

Othniel

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[0 : 00] You can be taking your Bibles and turning to Judges.

A judge, a deliverer, that's the idea behind the word judge.

A judge in a courtroom, though some of the judges did do some of that in a sense. But a judge in a sense of deliverer.

In fact, as we explained last Sunday, that is what the Hebrew word that's translated judges actually means. Deliverer, Savior. So we'll be looking at the first one here tonight who will deliver Israel from the oppression of their enemy.

And there will be a specific judge, a specific enemy. Not all the judges are the same, of course. Not all the enemies are the same. Different enemies as we see that unfolding throughout the book of Judges.

[1 : 22] Now, you found that. I'm not going to read the passage. Actually, we're going to be reading it kind of step by step through the first 11 verses of chapter 3. But before we do that, because I want...

This may seem a little redundant because we kind of hit on this quite a bit last week. But I want to make sure that we keep this in our minds about what was going on.

What happened? What caused or brought about the need for these judges, these deliverers? And I want to keep that in the foremost part of our brain as we take our way, make our way, step by step through this book.

I want to read what I think is the defining verse. It actually appears twice in the book of Judges. The defining verses, I guess then, I should say, for the book of Judges.

And you don't need to turn to it. I'll just read it to you. Judges 17, 6. In those days, that is the days of the judges, there was no king in Israel. No king in Israel.

[2 : 32] Now, that's not so much the cause for the need or the reason for the need for judges. These deliverers. But it is somewhat a statement that gives you a window into Israel's problem.

Who was to be their king? God. God never intended for them, in a sense, never intended for them to be ruled by a king.

There was no king in Israel. Not even God. God was not their king. But then the next statement is kind of the cause and effect. There's no king in Israel.

Not even God. And everyone did what was right in his own eyes. That defines what was going on at this time with Israel.

And it's repeated also in Judges 21, 25. Very same words. Because in those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did. That was what was right in his own eyes.

[3 : 37] Now, that really is the epitaph on the tombstone, so to speak, of Israel's history during this time, in these particular days. And so the book of Judges, as I said last week, represents a dark, dark, dark time in Israel's history.

And that becomes clear as you begin to read. And over and over again, you read that Israel sinned. And I want us to just, you know, to serve as an explanation. I just want, again, to consider a few things here.

In the first place, remember that God had graciously and powerfully redeemed Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.

So we've got to keep all this, all their history in mind here. Where, by the way, in Egypt, as God brought them out, he made them his unique people.

And really codified that when he gave his law from Sinai, which, again, was a gracious act of God in behalf of Israel.

[4 : 41] And second, God had led Israel through their wilderness wanderings and had provided for them all throughout those 40 years. God had been their God. God had provided them.

God had led them. And third, remember that God had brought Israel safely and miraculously into the land of promise. By stopping the Jordan River and allowing them to walk over the Jordan, even at its flood stage.

And so God brought them in safely and brought them in miraculously into their land, the land that God had promised them. And remember that God had promised to defeat all their enemies. And he did so if, with this proviso, if they would walk with him in purity. And he was their God. They were his people. If they would continue to walk with God, he would defeat all their enemies. And initially, I think you can say that God proved that very clearly with Jericho and ultimately with Ai and many other proofs.

[5 : 50] And finally, I'd say that God had commanded Israel to conquer the land of Canaan. We've got to keep that in our minds as we make our way through this book and understand the lesson of this book.

Not the only lesson. There are many lessons to learn. But God had commanded them to conquer the land of Canaan and to serve, really, as God's instrument of judgment upon the people of Canaan.

Remember? The wicked people. The vile, wicked people of Canaan. Now, that's detailed for us. And again, you don't have to turn to it.

If you want to, you can. But Deuteronomy 7. Let me just read 1 through 6. Now, I've read these verses before. But we're just kind of bringing all this back to our minds as we begin to look at the very first judge of Israel in the book of Judges.

Deuteronomy 7. This is before Israel went into the land, before they began to do battle and conquering the people of the land, before the promise had actually been realized.

