

Judges 03 - Unconquered Canaanite Nations; Cycles 1-3: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar

- I. Israel deteriorates due to her failure to drive out the Canaanites (Judges 1:1—3:6)
 - (2) Spiritual failure (Judges 2:1—3:6)
 - (D) Test as reason for Canaanites being left in the land (2:20—3:6)
- II. Failure in rescue of Israel through the seven cycles (Judges 3:7—16:31)
 - (1) Othniel defeats Cushan-rishathaim of Mesopotamia (3:7-11)
 - (A) Sin (3:7)
 - (B) Suppression (3:8)
 - (C) Supplication (3:9)
 - (D) Salvation (3:10)
 - (E) Silence (3:11)
 - (2) Ehud defeats Eglon of Moab (3:12-30)
 - (A) Sin (3:12a)
 - (B) Suppression (3:12b-14)
 - (C) Supplication (3:15a)
 - (D) Salvation (3:15b-30)
 - (E) Silence (3:30b)
 - (3) Shamgar defeats the Philistines (3:31)

Judges 3

- (2) Spiritual failure (Judges 2:1—3:6)
 - (D) Test as reason for Canaanites being left in the land (2:20—3:6)
- 1 Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to test Israel by them (*that is, all the Israelites* who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan;
- 1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel by them (*that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan;*
- 1 Here's a list of nations that the LORD caused to remain in order to test Israel (that is, everyone who had not gained any battle experience in Canaan)
- 1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan;

- A continuation from 2:20-23...God now lists the nations that God "left behind" (did not deliver into Joshua's hand)
- God also reiterates the reasons given for this: to "test" Israel (Cf. 2:22)

God never violates human responsibility, but He does rule and overrule the affairs of individuals and nations to accomplish His great purposes on this earth.

2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it previously).

2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly).

2 only so that successive Israeli generations, who had not known war previously, might come to know it by experience.

2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;

- God also gives a third reason, not given previously: for Israel to learn the art of war for both the future, and the wars of Canaan

- Under Joshua, Israel experienced the power to conquer its foes. This power did not consist in multitudes or bravery of the fighting men, but solely in the might of its God, which was available only when Israel was obedient.

- Joshua did not win by his own strength, but by the works of God. Success was based purely upon Israel keeping the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, not by their battle prowess.

- The new generation had forgotten the true basis for victory, and so it was also necessary to teach the Israelites that they cannot defeat the Canaanites by their own strength, but only by obedience to God.

- God left the Canaanites in the Land to teach them how to fight a holy war. The people of Jehovah could only fight and conquer in the power of their God. Disobedience would not only bring defeat, but also subjugation by those same Canaanites.

3 *These nations are:* the **five governors of the Philistines** and **all the Canaanites** and the **Sidonians**, and the **Hivites** who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.

3 *These nations are:* the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.

3 These nations included the five lords of the Philistines, all of the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived in Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.

3 Namely, 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.

- God lists the specific nations that He will leave in the Land:

- "...five governors of the Philistines" - this shows that the tribe of Judah was not able to hold the key Philistine cities they had taken (1:18)

- "...all the Canaanites" - the other tribes failed to conquer the Canaanite nations, in the southeast part of the Land

- "...Sidonians" - also known as the Phoenicians, who dwelt in the northeast part of the Land

- "...Hivites" - are thought to be the Horites who were previously associated with the Upper Mesopotamians kingdom of Mittanni

— They were best known in Joshua's time as the Gibeonites, a confederacy of city-states (Joshua 9:7,17)

- The surviving nations adopted a "good neighbor" policy toward Israel that eventually defeated Israel from within

— Sometimes Satan comes as a lion to devour, and often he comes as a serpent to deceive (1 Peter 5:8; 2 Cor 11:3)

4 They were *left* to test Israel by them, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses.

4 They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses.

4 They remained there to test Israel, to reveal if they would obey the commands of the LORD that he issued to their ancestors through Moses.

