

ESCAPE SPIRITUAL LIES, TRAPS AND TRAUMAS—*OUTLINE*

Tamperproof Your Soul—Psalm 106:35-36

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OPPRESSORS IN THE LAND**I. Understanding the Old Testament's Insights into the Spiritual Realm**

Not only does the Old Testament provide us with historical parallels to our life-experience, giving us understanding about the swirl of sinful tendencies and demonic activities in which we live, it also lays out the spiritual laws that govern the cosmos, both in the heavens and the earth.

In addition to being a precise narration that chronicles God's dealings with His people—both as a nation and as individuals—the Old Testament provides us with profound insights into the goings-on in the spiritual dimension. The stories and conversations it contains are “*written for our instruction*” for our spiritual walk (1 Corinthians 10:11), so we are invited to read the episodes not merely to glean an accurate glimpse of history, but also to extract principles and understanding about the invisible realm.

A. Making Current Correlations—Not just Historical Characters.

1. Moses: a deliverer.
2. Attempting to do God's will by our own hand.

B. Lucifer: Our Adversary. (1 Peter 5:8 & Ephesians 6:12)

1. Pride and rebellion—questioned God's motives and goodness.
2. Still seeks to destroy us.
3. Nehemiah's struggle with his adversaries—Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem.
4. Demonic forces—not “spooky”—they drag us into confusion, agitation.

II. Judges 1 & 2

Judges describes the *wild-west* days in Israel's history, but it also gives us profound insight into patterns of God's dealings with His people and the enemy's ploys among us. The most apparent theme is a cycle with which you and I are quite familiar! **Disobedience** leads to **oppression**; oppression brings **misery**; misery eventually leads to **repentance**; and repentance enables **forgiveness** from the Lord followed by **deliverance** from the enemy.

A. Context—Joshua and an Entire Generation Had Died.

1. Israel had not driven the enemy completely out of the land. (Vs. 1:28)
2. This generation had not witnessed God's work on behalf of their ancestors. (Vs. 2:10)
3. They were bowing down to gods of the culture surrounding them. (Vs. 2:12)
4. As a result, God left them on their own to be ruled over by their enemies. (Vs. 2:14)

B. Description of Oppression.

1. God's people were being plundered (destroyed, robbed, despoiled, pillaged). (Vs. 2:14)
2. The enemy makes people smaller or less than God intended.
3. "They could no longer stand before their enemies." (Vs. 2:14)
4. Temptations and addictions rule over them.
5. "They were severely distressed" (bound, tied up, restricted, cramped). (Vs. 2:15)
6. "They did not listen to their judges." (Vs. 2:17)
7. They were oppressed (squeezed, crushed, forced, afflicted & disillusioned). (Vs. 2:18)

III. Adversaries to Our Rebuilding

A. The Invisible Dimension—Beneath the Surface.

1. Biblical parallel with archaeology.

- a. Present day people inherit ancestral “devastations of many generations” from ancient civilizations. (Isaiah 61:4)
- b. Rebuild lives now from the ruins of the past.

IV. Ezra 3-6: Exodus of Exiles—Rebuild the Temple

Ezra depicts the plight of a conquered, broken people who long to worship God in full freedom; though it ends victoriously with the rebuilt Temple, it gives us glimpses of the kinds of opposition people face when they move toward full spiritual restoration. Their enemies employ **discouragement**, **frustration** and **accusation** to stop the repairs, but because of prophetic words, the work resumed after having dwindled to a barely half-hearted semblance of labor.

Two different men, first Zerubbabel then Ezra, provided necessary leadership to the people. Then it took a third, Nehemiah, to oversee the rebuilding of the city walls years later. Our rebuilding (life) doesn't depend on only one person.

A. 70 Years of Captivity—Time Period Ordained by God.

1. False teaching to insist on deliverance when we want it.
2. Believe for God's intervention—trust His timing.

B. Restoration Begins with Altar on the Foundation.

1. The Holy Spirit dwells in our spirit—innermost part of us (altar).
2. Become a person of worship & praise—willingness: answer to discouragement.

C. Oppression During Rebuilding.

1. People terrified—dread, all consuming.
2. Enemies offered partnership.
 - a. “Society/culture” offers help that may not be based on the truth of God.
 - b. Hired counselors to frustrate good counsel—accusations.

- c. “Counsel shop”—tell me what I want to hear.
- d. Discouraged—weakened, made inactive and alone/not possessed, but hassled.

D. Counter-Measures.

- 1. Be willing to give your life away.
- 2. Pay close attention to prophetic words.

v. Carvings of the Gods—in Whose Name?

