

Day 241 - TUESDAY: August 29th

Judges 3

Judges 3:1-31 NKJV

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 (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), 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. 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. Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and 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. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 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. 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. So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died. And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years. But

when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.) And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. But he himself turned back from the stone images that were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him. So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from his seat. Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out. Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them. When he had gone out, Eglon's servants came to look, and to their surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber." So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened them. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor. But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them. Then he said to them, "Follow me, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years. After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan for this chapter states: “All of the Israelites’ weeping and sacrifice did nothing to restrain them from mixing with the detestable heathen in the Land of Promise. “And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods” (verse 6). Israel simply did not have a heart to obey God (Deuteronomy 5:29). The effect was disastrous: conquest and reduction to servitude under gentile kings. The first servitude in the land was under Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and it lasted for eight years. This king’s name “means ‘Cushan of Double Wickedness’; this may not have been his actual name, but instead a name pinned on him by the author of Judges for ridicule [or perhaps one that the people called him for the same reason]. Note that this name is found four times in two verses (vv. 8, 10), which may support the point that the author was mocking the king” (Nelson Study Bible, note on Judges 3:8). The brevity of the servitude under him may be accounted for by the fact that it was Othniel, the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb (Judges 3:9; compare Joshua 15:16-17), whom God used to restore Israel’s freedom. Othniel probably saw and participated in the initial conquest, making him a transitional figure from the generation that saw the earlier works (compare Judges 2:7) to those who didn’t. It may be that some of the first-generation zeal was in Othniel and that his fearless leadership was able to rally a more repentant and zealous spirit in his brethren. For 40 years Israel had freedom. But after the death of Othniel and his restraining influence, Israel returned to the slavery of idolatry. With the return to idolatry came the inevitable return of servitude to a foreign nation. This time it was Eglon, king of Moab, who subdued Israel. After 18 years, God provided release through Ehud, who

assassinated Eglon. Once again, Israel had rest, this time for 80 years. But once again, Israel lapsed into disobedience.

The deliverance by Shamgar is related in a single line. It may be that he judged contemporaneously with Ehud, perhaps taking a more westerly area of administration. He is said to have slain a large number of Philistines, which would put his activity in the western lowlands of Judah. We cannot know for certain. Since Israel is said to have gone astray after Ehud died (Judges 4:1) we may conclude that Shamgar's deliverance occurred after Ehud's judgeship began (Judges 3:31) and that he died before Ehud. Beyond that, The Nelson Study Bible makes some interesting points: "Moreover, Shamgar delivered Israel but did not judge it [at least, that is not expressly stated]. Even the name Shamgar is not Hebrew. Yet he was the son of Anath—clearly a Semitic name. This may mean that he was from the town of Beth-Anath in Galilee; more probably, however, Anath is derived from the name of the Canaanite warrior goddess. If so, then it is ironic that God used a foreign warrior to deliver Israel" (note on 3:31)." [END]

Verse 11 – Othniel means "Lion of God" (BDB)

Verse 13 – The city of Palms refers to valley of "Jericho" (compare Deuteronomy 34:3). The Jewish historian Josephus records that a palace/garrison/fort was near the destroyed city of Jericho. The city of Jericho was not rebuilt until the reign of Ahab.

Verse 15 – Ehud means "united" (BDB).

Verse 16 – This dagger was approximately 18 inches long.

Verse 24 – Some commentaries and translations believe this verse states that they believe he was “taking a nap” (by taking off his slippers and covering his feet) or that he was using his private toilet.

Verse 27 – Here the word for trumpet in Hebrew is “shofar”. While this trumpet had multiple uses, one of its primary purposes was a call to war which we see the people do in verse 28.

Verse 31 – The name Shamgar means “sword” (BDB). This is the only time this word for “ox goad” is used in the Bible. The JFB commentary states: “This instrument is eight feet long and about six inches in circumference. It is armed at the lesser end with a sharp prong for driving the cattle, and on the other with a small iron paddle for removing the clay which encumbers the plough in working. Such an instrument, wielded by a strong arm, would do no mean execution. We may suppose, however, for the notice is very fragmentary, that Shamgar was only the leader of a band of peasants, who by means of such implements of labor as they could lay hold of at the moment, achieved the heroic exploit recorded.” [END]