

Judges 08-02-08a

This is Friday, the 8th of February, 2008. We continue our study in the book of Judges. We pick up in chapter 3, verse 7 tonight.

We'll take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer. It's a chance to focus our concentration, make sure that we're individually and collectively susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. So let's begin.

Father, what a privilege it is to take a break from the flow of events and the nonstop demands that are made upon us to refresh ourselves at the oasis of your Word, to receive spiritual refreshment and renewal through the great truths that are contained in your Word. We thank you for this book and the message that it has for us this evening. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will help us to perceive, understand, and ultimately apply the truths that you have put here for us to learn and to know.

We pray that our fellowship and our study will be a blessing to everyone involved. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. The book of Judges lies before us as a record of a downward trend.

And that can be kind of discouraging, and it's something of a depressing... There are certain movies that I just don't want to see. There are certain categories of movies that I don't want to see. I've never seen Gandhi.

I've never seen any of the Godfather movies, Goodfellas, Mafia movies. I don't watch them. They're depressing.

I know that it doesn't have a happy ending. The good guy doesn't go riding in the sunset with a white hat, so why watch it? I don't like stories that I know are going to have a dismal ending. I never saw Jaws, of course, a couple of other reasons, but rubber shark movies aren't my thing anyway.

I figured at the time it came out, it was playing at the Circle Theater in Annapolis when I was a plebe. I had to memorize the theaters and the movies that were playing there to keep the upper class midshipmen happy. So, the Circle Theater was playing Jaws, Cinema One was showing Bambi, Cinema Two was showing White Line Fever, an eminently forgettable film.

If you think about the Book of Judges, we know that this is not a book with a happy ending. I think now, what is going to be the interest factor in this? It's just going to decline. It's going to be more and more morose, more and more depressing.

We know that it's just getting blacker and darker as we go. We're going to start out with a guy tonight who's got a bad name, and it just goes down from there. However, I have begun to detect an interesting pattern in these cycles.

There are six major gill gals that we're going to see in this book. We're doing the first one,

possibly the first two tonight, depending on how verbose I get. But I want to alert you to pay attention to thematic, symbolic elements.

Names mean things. Locations have resonance. They have links.

They suggest. They evoke. They remind.

Now, specifically, if we're at the period of the Judges, and this is written not long after that, when it says repeatedly in this book, at that time there was no king in Israel, we get the idea that at the point that this account was finally assembled and edited together, there was a king in Israel. Notice a king. It doesn't say there were no kings in Israel.

And that points, suggestively at least, to a time during either Saul or David's reign. I would guess David's reign. And perhaps at King David's behest, history was recorded in the same way that Moses had ensured that the history he had access to in the libraries of Egypt from cuneiform tablets and so on was set down for the people.

David was literate. David was a writer. David wanted to memorialize the acts of God in his songs and in the hymnology of Israel.

And it would be very unsurprising to discover someday that he ensured, as his court began to grow and as they had other literate men and scribes and so on, that these accounts be gathered together and set down and stored in the temple along with the other scrolls, the other records of God's activity in Israel. But at that time there was no king in Israel. It sets a contrast to most likely the time of assembly of these.

But of course there could have been contemporaneous records that were kept and then these were put together in the same way that a good history of the Civil War will draw upon battle accounts, personal memorabilia, letters and so on. So keep in mind that there is a perspective and this perspective is going to look back from say circa 1000 B.C. We're not going to be necessarily drawing upon the later prophetic scriptures at the point that this was written when it was put together under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Now we had the advantage of hindsight, but they did not.

And the important things that we will see in here will tie back. And it's a very fortuitous moment for this book to be written as I think you'll see. So keep that in the back of your mind.

I'm not going to tip my entire hand here, but I'm just saying let's pay attention. Chapter 3 begins with a recounting of the situation we've already seen in the first two chapters where because of disobedience, because of faithlessness, because of covenant breaking bad things are going to happen to the people of Israel. Now the previous two chapters gave us sort of a military situation.

They went in and they could not drive out all the inhabitants, right? There was a sort of a geographical element to it. They were not able to drive out the guys with the chariots and the

planes and so forth, right? So you've got a geo-military element there. At the beginning of chapter 3, these are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel by them.

Now we are repeatedly reminded here that God had a purpose in leaving these nations. This is the third time we've been told this. So even God repeats himself.

Chapter 2, verse 22, God left these nations in order to test Israel by them whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it as their fathers did or not. That was chapter 2, verse 22. We saw the same thing here in chapter 3, verse 1. These are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel by them, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan.

