

Judges 3:1-8 - Thursday, September 13th, 2012

(1) Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is*, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan (2) (*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), (3) namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. (4) And they were *left*, *that He might* test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

- We're just now starting to see what the Israelites reap vis-à-vis the disobedience they sowed by not driving the Canaanites out of the land.
- So much so that the Lord will actually test them by leaving those enemy nations in the Canaan in order that they might dwell with them.
- He's not doing this to be cruel to them, He's doing this so as to have it become a lesson for them, in that, their sin will be their own reward.

- The lesson here becomes quite clear as it relates to the sin that we have failed to drive out of our lives in our disobedience to the Lord.
- Often times, the Lord puts us to the test, in the sense that He wants to use the consequences of past sin as a catalyst to future obedience.
- By that I mean, it's not too late for the Israelites and if they will obey the Lord and His commands, they would still be able to drive them out.

As one commentator said; "The reason that God didn't just eliminate these nations is again stated. It was to *prove* Israel's commitment to God's word. If they were faithful to the word of God the other nations would not hinder them and they would grow strong enough to drive them out completely."

Charles Spurgeon takes it a step further and talks about how that this wouldn't have been smooth sailing and would have made them stronger; "Surrounded as they were by warlike nations, the Lord meant His people to be expert in war, and therefore kept them in marching order, by leaving certain nations near at home to be a trouble to them. The church also is meant to be a militant army, and therefore the Lord will not allow everything to go smoothly with us."

- By the way, I think there's another layer to this and one for which isn't so easily visible at first glance related to teaching them to know war.
- Here's what I'm thinking, God wants us to not only be equipped for the battle, He also wants us walking in obedience before the battle.
- In other words, we should give God every reason to grant us the victory, and on the other side of the table no reason to not grant us victory.

(5) Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. (6) And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. (7) So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

- To say this is going from bad to worse would be a gross understatement because now, the children of Israel are sleeping with the enemy.
- As one commentator said it; "first they dwelt with their enemies, then had relations with their enemies, then worshipped with their enemies."
- This is the quintessential downward spiral on the part of the Israelites, which I believe is recorded here so that we'll learn from their sin.

Charles Spurgeon – "Because of sin's sliding-scale, they grew accustomed to talk of Baal and the thick trees in which he was worshipped; by and by they revered the lying vanities of the idolaters, and at last their treacherous memories forgot their God."

(8) Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is how that the name is the nature concerning this king of Mesopotamia.
- The name Cushan-Rishathaim means double darkness or wickedness and true to form they will come under his evil bondage and captivity.
- Also, notice this lasts for a total of eight years. The significance of this is that eight is known as the number of new beginnings in scripture.

- This brings up a couple of questions the first of which is, why would the parents of Cushan-Rishathaim name their son double darkness.
- The thought is that this was a name given to him by others who knew him for what he was, namely, that he was evil through and through.
- If the truth be known, we are given nicknames by others who know us for what we are, and sometimes those names can be very revealing.

- The second question is even more telling by virtue of why it is that it would take the Israelites eight long years before they cry out to God.
- The question is why so long under the cruel bondage of this Mr. Double Wicked Man. I would suggest that it was because un-brokenness.
- It's been said that the more broken you are, the quicker you are to repent, and conversely, the more un-broken you are, the longer it is.