



Sermon Notes

Journey Through Judges #4
Ehud
Judges 3:12-30

July 29, 2007
Tim Strickland

Judges 3:12-15

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord. [13] He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms. [14] And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

[15] Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

Introduction:

a. What is a Judge?

- a. Saviour/Deliverer & Leader (Judges 2:16-17)
 - To save Israel from oppression
 - To lead Israel to walk with God

b. The Cyclical Pattern of the Judges

1. Israel does evil in the sight of the Lord (3:7)
2. The anger of the Lord is kindled and He gives Israel into the hands of their enemies who oppress them (3:8)
3. Israel cries out to the Lord (3:9a)
4. The Lord hears them and sends a judge to save them (3:9b)
5. The Spirit of the Lord is on the judge, who leads them to victory (3:10)
6. There is rest in the land (3:11a)
7. The judge dies and the cycle begins again (3:11b)

Note: Not all steps in the cycle are found in every judge story

c. Examples and Instruction

- a. These OT stories provide us with examples and instruction
 - 1 Cor 10 esp note v6&11, referring to Moses but applicable to Judges

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1. Judgment and Mercy (12-15a)

- a. Israel does evil in the sight of the Lord (12)
 - *the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel*
- b. Israel cries out to the Lord (15)
 - *the Lord raised up for them a deliverer*
- c. Ehud (15)
 - *the Benjaminite* (Benjamin means 'son of the right hand')
 - *a left-handed man*
 - see Judges 20:16, 1 Chron. 12:2

2. The Tribute (15b-17)

- a. Ehud makes a two-edged sword and straps it on his right thigh
- b. *And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab.* (17a)
 - More food for the big guy
- c. *Now Eglon was a very fat man.* (17b)
 - Eglon means "young calf" and sounds like "fat"
 - i.e. kill the fattened calf

3. The Secret Message (18-22)

- a. Ehud announces that he has a "*secret message*" for Eglon (19a)
 - "message" can mean 'message' or 'thing'
- b. All of Eglon's attendants leave them alone (19b-20)
- c. "*I have a message from God for you*" (20)
 - Very true, but not what Eglon is expecting
- d. Ehud makes his move...all the gory details... (21-22)
 - He reaches with his left hand for his sword and thrust it into Eglon's belly
 - Eglon is so big that the sword goes all the way in
 - He falls dead in his own dung

4. The Escape (23-26)

- a. Ehud locks the door and leaves
- b. Eglon's servants think Eglon is '*relieving himself*'
 - They are right in a sense
- c. They finally go in to find him dead
- d. While they delay, Ehud gets away

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5. The Victory (27-30)

- a. Ehud sounds the trumpet to rally the Israelite troops
 - *"Follow after me, for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand."* (28)
- b. He leads them to seize the fords of the Jordan and they kill 10,000 Moabite soldiers, *"all strong, able-bodied men"*.
- c. Moab is subdued and the land has rest for 80 years

6. Lessons from Ehud

- a. God is Sovereign and in complete control of history
 - **the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel** (12)
 - **"the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud** (15)
 - **"I have a message from God for you"** (20)
 - **"Follow after me, for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hands"** (28)
- b. The Judgment and Mercy of God
 - God sees sin and judges it
 - God hears the cries of His people and sends a saviour
- c. But...How can this Story be in the Bible?
 - Was Ehud's method the right one?
 - Much debate in Biblical scholarship
 - Things to note:
 - He was raised up by God to save Israel
 - He acted in a time of war
 - The Bible portrays the story of Ehud in a victorious and humorous way
- d. Ehud displayed
 - Faith
 - Boldness and Daring
 - Courage
 - Strategic Leadership

Note: God's Sovereignty and power does not mean that we do nothing. The paradox is that He expects us to step out in courage, to carefully plan and prepare, but to never rely on our strength, wisdom and plans, but to rest our faith in Him. " 'It' never works. He works." *

* I believe the quote above is from Henry and/or Richard Blackaby, but I do not have the precise source.

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Our Response

1. Remember that God is sovereign over all things.
2. Walk in the Spirit, who is given to all believers today.
Ephesians 5:18b "...be filled with the Spirit"

3. Be ready to stand up and fight the spiritual battles that you will encounter, knowing that God is in complete control and His power is at work in you.

Ephesians 6:10-13 ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Questions for Application

1. Does it surprise you that the story of Ehud is in the Bible? Explain.
2. How do we see God's sovereign hand in this story?
3. Do you think Ehud acted rightly? Discuss.
4. " 'It' never works, He works". Discuss this statement as it relates to trusting in the Lord while still making wise, careful plans.
5. Do you need to step out in faith in some area of your life?
6. Pray together as a group for faith in God's strength to fight the spiritual battles we all face, and for the Spirit's working in our church as we study Judges together.

Questions, Comments? - inthebeginning@look.ca

If you have questions or comments about today's message, please drop me an email to the address above. Thanks,

Tim



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