

Judges Chapter 3 Part 8

Revised literal translation of verses we have covered:

I. Man's Sin and God's Response

Judges 3:12 Now continued the sons of Israel to do evil in the eyes of the Lord (Yahweh). So the Lord (Yahweh) motivated Eglon (fatted calf) the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Judges 3:13 And he gathered (harvested) to himself the sons of Ammon and Amalek; and he went and defeated Israel, and they took possession of the city of the palms (at or near Jericho).

Judges 3:14 And the sons of Israel served (as slaves) Eglon the king of Moab for eighteen years.

Judges 3:15 But when the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord (Yahweh, like they did in Egypt), the Lord (Yahweh) commissioned a deliverer (or savior) for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjaminite (literally "son of my right), a right-hand restricted man. And the sons of Israel sent by mission tribute (minha/sacrifice) by him (i.e. commissioned him to take) to Eglon the king of Moab.

Judges 3:16 Now Ehud made himself a (single use) sword which had two edges (literally, two “mouths”), a cubit in length, and he strapped it on his right thigh under his cloak (so that it was concealed).

Judges 3:17 Then he presented the tribute (same/similar words to presenting a Levitical offering to God) to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat (characteristic of a good sacrifice) man.

II. Eglon’s First Mission

Judges 3:18 And it came about, when he had finished presenting the tribute (same/similar words to presenting a Levitical offering to God), that Ehud sent away (on a mission: get ready to attack Moabite forces) the people who had carried the tribute (minha/sacrifice).

Judges 3:19 But he himself turned back from the idols which were at Gilgal, and said, “I have a concealed message (word; double entendre with sword) for you, O king.” And the king said, “Silence!” (“clear the room”) And all who were attending him left him. (Why would Eglon trust Ehud – One of those items left out but provided by Josephus)

Judges 3:20 Then Ehud came to him while he was sitting in his cool roof chamber (literally “upper”) alone. And Ehud said, “I have a message (word) from God for you.” And he got up from his seat.

Judges 3:21 Then Ehud reached out (literally sent his left hand with a mission) with his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

Judges 3:22 The hilt of the sword also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade because he did not pull the sword out of his belly; and the refuse came out.

Judges 3:23 Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and shut the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and locked *them*.

Vestibule. Per Robbie Dean

““Then Ehud went out into the vestibule” now we don't know what that is either, but in light of all the discussion here, that the slaves are outside and they think later on, they don't know what happened, they're going to think he's in the head (for you Navy guys), that he went to the rest room, they won't come in to the room. So Ehud goes out into the vestibule, and there's some indication that this word is not really a vestibule but some architectural feature probably related to the latrine, privy or the head. So what he does is that this is a private part of the throne room and he locks from the doors from the inside and then either escapes through some door inside the chamber, some other exit, or he goes on the roof and goes over the outside wall, but whatever the case, he manages to get out without anybody seeing him and he locks the doors from the inside.”

Judges 3:24 When he had left, the king's servants came and looked, and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked; and they said, "Undoubtedly he is relieving himself in the cool room."

Relieving himself. The Hebrew uses a different euphemism to describe this: He (was) covering (participle) his feet (dual). Again, if I read Gesenius correctly, feet here is the "dual" plural for feet, meaning two feet. Our favorite word, two. The servants' assumption may have been amplified by the smell of excrement from Eglon.

Judges 3:25 So they waited until it would have been shameful to wait longer; but behold, he did not open the doors of the roof chamber. So they took the key and opened them, and behold, their master had fallen to the floor dead.

Key. Apparently there were locks in those days. I saw a mention of an "Egyptian lock" in one commentary.

Fallen to the floor. To reiterate what was already said, the word "fallen" here in Judges is the same word used of the Philistine idol falling before the Ark of the Covenant. Based upon the text and the probable geometry of the "kill," it is possible that Eglon the king of Moab ended up fallen in front of Ehud in a "worship" position.

Judges 3:26 Now Ehud escaped while they were hesitating, and he passed by the idols and escaped to Seirah.

Passed by the idols. Interesting that idols are not worshiped.

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Seirah. Per Unger: “a place in the mountains of Ephraim, bordering on Benjamin, to which Ehud went for refuge after killing Eglon at Jericho (Judg. 3:26, 27).”

