

“The Unexpected Deliverer”  
Judges 3:12-30  
(Preached at Trinity, January 18, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight as we continue in the Book of Judges we find the pattern of Israel's sin repeating—Israel sins against God, God in His judgment hands them over to their enemies, Israel cries out in distress, God raises up a judge who defeats their enemy and they live in peace, the judge dies and Israel returns to their sin.
2. We read in **Verses 11-12** we see the pattern continued:  
**Judges 3:11-12 NAU** - "Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died. <sup>12</sup> 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."
3. Othniel had been a Godly and excellent leader. Israel prospered under his leadership and enjoyed peace for an entire generation. Upon his death, however, they returned to their sinful past and God once again brought judgment upon them.  
God raises up Eglon as His rod of judgment upon Israel.
  - a. According to **Verse 13** this time God raised up multiple enemies. Israel was overpowered. They lost control of the “City of Palms” which is the name for Jericho. Symbolically this was a terrible defeat. The city God had given to Israel with a mighty show of His power was now easily taken by Eglon.
  - b. They came under bondage for 18 years.  
**Judges 3:14 NAU** - "The sons of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years."
4. Once again Israel cried out and God demonstrated His rich compassion and pity.  
**Judges 3:15 NAU** - "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."
5. God raised up Ehud, a left-handed man.
  - a. To the original readers of Judges this would have come as a surprise. The expression “right hand” is found 126 times in the Bible. It symbolizes power, ability, and honor. This is easily understood since most people are right handed. A left-handed person would be the opposite of this. In fact, the Hebrew word literally means “impeded on the right.”
  - b. Some commentators presume Ehud must have been handicapped, perhaps paralyzed on his right hand. We shouldn't presume this. In **Chapter 20** the same word is used to describe 700 left-handed warriors. Surely they weren't all paralyzed on their right hand.
  - c. The point we should understand is that once again, we find God using the unlikely to accomplish His mighty purpose.

6. His left-handedness plays large in the unfolding of the story. Ehud had made a two-edged sword that measured a cubit or eighteen inches in length—an effective weapon. This is where his left-handedness comes to play. Normally a right-handed man carried his sword on his left leg where he could reach across and pull it from the scabbard in a single motion. Ehud carried his on the opposite leg. Since the normal condition was right-handedness no one would think to search his right side.
7. Israel had served Eglon for 18 years paying regular tribute to him. This time Ehud was chosen to carry the tribute. After presenting the tribute he told Ehud that he had secret message for him. This wasn't at all dishonest. His message was strapped to his right leg.
8. Eglon then sent everyone from the room so he could receive the message. **Verse 20** says he "rose from his seat." The word is sometimes translated "throne." This was his privy seat. The account is meant to be humorous.
9. The text makes a point to describe the obesity of Eglon – we presume fat and lazy. Ehud seizes the sword from his right leg and thrusts it into the belly of Eglon. He is disemboweled.
10. The word for "blade" is unusual, only translated "blade" in this verse. Elsewhere it is translated "flame."  
**Judges 13:20 NAU** - " For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground." Perhaps the author is describing the blade as the object of God's fiery judgment.
11. Ehud makes his escape locking the doors behind him.
  - A. Eglon's servants assume he is relieving himself. This was a euphemism for "going to the bathroom." The smell emerging from the room probably led to this conclusion.
  - B. Having heard of this great deed Israel followed Ehud into battle to win a great victory.  
Ehud was unexpected, he acted alone, and he led his people to victory.
12. There are some who have a great problem with such texts, this and others in the Bible that seem so bloody and gruesome. Some are almost apologetic or even deny that God would sanction such actions. We must never downplay or diminish God's hatred of sin or of His mercy upon His people. Eglon stands as an enemy of Israel and God's judgment came in all its severity.  
And we must not overlook, the actions of Ehud were of God.  
**Judges 3:15 NAU** - "The LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man."
13. Those who condemn Ehud for his deception also fail to miss the point that this judgment was from God. Ehud tells Eglon, "I have a message from God for you."
14. And we can't overlook the rich satire of this passage. This mighty king that that brought such suffering upon Israel with his oppressive taxation was nothing but a fat slob who God would bring to a humiliating end while sitting on his privy.  
**Psalms 2:2-4 NAU** - "The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them."
15. We must not miss the larger picture. God must judge sin and all stand condemned. But by God's mercy He has raised up a Deliverer for His people, Jesus Christ our Savior.
16. I want to take you on a brief journey tonight as we consider Ehud as a type of Christ.

