

BIBLE BRIEFING

“We’ve Got Spirit, Yes We Do!”

JUDGES 3:7 – 5:31

Introduction

Several times we will read concerning the various Judges that the Spirit of the Lord came upon them. His empowering was key to their success. The first five Judges – Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak - are a lesson in what it means to have the Spirit come upon you.

Judges 3:7 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

Judges 3:8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

How could you forget the Lord? In the case of Israel, during the time period of the Book of Judges, they forgot the Lord because of their intermarriage with the pagan peoples of Canaan. Their intermarriage was a physical representation of their spiritual adultery. They had fallen in love with the Canaanite women and their ways; as a result, they left their first love for God; they forgot Him.

Judges 3:9 When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.

We don’t know much about Othniel, other than he was the son-in-law of the great hero Caleb (Judges 1:12-3), and that his wife was also a woman of faith (Judges 1:13-15). Verse 10 tells us everything we need to know:

Judges 3:10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.

The Spirit of the Lord is God the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, He came upon believers, to empower them for special service.

He still does! In the Book of Acts, believers who were already saved; who already were indwelt by God the Holy Spirit; who already were filled with the Spirit; nevertheless had the Holy Spirit come upon them, again and again, to empower them to serve.

One of our favorite verses, here at Calvary Chapel, is Zechariah 4:6, which reads in part, *Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.*

1. **Might** is a word often used to describe strength in numbers; it is our collective strength as a congregation.
2. **Power** is a word often used to describe strength without numbers; it is your personal strength as an individual.

Neither the strength of our numbers as a group, nor your personal strength as an individual, can accomplish the work of God. God's work can only be accomplished by God's Spirit.

Pastor and author Warren Wiersbe points out that there are three ways we can go about trying to accomplish God's work: 1) We can trust our own strength and wisdom, 2) We can borrow the resources of the world, or 3) We can depend upon the Spirit of God.

Judges 3:11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

God used a person to provide them with an environment in which they could *flourish or flounder*. It's a good way to understand ministry. I want our Church to be a place where people can flourish. We want to provide a solid, consistent environment of worship and the Word. Some people still flounder; we want to do all we can to reach them, to encourage them.

Israel floundered:

Judges 3:12 And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

Judges 3:13 Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms [Jericho].

Judges 3:14 So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.

Sin always brings bondage; though it comes to us deceptively. The fish never contemplates the bondage of the hook when it goes after the bait; Satan snares us by making the bait attractive and hiding the hook.

Why did the Lord act just when He did? He's working out His eternal purposes in the hearts of men. We cannot understand His timing – except to say that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day.

Judges 3:15 But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab.

The author of Judges, probably Samuel, wants you to note that Ehud was left-handed. Here's why:

Judges 3:16 Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh.

Judges 3:17 So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.)

Judges 3:18 And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.

Judges 3:19 But he himself turned back from the stone images that were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

Judges 3:20 So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from *his* seat.

As today, most everyone was right-handed. The right thigh would be the proper side to sheath a blade for a left-handed man. You would unsheath it across your body. If Ehud was frisked, or searched, he would be less likely to be discovered – seeing he was left-handed.

God's message was pretty direct:

Judges 3:21 Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

Judges 3:22 Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out.

Judges 3:23 Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

Gross! This was an eighteen inch dagger. Eglon was a fat man.

It's a great picture of the sword of the Spirit slaying the flesh. We can't always see the sword as it penetrates; but, within, it is killing the flesh.

We just discussed being Spirit-filled. God fills you as you are – big, little, right-handed, left-handed. He doesn't need your skills or abilities; but He can and will utilize them.

In the case of Ehud, his physicality was always a hassle for him. He lived prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act! But God could, and did, use him. His social handicap was no obstacle in serving God.

His skills were also used by God. He was a skilled metal worker; he fashioned his sword. God has prepared you for your service.

Judges 3:24 When he had gone out, *Eglon's* servants came to look, and to *their* surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber."

Judges 3:25 So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened *them*. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.

They thought Eglon was in the bathroom! They waited until past the point of embarrassment, then found him dead on the floor.

Judges 3:26 But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah.

Judges 3:27 And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them.

Judges 3:28 Then he said to them, "Follow *me*, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over.

Judges 3:29 And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped.

Judges 3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

Remember: It's not by might, or by power, but by the Spirit. Still, God can use you; and He can use others. Many answered the trumpet call. Are you listening for the trumpet – to rally you?

Othniel was from Judah, the mightiest tribe. Ehud was a Benjamite – the smallest. The Holy Spirit chooses as He wills.

Here comes the third Judge:

Judges 3:31 After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

A [goad](#) was a long pole, somewhat pointed at the end, used to prod oxen along. It wasn't really a weapon at all; but in the hands of a Spirit-filled man, it was powerful.

Ehud had formed a weapon, using his skills. Shamgar used a common farming tool. You don't need the finest weaponry.

It's interesting to me that Shamgar was the first Judge after Ehud; but he didn't try to copy Ehud. He didn't try to forge a sword, or have one forged. Too often, we try to copy the successful principles of others.

The next Judge is no man:

Judges 4:1 When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Judges 4:2 So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim.

Judges 4:3 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

Judges 4:4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

Judges 4:5 And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Deborah was unusual in that, unlike the other Judges, Israel was oppressed while she was their Judge. Her role was as a prophetess – giving out God's Word as folks would visit her.

God apparently had called upon Barak to overthrow Sisera; but Barak was reluctant to serve.

Judges 4:6 Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, ‘Go and deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun;

Judges 4:7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand’?”

Barak had a clear word from God; maybe it was a prophecy from Deborah. But he was reluctant to act upon it.

We’ve been talking about the Holy Spirit coming upon you. He doesn’t always do it with tongues of fire! Sometimes – most of the time – you must simply believe He has come upon you, and act in faith.

Judges 4:8 And Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!”

Judges 4:9 So she said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Judges 4:10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

I don’t want to talk too much about the role of women in the Church. I will point out that Deborah was a prophetess; there were women with the gift of prophecy in the New Testament. Concerning certain gifts, men and women both receive them equally.

I will point out that Deborah thought it strange that Barak would elevate her to the role of leadership. Although she went along with it, she pointed out that it was not God’s ideal.

Listen: If men will not assume their proper roles in leadership, women often fill the gap; but it is not God’s ideal, nor should it be promoted.

Judges 4:11 Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which *is* beside Kedesh.

Judges 4:12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.

Judges 4:13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

Judges 4:14 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

Judges 4:15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot.

Judges 4:16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

Later on in Judges, we’ll learn that God caused a flash-flood to come – crippling the chariots on the battlefield. Barak showed himself, drawing out the superior military force. It was a radical, bold strategy that required him to depend upon the Spirit of God.

It’s always great to have a word from God to guide you. Too often Christians rely solely on their own feelings; or on facts; but not on faith. We need to seek God; we need the gift of prophecy to be exercised in our midst; we need to walk empowered by it.

Judges 4:17 However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was* peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

Judges 4:18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.” And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

Judges 4:19 Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him.

Judges 4:20 And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’”

Judges 4:21 Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

Judges 4:22 And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, “Come, I will show you the man whom you seek.” And when he went into her *tent*, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

You probably expected Deborah would be the woman God used; but she wasn't. All of a sudden, Jael was called upon to serve the Lord. Be ready – in season, and out of season.

Judges 4:23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel.

Judges 4:24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

This was a gradual kind of victory, with many hard-fought battles. Some things take time; we're called upon to persevere and walk by faith.

Chapter Five is a song – a duet of deliverance - composed and performed to worship the Lord in celebration of the victory.

We've been getting schooled about the power of God's Spirit. One of the results of the presence of the Spirit in our lives is praise on our lips from hearts filled with Him.

There are more than a few precious lessons in this song, regarding serving in the Spirit:

1. Read verses two and nine. Leaders must have the Spirit to lead; and soldiers (servants) must have the Spirit to submit to them.
2. Read verses four, five, and thirty-one. The Spirit reminds you to follow God's leading.
3. In verses thirteen through eighteen, and in verse twenty-three, you see that some refused to fight. The Spirit of God does not need great numbers.

Judges 5:1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:

Judges 5:2 "When leaders lead in Israel,
When the people willingly offer themselves,
Bless the LORD!

Judges 5:3 "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, *even* I, will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

Judges 5:4 "LORD, when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from the field of Edom,
The earth trembled and the heavens poured,

The clouds also poured water;
Judges 5:5 The mountains gushed before the LORD,
This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.

Judges 5:6 “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.

Judges 5:7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.

Judges 5:8 They chose new gods;
Then *there was war* in the gates;
Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

Judges 5:9 My heart *is* with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.
Bless the LORD!

Judges 5:10 “Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,
Who sit in judges’ attire,
And who walk along the road.

Judges 5:11 Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD,
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in Israel;
Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates.

Judges 5:12 “Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away,
O son of Abinoam!

Judges 5:13 “Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles;
The LORD came down for me against the mighty.

Judges 5:14 From Ephraim *were* those whose roots were in Amalek.
After you, Benjamin, with your peoples,
From Machir rulers came down,
And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter’s staff.

Judges 5:15 And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah;
As Issachar, so *was* Barak
Sent into the valley under his command;
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.

Judges 5:16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.

Judges 5:17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,
And why did Dan remain on ships?
Asher continued at the seashore,
And stayed by his inlets.

Judges 5:18 Zebulun *is* a people *who* jeopardized their lives to the point of death,

Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.

Judges 5:19 “The kings came *and* fought,

Then the kings of Canaan fought

In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;

They took no spoils of silver.

Judges 5:20 They fought from the heavens;

The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.

Judges 5:21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away,

That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon.

O my soul, march on in strength!

Judges 5:22 Then the horses’ hooves pounded,

The galloping, galloping of his steeds.

Judges 5:23 ‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the LORD,

‘Curse its inhabitants bitterly,

Because they did not come to the help of the LORD,

To the help of the LORD against the mighty.’

Judges 5:24 “Most blessed among women is Jael,

The wife of Heber the Kenite;

Blessed is she among women in tents.

Judges 5:25 He asked for water, she gave milk;

She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.

Judges 5:26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg,

Her right hand to the workmen’s hammer;

She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head,

She split and struck through his temple.

Judges 5:27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;

At her feet he sank, he fell;

Where he sank, there he fell dead.

Judges 5:28 “The mother of Sisera looked through the window,

And cried out through the lattice,

‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?

Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?’

Judges 5:29 Her wisest ladies answered her,

Yes, she answered herself,

Judges 5:30 ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoil:

To every man a girl or two;

For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments,

Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed,

Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?’

Judges 5:31 “Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD!

But *let* those who love Him *be* like the sun

When it comes out in full strength.”

So the land had rest for forty years.

