

OTHNIEL
THE COURAGE OF A LEADER

Introduction:

1. The cycle of the Judges...
2. Othniel was the first man chosen by God to be a judge (or, deliverer) over the Israelites.
3. As a judge, Othniel demonstrates the characteristics of a servant of God who is a leader of His people.
4. "The sheep are still the same, but they have another shepherd."

I. Othniel: A Man of Courage (1:9-13)

- A. He followed a godly example.
 1. Othniel was the nephew of Caleb.
 2. He imitated Caleb's example of courage and faith.
- B. He possessed a great faith in God.
- C. He was a leader who led!
 1. Josephus says he was "an active man, and of great courage."
 2. Jewish secular history tells of his actions provoking others to fight against the Canaanites.
- D. There is little wonder why God chose Othniel as a judge over Israel.

II. Othniel: A Man of Humility (3:9-10)

- A. Submission
 1. He was dependent upon the power of God for victory.
 - a. Othniel was directed by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Without doubt, this is similar to the work of other divinely guided men – Moses, Gideon, and, in a sense, the apostles.
 2. The Holy Spirit guides through the Word of God.
 - a. In miraculous times, it was given by inspiration.
 - b. Today, it is given in the written word.
 3. Good leaders must be submissive to the will of God in word and deed (cf. Matthew 23:3).
- B. Willingness
 1. He was willing to accept his role in God's plan.
 - a. God told them to drive out the Canaanites.
 - b. Othniel understood that God meant him.
 - c. "Go ye" means "Go me."
 2. He was willing to serve in the face of great risk.
 3. He was willing to step up into the role of a judge.
 - a. Deliverer (3:9)
 - b. Savior (Nehemiah 9:27)
 - c. Type of Christ (Micah 5:1)
 4. Good leaders must be willing servants (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1)
- C. Obedience
 1. He is pictured as one who was dedicated to following God.
 2. According to Jewish tradition, Othniel was ranked by the Jewish rabbis as first in holiness of character.

Judges 3:7-11

3. Thus, he judged Israel according to God's standard.
 - a. Note the sequence in verse 10.
 - b. First, God chose Othniel.
 - c. Second, he judged (corrected) Israel.
 - d. Then, they went to war.
 - e. Finally, there was peace for 40 years – during which time Othniel continued to lead and judge Israel.
4. Good leaders must be obedient to God's Word (1 Cor. 11:1).
- D. Compassion
 1. Clearly, Othniel felt the oppression and suffering of the nation.
 2. Even though Israel was to blame, Othniel (and God) still cared for them.
 3. Good leaders must be compassionate toward others (Matt. 9:36).
- III. Othniel: A Man of Family (1:14-15)
 - A. His forebears...
 1. He came from a family of faithful fighters.
 2. He worked to live up to the good example of his ancestors.
 3. We all stand on the shoulders of others.
 - B. His wife...
 1. He sought for a wife who had the same standards, understanding and goals as he had.
 2. He married a woman who was humble before God.
 3. His wife was one who was assertive in support of the family.
 4. Is it any wonder that the families of leaders in the Lord's church are to meet certain qualifications as well as the leader himself?
 - C. His descendants...
 1. He reared his children to be servants of God (1 Chron. 27:1, 15).
 2. Some of them were leaders in the role of protecting the nation.
 3. A good leader must pass his knowledge on to future generations (Genesis 18:19).

Conclusion:

1. Though little is said about the man Othniel, much can be learned about the kind of individual God wants as His servant.
2. Othniel was a great leader and deliverer of Israel.
3. May we learn to imitate his example as servants of Christ.