

Theme: It is God who raises up both nations and individuals to accomplish his plans and purposes. Those so employed may not recognize his work as they act according to their own desires. But those who look to the Lord in faith learn to see *and trust* that powerful rule over their own lives as well in the world around them.

Background: We turn from the cycle of Disobedience - Discipline - Distress - Deliverance in principle to the real life practice.

Introduction: What constitutes a good leader?

I. The Picture of Deliverance – Othniel (7-11)

The cycle begins

A. The people “did evil”

1. They “forgot?” the Lord their God?
 - More than memory lapses
 - To *remember* is to act accordingly
 - To *forget* is to forsake the truthPsalm 103:2; 14; 119:153; Jeremiah 31:34

2. Served Baals and Asheroth

B. The Lord’s *severe* mercy

1. God’s anger was “kindled”
2. King “double wickedness”
3. Eight years to come to their senses

C. The cry

- Leads to God’s pity and compassion

D The deliverer – Othniel

1. The “ideal” judge
2. In “The Spirit of the Lord”
3. Rest for 40 years! And then...
4. He died

II. A Peculiar Deliverance – Ehud

A. Eglon’s Strength (12-14)

1. Eglon and the consortium of enemies
2. God’s Instrument
 - Strengthened by Lord (12)
 - 18 years of oppression

II. A Peculiar Deliverance – Ehud (continued)

B. Ehud’s Strength (15-30)

1. A Left-handed surprise
 - a. The Lord *raised* up Ehud
 - b. Not exactly a “model” savior
 - c. Flawed?
 - Left-handed (Later Benjamites were)
 - Was he handicapped
 - d. Armed (18” sword – no hilt)
2. An arrogant king
 - a. Proud in life
 - b. Humiliated in death
3. The call to arms
4. The land is secured (saved?)

III. The Power of Discipline and Deliverance

A. The Lord’s discipline

1. Sold to slavery (8)
 - “Whored” after other Gods
 - Gave them what they thought they wanted!
2. God’s tool?
3. God uses the nations
 - Isaiah 10:6; Jeremiah 27:5ff; 50:29ff; Psalm 2

B. The Lord’s Deliverance

1. Raising up Othniel (9)
 - A likely choice
 - But only “in the Spirit”
2. Raising up Ehud (15)
 - An unlikely choice
 - NOTE: Those who follow will be/look even more “unlikely”.
3. Raising up our deliverer – Jesus
 - Unlikely in the eyes of the world (Isaiah 53:2,3)
 - Long-awaited, anticipated, promised
 - With the gift of the Spirit
4. We must not *forget!*