

HELP FROM UNEXPECTED SOURCES Sunday School- July 17, 2011

Unifying Topic: USE GOD'S STRENGTH

Lesson Text

- I. **God Chooses Ehud** (Judges 3:15-17)
- II. **Ehud Kills The King** (Judges 3:18-25)
- III. **Israel Deliverance** (Judges 3:29-30)

The Main Thought: But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer. Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. (Judges 3:15, KJV).

Unifying Principle: When the community is troubled and needs change, they may call for help and receive it. To whom should the people look for help? When the people cried to God for help, He answered by raising Ehud to save them from their oppressors.

Lesson Aim: To encourage confidence in God's ability to use anything and anyone to accomplish His will.

Life Aim: To recognize God as Judge and Savior of His people, who will address our needs when we call upon Him for divine assistance.

3:15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

3:16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

3:17 And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man

3:18 And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.

3:19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.

3:20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

3:21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:

3:22 And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.

3:23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

3:24 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.

3:25 And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.

3:29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

HISTORY:

In **Judges 2:20-23**, God allowed other nations to remain in the land to chasten or discipline His people. When Joshua died, He would no longer drive these nations out because, He needed to test Israel.

At the beginning of **Chapter 3:1-4 of Judges**, we learn that because of the Israelites' disobedience, there were enemies that remained among them. God used it to test the youth of Israel so they could exercise faith and obedience. There was a new generation that had not experienced the wars of Canaan. The nations that God permitted to stay had a **twofold purpose**: **First**, to chasten the Jews, **Second**, that through these nations, Israel might learn how to fight. By now the younger generation which had not fought in the great battles of conquest was coming of age. It was their job to complete the conquest of the land. There were many obstacles yet to be overcome. Perhaps God has left obstacles in your life—hostile people, difficult situations, baffling problems—for the purpose of allowing you to develop faith and obedience. The **five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath.**

- The five lords of the Philistines refers to the leaders of the five city pentapolis of Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza which formed the centralized Philistine government.
- The reference to all the Canaanites refers to the various tribes which were especially strong in the Valley of Esdraelon
- Sidonians refers to the inhabitants of the Phoenician city-state of Sidon, to the north on the Mediterranean coast.
- The Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon refers to the Horites, or Hurrians who established the kingdom of Mitanni in upper Mesopotamia in about 1500 B.C.
- Mount Baal-hermon was later known simply as Mount Hermon and is the more easterly range parallel to

Lebanon, running from Damascus.

- Hamath was on the Orontes River, about 150 miles north of Dan.

3:5-8 The Israelites discovered that relationships affect faith. The men and women of the surrounding nations were attractive to the Israelites. Soon they intermarried and the Israelites accepted their pagan gods. This was prohibited by God. Their cycle always began with **the children of Israel doing evil in the sight of the Lord**, serving Baal and Asheroth idols. ¹God sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. Now this was the first nation that would take charge over Israel. God gave Israel just what they wanted. They didn't want to serve God, so He allowed them to be in bondage to a pagan king. Israel reaped exactly what they sowed for 8 years. After the eight years of bondage Israel finally cried out in dependence on God.

3:9-11 When they cried out to the Lord, He raised up for them a deliverer. **Othniel** (*Caleb's nephew*) (1:13), was **Israel's first judge**. He was to lead the nation back to God. The name **Othniel means the "power of God."** The Spirit of the Lord took control of Othniel and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. The land had **rest forty years**, but then Othniel died.

3:12-14 So once again, Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and God rose up Eglon, king of the Moabites, an enemy of Israel and allowed Israel to be conquered because of their evil done in His presence. As the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab there were allied armies with him, the Ammorites and the Amalekites. These three tribes (Moabites, Ammorites and the Amalekites) were nomadic tribes that lived near each other. This was the first time nations outside of Canaan attacked the Israelites in their own land. With their gathered forces together they defeated Israel and took possession of Jericho which is called "*The City Of Palm Trees.*" And for the next 18 years the Israelites were required to pay crushing taxes to King Eglon of Moab, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. It went from eight years to eighteen years. Their bondage became much longer. Has God gotten their attention yet?

LESSON:

Judges 3:15-17 God Chooses Ehud

3:15 ²When Israel had forgotten their need of God, the Lord does two things; **First**, He allows them to be defeated by that which their own hearts were being drawn to – prideful independence. **Second**, God raises up another Deliverer who will remind them again of the power of God and their constant need to looking and relying upon God for His power in their life. Yes, they cried out again to God, to counteract the eighteen year oppression under king Eglon. God raised up **Ehud, the second judge**, a left-handed Benjamite. The name Benjamin actually means the "*son of my right hand*". ³Ehud's being himself left-handed reminds us of Christ's willingness to take the place of weakness and servitude, doing all in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in complete submission to the Father. God uses a left-handed judge that probably grew up thinking his left-hand was a curse, and turns it into an advantage.

His being described as "**the son of Gera**" continues to direct our attention to attributes of Christ, for "*Gera*" means the "*cud*"; "*a grain*"; "*sojourning*." The cud always speaks of rumination (reflections; ponderings) or meditation on the Word, particularly of strength derived from such meditation. The Lord's whole life was not only governed by God's Word, it was the fulfillment of that Word.

"*Ehud's*" name means "**I will give praise**", or "**I will give thanks**." When you fail to praise God, God has to send praise back to His people. They had not been thankful nor giving God praise because they failed to remember that there is power in praise and there is power in thankfulness.

