

14.03 First Judge, Othniel (Judges 3:1-11)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[...] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *judge*: an individual who was a military ruler of Israel, but not a king, in times of conflict

Scripture: (ESV)

Judges 3:1 Now these are the nations that the Lord left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. 2 It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before. 3 These are the nations: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 4 They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. 5 So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.

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. 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. 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. 10 The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. 11 So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Introduction/Review:

In our last lesson, we learned about the cycles of the judges of Israel: (1) Israel sinned by worshiping false gods. (2) God brought an enemy to oppress Israel. (3) Israel became sorry for sinning and cried out to God for help. (4) God sent a judge to help Israel get rid of the enemy. (5) Israel was at peace as long as the judge lived.

After one cycle was complete, another would begin. Over and over the cycle would repeat itself as the people served false gods, as God sent an enemy, as Israel repented and looked to God, as God sent a helpful judge, and as Israel had peace.

Story:

Nations still in the land

Today as we begin to learn about specific judges, we will first remind you of the nations still in the land. They were [locate on the map below] Philistines, Canaanites (2 areas), Sidonians, Hivites (2 areas), Hittites (2 areas), Amorites (2 areas), Perizzites, and Jebusites. [Teacher, refer to the chart of nations below for the meanings of names and descriptions.] If we look at this chart, we can see what kind of people these nations were. Note first that all these nations were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, who was the son of Noah. Generally speaking then, they could all be called Canaanites; however, they became known by their individual names.

Two purposes for leaving the nations

God tells us exactly why He left these nations in the land, not destroying them under Joshua's leadership. (1) First, the nations were left to teach all the men in Israel who had not experienced the wars under Joshua to learn war. ✓Perhaps these men had been too young to fight under Joshua or had not even remembered those first wars. ✓Israel would need to keep the discipline of war active and perpetual, for most national history is dependent upon soldiers' defending one's land. Rather than encouraging laziness, learning war would prepare Israel to be physically ready for future battles. (2) Second, the presence of these nations was to test Israel, showing whether or not they would obey the commandments of the Lord and serve and worship the God of Israel alone.

This second purpose became very important. With these nations living among them, Israelite men married women from the nations, and they gave their own daughters to be married to the sons of the nations. What was the predictable result? Israel not only married into the nations but also "married" and served the gods of the nations, which was evil in the sight of the Lord. "They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth." Baal and Asheroth were male and female false gods. In groves (groups) of trees, the heathen either set up their images or carved them from the trees and worshiped them there. Israel went right along with this practice and participated in the worship of Baal and Asheroth.

As we learned in the cycles of the judges, what happened when the people abandoned God and worshiped idols? God was angry and sent in an enemy. In this case, the intruder came all the way from Mesopotamia. This king and his people from about ✓100 miles away subdued Israel for eight long years. Finally, the people cried out to the Lord, and God sent His first judge to deliver them. Who was this first judge? Well, let's look back a bit in history to find out.

First judge, Othniel

Two lessons ago, we learned that Caleb, one of two spies who, about 65 years earlier, had trusted God to give Israel the Promised Land, when he was conquering his own inheritance, promised his daughter to the man who conquered one of his cities. The man who accomplished this feat was Othniel, Caleb's nephew. He became Caleb's son-in-law.

Othniel is the man God raised up to become the first judge. When the people cried out to the Lord, God gave His spirit to Othniel to go against the king of Mesopotamia. He went out to war, and the Lord gave the king of Mesopotamia into his hand. Othniel prevailed over the king of Mesopotamia and became the leader of Israel, the first judge.

The land had rest forty years. Then Othniel died.

What would happen now? The cycle of the judges would begin again.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus

"Thus let Christ be our Judge and Law-giver, and then he will save us, and on no other terms, Isa. 33:22. What good success he had. He prevailed to break the yoke of the oppression, and, as it should seem, to break the neck of the oppressor; for it is said, The Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim into his hand" (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/judges/3.html>).

- Beware of getting involved with boyfriends and girlfriends who are unbelievers.

Activities:

- Play dough: sword
- Snack: Since Othniel's wife asked her father, Caleb, for land with springs, let's have a beverage snack. How about a smoothie? This video gives ideas for three-ingredient smoothies:

<http://www.eatingwell.com/article/290812/secrets-to-living-longer-from-100-year-olds/>.

