

Judges Chapter 03 Commentary

1 ¶ Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; 2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; 3 ¶ Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. 4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

Because of the broken covenant of Israel in their sin of turning to idolatry; because they made treaties and did not annihilate all the former inhabitants of the land of promise; God says he will not drive out any more of the nations who are left, who should have been driven out. Remember, this generation has not experienced war. God will now use these nations which are left, in the land of promise, to teach this generation how to fight, and to test Israel for faithfulness.

We have here a prophetic picture of Joshua and Israel, which is prophetic of our Saviour and the church. Who is our great Commander-in-Chief, who has already fought the great battle and overcome the enemy? Jesus has procured to us a land of promise. Now, consider; Jesus has won the eternal battle of the remission of sins. The church is still on earth among the former inhabitants. The world is still attacking the church and will continue to do so until the church is removed into eternity. We, like the children of Israel, who were not present when the great war was fought, are like the generations of Israel. Here in time, we are left with our flesh natures to contend with.

Remember, this is a warfare that has been going on since the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve fell in sin. Consider the scripture: **1Jo 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."** These three things are found in the temptation by the devil in the garden. Consider: **Ge 3:6 "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, (lust of the flesh) and that it was pleasant to the eyes, (lust of the eyes) and a tree to be desired to make one wise, (pride of life) she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."** I believe that we can trace all sin back to these roots and see the inherit desires of the flesh.

2 "Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;" We have here a prophetic picture of the Christian life. How, you ask? We see that one reason these nations are left is to teach the children, who had never seen warfare, how to fight. Get the picture in your mind of the nation of Israel as your body, and the nations that are left as the temptations of sin in your life. Now can you see the picture, and reason, why your old, inherit, sin nature is never gone from the body, until the body dies?

When we are born again, we are commanded, like Israel was, to drive out all the former inhabitants of the land, that is, we are to purge ourselves of any desire to commit sin, and to not yield to the temptations thereof. We continue to have the old sin nature in the flesh after we are born-again. We must learn to war against that nature of sin and temptation, just as these children who had not known of war must learn to fight. You did not fight against sin and temptation before your new birth, but after the new birth you must learn to make war.

Israel had physical people, who were left to fight against them. Today, we are fighting a spiritual warfare, though often this may involve physical people as the instruments of sin and temptation. Consider our warfare today, as seen in scripture: **2Co 10:2-6; 2 "But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."**

Thus, we see; the things we war against are the temptations, which we are presented with from our own sin nature. These temptations and sins are lived out in the physical lives of those around us, who are yet dead to Christ. We have a biblical description of these temptations and sins summed up in: **1Jo 2:15-16; 15 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."** Physical people present us with these temptations, but we must fight the good fight of faith, or we shall be like Israel and fall into idolatry, and then the wrath of God will be upon us, and we will go back into captivity. Remember this principle, as we continue our study of Judges, and see how it comes to fruition.

5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: 6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. 7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

Herein, we see that any bit of disobedience to God leads to trouble, here in time. Remember, God gave Israel a direct order in: **De 20:16-18; 16 "But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: 17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: 18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God."**

God told them plainly what would happen if they did not do what he commanded. It has now happened just as God said would happen. Do you see how this is played out in our own Christian lives? We must continually purge our hearts and minds, or we too will be overcome. Consider again **2Co 10:2-6**; referenced above and add to this: **1Co 5:6-13;6 "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 ¶ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 ¶ I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them**

that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Both references are truths, which we can apply personally and as a church body.

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years. **9 ¶** And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. **10** And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim. **11** And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Because of Israel's disobedience and their turning to idolatry and forgetting God, God's wrath is stirred up and he uses the Mesopotamians to take Israel into slavery. Notice, it took Israel eight years of captivity to come to their senses and turn back to God. Do you see? Yielding to temptations and sin will lead to captivity by the enemy, the devil, and keep us from the joy of our salvation here in time?

God, in his infinite mercy, raises up a deliverer, the first judge, and gives Israel power to overthrow the Mesopotamians and free themselves from bondage. God gives Israel forty years of rest from war. Do you see? The grace of God is always working to bring his fallen ones to repentance, and to the restoration of the joy of our salvation.

12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. **13** And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. **14** So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. **15** But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. **16** But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

Notice, Ehud was lefthanded. What significance does this have? When a person was coming into the presence of the king, they would be searched for weapons. A righthanded man would carry his sword on his left side to make it easy to draw it out and use it swiftly. Ehud being lefthanded hid his dagger on his right side, and not being thoroughly searched, he got past the guards. Therefore, he was able to get in the presence of the king with this weapon.

17 ¶ And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. **18** And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. **19 ¶** But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. **20 ¶** And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. **21** And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: **22** And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.

God has provided Ehud with the opportunity, and the means, to kill the king of Moab.

23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. 24 ¶ When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber. 25 ¶ And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened *them*: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. 26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

God provided the means, by which Ehud would have time to escape beyond the reach of the Moabites before the king's death was discovered. God, in his providence, has muddled the minds of the Moabites. They wait until Ehud is escaped before discovering their king is dead.

27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. 28 And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. 29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

Israel spent 18 years in captivity before turning their hearts back to God in humble repentance. Israel was in captivity 8 years before the first judge was raised up. We see that the penalty of this second turning to idolatry is more than doubled.

This is a warning to us; when God delivers us from our sin, do not go back to sinning again, for it may cost us much more the second time. However, we still see the abundance of God's mercy, and grace, in restoration after we are brought to repentance.

31 ¶ And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

Here, we see that God raises up Shamgar, a single deliverer, to follow Ehud. There is only one other mention of Shamgar, seen in the song of Deborah in: *Jg 5:6 ¶ "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travelers walked through byways."* We do not have anything else about Shamgar, except he killed six hundred Philistines with an ox goad.

We can draw a conclusion; Shamgar ruled after the death of Ehud, from the phrase "**And after him the son of Anath**," but we are not told how long he ruled. We begin the next chapter with *Jg 4:1 ¶ "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead."* thus, we can assume that he did not rule very long.