

Explore the Bible: July 30

Worthy • Jeremiah 35:5-19

By Don Schuman



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Jeremiah 35 is about tests that prove the worthiness of people based on their faith and faithfulness to God. Some were tested and found faithful, while their faith also exposed the lack of faith in others.

Tested (Jeremiah 35:5-11). The descendants of Rechab were tested regarding their faithfulness to the will of the Lord concerning their family, and they passed the test. Their

father, Jonadab, taught them well.

The Lord Jesus Christ set the perfect example of obedience to the Father for us. He was tested throughout His life, particularly in the wilderness and during His crucifixion. He overcame the tempter with the Word of God and lived to fulfill the will of God the Father (John 5:30).

When we follow His example of obedience to the Father, Jesus said we would be "His brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

Although we may have theological differences, believers can learn from other denominations concerning things such as worship styles, temperance, appearance, and personal devotion. The aim is to draw nearer to God daily and be examples of Christ-like living, just as the Rechabites were examples of following the ways of God.

Life is filled with tests of faith. God's Word has clear answers to the problems. Sadly, too many people disregard the righteous answers and their lives record the hard consequences of disobedience.

Contrasted (Jeremiah 35:12-17). Most teachers can distinguish between students who struggle with a subject versus students who will not listen. The people of Jerusalem were the students who would not listen to the Word of the Lord.

The Lord had sent prophet after prophet, warning after warning, instruction after instruction, yet the people would not listen. An exasperated teacher today in such a situation might say, "Look! We've been over this and over this! Why don't you get it?"

The problems with the people of Judah were false prophets who contradicted the true Word of God, and hearts so full of unbelief that they could not discern true prophets from false prophets.

Unlike the Rechabites, who had chosen a difficult life of tent-dwelling and obedience to God, the people of Judah had chosen what they thought was the easy life of trusting their own ways. They would learn that their ways were not easy ways after all.

Another type of test is a medical exam, which is in the diagnostic category. Temperature, blood pressure, heart beat/pattern, and blood samples commonly indicate the condition of the body. The results of medical tests can prompt a course of action to get the body into a healthy state again.

The Word of God examines our spiritual condition. It exposes sin but also supplies the course of action – repentance and faith.

Commended (Jeremiah 35:18-19). The Lord through Jeremiah commended the faithfulness of the Rechabites and declared that descendants of Jonadab will stand before Him forever.

Life in Christ is also described in the New Testament as a contest. Hebrews 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 compare living by faith to running a race. We run to obtain an incorruptible crown and with patience, setting aside every hindrance and sin that could easily beset us.

God's work in and through the Gentiles should have prompted the Jews to trust in Christ and live for Him. Romans 9 and 10 show that salvation has come to the Gentiles to motivate the Jews to faith in Christ.

An example of great faith that should have inspired the Jews to similar faith is found in Matthew 8:5-13. A Roman centurion approached Jesus on behalf of a sick servant. He didn't consider himself worthy of much of Jesus' time so he requested that Jesus just say the word, knowing by faith the authority and power of Christ would be enough to heal the servant.

Jesus announced that the faith of the centurion, a Gentile,

was greater than anyone in all Israel. What a commendation by the Master! The one who felt unworthy before Christ was found worthy of a miracle at his request, and the servant was healed that same hour according to the centurion's faith.

Believers are called to live in the world without the world living in us. God's Word calls for us to be holy. That is, separate unto the Lord. Although we are unworthy of God's marvelous love and grace, we complete the tests of faith to be found worthy of the words from our Lord: *Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joys of your Lord! (Matthew 25:21).*

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