And look down at verse 4. They were for testing Israel to find out if they would obey the commandments of the Lord which he had commanded their fathers. So why are there still people in the land? It's on purpose. It wasn't an accident.

It wasn't an unfortunate thing. And this is a classic example of the combination of God's sovereignty and man's free will. Whose fault is it that there are still Canaanites and Hivites and Philistines in the land? It's Israel's fault.

But, God has already woven it into the fabric of his plan, and he has been intending from the beginning to use this as a test. God works all things together for good, even failures, even mistakes. We think, oh, I made this horrendous error.

Plan A for my life can never take place because I messed up. And that is complete nonsense. God knew in eternity past that we were going to mess up, and his plan A for us has already incorporated our failure.

The key to receiving blessing and being productive and fruitful in this life is to concentrate on making good decisions that God can weave into his plan in eternity past, instead of having to constantly look for ways to turn cursing to blessing, which he will not do unless we recover. God can turn cursing to blessing when we recover, and we pick up from where we are. You can't redo the past.

We don't get a do-over. We don't get a mulligan. It's now.

Now is the time for all good men to get moving in the right direction. Forgetting those things which are behind, we press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. That's what the Apostle Paul said, and he was doing his able best to murder Christians.

He said, look, I'm forgetting that. I can't be dwelling on that. I can't be beating myself up over that.

Forgetting those things which are behind, and he had a lot to forget, I press toward the mark. You cannot be a good driver if you're constantly staring in the rearview mirror, especially if you're a lady and it's aimed at your face. This is a scary thing.

You get on the highway in the morning, and you see all these people finishing dressing on the way down the highway. It's a danger. So these are the nations which the Lord left.

Three times we are told God is testing Israel, but it's Israel's fault that they're there. Would they have been tested if they had been faithful and driven all these nations out? Yes, just in a different way. The testing would have had to come from the outside.

In this case, it's coming from the inside. Suppose you and I could conquer all of our inner demons, throw off our besetting sin and the things that entangle us, and we could conquer all of the Philistines and Canaanites in our soul. We are the epitome of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

People are in awe of us because we practically glow in the dark. There is a light inside that shines forth, and we are the envy of all who know us and love us because they know us. Would we still be tested in this life? Would we still be tested in this life? Absolutely.

Where would the testing come from? Hypothetically speaking, of course, there is always going to be testing coming from the inside, but the testing would come from the outside. A classic example is the Lord Jesus Christ. Did He have any demons and unconquered sin in His soul? No.

Was He tested in all points like as we are? Yes. So, do not think that if Israel had fully fulfilled the mission here that they would not have been tested, but the nature of the test changes. Now the test is going to be from within as well as from without, and it is hard to pass your outside tests when you have not conquered your inner challenges.

It is doubly hard, and you can tell when the outside stuff is getting to you, it is because you have still got Canaanites in the land, and you are kind of trying to fight a two-front war. You cannot do an internment camp like they did in World War II for the Japanese in California and say, well, we are fighting the Japanese, so we have got to lock you up. You are suddenly having to fight traitors and sin in the camp.

So these are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel by them. God says, well, ideally, your testing would be coming from the outside, and you would be a united confederation. Isn't this a wonderful model for a nation? A united set of independent elements.

The United States of Israel, 12 states, and they would have been good isolationists, protecting their fellow states and fighting everybody on the outside off who did not come to them in peace, as some nations will do later on. Hiram King of Tyre is a great example. But that did not happen.

There was division between the tribes, and this is going to crack open and become very visible in the epilogue of this book, chapter 18 and following. But in chapters 3-17 in particular, we are going to see this gilgal, this downward spiral. These nations who are left in the land, God is going to teach newer generations to fight.

Now, think about that. In order that the generations of the sons of Israel, in verse 2, might be taught to know war, those who had not formerly known it. Now, is God just saying everybody has to get their baptism of blood, everybody has to learn to swing a sword and throw a spear and heft a shield and try to keep their helmet from getting split in two? What kind of warfare did the first generation experience? Think Greek Navy here, you remember the old glass bottom boat joke, it's not enough to have a Navy, you want to have a victorious Navy.

You don't want to just know how to fight, you want to know how to win. The generation that went in with Joshua, and the generation that survived him, knew war from a victorious perspective. Anybody can go in and get their helmet handed to them, that's not knowing war.

