OTHNIEL

THE LION OF GOD

**DATE: 2/17/2013 pm**

**TEXT: Judges 3:1-11**

**INTRODUCTION**

With our Series introduction in hand

Let’s now turn our attention to **Judges 3:1-11** and meet the first Judge of Israel

I want to introduce you to a man named ***Othniel***

His name means “*Lion of God*”

He was a man who lived up to his name

Israel failed to walk with the Lord, like commanded

God then refused to drive out their enemies in the land

Thus, Israel was forced to live alongside the very people they had been sent to drive out

We are told in **vs. 1-4** exactly why God left the people in the land …

Let’s look at His 2 reasons -

**1.** *He left them there* to prove Israel **– v.1**

The word “***prove***” means *to put to the test*

God allowed the pagans to live around His people to test Israel

His people were tested to see how they would live when surrounded by the wicked

His people were tested to see if they would keep His commandments or not

**vs. 5-7** tell us they failed the test!

**2.** *He left them there* to teach a new generation about spiritual warfare – **v.2** …

God wanted them to learn the lessons of battle their fathers had known

God wanted them to be strong and to know how to fight the enemy when the enemy came around

They failed this test too!

It wasn’t long before some serious problems arose among the people of Israel

Israel proved that they could not be trusted to stand up against the enemy

They proved that they would rather Join the enemy than Fight them

Let’s pray and then look at how God delivered Israel from a time of cruel bondage by raising up -

***Othniel: The Lion of God***

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I.** **ISRAEL’S “COMPROMISE” – vs.5-7**

We see here the ugly details of Israel’s first great failure

What they did, stands as a stark warning to the people of God in any age

What Israel does here is what we see people doing all around us today

Notice how they Compromised the Word & Will of God to do the things they wanted to do

**A. The ‘Interaction’ – v.5 …**

The Bible says that the children of Israel “***dwelt among***” the various tribes of Canaan

The word “***dwelt***” has the idea *of settling down; and setting up housekeeping*

When Israel arrived in Canaan

They were commanded to destroy these people without mercy –

**Deuteronomy 7:2 – *“And 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:”***

Now they are living among them

It didn’t take long for their former enemies to become their new neighbors

Here’s the problem

Israel was to live separate from the world

They were to be unique from other peoples

They had been Chosen, Redeemed and Set Apart to serve Almighty God

And He expected them to remain separate

**Deuteronomy 7:6-11 …**

Because they didn’t, they opened themselves up to sin that would end with them facing the terrible chastisement of God

The Christian is to continue the principle of separation

**II Corinthians 6:17 – *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”***

We are to be a “***peculiar people***”

**Titus 2:14  *“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”***

That does not mean we are weird,

It means that we are God’s *Special Possession*

He loves & chose us, He sent His Son to die for us

He redeemed us and bought us

**I Corinthians 6:20 – *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's”***

When we fail to walk in His will and honor His Word

We also open ourselves up to sin that eventually overwhelm us

It is a dangerous thing for a child of God to live like the world around them!

**The ‘Interaction’**

**B. The ‘Intermarriage’ – v.6a …**

After a while, the people of Israel got so used to living among the Canaanites that they began to intermarry

This was expressly forbidden by the Lord

**Deuteronomy 7:3 – *“Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son”***

It was pure disobedience on their part

This is how they thought? –

*“These Canaanites are not as bad as we were told. They are actually very nice people. They’re not monsters at all. Their girls make very good wives. There is no reason why we can’t marry them. After all, we might just be able to change them”*

Israel soon found out that it was them, and not the Canaanites that changed

As they married into the tribes around them, the Israelites began to lose their national identity

The integrity of their families began to break down

They soon lost the very thing that made them unique

The same danger confronts us today

When we get too close to the world around us,

We will soon find ourselves entangled with their sins

The company you keep will determine how close you walk to the Lord

**I Corinthians 15:33 – *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”***

This is why God commands us to keep our distance

We must interact with the world so that we can be a light to them and give them the Gospel …

**Matthew 5:16 –**

***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”***

**Acts 1:8 – *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”***

But, we must keep our spiritual distance

It’s but a short step from walking in the world to living like the world

**‘Interaction, Intermarriage’**

**C. ‘Idolatry’ – vs. 6b, 7b**

it was a very short step from living among them, to marrying them, to worshiping with them

You can imagine how they rationalized this

Perhaps they said, “*Well, you marry a Canaanite girl and you just have to understand how they are. They were brought up differently than we were. You have to allow them to bring their gods. After all, it’s just part of her culture*”

Soon, we find the Israelite’s bowing before the gods of the Canaanites

**V. 7b** says they “***served Baalim and the groves***”

This refers to the various gods and goddesses of the Canaanites

Many of their gods were associated with fertility rituals and their worship involved disgusting acts and the actual prostitution of their daughters in the groves

What you have here is a group of people, who have gone, in one generation, from worshiping God and fighting evil,

To abandoning God while they sleep with the enemy!

