"The First Judge - Othniel"
Judges 3 v1-11
Scripture Ref: 2 Cor 6:17; Luke 9:23-26; Judges 1:12-15

1. **Tonight we will be introduced to the first three judge of Israel: Othniel**

Enemy	Years of Bondage	Judge	Deliverance and Rest	Scripture Ref
Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40	3:7-11
Moab	18	Ehud	80	3:12-31
Canaan	20	Deborah	40	4:1-5:31
Midian	7	Gideon	40	6:1-8:28
Ammon	18	Jephthah	6	10:6-12:7
Philistia	40	Samson	20	13:1-16:31

2. **As we move into this section, we need to remember our lessons –**
   a. **the things that we allow can either lead us closer to the Lord, or farther away!**
   b. **The people we associate with – can either lead us closer to the Lord, or farther away!**
3. **The author brings us into the introduction of the judges with a short yet hard-hitting paragraph…**

<u>The Nations Remaining in the Land</u>
3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, **that He might test Israel** by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2(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), 3 namely, five lords of the **Philistines**, all the **Canaanites**, the **Sidonians**, and the **Hivites** who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses

<u>Those that the Lord Left…</u>
4. **We're told that "the Lord left" these nations. Don't get confused because we said earlier that the people failed to drive them out**
   a. **The people did not believe or obey God and move forward with their calling to drive out the Canaanites…**
   b. **God could have taken them out without the Israelites, but God chose instead to leave them in the land…**
5. **POINT #1 – God desires to work in harmony with us.**

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   a. **Sometimes we are in the middle of a problem/trial/bondage and we're praying "God take this away".**
   b. **But we want to sit back and do nothing…**
   c. **We must step out in faith – move forward – trusting God**
   d. **We cant just sit back and say "God, get those Canaanites out of here!"**
6. **Point #2 – God will sometimes leave our Canaanites in place…**
   a. **See God knows our heart – do I really want my Canaanites gone? Maybe I'm tired of all the problems, but I still want them nearby, in case I need a little "Canaanite fix"**
   b. **Like we said last week, God knows our heart…**
   c. ***"I see that you are unhappy – but I also see that you are not fully ready to renounce your area of sin. So I will leave it there for a little while longer – so you can really see the full effect of Canaani in your life."***

<u>The "Canaanites" would test Israel</u>

7. **And so God leaves these people to "test" Israel. Three different possibilities…**
   a. **"Test" as in to bring them difficulty and adversity**
   b. **"Test" as in to test them to see if they will follow God, or their flesh.**
   c. **"Test" as in allowing them to see for themselves what is in their own hearts.**
8. **When are we tested? - Our willingness to follow the Lord is not tested in church, or when you are around other Christians….**
   a. **Our willingness to follow the Lord is tested when we are in the world, when we are alone at the computer, or at the TV, or alone in a difference city.**
   b. **The true test of a Christians walk is when no one else is around, when no one will see, no one can hear. What we do when we think no one will ever find out.**
   c. **And so the Israelites will be tested by leaving these people near to them – like leaving unattended money on the counter…**
   d. **What will they do?**

<u>The problem with Israel</u>

5 Thus the children of Israel **dwelt among** the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and **gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods**.

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9. **The problem is that they "dwelt among" the Canaanites…**
    a. **Not just "living next door to, but they intermingled with them on an intimate level.**
    b. **They got up close and personal the intermarried – they began worshipping with them**
10. **See this is not a <u>racial thing</u> – this is a <u>spiritual thing</u>.**
11. **Current application:**
    a. **Entering into a romantic relationship with a non-believer.**
        i. **Maybe he/she is really hot, really cool, really fun to hang around has money, whatever…**
        ii. **But if they do not have a strong walk with the Lord – they will draw you away from God – into the ways of the world.**
    b. **Entering into close social relationships with non-believers…**
        i. **Same thing –**
12. **WE NEED TO GET THIS– we <u>are</u> in the minority – we <u>are</u> outnumbered– hardly anyone will have the same standards as us.**
    a. **We need to come to terms with that – get over it –**
    b. **and decide how we are going to live.**
13. **Who cares if we are a minority? There are a lot of good minorities…**
    a. **only 946 billionaires in the world, appox 9% of our population in the US are millionaires, 1:13M odds of winning Powerball**
    b. **Majority of people in world have a ½ the standard of living that we do here in US**
14. **One of the things God commanded to Israelites was that they were not to be influenced by the worldliness of the nations around them – they were to be "set apart"**

    2 Cor 6:17 *"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord.*

    Luke 9:23-26
    "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

15. **What did they do instead? *"gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods"***

<u>Othniel</u>
7 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. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of **Cushan-Rishathaim** king of Mesopotamia **(Cush of Double Wickedness)**; and the

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children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 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 the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

16. **One of the things that we will find interesting is that Israel waited a long eight years before they called out to the Lord.**
    a. **Why? Because this sounds familiar…**
    b. **When we open ourselves up to the world – then get taken captive by it… we often don't turn to God immediately.**
    c. **We think we can get ourselves out of it – or our heart is still rebellious against God so we wont turn to Him**
    d. **or we feel unworthy to come to him**
    e. **Whatever the reason – we often sit in captivity mush longer than we need to - because of our refusal to turn to the Lord!**

10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.

17. **If you recall, we ran into Othniel earlier…**

Judg 1:12-15
12 Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. 14 Now it happened, when she came to him, that she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 15 So she said to him,"Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water."

<u>Othniel – "Ready for Action"</u>

18. **I am one that believes that the people God uses usually don't just come out of nowhere,**
    a. **IOW Othniel was not a half-hearted man who suddenly become the mighty man of God…**
    b. **He was a man that was already sold-out and surrendered to God and willing to step out with God**
    c. **He was a man that God has prepared – perhaps when we went up to take Kirjath Sepher.**
    d. **Now we find God raising up this man again – for a purpose – to lead the Israelites against Cushan-Rishathaim, and reclaim their freedom.**
19. **Let me ask you – who are you? Are you a Othniel? Are you someone that God might be preparing?**

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a. **We don't know what the future holds – God may have a plan and a task for you that goes well beyond what you might ever imagine.**
b. **Would you be ready if God called?**
c. **Do you realize that things God allows into your life NOW are preparation for what He will do LATER?**
d. **Are you learning and growing in the Lord?**
e. **Are you in the process of being strengthened? Built up?**

A Sharp Blade or Dull?

20. **Perhaps things going on in your life now are like the stone, honing the blade of a sword, preparing the edge to a razor-like finish**
    a. **Because one day God is going to call out that sword – and call it to action!**
21. **But if your blade is dull – if you're just plodding in your Christian walk, staying stagnant, the edge is dull…**
    a. **And when the blade is pulled – it will not find its mark.**

11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

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