

JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS
Part II: Knowing And Heeding God's Will In REPEATED Trials Of Faith
(Judges 2:1-23)

I. Introduction

- A. Sometimes, we believers face an uncanny series of "repeated" trials, events that always seem to bother us.
- B. In such circumstances, the Lord may be trying to wean us from a "crutch" outside of Himself as we learn was Israel's case in Judges 2:1-23. We view the passage for appropriate application:

II. Knowing And Heeding God's Will In REPEATED Trials of Faith, Judges 2:1-23.

- A. The Lord clarified to Israel He had previously been the solution to all of her needs, Judges 2:1:
 - 1. The Angel of the Lord, the Pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, clarified to Israel He had delivered the nation from the Egyptian empire, the greatest military power in that part of the world at the time, Judges 2:1a.
 - 2. He also reminded them of His faithfulness in fulfilling a 430-year-old promise to their forefathers in performing that miraculous deliverance, Judges 2:1b with Genesis 15:16 and Exodus 2:24-25.
 - 3. It was thus to be a foregone conclusion Israel with God's help would have had no difficulty defeating the Canaanites who had been weaker than Egypt, and thus have been willing to make no treaty with the land's inhabitants nor tolerate their false idol altars to stand as their All-Sufficiency was in God.
- B. However, Israel had not **applied** the *lesson* of God's All-Sufficiency, and so had chosen to gain security in making peace covenants with the Canaanites and tolerating their worship altars to stand, Judges 2:2.
- C. Consequently, God decided to leave the Canaanites in the land to become troublesome snares to Israel in hope Israel would eventually trust in the Lord to conquer the Canaanites and eradicate idol worship, 2:3.
- D. Israel's response is noteworthy: though the people of God wept for their sin, they still did not give up their errant covenants with the evil land's inhabitants nor destroy their false idols, Judges 2:4. She was unhappy, but too untrusting in God to obey Him entirely for her national security!
- E. As a result, Israel experienced degrees of blessing and grief in the history of the judges in accord with how she vacillated between looking to the Lord for her security versus other false "crutches" as follows:
 - 1. While Joshua and the elders with him who had seen the Lord's miraculous deliverances of the people were still alive, the nation enjoyed a degree of peace and blessing due to their godly influence, 2:6-9.
 - 2. However, once these men died, the next generation arose that did not know the Lord nor His past works in Israel's behalf, and they depended on the gods of the Canaanites; this led to repeated ups and downs as the people vacillated between the hapless gods of Canaan and trust in Israel's true God:
 - a. The new generation trusted in Canaan's gods, so God judged them by Gentile domination, 2:10-15.
 - b. When that domination would become intolerable, Israel would repent, so God would mercifully send judges to deliver His people from their oppressors, Judges 2:16.
 - c. However, as soon as they were delivered, the people would ignore the admonitions of these judges to obey the Lord and return to even deeper levels of sin, Judges 2:17-19.
 - d. Hence, God would become even angrier with Israel, choosing to repeat the trials with varying kinds and degrees of trials until Israel would turn back to the Lord for deliverance, Judges 2:20-23.

Lesson: Repeated, similar trials where we find themselves facing FAMILIAR battles of faith are often God's effort to WEAN us from "false gods" to which we turn in PLACE of the LORD, cf. 1 John 5:21! When we thus DISCERN a PATTERN of such REPEAT-TRIALS, we need to discern the CRUTCH God is seeking to reveal we are errantly using in place of trusting Him, and TURN from it to the Lord!

Application: (1) If we experience a great TRIAL where the Lord delivers us when we TRUST in Him, it is GOOD to REVIEW the PAST to see what that trial might address in similarity to what PAST lessons the Lord may have given us relative to the current trial. (2) If we NOTE a PATTERN with PAST trials, we must APPLY as a LESSON the need to ABANDON what false "crutch" we are using in place of God. (3) If we do NOT discern such a pattern, we should NOT become introspective, but just handle the PRESENT situation by faith, and go on! (4) When God WONDERFULLY HELPS us out of a deep difficulty (as God did for Israel in delivering her from Egyptian bondage), we should NOT FORGET its lesson, but HEED it in our LIVES to avoid FUTURE disciplinary trials for NOT heeding the lesson!