

# God's Chastening Love

## Judges 2:14-23

*Judges*


Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, September 29, 2013, 5pm at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

“We often learn more of God under the rod that strikes us than under the staff that comforts us.”

STEPHEN CHARNOCK

- SIGN UP FOR COUNSELING CONFERENCE. \$150 FOR THREE SATURDAYS. \$275 FOR COUPLES. 20% DISCOUNT. \$120 FOR INDIVIDUALS AND \$220 FOR COUPLES.

 Open your Bible to **Judges 2:14-23**. We are continuing in a series the book of Judges entitled, “Standing Strong in a Pluralistic Culture.” This evening we are looking a message entitled: “God’s Chastening Love.”<sup>1</sup>

### I. The Burning **Anger** of the Lord (14-17)

#### God’s Response: His Nose Burned with Fury

How does God respond to idolatry? Judges 2:14a, “So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.” His fury literally “burned” against His children. Literally it says, “With fury, burned His nose – YHWH - against Israel! (לִישָׂרָאֵל בְּאַף יְהוָה). God was so angry he was breathing fire. That’s a terrifying picture!

God is angry when people in his world set other things in his place. His anger is not against a particular people group or type (here, He is angry with his own people).

#### Anger is Not Always the Opposite of Love

Anger is not always the opposite of love; it can be the outworking of it. God here is like a parent whose child has completely rejected them. So, as a result of Israel’s rebellion and God’s anger, there is oppression by enemies:

#### Whom the Lord Loves He Chastens

What does the Bible say about the love of God? God is love. His love cannot be measured – nothing can separate you from the love of Christ. He’s loved you with an everlasting love. What else? Whom God loves He... spoils? No, He chastens. God’s anger is often out of love. **Hebrews 12:6-11**, “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had

<sup>1</sup> A few of the ideas and material in this message is directly from Timothy Keller, *Judges For You* (God's Word For You) The Good Book Company.

earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

### **Extravagant Grace**

D.A. Carson notes: “the expression of divine fury must be interpreted against the background of extravagant demonstrations of grace in the past.”<sup>2</sup>

### **God’s Chastening Meant to Chip Us into Christ’s Image**

Jerry Bridges in his book *Trusting God* says this: “The author of Hebrews readily admits that discipline is painful (Heb. 10:11). But He also assures us it is profitable. It produces “a harvest of righteousness and peace.” The purpose of God’s discipline is not to punish us but to transform us. He has already meted out punishment for our sins on Jesus at Calvary: “The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him” (Isaiah 53:5). But we must be transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ. That is the purpose of discipline.”<sup>3</sup>

### **God is Passionate for His People**

**Judges 2:14**, “So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.”

Yahweh is a passionate God; he cannot stand idly by while other divine competitors snatch his people from him. Nor can he passively accept his own people’s adulterous affairs with other gods. Yahweh’s expression of anger against his people is described in the form of two roughly parallel statements:

*He gave them into the power of plunderers;  
He sold them into the power of their enemies.*<sup>4</sup>

Don’t miss the irony here: these enemies are the very people whose gods Israel has chosen to serve. If there were ever a historical picture of the truth that idolatry leads to slavery, this is it.

### **God’s Hammer**

This is quite shocking. We don’t know exactly who these plunderers were, but the effect is clear. God is using Israel’s enemies as His own hammer. So the one standing against them was not the pagan nations. God was actually using the pagan nations to humble Israel and woo her back to Him. We see this clearly in **Judges 2:15a**, “Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm [to defeat them], as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them.”

### **Israel’s “Enemy” is Actually YHWH**

---

<sup>2</sup> Block, D. I. (1999). *Judges, Ruth* (Vol. 6, p. 126). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Jerry Bridges. *Trusting God*, 1988, NavPress, 121.

<sup>4</sup> Block, 126-127.