[7 : 05] God gave these commands through Moses. When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you.

And when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. This is God's command. You shall make no covenant with them.

Now, we've already studied the book of Joshua. And now we've kind of entered into the book of Judges a little bit. And so we're already making some connections here with these commands of God and what in reality took place, what actually took place.

Make no covenants with them. And show them no mercy. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son. Nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods.

[8 : 23] So the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them. You shall destroy their altars and break down their sacred pillars.

And cut down their wooden images. And burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. Not that they were holy.

But in the sense of separated unto him. Separated unto God. The Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you.

Chosen you to be a people for himself. It's marvelous. Chosen to be a people for himself. A special treasure above all peoples on the face of the earth.

And we could go on and on. But just in those few verses we understand what God had clearly commanded Israel to do. In the very first place they were to possess the land.

[9 : 21] That's what he said there in verse 1. The land which you go to possess. They were to go in to possess this land that God had promised to them.

Second, they were to utterly destroy all the nations of Canaan. Every one of them. And all their people. That's verse 2 that I just read.

You shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. Thirdly, you're to make no peace treaties with them. That's what God said in verse 2. He said you're to make no covenant with them.

They are to show you no mercy. They are to show no mercy. Israel is to show no mercy to the people of Canaan. That's what he said in verse 2. Nor show mercy to them.

They were not to intermarry with them. This is clearly God's command. Verse 3. You shall nor shall you make marriages with them.

[10:19] It's very clear from Scripture. Just detail. Step by step. These are God's commands for God's people as they enter into the land. Six, they are to completely destroy every trace of their pagan religions.

That's what he says in verse 5. You shall destroy their altars. Break down their sacred pillars. Cut down their wooden images. Burn their carved images with fire.

That means total removal of all of their trappings of worship. All of their idols. All of their temples. All of their places of worship. All of it is to be completely destroyed with fire. And then God finally demanded total separation as his chosen people.

That's what he said in verse 6. You are a holy people to the Lord. The Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself.

[11:19] A special treasure above all peoples. All peoples on the face of the earth. A marvelous, wonderful, covenantal promise given to the people of Israel.

Now this is what God commanded even before Israel had entered into the land. Before they ever crossed the Jordan. Before they faced their first enemy. These were God's commands to them. And through most of Joshua's leadership. Israel lived up to those commands. Throughout most of it. For the most part he did. They did.

And God of course held up his end of the bargain. If you could put it that way. But after Joshua was gone. And that generation was gone.

Caleb is gone. After they were gone. A generation the Bible says came of age. In that time. A generation that did not know Joshua.

[12:18] Did not know Caleb. Had forgotten God. And so failure then became the rule of that generation. Failure.

That's what happens to a nation that forgets God. Failure. Failure. There's a lesson here for our nation. Though we can't make a comparison between America and Israel.

It's apples and oranges. But for a nation to be established upon the principles of God's word. And to be established upon the belief in the one true God.

And submission to that one true God. For a nation like that to forget God. Is doomed to failure. And that's what happened to Israel.

And this is what chapter 1 of Judges is all about. And we looked at this last week. I mean you have Judah failing to complete their conquering of the conquest of the land.

[13:18] Then Benjamin failed. And then Joseph. The children of Joseph failed. Manasseh failed. Ephraim failed. Zebulun failed. Asher failed. Naphtali failed.

Dan failed. All of that is chronicled for us in chapter 1. Failed in what way? Failed to absolutely obey God in conquering the land and utterly destroying the people.

They allowed many of the people to live. And they coexisted with them. And that was our subject last week. So all of this failure in chapter 1. And you could say. Though it's not chronicled here in Judges.

You could say that also Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. also failed in that they chose not to even enter the land.

Not to even settle in the land. They settled instead on the other side. The land on the other side of the Jordan River. But not only failure.

[14:17] Also wickedness. Wickedness was the rule of that generation. Rebellion. Rejection. Wickedness. Gross immorality.

