

## The Unlikely: The Tests Judges 2:6-23

Judges 2:6-23 - <sup>6</sup> After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. <sup>7</sup> The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.<sup>8</sup> Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. <sup>9</sup> And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres<sup>[a]</sup> in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.<sup>10</sup> After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. <sup>11</sup> Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup> They forsook the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the LORD's anger <sup>13</sup> because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. <sup>14</sup> In his anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. <sup>15</sup> Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.<sup>16</sup> Then the LORD raised up judges,<sup>[b]</sup> who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. <sup>17</sup> Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the LORD's commands. <sup>18</sup> Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them. <sup>19</sup> But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways. <sup>20</sup> Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, <sup>21</sup> I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. <sup>22</sup> I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their ancestors did." <sup>23</sup> The LORD had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.

- Passing the test gives you confidence.
- <sup>7</sup> The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.
- <sup>10</sup> After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. <sup>11</sup> Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals.
- Every generation must have their own experience with God.
- Exodus 20:2-3 - <sup>2</sup> "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before<sup>[a]</sup> me.
- <sup>13</sup> ...they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.
- <sup>14</sup> In his anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they

were no longer able to resist. <sup>15</sup> Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

- When you are defeated, ask “Is God sending me a message?”
- ...They were in great distress. <sup>16</sup> Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders.
- Leaders matter.
- Will you let God use you to lead?
- <sup>19</sup> But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshipping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.
- Denial is strongest in a pattern of self-destruction.
- <sup>20</sup> Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, “Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, <sup>21</sup> I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. <sup>22</sup> I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their ancestors did.”
- Could God be angry with you?
- Passing the test gives you confidence to take your next step.
- If you are coming out of a test, ask “Father, what was I supposed to learn?”
- If you are in a test, pray “Father, help me pass.”
- If you are about to go into a test, pray, “Father, give me strength.”
- When test time comes, does my god come through?

**Starter Question:** Do you know anyone with a self-destructive pattern in his or her life? In your opinion, why do they refuse to get help?

1. Read Judges 2:6-10.
2. In your opinion, what is the best way for the older generation to pass faith on to the next generation?
3. Read Judges 2:11-15
4. Why were the Israelites so susceptible to worshipping gods of wealth and love/sex?
5. What is your reaction to God being angry with his people? Is it positive or negative?
6. Read Judges 2:16-19.
7. In your opinion, why did the reforms of the judges not last? Why did people go back to worshipping other gods?
8. Read Judges 2:20-23
9. In your opinion, what kind of tests does God send to his people today?
10. Read 2 Corinthians 12:6-10. How does Paul’s testing compare to the testing of the Israelites?