

13 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 3:20

LESSON

A message from God

VERSE 20

And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

Here we read of Ehud delivering God's message personally to Eglon, king of Moab. Note the king's show of respect to receive the message - "he arose out of his seat". The message from God through Ehud was the pronouncement of the judgement of the sentence of death. Without wasting any time and seizing the opportunity of being alone with the king, Ehud carried out his action very swiftly.

"I have a message from God unto thee." God has sent many of His prophets with such a clear message for them to warn His people. Just to name a few, Biblical characters like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, John the Baptist, etc. were sent to do God's will. They were given specific messages to warn their people at different times when God's judgement was due.

What about you and me? Do you know what God's will for you is? First and foremost, have you responded to His saving grace by receiving Christ as your Lord and Saviour? If so, have you obeyed His command to bring the message of reconciliation to the lost?

Even now, there is a message for you. The writing is now on the wall for us today. We are living in the last days. God's Word says that Christ is coming very soon, even at the door. Let's heed the call of Christ to salvation before it is too late. If you are not saved, what is holding you back? Do not keep on resisting God's loving call.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL I
ROMANS 3

THOUGHT

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. – 2 Corinthians 5:19

14 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 3:23-30

LESSON

The rest of
Ehud's story

VERSE 30

*So Moab was subdued
that day under the hand of
Israel. And the land had rest
fourscore years.*

Continuing on with Ehud's plan of attack, he made his escape while the servants were busy waiting on their king. He bravely gathered all the men of Israel to attack the Moabites. The Lord gave them victory over the Moabite 10,000 lusty men of valour. Under Ehud, the nation of Israel enjoyed 80 years of long rest. Yet it is incomparable to the saints' everlasting rest in the heavenly Canaan.

"The left-handedness of Ehud also becomes curiously and instructively prominent. His very defect proved his fitness for the special task he had to accomplish" – AF Muir. "The left-handed man may be regarded as a type of the abnormal, the eccentric. The existence and position of such people deserves notice" – WF Adeney. King Eglon of Moab presumed that he was safe from Ehud.

Again in the history of Israel we see a cycle here – sin, suffering, supplication, saviour. When Israel sinned against God, He will chastise them because they must suffer the consequences of their actions. After much suffering, the people cried for deliverance and supplication. Then God their Saviour would mercifully step in and deliver them.

Likewise, God is dealing with you and me so mercifully and lovingly. Do not test His patience for too long. Is there any besetting sin that is preventing you from asking the Lord Jesus for forgiveness? Our sovereign God is in control of every situation. He will always forgive if only you will go to Him in repentance. Then you will be able to enjoy eternal rest in Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 2
ROMANS 4

HYMN

Is not this the land of Beulah,
Blessed, blessed land of light,
Where the flowers bloom forever,
And the sun is always bright?

15 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 3:31

LESSON

Shamgar

VERSE 31

*And after him was Shamgar
the son of Anath, which slew
of the Philistines six hundred
men with an ox goad: and he
also delivered Israel.*

The next judge was Shamgar, the son of Anath. What he did was very unusual indeed. Using an ox goad, seemingly the only weapon at hand, he was able to slay 600 Philistines. Of course, he was able to deliver Israel only with the help of God.

This incident was mentioned in Judges 10:11 and the reason given in Judges 10:6. The Israelites were worshipping the gods of the Philistines, thus disobeying God's command. The Ammonites and the Philistines teamed up together to vex Israel. Further than this, nothing more was known of Shamgar. He was only mentioned in the song of Deborah [Judges 5:6].

The Lord can use different people, significant or otherwise, to do His will with whatever weapons they have. For instance, David the young shepherd boy, defeated Goliath with just a stone. Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, had to challenge Baal's 450 men. Samson, too, single-handedly slew 1,000 men with the jawbone of an ass. These were miraculous deeds, proving that God could easily empower the person and his weapon.

