

The Pattern of the Judges (Judges 3)
Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar

I. Introduction

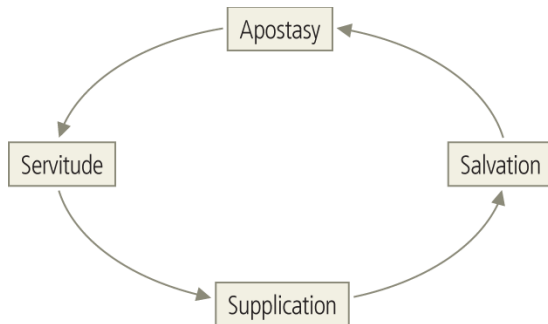
A. The Theme of Judges: The Canaanization (worldliness/ covenant unfaithfulness) of Israel and God’s merciful rescuing work.

B. Outline of Judges

1. After Joshua: Israel’s slip into apostasy (1:1-3:6)
2. The Judges: Israel’s spiral into apostasy and the severity and salvation of the Lord (3:7-16:31)
3. The Need for a Godly King: The depths of Israel’s depravity (17:1-21:25)

C. Introduction to Judges 3:7-16:31

1. Romans 11:22 “*behold the kindness and severity of the LORD*”
2. God raises up 12 Judges.
3. Cycle of Judges.



II. Othniel: The Pattern of Judges (3:7-11)

A. The Pattern / Paradigm

1. Note the cycle in action.
2. Note that Othniel is from the tribe of Judah. As things move away from Judah, the spiral into depravity grows.

B. God’s Mercy and Grace (v. 9-10)

“ Our primary problem is that verse 9 moves us only to yawn. After all, we already know the theological truth of verse 9—we’ve read that sort of thing often before. So we respond with a pleasant, nodding ho-hum. Isn’t God nice? What’s for supper? If we fail to see, to feel, to delight in the miracle of God’s own nature, are we not strangers to rather than partakers of such unbelievable grace?”¹

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *Judges: Such a Great Salvation*, 50–51.

III. Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)

A. Apostacy (12a)

B. The Severity of the LORD

1. The Lord punishes Israel using a pagan king (12b-14 cp. Isaiah 10:5-7, 12-13, 15-16)
2. The people cry out to the Lord for help (15a)

C. The Kindness/Salvation of the LORD

1. The Lord raises a deliverer (15b)
 - a. Ehud – who is from the tribe of Benjamin
 - b. Benjamin – “son of right hand”
 - c. Ehud is “left-handed man” (likely ambidextrous. See Judges 20:16)
2. The Lord uses Ehud to deliver Israel (16-29)
 - a. There are double-entendres
 - (i) Eglon, meaning little calf...is a fat calf.
 - (ii) “secret message” could refer to an experience.
 - (iii) “Double-edged” literally means double-mouthed.
 - b. Eglon gets quite an experience. The fatted calf is slaughtered.
 - c. The idols stand impotent as Ehud passes by them (a message to Israel to stop worshipping them and to her enemies that their gods have no power).
 - d. The Moabite army is defeated.
 - e. God delivers Israel through judgment (cp. the flood, the cross, Revelation).
3. They gain victory and rest (30)
 - a. Obviously, this can point us to our desire for heavenly rest.
 - b. But as Dale Ralph Davis reminds us, “There is no need to fly off to heaven at this point. Does not the apostle command us to pray ‘for kings and all those in authority, *that we may live peaceful and quiet lives* in all godliness and holiness’ (1 Tim. 2:2, italics added)? To have rulers in one’s country who can maintain social and civil order is one of God’s wonderful gifts to his flock. And if your land has relative rest, you should thank the kind King who has granted it to you.²”
 - c. Let us pray for those in authority that we may live peaceable and quiet lives

IV. Shamgar (Judges 3:31)

V. Applications

A. “Ehud, sorry to say, is not a totally adequate savior, for though Yahweh brings a certain kind of salvation and help through Ehud, nothing Ehud did could change the hearts of Israel”³

1. Apart from Christ, we are under sin (Rom. 3:9) – not simply our sins, but the power of sin.
2. What we need is deliverance that only God can bring.
3. Not so much a left-handed Savior, but one with nail-scars on his hands.

B. We aren’t called to physically drive out nations, yet, we are not to love the world or get comfortable in its ways.

² Davis, 54.

³ Davis, 63.