

BOOK OF JUDGES
CHAPTER 3



The Cycle of Evil / Repentance / Deliverance Begins

1-2 Because Israel was **disobedient**, the Lord decided to use the pagan nations left in Canaan as **A TEST** for the new generations who had not known either the Exodus or the conquering of Canaan under Joshua.

- The test enables the **NEW generation** to decide for God and His Covenant just as their forefathers had done – each generation must make their surrender to God.
- This is Divine Wisdom working among the Chosen People.

- Another reason was that God wanted His People **TO BE WARRIORS** who would **fight the good fight** (2 Tim 4:7) for the People will only keep the faith if they recognise and fight the enemy off.
 - If they are lazy and sit back, then the enemy wins the Battle for **Mother Earth**.
 - God's chosen People **then and now** live in a hostile environment.
 - The symbol for Christianity is **THE CROSS** and Redemptive Suffering
 - not a feather bed and luxurious lives!!

- God deliberately placed His Chosen People in the **CENTER** of the world. In O.T. Palestine (Canaan) had the Western Seaboard and Mediterranean, and sea-faring was the way of Commerce.
 - So all the big powers **wanted** this land so they were successively attacked by the armies of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome – also Egypt.
 - Just as with modern Israel military prowess was a necessary accomplishment, because to this day they are surrounded by powerful enemies.

3-4 **The pagan Nations are listed now** [see map]

Lesson:

We could make a list of pagan “territory” that challenges **us** in the 3rd Millennium and tests **us** to see whether **we** have truly chosen Jesus or not! **Our** list is endless: examples New Age Philosophies, false prophets, ‘money, sex and power domination’, worldly ambition, false morality, etc. etc.

- By **our** dealing with these (and other) issues we show who **we** are **and** who our God and Saviour is.

Israel under the Judges



5-7 The First Cycle in Judges

Problem

- 1) Israel **lived** with the enemies
- 2) She intermarried with them
- 3) She forgot the Lord and His Covenant
- 4) She fell into apostasy

- Divine Wisdom disapproves of Israel's sinfulness

Wisdom 1:4-5: Omnipotence put to the test confounds the foolish.

No! Wisdom will never make its way into a crafty soul nor stay in a body that is in debt to sin; the Holy Spirit of instruction shuns deceit...

Wisdom 9:13 What man indeed can know the intentions of God?

Who can divine the Will of the Lord?

Prov 8:13

**I hate pride and arrogance, wicked behaviour and a lying mouth.
I love them who love Me!**

- This apostasy will be the **THORN IN ISRAEL'S SIDE** because the negative results will drive her back to the Arms of God time after time, but she **never fully** surrenders to God's Will... warning for **us!**

- vs 8** Since His People had rejected Him, God allowed them to be **ENSLAVED** to the
a) King of Mesopotamia for **8 years!** This place covers Eastern Syria and N. Iraq today
- The King's strange name reads literally "Cushan of double wickedness" – so it is a title given by his enslaved victims.
e.g. In a later Era **Attila The Hun** who devastated Rome was called Ira Dei et orbis vastitas. This means "the wrath of God and waster of the world"!!
- vs 9** (NB) Just as it happened to their ancestors it took **SLAVERY** to get Israel to turn to the **True** God and ask for deliverance! This is a repeat of Egypt in Ex Ch 1.
cf Ps 107:6,19,28 **Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.**
- This is an example of using God only as an emergency service:
Yet we are no different! How long does it take **us** to turn away from the enslaving EGO and human will to "seek God with **all** of our hearts? Deut 6:4-10
How long does it take to turn away from self to truly look at God?
- b) God **hears** the cry of the poor! He sends us a **DELIVERER** – one of our **own!**
He raised up **OTHNIEL**, Caleb's son-in-law: Joshua 1:12-13



- vs 10** **The Spirit of the Lord came upon him.**
- this is the beginning of the call of prophets in the rest of O.T.
 - yet this is just a "touch" of the Holy Spirit.
God's people had to wait for Pentecost (Acts 2) for the Descent of the Holy Spirit after the **FINAL** DELIVERER had fought the true enemies which enslave us, SIN, DEATH and Hell.
- Jesus came to "save us from **OUR SINS** – the true enslavers.
Sin opens the door to the **true** enemy - SATAN - and he enslaves souls forever.
everyone who calls upon the Name of the Lord will be saved: Rom 10:13; Acts 2:21
- vs 11** **The Lord delivered the kings into his hands.** Only **God** can give the victory.
Result: Rest for **40 years!** cf Is 33:22

CYCLE TWO SECOND JUDGE: EHUD: Jud 3:12-30

Ehud



Judges 3:12-30

The Account

- Oppressed by Eglon (king of Moab)
- Left-handed man (significance?)
- Eglon, a rather large fellow (3:17)
- Ehud's plan
- "He's only covering his feet" (3:24)??

vs 12 When Othniel died the people reverted back into sin and apostasy

- Sin opens the door to evil and Satan... makes us morally weak
∴ empowers the enemy to attack and enslave us...
- God had the right to **cast His People off completely** for continued breaking of Covenant but He does not... instead He manifests His loving-kindness and Mercy continuously.