So God is really the “enemy” that Israel is fighting against, not the pagan nations. God actually said He would be their enemy back in **Deuteronomy 31:16–21**, “And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. 17 Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ 18 And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.”” In the next verses, God actually had Moses teach Israel a song to warn them about how they would one day depart from Him and serve other gods. How God lovingly gives His children warnings! We ought to listen to Him!

### **The People in Great Distress!**

Next follows **repentance** (2:15b): “And they were in terrible distress.” As we’ll see, this distress caused the people to cry out to the Lord (3:9). And so finally, God “raised up judges, who saved them” (2:16). The Lord sent his salvation through a chosen leader, who liberated the people from their slave-masters and returned the land to peace (v 18).

### **Stephen Charnock Quote**

God’s daily chastening of us is so vital. Stephen Charnock, the great Puritan theologian said: “We often learn more of God under the rod that strikes us than under the staff that comforts us.”

### **The Awful Whoring of Our Hearts**

But the judge’s leadership was not heeded in any kind of lasting way—Look at **Judges 2:17**, “they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way [of obedience]” (v 17).

Now before you go judging Israel, when is the last time you covenanted with God to grow and change, but before you knew it you turned your back on Him? It could have been through:

- An unkind word to a loved one in your family or at church
- A time you fell, allowing yourself to be carried away with anger, lust, covetousness, jealousy, bitterness or hurt.
- A time you lost patience with someone – could be a co-worker, children, a parent or a spouse.
- A time you wasted time with media and had a love affair with this world.

What is amazing here is not the rebellion of the people. What is amazing is God’s patience in Israel’s downward spiral.

## **II. The Burning Compassion of the Lord (18-23)**

### **The Burning Compassion of God**

Judges 2:18-19, “Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD

was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. 19 But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways” (v 19).

### **God’s Whip (Spurgeon Quote)**

CH Spurgeon said it this way: “No matter how dear you are to God, if pride is harbored in your spirit, He will whip it out of you. They that go up in their own estimation must come down again by His discipline.”

### **Conclusion**

So we are left with this dismal conclusion in Judges 2:20-23, “So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did, or not.” 23 So the Lord left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.”

The thorns dug deeper and deeper; the snares pulled Israel more and more tightly. We will see as Judges progresses that the rebellion becomes **worse**, the oppression **heavier**, the repentance **less heartfelt**, the judges themselves more flawed, and the salvation and “revivals” they bring **weaker**. It is a reminder, of course, that we need something better than a human judge; something more permanent than a leader who dies; something that can deliver the soul, as well as the body. We will not find such a rescuer in the book of Judges!

### **The Judges Cycle in Your Life**

How have you seen the “Judges cycle” in your own Christian life? How does the reality of your sin and of God’s grace prompt you to praise and thank him today? Isn’t God patient, gracious, and forbearing with us?! What a joy!

### **Application & Conclusion**

As we conclude, let me ask you a few questions.

How have do you need to readjust your thinking when it comes to God’s anger?

### **God’s Anger and Compassion Reflected**

God is angry at times, and so ought we to be angry with an anger that flows out of jealous compassion for those in the Body. We ought to be jealous that no cancer come into the Body of Christ. We ought to have the gentleness of dove and the fierce heart of a lion.

Look at how Paul says we should deal with anger in Ephesians 4:26–32, “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

We ought to have the jealous anger of a mother protecting her children.

**Isaiah 43:4**

“Because you are precious in my eyes,  
and honored, and I love you,  
I give men in return for you,  
peoples in exchange for your life.”

Your anger should always turn out for the other persons good, not for punishment.  
Vengeance is the Lord's!

**Reflecting on the Good Chastening of God**

Jonathan Edwards was one of the godliest men we can think of. Yet he was kicked out of his church for taking a stand for regeneration (against the Halfway Covenant) and he died from a vaccination at the tender age of 55 before he would become the president of Princeton College (now University).

Sarah Edwards on hearing that her husband died:

‘What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had him [her husband] so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband , and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be’<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Murray, Iain. *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2002. 442.