4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

- God reiterates the reason for the continued presence of Israel's enemies in the Land

— The test was specifically from God, for Israel, to give them an objective standard that would measure the level of their obedience or the depth of their disobedience

- The question for this new generation of Israelites was whether they would obey the commandments of God given to Moses

— This presumes the availability of the knowledge of the Law of Moses, which was obtained through the priesthood

— Learning how the congregation of the Lord was to fight against the enemies of God and of His kingdom was one of the ways God tested whether Israel would listen to the commandments of God and would walk in the ways of the Lord

— If Israel was to learn the art of war successfully, they would, at the same time, have to learn to keep the commandments of God

Collapse in the life of the believer is rarely the result of a blowout, but almost always the result of a slow leak. Throughout the Book of Judges, we see the collapse of the people of God. It doesn't happen in a single decisive battle; it erodes slowly by compromises with their enemies. A slow leak will dissipate their spirituality and destroy their potency...

5 The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites;

5 The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites;

5 The Israelis continued to live among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites,

5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

- This verse shows that Israel failed to obey Deut 7:1-2, the command to conquer and destroy these enemies

— When they failed to do so, God used their enemies to reveal their heart

6 and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

6 and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

6 taking their daughters as wives for themselves, giving their own daughters to their sons, and serving their gods.

6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

- The intermarriage with the Canaanites was a failure to obey Deut 7:3-5 (Cf. Gen 24:3; 26:34-35; 27:46; Ex 34:15-16; Joshua 23:12)

— Jewish men married pagan wives, and Jewish women married pagan husbands

— The result of intermarriage was that the Israelites began to serve Canaanite gods

Four Observations

(1) The definition of apostasy in the Book of Judges is "abandoning Jehovah in favor of other gods"; that is, they claim to be the people of Jehovah while acting as if they belonged to Baal. The apostasy is described in several ways, such as, transgressing the terms of the covenant, not walking in God's ways, not listening to His voice, not heeding His commands

—especially the one of exclusive allegiance since, unlike other gods, Israel's God tolerates no rivals.

(2) In turn, Israel's failures teach two lessons. The first lesson is that seeing miracles is not a guarantee against apostasy. These people saw miracles and they apostatized anyway. The second is that spiritual and theological apostasy is a subtle process; merely being in possession of a correct theology does not guarantee freedom from apostasy.

(3) The seven cycles now begin, and the cycles are described on two levels:

- The first level is Israel's cycle, involving four basic steps of spiritual apostasy: foreign oppression, groaning, Israel's repentance, and deliverance by divinely appointed judges.
- The second level is God's cycle, which is anger, punishment, change of mind, and deliverance.

(4) Judges documents seven cycles to illustrate the historical record. This may be for the purpose of corresponding with the seven waves of judgment in Lev 26. The basic formula for the seven cycles is seven-fold:

- First: evaluation: Israel had done that which was evil, a statement that appears 6x (3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1)
- Second: divine judgment - the Lord gave, or sold, them into the hand of the enemy (3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1)
- Third: the cry for help - Israel cries out to the Lord (3:9,15; 4:3; 6:6; 10:10)
- Fourth: the raising up of the judge - the Lord raised up, He delivered to save them (3:9,15)
- Fifth: subjugation of the enemy - the oppressing nation was made subject to Israel (4:23; implied in 3:30; 8:28)
- Sixth: time of rest - the Land had rest of a number of years (3:11,30; 5:31; 8:28)
- Seventh: death of the judge (3:11; 4:1; 8:33; 12:7)

II. Failure in rescue of Israel through the seven cycles (Judges 3:7—16:31)

Earlier, seven cycles were mentioned, but actually, a total of 12 judges are dealt with in this book. Seven are detailed, while five are mentioned only in passing. With a total of 12 judges, there were actually 12 cycles, but the author does not detail all 12 cycles; he details only seven cycles.

(1) Othniel defeats Cushan-rishathaim of Mesopotamia (3:7-11)

(A) Sin (3:7)

7 So the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the **Asheroth**.

7 The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.

7 The Israelis kept on practicing evil in full view of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served Canaanite male and female deities.