Paganism. Idolatry. And that's what chapter 2 of Judges is all about. They did. Verse 11. They did evil in the sight of the Lord.

And served the Baals. That is the Canaanite God. Verse 12. They forsook the Lord. And provoked the Lord.

To anger. We're going to see that again. Here in chapter 3 when we get to it. And also we see this happening in chapter 3. But back in chapter 2 verse 14. The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.

He was furious with them. And so he delivered them into the hands of plunderers. Who despoiled them. And he sold them into the hands of their enemies.

[15:16] All around. So that they could no longer stand before their enemies. And we're going to see that somewhat repeated. When we get into chapter 3. Then you know comes a grace filled conjunction.

Mentioned this at the close of my message last Sunday. Nevertheless. Verse 16. Nevertheless. Nevertheless. The Lord raised up judges.

Who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. So we have God's grace.

Overriding. Their rejection.

And even their wickedness. And so that sets us up for chapter 3. And the first of the judges. And his name is. What? Ophniel. Ophniel.

Ophniel. And the first of the judges. Ophniel. Which is in the Hebrew. Means lion of God. It's an interesting. Meaning for the name.

[16:21] Even though we don't have. Much of a description of what Ophniel did. But before we look at Ophniel himself. Let's just see how the author. Of judges here. Sets all of this up.

And here we'll just kind of walk step by step through this. Verse 1. Look at it. Now these are the nations which the Lord left. He left them there.

He's talking about the Canaanite nations. And why did he leave them there? That he might test Israel by them. Test them to prove them.

What did he want to prove? What did he want to test? That is all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan. This was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war.

At least those who had not formerly known it. Now what is he talking about there? Is he testing them to see if they were capable of warfare? Testing them, proving them.

[17:25] I mean these, you know, of this new generation. Testing them to see if they knew how to conduct war. That's not the idea here. The point, the idea is that they might learn the significance of this particular war.

This war. That is this war against the Canaanites. That's what they had forgotten. You see, among other things, they had forgotten why they were there. Why they needed to conquer the land.

And so since they did not know the significance of this particular war. Then God left some nations there to prove them, to test them.

To remind them of why they were there. And what they were supposed to do. And then, of course, those nations are named in verse 3. And we'll not, I don't need to read that.

In fact, it's the same, primarily the same list that you've found in Deuteronomy 7. That I read a moment ago. So, anyway, and they were left, according to verse 4, that he, God, might test Israel by them.

[18:36] Might prove them, to test them by them. And for what reason? To know that they would obey the commandments of the Lord. Which he had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

And I just read that in Deuteronomy 7. All right, so, stop right there for just a moment. And Israel then, I mean, certainly they were responsible, weren't they?

For their failure to conquer the land and to utterly annihilate, to destroy all the people of these nations. Weren't they commanded to do that? And weren't they remiss in their responsibility?

Disobedient to God's command by not doing it completely and allowing these nations to exist? Yes, they were responsible. But it says here that God left them there.

You see, God allowed them to fail. He allowed them to fail. And what's interesting is that even their failure to completely conquer the land was part of God's larger plan to prove their loyalty to Him.

[19:40] And it's interesting how God does that. It's not like God is making a new plan and you have failed. And so, God is saying, now, what am I going to do? I guess I'll just try this and, you know.

No, it was God's plan all along. God knew. God allows us to fail. And then He takes our failures and uses them for His purposes in our lives.

And it may seem like that may be plan B with God, but it was plan A all along. So then, we're not accountable? We're not responsible? Yes, we are. God is still sovereign over these things.

And we see that here in Israel. So, we have Israel, you know, failing to do what God commanded them to do. And at the same time, God using that failure to prove to test His people.

All right, now, the first thing we need to see here in this passage. This kind of sets us up. And now, we're ready to look at Othniel.

[20 : 47] First thing we need to see is Israel's compromise. Now, we really have already been talking about that. And kind of set it up that way by reminding us about what the Bible says in chapter 1 of Judges and chapter 2.

