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Opening: What happens when God’s people turn away from Him? What does God do to bring people back to himself. What confidence can the faithful have in seasons of spiritual disillusionment. The righteous can have great courage, because even when it seems all is going the wrong direction, God is not out of ability or options to restore it all back!

Key Scriptures: Judges 2:10-15 10After that whole generation had also been gathered to their fathers, another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works that He had done for Israel. 11And the Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals.

12Thus they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed after various gods of the peoples around them. They bowed down to them and provoked the LORD to anger, 13for they forsook Him and served Baal and the Ashtoreth.14Then the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of those who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. 15Wherever Israel marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them to bring calamity, just as He had sworn to them. So, they were greatly distressed.

Lamentation 2:5 5 The Lord is like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel. He has swallowed up all her palaces and destroyed her strongholds. He has multiplied mourning and lamentation for Daughter Judah.

Isaiah 63:10-11 10But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. So, He turned and became their enemy, and He Himself fought against

them. **11Then His people remembered the days of old**, the days of Moses. Where is He who brought them through the sea with the shepherds of His flock?

Key point: God is never the enemy of humanity, He is its savior, friend, and helper. God is patiently reviving the people that are willing and working to draw all men to himself.

1. Is America experiencing spiritual decline?

- a. America is split. Today estimates are that half the country live contrary to the scriptures. Each generation removed from the “Boomer” generation has less adherence to the truth of God than the one before it.
- b. Only 6% of Millennials and 4% of Gen Z have a biblical world view. Meaning they agree with scriptures.
- c. The Church in America has grown indifferent, quiet, corrupt, and complicit. A good portion of the church in America now vote politically over God’s biblical values.
- d. Trillions of dollars are squandered every year on frivolous things, that don’t matter.
- e. A good portion of the church in America now hold to beliefs that are clearly abhorrent or opposed to the doctrines of scripture, these beliefs are not innocent but destructive and bring judgement.
- f. Only 2% of Christians share there faith publicly.
- g. Only 5% of Christians give the biblical tithe.
- h. **Key Truth:** Hypocrisy has always been prevalent in the world and in the church. Even though the world is in a difficult place God always has a church that is faithful and persistent in His work.

2. What are some signs that a nation is leaving God?

- a. God is the author of **life**, therefore a nation that leaves God no longer values life.
- b. God is the author of **liberty**, therefore a nation that leaves God is no longer spiritually free but becomes enslaved to their own lusts and passions. (Consider the island city of Venice)
- c. God is the author of **prosperity**, therefore a nation that leaves God will struggle economically and go further and further in debt as the chains of debt enslave a nation.
- d. God is the author of **peace**, therefore a nation that leaves God will have conflicts internally and externally, the nation will be undermined and overwhelmed by its adversaries. New adversaries will arise from distant places.
- e. God is the author of **justice** in the earth, therefore a nation that leaves God will no longer adhere to, abide by, or pass laws that ensure justice for the oppressed.
- f. God is **love**, therefore a nation that leaves God will redefine what love is, it will confuse lust for love,

it will become cold and callous to the needs of others.
- g. God is the author of **truth**, therefore a nation that leaves God will be consumed with lies, omissions of truth. Truth will be redefined and those who speak truth will be **silenced** or persecuted.
- h. **Life Lesson:** The nation that leaves God is not the lost within a geographic region but the church within that geographic region that turns away from God.

3. What hope do we have in these uncertain times?

- a. Even when a nation forsakes its God, the God of that nation does not forsake His people.

b. God promises restoration for His people: Ezekiel 20:41-44

41When I bring you from the peoples and gather you from the lands to which you have been scattered, I will accept you as a pleasing aroma. And I will show My holiness through you in the sight of the nations. 42Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the land that I swore to give your fathers.43There you will remember your ways and all the deeds with which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evils you have done. **44Then you will know, O house of Israel, that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for the sake of My name and not according to your wicked ways and corrupt acts, declares the Lord GOD.**

c. Psalm 106:44-46 44Nevertheless He heard their cry; He took note of their distress. **45And He remembered His covenant** with them and relented by the abundance of His loving devotion.

46He made them objects of compassion to **all who held them captive.** ** Even a people in captivity who have rebelled against God are dealt with graciously. The children of Israel **were still God's children in the land of bondage.** The ones who suffered were the ones who resisted God's command that they were to go into judgement, they rejected God's right to correct His children for their disobedience and to bring them back to the truth.

d. God is not ruled by His anger of sin: In wrath God remembers mercy. God's anger against evil is righteous and always under self-control. God never stops working.

4. What does God do to bring a nation back

- a. God will attack the idols of a nation that lead his people to commit sins against him or that create complacency to the things of God.
- i. **Exodus 12:12** For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.
 - ii. **2nd Chronicles 14:2-4** And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. **3**He removed the foreign altars and high places, shattered the sacred pillars, and chopped down the Asherah poles. **4**He commanded the people of Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandments
- b. God will revive the church in the nation and call the church to lead in repentance through prayer, confessing its own complacency to the spiritual decay.
- i. **2nd Chronicles 7:14** **If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**
- c. God will pour out his Spirit upon His servants to meet the needs of that generation.
- i. **Joel 2:28-29** **28**And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. **29**Even on My menservants and maidservants, I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Our Days).

- d. God will show great patience but will increase the volume and repetition of his warnings.
 - i. **2nd Peter 3:9** 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering to us-ward**, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
- e. God will humble a nation and allow others to prosper over it to provoke them. **Deuteronomy 28:43**
- f. God will humble a nation and allow enemies to defeat his people in battle. **Deuteronomy 28:25**

Conclusion: May we grow to understand that God ultimately controls both sides of the battlefield of salvation.