13-14

- So, the Lord permitted Eglon, King of Moab to attack and enslave
- this was an alliance between Moab, Ammon and Amalek against Israel
- they took possession of **the city of palm trees** (i.e.) Jericho cf Deut 34:3
- and Israel was enslaved for **18 years!**

- a) **Moab**, situated to east of Dead Sea between Rivers Arnon and Zered, **became** a Kingdom about 50 years before Israel's invasion of Canaan.
- b) **Ammon** situated North-East of Moab was established at the **same time** as Israel (i.e.) in the late 13th century BC
- c) **Amalakites** – related to **Edomites** were Nomadic Race and occupied a lot of territory to **south of Judah** and were possibly Israel's **greatest** enemies. cf Ex 17:8-16 1 Sam 15:2-3

vs 15 It took **18 years** for Israel to turn back to God!

(NB) It is harder to be **converted** the second or third time... repentance isn't **real!**
You just want to get out of the fix you find yourself in!

**When Israel cried to the Lord He raised up a deliverer for them:
Ehud, son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a LEFT-HANDED man.**

When Benjamin was born Jacob called him son of my right hand. (Gen 35:18)
Yet Judges 20:16 shows that many of them were either left-handed or ambidextrous.

(NB) - the right hand was considered a symbol of power – but Israel knew from experience that she **was powerless** – the Power lay with God.

cf Ps 44:3 **It was not by their sword that thy won the land,
nor did their arm bring them victory;
it was your Right Hand, your arm,
and the light of your Face, for you loved them**

Ps 80:17 **Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,
the son of man you have raised up for yourself**

Zec 4:1 **“Not by might, not by power – but by my spirit” says the Lord Almighty**

16 – 26 Ehud’s daring assignation of King Eglon

Jericho, the city of Palms happened to be in Ehud’s inheritance, so he had to deliver the people.

vs 16 Ehud made a special dagger for his secret plan.

vs 17 Ehud presented the Tribute to Eglon as a vassal nation.
- this was usually an elaborate affair with much drama – very ancient origins.

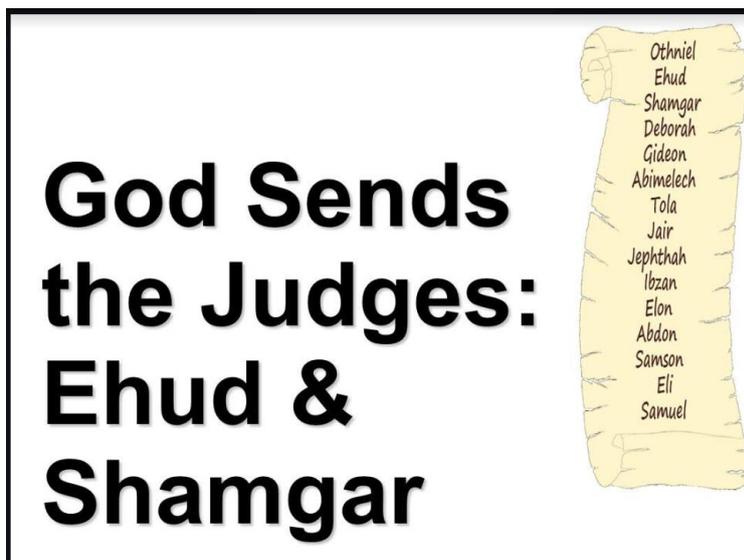
18-25 Ehud kills Eglon
The idols of Gilgal: this is interesting! Joshua left a ring of stones standing upright at the place where Israel crossed the Jordan as they entered the Promised Land: Joshua 4:19-20 – had they **become** idols?
or had someone inscribed idolatrous symbols on them?

