

**OTHNIEL:
the first judge**

Judges
1:12-16
3:7-11

THINKING ABOUT A JUDGE

- Judge defined (Hebrew; “*shoftim*” = judge)
- Not a judge as we think about it
- A ruler or leader

THE CYCLE IN JUDGES

1. Israel serves the Lord & has peace
2. They fall into sin & idolatry
3. Go to war & become slaves to a foreign power
4. They call out to God in repentance
5. God raises up a judge to deliver them
6. Israel is delivered
7. ... repeat ...

THE CYCLE

- x 3:7 The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD'S sight
- x 3:12 The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD'S sight
- x 4:1 The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD'S sight
- x 6:1 The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD'S sight
- x 10:6 Then the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD
- x 13:1 The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD'S sight

SCENARIO

3:7 “Did evil”

3: 8 God’s judgement

3:9 “Cried out to the LORD”

3:9 God raised up a deliverer – **Othniel**

3:10 Victory

3:11 Peace for forty years

3:12 “Again the Israelites did evil...”

OTHNIEL

- ❖ About his name:
- ❖ Meaning: “el” always means God (*eg Daniel = God is my judge, Joel = Yahweh is God, Ezekiel = God strengthens*)
- ❖ Othniel: probably God/He is my strength or God has helped me
- ❖ Father: was Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother
- ❖ Wife: Achsah

OTHNIEL AS THE FIRST JUDGE

- Seemingly unknown & insignificant
- God's appointed person (3: 9, 10)
- Family heritage (Caleb's nephew)
- Godly person (compare Judges 3:6 & 1:13)
- Acted courageously & obediently (1:13; 3:10)
- Israel had 40 years of peace with him as leader (3:11)
- Ultimately it was about God, not Othniel (3:10)



Lessons Learned

1. God's patience & grace operating
2. Don't assume - no compromise on our part
3. God + one always a "winner"
4. Need to deal with besetting or habitual sin
5. Celebrate/acknowledge ordinary saints