Note the phrase "after him". It was Ehud's example which inspired Shamgar. Do not ever despise anyone just because the person is a nobody in the eyes of the world. Just remember that one is a majority with God. Is your life an example to others? Whether positively or otherwise, we have an influence on people whether we realise it or not. Pray and ask God to help you be a good influence on others.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 3
ROMANS 5

THOUGHT

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. – 1 Timothy 4:12

16 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 3:31

LESSON

Ox-goad in the hands
of God's servant

VERSE 31

*And after him was Shamgar
the son of Anath, which slew
of the Philistines six hundred
men with an ox goad: and he
also delivered Israel.*

The Philistines frequently invaded and plundered Israel. Judges 5:6 describes the lack of public safety because of these raids. "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath ... the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways." Verse 7 says life in villages ceased. Verse 8 continues, elaborating that not a shield or spear was seen among 40,000 in Israel.

Those desperate circumstances motivated one man, Shamgar, to deter Philistine incursions into Israelite regions. He single-handedly slaughtered six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, thus delivering Israel. The ox-goad or ploughshare is an agricultural tool. Jamieson says, "This implement is eight feet long and about six inches in circumference. It is armed at the lesser end with a sharp prong for driving cattle, and on the other with a small iron paddle for removing the clay which encumbers the plough in working. Such an instrument wielded by a strong arm, would do no mean execution."

Matthew Henry says, "It is no matter how weak the weapon is if God directs and strengthens the arm. An ox-goad, when God pleases, shall do more than Goliath's sword. And sometimes He chooses to work by such unlikely means, that the excellency of the power may appear to be God," and that He may have all the glory.

Shamgar used an ox-goad, Samson wielded the jawbone of an ass [Judges 15:15], and David just a sling and a stone. Shamgar's success was not due to his own physical prowess or the superiority of the weapon he used, but to the hand of the Lord upon him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 4
ROMANS 6

PRAYER

Lord, whoever we are, whatever our circumstance may be, may we all give You our heart devotedly and unreservedly so that You may use us for Your glory.

17 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 4:1-3

LESSON

Sin and punishment

VERSE 2

And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

After the death of Ehud, the political and spiritual trend in Israel changed. They continued to do evil. (When he was alive, Ehud restrained the people from idolatry). God's covenant people succumbed to apostasy and idolatry. Living among idolaters whom they failed to exterminate, they embraced their culture, intermarried with them and became contaminated by their abominations.

We should live obedient lives in reverence to God. The Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin who reigned in Hazor. His captain, Sisera, with nine hundred chariots of iron caused dread because the Israelites had no such armaments. For twenty years Sisera oppressed the children of Israel. The oppression was so great that the whole nation of Israel was on their knees offering prayer and supplication with crying and tears unto God who is able to save. They realised that it was the punishment for their sins and sought deliverance.

The merciful, gracious and forgiving Lord desired His people to repent, obey and receive His blessings. He raised up judges to lead the Israelites in military exploits to rout the opposing enemies. He would have liberated them from their spiritual bondage if they had truly repented and asked for forgiveness. They asked the Lord to relieve their suffering. David's prayer of repentance is what Israel needed to pray, "Have mercy upon me, O God ... and renew a right spirit within me [Psalm 51:1-2, 4, 9-10].

God is righteous, just, and ready to forgive us of our sins when we confess, repent, and cry to Him for deliverance. He is our true deliverer from sin and punishment.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 5-6
ROMANS 7

PRAYER

Lord, root out the sin in my life and fill me with Your love, so that I may fight against the evil present in the world today.

18 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 4:4-5

LESSON

Deborah –
the woman
from Mount Ephraim

VERSE 5

*And she dwelt under the
palm tree of Deborah between
Ramah and Bethel in mount
Ephraim: and the children of
Israel came up to her
for judgement.*

Once again, the cycle of sin repeats itself, with the Israelites doing evil after judge Ehud died. The Lord sold them into the hands of the Canaanites as punishment for their sins. The Canaanite oppression was severe because of their superior military force, spearheaded by 900 chariots of iron. The oppression lasted for 20 years. In their distress, the Israelites again cried to the Lord for help.

The Lord raised Deborah and empowered her to be Israel's deliverer and prophetess like Miriam, sister of Moses [Exodus 15:20] and Huldah [2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22]. She is the wife or a woman of Lapidoth. She was indeed an exceptional woman with special endowments of Godly wisdom, leadership skills and knowledge.

