

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 4- ''

Key text: Judges 3:1-11

Suppl. texts:

Introduction: Last time, we read of a divine dispatch, a divine decree, & a divine despair. We discovered that it was the preincarnate Christ, the Angel of the LORD, who delivered God's rebuke of His people for their idolatrous ways. God did not thrust His people out of the land, nor did He destroy them, but He did remove His ability behind their actions. Finally, we saw the temporary sorrow of God's people by the way they wept over their sin. However, they only felt remorse, not repentance, and went right back to their sins. Tonight, we begin to understand the people God raised to be Judges in Israel & how God rescued His people time & again.

Outline: **read Judges 3:1-11.**

1. A growing comfort

- Chapter 3 begins by telling us that the LORD allowed the nations to stay to 'test' the Israelites. This speaks of **tests, trials, temptations, & tyranny** for God's people.
- **Vs. 1-2**; *"These are the nations **the LORD left to test** all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (He did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience)."*
- The allowance of the battle testing does not make it okay that the children of Israel disobeyed. God was not 'okaying' their actions but using their **rebellious** hearts to accomplish His **purposes**. (Sound familiar? Jesus)
- ***"When God goes to war, He usually chooses the most unlikely soldiers, hands them the most unusual weapons, and accomplishes through them the most unpredictable results."*** This is true in both the positive & negative sense.
- There is a **spiritual** battle behind every **physical** battle.
- **Vs. 3-4**; *"the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which He had given their forefathers through Moses."*
- ***Did the Israelites pass the test?*** The answer is sadly, no!
- **Vs. 5-6**; *"The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods."*
- They were comfortable in their **surroundings**, though their surroundings were **ungodly**. They not only settled among foreigners, but they also made foreigners part of their families. This was a **double violation** of God's commands.

2. A growing **disobedience**

- This was not **racism**. God didn't forbid intermarriage because He disliked other races.
- God knew that foreign wives & foreign husbands would exert **pressure & influence** over the Israelites. Infecting them with the worship of false gods.
- **Who were the main false gods?**
- These people groups worshipped **Baal & Asherah**.
- **How were these gods/goddesses worshipped?**
- Through sexual promiscuity, dancing, child sacrifice, & fertility rituals.
- They stopped being disciples of Yahweh & became disciples of Baal & Asherah.
- Their society began to reflect this promiscuous change. *"They followed a religion of sex, or rather, sex became their religion."*
- In other words, the worship of these foreign gods appealed to their **fleshly** desires & was much more **palatable** to them than the worship of Yahweh.
- Their initial **curiosity** led to their total **conformity**.
- **Vs. 7:** *"The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs."*
- Interesting how the text says they forgot about Yahweh. As if God didn't really enter their daily thinking or life. They just started serving the false gods.
- God didn't look the other way at their horrific sin. He responded by keeping His Word & promise to discipline them for disobedience. God is jealous for His people.
- **Vs. 8:** *"The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years."* Likely a **nickname**, his name means: **Cushan of double wickedness**. This powerful & evil ruler owned Israel all the way south to Judah.
- God's punishment: enslave them to another master, worse than Egypt.
- **Four** times in the book of Judges, we are told that God 'sold' His people.
- *Spurgeon quote: "God never allows His people to sin successfully. Their sin will either destroy them or will invite the chastening hand of God." (put on a slide)*

3. A growing **threat**

- The Israelites **groaned** under the **weight** of their oppression. Sound familiar?
- Suddenly, they experience an epiphany, let's return to the one true God.
- **Vs. 9:** *"But when they cried out to the LORD, He raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them."*
- God now acts in accordance with His **covenant** Word to maintain Israel & bless the whole world & sends them a deliverer named Othniel, the first judge.
- We first heard of Othniel back in **Judges 1:11-13**, where Othniel captured a city & married Caleb's daughter (Acsah) in reward for his courage.
- When called upon, by man or by the LORD, Othniel was ready to obey.

- **Vs. 10;** *“The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan Rishathaim, king of Aram, into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him.”*
- Cushan was very wicked, but he was no match for the Spirit of the LORD.
- We must pause to discuss what becomes a familiar Old Testament phrase, *“the Spirit of the LORD came upon him.”* The Holy Spirit of God did not ***indwell*** people in the Old Testament. Instead, the Spirit ***came*** & ***went***, accomplishing God's purpose & will.
- In the N.T. & under the new covenant, the Holy Spirit ***indwells*** God's people to ***empower, sanctify, & accomplish*** God's will in & through His people.
- The secret to Othniel's strength & success was the LORD Himself.
- Othniel not only delivered His people but went on to successfully lead & judge Israel for the next ***forty*** years.
- God was not just gracious once but time & again despite their disobedience.

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 4

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Finally, we saw the temporary sorrow of God's people by the way they wept over their sin. However, they only felt remorse, not repentance, and went right back to their sins. Tonight, we begin to understand the people God raised to be Judges in Israel & how God rescued His people time & again.

1. A growing _____

- This speaks of _____, _____, _____, & _____.
- God was not 'okaying' their actions but using their _____ hearts to accomplish His _____.
- *"When God goes to war, He usually chooses the most unlikely soldiers, hands them the most unusual weapons, and accomplishes through them the most unpredictable results."*
- There is a _____ battle behind every _____ battle.
- ***Did the Israelites pass the test?***
- They were comfortable in their _____, though their surroundings were _____. This was a _____ of God's commands.

2. A growing _____

- This was not _____.
- God knew that foreign wives & foreign husbands would exert _____ & _____ over the Israelites.
- ***Who were the main false gods?***
- These people groups worshipped _____ & _____.
- ***How were these gods/goddesses worshipped?***
- *"They followed a religion of sex, or rather, sex became their religion."*
- In other words, the worship of these foreign gods appealed to their _____ desires & was much more _____ to them than the worship of Yahweh.
- Their initial _____ led to their total _____.
- Likely a _____, his name means: ***Cushan of double wickedness.***
- _____ times in the book of Judges, we are told that God 'sold' His people.
- *Spurgeon quote: "God never allows His people to sin successfully. Their sin will either destroy them or will invite the chastening hand of God."*

3. A growing _____

- The Israelites _____ under the _____ of their oppression. Sound familiar?

- God now acts in accordance with His _____ Word to maintain Israel & bless the whole world & sends them a deliverer named Othniel, the first judge.
- The Holy Spirit of God did not _____ people in the Old Testament. Instead, the Spirit _____ & _____, accomplishing God's purpose & will.
- In the N.T. & under the new covenant, the Holy Spirit _____ God's people to _____, _____, & _____ God's will in & through His people.
- Othniel not only delivered His people but went on to successfully lead & judge Israel for the next _____ years.

Small Group Questions:

1. Can you think of other biblical examples of how God used man's disobedience to accomplish His purposes? Discuss.
2. In a previous message, we saw that the Israelites allowed other people groups to stay outside their city gates. Now they are living among them & intermarrying with them. Discuss the insidious nature of sin & the slippery slope it always entails.
3. Discuss the similarity to the religion of sex in their day compared to the hyper-sexualized culture we are surrounded by today. How can we keep from being drawn in?
4. Discuss the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life & how blessed we are to live on this side of Christ.
5. Finally, discuss the extravagant grace of God. He gave His people grace in victory over bondage & forty years of grace. How much more to us today through Jesus Christ?

Additional Prayer Concerns:
