

## Judges Chapter 3 Part 3

Tonight we start the second section of the book of Judges.

Outline (based upon Thomas Constable & Robert Dean):

Judges 1:1 – 3:6      The reason for Israel's apostasy

**Judges 3:7 – 16:31      The record of Israel's apostasy**

Judges 17:1 – 21:25      The results of Israel's apostasy

This week we start with the first apostasy and the first judge. As an overview of the second section here is outline of the section based upon a combination of Thomas Constable, J. Vernon McGee and Robert Chisholm.

- A. **The first apostasy 3:7-11 [judge: Othniel] 3:7 “The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,...”**
- B. The second apostasy 3:12-31 [judge: Ehud] 3:12 “Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.”
- C. The third apostasy chapters 4—5 [judge: Deborah and Barak] 4:1 “Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord...”
- D. The fourth apostasy 6:1—10:5 [judge: Gideon] 6:1 “Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.”
- E. The fifth apostasy 10:6—12:15 [judge: Jephthah] 10:6 “Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,...”
- F. The sixth apostasy chapters 13—16 [judge: Samson] 13:1 “Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,...”

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Pattern of chapter 2 applied to chapter 3 (NASB).

Chapter 2	Chapter 3
2:11-13 Then <b>the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord</b> and served the Baals, 12 and <b>they forsook the Lord</b> , the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 So they <b>forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroht.</b>	3:7 The <b>sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord</b> , and forgot the Lord <b>their God</b> and served the Baals and the Asheroth.
2:14 The <b>anger of the Lord burned against Israel</b> , and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and <b>He sold them into the hands</b> of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.	3:8 Then <b>the anger of the Lord was kindled (burned) against Israel</b> , so that <b>He sold them into the hands</b> of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.
2:16 Then the <b>Lord raised up judges who delivered them</b> from the hands of those who plundered them.	3:9 When the sons of Israel cried to the Lord, <b>the Lord raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them</b> , Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.
2:18 When the Lord raised up judges for them, <b>the Lord was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge</b> ; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them.	3:10 <b>The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord gave</b> Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.
2:18-19 But it came about <b>when the judge died</b> , that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.	3:11 <b>Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.</b>

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**Judges 3:7 The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.**

**Sons of Israel.** Keep in the back of your mind, that when you see “sons of Israel,” this is not just the nation Israel or the confederation of tribes, it is actually the descendants of Jacob who God renamed “Israel.” God chose them. But they were given an option to back out when Joshua asked them in Joshua 24:14-18.

**Did evil in the sight of the Lord.** Each of the major subsections include this phrase in the opening statement. These subsections are listed on the first page of this handout. The subsections on Othniel (this subsection) and Jephthah contain additional amplification on this evil.

**Evil.** The text of the Hebrew that I read says **the** evil. Apparently, the NASB translates that as “what was.” Typically, in this kind of context, evil is associated with idolatry. Indeed, within this verse as an amplification of the evil is worship of the Baals and Asheroth. Israel is a theocracy with God as their king.

**Forgot.** This is the only use of this word in the book of Judges although it is used other places in the Old Testament. This is a strong word. It is more than a momentary lapse of memory. This is parallel to the word in chapter 2:12, forsook or abandon. We have seen that some of the activities the sons of Israel engaged in, they were previously warned to avoid. Just as an example, let us read Deuteronomy chapter 4. This is a powerful chapter. Three verses from this chapter are given below. Each one contains our word forgot.

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**Deuteronomy 4:9 “Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.”**

Do not forget history, especially the history you lived in. Teach it to your children so they do not forget what made this country great and how we obtained and kept our freedom. The principle applies to us as well as the sons of Israel. Thomas Jefferson has been quoted as saying, “The cornerstone of democracy rests on the foundation of an educated electorate.” Tyrants attempt to restrict the free flow of information. If people do not know truth from the Bible and about the history of their own country, that country will not be free.

**Deuteronomy 4:23 So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you.**

There are lessons in both the Old Testament and the New Testament we as Christians need to remember and not forget. Bible doctrine. And in America, some of those lessons are included in our Constitution. The most important truth is about expressing God’s love through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

**Deuteronomy 4:31 For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor**

**destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.**

On a personal level, as you grow in knowledge walking by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit, you will see the hand of God in your own life. Do not forget what God has done for you. He is faithful to His character, Grace, Mercy and Lovingkindness. And of course, His Righteousness.

Back to Judges 3:7.

**Served.** This means served. In this context it involves worship, even obedience. It can also mean to be enslaved. They served the gods of the land rather than the Lord God. This starts in the mind with the sin nature. This word will link up with another word related to slavery.

**Romans 6:16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?**

**Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”**

Out of fellowship, especially being out of fellowship for an extended period of time, a believer will become enslaved to the sin nature, the Kosmos and the Devil.