Escaped. He eluded the hostile forces in the fort because he got a head start before the discovery of the dead Eglon. Below, the same word is used of the hostile forces that did not escape.

III. Eglon’s Second Mission

Judges 3:27 And when he arrived, 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 leading them.

And when he arrived. NO! My printed NASB is different than the NASB on-line at Biblegateway.com. My printed Bible says “It came about when he had arrived.” The phrase “It came about” is a Hebrew word meaning it came about. Trent Butler says it is a “temporal indicator.” That means it is an indicator of the passage of time. It is a way to connect two narratives. In this case, it connects Ehud’s first mission with his second mission. The first mission starts with this word in verse 18.

Blew the trumpet. As noted previously, “blew” is the same word used of thrusting the sword into Eglon. So, this word is used twice in this narrative concerning Ehud. One use is for the first mission. The second use is for the second mission.

Trent Butler expands on this:

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“The Hebrew verb **that he blew** plays an important role here. It describes the sounding of the “ram’s horn” or shofar as featured in Josh 6. The same verb appeared in Judg 3:21 describing the thrusting of the dagger into Eglon’s belly. It will appear again as Jael hammers the tent peg into Sisera’s temple. Gideon sounds the shofar to muster the troops (6:34) and scares the Midianites into fleeing by having the people sound their

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shofars (7:18–22). Finally, Delilah will thrust a peg into Samson’s hair in a fruitless effort to discover the secret of his strength (16:14). Thrusting and blowing thus mark the narratives with action, summon the troops to battle, and celebrate the heroism of one woman and the dastardly deception of another.”

This word provides a link between the two missions. Same word with different uses.

Combine this word with the word used for “trumpet.” Again per Trent Butler:

“The shofar was not a musical instrument. It was used in solemn occasions to celebrate God’s approach in theophany (Exod 19: 16, 19; 20: 18; Zech 9: 14; compare 2 Sam 6: 15; Pss 47: 6; 98: 6; Joel 2: 1; Zeph 1: 16), to call people to holy days on the religious calendar (Lev 25: 9; Ps 81: 3 [Heb. 4]), to instigate national fasts (Joel 2: 15), and to announce a new king (1 Kgs 1: 34, 39, 41; 2 Kgs 9: 13). A major function involved battle signals and warnings (Josh 6: 4–20; Judg 6: 34; 7: 8–22; 1 Sam 13: 3; 2 Sam 2: 28; 18: 16; 20: 1, 22; Isa 18: 3; Jer 42: 14; 51: 27; Ezek 33: 3–6; Hos 5: 8; 8: 1; Amos 2: 2; 3: 6).”

Note how Ehud was a leader from making the sword, to delivering the tribute, to killing Eglon, to blowing the trumpet and leading the Israelite troops into battle. He took the initiative, planned the mission, coordinated with others and executed it well. We will have an opportunity to contrast this with a weaker leader, Barak, in chapter 4.

Judges 3:28 Then he said to them, “Pursue them, for the Lord has handed your enemies the Moabites over to you.” So they went down after him and took control of the crossing places of the Jordan opposite Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross.

Per Robbie Dean:

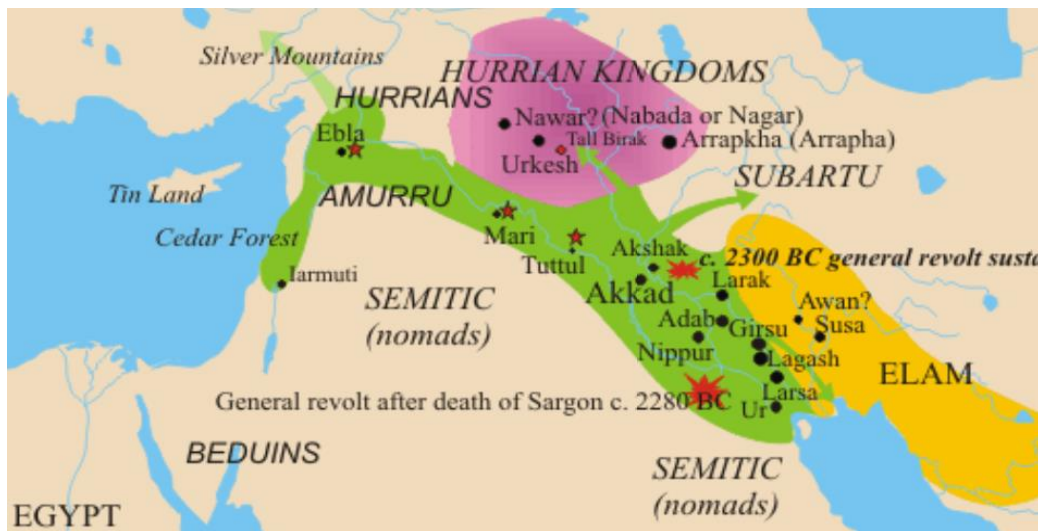
Judges 3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was at rest for eighty years.

