Word of God. Just because we don't understand what God is trying to communicate to us doesn't mean the text is wrong. It means we need to get up to speed on God's communication to us.

Judges 3:3 These nations are: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.

Judges 3:4 They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses.

Note the third use of "to test" in these verses The purpose of the testing is to see if the people would listen/obey the commands of the Lord. This is on a person by person basis.

At least one commentator is confused by the multiple purposes stated in these verses. Why would the writer state a purpose for the testing and then later give a different purpose for the testing? Perhaps the words and structure of the narrative will aid in producing a structure we can understand and make sense.

Let me highlight some of the words from 2:22-3:4 and put it into an outline. We may be aided in this by some repeated words, change of speaker and peculiar construction. The verses that include "to test" are 2:21-23, 3:1-2; 3:3-4. Note that for verses 2:21-23, the speaker is God, in the first person. In verses 3:1-2 and 3:3-4 God is referred to in the third

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person. Verses 3:1-2 & 3:3-4 both contain “to know.” Here is what I would like to suggest:

Testing

General Command from God (2:21-23) 1st Person.

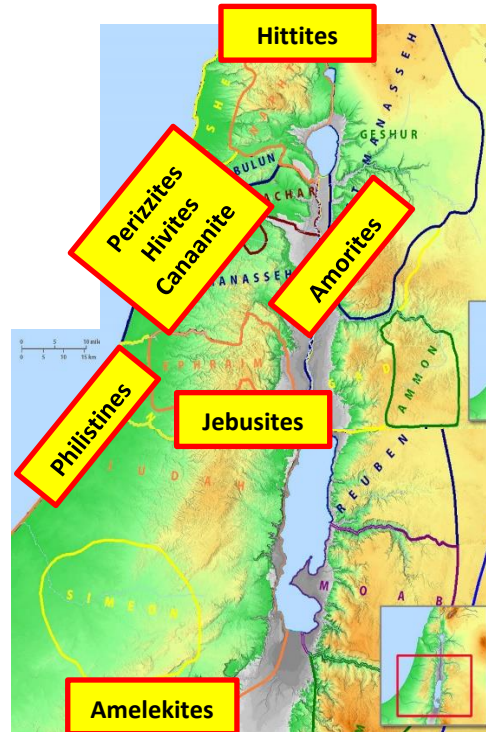
Will Israel keep/treasure ways of Yahweh and walk in them?

A. Command that applies to the nation (3:1-2) 3rd Person.
To know whether they might teach war. Individuals learn war, but it is in the context of a nation that the training is accomplished.

B. Command that applies to individuals (3:3-4) 3rd Person.
To know whether they would listen to the commandments of the Lord. Will individuals attend Bible class and apply the lessons taught?

**Judges 3:5 The sons of Israel lived among the
Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the
Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites;**

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Map based upon maps from FreeBibleImages.org

Judges 3:6 and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Something like this had been suggested by Jacob's sons in Genesis 34. Dinah had been raped. The sons of Jacob set up the men of Shechem so they deceived them into being circumcised.

Genesis 34:15 Only on this condition will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you be circumcised,

Genesis 34:16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for

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ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people.

Note that these are the sons of Jacob. In other words, they are the sons of Israel whose names are the names of the tribes we are dealing with in the book of Judges! And in the book of judges, the sons of Israel do what the sons of Jacob proposed doing. Sad irony.

I want to point out that intermarriage was sometimes used as a way to solidify the relationship between two tribes or nations. In this case, the sons of Jacob say correctly what later actually happens to the sons of Israel (Jacob). They intermarry into a culture that is hostile to Yahweh. They start to become assimilated into the Canaanite culture.

Later, after the return from the Babylonian captivity, many men had married foreign women. Ezra explains this was wrong.

Ezra 10:10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have been unfaithful and have married foreign wives adding to the guilt of Israel.

Ezra 10:11 Now therefore, make confession to the Lord God of your fathers and do His will; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.”

Foreign. The word can mean stranger, foreign, alien, even pagan.

There are “foreign” women in David’s genealogy. My understanding is that the main issue is that they are “foreign” because they are unbelievers and brought their pagan culture and pagan gods with them.