If this passage is a model of future apostasies, why mention only two items, forgot and served, one of which was not mentioned previously?

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Wasn't there a longer list in chapter 2? Two items? Let's keep a watch to see if we start to see things in two's.

**Baals and Asheroth.** These are in the plural. And there are two sets of gods: Baals (male) and Asheroth (female). The sons of Israel picked up worship of the Canaanite gods.

**Baal.** The storm-fertility god [per Trent Butler].

**Asheroth.** According to Trent Butler, "Asheroth is the plural form of Asherah, a Canaanite goddess distinct from Astarte of 2:13. This is a fertility goddess represented by a wooden pole."

I am not going to explain in detail the pantheon of the Canaanite gods. Suffice it to say here that the sons of Israel worshipped gods of wood and stone (Deuteronomy 4:28) and abandoned the Lord their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their fathers.

**Judges 3:8 Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.**

**Anger of the Lord.** Literally the nose of God was hot or burned. As discussed in previous lessons, this is both an anthropomorphism and an anthropopathism.

**Kindled.** Why did the translators use the word kindled here but chose burned in Judges 2:14 for the same word?

**He sold them.** This does mean to sell. But, it is often used of selling someone into slavery. For instance, the sons of Jacob (Israel) sold Joseph into slavery.

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**Genesis 37:28** Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they (sons of Jacob minus Joseph) pulled him (Joseph) up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.

So we have the sons of Israel serving/worshipping like slaves the gods of wood and stone. Then, God “sells” them into physical slavery to an external people. The book of Judges, like many other books in the Bible uses word plays throughout.

**Cushan-rishathaim.** This is likely an epithet (a characterizing word or phrase accompanying or occurring in place of the name of a person or thing) title or nickname rather than the king’s real name. To begin with “rishathaim” means “double wicked.” Perhaps there is a word play here as well. The sons of Israel did evil or wickedness (a different word than the word here in Judges 3:8. They served (worshipped the Baals and Asheroth). It took a double wicked king to conquer them. And they ended up serving the double wicked king. All the while, they forgot their own king, Yahweh.

In English, nouns are singular or plural. In Arabic and Hebrew there is also “dual” meaning two of something or double. In “rishathaim” the “aim” means it is dual or double.

Cushan was possibly a Midian name. So there are two names, one of which is a dual.

**Mesopotamia.** Literally, this is Aram of the naharaim, or two rivers. There is that “dual” again, “two rivers.” Mesopotamia is the Greek term and English term for this area.

**Served.** Here is irony. The sons of Israel served the Baals. They were assimilated in thought to the Canaanite culture. Then they became weak

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and could not defend themselves and served like slaves to an outside power.

**Judges 3:9 When the sons of Israel cried to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.**

**Cried to the Lord.** The text does not say the sons of Israel repented, changed their minds or confessed their sins. But is it possible that they expressed faith in their cries to the Lord? It would appear they realized they were helpless (humility). They addressed their cries to the Lord in expectation that He would do something. They did this previously in Egypt. God responded and caused Moses to lead the sons of Israel out of Egypt.

**Exodus 2:23 Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.**

**Exodus 2:24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

**Exodus 2:25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.**



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**Raised up a deliverer.**

Here is the quote from Robbie Dean on this word which I am repeating from a previous lesson.

“The word there for "raised up" is the Hebrew word in the hiphil stem which indicates that God causes the action. The word for "delivered" is ysha and it is transliterated yeshua in the noun, which is also transliterated Joshua, and is the Hebrew rendering for the name of Jesus. It means to deliver or to save and is a picture of God's saving grace in the nation. We must remember when we look at this that is always God in His grace who exercises the initiative to save man. God's grace is not dependent upon human action or human volition, it is motivated exclusively by His character and His love and not by man's actions. So God in His grace exercises the deliverance option for Israel in order to take the pressure off to give them the opportunity to get back on positive volition.”

**Deliverer.** The root of this word is the source of words like Joshua and Jesus. Othniel is not initially called a “judge.” He is called a deliverer. So, this concept should be factored into our understanding of what a judge in the book of judges is.

**To deliver them.** The word is from the same root as the noun deliverer already used in this verse. By using the noun and the verb, the writer is emphasizing that the deliverer was going to deliver the sons of Israel. It might also be part of the series of twos in this subsection. And this verse also contains “sons of Israel” twice.

Othniel son of Kenaz. He is related to Caleb the great hero of Judah. But he is not a native Jew. Robbie Dean has a good explanation.

