

OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 5 — “Faithfulness & Availability to God” — June 8, 2025

Introduction: Bear the Burden

“It is in responsibility that most people find the meaning that sustains them through life. It’s not in happiness. It’s not in impulsive pleasure.”
—Jordan Peterson

Main Point: The account of Othniel demonstrates that a life of faithfulness _____ us to work along with the Lord as He carries out His purposes in the world.

Judges 3:7-11

Following after the first and second introductions to the book, the account of Othniel describes how the Lord brought about deliverance for Israel in spite of their sin. Othniel’s judgeship serves as the archetype for all others whom the Lord would raise to this position of leadership during this turbulent time.

Observations:

1. Israel abandoned the Lord and so He permitted them to be oppressed by enemies from the North. (3:7-8)

Judges 3:7—And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.

“what was evil”

“forgot”

⇒ This involved failing to properly worship the Lord according to His _____ and actively engaging in idolatrous and immoral worship practices associated with the Canaanite gods.

Judges 3:8—Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

Israel’s Oppressor: Cushan-rishathaim (‘*Cushan of double* _____’)

King of _____ (‘*āram nahārayim*—‘Aram of the Two Rivers’)

Key Point: God even work through the _____ who unintentionally accomplish His purposes in the world.

2. In response to Israel’s oppression, God raised up Othniel as judge. (3:9-11)

Judges 3:9—But when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.

⇒ The word used of Israel’s response to the Lord’s discipline (*zā‘aq*—‘cried out’) does not necessarily carry any idea of repentance.

Israel’s Deliver: Othniel (‘*God is my* _____/_____’)

⇒ Othniel was from the tribe of _____ and so he is associated with the continued conquest of the land in the early successes under their leadership (Judges 1:1-19). He is singled out in the first introduction for his capture of the city of Debir.

Excursus: How did Othniel get his wife? — Joshua 15:13-17

What about Achsah could have caught Othniel’s attention?

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Key Points: While attraction is subjective, there are important _____ realities worth noting.

Many of the basic things that attract a spouse help to _____ a good marriage.

⇒ The placement of the Othniel account within the book of Judges highlights him as a faithful man and the _____ judge to which all of the others will be compared.

(1) *In contrast to Israel as a whole, nothing specifically negative is said of him.*

“...there is no mention of sin, no reluctance or hesitation, no failure, no suggestion of any word or actions that might sully the bright, ideal picture of the first judge.” —Boda & Conway

(2) *While the Spirit of the Lord is active in the lives of other judges, the text seems to imply an ongoing role in Othniel's time as a judge.*

Key Point: Faithfulness and successful service to the Lord are ultimately the work of the _____ in us as we yield ourselves to Him.

3. It is the Lord who is Israel's true Savior!

⇒ His sovereignty is highlighted in the _____ of Israel.
“he sold them”

⇒ His sovereignty is highlighted in the _____ of Israel.
“the Lord raised up” *“the Lord gave...into his hand”*

Key Point: God's discipline and His mercy are both intended to lead His people to _____.

Applying the Text

1. God is always at work both in the _____ and in _____.

2. Will we work _____ Him or _____ Him?

Phil. 2:12-13—¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

3. When we walk faithfully with the Lord, we make ourselves _____ to Him to used for His purposes.

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⇒ His sovereignty is highlighted in the deliverance of Israel.

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