And so, we already have a pretty good sense of the reason, what's going on here with Israel. But first, we need to consider what chapter 3 says about their compromise, Israel's compromise. Verse 5, we have the first part of the compromise is Israel interacting with the Canaanites. Their interaction with the Canaanites.

Verse 5, thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites. We don't even have to go any further than that. To understand their compromise in that they interacted with the Canaanites. They dwelt among them. Dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites. And so, these then are the nations that God will use to chastise His people. [21 : 55] And Israel has chosen to interact with them. And God is going to use that for His purposes in their lives. Then we have a description of something that will be repeated over and over throughout the book of Judges.

Though the story will change somewhat. There will be some variations. But this is pretty much kind of the formula. And so, starting with verse 6, we see Israel intermarrying with the Canaanites. So, first there's kind of an interaction with the Canaanites. And then verse 6, Israel intermarries with the Canaanites. And they took, verse 6, they took their daughters, meaning the daughters of the Canaanites, to be their wives.

And gave their daughters to their sons. Alright, so what did they do? They did exactly what God had commanded them not to do. And we read that in Deuteronomy 7. And then, the latter part of verse 6 and on into verse 7, we have Israel's idolatry with the Canaanites.

So, we have Israel's interaction with the Canaanites. Then we have Israel's intermarriage with the Canaanites. And then we have Israel's idolatry with the Canaanites.

[23 : 07] So, they're just going head first into this. From just a casual interaction to then intermarrying and then taking on their religion. Taking on their religion.

And they, the Bible says here, served their gods. Man, how quickly they went down. That seems quick. I'm sure this took some time.

There's some passage of time here. But not really very much. And certainly a short time. You know, when you think about it. Considering all that God had done for Israel.

And then, in a relatively short time, they are hobnobbing with the Canaanites. Intermarrying with the Canaanites. And now they are joining them in their worship services.

Took on their religion. They served their gods. So, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and Asherahs.

[24 : 08] Asherahs. Now, Baal, of course. Though it's sometimes presented in the plural. Baal was the chief god among the Canaanites.

And Asherah. As mentioned here in verse 7. Was the chief or predominant goddess.

Goddess. So, the female goddess in Canaanite fertility worship. That was what their worship was. It was fertility worship. We don't want to talk a whole lot about that.

Very wicked. Very immoral. Perverse. Sexual immorality was a part of their worship. And Asherah then was the goddess in Canaanite religion.

And she was apparently Baal's wife. In a sense. His consort. And in their religion, she was the mother of 70 gods.

[25 : 11] So, she had a lot of children. Of course, it's a false god. This is what they worship. And by the way, if you have a King James. And you were looking at your King James version.

You notice the word groves. Instead of Asherah. And the word Asherah. Can in the Aramaic. Can mean groves of trees.

So, that's a meaning of the word. And so, when the King James was translated back in 1611. They didn't have any archaeological evidence for Asherah.

And so, they just assumed. Kind of made a connection between the poles. Or wooden kind of structures. That were typically.

You typically would find them near pagan altars. And so, that's how the King James translated. But more recent archaeological discoveries. Have proved the existence of a god.

[26 : 11] Goddess by the name of Asherah. So, now they're worshipping Baal and his wife Asherah. And they're taking part in the Canaanite religion.

And again, the Canaanite gods were part of their fertility religion. And it consisted of gross sexual immorality. And perversion.

And the priests and priestesses of the Canaanite religion. They were really nothing more than prostitutes. That was their religion.

And the acts of worship were always sexual and perverse. Sounds a lot like the religion of our culture, by the way.

Now, how did God react to Israel's sin? Well, alright. So, we have Israel's compromise. And now, we have Israel's chastisement. How God reacted.

[27 : 08] And there are three things that we need to see about this. First of all, this is important. Maybe it should go without saying. But I want to point this out. First of all, the focus.

The focus of God's anger. God became angry. What was the focus of His anger? Or rather, who was the focus? Verse 8 says, Therefore, the anger. And by the way, literally, the word could be translated, the flaring of the nostrils.

