

Theme: Israel will live in the midst of foreign people and idols. There God would test them and teach them warfare so they might remember the ways of their forefathers and learn to trust the living God. We too live in the midst of “enemies” whose “idols” can be a snare to us. We must learn the “ways of war” in the path of obedience.

Background:

Introduction Part 1 gave us the setting of Judges.
Introduction Part 2 sets out the *pattern* of Judges

Introduction: Why read the “Introduction”? It tells us why it is important to read the book.

I. Rapid Degeneration

A. A new generation

1. Following a legacy of faithfulness (2:6-9)

2. A lost generation

a. “Did not know the Lord” (2:10)

- They knew *about* him, but did not *know* him
- Therefore, they had no regard for him

b. They “abandoned the Lord” (2:12)

- Served the Baals and Ashtoreth
- Added other “gods” to their worship

ASIDE: The fear of every believing parent? My children will abandon the Lord.

How did that happen?

- Raised in the midst of unbelievers
- No real personal experience of God presence?

How do we avoid it? (No guarantees here.)

- More than claiming Proverbs 22:6
- Let them see faith in action
- Seek the mind of Christ in all of life

B. Unfaithfulness (2:17)

1. Spiritual adultery

- Israel prostituted herself to other gods
- Jeremiah 3:8; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 7:4

2. The Lord’s bride

- Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:6-9

C. A downward spiral of Israel

1. The pattern of Judges

- Abandon the Lord – Oppression – Distress/Crying out – Deliverance

2. The progression

- Worse than the time before! (2:19)
- Indistinguishable from the unbelieving world (3:6; Deuteronomy 7:1-5)

II. God's Judgment and Mercy

A. God's continuing pattern

- Jealous Anger – Judgment/Oppression – Compassion – Deliverance (Judges)

1. God's jealous wrath

- It is a holy jealousy

2. Judgment

a. God fulfills His promise (2:3)

- Deuteronomy 28

b. God's *severe* mercy at work!

3. Compassion!

a. God's *tender* mercies!

b. Moved to pity

4. Deliverance!

- Raising up judges over them

B. Testing and warfare

1. Testing (3:1,4)

a. To know whether Israel would obey

b. Not for God's benefit – but for Israel's benefit

- Will we be faithful to him, his word, his promise?

- Or conformed to *this world*? (Romans 12:2; cf. 8:29)

2. Warfare! (3:2)

a. God is their champion

b. The test: Will they fight the good fight?

III. Regeneration

A. The war continues

1. We live now – in the midst of all the nations

2. Engaged in spiritual warfare even now (Ephesians 6:10-18)

- Our Lord fights for us

- Our armor is a reflection of the fight we wage

- Our victory is assured

B. The perfect judge

- Full of mercy, love and of grace

- Fulfilling the promise of God

- Deals with them in mercy because they are so deserving?? Hardly.