

“Ehud – God’s Southpaw”

Judges 3 v12 -31

Scripture Ref: Rom 6:4; Gen 19:30-38; Ps 139:23-24;

Enemy	Years of Bondage	Judge	Deliverance and Rest	Scripture Ref
Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40	3:7-11
Moab	18	Ehud	80	3:12-31
Canaan	20	Deborah	40	4:1-5:31
Midian	7	Gideon	40	6:1-8:28
Ammon	18	Jephthah	6	10:6-12:7
Philistia	40	Samson	20	13:1-16:31

- 1. As we come to the next period in Israel, the very first line gives us an clear message of trouble – “Israel again did evil”**

The Cycle Repeats – Moab

12 And the children of **Israel again did evil** in the sight of the LORD.

- 2. So Israel was in bondage to Cushan-Rishathian, God delivered them, but once again, Israel walks away from God.**
 - a. a gradual descent - 40 years – but a descent nonetheless!**
- 3. This should cause us to consider – When God delivers us from something – do we from that point on set our hearts “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”...**
 - a. Are we “walking in the newness of life”**

***Rom 6:4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

- b. Or do we walk back into the prison cell?**
 - i. Imagine you spent eight years in a prison cell... languishing –**
 - ii. Then you were set free – and given a nice new home to live in...**
 - iii. How many of us would think “hey, I think I’ll go back and visit that prison cell! Maybe they’ll let me spend the weekend!”**
 - iv. When we go back to something that God has delivered us from – that is exactly what we are doing!**

- v. Don't let Satan fool you – he might put a fresh coat of paint on the cell – put up some curtains, spray from air freshener....
- vi. But it is still a prison cell – and we don't belong there!

Confronted With an Enemy

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 (**Jericho**). 14 So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.

- 4. So first of all, we are confronted with a new enemy. God strengthened Eglon, King of Moab, who teams up with the Ammonites and Amalekites, to take control of the Promised Land.
 - a. First point of interest – God strengthened this man against Israel
 - i. IOW God caused his kingdom to become militarily strong, AND put it into his heart to go to war against Israel.
 - b. Second point of interest is that Moab and Ammon were relatives of the Israelites, born through an incestuous relationship between Lot and two of his daughters. (Gen 19:30-38)
- 5. Another example of where compromise will take you:
 - a. When Lot and Abraham parted, Lot went “towards Sodom”, then later we find him right smack in the middle of this wicked city, whose homosexual rapist men wanted to abuse the angels that came to see if there were any righteous people there (they got their answer!)
 - b. When Lot fled Sodom, the only ones who made it out alive with him were his daughters
 - c. They hid out in the caves, and they got their dad drunk and slept with him so they could have descendants –
 - d. What kind of daughters would do this? I would put the blame on Lot, as he placed his family in a place that apparently desensitized them to sin...
 - e. And the two sons that were born to Lot's daughters were – Moab (Moabites), and Ben-Ammi (Ammonites)
- 6. Now we find these two sons coming back to haunt Israel...

God Raises up Ehud – a “Left-handed Man”

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.

- 7. Ehud means “I will give praise” or ‘I will give thanks” (maybe)

- 8. “Left-handed” - Many in ancient times who were left-handed were made to be right-handed – a left-handed man was considered handicapped!**
- 9. So God raises up Ehud – we’re not told all the details, but we could say that Ehud came forward with a plan...**

The Strategy – Strike at the Root

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.)

- 10. Don’t know if Ehud normally brought the tribute, or tax payment, to Eglon, but he did this time**
 - a. And he comes with a message, but it’s not what the king thinks it is.**

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.

- 11. This is like a drama plot! You couldn’t make this stuff up!**
 - a. Ehud tells Eglon “I’ve got a special message from God for you....”**
 - b. And he pulls the blade with his left hand – which would not have been expected...**
 - c. He shoves the blade in – sinks all the way into his belly and is just swallowed up!**
 - d. Eglon soils himself (in the Hebrew it’s “dirt” from “down there”)**
 - e. Probably why his servants thought he was relieving himself!**

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.

The Sin Root

- 12. Notice that Ehud does not kill the prime minister, or the captain, but he goes straight to the root – Eglon the king – the source of the oppression**
- a. **Thing is with any bondage, any oppression, there is a SIN ROOT.**
 - b. **Regardless – there is some root – unforgiveness, lust, greed, idolatry**
 - c. **We often deal with the symptom – “Lord forgive me for being angry”,**
 - d. **but if we don’t deal with the ROOT SIN, we’ll just get angry again.**
 - e. **This is where prayer and seeking the Lord are important**

Ps 139:23-24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

- 13. So Ehud has struck the oppressor – but at the same time it was like kicking a hornets nest, because the Moabites were not going to let this go unanswered.**
- a. **They will gather up their men and want to teach Israel a lesson...**
 - b. **Except that Israel has a decided advantage – something they didn’t have before, and something that Moabites are not counting on...**
 - c. **They have the power God, and a Leader anointed by God!**

The Leader God Uses

- 14. We can have good motives, good intentions, and direction from the Lord, but it takes a person who is called, anointed, and submitted to the Lord to say “Follow me!”**
- a. **Called: Without the calling affirmed, the leader cannot step out in faith and confidence, nor will they have the empowerment.**
 - i. **Some will step out – but if they are not stepping out in the full knowledge of a calling by God...**

- ii. When things get tough, or don't turn out like they thought, all of a sudden its "I'm feeling led to go over here"
 - b. **Anointed:** People can do incredible things in their own strength and understanding, but they cannot do "God things" without the power of God fully engaged!
 - c. **Submitted:** A person can have the calling, and the anointing, but unless they have submitted themselves to the will of the Lord – they wont move forward!
15. Could God do it without a leader? Of course. But for His own reason and purpose, God chooses leaders to work through
- a. Maybe because people need a tangible face to look at, an example to follow, a voice to hear – God knows man!

God Can Use "Lefty's"

16. Not to harp on Ehud – but being left-handed was seen as a handicap, and yet God didn't pass over him for a more 'whole' person.
- a. "We all have handicaps" All of us who are honest have something in our lives that we feel is some kind of handicap – especially when it comes to serving God
 - i. Maybe some personality trait – shy, or reserved, or overly emotional...
 - ii. Maybe a physical handicap, or we don't think we are smart enough
 - iii. Or maybe because you are a female (which we'll dispel next week with Deborah!)
 - iv. **FACT: God can use anybody!**
 - b. God often uses people who have some limitation because... guess who gets the glory?? **GOD!**

1 Cor 1:26-30

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

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

Shamgar

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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