26-30 Ehud leads Israel to war against the Moabites
Ehud had just killed the lead-King in the alliance against Israel, so he was confident of victory.

vs 28 **Follow me FOR the Lord HAS delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hands.**
- if Eglon, King of Moab was dead, his people were easily overcome.

vs 29 Victory over the Moabites left Israel **80 years of peace**

THIRD JUDGE: SHAMGAR Judges 3:31



- Shamgar is one of 6 people who are called **MINOR** Judges because little is written about them - like the “Minor prophets” - a later history!
- Yet their work was just as important as anyone else’s work!
 - most of the SAINTS are unknown also! Very few are canonised.
- Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an **OX-GOAD!**
 - an ox-goad is 8 feet long and 6 inches round at one end and pointy at the other
 - the pointy end was used to poke the ox to get it to move
 - the larger end was used like a chisel to clean the plough
- This indicates that Shamgar was a powerful man with great strength and skill to use such a simple tool and win his battle!

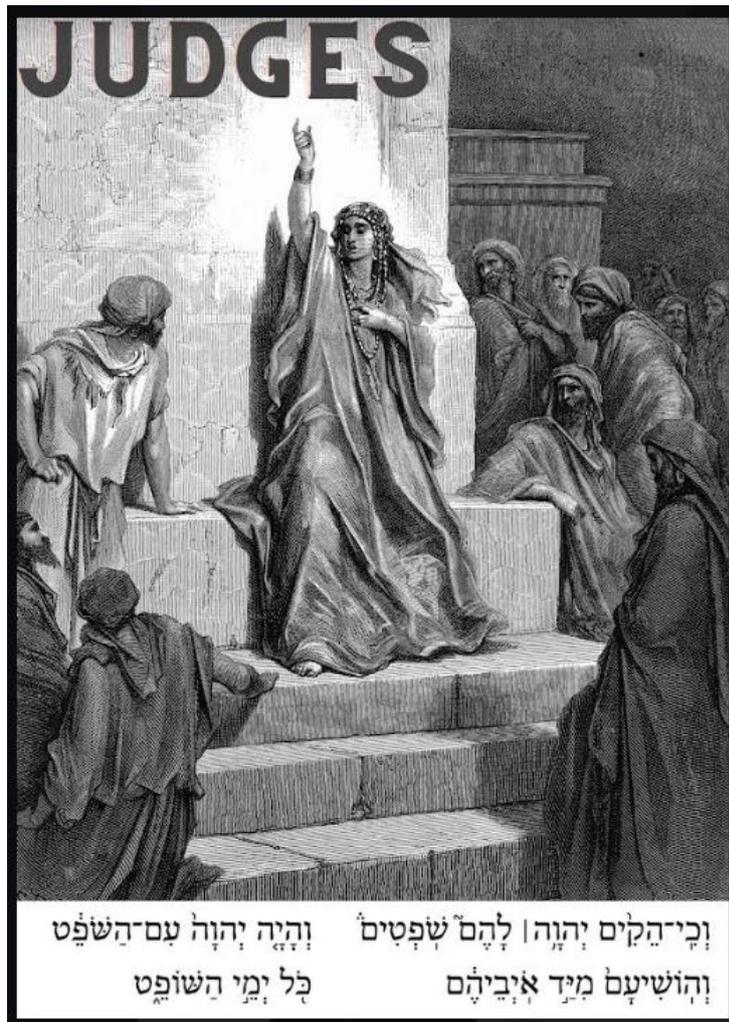
Lesson

God uses very simple ways to deal with us also to accomplish great things.
He also uses very simple people to accomplish great things for Him.

BOOK OF JUDGES CHAPTER 4

THE FOURTH CYCLE: FOURTH JUDGE: Deborah and Barak: Jud ch 4 and 5

D & B = one Deliverer



- **The cycle is:** apostasy, servitude, supplication, deliverance and freedom.
- It is clear that Israel has **NOT** obeyed Deut 6:4-10: her heart is divided
 - She has not committed her heart or will to the Lord God.
 - so His commandments are **NOT** precious to her...
 - therefore she falls repeatedly into worldliness, sin and error.
 - and God **has** to let her experience the consequences of her choices!

1-3 After the death of Ehud Israel fell **again... so** God permitted Jabin, the King of Hazor in Canaan to oppress them...

- People often wish God would leave them alone to go **their own** way, but He **loves** us too much to allow this to go on... for **He** sees the loss of souls, where we **don't**.
 - in the end we are grateful that He loved us more than we loved ourselves.
- God used a **different** oppressor this time – **anything** to get our attention!

Ⓝ Joshua had won a victory over a previous Jabin of Hazor (Joshua ch 11) because he operated within God's Will in the Covenant. Once Israel abandoned God's Will, Jabin grew powerful. **Sisera** was Jabin's famous General; they had 900 chariots – VIP at that time.

- they oppressed Israel for 20 years!

Ⓝ In the first cycle Israel repented after 8 years.
In the second cycle they repented after 18 years.
In this third cycle they repented after 20 years. } It takes longer each time!
This is a downward spiral.