

OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 6 — “Repentance & Availability to God” — June 15, 2025

Introduction: How then shall we fight?

“In order for a war to be just, three things are necessary. First, the authority of the sovereign by whose command the war is to be waged... Secondly, a just cause is required... Thirdly, it is necessary that the belligerents should have a rightful intention.”

—Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

Main Point: The account of Ehud demonstrates the importance of _____ in the life of the believer who desires to be useful to God for His purposes.

Judges 3:12-31

With Othniel introduced as the ideal judge, the accounts of the primary figures who will comprise the narrative of the book begin to unfold. Ehud's story is vivid and action packed while Shamgar's is brief. Although nothing is specifically said that indicts the character of these men, there are subtle hints that the downward spiral of the judges has begun.

Exposition:

1. Israel abandoned the Lord and so He permitted them to be oppressed by enemies from the East. (3:12-14)

Judges 3:12-14—¹² 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...¹⁴ And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

“again did what was evil”

Israel's Oppressor: Eglon (‘ _____ ’) the King of Moab

⇒ With a coalition of Canaanite allies, Eglon was able to recapture “the city of palms,” probably the city of _____, demonstrating that Israel's unfaithfulness has begun to reverse the conquest begun under Joshua.

2. In response to Israel's oppression, God raised up a deliverer for them. (3:15-16)

Judges 3:15-16—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. ¹⁶ And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length, and he bound it on his right thigh under his clothes.

Israel's Deliver: Ehud (‘ _____ / _____ ’)

⇒ Ehud was from the tribe of _____ (‘son of the right hand’) which is ironic given that he is described as being left-handed.

Ehud's Preparations:

- He recognized that a unique _____ was before him.
- He made a specific kind of _____.
- He _____ the weapon in a way that would have helped to avoid detection.

3. Ehud's actions led to the destruction of the Moabite king and his forces. (3:17-30)

The Assassination:

- The account hints at Ehud's _____ as well as his own personal _____. (3:19)
“he himself turned back from the idols at Gilgal”

“There may be an implied criticism of Israel for tolerating foreign idols or actually worshiping idols themselves, but the text points out that Ehud *himself* turned back from the idols...the Hebrew word for “turned” is *shoob*, which in the Deuteronomistic History often has clear implications of repentance, of turning away from false gods.”—Boda & Conway

Key Question: What is our response to the _____ of the culture that surrounds us?

- *Ehud's deception allowed him to get close enough to kill the king. (3:20-25)*

"I have a message from God for you"

"As far as Eglon is concerned, Ehud is bringing a divine message back from the idols at Gilgal; as far as Ehud is concerned, he is bringing something secret from YHWH, the God of Israel." —Boda & Conway

⇒ The graphic description of Eglon's assassination pictures him in some ways as a _____ offered to the true God and also offers an explanation for Ehud's escape.

- *Following his escape, Ehud rallied his countrymen to go to battle with the Moabites. (3:26-30)*

"he passed beyond the idols"

"...the Lord has given your enemies...into your hand"

⇒ The description of the defeat of the Moabites demonstrates YHWH's _____ over Israel's enemies and may also recall the "sacrificial" killing of their king.

Key Point: There are times when God's people are called to act boldly _____ those who would harm others.

Assessing Ehud

- (1) While Ehud's methods are never specifically _____, the text certainly portrays him as a heroic and faithful leader.

"...Ehud is a courageous, clever, faithful leader of Israel who repudiated idols and served the Living God. His initiative, his willingness to risk his own life, his leadership skills, and his loyalty to YHWH should be emulated rather than condemned."
—Boda & Conway

- (2) At the same time, the fact that he first engages in deception seems to hint at a lack of complete _____ in the Lord's promise to give victory to His people when they turn to Him.

"...silence is here severest condemnation. It needed not cunning and murder to effect deliverance. Not one word...or excuse is said for this deed. It was *not* under the influence of "the Spirit of Jehovah" that such deliverance was wrought..."
—Alfred Edersheim

4. This section ends with a brief description of the career of Shamgar. (3:31)

Israel's Oppressor: The Philistines

Israel's Deliverer: Shamgar ("Son of Anath")

⇒ 'Anath' was the Canaanite goddess (sister of Baal) of war, violence, and hunting. 'Son of Anath' was possibly a title associated with a certain warrior class.

* *He could have been a _____ from Paganism*

* *He could have been a _____*

Assessing Shamgar

- (1) Whoever he was, the fact that a foreigner becomes Israel's deliverer is an _____ of them and their general failure to worship and serve the Lord.

- (2) If he was a proselyte, it illustrates that the Lord is not limited by His people's unfaithfulness and can _____ them from their enemies through unlikely means.

Key Point: _____ is the primary characteristic that God is looking for in His people in order that we might be useful to Him.

Applying the Text

1. Repentance is intended by God to restore our _____ with Him.

Rev. 3:19-20—¹⁹Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

2. Through repentance, we are _____ before the Lord and thereby become useful to Him.

1 Pet. 5:5b-7—...Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

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(2) *He could have been a mercenary*

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