



Mass Chaos

A Study of the Book of Judges

Chapter 3: Othniel, Ehud & Shamgar

Introduction

In a small group, select an artist. Draw a picture of an ideal leader of God's people today:

Othniel

3:7-11

Geographic Note: Aram Naharaim (literally in Hebrew, “Aram of the two rivers”) refers to an area of Northwestern Mesopotamia, north of Damascus, near two main tributaries of the Euphrates River. This was also the area where Abraham’s servant found Rebekah and where Jacob fled in order to live with his uncle Laban (Gen 24:10, 28:5).

As a review from last week, trace how the “four R’s” (rebellion, repression, repentance, rescue) of the book of Judges occur in the Othniel episode.

This is the first of many cases in Judges where the phrase, “The Spirit of the LORD came upon him,” occurs (here; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Make the connection between what the Holy Spirit was doing here and what he would later do in Jesus’ baptism (see Acts 10:38).

Ehud

3:12-30

Archaeological Note: The British archaeologist John Garstang discovered Eglon's luxury palace when he excavated Jericho (known as "the City of Palms") in 1933. It was dated to the fourteenth century B.C. It was found all by itself, which seems to indicate there was no surrounding community at that time period. Eglon constructed this palace for himself when he visited the area to collect tribute. It was abandoned when Eglon was killed and the Moabites retreated.¹

Give your moral assessment of how Ehud killed Eglon. Was he being ingenious or deceptive, heroic or cowardly, godly or blasphemous?

This story has been called "a literary cartoon."² Analyze it from a literary perspective. In what ways is it amusing? disturbing? something else?

Shamgar

3:31

Anath was Baal's sister and a goddess of war. Why would God use a person like this to save Israel?

Agree/disagree: "Shamgar is a minor character in the book of Judges whom we mind as well forget about."

Conclusion

Draw a picture of Othniel, Ehud, or Shamgar below. What do your two pictures (cf. introduction) tell you about how God selects leaders for his people?

¹ "Eglon's Palace," in Walther Kaiser & Duane Garrett, ed., *Archaeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 348.

² Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC 6 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 156.