Worst of all, they have handed over their precious sons and daughters to the very people they had been commanded to utterly destroy

The same danger confronts wayward saints in our day!

When we refuse to maintain our distance from the world around us;

When we continually yoke ourselves to the people and things of the world; when we bow down at their altars, we are sacrificing a generation to the gods of this world

We are teaching our children that they are free to treat God and His Word as they please

We are telling them that it is alright to disregard God, His Word, His House, His worship and His will

We are telling that they are free to chart their own course through this world

**‘Interaction, Intermarriage, Idolatry’**

**D. ‘Indifference’ – v.7a …**

Each step they took led them farther away from God

Eventually abandoning God and His ways

**V. 7a** tells us that they “***forgat the Lord their God***”

The word “***forgat***” means *to ignore, or to cease to care*

The people of Israel reached a place where they simply ignored God …

And ceased to care about Him or what He had to say about anything

They reached a place of total indifference toward the Lord

That is where U.S. is today!

Most folk know the Lord is there

They know that His Word has something to say to them about their lives and how they lives them

They know God as a claim on their lives, but they choose to ignore Him

He is there, but they aren’t listening

He calls, but they don’t come

They harden their hearts against God, His Word and the call of the Spirit of God

They turn a deaf ear to Him and His call on their lives

As far as they are concerned, God doesn’t matter, and He might as well not even exist!

That is a dangerous place to be!

**ISRAEL’S “COMPROMISE”**

**II.** **ISRAEL’S “CHASTISEMENT” – v.8** (3/17/2013 pm)

That is where Israel was spiritually,

But that is not where God would leave them

**Quote:** Charles Spurgeon used to say, “*God never allows His people to sin successfully.*”

That is, you might do it, but you won’t get away with it!

There is always a price to pay for disobedience and rebellion against God

**A. The ‘Focus’ of God’s Anger**

The word “***anger***” refers to *a flaring of the nostrils*

It is the image of a face filled with rage

The word “***hot***” means *to be furious*

God was not angry with the Canaanites

Oh, He hated their sin, but they were lost people

They did not have His Law

They had not been redeemed and separated and commanded to be different

God’s anger was directed at His people

He was about to deal with them for their sin

If we are saved and we choose to walk away from the Lord,

We might as well know that there will be a price to pay

If you are genuinely saved, God will bring His chastisement into your life

**Revelation 3:19 – *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent***”

**Hebrews 12:6-12 …**

God does this, not to hurt us, but to help us …

Help us get back to where we are supposed to be

**I Corinthians 11:32 – *“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”***

**The ‘Focus’ of God’s Anger**

**B.** **The ‘Fierceness’ of God’s Anger**

We are told that God “***sold***” Israel into the hands of a pagan king

It has the idea of *giving up, or giving over into someone’s control or power*

In other words, Israel gave themselves to paganism

God punished them by allowing them what they wanted

They did not want to follow God’s rule in their lives,

So He allowed them to be ruled by a harsh, pagan king

The name of this king is “***Chushan-rishathaim***”

Which means *Doubly Wicked Cushan*

Literally “*Doubly wicked and black*” (dark hearted)

Israel was reaping what they had sowed

They wanted paganism

They wanted their sin; they wanted their false gods;

And God gave them everything they asked for and more

The same danger faces us today

Those that are not as close to the Lord as they once were

Those who are not attending church like they used to

Those that are not as committed as they used to be

Those no longer faithful to the Lord like they once were

Other things have taken God’s place in their life

Other gods if you will

Little things like pleasure, desires, toys …

(You know what I am talking about)

Don’t be surprised when they reap what they have sowed

Those things that seem so important can become tyrants in someone’s life

They can become to us “***doubly wicked and black***”

Be especially Careful! because …

We might reap our harvest in the lives of our children,

We might reap our harvest in God selling us to the things we run after

But, be certain, a harvest will be reaped!

The fact is, Spurgeon was right

“*God never allows His people to sin successfully!*”

We will reap what we sow - **Galatians 6:7, 8**

**The ‘Focus’ & ‘Fierceness’ of God’s Anger**

**C. The ‘Fullness’ of God’s Anger**

God sold them into slavery and left them there for “***eight years***”

He allowed them to experience the full measure of what their sin cost them

When they at first, dwelt among the Canaanites, married their sons and daughters and bowed down to their gods, they never thought it would come to this, but it did!