This implies victory, this implies conquest, this implies success. And every generation ought to be able to achieve success. God doesn't just want them to know defeat, he wants them to know success.

And this is one of the things that we can learn even as we are fighting our little Canaanites and Hivites and Hittites and Philistines and so on in our soul, is we may not lick them all but we ought to learn victory. We can taste victory in at least some of these battles. And to know war when God is on your side.

To know war when one of you puts to flight a thousand. That was God's goal. If there are going to be enemies in the land, then let's learn how to defeat them.

You will get the experience of conquest. That's what God is after. Namely, the five lords of the Philistines, you remember Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza.

Those are the five cities of the Philistines. Five is the number of one hand. And it speaks.

When you think about the five lords of the Philistines, you think about doing things with the hand. There is a lot of symbolism in scripture, you remember the blood on the earlobe and on the thumb and on the toe, talking about what you take in, what you do and how you conduct yourself, how you walk. Well, five is not an accidental number for the Philistines.

The Philistines are the strength of the flesh. Goliath is going to epitomize this ultimately. How many stones is David going to pick up from the brook to fight the Philistines? Five smooth stones.

For the five brothers of the giants, from the five cities of the giants, it's all about the fives. And five is the number of fingers on your precious right hand. It's what you do.

Victory over the flesh, victory over works, victory over I can do it, I don't need any help, I will stand in my own strength, I will stand in my own might, I will do it on my own, watch me. Five lords of the Philistines. All the Canaanites.

These Canaanites were originally mentioned back in chapter 1, verses 27-33. You have Beth-

Shean in its villages, Ta-Anak in its villages, Dor in its villages, Iblaim in its villages, Megiddo in its villages. So the Canaanites persisted in living in the land.

These are towns and villages. These are tracts of geography. The Philistines, if you think about the geography, you remember the map in the air, you've got the Mediterranean on the left, you've got the land, and then you've got the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River and the Salt Sea, the Dead Sea, and in between you've got Israel's inheritance in the western portion of that, with its west border on the sea and then sharing an internal border in the plain.

This is the area of the Philistines. If you remember where Jerusalem is, just west of the tip of the Salt Sea, the Dead Sea, Philistia, the five city area is straight west and just slightly south. It's west-southwest of Jerusalem.

It's got a seashore behind it, and it's got a border that fluctuates in varying distances toward Jerusalem, basically. So the Philistines are contiguous. They're all in one place.

That pentagram of cities over there is all in one place. It's a contiguous... These others, the second element here, the Canaanites, they are peppered in. They are little patches, little... It reminds me of the island hopping that MacArthur did in World War II in the South Pacific, where you bypass in order to win a strategic victory, but you've still got these little pockets of resistance that sooner or later you have to go back and mop up.

So the Canaanites represent these little pockets of unconquered territory. That's the second set. The Sidonians, Tyre and Sidon.

You remember this, Sidon and Tyre are both up in Lebanon. In these days, that's up to the north. And that's, again, beyond the northern border of the land.

So this is a northern threat. You've got the Philistines on the west-southwest. You've got the Sidonians at the northwest, almost north-northwest.

You've got some infiltrators of the Canaanites. You have the Hivites who dwell in Mount Lebanon from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. This is the Beqaa Valley.

This is north and even a little bit north-northeast of Israel. This is, again, up in Lebanon, over from Sidon, inland. Sidon is on the coast.

They're going to be... And Sidon, by the way, is sort of the general term that actually represents the Phoenicians at this point. Whenever they wanted to talk about the Phoenicians, they would just say, well, the Sidonians, the people from Sidon. It's those sea peoples, those boat builders and sailors.

The Hivites are also known as the Horites. You'll see it that way sometime, H-O-R-I-T-E-S. And they live in the valley.

These are the valley dwellers. They are a land power, where the Sidonians are more of a sea-

traveling type. And notice that they're in the mountains, Mount Lebanon, Mount Baal Hermon, to the entrance of Lebo Hamath.

So they were left that he might test Israel to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord. So you've got this arc on the west and going across the north, and it makes a kind of a what we would call a small R shape. Where are they not currently being threatened? These are the peoples that they didn't conquer.

Well, they occupy all the way over to the Jordan, pretty much, right? They did a reasonably good job of conquering land. Judah went up, come on, Simeon, let's whip these guys. They got most of them.

But except for these pockets. So you've got this. And then, of course, on the other side of the Jordan, outside of Reuben Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, what have you got to the east and the east, southeast? And you've got the great Arabah, you've got the desert down south.

