

OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 4 — “Temptation & Testing in a Fallen World” — June 1, 2025

Introduction: The Journey or the Destination?

Eccl. 12:13-14—¹³The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Matt. 25:13—His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

Main Point: Walking in the way of the Lord means seeing beyond our immediate _____ and even beyond the _____ of our entire life.

Judges 2:6-3:6

This passage serves as the second introduction to the book of Judges and describes the spiritual condition of Israel from the Lord’s perspective. After the death of Joshua and the generation he led, Israel fell into a cycle of apostasy, oppression, and rescue. This section serves as an explanation for Israel’s discipline and deliverance seen throughout the rest of the book.

Observations:

1. The passage begins by _____ Joshua and his generation with those that came after them. (2:6-14)

- Joshua and the other leaders of his generation faithfully led the people.

Judges 2:7—And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel.

- The generations that came after Joshua fell away from the Lord.

Judges 2:10b-11—...And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals.

“what was evil” → _____

“...the religion of the Canaanites was based on the assumption that the forces of nature are expressions of divine presence and activity and that the only way one could survive and prosper was to identify the gods responsible for each phenomenon and by proper ritual encourage them to bring to bear their respective powers.” —Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*

“_____” — (meaning lord’ or ‘master’) the chief Canaanite storm god and fertility deity; often associated with rain, agricultural fertility, thunder, and war.

“_____” — (related to the Mesopotamian ‘Ishtar’ and Phoenician ‘Astarte’) goddess of fertility, love, and war. She was the wife of the El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon, but she was also the consort of Baal.

⇒ These false gods were often worshipped together in the same locations (“high places” or “groves”) through festivals, sacrifices, and ritual prostitution.

“...the nature of Israel’s apostasy...was turning from Yahweh, the real source of prosperity and fertility, to the figment of depraved imaginations which confused the result of divine blessing with its cause. It was in every way an egregious act of covenant rebellion and disloyalty best described as “whoring after other gods.”—Eugene Merrill

- As a result, the Lord gave Israel over to the consequences of their disobedience.

Judges 2:14—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 hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.

Key Points: 1. While it is the responsibility of the older generation to _____ the faith, it is the responsibility of the younger generation to _____ it and then do likewise.

2. Idolatry is seductive to us because it tends to offer the indulgence of our _____ desires.

2. The _____ of the judges is described and explained. (2:15-19)

- The Lord turned against them just as He had promised that He would.

Judges 2:15—Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

- Because of His mercy, the Lord would have compassion on them in the midst of their distress.
Judges 2:16—Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them
⇒ The sorrow of the people moved the Lord to act on their behalf and to raise up and empower judges who would lead the people politically and militarily (2:18).
- Although they experienced God's power to deliver, the people would turn from him after the deaths of the judges.
Judges 2:19— But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.

Key Point: Faithful _____ can accomplish only so much.

3. The Lord's purpose in ceasing to drive out the Canaanites was the _____ of Israel. (2:20-3:6)

"test"— נָסָה (nāsā)—to test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test

πειράζω (peirazō)—to endeavor to discover the nature or character of someth. by testing, try, put to the test

- The Lord purposed the testing of Israel for corrective discipline.

Judges 2:20-21—²⁰ So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, ²¹ I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died

When they experience hardship because of their sin, will they _____?

- The Lord purposed the testing of Israel for formative discipline.

Judges 3:2,4—² It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before...⁴ They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

When tempted, will they _____ themselves of God's Word and His power?

- Unfortunately, Israel mostly _____ to respond rightly to the testing and temptation they faced.

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

Key Point: In a _____, it is certain that we will undergo seasons of testing & temptation.

Applying the Text

1. The Lord Himself does not temp us to _____, but He _____ that we undergo times of testing.

James 1:12-15—¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial (peirosmos), for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted (peirazō), "I am being tempted (peirazō) by God," for God cannot be tempted (peirazō) with evil, and he himself tempts (peirazō) no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted (peirazō) when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Rev. 2:10—Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested (peirazō), and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

2. The Lord Jesus is _____ for us and available to us when we are tested.

Matt. 4:1—Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (peirazō) by the devil.

Heb. 4:15—For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted (peirazō) as we are, yet without sin.

Matt. 6:9-13—⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation (peirosmos), but deliver us from evil.

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Main Point: Walking in the way of the Lord means seeing beyond our immediate circumstances and even beyond the span of our entire life.

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Judges 2:10b-11—...And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals.

“what was evil” → Apostasy

“...the religion of the Canaanites was based on the assumption that the forces of nature are expressions of divine presence and activity and that the only way one could survive and prosper was to identify the gods responsible for each phenomenon and by proper ritual encourage them to bring to bear their respective powers.” —Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*

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- As a result, the Lord gave Israel over to the consequences of their disobedience.

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Key Points: 1. While it is the responsibility of the older generation to pass on the faith, it is the responsibility of the younger generation to receive it and then do likewise.

2. Idolatry is seductive to us because it tends to offer the indulgence of our immediate desires.

2. The cycle of the judges is described and explained.

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Judges 2:15—Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

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⇒ The sorrow of the people moved the Lord to act on their behalf and to raise up and empower judges who would lead the people politically and militarily (2:18).
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Key Point: Faithful leadership can accomplish only so much.

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- **The testing of Israel was intended for corrective discipline.**

Judges 2:20-21—²⁰ So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, ²¹ I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died

When they experience hardship because of their sin, will they repent?

- **The testing of Israel as intended for formative discipline.**

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When tempted, will they avail themselves of God's Word and His power?

- **Unfortunately, Israel mostly failed to respond rightly to the testing and temptation they faced.**

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Key Point: In a fallen world, it is certain that we will undergo seasons of testing & temptation.

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1. The Lord Himself does not temp us to sin, but He permits that we undergo times of testing.

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