They paid a terrible price for their folly!

What kind of price will we or someone we know pay, if we continue to live in sin?

When living in sin –

- We lack the power to free ourselves

- We lack the power to help others

- We lack the power to pray

- We lack the power to read and understand the Word of God

- We lack the power to be who God saved us to be

**Quote:** Someone said, “*Sin will take you farther than you want to go; keep you longer than you want to stay; and cost you more than you want to pay.*”

**ISRAEL’S “COMPROMISE”**

**ISRAEL’S “CHASTISEMENT”**

**III.** **ISRAEL’S “CHAMPION” – vs. 9-11**

When Israel came to themselves; they called on God

The Bible says in **v.9**

***“the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel,”***

The assumption is - *He heard them*

When they turned back to Him in their hearts,

He reached out to them in deliverance

He raised up their first judge, a man by the name of Othniel!

Othniel is called “***a deliverer***”

The word means *a saviour*, and …

That’s just what Othniel was

**A.** **Othniel’s ‘Credentials’**

We are told that Othniel is “***Caleb’s younger brother***”

We are also told that he is the son of “***Kenaz***”

But Caleb’s father was a man named “***Jephunneh***”

**Numbers 13:6 *– “Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh”***

This is not a contradiction

Kenaz was probably Caleb’s brother, and Othniel was probably his son

That would have made him Caleb’s nephew

And, if Kenaz was dead, Othniel would have been elevated to a place of leadership in the family

Thus, he would have been recognized as Caleb’s brother

At any rate, Othniel came from a family of courage and bravery

Back in **Judges 1:12, 13** Othniel defeated a Canaanite city to win Caleb’s daughter as his wife

So, Othniel was a man of great courage with strong ties to a former generation of leaders in Israel

He was an older man, some believe around 75 yrs. old

He was battle tested

He was available and God chose him

Othniel reminds us that God can use anyone

Regardless of how old we might be

Regardless of our past

Regardless of who we are or what we are going thru

God can use us for His glory, if we will only make ourselves available to Him

Othniel did that, and the Lord used him

It has been said, and it is still true, that -

“*the greatest ability is availability*”

**Othniel’s ‘Credentials’**

**B.** **Othniel’s ‘Companion’**

Othniel was useful to the Lord because “***the Spirit of the Lord came upon him***”

Othniel did not possess the power to deliver Israel by himself

But, when the Spirit of God took control

God was able to use him in great ways

Othniel did not really deliver Israel

God delivered Israel through Othniel!

The truth is, left to ourselves, we are incapable of serving God as He deserves to be served

The only way we will ever be useful and usable …

Is when we are controlled by the Spirit of God like Othniel

**Galatians 5:16-25 …**

**Ephesians 5:18b …**

- The Spirit of God will enable us to stand against the enemy

- The Spirit of God will make us powerful for the glory of the Lord

- The Spirit of God will use us in ways that we can hardly imagine

But we must yield to Him and His power in our lives

That is the secret to power with God

**Acts 1:8 …**

**Othniel’s ‘Credentials’, ‘Companion’**

**C. Othniel’s ‘Conquest’**

- God enabled Othniel to defeat the pagan king

- God allowed Othniel to deliver Israel from bondage

- God empowered Othniel to judge the nation of Israel

- God gave Othniel victory in his life

Because Othniel gave himself to the Lord!

Do you want the Lord to use your life for His glory?

- Do you want to see Him do great things through you?

- Do you want to be free from the yoke of sin?

- Do you want to see your family delivered from bondage?

- Do you want victory in your life?

If you do, yield to the Lord like Othniel did

Allow the Lord to lead you and control you and He will use you for His glory

**CONCLUSION**

I wonder, are you concerned about where you are spiritually with the Lord

Are you concerned about where your family is headed?

Are you concerned about someone around you who has gone off in search of the things of this world?

If any of these things are true, why not come before the Lord and deal with these issues

Would you like to be used of the Lord in a greater way?

Would you like to be more dedicated to Him?

Has God been dealing with you about your walk with Him?

If so, come to Him and get the help you need

If He has touched your heart on any level,

You come and let Him do in you what He wants to do

If He is calling, you need to obey His voice

That is the first step toward victory

**ISRAEL’S “COMPROMISE”**

**ISRAEL’S “CHASTISEMENT”**

**ISRAEL’S “CHAMPION”**