And then who do you have over here? Moab and Ammon and Midian. So he is going to test them to see whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord. What is your goal in life? What are your values? What is your list of priorities? Goals, values and priorities.

That determines whether or not you are going to be obedient, because if obedience doesn't line up with your goals, why obey? If it isn't a priority, why obey? If you don't assign it a value, why obey? This is the problem we were talking about, the stack up on 75 this evening and us having to take alternate routes to get here, because Friday nights, I've seen it many times coming down here at night, cars full of teenagers get on 75 and play road rally and treat all of the other cars on the highway like pylons. And they weave in and out. They come up short behind blocked lanes and slam on the brakes and smoke and cinders.

And then they gun it and they go around and they get the shoulder. They dodge into the HOV lane now that we've got one. And there was some kind of a big pile up and it looked like that's what was involved out there.

Disregard for the rules. The rules are for other people. I'm going to have me a good time.

And it goes to a lot of different areas of life. Social rules, rules of courtesy, rules of respect in school, respect for teachers, respect for structure, respect for parents. It's there is no respect.

And if you do not value something, you're not going to assign it any weight. And this is what happened in Israel. The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

Now, they took their daughters to be their wives and they gave their daughters to their sons and they served their gods. You know, the last time we saw a note like this was back in Genesis, chapter six. It doesn't say anything about the Israelites intermarrying with the Egyptians, does

it? When they were living in Egypt and eventually enslaved in Egypt, it doesn't talk about a bunch of intermarriage taking place.

The last time we saw men taking wives of all whom they chose, the human race got judged. And why would that be? If the angels who kept not their first estate, if the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair to look upon and they took wives of all whom they chose, you can't just take a wife in the ancient Near East. You are given a wife by that girl's father.

That's how it works. And there is an exchange. There is the dowry.

There is tit for tat. There is compensation. I have responsibility for this young lady because I'm her father.

If you're going to take that responsibility, I will send some wealth with her and you send some wealth to me. And there is an exchange. And when the sons of men gave their daughters to these ruling administration angels, there was compensation.

Why would they do this? Well, I will look favorably on you the next time there is a land dispute, the next time there is an auction to be held for this parcel of land or whatever. So this is not good to marry outside the fold, so to speak. And they had been specifically commanded not to do this.

In Deuteronomy, it was predicted that if they intermarried with the people of the land, bad consequences would follow. So what happens? Well, this is the prelude, and we get in verse 7 now, chapter 3, into the first of these cycles. This disobedience, this faithlessness is going to lead to oppression.

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. We saw their military failures. We saw their geographical failures.

And now we have seen their social failure. Not only did they not conquer these people, but they have actually gone and made friends with them and intermarried with them. And this is forbidden.

So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God, and they served the Baals and the Asherah. Now, you will recall that there were a number of different Baals.

There is Baal Peor. There is Baal Berit. There is Baal Zebub.

I mentioned different places in the Old Testament. There were multiple lords, flavors of Baal, worshipped locally in Canaan. And Asherahs, these are wooden pillars or images that are used as idols.

This can also be construed as Ashtaroth, who is the consort of Baal proper. So there are Baals and Asherahs. There are different flavors of this unholy, idolatrous couple, so to speak, that

they got tangled up with.

Therefore, the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. I cannot think of a worse situation. This, as we saw in the book of Job, this is the very same phrase we saw in the book of Job.

Remember hot anger? Remember what the literal phrase is in Hebrew for that? Who is the fourth man who speaks up after Job's three friends have spent themselves? You had Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad, Shuhite. Who else? Elihu is the fourth man. Boy, that Job seems like a long time ago, doesn't it? Who are the three friends of Job? Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the... And then after they have finished, who is the young man who stands up and says, I cannot contain myself? It's Elihu.

And what does it say about him? What's his attitude? He says, my nose is on fire. My nose is burning. My nose has become hot.

And that's what it says here. Af, A-P-H is the word in Hebrew for nose. And karah, C-H-A-R-A-H, is the verb that means to burn.

You have a couple of different words in Hebrew for burning. You have saraf. The seraphim are the burning ones.

But the nose of Yahweh became hot against Israel. It's a very graphic picture. God's nose got very hot.

And he sold them into the hands of Kushan Reshathayim. Now, did Kushan Reshathayim send an offering to God? If you sell something, you receive money back, right? Ideally. What does it mean that he sold them? This means give over completely.