By Ehud, the children of Israel sent a present or tribute unto Eglon, king of Moab: This means they paid their yearly tribute to the king of Moab because they were under his domination. And according to Eastern custom, it was presented with great ceremony so as to impress both the oppressed and the oppressor regarding their respective positions and relationship to each other. In this move, it was a clever way for Ehud to gain entrance to see the Moabite king.

3:16 Bound to Ehud's right thigh under his garment is a dagger he made. This dagger had two edges; was of a cubit length. It refers to a short cubit, i.e., the distance between the elbow and knuckles of a closed fist; therefore, it was about twelve to fourteen inches long. The purpose: assassination of the Moabite king! The right-handed warriors would bind their short swords on their left thighs, to draw them across their body for battle. The bodyguards of the day had gotten used to only patting down the left sides of visitors. God was using his "*handicap*" as an advantage.

3:17 Ehud carried the present; the tribute in his right hand. The people let him go where the king was. They did not think that he was dangerous. Eglon was described as a very fat man, indicating the need for the length of the dagger.

¹ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7531&commInfo=31&topic=Judges

² <http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/judges5.htm>

³ http://www.greenmeadows-stillwaters.com/types_ehud_the_benjamite.htm

Judges 3:18-25 Ehud Kills The King

3:18 It is serious business to be used by God to bring deliverance and blessing. Those who are most used of God have paid a price to do so. After the official presentation of the tribute, Ehud dismissed the entourage that bore the present so they would not be blamed for what he was about to do. This gave chance for the unexpected.

3:19 They had gone as far as the quarries and **Ehud turned again from the quarries** (graven images, or idols) giving indication that when he had passed them, he was safe from the Moabites. Thus, it has been suggested that they marked the limits of the Moabite territory that was near Gilgal. Ehud was outside the city at the quarries sending his companions on and he turning back to seek and request a private audience with the king himself. Nobody expected anything different. Eglon probably thought Ehud had brought a special bribe to him in addition to the tribute. The king responded with the statement **keep silence** meaning "*hush*," and all of the king's attendants withdrew.

3:20 The Moabites had evidently built a summer palace for their king between old Jericho and Gilgal. The king went into his summer room. This was on the roof of the house. It was cool there and he was alone. Ehud told the king that he had a message from God. The message was for the king only. This message was actually his dagger, which he was carrying on his right thigh. Eglon stood up to hear God's message.

3:21-23 Ehud reached with his left hand, took the double-edged dagger from his right thigh and plunged it deep into the belly of king Eglon. Ehud killed him when he stood up.^{v22} The blow to the abdomen was so quick and powerful that the blade and "*haff*" (handle) went in entirely into the abdomen, so that the fat closed upon the blade. There was no way to pull the dagger out. The "*dirt*", spoken of here, was the "*excrement*" that came out of his stomach, or "*bowel*." The thrusting of the blade was sufficient to kill Eglon immediately, before he could warn any of his servants.^{v23} Ehud escaped through the porch, shutting the door, and locking it. The writer tells us everything about how he killed him!

3:24-25 ⁴When Ehud was gone through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual. They saw that the door was locked from the inside and thought that the king had locked it. Having no suspicion they thought the king was just relaxing or **Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber** meaning "*to go to the bathroom*"^{v25} Thinking he had gone to the toilet, the king's servants were slow to find him, until they were "*ashamed*", meaning, "*they waited until the point of confusion*". Then they discovered what had happened after finally opening the door with a key. The king was lying dead on the floor. By then, Ehud had escaped.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON

Verses 26-28

⁵The hours that the king's door was locked, gave Ehud ample time to get away. He escaped to Seirath. In the mountain of Ephraim, he blew the trumpet of war because the Lord through him would deliver Israel. Again, the Lord had sent them a leader who would go with them into battle. Ehud led, but he had to have followers. **He said unto them, Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.** The Israelites immediately took the fords of Jordan, meaning they cut off the shallow water fords across the Jordan which would be used as an escape route by the fleeing Moabites. Ehud stationed his men at the river crossing and didn't allow anyone to cross the river. Notice that not one of the Israelites lost their life when God was the one to do battle.

Judges 3:29-30 Israel Deliverance

3:29-30 Trapping the Moabites on the west bank of Jordan, the Israelites killed ten thousand men; a serious loss for the Moabites, thus ending their oppression of Israel. It says they were **all lusty** meaning "*healthy and vigorous*"; **all men of valour** meaning "*skillful and valiant*" men. And not one escaped! And they were the best and choicest of all the king of Moab's forces.^{v30} Moab was subdued by the Israelites. The country was cleared of these oppressors, and the land had rest for eighty years.

SUMMARY:

When king Eglon of Moab conquered part of Israel, he set up his throne in the city of Jericho. To counteract the eighteen year oppression brought on by Eglon, God raised up a deliverer by the name of Ehud, who would be the second judge. "*Deliverer*" can also mean Saviour. Ehud, a Benjamite, means "*son of the right hand*", however, Ehud was a left-handed man. It seemed that the Benjamites had many warriors who were left-handed. Ehud was chosen to take Israel's tribute before king Eglon. After delivering the tribute, Ehud used a dagger hidden underneath his garment, which he thrust into king Eglon's stomach, killing him. Ehud escaped into the hill country of Ephraim and gathered together an army to cut off any Moabites that would try to escape. None escaped! The Lord saved Israel through Ehud.

APPLICATION: God knows what we need. The how sometimes come from Him in unexpected sources that always work for our good.

⁴ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=jud&chapter=003&verse=024>

⁵ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/judges/03.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>