

OTHNIEL AND EHUD: Judges 3:7-31

By Brett Baggett on Sunday, January 26th, 2020

I. OTHNIEL, THE OLD SCHOOL KENITE (identified with Judah but his pedigree is Kenite)

- 1. The LORD disciplined the people of Israel for their idolatry.
- 2. The LORD's Discipline drove them to prayer.
- 3. The LORD raised up saviors for them.

II. EHUD, THE LEFT-HANDED ASSASSIN (v. 30)

- **Verse 13** - 1. Ammon and Amalek ("the foe of Israel from the first, and therefore doomed by God to eternal destruction" **Fausset**) 2. The city of Palms = Jericho.
- **Verse 15** - 1. Hebrew, lit. "Shut to his right hand." 2. In the eyes of the people of Israel, Ehud seems to be in a place of honor, seen in that he is the one who brought the tribute to Eglon (though as a delegate, not a warring savior).
- **Verse 16** - Ehud made himself a sword (forbidden to do in public, as they were under the rule of the Midianites....As it also was when Israel was under the rule of Philistines in **1 Samuel 13:19**).
- **Verse 17** - **Psalms 45:3** "Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty!" (Presumably, the sword on his right thigh would never have been suspected since the sword went on the left thigh).
- **Verse 18** - "Very fat" = probably from living in luxury, and the pleasures of the appetite. He had no lack of wealth, food, or drink as the Israelites paid tribute to him.
- **Verse 19** - Gilgal is the place the Israelites encamped after crossing the Jordan River about 65 years prior under the leadership of Joshua. There they rolled off the reproach of Egypt. Now this site is occupied by the Midianites, their idols on display. *Plymouth Rock or Washington DC flying a British Flag.* **Fausset**: "How humiliating that the reproach of the heathen should be rolled back on them here! The sight of these [idols] set up to vex and to tempt Israel fired Ehud's zeal against Eglon."
- **Verse 26** - The idols—the gods—of the Midianites did nothing. Indeed idols can do nothing!
- **Verse 29** - able bodied = fat. see Eglon in verse 18.

III. SHAMGAR, THE OXGOAD SLAYER (v. 31)

- An Oxgoad is something Shepherds would use to prod their Oxen along. The point is this: when the LORD raises up a Judge to save His people, it doesn't matter what the Judge has in his hands—he will accomplish what the LORD wants.

APPLICATION

IDOLATRY

Q. What is idolatry? **A.** Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security. (**Paul**: "exchanging the truth about God for a lie; worshiping and serving created things rather than the Creator" (**Romans 1**). **Jeremiah**: "Rejecting the LORD who is the loving water, and manufacturing our broken cisterns that cannot hold water" (**Jeremiah 2**).

I. Idolatry leads to servitude; idolatry leads to slavery (v.8,14-15)

- **We must make no mistake: We will serve something or someone.** We will worship something or someone. We will bow down to something or someone. We will trust something or someone. And whoever we trust, bow down to, worship, and serve—we will be like them.
- **Psalms 115:2-8** "Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them."

II. Idols cannot do anything for you besides provoke the LORD to either discipline you for holiness (if you are in Christ) or destroy you to vindicate his holiness (if you are not united to Christ Jesus by faith) (v.19,26)

- **C.S. Lewis** "Idols always break the hearts of their worshippers." That's true.
- **But the more terrifying yet sobering reality is this:** "the LORD breaks the backs of idolaters and casts them into hell."

III. Sudden humiliation and destruction will come upon idolaters even as they live in every comfort of life (v.21-22,29)

- “Eglon” = very fat. Strong “able-bodied men” = fat.
- Sudden destruction often comes upon such as Eglon and the other Midianites in the midst of their self-indulgence.
- **Consider the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-21** “And [Jesus] told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”
- **Also consider the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-23** “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day...The rich man...died and was buried, and in Hades, [he was] in torment...”
- **Lastly, we must heed Jesus’ warning in Luke 21:34** “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation (*self-indulgence*) and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.”

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- **1 Corinthians 10:11-12** “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”

I. Suffering drives the true Christian to JESUS and—on the flip side—suffering drives the fake Christian away from Jesus

- **To Jesus:** v. 9, 15
- **2 Corinthians 1:8-10** “For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”
- **Away from Jesus:** Parable of the Soils: **Mark 4:16-19** “And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.”

II. Our chief ask in prayer should be for the LORD to deliver us from our sin and idolatry, not simply the consequences (v.9,15)

- Look at the people crying out to the LORD and how the LORD responds. (v.9,15)
- **James 4:2-3** “You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

III. By the power of God the Holy Spirit at work within you, Passion for the glory of Jesus will fire you up to destroy the idols within and without (v.19)

- **Acts 17:16** “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens (Timothy and Silas), his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols...[so he preached the gospel].”

IV. A servant of the LORD can do nothing of value except by the Spirit of the LORD at work in them and through them (v. 10)

- **John 15:5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

V. The LORD is the one who gives his people the victory as we follow His Savior (v. 28-29,31)

- **1 Corinthians 15:10** “by the grace of God I am what I am.”

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

I. The Faithful Savior must have the Spirit of the LORD upon him (v. 10)

- **Luke 4:18-19** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

II. The LORD's Savior is unlikely (Othniel and Ehud)

- Just as OTHNIEL and EHUD were odd Savior's to the naked eye (one being a Kenite and the other not able to use his right hand), so Jesus is an unlikely Savior in the world's eyes.
- He did not come and save us by His great Wise Teaching like the Greeks sought after; and he didn't come to save us by a great exercise of Power like the Jews sought after. He saved us by doing something utterly foolish and utterly powerless in the world's eyes.
- He gave himself up to death (*how weak to the world!*) and died in our place, taking the wrath of God that sinners deserve (*how foolish to the world!*).
- On the cross, **Jesus allowed himself to be run through with the sword of God's justice** on our behalf so that we would get only the LORD's mercy and love both now and forever.
- **1 Corinthians 1:22-24** "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

III. The LORD's conquering Savior gives rest to the LORD's people (v.11,30)

- By what Jesus has done in his Cross and Resurrection, He—*the true and better Ehud*—has sounded the trumpet of victory; he is calling all His people: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." **Matthew 11:28-30**
- On the cross, Jesus ultimately accomplished our deliverance from our great enemies sin and death—and if we rest in Him and in Him alone, we will have true rest for our souls.