

Title: God Left Enemies  
Text: Judges 3: 1-11  
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**Judges 3: 1: Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left,...3: *Namely*, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath...5: And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:**

After Joshua died and God took him home, the LORD left enemy nations in the land with the children of Israel. Likewise, after Christ laid down his life and God raised him from the dead, God left many enemies surrounding his children, born of his Spirit.

In those days, the LORD left various kinds of enemies among them. Likewise, in this life, believers have various kinds of enemies. Our new man, created of God, yet dwells in this body of death. "In our flesh dwells no good thing." The flesh is still spiritually dead because of sin. And the lust of our flesh is our own worst enemy. This world is an enemy to the believer. Its vain religion, its riches, its poverty, its many attractions are all enemies to our souls. Unseen enemies—Believers face many enemies that we cannot even see—principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph 6: 12)

On the cross, the Lord Jesus conquered every enemy for his people. He could have destroyed every enemy and delivered us forever all at once. But he did not.

**God Left Enemies—Title.** Why?

**Proposition:** In this life, God left enemies surrounding his children to teach us that we have no strength in ourselves and to teach us that his grace is sufficient for us.

**Divisions:** 1) God left enemies to teach his children war; 2) God left enemies to prove his children; 3) God left enemies to teach his children to continually cast all our care into his hands

**I. GOD LEFT ENEMIES TO TEACH HIS CHILDREN WAR—Judges 3: 1: Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all THE WARS OF CANAAN; 2: Only [for this reason] that the generations of the children of Israel MIGHT KNOW, TO TEACH THEM WAR, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;**

When God first delivered Israel into Canaan, God "cast out seven nations mightier than they." That is what is referred to when it says "the wars of Canaan." The LORD did it! And the LORD did it through Joshua, whose name means Savior. The generation of children born after that Joshua died had heard from their father's about those wars and that God would fight for them now. But they had not experienced those wars themselves; they "knew nothing thereof." So God left enemies in the land, "that the generations of the children of Israel might KNOW, TO TEACH THEM WAR."

**Christ Conquered Our Enemies**

In those wars of Canaan, we have a picture of God casting out our enemies by the hand of Jesus Christ, our great Joshua. On the cross, Christ Jesus accomplished the warfare of every chosen child of God. By bearing our sin in his own body on the tree Christ conquered Satan, Christ conquered the sins of his people, Christ conquered the law for his people, and Christ conquered death for his people. Christ put away our sins, justified us, and Christ is himself the fulfillment of the righteousness of the law for his people.

Romans 8: 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Like this new generation was taught by their fathers about the wars of Canaan, Christ sent his gospel to us and the everlasting Father through the Holy Spirit taught you, believer: taught us that Christ cast out “seven” enemies mightier than we. “Seven” signifying the defeat of all our enemies is “perfect.”

Isaiah 40:2: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.

## **Christ Conquered Us**

And Christ conquered US by his irresistible grace, by creating us anew, we believe on Christ.

Colossians 1: 21: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22: In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard

We must continue in faith, yet, like that new generation in Canaan, though we have been taught, though we have heard, and though we believe—the new believer “knows nothing” of this warfare. We know in doctrine, we know in the heart, we know in spirit, but until we face the enemy, we do not know by experience the reality of the warfare that we are in and the reality of God saving us from every enemy in life.

So God left enemies around us, “that the generations of the children of Israel MIGHT KNOW, TO TEACH THEM WAR.” The life of the believer is not all milk and honey, it is a warfare. And the art of war is best learned by experience.

## **Experiencing the Warfare**

**Illustration:** Running track. You start out running shorter distances. Then increase as your stamina increases. It is the same in this warfare.

Jeremiah 12: 5: If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

How shall you run? Only by God’s grace! So God controls which enemies come up against us at which times. At first, he only allows the less powerful enemies.

For instance, the NEW believer runs to his friends and loved ones, excited to tell them about Christ. Surely, one who has caused your own heart to rejoice will rejoice theirs. Instead, they insult you and your Redeemer. You try to answer their insults but you don’t know how to answer, you get into an argument and act more like a child of hell than a child of God. They end up forsaking you over the gospel. You were defeated. But you learned some things: that the carnal mind really is enmity against God, that you need to study your Redeemer’s word so you can be prepared to speak for him and that you need his constant abiding grace.