That's the idea behind that word that's translated anger. And so, we can kind of visualize that. You know, flaring of the nostrils. Real anger. The anger of the Lord was.

And here's another word. Hot. Interesting. Meaning, He's furious. His nostrils are flaring. And He's furious. And so, the anger.

Therefore, the anger of the Lord was hot against who? Not the Canaanites. We might want to insert Canaanites there.

[28 : 10] You know. I mean, they're the immoral ones, right? They're the ones that have drawn Israel away. I guess you could argue, though Israel went willingly.

It was not the Canaanites. That was not the focus of God's anger. Now, He'd already had a settled anger against the Canaanites. That's why Israel was there. To bring God's judgment upon them. But here, His anger is not focused upon the Canaanites. His anger is focused upon Israel. God's anger was focused upon His people.

His unique, redeemed people. Charles Spurgeon once said, God never allows His people to sin successfully.

Think about that. And amen is right. It's the right response. Aren't you glad? And so, God did not allow them to go on with their sin.

[29 : 07] He became furious with them. Anger. Angry with them. And so, notice second, the fierceness of God's anger. So, the focus of it is Israel.

And how fierce is His anger? Well, verse 8. And He sold them. Sold them like you would sell a slave on the block.

He sold them into the hand of Cushan Rishithayim. You've heard of him, haven't you? King of Mesopotamia. Now, on the face of it, this is troubling.

Now, the story is so familiar, and it's repeated over and over in Judges, that it doesn't appall us, doesn't catch us by surprise. Only, if we really think about it, how troubling this is, that God actually sold His own beloved people, His redeemed people, to a wicked king.

To be His slaves. The word sold means to give something or someone over to the control, the absolute control and power of another. The very same way that, you know, someone might sell a slave.

[30 : 18] And in this case, they were sold to the absolute control of Cushan Rishithayim, king of Mesopotamia.

And by the way, just as a side note, this is interesting as well. Mesopotamia was not even in the Promised Land. Mesopotamia, far outside the Promised Land, actually the word means between the rivers.

And so we're talking about a land east of the Euphrates River. We're talking about a land that is in what we call today the Fertile Crescent.

It's the land where the Garden of Eden once existed. Long way from Israel, from the Promised Land. And so it means that this man, Cushan Rishithayim, by the way, his name means Cushan the double wicked.

The double wicked Cushan. And so think about it. This was a powerful and wicked king, double wicked, according to his name, whose power extended, the reach of his power and rule extended

far beyond his own land and apparently included all of the land of Canaan.

[31 : 41] So this is pretty serious. But God, God was the one who gave him this power. That's what the Bible says here. He sold them into the hand of Cushan, Rishithayim.

God allowed him, gave him this power, this influence to be able to reach out and, in a sense, take God's people into slavery.

God allowed that. Into the slavery of this double wicked king. The fierceness of God's anger. And then third, the fullness of it. The fullness of his anger.

God sold them into slavery and he left them there eight years. Eight long years.

Verse 8. And the children of Israel served Cushan, Rishithayim, eight years. Now, why would God do that? Why would God judge his people in that way?

[32 : 40] Why would he do that? Why does God ever judge his own people? In the sense of chastising them. And that's the idea here.

What was that? Yeah, that's right. 1 Corinthians 11.32. Listen to this. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord.

That we may not be condemned with or along with the world. It's the grace of God. Grace of God. That he would chastise us. Because if he did not chastise us, we would not belong to him. And we would be judged along with everyone else in the world. So, it's a gracious act on the part of God that he turned his anger toward his own people.

And that it was so fierce that he actually sold them into slavery for eight long years. So, after Israel's compromise and after Israel's chastisement, then we have...

[33 : 52] Here's where we're going to be introduced to Othniel. Israel's champion. Israel's champion. Verse 9. When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel who delivered them Othniel.

Othniel. So, Israel responded in the right way, didn't they? At least initially.

