

# OTHNIEL, EHUD, AND SHAMGAR, JUDGES OF ISRAEL

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Judges 3:1-31

LESSON 189 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles" (Job 11:14)..

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Judges 3:1-31

<sup>1</sup> Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, *even* as many of *Israel* as had not known all the wars of Canaan;

<sup>2</sup> Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;

<sup>3</sup> *Namely*, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

<sup>4</sup> And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

<sup>5</sup> And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

<sup>6</sup> And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

<sup>7</sup> And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.

<sup>9</sup> And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

<sup>10</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD came

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### I Othniel

1 Some nations of Canaan are left to prove Israel, Judges 3:1-4'

2 Israel is sold into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, Judges 3:5-8 3 Othniel delivers Israel, Judges 3:9-11

### II Ehud

1 Israel serves Moab, Judges 3:12-14

2 Ehud subdues Moab, Judges 3:15-30

### III Shamgar

1 Shamgar delivers Israel from the Philistines, Judges 3:31

## NOTES:

### Proving Ground

"Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them." One might be inclined to wonder why God would leave these heathen people who would be a snare and temptation to Israel. Why would He allow a tempter to enter the Garden of Eden? We might consider it an obstacle course for the training of soldiers. At first the course is very difficult, but by going over the ground and making the hurdles the soldier becomes hardened and better able to meet the problems that arise.

Gold is purified by fire. It is said that timber grows stronger on the storm-swept hills than it does in protected valleys. Work hardens muscles. And faith, as well as muscles, can be exercised and tried. Peter tells us: "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory" (1 Peter 1:6, 7). Strong Christians are those who have been tried.

Patience, also, is developed through trials, for we read that "the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3). The Bible also states: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12). It is a good thing for the Christians to remember in the midst of trials that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). This will give him courage, strength, and fortitude in times of trials, that he may come forth as gold tried in the fire.

### Compromises

"The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites . . . and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods." First, the Children of Israel began to transgress by dwelling among the Canaanites, then by mixing with them, and finally by serving their gods.

Compromise often starts with small issues. A little letdown here, a dropping of the standard there, and then the world of sin comes in, Christian principles are lost, and the gods of this world are wholly served.

There are those who would unite all religions under one head. They seek to find common grounds on which all can get together. Any such movement calls for a compromise of doctrine and the Biblical standards, and is contrary to the will of God. The Law demanded: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy

upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.

<sup>11</sup> And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

<sup>12</sup> And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

<sup>13</sup> And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

<sup>14</sup> So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

<sup>15</sup> But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

<sup>16</sup> But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

<sup>17</sup> And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon *was* a very fat man.

<sup>18</sup> And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.

<sup>19</sup> But he himself turned again from the quarries that *were* by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.

<sup>20</sup> And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of *his* seat.

<sup>21</sup> And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:

<sup>22</sup> And the haft also went in after the

friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods . . . thou shalt surely kill him" (Deuteronomy 13:6, 9). Paul the Apostle took as emphatic a stand in a spiritual sense, against those that would pervert the Gospel of Christ. He said: "But though we, .or an angel from, heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

### The First Judge

When Israel obeyed God there was not a man able to stand before them; but when they sinned, God sold them into the hands of their enemies. The first foreign invasion of their land was by the king of Mesopotamia, a country several hundred miles to the north and east of Palestine. For eight years the Children of Israel were oppressed by this foreign power until the Israelites cried unto the Lord. It was then that God raised up the first judge, Othniel, the nephew of Caleb.

Caleb was that intrepid man of God who, with Joshua, had brought back a good report of Canaan to Moses. Ten of the spies had said: "The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there" (Numbers 13:28). But Caleb was of another spirit. He wanted to go in and possess the land. Yes, and forty years later, at the age of eighty-five, Caleb asked for Mount Hebron for his inheritance. Mount Hebron, where the sons of Anak dwelt, was a challenge to the faith and courageous spirit of this man of God.

Caleb's nephew, Othniel, had some of the same spirit that was so commendable in Caleb. When Caleb said, "He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife" (Judges 1: 12), Othniel took the city. When the Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel he went to war and delivered Israel from the king of Mesopotamia. God was with Othniel, and the land had rest for forty years.

### A Cry for Mercy

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel." How different might have been the history of Israel! "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deuteronomy 32:29). The One who had borne the Israelites "on eagles' wings" had seemingly turned against them and was now strengthening their enemies against them. Eighteen long years they served the king of Moab because of their disobedience of God's law. Many a man today finds himself in bondage because of sin. The devil's hold will keep getting a little tighter and tighter until the sinner finally realizes that he must cry to God for deliverance from the oppression if he is to be saved from eternal doom. God in His mercy responds to the cry of a penitent heart. He raised up a deliverer for Israel, Ehud the son of Gera, a left-handed Benjamite.

### Equipment

Ehud made himself a two-edged dagger. The weapons of the child of God are not carnal but "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (II Corinthians 10:4). The Christian is admonished to. "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). We have a battle to fight, and it is not a sham battle; but we have a Captain who never lost a battle. We can fight the good fight of faith with the assurance that He will see us through to the finish.

blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.

<sup>23</sup> Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

<sup>24</sup> When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

<sup>25</sup> And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened *them*: and, behold, their lord *was* fallen down dead on the earth.

<sup>26</sup> And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

<sup>27</sup> And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

<sup>28</sup> And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.

<sup>29</sup> And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

<sup>30</sup> So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

<sup>31</sup> And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

God gave this left-handed Benjamite courage to face the enemy in his own territory with nothing but a homemade dagger. He struck but one blow, but he put all his strength into it. May God help His warriors today to put all the faith and strength they have into the fight against sin! A curse is placed upon the man that doeth the work of the Lord negligently or "keepeth back his sword from blood." Through the leadership of Ehud, Moab was subdued and the land had rest for eighty years.

### Shamgar

The story of Shamgar is short, but any man who could kill six hundred men with an ox goad is not to be lightly esteemed. God used Shamgar, and Shamgar used the instrument that he had at hand. Some men may sit around and bemoan their lack of talent or lack of weapons, but Shamgar seized his ox goad and went to work. He delivered Israel.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did the Lord leave some of the Canaanites in the land?
- 2 Find a passage of Scripture against the Israelites' marrying the Canaanites.
- 3 What similar doctrine concerning marriage is there in the New Testament?
- 4 Who was the first judge of Israel?
- 5 How did he receive his appointment?
- 6 What was the first country to conquer Israel in the time of the judges?
- 7 How many Moabites were slain in the battle at the fords of Jordan?
- 8 How long did the land have rest after **the** deliverance of Othniel? of Ehud?
- 9 What lessons are derived from the life of Shamgar?
- 10 What is an ox goad?