7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

- "...Asheroth" - *asherim*, phallic symbols for immoral religious rites

— These Asheroth groves (Deut 16:21; Judges 6:26; 2 Kings 13:6; 17:10, 23:6, and 23:15) were probably regarded as a dwelling place of the deity

— The idolaters gradually stole the hearts of their mates from worshipping YHWH; King Solomon made the same mistake

- Relationship led to service... we dwell with the world; we relate to the world; we end up worshipping with the world (we become like the things we worship: Ps 135:18)

(B) Suppression (3:8)

8 Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, so that He **soldthem** into the hand of **Cushan-rishathaim, kingof Mesopotamia**; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim for eight years.

8 Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

8 Then in his burning anger against Israel, the LORD delivered them to domination by King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim. So the Israelis served Cushan-rishathaim for eight years.

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-Rishathaim eight years.

- Since Israel was acting like pagans, God treated them like pagans; they acted like slaves, so God sold them as slaves

— Had they been faithful, God would have sold their enemies into their hands

- "...sold them" - 4x in the Book of Judges we're told that God "sold" His people to the enemy (2:14; 3:8; 4:2; 10:7. Cf. 1 Sam 12:9; 1 Kings 21:20,25; Ps 44:12)

- "...Cushan-rishathaim" - means "double darkness," or "doubly wicked"

- "...king of Mesopotamia" - "king of Aram Naharaim" [NIV]; Lit. "Syria of the Two Rivers"

— A distant king to be plundering Israel. He had come a long way, probably attacking from the north. Since the deliverer that God raised up was from Judah, it suggests that they had penetrated all the way to the south when God decided to intervene on behalf of His people...

(C) Supplication (3:9)

9 But the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD, and the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to set them free, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

9 When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

9 When the Israelis cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up Othniel son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz, to deliver them, and he did.

9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

- It took eight years for Israel to realize that continuing worship of Baal and Ashherah was of no benefit to them and would not free them from oppression

- God responds to His people when they cry out; this is one of the key messages in the Book of Judges (James 5:16)

- The first of the "judges": Caleb's son-in-law, the man who captured Hebron and married Caleb's daughter

— The exact blood relationship is obscured: was Othniel Caleb's nephew—the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother—or was he simply Caleb's younger brother? From the text, either interpretation is possible.

(D) Salvation (3:10)

10 And the Spirit of the LORD **came upon** him, and he judged Israel. When he went to war, the LORD handed over to him Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

10 The Spirit of the LORD was on him, and he governed Israel. When Othniel went out to battle, the LORD handed king Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim into his control, and Othniel's domination of Cushan-rishathaim was strong.

10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-Rishathaim.

- "...came upon" - a ministry of the Holy Spirit in the OT (see Num 27:18)

— Othniel's ability to be a deliverer was the result of the Spirit of the LORD, which "came upon" him (Zech 4:6; Acts 1:8)

— Other instances in the OT: Othniel (Judges 3:9-10); Gideon (Judges 6:34); Jephthah (Judges 11:29); Samson (Judges 13:24-25; 14:6,19; 15:14); Saul (1 Sam 10:9-10); and David (1 Sam 16:13).

— This was the secret of Othniel's strength, as it was with Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephthah (11:29) and Sampson (14:6,19; 15:14); and it must be for us today (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:8,31; Eph 5:18).

(E) Silence (3:11)

11 Then the land was at rest for forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

11 Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

11 As a result, the land was quiet for 40 years. Then Kenaz' son Othniel died.

11 And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

- Othniel not only rescued his nation from bondage, he also served as judge for 40 years

— Never underestimate the impact one person, who is filled with the Spirit of God and obedient to His will, can have

- The rest lasted 40 years, about one generation; however, it's obvious that the repentance of that generation failed to transmit to the next generation

— Only once did peace last for 80 years (3:30); all other instances, peace lasted for 40 years or less (3:11, 40 years; 3:30, 80 years; 5:31, 40 years; 8:28, 40 years; 10:2-3, 45 years; 12:7-14, 31 years; and 16:31, 20 years).

(2) Ehud defeats Eglon of Moab (3:12-30)

(A) Sin (3:12a)

(B) Suppression (3:12b-14)

12 Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

12 Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

12 The Israelis again practiced evil in full view of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab in his control over Israel, because they had practiced evil in full view of the LORD.

