

## Three Perspectives On Israel's Condition.

Judges 3:1-8

Sunday evening, December 26, 2010.

### I. Israel's outward condition.

- A. Once more the wisdom and purposes of God regarding not casting out all the Canaanites at once is enlarged upon:
  1. In Deuteronomy 7:22 the Lord had said to Moses that Israel would come to possess the land gradually, lest, if the Canaanite nations were cast out all at once, the wild beasts would get the upper hand.
  2. Last week we learned that a further design in receiving their inheritance in this manner was that the Lord was going to use the presence of the Canaanites in the land to test Israel's loyalty to Him over several generations. Judges 2:22.
  3. Furthermore, the Lord was going to use the presence of the Canaanite nations as a means of chastisement in the event of Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord and His covenant. Judges 2;3.
  4. Finally, our passage tonight adds one more reason to this state of affairs regarding Israel's outward condition: It was so that so that upcoming generations also might know how to fight the Lord's wars.
- B. Some insights that may be gleaned from this way of God's shepherding His People, which are still applicable today:
  1. The Lord, in bringing His people into the promised land, did so by supernatural power. The Lord still brings His people into their promised land and into the estate of salvation by supernatural power. "Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:9.
  2. It is to be noted that both the going out (of Egypt), and the coming in (to the promised land), was through the water (of the Red sea and the Jordan River respectively). 1 Corinthians 10:2 makes the connection that this was done in type; a type of which baptism is the antitype.
  3. In entering the estate of salvation by way of regeneration, the Lord makes room for Himself in our hearts, in the process He will cast out any number of Canaanites, and He will do so supernaturally. This corresponds to the supernatural battles the Lord fought for Israel when they first began to possess the land. Yet the Lord left any number of Canaanites in the land for them to deal faithfully with, and He has left any number of Canaanites in your land for you to deal faithfully with.
  4. The Lord left the Canaanites for them to test their loyalty to Him. And upon the discovery of the lack of loyalty in their hearts, to humble them and to make them all the more dependent on His grace, so drawing them closer to Himself. The same applies to us today.
  5. When they grew careless about the lack of loyalty they found in their own hearts; no longer cared about living in covenant with the Lord, and openly embraced the idolatry present among the Canaanites around them, then these very Canaanites became so many thorns and snares to them, torturing and enslaving them. And so it is with our relationship with the Lord and our attitude to the Canaanites around us.

6. Finally the Lord has left Canaanites in the land of our souls and our churches so that every new generation might learn to cultivate a vigilant spirit, and a willingness and ability to fight the Lord's wars. "There must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest among you" 1 Cor 11:19 KJV.

## II. Israel's inward condition.

Much has been said and implied about this already in the above treatment.

- A. Inwardly speaking their hearts were going to be tested regarding their faithfulness and determination to cling to the Lord, and to obey Him. The Canaanite presence was going to be the vehicle of testing. The Canaanite presence in our souls will be the vehicle of testing for us as well.

- B. Inwardly speaking they were going to discover a lack of faithfulness and desire to follow the Lord all the way. On the other hand they were going to discover an attraction to, and an admiration of, and a love for the Canaanites.

This should have set off alarms in their souls, and caused them to humble themselves before the Lord, and say about themselves in NT language: "O wretched man that I am!" Romans 7:24.

It should have sent them running to the Lord to seek His help and grace and forgiveness for the waywardness of their hearts, but it didn't. They would take the liberty to worship and serve the idols of the Canaanites.

All too often our love for the gods of our world keep us from running to the Lord for grace to help in time of need, and we take the liberty to serve the gods of our age just like they did.

- C. Inwardly speaking this results in an estrangement from the Lord. Coldness and distance; spiritual blindness and hardness of heart befall us. "You say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Rev. 17.

Enslavement to the Canaanites would bring out in the open their true condition., and so it does for us.

## III. The Lord's faithfulness.

- A. The Lord's faithfulness is the only explanation there exists for the correlation we observe between a believer's, or a church's, or a nation's inward and outward condition.

The Lord is faithful in two ways:

1. The Lord is faithful to deliver His people over into the hands of their enemies if they forsake Him and give their hearts to serve other gods.
2. The Lord is faithful to restore, and to extend His mercy and grace to the humbled soul that seeks to return to Him.

- B. The book of Judges highlights for us Israel's outward and inward condition, as well as the Lord's faithfulness both ways.

- C. The Lord's table is the place for us where we take inventory of our outward and inward condition; we come with self-examination; we take our rightful place before Him (again), or else we eat and drink judgment to ourselves. And here the Lord shows His faithfulness to us again, both ways.