

GOD PROVES HIS PEOPLE

Introduction: *Proverbs 7:13*

1. God had commanded His people to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan.
 2. He had promised to help them in this work so long as they faithfully obeyed Him (Exodus 23:22-33).
 3. However, when Israel failed to do what God had instructed, God allowed the Canaanites to remain in the land as a means of testing His people (2:1-3, 20-23).
 4. We need to learn an important lesson from these events – **God proves His people.**
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- I. Tested by the Word (3:4; Numbers 33:51-36)
 - A. The faithfulness of the children of Israel was put to the test by their receiving the Word of God.
 - B. Once they had been given God's commands, they were tested to see if they would obey or disobey.
 - C. We are proved by that same Word of God today.
 1. God's Word commands (1 Corinthians 14:37).
 2. God's Word instructs (2 Timothy 3:15-17).
 3. God's Word disciplines (1 Corinthians 11:28-32; Revelation 3:19).
 - D. Some commands are easier to obey than others, but that is part of the test.

 - II. Tested by War (3:1-3)
 - A. This generation of the Israelites had not been forced to fight for their land and their homes.
 1. They had not learned their complete dependence upon God.
 2. They had not learned the true source of their blessings.
 3. They had not learned the need to defend that which is precious.
 - B. Thus, they needed to be proved by war.
 - C. We are proved by spiritual war today.
 1. There is division because of Christianity (Matthew 10:34-39).
 2. There is conflict between the church and the world (John 16:33).
 3. There are battles with false doctrine and error (1 Corinthians 11:19; Matthew 18:7; 1 John 2:19).
 4. Christians must stand and fight as soldiers in the Lord's army (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:6-8).
 - D. *This is why we study the Restoration Movement...*

 - III. Tested by Wickedness (3:5-8)
 - A. In the days of the judges, the children of Israel lived among the children of the world.
 1. Though they lived among them, they were not to be like them.
 2. Sadly, Israel compromised by adopting the thinking and practices of the Gentiles who were among them.
 3. They even began to intermarry with them.
 - B. The wickedness of the world around the Israelites was meant to test their faith in and obedience to God.

Judges 3:1-8

- C. We also are tested by the wicked world in which we live.
 - 1. We prove ourselves by not conforming (Romans 12:1-2).
 - 2. We are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:14-16).
 - 3. We must overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Conclusion: *Job 23:10*

- 1. God wants our trials and tests to serve as a purifying, refining fire.
- 2. Sadly, the Israelites failed their tests time and again.
- 3. How do we respond to God's Word, to our spiritual warfare, and to a wicked world?