

The Book of  
**JUDGES**

*Testing the Heart of God's Children*



Testing the Heart

Judges 3:1-31

Lesson 3

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### Introduction

A.T. Pierson used to say that "history is His story," and he was right. As He executes His divine decrees, God never violates human responsibility, but He does rule and overrule in the affairs of individuals and nations to accomplish His great purposes on this earth. When God goes to war, He usually chooses the most unlikely soldiers, hands them the most unusual weapons, and accomplishes through them the most unpredictable results.

God gave Shamgar an ox goad, and with it he killed 600 men. Jael used a hammer and tent peg to kill a captain, and Gideon routed the whole Midianite army with only pitchers and torches as weapons. Samson slaughtered 1,000 Philistines using the jawbone of an ass.

### Canaanite Gods that Israel worshiped

**Dagon** – a god of the sea. Dagon meant "lord of the fish"

**El** - was the chief god of the Canaanites. He was the father of all gods and mortals, though his power was weak.

**Asherah** - she was the wife of El, the mother of the gods and the goddess of the sea. Asherah should not be confused with Ashtoreth, the consort of Baal,

**Baal** – his name means lord. A storm represented his power, but also life-giving rain. He was pictured as standing on a bull. The storm cloud was his chariot, thunder his bow and lightning his spear and arrows. He is described as dying and rising therefore ordering the annual cycle of the seasons. The Baal religion was basically a fertility cult. Canaanite worshipers participate in lewd, and immoral acts with sacred temple prostitutes. Bestiality and child-sacrifice were also associated with this depraved religion.

**Ashtoreth** - fertility goddess and goddess of love and war, closely associated with Baal.

**Anath** - Baal's sister and wife, was also a goddess of love and war.

Though our world has changed dramatically since the days of the Judges, the "world system" is still the same because human nature hasn't changed. As long as we're in this world, God's people are involved in a spiritual battle against Satan and his armies. God is still looking for men and women who have what it takes to win: **power, strategy,** and the **courage** to use **God's weapons** to fight the battle. God left the enemy in the land as a test of their obedience, that He might teach His children how to fight.



## LOOKING FOR GOLD - WHAT DOES IT SAY?

The first step in mining for gold is getting the lay of the land. **Carefully observe the text** looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. **Mark your text** looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. Look for answers to, Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

***Setting the scene:** Read Deut. 8 to remember what God told Israel. Use an atlas or other sources to place the cities in the appropriate place on your map. Pay attention to who's inheritance they are occupying.*

### **Judges 3:1-4**

3 Now these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.



### **Digging Deeper**

Dig deeper using other resources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps & cross-references. Notate where you found it to share with the group. Look for commands to obey or questions to be answered. What does God want you to know about Himself?

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### Judges 3:5-11

5 Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. 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. 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. 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. 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. 11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.



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### **Judges 3:12-25**

**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. **13** Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. **14** So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years. **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. **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. **17** So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.) **18** And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. **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. **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. **21** Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. **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. **23** Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

**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." **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.



### Judges 3:26-31

**26** But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. **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. **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. **29** And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. **30** So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years. **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.



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## BOILING IT DOWN – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



What **lesson** can I draw from my observations?

State each lesson in a simple sentence (aim for 10 words or less).

Judges 3:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

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Judges 3:5-11 \_\_\_\_\_

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Judges 3:12-25 \_\_\_\_\_

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Judges 3:26-31 \_\_\_\_\_

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## REFINED AS GOLD - HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

What **course of action** do I need to take to apply each lesson?  
(aim for 10 words or less)

Judges 3:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

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Judges 3:5-11 \_\_\_\_\_

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Judges 3:12-25 \_\_\_\_\_

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Judges 3:26-31 \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHALLENGE:** Use cross-references to find correlating scripture that backs up a main point of the chapter. Summarize your findings in your own words.

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### STORING UP YOUR TREASURE . . .

What did God say? Deut. 8:1-5, 16-19

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List how Israel disobeyed in Judges chapter 3?

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How did God deal with Israel's disobedience ?

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What did the Spirit of the Lord enable (empower) the judges to do?

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What words or phrases are repeated?

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**CHECKING FOR CLARITY:** See if you can boil down the meaning of **each section** into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you catch the vision?

Judges 3:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Judges 3:5-11 \_\_\_\_\_  
Judges 3:12-25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Judges 3:26-31 \_\_\_\_\_

**BARS OF GOLD:** State the main **point** of the passage in the form of a title.

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**FLEX YOUR MUSCLES:** Can you discover an N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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### HIDE YOUR TREASURE IN YOUR HEART

And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses Judges 3:4

#### Radiating His Truth . . .

The presence of the enemy in the land was an opportunity for teaching, testing and trusting. -Warren Wiersbe





