

2 | EHUD [NOT ANOTHER DAY]

INTRO:

Last week we began our new series in the book of Judges by looking at the first judge God raised up for Israel—Othniel.

We saw that Judges takes place during one of the darkest seasons in Israel's history. After the generation of Joshua passed away, a new generation arose that did not know the Lord or remember what He had done for Israel. Instead of fully driving out the nations from the land, Israel began to compromise. They lived among the surrounding peoples, adopted their practices, and eventually began serving their gods.

And that compromise led to a tragic cycle that repeats throughout the entire book: Israel turns away from the Lord, they fall into oppression, they cry out to God for help, and God raises up a deliverer.

That's where Othniel comes in. When the people cried out, God raised up this first judge—an experienced warrior and a man of proven character—and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him to deliver Israel from their oppressors.

Through that story we saw a few important truths: God's redemptive purposes keep moving forward even when His people fail. God is bigger than our compromises and our shortcomings. And time after time, when His people cry out to Him, He responds with mercy by raising up deliverance.

Most importantly, we were reminded that the real hero of Judges isn't the judges themselves—it's the God who saves His people.

Judges 3:12-30 NIV

¹² Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. ¹³ Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms. ¹⁴ The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years. ¹⁵ Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶ Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a cubit long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. ¹⁷ He presented the tribute to

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Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. ¹⁸ After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way those who had carried it. ¹⁹ But on reaching the stone images near Gilgal he himself went back to Eglon and said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you." The king said to his attendants, "Leave us!" And they all left. ²⁰ Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his palace and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his seat, ²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. ²² Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it. ²³ Then Ehud went out to the porch; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them. ²⁴ After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the palace." ²⁵ They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead. ²⁶ While they waited, Ehud got away. He passed by the stone images and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷ When he arrived there, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills, with him leading them. ²⁸ "Follow me," he ordered, "for the LORD has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." So they followed him down and took possession of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab; they allowed no one to cross over. ²⁹ At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong; not one escaped. ³⁰ That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.

1: THE SETUP

Israel's sin cycle

- (Again) People do evil again in the sight of the Lord
- God disciplines them
 - The Lord strengthened the hand of Eglon the king of Moab against Israel
 - The people serve/made subject Eglon for 18 years
 - The word for made subject = כָּנַע [ku-nah]: to have to submit, to be humbled, to humiliate, to bend the knee, bow, bring down low

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- They were humiliated, made to bow, and brought low before King Eglon of Moab
- (Again) The people of Israel cry out
- The Lord raises up a deliverer [again]
- Victory and peace under the judge (during his lifetime and rule)

Irony in the characters and setup

- Ehud
 - is a left handed Benjaminite
 - Benjamin means son of my right hand
 - Eglon
 - means little bull or bull calf
 - however he is described as 'very fat' in v17
 - The wording used here is used for a fattened calf
 - Eglon is brought tribute by Ehud
 - The word for tribute is the word for a gift/offering but also used for grain offering
 - The thought is that the tribute itself was agricultural–grain–food.
 - Symbolically:
 - Eglon is getting fat off the tribute of Israel
 - Eglon is receiving the offering that was supposed to belong to Yahweh
 - Eglon is now a fattened calf ripe for slaughter
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2: EHUD'S UNIQUE PROFILE

Ehud is meant to be seen as an unexpected deliverer

- He was left handed
 - Literally the wording translates: a man bound or impotent [in] his right hand
 - That means his right hand could have been disabled OR
 - That he had been training to be a left-handed warrior by binding his right hand.
 - The LXX states that he was ambidextrous (or amphibious as P.Ben would say)
- He was a tribute bearer
 - Scholars note that Ehud would have been a known face to the king
 - It's important to recognize that this wasn't the first time he had brought tribute to Eglon
 - Notice how the king seems to trust Ehud entirely?

Ehud is a secret assassin

- This wasn't by his own doing: V15 - the LORD raised up for them a deliverer
 - The LORD put this plan into his heart.
- Ehud prepared himself for God's purpose of being an agent of deliverance
 - He likely made himself ambidextrous (although a disabled right hand is technically possible, but doubtful)
 - He had a double-edged sword made - it's length specific to his purpose
 - He hid the sword on his right thigh
 - Scholars note that Eglon's guards would've only thought to check visitor's left thighs for daggers (most people were right handed)
- Ehud had to have spent time building up trust like an undercover agent

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Ehud had the ability, he had the weapon, he had the cover... he just needed the opportunity.

3: THE PROVOCATION OF GILGAL

Judges 3:18-19 NIV

¹⁸ After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way those who had carried it. ¹⁹ But on reaching the stone images near Gilgal he himself went back to Eglon and said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you." The king said to his attendants, "Leave us!" And they all left.

NOTE: Ehud turned back upon reaching the idols near Gilgal (the tribute carriers continued on to Moab)

What were the stone images–idols?