We experience many sad defeats—but that is how we learn. The Lord does not give his child more than we can bear. In each lesser trial, God prepares us for the more difficult hardships. Always remember believer, the Lord has left us in this body of death, left us in this world, and we are facing these enemies because God is teaching us war. I’ll say a bit more about that toward the end.

## **II. GOD LEFT ENEMIES TO PROVE HIS CHILDREN—Judges 3: 4: And they were TO PROVE Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.**

When the LORD delivered the children of Israel into Canaan, the LORD gave these commandments by the hand of Moses.

Deuteronomy 7: 2: And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; THOU SHALT smite them, and utterly destroy them; THOU SHALT make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither SHALT THOU make marriages with them; thy daughter THOU SHALT NOT give unto his son, nor his daughter SHALT THOU take unto thy son. 4: For they will TURN AWAY thy son from FOLLOWING ME, that they may SERVE OTHER GODS: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5: But thus SHALL YE deal with them; YE SHALL destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6: For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth. 7: The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: 8: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9: KNOW THEREFORE that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; 10: And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11: THOU SHALT THEREFORE keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee THIS DAY, to do them.

### **The Enemies Worshipped False Gods**

These enemies worshipped gods of their imaginations, the works of their own hands—they worshipped themselves. They were: no different than those who call on a jesus that cannot save unless they let him; no different than those who worship a jesus who died for all men yet cannot save all those they say he died for; no different than a jesus who accomplished nothing by his death unless the sinner makes his work effectual; no different than a jesus who did not perfect forever his people but depends upon the sinner to perfect himself by the deeds of his flesh. They both are idolatrous, will worshippers worshipping the works of their own hands.

Have you ever wondered why heretics like these fill the earth all around us? Here is why. God left them in the land to prove the children of Israel—**Judges 3: 4...whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.**

1 Corinthians 11: 19: For there must be also HERESIS AMONG YOU, that they which ARE APPROVED may be made MANIFEST AMONG YOU.

God already knows them that are his. God knows who are approved because he approved them, washing them in the blood of his Son, accepting them in the Beloved. The heresies are among us that those that are his may be manifest among us.

### **Step-by-Step They Fell Away**

Notice, what the children of Israel did. First, the children of Israel just lived beside their enemies—V6: **And the children of Israel dwelt among** them. They got to know them, and became friendly with them. And those sons of the enemy were some handsome boys and those daughters of the enemy were some good-looking gals. That Israelite son came home and said, “Dad, I want to marry that Canaanite gal!” Dad said, “No son, God said, they will turn away thy son from following me that they may serve other gods.” But then the Israelite daughter came

home and blinked her eyes and said, “Daddy, I want to marry that Jebusite boy!” Dad said, “Well, I guess it will be alright.” Then the Israelite son said, “Well if she can, why can’t I.” And dad caved under the pressure—**V6: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons.** Then that little Israelite daughter brought that first grandbaby home to that new Israelite granddaddy and said, “Dad, you are cordially invited to a sprinkling ceremony over in the First Grove of the Jebusites. Now, daddy, don’t be so old fashioned, come with us, you’ll like their services!” So the Israelite family went with the Jebusite family to church in the grove. And the Israelite family sat there thinking, “This IS nice: lots of shade here in the grove. We get to see the high priests, instead of waiting while they go into the holiest of holies. We even get to participate, instead of depending on that high priest to represent us to God. They make me feel like I’m somebody. I like church in the groves!”—**V7: And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.**

## **Kept by Grace**

Now, the children of Israel were under a covenant of works. They were required to keep those commandments in order to get the favor of God. But in THE DAY God makes his EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE with the believer, we are no longer under the law but under grace. Christ assures the believer he has made us the righteousness of God. He assures us, Christ shall never let the believer go. WE ARE MARRIED TO CHRIST.