“Who exactly is Kenaz? What we will discover is that he is listed back in Genesis 36:9-12 in Amalek's genealogy. So a grandson of Esau was Kenaz, from whom came Caleb and Othniel. They were not native Jews,

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Caleb or one of his ancestors was captured by the Egyptians and was probably enslaved in Egypt along with the Jews. So they had become part of Israel just as Ruth did later on, just as Rahab had earlier and there were many others who came out of Egypt that were not Jewish but that had become part of Israel and assimilated into the nation. So here you have God using someone who is ethnically related to Cushan-rishathaim who is part of this overall Arab conspiracy and Arab alliance. In the same way God uses believers who are transformed from the unsaved to the saved and He uses them as a testimony on the angelic conflict. So He raises up Othniel; ethnically he is not a Jew, he is related to the Arabs who are against them and He uses him to bring about the victory and the deliverance, and He does this through the Spirit of the Lord.”

**Judges 3:10 The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.**

**The Spirit of the Lord came upon him.**

The Holy Spirit is said to come upon four of the judges. In the Old Testament, when God wants something accomplished, He will give a person or persons the Holy Spirit. I suspect that all the judges received the Holy Spirit to carry out their tasking from God. However, only four are specifically said to receive the Holy Spirit.

I did not want to develop an elaborate doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, but I did want to provide some points for consideration. These are taken from Walvoord’s book on the Holy Spirit:

1. “It will be noted, first, that the coming of the Spirit to indwell individuals has no apparent relation to spiritual qualities.” Based upon what text I have read so far, it says “came upon,” not “in.” The

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Church Age indwelling of the Holy Spirit must not be confused with the Old Testament “endowment” [means to provide or to put on] of the Holy Spirit.

2. “A second important factor quite distinct from indwelling as known in the New Testament Church is that indwelling was a sovereign gift usually associated with a special call to service, and it had in view enablement for a specific task. Indwelling was not a universal privilege. Only a few were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and these were known for their distinctive gift, were sought out as leaders and prophets, and were usually marked men.” Here is a list of some of those endued with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament:
  - a. The tailors who made the garments for the priests (Exodus 28:3)
  - b. Bezaleel and Aholiab, find craftsmen who helped build the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:3; cf. 35:30-35).
  - c. The seventy elders who assisted Moses were endued with the Holy Spirit (Numbers 11:17, 25).
  - d. At least four judges (Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson) were said to have been given the Holy Spirit.
  - e. Both Saul and David were endued with the Holy Spirit (1 Samuel 10:9-109; 16:13).
  - f. There were yet others, like the prophets.
3. “A third important distinction found in the Old Testament doctrine of indwelling was that it was in many cases temporary. While the New Testament saint need never fear loss of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, however He may be hindered in His ministry by sin, the Old Testament saint knew the presence of the Spirit was a special privilege which could be withdrawn at will even as it was given. Thus, of Saul, it is revealed that the Holy Spirit left him (1 Sam. 16:14), and David prayed earnestly after his sin, “cast me not away from thy

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presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11).” This should be emphasized. Temporary.

**He judged Israel.** Here is the word to judge.

At the point, let me quote from Robbie Dean:

“When we think of a judge we think of a magistrate who rules in a court and he adjudicates between decisions or he oversees the prosecution of criminals. That was not, let me put it this way, that was not the sole function of a *shaphatim*, that was a minor part of the *shaphatim's* role, of the judge's role, but it wasn't the whole thing. We've seen that as part of the judge role they also have a military function, they're a commander, they raised an army, they defeated the enemies of Israel, and they led the nation spiritually. So it's a broad term and I think the very best meaning for us is they're a deliverer. It's a deliverer, that's their function, is to deliver and they did it in different ways and you have to look at each individual case to see how they did it.”

**When he went out to war.** In 3:1-2, one of the purposes of leaving some of the indigenous peoples in the land was to have the sons of Israel learn war. That is the same word for war that is here in 3:10.

**Judges 3:11 Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.**

Note the frequency of items in pairs. Relationship between believer and God is binary. A believer worships God.

The tomb of Othniel, currently an empty cave, is located in Hebron in the Palestinian Authority area. Jews are only allowed to visit this site a couple of times a year for prayer, usually escorted by armed Israeli officials. As I mentioned previously in chapter 2, burial sites are pilgrimage sites visited by Jews today. It reminds them of what the Bible says about them and what they did in the time of the judges. It is both

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physical history and spiritual history. It should be a reminder of what God did for Israel, from the the time of Abraham up until the present era.

**Burial Sites Identified in the Book of Judges**

<b>Chapter / Verse</b>	<b>Judge</b>	<b>Burial Site</b>
2:9	Joshua	in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.
8:32	Gideon	in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites
10:2	Tola	in Shamir
10:5	Jair	in Kamon
12:7	Jephthah	in <i>one of</i> the cities of Gilead
12:10	Ibzan	in Bethlehem
12:12	Elon	at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun
12:15	Abdon	at Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites
16:31	Samson	between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father

Let us read 1 Samuel chapter 12.