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# WHY SOME ENEMIES REMAIN

## Long-Term Resistance

by Daniel A. Brown, PhD

*“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.” ~ Joshua 3:3-4*

Frequently in the scriptures we will find God giving people reasons why He does certain things. Remembering that His plans are very deep—not readily understandable by looking on the surface of things. We should pay special attention to His explanations about why He does what He does. Looking at such situations in the Old Testament gives us understanding for our own life.

Take, for instance, God’s decision to allow certain nations to keep living in the land He had promised to Israel. On the one hand, He had told His people to drive all nations out of Canaan, yet on the other, it seems like God was contradicting Himself by allowing the Philistines, the Sideonians and the Hivites to remain.

As with all such seeming contradictions, we must examine the context (i.e. what has just been going on). Under Joshua, the people of God had entered the Promised Land and conquered 31 foreign city-states. But Joshua and all his generation had died, and there arose a new generation after them that did not know the Lord, or of the work which He had done for Israel (Judges 2:10).

This new generation turned away from the Lord and did things they should not have done. Their rebellion took them out from under God’s protection, and they ended up in bondage to plunderers who robbed, destroyed and ruined their inheritance. God wanted Israel to understand that these nations were their enemies—people to resist, not people to accommodate.

In our own life there may be issues or temptations that seem to persist no matter what we do to rid ourselves of them. Wrong thoughts lurk in the shadows; inappropriate responses beckon to us; we

keep coming up against the same struggles. Why? Why are there some struggles that seem to last for years? Why can't we defeat and immediately dismiss certain enemies to our soul?

Sometimes the answer is because God wants to test us to see whether we will follow His truth even when it is a struggle to do so. Will we resist the temptation and refuse to follow its suggestion? Or will we give in to what it wants us to do?

God wants us to learn how to effectively battle enemies of our soul. Not all wars are decided by one or two fights. Sometimes we are only victorious after a protracted campaign against our adversaries.

The fact that we have to keep on resisting certain temptations is not necessarily a statement of our failure to overcome them. Actually, the fact that we are still resisting a long-term temptation is proof that we have decided to obey the commandments of the Lord even when it is very hard to do so.

Are there enemies still in my Land? Yes. Does that mean that I have been defeated or compromised? No. It means I have a long fight on my hands.