Therefore, in each fiery trial, when we are tempted, Christ sends forth the right word, at the right time, he speaks into our hearts. He reminds us once again, you were Gomer—you were espoused to Christ in eternity—but you played the harlot. You said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. For you did not know that Christ gave you the corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied our silver and gold, which you prepared for the gods of your imagination. But Christ hedged up your way with thorns, and made a wall, that you could not find your paths. He took away all that you trusted in and discover your lewdness in the sight of your lovers, and would not let you go. He caused all your joy to cease, took away all our false religion, self-righteousness, and your worldly lovers. Then you found out none of your so-called lovers really loved you at all: he made you to see you are a sinner. But though you were an adulteress, yet Christ loved you, he came and he bought you with his own blood. So Christ allured you, and brought you into the wilderness, and spoke comfortably unto you. Christ said unto you, “Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” (Hosea 2: 1-3: 3)

## **All Through Faith in Christ**

So by his grace working effectually in our hearts, the believer keeps all these commandments given by Moses by keeping the one commandment of grace given to us by God our Father:

1 John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And we even keep his commandment by his grace keeping us. We pass through the fiery trial, when Christ appears in the trial with us. By his grace and power alone we utterly destroy our enemy by trusting Christ to destroy our enemy in our hearts. We make no covenant with our enemy and show no mercy (no compromise with the enemy) by trusting Christ to keep us stayed on him. We enter no marriage covenants with the sons and daughters of our enemy—only by trusting Christ to keep us ever faithful to him according to the everlasting covenant of grace. We destroy the vain altars of our enemy—by abiding in Christ through faith, in whom we are free from the rudiments of this world. Peter said, “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast...HOW?...in the faith...Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” And we also love one another by believing on Christ because through faith in Christ, we show the greatest love we could possibly show to one another. As we hold fast the profession of our faith, we declare to one another that nothing in this world is worth parting from God who loved us in Christ, who chose us in Christ, who made us holy and righteous in Christ, all by his sovereign and free grace. And because we do so by his preserving

grace, we cry, “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.” (Ps 115: 1)

I have been a young, single believer before. It is a great trial of faith to trust and wait on the Lord to send you someone who loves him and delights in his gospel. But remember our Savior promises, “if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.” (Jn 12: 26) Proverbs 27:18: Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured. And remember, it’s not called a trial for nothing. It will be a trial—but remember our sufficiency—look to Christ. O, the joy of a believing spouse!

**III. BRIEFLY, GOD LEFT ENEMIES TO TEACH HIS CHILDREN TO CONTINUALLY CAST ALL OUR CARE INTO HIS HANDS—Judges 3: 8: Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.**

### **Chastened**

Our faithful Father will chasten his child when we turn from him. In their day the Lord sold them, but the faithful heavenly Father will not cast away those for whom Christ died—they are justified—they must be saved. But he will chasten us.

**Illustration:** Forcing something out of my child’s hands.

### **The Deliverer Raised Up**

God will destroy every vain refuge of his child. It may mean great sadness and pain. But he shall bring his child to cry unto the LORD!—**V9: And WHEN the children of Israel CRIED UNTO THE LORD, the LORD RAISED UP A DELIVERER to the children of Israel.** When his child cries unto the LORD, the LORD shall raise up our Deliverer, Christ Jesus the Son of God: raises him up in our hearts, raises him up before us on the cross, raises him up before us on his sovereign throne ruling and reigning on our behalf.

### **Our Enemies Defeated**

Each time he raises up Christ in our hearts before the eye of faith, he defeats our enemies—**V9: WHO DELIVERED THEM, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. 10: And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD DELIVERED Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.**

### **Rest**

Then by his preserving grace, we have rest!—**v11: And the land HAD REST forty years.** And so the end of each trial always proves joyful!

### **Three Lessons We Learn Over and Over**

We as believers never stop learning the same lesson over and over in our warfare, as we are proven in these trials the lesson is threefold.

First, we learn our sufficiency is of God.

Judges 2: 3: Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as THORNS in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh

2 Corinthians 12: 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Each battle in the warfare, each trial teaches the true child of God—our sufficiency is his grace, the power of Christ—when I am weak, then am I strong.

Secondly, we learn the weapons of our warfare are of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6: And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

The obedience of Christ is Christ's own obedience. By God's mighty hand he always, effectually brings the child of God to the feet of Christ to trust his righteousness to be my righteousness in the face of my sin, to trust his faithfulness to keep me and protect me in the face of my unfaithfulness, to use only his gospel and keep my mouth shut in the face of the gainsayers. When God brings us to trust the obedience of Christ, then it is OUR OWN personal disobedience that we are ready to revenge. God makes us to put off our old man, with his vain deeds, and put on Christ.

Thirdly, we learn our armor is of God.

Ephesians 6: 10: Finally, my brethren, be strong IN THE LORD, and in THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. 11: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

May God use these words now, to deliver one of his tried saints.

Amen!