

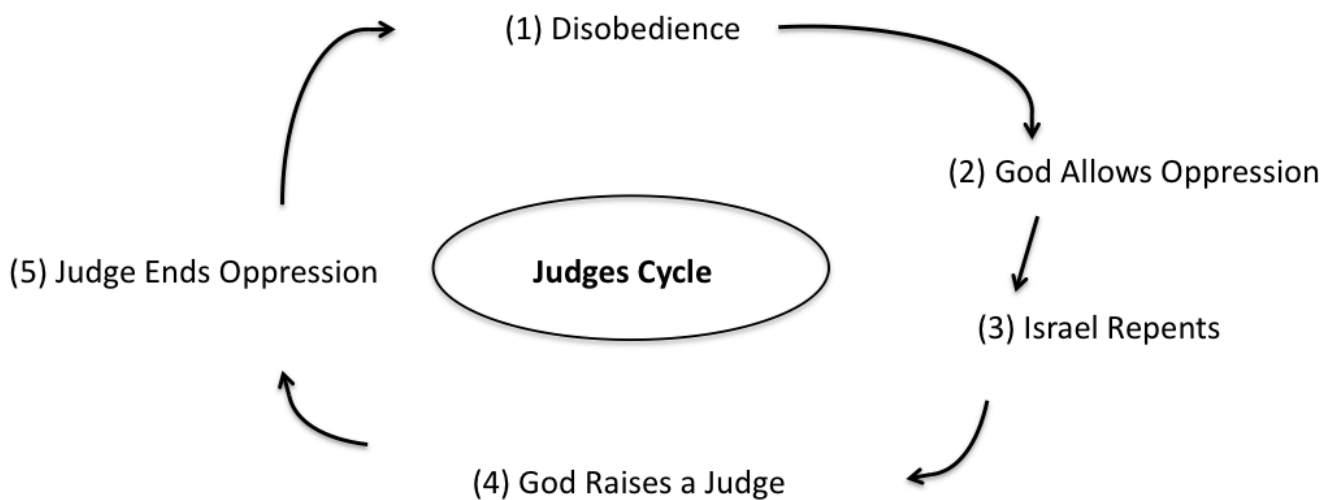
Lessons From Characters In Old Testament

The Judges

Lesson 16

INTRO:

- A. The Hebrew word for “judges’ does not mean judge in the sense of a modern judicial person with black robes and a courtroom.
- B. It means one who decides, who vindicates, who delivers, or one who leads or governs.
- C. These leaders were not governors of all Israel.
 - 1. They were mainly local individuals who led certain tribes of Israel to freedom over their oppressors.
- D. There is a repeated pattern in the book of Judges:
 - 1. *“the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD”*
 - a. This phrase is found first in Judges 2:11. It is then repeated in Judges 3:7.
 - b. After that, it changes slightly to *“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD...”*. (Judges 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1).
 - c. More times than not, the evil involved the worship of the idols of the Canaanites: Baal (plural form “Baalim”) and Ashtaroath (Judges 2:11-13).
 - 1) Baal, which meant “master” or “lord” was one of the principle gods.
 - 2) Ashtaroath was one of Baal’s companions, the goddess of love and fertility.
 - 3) Between these two idols were, supposedly, control of weather, crops, and offspring.
 - 2. *“He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about,”* (Judges 2:14; 3:8; 4:2; and 10:7.)
 - a. This is the statement often found after mention is made of the “burning” anger of God concerning the evil being done by the Israelites.
 - 3. *“And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD,...”* (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:2; 6:6, 7; and 10:10.)
 - 4. *“Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.”* (Judges 2:16,18; 3:9,15; Judges 2:16; 3:9,15,31; 6:15,36,37; 7:7; and 10:12.



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- E. These judges were local rulers from different tribes of the children of Israel who God raised up at a specific time against a specific enemy.
 - 1. Some took the role of military leader (Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah).
 - 2. God used others to deliver Israel in roles as a single warrior (Shamgar and Samson).
 - 3. The judges at times were like prophets (Deborah) and one took a Nazarite vow (Samson).
 - 4. Concerning several of the judges, we are not told the specifics of their roles (Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon).
- F. In the book that follows the book of Judges (1 Samuel) we read of two more judges who were priests (Eli and Samuel).
 - 1. It was during the time of Samuel that Israel left the days of judges and became a monarchy under a king (Saul).

I. **OTHNIEL (JUDGES 3:7-11)**

- A. We know very little about Othniel other than him being of the tribe of Judah and the Lord calling him to be a judge.
 - 1. He was the grandson of Caleb's brother. (v. 9)
- B. Othniel lived at a time when Israel was worshipping the idols of the Canaanites. (v. 7)
- C. God caused the king of Mesopotamia, King Cushan-rishathaim, to oppress Israel for eight years. (v. 8)
- D. He enslaved Israel until they cried out to the Lord and He placed His Spirit upon Othniel. (vs. 9-10)
- E. Going to war, Othniel defeated the King and the land of Israel had peace for the duration of Othniel's life (forty years). (vs. 10-11)

F. **LESSONS:**

- 1. It Is God We Must Serve!
 - a. The Israelites turned their backs on God.
 - b. Their sins lead to their enslavement as sin can and will do to us.
- Romans 6:16**
- 2. If We Repent, God Will Deliver Us From Sin.
 - a. It's interesting how it took eight years for Israel to realize they needed God.
 - b. Just as there are folks today who don't think they need God!
 - c. Israel might could have very well...
 - 1) thought they could simply shake off their oppressor or...
 - 2) made light of their suffering at the beginning or...
 - 3. let their pride kept them from seeing their real situation – that they are hopeless without God.
 - d. They eventually realized that Baal and Asheroth couldn't help them.
 - e. Our God is "...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

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3. God Will Give Us Rest.
 - a. In verse 11 God is showing He can give us rest and He wants to give us rest – if only we seek it.
 - b. So many go on with their lives with all of its many distractions and worldly cares.
 - 1) They chase after things they think will make them happy.
 - c. In the end, they end up feeling empty, disillusioned, and tired.
 - d. Only God who can give us true rest – a peace this world fails to experience - a peace “*passeth all understanding*” (**Philippines 4:7**)
 - e. Remember what Christ said: (**Matthew 11:28-30**).

Next Study:

Ehud, Shamgar, and Deborah

Read: Judges 3:12 - 5:21