The end of the paradigm. The end of the story of Ehud. I did not find any reference on the internet to a burial site for Ehud.

The land. Ha Eretz in Hebrew. It can mean land. It is also used of the whole earth as in Genesis 1:1.

Now we come to a cryptic passage consisting of a single verse. I will rely on Robbie Dean here to explain this.

Judges 3:31 Now after him came Shamgar the son of Anath, who struck and killed six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad; and he also saved Israel.



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Per Trent Butler: “Shamgar is assigned no tribal designation among the Israelites. His name appears to be Hurrian (B. Maisler, “Shamgar ben ‘Anat,” PEQ 66

Per Robbie Dean:

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“Another thing we need to observe in the text is that his name is Shamgar Ben-Anath, Shamgar the son of Anath. The Hebrew word for "son" is the word "ben," and in Benjamin, son of my right hand. So he is called the son of Anath. Now who is Anath? In the Canaanite religious system the chief god is El who is kind of off center stage right now, in the background and he's really replaced by his son, Baal, the storm god. Baal is also known in Phoenician as Hedad. Now Baal has a consort, a female goddess, named Anath, who is the goddess of war and she is an extremely violent blood individual. You read through some of the ancient texts that describe her wading through the battlefield drinking blood and gore dripping off of her teeth and off of her hands and it's just horrendous sort of stuff. And Anath is the female goddess of war. And we know that as far back as the 19th century BC, which is 1800-1900 BC that Anath was assimilated into the Egyptian pantheon of goddesses, and she becomes the personal protectress of the Pharaoh. And we have evidence that from at least the 15th or 14th century the elite troops that guarded the Pharaoh, just as the elite troops that guarded Caesar were called the Praetorian guard and you have the Swiss troops that guarded the French kings, the elite troops of the Pharaoh, the special forces, the force recon types of the Egyptian army were called the "Sons of Anath." That was their technical name in Egyptian; they were the sons of Anath.”

“Now I've given you all this historical background; the point that I'm making is once we get into the history of what's going on at that time, is we know that there was a hardcore first class elite troop of soldiers that the Pharaoh used as his battering ram against the incursions of the Philistine sea peoples and they were called the Sons of Anath. And here we come across this cryptic figure in Judges name "Shamgar, son of Anath," and from the etymology of his name and from the fact that he too is called the "son of Anath," then I think we can conclude that this guy is not a Jew, he's probably not a believer, but he is a mercenary warrior serving under Pharaoh and that God uses him to come in and kick the Philistines out of the south of Judah in order to protect Israel.”

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“Now what are the implications of that? The implication is that there's no one among the Jews that's trusting God, that's following a spiritual life, that God can use in order to protect Israel. There is a major problem here: God is using a Gentile to bless Israel instead of Israel to bless the Gentiles according to the Abrahamic Covenant. It is a reversal, so when the writers of Judges mentions this he is making a very strong statement; it's a slap in the face to the Jews, you have failed so badly, Israel, that in order for God to preserve His covenant, preserve the nation in the land, He's obviously raising up leaders in the north but there's no one in the south that God can call on, there's no leader to stand in the gap in the south, God has to use an unbeliever operating in the Egyptian army to come in and remove the Philistine threat and to protect your left flank. And what the writer is indicating in all of this is a tremendous indictment on the leadership of the nation. The point that he is making is that paganism and pagan thought has so infiltrated the worldview and the culture of Israel that they no longer can produce leaders that can defend the nation. Probably they've become pacifistic.”