- Sing “Let’s Be True to Jesus,” found in Lesson 14.02.
- Watch a YouTube video of Othniel and Judges 3 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5RagPgGwfQ>.
- Review questions: (Game: Print the name *Othniel*, found below on cardstock if using a pocket chart. If using a flannel board, print on paper and back with paper towel. Cut out each letter block. For each correct answer, a student will place a random letter in the pocket chart or on the bulletin board. The eighth person to answer correctly may rearrange the letters to spell *Othniel*.
 1. Why did the Lord leave some of the nations in the land? [To test the people.]
 2. Name one reason (two reasons were given) why God tested the people. [To teach them how to war; to see if they would follow the Lord.]
 3. Name two of the nations left in the land. [Philistines, Canaanites, Sidonians, Hivites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Jebusites.]
 4. Before worshiping their false gods, what was the first interaction of the Israelites with the nations? [Intermarrying.]
 5. From where did the first enemy come? [Mesopotamia.]
 6. Who was the first judge? [Othniel.]
 7. How was Othniel related to Caleb? [Nephew and, later, son-in-law.]
 8. How long did Israel have peace after Othniel subdued the king of Mesopotamia? [Forty years; or until Othniel died.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Judges 2:11, 12: And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. . . . And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger.

Handwork:

- At the web site https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eKWPbMxr2y32GlvajbJ_7V7-ftVRjdXA/view, choose a project for preparing and collecting trading cards of the judges. Some are already colored; others are black and white. Select the card for Othniel this week and color and/or cut it out. Continue to do the same for the other judges as you teach their stories in coming lessons. Store the cards in individual envelopes for each student. When the collection is complete, punch a hole in the corner of the cards and put them on a ring so that each student has a set.