Of course, the most obvious reason why we should not have any other gods before the Lord is because it is wrong; He is the true God and our worship belongs to Him. “He jealously desires [dotes upon, yearns for] the spirit He has caused to dwell in us” (James 4:5). It’s a love thing! God wants to possess us, but God’s love also wants to protect us from certain cause/effects that will have detrimental power over us. Idols are dangerous; their physical form (wood or metal carved in some image) is nothing, just a piece of this world; but behind idols are demonic forces that prompt people to acts of worship.

A. God Wants Us for Himself and He Wants to Protect Us from Idols’ Power. (James 4:5)

- 1. We either worship God or idols. (1 John 5:21; Romans 12:1-2)
 - a. Worship = praise, serve, to be in bondage to: a slave.
 - b. Anything to which we give time, energy or resources will make us serve it.
 - c. Worship shapes or carves us.
 - i) When we worship and serve God, we become like Him.
 - ii) “Serve” (consumed by thoughts of) anger, rage, resentment, or rejection—they become engraved in us.

B. Psalm 106—Our Ancestors Lives Parallel Ours Today.

- 1. We have sinned like our fathers—story of Pharaoh. (Vs. 6)

2. “He saved them from the hand of the one who hated them...and redeemed them... The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them was left.” (Vs.10-11)
 - a. Parallel with Colossians 1: 13-14 (baptism).

VI. Snares of the Idols

“But they mingled with the nation and learned their practices, and served [came in bondage to, became bond-servants of, were compelled by, performed acts of worship to] their idols, which became a snare to them.” (Psalm 106:35-36)

We may be bored by history lessons that seem to have little relevance to today’s world, but when a seasoned river-guide relates the story of a catastrophic spill from a raft that took place years ago when white-water thrill seekers steered too close to the outcropping on the south side of the river, we pay attention—especially when we find ourselves on the south side near that very stone jutting from the grey granite!

- A. The Nature of a Snare that Idols Give Us.
- B. Paul Alerts Timothy to the Snares of the People During His Time. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)
 1. We are offered escape (and offer escape to others) by way of repentance.
- C. Law of Atonement. (Leviticus 16 & 17)
 1. “Goat demons”—scapegoat. (Leviticus 17:7)
- D. Understanding Traps or Snares.
 1. Peddler offering pots, pans, curios—the latest thing.
 - a. Demonic “peddlers” come to us saying, “You need what I have.”
 - b. Suggestions, conclusions, vows.
 - c. Drag us into living/behaving in the manner it dictates.
 - i) Betrayal: vow to “never trust anyone again.”

- d. Vows can become self-fulfilled—if you never find trustworthy people, *you* become untrustworthy.
 - i) Resentment; when you rehearse an injury or insult.
 - ii) Trap = pain starts it and then perpetuates it, like wood that feeds a fire.

E. They Didn't Wait [settle into] for God's Counsel. (Psalm 106:13-15)

1. Will God give me what I want?
 - a. Wait for God's plan and timing without craving what I want.
2. Aaron and Marion envious of Moses. (Psalm 106:16)
 - a. Moses was the most-humble man on the face of the earth.
 - b. People didn't respect his "headship."
3. "They made a calf...and worshipped a molten image." (Vs.19)
 - a. The people were tired of waiting.
 - b. They asked Aaron to make a god to do "their will."
 - i) False gods cost people a lot of pain.
 - ii) They exchanged the glory of God.

VII. How Could A Good God Do That?

A. A. God's Witness to the World.

1. New Testament: individual believers as ambassadors.
2. Old Testament: nation of Israel—Jews as the example (Isaiah 60:3, Deut. 4:1-8).

B. B. God's Character.

1. Old Testament: God seems harsh and vindictive.
2. New Testament: God seems more merciful, loving and forgiving.
 - a. God's mercy in the Old Testament was to remove what was bad, in order to protect His people Israel.
 - b. God's mercy in the New Testament does this for individuals.

C. Life-Saving Immune System.

1. God's heart is to remove danger from us, not in anger, but in mercy. (1 Corinthians 10: 11)

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds." (Psalm 145:17)

"...With the Lord there is loving-kindness, and with Him is abundant redemption."
(Psalm 130:7)

2. Example of Adam and Even being sent out of the garden.

D. "They Despised the Pleasant Land...and Did Not Believe...But Grumbled." (Psalm 106: 24-25)

1. Check out the land.
 - a. Caleb and Joshua: good report.
 - b. The other ten: scared, negative, natural view.

2. There is forgiveness, but still consequences.

E. "They Joined Themselves to Baal-Peor." (Psalm 106:28-31 and Numbers 22-25)

1. The Moabites and Midianites opposed the Israelites; they called on Balaam to curse Israel.
2. Men were sexually enticed and then fell into worshiping false gods.
 - a. Israel weeping over their sin.

- b. Phineas introduced atonement and stopped the plague.
3. Numbers 31 and Revelation 2 tell us the rest of the story, offering the big picture.