

Judges 3:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

Analysis

When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

This passage relates to early judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar, demonstrating God's sovereign choice and empowerment of deliverers. The judges themselves display varying degrees of faith and character flaws, yet God works through these imperfect human instruments to accomplish His purposes. This illustrates the biblical pattern that God's power is made perfect in human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Theologically, these early judges establish the pattern of divine deliverance through unlikely means. God chooses the weak, marginalized, and flawed to demonstrate that victory comes from His power, not human strength. This anticipates Paul's teaching that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

The military victories recorded here serve spiritual purposes—they deliver Israel from physical oppression but more importantly provide opportunity for spiritual renewal. Each deliverance creates space for Israel to return to covenant faithfulness. However, the repeated cycles show these deliverances provided only

temporary relief, pointing to the need for the ultimate Deliverer who would provide permanent victory over sin and spiritual oppression through His death and resurrection.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: The Book of Judges spans approximately 350-400 years (c. 1375-1050 BCE) during the Late Bronze Age collapse and early Iron Age. This period saw the disintegration of major empires (Hittites, Mycenaeans) and weakening of Egyptian control over Canaan, creating a power vacuum filled by emerging peoples including Philistines (Sea Peoples), Aramaeans, and regional kingdoms. The decentralized tribal structure left Israel vulnerable to external oppression and internal chaos.

Cultural Context: This passage relates to early judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. Canaanite religion dominated the region, centered on Baal (storm/fertility god), Asherah (mother goddess), and Anat (war goddess). Archaeological discoveries at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) have provided extensive information about Canaanite mythology and religious practices. Baal worship involved ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and fertility rites tied to agricultural seasons. Israel's persistent attraction to these gods demonstrates the strong cultural pressure to conform to surrounding nations' religious practices.

The material culture of this period shows gradual Israelite settlement in the Canaanite hill country, with simpler pottery and architecture than coastal Canaanite cities. Iron technology was beginning to spread, giving military advantage to peoples who mastered it (note the Philistines' iron monopoly, 1 Samuel 13:19-22). The absence of centralized government during the judges period stands in stark contrast to the bureaucratic city-states of Canaan and the imperial administration of Egypt and Mesopotamia. This political structure reflected Israel's theocratic ideal—God as king—yet the repeated cycles of apostasy showed this ideal required more than political structures; it demanded heart transformation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this passage about early judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar reveal God's character in dealing with persistent human rebellion and incomplete obedience?
2. What patterns of spiritual compromise or incomplete obedience in your own life mirror Israel's failures during the judges period?
3. How does understanding the cyclical nature of sin and deliverance in Judges help you appreciate Christ's perfect and final deliverance from sin's power?

Interlinear Text

וְיָצָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה וְיָרַא אֶלְעָבָד יְהוָה הַיְלָדָן
H1931 When he was gone out his servants came and when they saw H2009
H3318 H5650 H935 H7200

אֵלֶת וְתַּחֲלִית הַדְּלָת וְתַּחֲלִית הַבָּנָה
that behold the doors of the parlour were locked they said H389
H1817 H5944 H5274 H559

בְּמִקְרָבָה: בְּחִדְשָׁה רְבָנָה מִסְּעָן
Surely he covereth his feet chamber in his summer H4747
H5526 H1931 H853 H7272 H2315

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 24:3 (Parallel theme): And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

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