When you sell a thing, you relinquish ownership. I was thinking about this in another context. Sometimes people found an organization or they found some entity, and then they go away for a long time.

Then they want to come back and say, hey, wait a minute. This has become something other than what I wanted it to be, and I'm going to come back in here and try to fix it. Look, if you had a car and you loved that car and you detailed it out and you took real good care of it, and then you sold it and you see somebody driving it around six or seven years later and you say, you've totally trashed out my car.

Come here a minute. You need to clean this thing up right now. I want it reupholstered.

I want it shined. I want it painted. I want it fixed.

You can't do that. You have relinquished ownership. You sold it.

You have no further right or interest in it. And that's what this verb ultimately means. God turned them over to Kushan Reshathayim.

Romans 1, those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, when they knew him as God, they did not glorify him as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened, exchanging the glory of the Creator for the thing created, et cetera. And then there's a series. God turns them over to what they choose instead, evil passions, and so on.

God turns them over and turns them over and turns them over. That's what this is talking about. God turned them over to Kushan Reshathayim, king of Mesopotamia.

Kushan, you may remember that back in the law, back in Exodus, Moses' wife's name was what? Starts with a Z and ends with Zipporah. Right, Zipporah. And when they are engaged in the first part of the Exodus, she's gone.

She goes back to her father in Midian. And then later on, Jethro, Hobob, Ruel, whatever you want to call him, one of his three names, comes back. Remember the whole thing where, Moses, you're wearing yourself out, get yourself judges, et cetera? Then Zipporah returns.

Well, not long after that, Miriam has a big hot nose against her brother, Moses, because of the Kushite woman. She calls her the Kushite. He's married to this Kushite.

People say, oh, see, Zipporah must have died and Moses remarried, or Moses took on a second wife, kind of like Abraham, after Sarah couldn't conceive why he ended up with Hagar. The Kushite woman, King James says Ethiopian woman. But it's Kushite in Hebrew.

Well, what is the resolution of this? There have been a lot of attempts at explanation, but the Kushite woman is Zipporah. But she is referred to pejoratively by Miriam as Kushite, because Kushite means swarthy. Kushite means dark.

Martin Luther translated this *negrus*, *negro*, being the Latin, I think, for black. And there have been people who thought that Moses was actually married to a black woman. But this is a reference to the swarthy complexion of the Midianites.

They were much darker complected than the Hebrews. And Moses, being married to Zipporah, and Miriam got fed up. She wanted to be the big woman on campus there.

And here Zipporah has returned. And now there's sort of a little power struggle, because Miriam is sort of the first lady of Israel. She's doing the White House lawn egg hunt and all the rest of it.

Photographers are coming for her. She's reading to the kids in the kindergarten and all that. And now Zipporah shows up, and suddenly Miriam's having to take a back seat.

And so she starts referring to her as the Kushite. Well, where's the dark one? Where's your darky wife? And it's pejorative, and that's exactly the connotation that it had. And so God says, you want to call her swarthy? And you want to flaunt the fact that you're not as dark as she is?

Fine.

And God put a skin disease on Miriam that made her snow white with leprosy. You want to be white? I'll make you white. So white you have to sit outside the camp.

There's poetic justice in that leprosy that God gave Miriam for bad-mouthing Zipporah. So that whole black and white thing is at work. I say all of that to refresh your memory on what Kush means.

Because this is Kushan, and this is the dark one. Rishat Haim means doubly evil. This is the dark, doubly evil one.

It's not his actual name. I don't think the king of Mesopotamia said, hi there, let me introduce myself. I'm the dark, doubly evil man.

This is what he was known as in Israel. Kushan Rishat Haim. They said he is the dark and doubly evil one, the king of Mesopotamia.

Who was he at this time? Well, you can parse out the strands and threads of chronological inexactitude at that time. We don't know who he was. But here's the interesting thing.

What is he king of? He is the king of Aram Naharaim. Nahar is the word for river. Naharaim is the two rivers.

What are the two rivers of Mesopotamia? Why do they call this Mesopotamia? Potamus means river. Meso means between, between the rivers. Mesopotamia is Aram or Aramea, where Aramaic originated, between the rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

What do we know about this land? Anybody famous ever come from there? Anybody we know from the time previous to Joshua and Moses and that crowd? These people's patriarch came from there, didn't he? Abraham, in obedience to God, left Ur of the Chaldeans, Ur of the Arameans, Ur of Mesopotamia to go to a land that God would show him. People 400 years later have finally showed up in that land. And the first thing that happens is, not only have they not licked all the people who they were supposed to conquer and destroy and eliminate, but the old, original problem has returned.

