

Judges Chapter 3

V: 1-7 The actions of the children of Israel are the opposite of what they were told to do.

Deuteronomy 7:1-5 “¹When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; ²And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. ⁵But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.”

- God had made it very clear to the Jews that they were not to study “comparative religion” nor develop any interest in the pagan practices of the Canaanites.
- God never wastes His breath with un-necessary warnings; we may think that it was nice of Him to remind us, but that it wasn’t really necessary – that is never true. If God warns us it is because there is good reason to warn us.

V: 1-4 There was this younger generation that did not know what the previous generation had been through – they didn’t experience the war, or the victory that the Lord had given.

Prove (X2) (H5254) *nacah*, *naw-saw'*; to test; assay, prove, tempt, try.

- LBPB rookie test, Pike, Navy bar – challenge. The older officers did this to see what the rookie was made of, to see if he was a coward or not, to see if they had that fighting spirit or not.
- The Lord would use these nations both to prove / test the children of Israel. Not so that God could discover what they were made of or if they would be faithful or not – but so that the children of Israel could see their own limitations, because God already knows.

Psalms 139:23-24 “²³Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

- The 2nd purpose was to instruct them in the ways of war – to help them develop a greater appreciation for the Lord’s help in their battles.

1. Often times people will raise the objection to killing or exterminating these groups of people including the women and children, the “innocents”, completely wiping them out at God had commanded.
2. We can liken this to another situation: We’re overseeing a group of children playing on the playground at school. They’re playing in the grass, having a wonderful time when we hear the yipping of a dog. As we look we see this puppy running onto the playground, yipping, barking and we see that it is foaming at the mouth. We know that this dog has rabies and that the rabies will kill the dog.
3. There is a real threat to the children, if they are bitten they will contract rabies and could very well die, or at the least the treatment for rabies is very painful to the kiddies. That dog is going to die either way, and we would be fully justified in killing that dog before it get to the kids. The dog is put out of it’s misery and the children are protected from a grave threat.
4. These pagan cultures are sick and dying, they are so involved in immoral and wicked practices that will lead them to death, these practices have permeated every part of their culture and very much involve the children who are being trained up in their horrid ways – and they want very much to pass these practices onto the children of Israel – defiling them and leading to their death.
5. So God would use the nation of Israel as His instrument of judgment to destroy this threat to His children.
6. When the nation of Israel refused, they opened themselves up to that defilement.

V: 5-7 The children of Israel dwelt among / tolerated the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, etc. maintained a “good neighbor” policy and “^{6b}... *served their gods.*”

- They took the daughters of the pagan non-believers to be wives for their sons, they gave their own daughters to be wives to their sons, throwing those innocent girls to the wolves – intermarrying – and they served their gods.
- Serving Baal, meaning they sacrificed their children and “worshipped” in the “groves”, Ashtoreth was worshipped in the groves. The groves were outdoor temples, sometimes they were referred to as the quarries, meaning stones that were carved or stands of trees carved into phallic symbols where the various sexual rites were performed.
- They did evil in the sight of the Lord – “*and forgot the Lord their God*” – which led to these other things.
- Non-believers act as if there is no God, acting as if there will be no consequence to their sins. But for a nation that once knew and revered God to “*forget the Lord their God*” – how does that happen?

1. When we spend time in God's word, that is or should be a daily reminder of God.
2. When we meditate in His word that would be a constant reminder of God.
3. When we spend time in prayer we are conscious of God.
4. When we spend time in fellowship, being around God's people – another reminder.
5. When we serve God we might even ask ourselves in the midst of the task or mission; "why am I doing this?" - Answer: "because I love God."
Working along, humming or whistling a tune – Psalms, hymns, praise songs to God – all constant reminders.

- God's ways are best. If we're going to know life, and love long days, then keep God's word, it's a good life.

V: 8 Cause and effect, they've sown now they reap. "*Therefore*".

Galatians 6:7-8 ⁷"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;..."

- Chushan-rishathaim: Twice wicked Cushan, more of a derogatory term than an actual name or official title. (No curse words in Hebrew)
- Sold into their hand for 8 years.

Proverbs 14:34 "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

V: 9 The children of Israel cry out and God raises up a deliverer; Othniel.

- Prayer; in this case in the form of "crying out" is an act of humility before God; in essence God I need your help, I need you!
- The Lord heard their cry:

Psalms 34:15 "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry."

- Are they righteous? Not to me, not at this moment... God is looking ahead...
- God raises up a delivered, Othniel: "The strength of God", also translated "Lion of God".
- God will raise up 12 men and one woman as "Judges" delivers but the first one is from the tribe of Judah who name means the strength of God or the Lion of God.
- We can't help but think of our Lord Jesus – He's the "first" in all things, He's the strength of God; and He's the Lion of the tribe of Judah!

