

Cycles of Rescue

(Judges 2:1-23)

Yearly Theme: *“Patience is...”*

Series Title: *“Preserving Patience”*

March 27th, 2022

Something to think about:

Stubbornness. We’ve all been stubborn a time or two in our life. And though, not wrong, in and of itself, stubbornness for the wrong things in life can lead to a lot of heart-ache and pain. As we’ll see in just a moment, stubbornness against GOD’s will and purposes, always leads to bondage.

The Israelites, after having wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, had come into the land of Promise under the leadership of Joshua. After years of conquest and settlement of the land, Joshua died and there was not human leader who succeeded him. GOD was to be their leader, and the priests and Levites would intercede on behalf of the people for their sins. However, over time, generations of Israelites forgot GOD and His commands, and worshiped the gods of the surrounding nations, prostituting themselves to the whims of their sinful desires and selfish ambitions. After destruction and captivity overtook them, GOD would take pity on them and raise up a Judge to bring the people in alignment with His teachings and commands. However, when that Judge died, the downward spiral would continue. The following passage illustrates this clearly. Let’s take a look...

Turn in your Bible to: *Judges 2:1-23*

Biblical scholar and author, Robert Hughes, writes, “Israel’s cycles of apostasy (Judges 2:16–19) always began with a *relapse* into sin, followed by *ruin* and servitude to a foreign power. After crying out to God in *repentance*, the nation would be *restored* through a judge and enjoy a period of *rest*. This cycle, repeated throughout the book of Judges, formed the pattern for Israel’s bondage and deliverance.”¹

Here’s the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: “GOD takes pity on His people by repeatedly rescuing them as they stubbornly rebel against His perfect plan.”

Let’s take a closer look at the various stages of this downward spiral that the Israelites perpetuated over nearly a 300-year time span:

- **Sin**

Judges 2:11-13 (NLT), ¹¹ The Israelites did evil in the LORD’s sight and served the images of Baal. ¹² They abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the LORD. ¹³ They abandoned the LORD to serve Baal and the images of Ashtoreth.

- **Slavery**

Judges 2:14-15 (NLT), ¹⁴ This made the LORD burn with anger against Israel, so he handed them over to raiders who stole their possessions. He turned them over to their enemies all around, and they were no longer able to resist them. ¹⁵ Every time Israel went out to battle, the LORD fought against them, causing them to be defeated, just as he had warned. And the people were in great distress.

- **Sorrow**

Judges 2:18 (NLT), Whenever the LORD raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge’s lifetime. For the LORD took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering.

- **Salvation**

Judges 2:16-19 (NLT), ¹⁶ Then the LORD raised up judges to rescue the Israelites from their attackers. ¹⁷ Yet Israel did not listen to the judges but prostituted themselves by worshiping other gods. How quickly they turned away from the path of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the LORD’s commands.

¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge’s lifetime. For the LORD took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering. ¹⁹ But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

Something to take home:

Where would you find yourself in the following cycle?

1. Sin (Rebellion)
2. Slavery (Repression)
3. Sorrow (Repentance)
4. Salvation (Redemption)

Where do you think we are as a people?... a church?... a nation?

Key Point: “GOD takes pity on His people by repeatedly rescuing them as they stubbornly rebel against His perfect plan.”

How much better would it be if we broke the cycle and stayed focused and centered on GOD’s will for our lives?

¹ Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 99.