12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

- The armies of Mesopotamia came a long distance to invade Israel (v8), but the Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites were not only neighbors, they were also relatives of the Jews

— Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was the ancestor of both Moab and Ammon (Gen 19:30-38); and Esau, the brother of Jacob, was the ancestor of Amalek (Gen 36:12,16; Deut 25:17,19)

— It was God who energized Eglon to be the oppressor against Israel, even though they were His people

Ehud

But the dismal cycle continues, and they would have been a forgotten nation if God hadn't loved them and chosen them for Himself (Deut 7:1-11). They would have perished in Egypt or the wilderness if God hadn't cared for them. They would have died on the battlefields of Canaan if God hadn't given them victory over their enemies. They would be wallowing in moral sewage if God hadn't given them His Law and priests to teach it to them. Where was the breakdown? In the family: the parents were to teach their children the ways of the Lord (Deut 6:6-25; 11:18-21; Cf. Gen 18:17-19; Job 1:5).

13 And he gathered to himself the sons of Ammon and Amalek; and he went and defeated Israel, and they took possession of the **city of the palm trees**.

13 And he gathered to himself the sons of Ammon and Amalek; and he went and defeated Israel, and they possessed the city of the palm trees.

13 Eglon assembled together the Ammonites and the Amalekites, proceeded to attack Israel, and captured the cities of palms.

13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

- Eglon, the king of Moab, organized the confederacy and made Jericho his headquarters.

- "...city of the palm trees" - Jericho (1:16; Deut 34:3)

— Jericho had been destroyed by Joshua about 60 years earlier, and had been rebuilt, but not as a fortified city, so it didn't violate the curse of Joshua (Joshua 6:26)

14 And the sons of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab for eighteen years.

14 The sons of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

14 So the Israelis served king Eglon of Moab for eighteen years.

14 So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

- Any time under oppression is a long time; but 18 years is a very long time...

(C) Supplication (3:15a)

(D) Salvation (3:15b-30a)

15 But when the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. And the sons of Israel

sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

15 But when the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. And the sons of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

15 But when the Israelis cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up Gera's son Ehud, a left-handed descendant of Benjamin, as a deliverer for them. The Israelis paid tribute through him to king Eglon of Moab.

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.

- A subtle contradiction here: Benjamin means "son of my right hand," but Ehud was left-handed

— Benjamites were known for their ambidexterity (Cf. Judges 20:16; 1 Chr 1:2)

- *'itter*, bound, impeded (on the right, thus, left-handed). This could be translated, "a man handicapped in the right hand."

— Ehud was only able to use his left hand; he will turn that liability into a key asset

16 Now Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges, a cubit in length, and he strapped it on his right thigh under his cloak.

16 Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges, a cubit in length, and he bound it on his right thigh under his cloak.

16 Ehud forged a double-edged sword that was one cubit long, tied it to his right thigh under his cloak,

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.

- While the children of Israel prepared the catering (assuming the tribute also included a present of food), Ehud went to his workshop to fashion a double-edged sword, about 20 inches long (Cf. Heb 4:12)

— Hiding his sword on his right side was the opposite of convention: most warriors, right handed, would carry their sword on the left side

— This concealment, by a handicap, would evade the traditional frisking of guards

17 Then he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was **a very fat man**.

17 He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man.

17 and went to present the tribute to King Eglon of Moab. Now Eglon happened to be a very obese man.

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

- In addition to the required tribute, it likely included some gourmet items for the gourmand...
- "...a very fat man" - Eglon is the only man in the Bible designated as such; he would have been the Olympic champion of the Long Belt Society
- He could have been the inspiration for Stephen Spielberg's Jabba the Hutt. We'll see how to pierce the defenses of heavyweight opponents.

18 And it came about, when he had finished presenting the tribute, that *Ehud* sent away the people who had carried the tribute.

18 It came about when he had finished presenting the tribute, that he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.

18 As he finished presenting the tribute, Ehud sent away the people who had been carrying it.

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

- Ehud set up a private audience...

