

## Sunday Night Message

June 17, 2018

Judges 3 – *Judges One Through Three*

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 3

### Introduction (Judges 3:1 – 6)

In chapter three, we will meet Israel's first three judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. Before we are introduced to these three judges, however, we will be reminded of Israel's failure to drive out all of the Canaanites, and what would be the consequences of their negligence.

In v. 3 we see the five Lords of the Philistines, which inhabited the southern coastal cities of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza.

Practical Point – We live in a world that is filled with evil, but we must drive out the evil from our own personal world by living a separated life. We cannot and should not isolate ourselves from the people of the world, but we must separate from the godless practices and philosophies of this world. Christian, your job is to influence this world for Christ; you are to make Christ look good. Unfortunately, for most Christians, their lack of separation from the world is literally destroying them.

After Israel's initial failure to remove the Canaanites, God stated that He was going to allow these godless nations to stay in the land, to prove or test the Israelites. The people of God were going to have to learn to live among these heathen nations, without participating in their sin. However, as we see in v. 6, the people of Israel failed the test.

The people intermarried with other nations, which was strictly prohibited:

"And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell." (Genesis 24:3)

*"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."* (Genesis 26:34-35)

*"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods."* (Exodus 34:14-16)

Turn to 1 Kings 11:1 – 13 – Solomon made this same mistake.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 18 for the New Testament parallel.

According to McArthur, idol worship in Israel quickly took root.

El was the supreme Canaanite deity, a god of uncontrolled lust and a bloody tyrant, as shown in writings found at Ras Shamra in N Syria. His name means “strong, powerful.” Baal, son and successor of El, was “lord of heaven,” a farm god of rain and storm, his name meaning “lord, possessor.” His cult at Phoenicia included animal sacrifices, ritual meals, and licentious dances. Chambers catered to sacred prostitution by men and women (cf. 1 Kin. 14:23, 24; 2 Kin. 23:7). Anath, sister-wife of Baal, also called Ashtoreth (Astarte), patroness of sex and war, was called “virgin” and “holy” but was actually a “sacred prostitute.”<sup>1</sup>

These Canaanite nations were then going to be used by God to chasten the people of Israel for their failure.

Charles Spurgeon said that God never allows His people to sin successfully. Their sin will either destroy them or it will invite the chastening hand of God. If the history of Israel teaches the contemporary church anything it’s the obvious lesson that “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34)<sup>2</sup>

## I **Othniel (Judges 3:7 – 11)**

The first judge that we meet in the Judges is Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. No doubt, by this time Caleb is dead. Caleb was part of that first generation that served the Lord. (Judge 2:7 – 10) Othniel was part of the next generation, “*which knew not the Lord.*” (Judges 2:10)

We already met Othniel in Joshua 15:13 – 19.

Here the Bible says that the people:

“did evil in the sight of the Lord”

“forgot the Lord their God”

“served Baalim” – Baalim and Baal are used interchangeably (see Judges 2:13; 6:25, 28 – not to be confused with Balaam who was the one who tried to curse Israel for Balak back in the Book of Numbers)

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). The MacArthur Study Bible (electronic ed., p. 338). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). Be available (p. 25). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

“served the groves” – some say the Hebrew word for “groves” (Ashera) is the name for an Phoenician goddess who was the consort of Baal.

Notice v. 8: God “sold them” (see also 2:14; 4:2; 10:7; also 1 Samuel 12:9; 1 Kings 21:20, 25; Psalm 44:12) The people were acting as slaves; they were in bondage to their sin, and God sold them as slaves. They were then in bondage to the king of Mesopotamia for eight years.

The name Chushanrishathaim means “twice wicked Cushan” – a name which may have been given him by his enemies.

In v. 9 – the word “deliverer” means “savior”. God raised up these judges to help Israel when they were without hope.

Notice v. 10 – *“the Spirit of the Lord came upon him”* – this is different from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

*“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”* (Ephesians 1:12-14)

According to McArthur:

Certain judges were expressly said to have the Spirit of the Lord come upon them (6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14); others apparently also had this experience. This is a common OT expression signifying a unique act of God which conferred power and wisdom for victory. But this did not guarantee that the will of God would be done in absolutely all details, as is apparent in Gideon (8:24–27, 30), Jephthah (11:34–40), and Samson (16:1).<sup>3</sup>

Notice, for a time, Israel had rest (40 years)

## II Ehud (Judges 3:12 – 30)

Notice here that Israel was in bondage for eighteen years, so the bondage was longer by ten years this time.

Notice in v. 15 Israel’s judge was from Benjamin, whereas before with Othniel, who was from Judah.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 340). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

In v. 16 – this word (gomed) is not the usual Hebrew word for cubit, which is “ammah”. Some say that this blade was less than the typical 18 inch cubit, and may have only been 9 – 12 inches.

Ehud, being left-handed, hid the dagger on his right side. Interestingly, many from Benjamin were left-handed:

*"And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war." (Judges 20:15-17)*

*"Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war. They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin." (1 Chronicles 12:1-2)*

In v. 17 – “present” tax money and perhaps produce.

In v. 20 – “summer parlour” – a windowed room on the flat roof, which was able to catch the breezes.

In v. 22 – “dirt” means “feces” or “excrement”

In v. 24 – “covereth his feet” – euphemism for relieving himself.

In v. 30, we see that Israel rested for 80 years. Keep in mind, there were overlaps in both areas and chronology in the judges.

### **III Shamgar (Judges 3:31)**

According to Ryrie:

An *ox goad* might have been as long as eight ft (2.4 m) with a spoke on one end and a chisel-shaped blade on the other. Normally used for cleaning a plow, it substituted nicely for a spear.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ryrie, C. C. (1994). *Ryrie study Bible: King James Version* (Expanded ed., p. 385). Chicago: Moody Press.