JUDGE

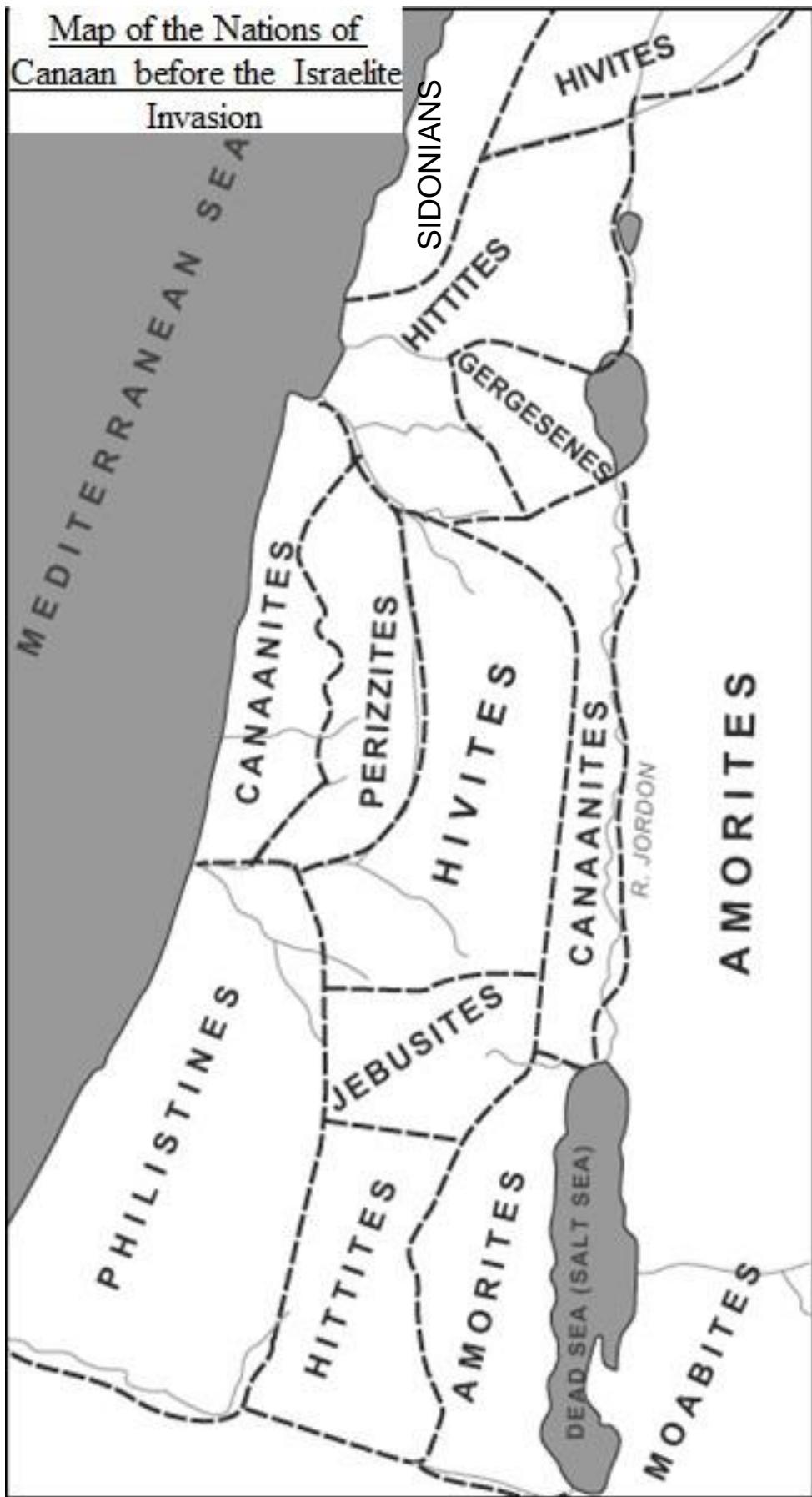
Nations Left to Test Israel

(All descendants of Canaan, Ham's son)

Name	Meaning	Description
PHILISTINES	griever; weakener; burrower	Their five cities were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. They were a long-standing enemy of Israel. "The name Philistine comes from the verb (<i>palash</i>), which originally described the digging of burrows in river banks by rodents such as rats. By doing so, these creatures weaken the shore and may ultimately cause it to collapse" (https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Philistine.html#.XwzfAR0SmM9).
CANAANITES	merchants; of purple	The term often refers to many different nations west of the Jordan. They were financial giants. The Canaanites were motivated by greed and lust for the accumulation of earthly and material wealth.
SIDONIANS	to hunt or fish	"Sidon is considered the 'seat' of the Phoenician Civilization in that most of the ships which would ply the seas and spread Phoenician culture were launched from this city's port" (https://www.ancient.eu/sidon/).
HIVITES	villagers	They lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. They claimed to offer a good lifestyle, living by phrases such as "if it feels good do it," "don't worry what other people think," and "look out for number one." They lived a very luxurious life. They were probably a branch of the Hittites.
HITTITES	terrible; fearsome	"A local Canaanite clan descended from Heth, the great-grandson of <u>Noah</u> through <u>Ham</u> and <u>Canaan</u> (Genesis 10:5 and 15:20)" (https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Hittite.html#.XwzcTx0SmM8).
AMORITES	arrogant; talkers	They were people who were always challenging in their speech. They had high self-esteem, and this pride led to finding fault in others.
PERIZZITES	of the open country	People who had rejected urban living, separated themselves, and lived in unprotected, unwalled villages. They had no discipline or restrictions.
JEBUSITES	trodden underfoot; threshing place	They were people who exploited and polluted others through immoral activities. They lived in and near the city of Jerusalem.

Information from http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk/2014/Sep_Oct/7Enemies.htm unless otherwise noted.

Map of the Nations of
Canaan before the Israelite
Invasion



JUDGES

Character Card 1

Othniel

Character Card 1

Othniel

"...the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and went out to war..." 3:10

"...And the Lord delivered the king...of Mesopotamia into his hand." 3:10

JUDGES

Reference:

3:7-11 (five verses total)



Cause of Oppression: Israel's Idolatry
Oppressors [Duration]: An invasion force under King Cushanrishathaim ("Doubly Wicked"). [8 years]

God responds because: Israel cried out to Him.
His Choice: Othniel, son of Kenaz and nephew of Caleb. From the region of Judah.

The Land had rest for: 40 years.

Important to note:

- Othniel was the first and best Judge.
- His lineage was not from the line of Israel. He was a Kenite.