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Take the example of Ruth. This is a good example because, Ruth 1:1 says, “In the days when the judges ruled,...” Naomi’s sons were wrong in marrying foreign wives because they were unbelievers.

Ruth 1:15 And she saith, `Lo, thy sister-in-law hath turned back unto her people, and unto her god, turn thou back after thy sister-in-law.'

But then, why is Boaz not wrong when he married Ruth? What does she say?

Ruth 1:16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”

Ruth 1:17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.”

She became a believer. She then married Boaz, also a believer.

But what if you find yourself married to an unbeliever? Paul answers that question:

1 Corinthians 7:9 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.

1 Corinthians 7:13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live

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with her, she must not send her husband away.

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

Note: Judges 3:6 is the answer to the previous questions which will be played out in the rest of the book of Judges.

Robert Chisholm, commenting on chapter 1 in his introduction to the commentary on Judges, says, “The matter-of-fact description of Israel’s failure to carry out God’s commission prompts the reader to ask: Why did the people fail? The account of the incident at Bokim (2:1-5) provides at least a partial answer by making it clear that Israel’s failure was not really due to Canaanite military power and persistence (the impression given by 1:19, 27, 35), but was the result of assimilation to Canaanite culture and idolatry.”

Therein lies an important lesson for us today. Do not allow yourself to be assimilated into an anti-Christian culture.” Today’s culture is much like the “Borg” of Star Trek. “You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile.” And that is true if we only depend upon our sin nature to address any testing. But we have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to resist being assimilated into the “Kosmos” culture of today.

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At this point, I include some points on testing from Robbie Dean.

Doctrine of Testing

[R. Dean at <https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/judges-menuitem/message/2000-judges-008/read>] The quoted text is from Robbie Dean. I have added a couple of comments along the way. The point of this doctrine is to encourage you to walk by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit whenever you have to use your volition to make a decision. Will you do it?

- I. **“Definition:** A test is any situation in life when the believer has the option of choosing between applying doctrine or using his own resources to solve the problem.” I want to quickly add that application of doctrine can only happen in the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - A. “Any situation in life would include mundane every-day situations in life from how you drive to how you respond to someone at a check-out, a cashier at the local store, some telephone sales person who calls right in the middle of dinner, or responding to how politicians are handling situations, to the extreme disasters and adversities that we face. These can be pleasant situations, and it is the pleasant things that often distract us from taking in doctrine, or it may be an unpleasant situation of adversity. These situations involve people, family members, a spouse, children or parents, business associates, or people we don't even know such as someone else driving on the highway. It may involve system testing, all kinds of systems we work under—political, at work in terms of the structure of office politics, having to deal with a bureaucracy, etc. Thought is another category of testing. What is going on

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in our thinking? What is our mental attitude? Are we involved in mental attitude sins or are we rehearsing divine viewpoint and promises in our thinking? So any situation in life, then, is defined as any opportunity where you have to make a decision. It can be good, bad, mundane or extreme.”

- B. “The phrase "when the believer has the option of choosing." This emphasizes the issue of volition. God created man with volition. What goes along with volition is personal responsibility. We are responsible for the decisions we make and we are accountable for those decisions and the consequences of those decisions. Volition emphasizes that it is *your* choice and *your* responsibility for making that choice, whether good or bad.”
- a. **“Principle #1:** Our lives are the result of the decisions that we make. We develop all sorts of habits as a result of decisions we make when we are very young, and yet, at that age we are not volitionally conscious, i.e. we are not fully aware that these decisions, habits, mental attitude patterns and practices may be extremely damaging over the long run. We don't understand the consequences and yet we have already made decisions and set a certain course for our lives at a very young age. Our lives are determined by the decisions we make, they are not determined by our environment, by the decisions that other people make, by the good or bad situations or circumstances that we find ourselves in that are beyond our control. Our lives are determined by the decisions we make in response to that environment, in response to the decisions others make that affect us, that are made in response to the good or bad situations that we find ourselves in.”