19 But he himself turned back from the **idols** which were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." And *the king* said, "Silence!" And all who were attending him left him.

19 But he himself turned back from the idols which were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." And he said, "Keep silence." And all who attended him left him.

19 He had turned away from the idols that were at Gilgal. So he told Eglon, "I have a secret message for you, king."

King Eglon responded "Silence!" and all of his attendants left him.

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.

- Ehud left Jericho, got as far as Gilgal, then returned to Elgon in Jericho

- "...idols" - *psillim*, image or graven image; sculpted statues

— These were likely sculpted statues of Canaanite gods

— The were erected at Gilgal, which is the same place where Joshua erected the memorial stones in honor of what God had done for Israel

— The Angel of the Lord had already departed from Gilgal; these statues may have been the cause of His departure

20 Then Ehud came to him while he was sitting in his cool roof chamber alone. And Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." And he got up from his seat.

20 Ehud came to him while he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber. And Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." And he arose from his seat.

20 Ehud approached him while he was sitting by himself in the cool roof chamber of his palace. He said, "I have a message from God for you!" So when Eglon got up from his seat,

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.

- Eglon received him in the cool upper room (*aliyah*), the rooftop sitting room of his palace. Ehud had a secret message to share... what harm could come from a cripple...

21 Then Ehud reached out with his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

21 Ehud stretched out his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh and thrust it into his belly.

21 Ehud used his left hand to take the sword from his right thigh and then plunged it into Eglon's abdomen.

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

- His weapon was hidden on the unaccustomed side; his left hand, however, was most effective...

22 The hilt *of the sword* also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade because he did not pull the sword out of his belly; and the **refuse** came out.

22 The handle also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly; and the refuse came out.

22 The hilt also penetrated along with the sword blade, and Eglon's fat closed in over the blade. Because he did not withdraw the sword from Eglon's abdomen, the sword point exited from Eglon's entrails.

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.

- A 20-inch blade and a 10-inch handle would imply a 30-inch penetration!

- "...refuse" - *parshedona*, excrement, feces; in other Semitic languages, it is used to describe the anus

— So the downward motion of the dagger was with such force that it passed completely through the abdomen and projected through the anus

— The one whom God earlier “strengthened against Israel” (Cf. v12) was now reduced to a pile of fat and excrement

23 Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and shut the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and locked *them*.

23 Then Ehud went out into the vestibule and shut the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and locked *them*.

23 Then Ehud left the cool chamber in the direction of the vestibule, shutting and locking the doors behind him.

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

24 When he had left, the king’s servants came and looked, and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked; and they said, “Undoubtedly he is **relieving himself** in the cool room.”

24 When he had gone out, his servants came and looked, and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked; and they said, “He is only relieving himself in the cool room.”

24 After he left, Eglon’s attendants came to look, but the doors to the cool chamber were locked! So they said, “He must be relieving himself in the inner part of the cool chamber.”

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.

- “...relieving himself” - he was “taking a dump”

25 So they waited until it would have been shameful *to wait longer*; but behold, he did not open the doors of the roof chamber. So they took the key and opened *them*, and behold, their master had fallen to the floor dead.

25 They waited until they became anxious; but behold, he did not open the doors of the roof chamber. Therefore they took the key and opened them, and behold, their master had fallen to the floor dead.

25 They waited until they were embarrassed, since he never opened the doors to the chamber. Eventually they took a key, opened the doors, and found their master dead on the ground.

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.

- Three “behold” statements (v24-25) declare their three surprises:

— The doors were locked

— The king didn’t respond to their calls

— Their king was dead

26 Now Ehud escaped while they were hesitating, and he passed by the idols and escaped to Seirah.

26 Now Ehud escaped while they were delaying, and he passed by the idols and escaped to Seirah.

26 Meanwhile, Ehud escaped while they were delayed, passed by the idols, and escaped in the direction of Seirah.

26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

- Their delay was Ehud's opportunity for escape

- His next challenge was to rally the troops and attack

27 And when he arrived, he blew the **trumpet** in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was leading them.

27 It came about when he had arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was in front of them.

27 When he arrived there, he sounded a trumpet in the mountainous region of Ephraim. While the Israeli army accompanied Ehud from the mountainous regions,

27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

- "...trumpet" - *shofar*, a ram's horn

— This made the Israelites aware that it was time to rebel against the Moabites

- Ephraim was one of the most powerful tribes in Israel

28 Then he said to them, "Pursue *them*, for the LORD has handed your enemies the Moabites over to you." So they went down after him and took control of the crossing places of the Jordan opposite Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross.