She was the only female judge of Israel. Dwelling between Ramah and Bethel under a palm tree in Mount Ephraim, the Israelites from all parts came to her for judgement. She had come to be intimately acquainted with the misery of the people who were oppressed by Jabin. She planned for their deliverance and brought peace to her land.

She was a spokeswoman for God. In Judges 4:6 and 4:14 she commanded Barak in the name of the Lord, "Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying ...?" She received direct revelation from the Lord and shared that Word with His people. As Deborah prophesied, a battle was fought (led by Barak) and Sisera was completely defeated. She was steadfast and loyal to God's Word, and had inspired her people to victory in battle, guiding them to live in faith and peace.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 7-8
ROMANS 8

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for using Deborah and Barak to deliver Your people from oppression. Use me in the battle against evil. Help me always to be ready to immediately respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

19 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 4:6-7

LESSON

Barak – the man
from Kadesh-Naphtali

VERSE 6

*And she sent and called
Barak the son of Abinoam
out of Kadeshnaphtali, and
said unto him, Hath not
the LORD God of Israel
commanded, saying, Go and
draw toward mount Tabor,
and take with thee ten
thousand men of the children
of Naphtali and of the
children of Zebulun?*

The word “Barak” means “lightning”, an appropriate name for a warrior. He was the son of Abinoam, who lived in Kedesh in Naphtali, a city on the border of the sea of Galilee in ancient Israel. Though Barak’s role was limited in the book of Judges, he played an important part in delivering Israel from Canaanite oppression, uniting the tribes of Israel for greater strength and commanding them with skill and daring. He was the military commander of thousands of men and highly regarded as a soldier in his hometown.

He was summoned by the prophetess Deborah to lead his people to war against the Canaanites whose army was under the leadership of Sisera. The Israelites suffered at the hand of the enemy: the roads were in danger, traffic almost ceased and the cultivated country was plundered. Barak mustered ten thousand men chosen from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun and assembled them on Mount Tabor. Then the Lord caused Sisera to lead his army toward the river Kishon in the plains of Megiddo. Barak accompanied by Deborah and his ten thousand soldiers would then descend upon the enemy whom the Lord would deliver into his hands. This was the strategy given by the Lord Himself through Deborah.

Barak was afraid to confront the enemy without Deborah’s help, for Deborah was the mouthpiece for God. He trusted God instead of relying on himself. He is thus mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 as a hero of faith right along with Gideon and Samson. Let’s emulate their heroic deeds and be a good soldier of Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 9
ROMANS 9

THOUGHT

Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.
– Psalm 119:129-130

20 AUGUST

BIBLE LESSON

Judges 4:8-10

LESSON

If thou would go,
then I will

VERSE 8

*And Barak said unto her, If
thou wilt go with me, then I
will go: but if thou wilt not go
with me, then I will not go.*

Deborah realised that Israel needed to assemble an army of soldiers and a military captain to lead the army. She had heard of Barak, an experienced captain from the tribe of Naphtali. He lived far north, almost within sight of Jabin's capital. She summoned him to her side to raise and led the army. She realised God would do much of the work through him. When she unfolded to Barak God's plan of deliverance, he was timid, faltering and doubtful.

Barak, soldier and army captain, could get no further than to say, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go." Though it was a denial of self-reliance, it was still an unfitting response to a command from God. Barak's faith was manifestly weak like Gideon [Judges 6:15, 36] Moses [Exodus 4:10, 13] and Peter [Matthew 14:30-31]. God's command and promise ought to have been enough. Yet God has not left his name out of the list of faith, any more than that of Samson and Gideon [Hebrews 11:32-34].

Deborah said, "I will surely go with thee." There was no hesitation. She predicted that the Lord would sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. It means that the honour of killing Sisera would be accorded to a woman. In the battle that followed on the plains of Megiddo, Sisera and all his host were completely defeated. Considering the fact that Israel had no weapon and no standing army, what Barak and Deborah did was an amazing act of faith. They trusted God and He gave them a great victory.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I SAMUEL 10
ROMANS 10

THOUGHT

And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.
– 2 Corinthians 12:9a