

Ehud the Left-Handed Judge

A left-handed Benjamite delivers Israel from Moab's oppression through a daring assassination of the enemy king.

Judges 3:12-30

CHARACTERS: Ehud, King Eglon, The Israelites, The Moabites

THEMES: Deliverance, Courage, Using What You Have, Unexpected Heroes

ONCE AGAIN THE Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and because of this evil the Lord gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. Eglon got the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, and they attacked Israel and took possession of the City of Palms. The Israelites were subject to Eglon for eighteen years.

Again the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He gave them a deliverer—Ehud son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a cubit long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing.

Ehud presented the tribute to Eglon, who was a very fat man. After sending away those who had carried the tribute, Ehud turned back at the stone images near Gilgal and said, 'Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you.' The king said, 'Quiet!' and all his attendants left him.

Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his palace. 'I have a message from God for you,' Ehud said. As the king rose from his seat, Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it.

Then Ehud went out onto the porch, shutting the doors of the upper room behind him and locking them. After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, 'He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the palace.' They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors, they took a key and opened them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead.

While they waited, Ehud got away. He blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills. 'Follow me,' he ordered, 'for the Lord has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands.' They took possession of the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab and did not allow anyone to cross. That day they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong men. Not one escaped. So Moab was subdued under Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.