- They were sculpted stones formed into images of Caananite or Moabite gods
- Scholars debate whose idols they were (Israelite OR Moabite)
- Some see them as boundary markers
 - Beyond them to the north and west belonged Israel
 - They marked Moab's conquest of Israel
 - Babylonians were known to do this – so it is seen in ancient cultures
- Some see them purely as idols and they are indicators of Israel's repeated fallenness into sin

Why is the location important?

- Gilgal had been the entry point into the promised land – Jericho lays just to the west – the first city of the conquest (now in ruins–but at a nearby oasis is presumably Eglon's residence)
- Gilgal is where the 12 stones that Israel pulled up out the Jordan when God stopped the waters for them to cross over in Joshua's day

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- Gilgal is where a whole generation of Israelites were circumcised
 - They 'rolled away the reproach of Egypt'
 - Gilgal comes from the root galal and means to roll away
 - Its believed the place had possibly already been called that, but the LORD (named OR) repurposed its name in saying "I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt" ([Joshua 5:9](#))
- THEREFORE Gilgal was a place
 - Where Israel renewed their covenant with God
 - Was a place of renewed committment
- BUT NOW its a place
 - Filled with idols that reveal their apostasy
 - Sculpted stones that reveal their conquered fallen state

Not another day!

- I think something snapped in Ehud that day
- He had done his duty—delivered the tribute—saw the carriers head into Moab—and he was headed home
- However, when he saw the stones AGAIN... he had enough
- Q: When will God's people be done tolerating their sin and reproach?
- Q: When will we say... not one more day of slavery to sin?
- Q: When will we resolve ourselves with renewed commitment to the Lord?

Today, I choose courage!

- I'm of the opinion that Ehud (can't prove this) had been planning and waiting for the right moment and opportunity.

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- That quite possibly, he strapped on that hidden dagger EVERY TIME he delivered tribute
- Yet for whatever reason, the opportunity didn't come, or he gave into his fear and kept on walking past the stones
- But that day... Ehud had had enough. He chose courage and resolved to do what must be done to deliver himself and his people.
- We know from v28 that he gives credit to the Lord... so not only was he choosing courage... he was trusting the Lord to empower and deliver him!
 - Faith doesn't remove fear, faith says that you trust and believe God despite your fear.
 - Similarly, courage doesn't mean the absence of fear, rather courage is the will to act in the presence of fear
 - Faith and courage go hand in hand.
 - Reminds me of Moses ([Deut 31:6-8](#)) and later the Lord himself saying to Joshua ([Joshua 1:1-9](#)): BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS
- That day, Ehud chose courage.

"Ehud had the weapon. He had the opportunity. But when he saw those idols at Gilgal, he finally had the resolve."

4: THE VICTORY OVER MOAB

Assassination of Eglon

- Gains a private audience with the king by saying he has a secret message for him
- Eglon (??) calls for his attendants to leave them
- Says the message is from God and proceeds to kill him

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- The bowels are emptied (poop everywhere), which help buys Ehud time to escape because his servants see the door locked and presumably smell his emptied bowels.

Complete defeat of Moab's army

- Ehud passes by the idols once more on his way to call the troops.
- He sounds the trumpet—the call to war and the people rally behind him (no small thing)
- They take possession of the fords of the Jordan—this blocked the escape route of the Moabites with Eglon near Jericho
- They completely destroy the Moabites

The victory attributed to all Israel

- Notice V30 in the ESV: Moab was subdued that day under that hand of Israel
- Further, (NIV v30) Those who were made subject have now turned the tables and made subject their former masters

RESPONSE | APPLICATION

ITS TIME TO PICK A FIGHT WITH THE ENEMY

- Do not tolerate being subjected a single day more—ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PROVOKE YOU TO ACTION
- Do not allow yourselves to be mastered and enslaved by sin—DEVELOP A RIGHTEOUS ANGER AND INTOLERANCE FOR SIN
- Choose courage and faith today

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Response Questions

1. Where in your life have you begun to tolerate something God never intended you to live under?
Is there an area where compromise has slowly become normal?
2. What are the “idols at Gilgal” in your life—those moments or reminders that show you something isn’t right between you and the Lord?
What has God been using to get your attention?
3. Is there a place where fear has kept you walking past the moment God was calling you to act in faith?
What would it look like for you to choose courage and obedience today?
4. What step of action might God be calling you to take to stop tolerating sin and pursue freedom in Christ?
(Confession, repentance, accountability, cutting something off, seeking help, etc.)
5. If God is the true deliverer—as we see in Judges—how can you begin relying on His power rather than your own strength in the battle against sin?

Closing Encouragement:

As we leave today, don’t just walk past the “idols at Gilgal” in your life one more time. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you’ve begun to tolerate what God never intended you to live under. Like Ehud, there comes a moment when God’s people must choose courage—when we say, *not another day* under the power of sin. The good news is that we don’t fight this battle alone; the same God who raised up deliverance for Israel is the God who empowers His people today. So choose faith, choose courage, and trust the Lord to give victory as you walk in obedience.