28 He said to them, "Pursue *them*, for the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hands." So they went down after him and seized the fords of the Jordan opposite Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross.

28 he told them, "Attack them, because the LORD has given your enemies—the Moabites—into your control." So the Israeli army followed after him, seized the fords of the Jordan River opposite Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross.

28 And 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.

- By guarding the fords, the Israelites prevented the Moabites from escaping or receiving reinforcements

29 They struck and killed about ten thousand Moabites at that time, all robust and valiant men; and no one escaped.

29 They struck down at that time about ten thousand Moabites, all robust and valiant men; and no one escaped.

29 At that time they attacked about 10,000 Moabites, all of whom were strong and valiant men. Not one man escaped.

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.

- The tables were turned by that victory: the Moabites became subject to Israel

— Apparently their allies, the Ammonites and Amalekites, left early

(E) Silence (3:30b)

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

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

30 As a result, Moab was subdued under the control of Israel, and the land remained quiet for 80 years.

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

- Ehud was the instrument through which God brought 80 years of peace to His people

(3) Shamgar defeats the Philistines (3:31)

31 Now after him came **Shamgar** the son of Anath, who struck and killed **sixhundred** Philistines with an **oxgoad**; and he also saved Israel.

31 After him came Shamgar the son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad; and he also saved Israel.

31 After Ehud, Anath's son Shamgar attacked 600 Philistines with a cattle prod. He also delivered Israel.

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

- This is one of the five cycles that is not detailed...

- "...Shamgar" - we know little about this overlooked hero. He apparently was "the son of Anath" (5:6-7) which might mean he was from the town of Beth Anath in Naphtali (1:33), which was also the tribe Barak came from (4:6; Cf. 5:18)

— Or, since Anath was the name of a Canaanite goddess of war, “son of Anath” might have been a nickname for a warrior, or “son of battle”

— Shamgar is connected with Ehud. His judgeship may have transpired after Ehud’s deliverance, but before Ehud’s death, which is why the historical notation in 4:1 continues after the death of Ehud, not Shamgar.

— So it might very well be that Shamgar’s actions occurred within the period of Ehud’s judgeship

- “...six hundred” - this may be his lifetime total, not the result of a one-time battle

- “...oxgoad” - *malmad*, a cattle prod; used to urge oxen to move forward

— It was a strong pole, about 8ft long, with a sharp metal point for prodding oxen, and often a spade on the other end for cleaning the dirt off a plow

— It would have been the closest thing to a spear, since the enemy had confiscated the weapons of the Israelites (5:8; Cf. 1 Sam 13:19-22)

The Weapons of Our Warfare

- “...the foolishness of God” (1 Cor 1:18): 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.
 - Shamgar: an ox goad; killed 600 men (3:31)
 - Jael: a hammer and tent peg to kill a captain (4:21)
 - Gideon: pitchers and torches, to rout the whole Midianite army (7:20)
 - Sampson: a jawbone of an ass, to slaughter 1,000 Philistines (15:15)
 - David: a stone from a shepherd’s sling, to kill the giant Goliath (1 Sam 17)
 - And the ultimate “foolishness”: a wooden cross, erected in Judea, to save the world—
—or all who would accept it.

Opportunity

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: There spread a cloud of dust along a plain; And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince’s banner Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes. A craven hung along the battle’s edge And thought, “Had I a sword of keener steel — That blue blade that the king’s son bears—but this Blunt thing—!” He snapt and flung it from his hand And, lowering, crept away and left the field. Then came the king’s son, wounded, sore bestead, And weaponless, and saw the broken sword, Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand, And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down, And saved a great cause that heroic day.

— Edward Rowland Sill