

A Left Handed Savior.
Judges 3:12-4:1
Sunday afternoon, January 30, 2011.

I. Does this belong in the Bible?

- A. The account of the first Judge, Othniel, was exceedingly brief; just a few bare bones facts about his life and ministry. The emphasis did lay on what the Lord did in the life of the Nation of Israel which had gone astray from serving Him.
- B. Whatever color and detail was overlooked in the life and ministry of Othniel is made up for in the account of the life and ministry of Ehud. Seldom, if ever, is any event in Scripture given to us with this kind of gruesome detail and even intended humor.
1. The story is told the way Israelite fathers might have told the story to their children at a campfire.
 2. Several details are related in a way that was meant to be humorous to the listener:
 - The way Eglon was a very fat man (a tyrant living large at the expense of the people he had conquered.)
 - The way the dagger went into his belly, handle and all. That belly was the symbol of the tyrant living large at the expense of the people he oppressed.
 - Ehud came at the head of a delegation from Israel that brought King Eglon fresh supplies for living large, (the tribute money), but then he literally popped the balloon of King Eglon's extravagant life style.
 - The way king Eglon's personal attendants are totally taken off guard. They don't know what to do; they do not want to barge in on him if he is taking care of his personal needs, and so they wait; they wait until they can wait no longer. They open the door, and there is their master, dead on the floor. In the mean time Ehud had escaped to muster an army with which he cut off the Moabite troops from retreating across the Jordan, and he defeated the Moabites who were without their leader.
- C. At first glance we might be inclined to think that this story centers around Ehud and his heroics. That would be short sighted however; verse 15 tells us explicitly that it was the Lord who raised up Ehud. The Lord, by his Spirit, equipped Ehud with courage, wisdom, and skill, to do what he did, and so to deliver His people who once again had gone astray, but now were calling out to the Lord for deliverance.
- D. If this story centers on Ehud and his heroics it does not belong in the Bible. The Bible is the book of God's dealings with, and provisions for the people He is redeeming for Himself. The central thought of the story (humor and all) is what God did for His people in raising up Ehud as their left-handed savior.
- E. Chapter 4:1 points out that the salvation that Ehud brought was outward and temporary in nature. It would take a greater Judge than Ehud to work an inward and lasting salvation.

II. What may we learn from these events.

I believe that in these events we have a pattern of God's dealings with His people.

- A. If you are a child of God, you too have a tyrant in your life. His name is "The first Adam." He has been nick-named "The old man" in Scripture.
- B. He too has a large belly, bloated with large desires and expectations; and a large ego besides, inflated with high and lofty thoughts about himself.
- C. He too oppresses those around him, demanding that they serve and service his large desires, and cater to his ego. He demands that tribute be paid to him to keep up with his expectations for himself.
- D. For a child of God this becomes increasingly oppressive. At first they thought the first Adam to be "A nice old man," but more and more they begin to see him for what he is, and they cry out: "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
- E. Right about then the Lord rises to the occasion and raises up an Ehud in your life. Now Ehud is a left-handed savior. That means that you never even see it coming. King Eglon thought that Ehud came to service his desires; after all he was the head of the delegation that came to give him the tribute money. He too, never saw it coming.
- F. That Ehud is the Greater Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ. How many people think that He comes, and should come, to service our desires? Is that what you think?
- G. Then all of a sudden, there it is; the dagger; the sword of the Spirit, and it sinks into our inmost belly; handle and all, and it doesn't come out; it kills us.
- H. Or else, all of a sudden, as it were out of no where, a difficult providence knocks us down, and it lets a bunch of hot air out of our inflated ego's.
- I. But the first Adam, the old man, is a resilient bird. It will take repeated visits from Ehud to get the upper hand over this tyrant. Thank God that our Ehud does not tire from visiting us in this manner and from time to time.
- J. When Ehud shows up on your doorstep, and he will, and you recognize Him, you should do two things:
 1. Pull the plug on your inflated ego; humble yourself under His mighty hand.
 2. Hand over the old man, the first Adam, for execution, and ask Ehud to be your Judge, and to rule over you.