They responded in the right way. God punished them, chastised them. And under the burden, the weight of their oppression, they cried out to the Lord.

That's the right thing to do. And that's what they did. And God, because he's merciful and gracious and ready to forgive, he sent them a deliverer. Raised up a deliverer.

His name was Othniel. Let's learn just a few things about Othniel. First of all, who is he? Do we know anything about him? I made the statement that nearly all of the judges were obscure people.

[34 : 59] Not people who, you know, there's a lot of copy on in Scripture. And this is true of Othniel, though we do have some things said about him. We do know some things about him. And we know some things right here from the text itself.

From this passage itself. It says, Othniel, the son of Canaz, Caleb's, we know him, don't we? Caleb's younger brother. All right.

Now, Othniel is not Caleb's younger brother. That's not the idea. I mean, because Caleb's father, his name was Jephunneh. All right. So this is not Caleb's brother.

It is Canaz. Canaz, who was Caleb's younger brother. And so Othniel was Canaz's son. And that would make Othniel Caleb's nephew.

All right. That's all we know from this particular passage in Judges. And it's a good thing to know. Because we know that Othniel was from a great family.

[36 : 00] From Caleb's family. Faithful Caleb. We remember him, don't we? So he had a famous uncle. Caleb, one of the spies. One of the two that were faithful. He and Joshua. And we know that about Caleb.

And we would assume that that kind of character was then permeated the entire family. The lineage of Caleb. And also Caleb was courageous.

Very courageous, you know. He conquered the region of the giants in Canaan. In fact, he said, give me that mountain. Give me that land where the giants dwell.

And he went in and conquered them. All right. So we know that. That we know Othniel was from a great family. Caleb's family. Had a famous uncle.

Courageous uncle. But what about Othniel himself? Othniel was also something special in his own right. According to Scripture. There's not a lot said about it.

[36 : 59] In Joshua chapter 15 and verse 14. The Bible says, After Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak. Father of the giants.

The Anakim. He drove them out. He then set out to conquer the inhabitants of a place called Kirjathsephir. And listen to what it says in Joshua 15, 16.

And Caleb said, He who attacks Kirjathsephir and takes it, conquers it. To him I will give Aksah, my daughter, as wife.

All right. So she must have been a real beauty. You know, because evidently that would be some great incentive. For someone to go and conquer this particular city.

You conquer the city. You take the city. You can have my daughter as your wife. And did Caleb have any takers on that offer? Yes, he did. Guess who it was?

[37 : 58] It's Othniel. Othniel. And verse 17 of Joshua 15 says, So Othniel, the son of Canaz, brother of Caleb, took it.

And he gave him Aksah, his daughter, as wife. All right. So we know a little something about Othniel. Othniel had close ties with the previous generation.

Remember the generation of Joshua that had passed away. And then another generation was raised up. Well, not everyone forgot Joshua and Caleb. Because Othniel was a member of that family.

And so we could say this to his credit. He had close ties to that previous generation. The generation of Joshua and Caleb. Which made him probably a rather old man.

Some scholars say he may have been as old as 75. And at this time, 75 was still kind of getting up there. Though they still lived a lot longer than that in those days.

[38 : 57] So he's 75 years old. He's, by our standard anyway, a senior adult. And yet Othniel was courageous. And brave. And battle-tested.

We'd have to say that. We can assume that about him. He took that city so that he could have Caleb's daughter as his wife. So he's battle-tested. He, Othniel, was also available for God's use. And the most important thing, of course, is that God chose him. God chose him uniquely. Verse 9. The Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel.

God raised him up. He would not have done this on his own. He was not in some high position of authority and leadership within the armies of Israel.

It was not that he was just, you know, a shoe-in. He was already there to do such a thing. And, no, it's God raised him up for this very task.

[39 : 55] To be Israel's deliverer. And so, second then, we're just learning something about Othniel. Well, what was special about Othniel then? What was special about him?

