

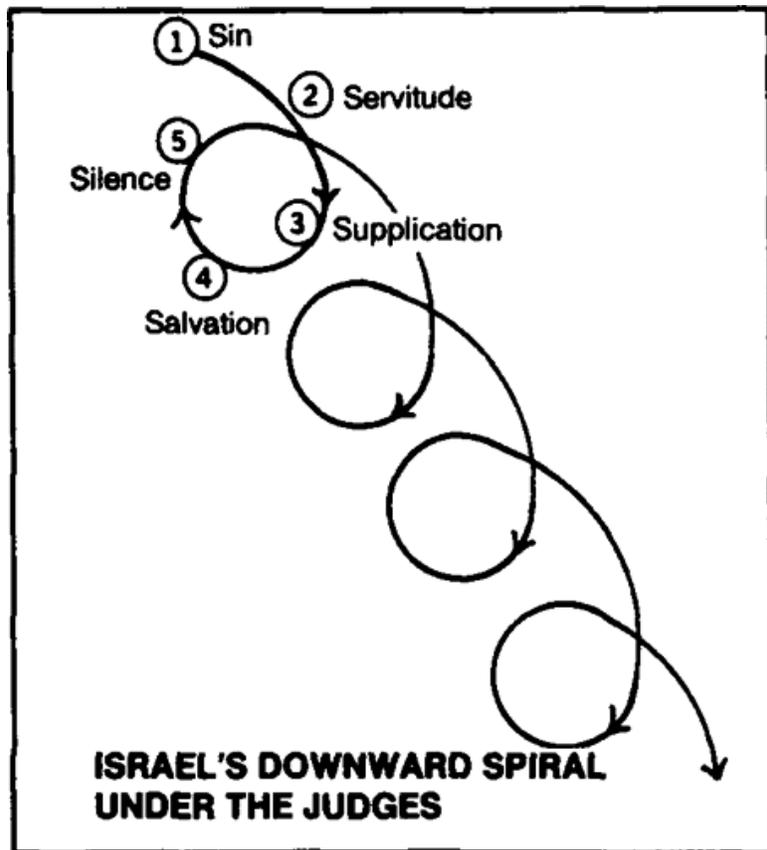
**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
May 2, 2016**

- ✓ **Judges 2:11-3:31.** Israel’s “testing.”
- ✓ **Philippians. 1:12-18.** Paul’s “testing.”
- ✓ **Psalm 63-64.** David’s “testing.”

COMMENTS:

Judges 2:11-3:31. This section begins with the highlighting of Israel’s forsaking the Lord who brought them out of Egypt. Note how they are now worshipping the various gods of the people around them. Man is a creature designed to worship a greater good. If he does not worship the true God, he will worship other gods and things in creation.

Observe the issue of testing again in verse 22: while it says that God tested them, this is only true that in He is in sovereign control and He *permitted* the Canaanites to remain in the land. It is not like God made the Canaanites persecute the Israelites or that He tested/tempted Israel with the Canaanite gods and their sensuous worship. God does not directly test anyone as James 1:13 explicitly avers—along with the warning that the believer should never say God is testing him. However, God does allow evil to play itself out in broken creation. God simply removed His protection from Israel due to their apostasy, which allowed the Canaanites to



tempt and persecute rebellious Israel. God only tested them by allowing evil free will to play out. We see the same thing with Job and David’s numbering of the people. *Again, God is not the Author of evil and does not need evil to obtain a greater good or glory!* Moreover, we can discern at least four reasons God allowed the Canaanite nations to remain in the land: (1) to punish Israel for her apostasy (2:20-21), (2) to allow her to be “tested” regarding their faithfulness (2:22), (3) to use this as an opportunity for Israel to learn warfare (3:2), and (4) to prevent the land from becoming a wilderness (Deut. 7:20-24). As we have studied, we need to make a distinction between the reason for something and a purpose. To posit that it was *all* God’s purpose is to say that God made the Israelites forsake God and made the Canaanites

worship hideous gods so in the end and for the purpose of testing Israel. What an unbiblical and hideous view of God as it would make Him the Author of Evil even if to bring a greater good out of it. In sum, God allows evil to play out in terms of testing, but as James says God does not directly test or tempt His people. Also as James says, a dominant source of testing is man's own lustful nature—not God! God never needs evil testing in any way. And as a matter of history, this testing really did not solve the spiritual problems of the Israelites. Would not the Israelites have a much better spiritual life simply by living for the Lord rather than needing testing due to evil thinking? Which would really be more effective in their spiritual lives: walking with the Lord without the need of evil testing or going through evil testing to wake them up regarding their apostasy?

Philippians. 1:12-18. We see divine providence at work in verses 12-14 in that while Paul was imprisoned, which would normally hinder the spread of one's ministry, his ministry was actually enhanced by the fact that the "whole palace guard" as well as others were hearing about Jesus Christ. Although Satan and evil Romans has sought to silence the Truth, it actually encouraged believers to speak more courageously and fearlessly about Jesus Christ (14)—even if some did not preach Christ out of pure motives (15-16). Again, in keeping with our theme of testing, God did not test Paul: He did not make the Romans hate the Truth and throw Paul in prison. God *allowed* these malefactors to incarcerate Paul, but what they intended *for evil* God used for good. Again, we must make a distinction between the reason Paul was in prison (evil, truth-hating Romans) and what God can do about it: turn it all into a blessing by infusing His grace in the situation, a grace that is always far more powerful than any detail of life, even the detail of a dark Roman dungeon, which generally ended with blood.

Psalms 63-64. In Psalm 63 we see David's love for the Lord described in terms of thirst of his soul for God. Because of his thirst for God, he wrote "earnestly I seek You." Such longing included such things as God's power and glory. He thanks God for His grace and anticipates God's victory over his enemies. In Psalm 64 David prays for God's judgment on the enemies of the righteous and protection for himself. He then delineates their malicious plans against the righteous. He was convinced that God would turn these schemes on the wicked themselves. These malicious schemes certainly were tests for David. But are they from God? Yes and no! Yes, in that God permitted them. No, in that God is *not* the direct source of testing—unless one is willing to move into such incoherency as to posit that God made these evildoers come up with malicious plans so that God could then turn the plans against the wicked. Throughout all of these psalms of David that record various tests he faced, he clearly recognizes that the trials were from evildoers, not from God. David knew that God only brings good. It was to God as Goodness that David turned, not to a God who brings evil testing in order to get him to see God's goodness in delivering him. This may be the way the Calvinist *chooses* to view God, but it should not be the perspective of the Whole Truth believer.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don