

Who Does God Choose? — Othniel

In spite of the growing human failure to obey and worship the Lord wholeheartedly, God acts to save His people. In doing so He demonstrates His great power, compassion, and grace. He does so by choosing someone through which to work. The surprising part is whom He chooses. In this lesson, we will look at Othniel and the delivering role he played during one of Israel's repeated cycles of sin, sold, sorrow, salvation and security.

Stop and Pray - Oh, that You would use me, Lord. Open my eyes to the wisdom in Your choices, and make me worthy of Your choosing that You might be glorified through me.

1. Tell about a time you were chosen for a contest, job, or office. Why were you selected from all those who also wanted the title or position you received?

2.
 - a. What kind of leaders do you desire for our nation or church? List their ideal qualities.

 - b. What kind of men does God choose (I Corinthians 1:26-29)? Why?

3. After the death of Joshua, no one was appointed to lead Israel. Who was the nation suppose to look to for leadership, according to God's plan, and what would that plan have achieved? Refer to I Samuel 8:6-8 while considering all that we have studied so far this year.

Othniel - Read and mark the text of Judges 3:7-11 found on page 6 of this lesson.

4. Sin—Israel's idolatry provoked the Lord to anger so that He sold Israel into the hands of oppressors.
 - a. What does "sold them" mean (Deuteronomy 32:30)?

- b. Is this unloving? Unjust? Mean? Based on all we have studied so far this year, how would you explain God's actions to a friend?

Note: As we progress through the various judges' stories, we will examine the attributes of each oppressor and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if a similar enemy is oppressing us. Remember that an enemy is something that God allows in your life in order to drive you back to Him.

Sold—Let's look at the oppressor in the Othniel story. God's method for curbing Israel's idolatry in Judges 3:7 was to sell them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim to whom they were subject for eight years. Cushan-Rishathaim's name means "dark, twice wicked". It probably was a name that described his character and how he ruled.

5. Pause for a moment to think about what it would be like to live under a dark, twice wicked ruler. List some words that describe how one might feel living under this type of an oppressor.

6. Sorrow—Let's examine the purpose of this oppression.
 - a. In Judges 3:7-11, what did eight years of being subject to this dark, twice wicked king lead the people to do?

- b. Once this end was achieved, how did God respond?

- c. What does this sequence of events teach you about God's character and His methods of dealing with His children?

7. Salvation—Let's examine Israel's first judge: Othniel son of Kenaz.
 - a. Background of his name:
 - What does "Othniel" mean? Look up the translation of his name in a Bible dictionary.

- Who were the Kenizzites (tribe of Kenaz)? Consult a Bible dictionary if you have one. See Genesis 36:9-11; 36:40-42; Genesis 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 7:1. (Note who is missing from the list in Genesis 15.)

- From whom were Caleb and Othniel descended (Joshua 14:13-14; Joshua 15:13; I Chronicles 4:13,15)?

- b. Scriptures note that Othniel was Caleb's relative. Who was Caleb and what impact might he have had on Othniel (Numbers 13:1-2, 6, 30; 14:6-9, 24; Joshua 14:6-15)?

- c. What do we learn about Othniel's life from Joshua 15:13-19 and Judges 1:11-15?

- d. As you noticed in the above verses, Othniel's marriage to Acsah is mentioned in detail twice. Why do you think their story is repeated in the book of Judges?

- e. In summary, how does God choose to portray Othniel through the author of this passage?

- f. How was he different than most men of his day?

8. The Delivery—How was Israel saved from the rule of this dark, twice wicked king?
a. According to Judges 3:7-11, list all the things that God did and all the things that Othniel did.

God

Othniel

- b. Summarize God's part:

Summarize Othniel's part:

Note: In Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit would empower individuals for specific tasks, giving them various skills, such as leadership in the case of Othniel (Judges 3:10) or physical prowess like Sampson (Judges 14:6). It was not a continuous indwelling for all time as born-again Christians have in the New Testament.

9. Reviewing Othniel's life, why do you think God chose Othniel? What made him so usable by God?
10. For women only: How could you learn from Acsah's example? How could you influence the men in your life to value, trust in, and act on God's promises in their own lives?
11. Security
a. What was the outcome of this cycle and why was it so positive?

- b. Remembering the circumstances Israel was living under in this cycle, how does this story encourage your faith in God?

12. *“...If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen”* (I Peter 4:11). Othniel lived in such a way that God was glorified in all he did. Examine your life. What specifically are you doing to glorify God? What could you do to glorify God?

Heart Check: God is the only one capable of ruling Israel or our lives well. However, many do not allow God to rule in their lives. Is He the LORD of your life? Are you allowing Him to command you in His ways? If not, do you want Him to become the LORD of your life? If you have any questions about taking this important step, please ask your leader. She will be thrilled to answer any questions you have.

Final Thoughts: Othniel, as Israel’s first judge, was obedient to God and the way in which he led the nation exemplified the ideal cycle. Othniel was completely available to God. As long as we are available to Him, His ways work so well. The problems begin when we let ourselves and our ideas get in His way. It will be interesting to compare the remaining judges’ stories with this ideal. Are they all this effective? Why or why not? Those are questions from which we all can learn.

Pray - God, only You know how to rule a broken world. Convict me and forgive me when my ideas get in Your way. Oh, that I would be fully available to You that You might be glorified in all that I do and say.

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Lesson 9 — Othniel — Judges 3:7-11

Examine your text.

Mark your text. Put a box around time words (e.g. when, then, now). Put a circle around conditional words (e.g. so that, because, but). Underline all references, including pronouns (e.g. their, them, he):

- God in red
- Othniel in green
- Israel in blue
- an enemy in black
- an enemy's gods in jagged black

Judges 3:7-11 -- Othniel

7 The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. 8 Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. 9 When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. 11 Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

(Judges 3:7-11, NASB95)