- I. Like Ehud, Jesus was an unexpected deliverer.
- A. Ehud was a left-handed man, an unexpected deliverer
1. Eglon was not afraid of him. He seemed unassuming
  2. This was to his own destruction
- B. Jesus Christ also came as one most unexpected.  
One would expect the King of kings to be born in wealthy conditions
1. Kings are wealthy by earthly standards. Look at Ehud whose great wealth had led to his obesity.
  2. Jesus was born in a stable among the animals
  3. When Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem He did not ride a shining steed covered with ornaments of gold and silver and purple and scarlet. He entered riding on a lowly donkey.
  4. One would expect the Deliverer King to raise an army to defeat Israel's enemies. This even amazed His disciples. They continually asked, "Is it time?" As Jesus was arrested Peter drew his sword—surely it must be time. But Jesus commanded him to put his sword away.
  5. As He hung on the cross Pilate hung a placard over His head, "The King of the Jews." Even at this the Jews voiced loud disapproval. When Pilate told them, "Behold your King," they shouted, "We have no king but Cesar."
- C. One would expect the one who would draw men to Himself to have an outward appearance that would attract men
1. Surely He would be tall like Saul, or handsome like David, or strong like Samson.
  2. But Jesus was not one adorned with outward beauty
  3. Isaiah described Him,  
**Isaiah 53:2 NAU** - "For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him."
- D. Most find Jesus easy to reject  
**Isaiah 53:3 NAU** - "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."
1. Most fail to see the infinite beauty and excellence of Christ. They fail to see His radiance.  
**Hebrews 1:3 NAU** - " And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
  2. They use His name as a byword. They enjoy His mercies while continuing their life of treason against the King of kings.
  3. They reject Him to their own destruction

II. Like Ehud, Jesus was alone as He conquered the enemy of His people

- A. When Ehud conquered Eglon he was all alone
1. As the deliverer of Israel Ehud at first didn't try to rally an army around him to attack and defeat Eglon.
  2. The nation Israel had suffered 18 years. They were in no frame of mind to rise up against Eglon
  3. When Ehud came with the tribute he was with others but after delivering the required bounty he sent his brethren away. He turned back to the presence of the king, alone.  
**Judges 3:18-19 NAU** - " It came about when he had finished presenting the tribute, that he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. <sup>19</sup> But he himself turned back"
- B. Jesus was alone as He stood as our Deliverer
1. When He went to the wilderness to battle Satan He was alone
  2. When Jesus suffered in prayer at Gethsemane He was alone  
**Matthew 26:36-40 NAU** - "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup> And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. <sup>38</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." <sup>39</sup> And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." <sup>40</sup> And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you *men* could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"
  3. After His arrest all forsook Him. He was alone  
**Matthew 26:31 NAS** - "Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.'"
  4. His ultimate forsakenness was upon the cross  
**Matthew 27:46 NAS** - " And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
  5. This was not a task that any other could perform. Jesus alone is our Savior
- C. Jesus alone was our Deliverer
1. None other could do what He did  
**Acts 4:12 NAU** - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
  2. As our mighty Deliverer He has saved us from our sin, He has saved us from the wrath of God and from the bondage of Satan.
  3. After conquering all of His enemies God raised Him from the dead as a sign that His sacrifice for sin was accepted and assuring the final victory for His people.

- III. Like Ehud who then led Israel to victory, Jesus now leads us to victory
- A. Ehud defeated the enemy and then went forth to lead Israel  
**Judges 3:27 NAU** - "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."
1. He went before them into war – “and he was in front of them.”
  2. **Judges 3:28 NAU** - "Pursue *them*, for the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hands."  
**Judges 3:29-30 NAU** - "They struck down at that time about ten thousand Moabites, all robust and valiant men; and no one escaped. <sup>30</sup> So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. "
- B. Jesus is our mighty conquering King!  
**Revelation 19:11-16 NAS** - "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it *is* called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. <sup>12</sup> And His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. <sup>13</sup> And *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
1. Sadly, with Ehud as Israel's deliverer, as soon as he was gone they returned to their sinful ways. But our mighty King conquers both us and our enemies.
  2. By His mighty power He calls us into His Kingdom  
**Acts 26:18 NAU** - "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."  
**Psalm 110:3** – “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”
  3. Then He leads us forth unto victory  
This life is a life of warfare. We are battling with the idolatries and ways of this world, the lusts of our own flesh and the spiritual warfare that tears at our own soul. Satan has a design to turn us from Christ. But we fight on valiantly with our great King before us. We go through many battles but we do not fight alone  
**Psalm 143:9** – “Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.”

4. We are assured of victory  
**1 Corinthians 15:57 NAS** - "thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."  
**Romans 8:37 NAS** - "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."  
**Romans 8:37 KJV** - " in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."
5. Every last enemy will be vanquished  
**Psalms 110:1-2** – "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."  
**1 Corinthians 15:24-25 NAS** - " then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."
6. We shouldn't miss the other similarity here. Ehud brought the message from God in the form of a two-edged sword. Our Lord will return with another two-edged sword, also the Word from God.  
**Revelation 1:16 NAU** - " In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength."

#### Conclusion:

1. God's hatred of sin has never changed. And His wrath against sin has never wavered. All of us stand condemned.
2. If God had not raised up a mighty Deliverer we would have been forever lost. Jesus was that great Deliverer. He came in a manner most unexpected, He alone was able to accomplish our deliverance, and He alone now leads us to victory.  
 "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."  
**Isaiah 54:17 NAU** - "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD."
3. If you don't bow and submit to this mighty deliverer you can expect no better treatment than that which Eglon received. You will be judged of God.  
**Psalms 2:12 KJV** - "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him."