Was it his family heritage? Was it his maturity? I mean, that's a valuable thing. Was it his courage? His bravery? Was it his experience? Experience on the battlefield. He possessed all those things. And God, I think, certainly would use those things.

And those would come in handy as he is serving as the deliverer of Israel. But these things alone were not what made Othniel special. What then?

Okay. Yes, sir. Hear what? Exactly right. You're reading ahead. That's not fair. Verse 10.

[40 : 55] The Spirit of the Lord came upon him. That's what made him special. And he judged Israel. He delivered Israel. You see, apart from the Spirit of the Lord, whether you're Othniel and one of the judges of Israel, a deliverer of Israel, or no matter what you've been called to, apart from the Spirit of Israel, you cannot do anything of any eternal value, any spiritual value.

It may be of value here. It may be of value for a time, for a season, maybe in this lifetime. But it's of no value eternally. Right? And so with man's power, you can do what man can do.

But with God's power, you can do what only God can do. And there's a huge difference between those two things. All right. So then we're just learning some things about Othniel.

Who was he? And what was special about him? And then finally, how did God use Othniel? How did he use him? Well, verse 10, Othniel went out to war. He led at least a portion of the army of Israel.

And the Lord delivered Cushan Rishithaim, king of Mesopotamia, into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan Rishithaim.

[42 : 15] Wow. Big story, isn't it? So much detail here. We kind of wish there was a lot more detail. But what we need to know are the crucial facts here.

And the most crucial fact is who really conquered this double wicked Cushan? The Lord did. The Lord did. And that's what the scripture says.

The Lord delivered Cushan Rishithaim, king of Mesopotamia, into his hand. What did Othniel do? I mean, was he just, you know, an insignificant part of this?

Did he just kind of sit back and here comes Cushan, double wicked? And he says, I give up. No. He went to war.

He made himself available. He trusted God's calling. He trusted God's power. And he went out to meet the enemy. Now, the battle is the Lord's.

[43 : 17] It always is. And all throughout the book of Joshua, we've made that point. The battle is the Lord's. But God's people still had to possess the land. They still had to go. They still had to go out against the enemy. They still had to fight.

They were to possess the land even though it was promised to them. And God would be the one to conquer their enemies. And so the battles were all the Lord's. And so the glory all belongs to him.

And that's not just true in this unique kind of grand kind of setting in Joshua and Judges.

In the conquering of the land of promise at that scale, that big, big story. It's not just true in that context. But true even in our little battles. The battle is the Lord's.

And the glory goes to him. We cannot do it without God. I've heard it said this way a number of times. I'll credit it to Adrian Rogers. I always do anyway. God cannot, I mean, we cannot do it without God.

Isn't that true? We cannot do it without God. But God will not do it without us. He will not do it without us.

[44 : 25] And so it's us joining God in what he is doing. And he gives the victory. He gives the victory. So what's the lesson from this first judge?

I mean, certainly we come away with a lesson that comes to us from Israel. Israel. A people who were uniquely chosen by God. Set apart by God.

Delivered by God. And blessed by God. Beyond, you know, imagination. God had blessed Israel and yet they sinned. Continued to sin.

Rejected him. Forsook him. So we can learn a lesson from that as God's people. We don't want to model in any way Israel's relationship with God.

And their rebellion against him. And we'll see that lesson over and over and over throughout the book. But we also can learn a lesson from Othniel. Othniel was just a man.

[45 : 31] Yeah, he had had a notable experience in his life. Courageous. He was brave. But here he is raised up by God to perform a great task.

To deliver Israel. Task way bigger than anything he had ever done before. It was something beyond him. Something that, you know, when you think about what we know about Cushan Rishithaim.

And the apparent might of his kingdom and his armies. Othniel was not equal to the task. But God raised him up.

Spirit of the Lord was upon him. And he went out to battle and God gave him the victory. And so whether we're talking about little battles or little jobs that God has called us to do.

Or we're talking about big grand things like Othniel was called to do. We must rely upon the Lord. He gives the victory.

[46 : 39] And it's always for his glory. Amen. Amen.