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- b. **“Principle # 2:** We cannot blame the environment or others for our bad decisions.”
 - c. **“Principle # 3:** We are always accountable for our decisions, even when we are not aware of all of the negative consequences of those decisions. Ignorance is no excuse.”
- C. “The phrase "between applying doctrine or using our own resources."”
- a. **“Principle #1:** In any decision-making circumstance you are either operating in the sphere of divine viewpoint or the sphere of human viewpoint. All of Scripture presents one unified perspective on life which we call divine viewpoint. This presents God's values, criterion, God's way of thinking about everything. In 1 Corinthians 2:16 the Bible is called the mind of the thinking of Jesus Christ. This is divine viewpoint. In contrast to that there is human viewpoint which has another technical term called paganism. Paganism is not a pejorative term, it simply refers to those cultures, societies and thought forms that are not biblical. You either think biblically or you don't think biblically.
 - b. **“Principle #2:** From birth on the only options presented to us (before salvation) come from our sin nature. The only way you have to respond to life situations comes from your sin nature, either as human good or as personal sin. Because you are devoid of the Holy Spirit, because you are not regenerate, because you do not have any way to understand spiritual things and doctrine, then you cannot do anything other than that which is produced by your sin nature. Therefore it is all human good and all human viewpoint. The result of that is even though these solutions might work they are ultimately self-destructive. Proverbs says, "There is

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a way that seems right to man, but the end thereof is death [self-destructive]." The issue is not "does it work?" If you are a believer the goal is not to make ourselves functional, the goal is to become spiritually mature and to glorify God. We need to realize that the only way to make life a success in the long term, which means eternity, is to solve problems God's way. So the issue is not "does it work? does it make me functional? does it alleviate the pain? does it make me happy or feel good? The issue is, does it have eternal spiritual value? In some cases choosing the biblical option means that you are going to stay in a difficult situation and endure suffering and hardship. Choosing the human viewpoint solution means that you escape the problem temporarily but eventually it will come back to haunt you."

c. **“Principle #3:** Our "own resources" means that mankind has developed many different techniques to handle problems. Many of them work, many of them temporarily alleviate the problem and make us feel better, but they do not ultimately solve the problem. The issue in testing is whether we are going to rely on human resources or on divine resources which are the ten problem-solving devices (stress-busters) which we have discussed, and whether or not we are going to rely on God's solution which is the only solution.”

II. “A test is the opportunity to demonstrate the doctrine that we have learned and assimilated into our own soul.”

III. “Tests may originate from one of three sources and these are the three enemies to the spiritual life.” These are the sin nature, the cosmic system and the devil and the demons. The sin nature is oriented to the cosmic system under the rulership of Satan. The

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cosmic system is not just the physical world. Remember, the battle is in the mind, how you think. It is a constant battle to orient our thinking to God's thoughts. That is one reason we study the Bible. We acquire God's thinking, God's viewpoint on what is right. Most of us are not under direct attack from Satan and demons. But we are under attack daily from Satan's cosmic system. We combat that the same way Jesus did when He was tested: with doctrine, Bible information."

- IV. "Tests may be the result of our own bad decisions." Sometimes we just make bad decisions from our sin nature and they create worse scenarios and worse situations and develop negative consequences and then we have more problems. Now it doesn't matter how badly you have failed, it doesn't matter how terrible the decisions have been in your life, as long as God is there and you are alive there is still hope for recovery. If you rob a bank, you will suffer testing. There is always consequence for sin."

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Next week we will start with the first apostasy and the first judge. As an overview of the second section here is outline of the middle section based upon a combination of Thomas Constable, J. Vernon McGee and Robert Chisholm.

- A. The first apostasy 3:7-11 [judge: Othniel] 3:7 “The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,…”
- B. The second apostasy 3:12-31 [judge: Ehud] 3:12 “Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.”
- C. The third apostasy chapters 4—5 [judge: Deborah and Barak] 4:1 “Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord…”
- D. The fourth apostasy 6:1—10:5 [judge: Gideon] 6:1 “Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.”
- E. The fifth apostasy 10:6—12:15 [judge: Jephthah] 10:6 “Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,…”
- F. The sixth apostasy chapters 13—16 [judge: Samson] 13:1 “Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,…”