

Othniel, the Lion of God, Caleb's Nephew

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

- A. Joshua 24:15-31; Judges 2:10-23 - 3:1-11
- B. Israel during the time of the judges can be summed up in Judges 17:6; 21:25
- C. God told them what to do in the Promised Land - Deut. 7:1-6
 - 1. Possess the land,
 - 2. Utterly destroy all the nations of Canaan,
 - 3. Make no peace treaties with them,
 - 4. Show them no mercy; they were idolaters who burned their children alive in sacrifice,
 - 5. Refuse to intermarry with them,
 - 6. Completely destroy every trace of their pagan religions.
- D. Israel failed to fully carry out the Lord's command.
 - 1. Judah - Judges 1:19-20
 - 2. Benjamin - 1:21
 - 3. Joseph - 1:22-26
 - 4. Manasseh - 1:27-28
 - 5. Ephraim - 1:29
 - 6. Zebulun - 1:30
 - 7. Asher - 1:31-32
 - 8. Naphtali - 1:33
 - 9. Dan - 1:34
 - 10. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh refused to enter Canaan, choosing to remain on the other side of Jordan.

I. OTHNIEL: THE LION OF GOD

- A. The man who lived up to his name - Judges 3:1-11
- B. Israel's compromise
 - 1. Interaction with the Canaanites
 - a. Israel was to be separate from the world around them. They were unique among all the peoples of the world.
 - b. They had been chosen, redeemed and set apart to serve the Lord God Almighty, and He expected them to remain separate.
 - c. Deut. 7:6-11
 - d. Because they didn't, they opened a floodgate of sin that would end with facing the chastening of God.
 - e. 2Cor. 6:17; Titus 2:14; 1Cor. 6:20
 - 2. Intermarriage with the Canaanites
 - a. After a while, the people of Israel got so used to living among the Canaanites that they began to intermarry with them.
 - b. This was expressly forbidden by the Lord.
 - c. The company you keep will determine how closely you walk with the Lord - 1Cor. 15:33

- d. We must interact with the world so that we can be a light to them.
 - 1) Matt. 5:16
- e. But we must keep our spiritual distance. It is but a short step from walking with the world to living like the world.
- 3. Idolatry with the Canaanites
 - a. It was a very brief journey from living among them, to marrying them, to worshiping with them.
 - b. They were producing children that would be offered in sacrifice to the pagan gods.
 - c. When we compromise with the religions of our family and friends, we teach our children that it is acceptable to trade the faith and their eternal souls for temporary relationships in this world.
- 4. Indifference with the Canaanites
 - a. They forgot God; the One who delivered them from bondage and placed them in the Promised Land was forgotten within a generation and a half.
- C. Israel's chastisement
 - 1. The focus of God's wrath.
 - a. In Hebrew, the word "anger" refers to a flaring of the nostrils. It is the image of a face filled with wrath.
 - b. God was not angry with the Canaanites; He was angry with His people who were care for and blessed by Him - Rev. 3:19
 - c. God does this to help us to get back to where we are supposed to be - 1Cor. 11:32
 - 2. The fierceness of God's wrath.
 - a. God sold Israel into the hands of a pagan king (giving up, or giving over into one's control or power).
 - b. Israel gave themselves to paganism and God punished them by giving them what they wanted.
 - c. Chushan-rishathaim means Doubly Wicked Cushan (literally translated "doubly wicked and black with darkness").
 - d. Spurgeon wrote: "God never allows His people to sin successfully!" You will reap what you sow - Gal. 6:7-8.
 - 3. The fullness of God's wrath.
 - a. God sold them into slavery and left them there for eight years.
 - b. "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."
- D. Israel's champion
 - 1. Othniel's credentials - Caleb's nephew
 - a. He is the son of "Kenaz."
 - b. Caleb's father was a man named "Jephunneh" - Num. 13:6.
 - c. Kenaz was likely Caleb's brother, and Othniel was his son; that would have made him Caleb's nephew.
 - d. He was a man of courage and bravery. In Judges 1:12-13, he defeated a Canaanite city to win Caleb's daughter as wife.
 - e. He was an older man; some believe around the age of 75.

- f. He was battle tested. He was available and God chose him.
- g. "The greatest ability is often availability." (Bill Parcells)
- 2. Othniel's companion - The Spirit of God
 - a. Look what the Spirit of God did for him. What can the Spirit do for us? - Rom. 8:9-14
- 3. Othniel's conquest
 - a. God gave Othniel victory in his life because Othniel gave himself to the Lord.
 - b. Jesus took a lad's lunch and fed a multitude.
 - c. He took two tiny coins and taught billions a timeless message about what is important.
 - d. What can He do with your life if you give it to Him? - 2Cor. 8:3-5

Conclusion:

- A. Othniel, Caleb's nephew, 75 years old, led Israel in war against the doubly wicked king of a nation that would eventually become the Babylonian Empire, and won; and then, returned Israel to worship God in peace for 40 years.
- B. Can we, who enjoy the blessings in Christ and the fullness of God's will, do any less?