V: 10 “*And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him...*”

Zechariah 4:6 “... this is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

- Othniel, empowered by God judged Israel and went out to war against Israel's enemies and was victorious.

V: 11 The land – and the people, had rest from war and persecution for 40 years.

- Then Othniel died...

V: 12 As soon as Othniel died, the children of Israel went right back to their “natural” ways.

- Apart from God that is what we do, that is what is natural for us because of our inherent sin nature.

Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;...

Jeremiah 10:23 “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

- I've always been an admirer of military aircraft: WWI the bi-plane, very simple to operate, WWII more powerful, faster – modern age with advanced avionics and electronic systems too complicated for a human being to operate all at one time – F-16's, F-18's, Stealth fighters – none of them will operate without several computers running at the same time – they would fall like a rock from the sky.
- We're the same way, without the Holy Spirit working in us and through our lives we too will crash – and frequently do.
- Without that 3rd part of our tri-unity working in us, we will be governed by the flesh, and the result will be death – which is why we must be born again in the Spirit!
- “... the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab...” For a purpose, to draw this next generation to repentance.
- Whenever God raises up an opposing force in our lives it would be good to ask yourself why is God doing this? He always has a good purpose in mind – because He is good!

V: 13-14 The Lord raised up Ammon and Amalek and smote Israel taking Jericho from them. The children of Israel served / were oppressed by Eglon king of Moab for 18 years. 8 years the first time, 18 the second.

Psalm 75:6-7 “⁶For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and sitteth up another.”

V: 15-17 Again, the children of Israel cried out to God, again God raised up a deliverer.

- Ehud: Unity, Power.
- This time the deliverer is raised up from among the tribe of Benjamin, and he's left handed. Being left handed was actually a common trait of the tribe of Benjamin which is funny because “*Benjamin*” means “*Son of my right hand.*”
- The right had was considered the hand of strength and power, Ehud is left handed – possibly a symbol of weakness.
- This phrase could also be interpreted to mean that Ehud possibly was disabled in his right hand and thereby had to use his left.

1 Corinthians 1:26-27 “²⁶For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

- Eglon = “Calf like” – “... *a very fat man.*” I’m picturing Jabba the Hut fat...
- Ehud was a man with a plan; he made a dagger, a short two edged sword.
- Getting ahead of things a little, the nation will be delivered with the use of a two edged sword, analogous to the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

V: 18-22 Under the guise of presenting his gift, tribute to the conquering king – Ehud tells Eglon that he has a secret message for him.

- Predictably the king sends the servants out.

V: 19 Gilgal had been the place of victory and blessing to the nation, that is where the nation had made their camp after they entered the promised land, now it was a “quarry” – A stone grove, carved images of the male sex organ and a place of pagan fertility rites – Eglon had set up his summer parlour to be able to view these things and as Ehud enters, he positions himself and turns his back to them.

- Ehud tells Eglon that he has a message from God; a message from God would be the same as speaking the word of God for God which brings us back to the sword analogy – and Ehud sticks it to him.
1. I sense a little adrenaline here; Ehud stabs him with such force that the whole sword going past the hilt goes into Eglon and the fat closes over it.
 2. Not wanting to over spiritualize the scene, the sword goes in, and the dirt comes out.
 3. The sword penetrates our lives, and the dirt starts to come out, and seemingly it keeps coming out, and coming out – it’s all part of that refining process that never ends until we are in the presence of the Lord – the Word of God has that cleansing and purifying effect in our lives.

V: 23-26 This details how Ehud made his escape. Seeing the locked door the servants assumed that Eglon was using the restroom.

- When they finally enter in, they discover him dead.

V: 27-30 Blowing the trumpet, gathering the people to war – the tribe of Ephraim.

- Ehud tells the people that ^{“28}...the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.”
- They followed him to victory, killing 10,000 men – “lusty” – “stout men”, “able bodied men” of valor.
- Moab was subdued and they had rest for 80 years.

V: 31 Seemingly without describing the whole cycle of rebellion and subjugation we learn that Shamgar is the next judge who delivers the children of Israel from the Philistines.

- “Shamgar” = “Sword”.

Speaking of spiritual weapons, Paul writes:

Ephesians 6:17b “... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

- An ox goad is simply a sharpened stick, sometimes with a metal tip, it was used to drive oxen, a very simple weapon at best.
- That it could be used to kill 600 men is a miracle. It’s not the weapon, it’s not the man, it’s the God.

Summary:

- How was the nation delivered?
 1. Othniel: The strength of God, filled with the Spirit of God.
 2. Ehud: The power of God wielding the two edged sword, the Word of God.
 3. Shamgar: “Sword” – again the word of God.

2 Peter 1:2-3 “²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ³According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”