The stuff that Abraham left four and a half centuries before, five centuries probably by this time, to get away from, has come down again. Right back where I started from. What's the point if, remember Jesus told that story? God casts out your demons, they go to wander in a faraway place, and they come back to find the house clean and swept.

The guy brings six or seven of his friends, and it's worse than at first. This harks back to the days of Abraham. It's no accident that of all of the possible incursions, it's not the Philistines first.

It's not the Moabites or the Ammonites or the Midianites or any of the other ones. It goes all the

way back to old times. All the way back to the original first problem.

It is as though Abraham never got out of Ur. Kushan Reshathayim, dark and doubly evil. Dark and doubly evil.

King of Mesopotamia, the place they ought to be farthest from by this time. The children of Israel served Kushan Reshathayim eight years. Eight years.

Now, what is the number eight spark in the mind of any good Hebrew? What day is a newborn baby circumcised? What is the day of entry into the covenant? You've been born, you live for a week, and circumcised on the eighth day. That's the day when you're supposed to be entering into a new life. Here's Israel in the land, supposed to be entering into a new national life, and instead you get eight years of servitude.

Instead of eight days passing and resulting in a member of the covenant, newly added to the roster, it's just the opposite. They serve eight years. When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel.

Who delivered them? The word for deliverer here is Moshia. It's from the word Yasha, which is where the name Yeshua is derived. Yeshua, Joshua, is deliverer.

The Lord raised up a Moshia. You take the verb Yasha, you put an M in front of it to make a noun out of it. A savior, a deliverer for the children of Israel, and He Yasha'd them, He delivered them.

Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. Kenaz is Caleb's younger brother. That makes Othniel Caleb's nephew.

And it puts him down a generation. Makes him the right age to be the deliverer for this generation. Remember, we had the whole story of Othniel and Ahsa before.

We've been given that story twice. This is Othniel's third appearance. Once at the end of Joshua, once at the beginning of Judges, and now here he is again.

The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. This is Shafat, and it is often used for civil judgment, for rendering a decision, for discerning things. It has the connotation here of analyzing the situation, determining what the solution is, and then implementing that solution.

Othniel is just a local phenomenon, right? What tribe is he from? What tribe is Caleb from? He's a Kenazite, right? Caleb is the son of Jephunneh, but where does he take up residence? It's Judah, down there in Hebron. So, Othniel looks at the situation. There are 11 other tribes, 12 other tribes.

But Othniel says, hey, something needs to be done. He stands up, he analyzes the situation, he formulates a solution, and he leads Israel to implement that solution. That's what judging means in this context.

He didn't set up court and say, everybody come here and tell me how many cows got out of your pen, and this guy is now claiming them, or you put your fence in the wrong place, or why did you build on the back 40? None of that. He's not judging in the sense of rendering decisions, and implementing punishments, and so on. He analyzes, he identifies, he implements for Israel.

He went out to war. His solution was, we've got to go to war. And the Lord delivered dark and doubly evil into his hand.

And his hand prevailed over Kushan Rishat Haim. So the land had rest for 40 years. Forty years is a biblical generation.

Notice in verse 8, where did God sell Israel? What part of Kushan Rishat Haim got Israel? His hand, right? God sold him into the hand of Kushan Rishat Haim. After eight years, God raises up Othniel, and delivers Kushan Rishat Haim into Othniel's hand. It's all about the hand.

Power. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with what? The right hand of my righteousness, the power of my righteousness. Delivered them into the power of Kushan Rishat Haim, and when the time was right, the opportunity was right, and there was a faithful deliverer on hand, on hand, God delivered Othniel's victory.

Rest results. They had eight years of bad stuff, they had 40 years of rest. Then Othniel, the son of Kenaz, died.

You get the idea that these successes only seem to last as long as the leader does. When the leader dies, all bets are off. There is no transfer, just like in the first generation, they did not train up their children.

The generation that knew not Joshua, so to speak, fell apart. Now Othniel has showed them victory the way Joshua did. And he does a Yeshua, he does a Yashah for them.

He is the Moshiach, he is like Joshua. He is from Joshua, he hearts back to Joshua, and as long as he is alive, they remember those lessons. But then he died, and you hear this warning bell.

And that warning bell tells us it's time to take a break. We'll come back and continue at verse 12.