

## Judges Chapter 3

Verses 1-2: God tested Israel to refine it (Gen. 22:1; Deut. 13:3; 2 Chron. 32:31; James 1:3), and to prepare the generation that was born in the wilderness for “wars”.

The “nations” left unconquered in the Israelite invasion became a challenge and a test of Israel’s faithfulness. However, God in His grace allowed “Israel” to learn from them more advanced forms of warfare (see the note on 1:21, 27-36).

**Judges 3:1 "Now these [are] the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, [even] as many [of Israel] as had not known all the wars of Canaan;"**

“Nations ... left”: The purpose was to use them to test (compare verse 4), and discipline the sinful Israelites, as well as to aid the young in learning the art of war.

We saw in the last lesson that their unfaithfulness to God had caused God to leave these nations among Israel as a thorn in their sides. Israel must stay alert and ready to remove them at all times, or else be removed themselves. Perhaps most of those who fought under Joshua are dead. The new generation had to learn to take and keep their land. They also needed badly to realize their need for the LORD. They had been unfaithful. They must repent and turn wholly to their LORD if they are to receive the blessings of the LORD.

**Judges 3:2 "Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;"**

That is, the following nations were left in the land that the young generations of Israel might by their wars and conflicts with them, learn the art of war and be conditioned to martial discipline. Which, if none had been left to war with, they had been ignorant of. Besides, their fathers in Joshua's time, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, had no need to learn the art of war, for God fought for them. They did not get possession of the land by their own arm, and by their sword, but by the power of God in a miraculous way. But now this was not to be expected, and the Canaanites were left among them to expel, that they might be trained up in the knowledge of warlike affairs, and so be also capable of teaching their children the military art. Which they should make use of in obeying the command of God, by driving out the remains of the Canaanites, and not give themselves up to sloth and indolence. Though some think that the meaning is, that God left these nations among them, that they might know what war was, and the sad effects of it.

This new generation knew nothing of war. They must stay alert if they are to keep their inheritance.

**Judges 3:3 "[Namely], five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath."**

The places they were lords of were Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (see Joshua 13:3). Three of these, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, had been taken from them by Judah, since the death of Joshua (Judges 1:18). But they soon recovered them again, perhaps by the help of the other two. The Philistines were a people originally of Egypt, but came from thence and settled in these parts. And were here as early as in the times of Abraham, and were very troublesome neighbors to the Israelites in later times (see Gen. 10:14).

"And all the Canaanites": These were a particular tribe or nation in the land so called, which inhabited by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan (Num. 13:29). Otherwise this is the general name for the seven nations.

"And the Sidonians": The inhabitants of the famous city of Sidon, which had its name from the firstborn of Canaan (Gen. 10:15).

"And the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon": On the north of the land of Canaan.

"From Mount Baal-hermon": The eastern part of Lebanon, the same with Baal-gad, where Baal was worshipped.

"Unto the entering in of Hamath. The boundary of the northern part of the land, which entrance led into the valley between Libanus and Antilibanus (see Numbers 34:8; see the note on Joshua 13:2-3).

The Philistines remained a thorn in the side of Israel for a very long time. The five lords were from the cities of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. All of these people were subdued by Israel but never totally defeated. They lived among the Israelites and kept their own identity. Goliath was known as a Philistine, but probably was descended from Rephaim, who lived with the Philistines.

**Judges 3:4 "And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses."**

They were left in the land, as to inure them to war, and try their courage, so to prove their faithfulness to God.

"To know whether they would hearken to the commandments, of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses": Even all the commandments of the Lord delivered to them by Moses, moral, civil, and ceremonial. And particularly those that concerned the destruction of the Canaanites, their altars, and their idols (Deut. 7:1).

Not only were they to prove the Israelites faith in God, but their ability to fight as well. They were a constant threat if Israel turned away from the commandments of God.

Verses 5-6: Once Israel tolerated the cultures around them, it was a short step to next assimilate them through intermarriage and then to imitate them as they “dwelt among” them. This cost the Israelites their distinctive character and testimony, and they failed to be the holy people God created them to be (Deut. 7:1-6).

**Judges 3:5 "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:"**

As if they had been only sojourners with them, and not conquerors of them. And dwelt by sufferance, and not as proprietors and owners. Such were their laziness and indifference. And such the advantage the inhabitants of the land got over them through it, and through their compliances with them. And this was the case not only of one sort of them, the Canaanites, but of the rest.

"The Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites; who all had cities in the several parts of the land. With whom the children of Israel were mixed, and with whom they were permitted to dwell.

See the note on 1:4; 1:1-20.

All of these tribes were living in Canaan. In a wider sense, they were all from Canaan.

Exodus 3:8 "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

Verses 6-7: Moses had warned the nation of the danger of an incomplete conquest, with the resultant intercourse with the unbelieving pagan peoples of Canaan (Exodus 34:11-16; Deut. 7:1-5). Moses' fears had already become a reality. The problem would continue to plague “Israel” (compare 1 Kings. 11:4-8). The “groves” were the detestable sacred trees or poles used in Canaanite worship centers as symbols of life and fertility. These were sacred to the worship of the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah. Moses had warned against their use and given instructions to Israel to destroy them when they entered the land of Canaan (compare Exodus 34:13; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:21-22). Unfortunately, the use of such poles would prove to be a continuing fascination for Israel and a source of deepening apostasy (compare 2 Kings 17:9-11). For “Baalim” (see the note on 2:11-15).

**Judges 3:6 "And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods."**

(See the note on 1:19). The Israelites failed God's test, being enticed into (1) Marriages with Canaanites; and (2) Worship of their gods.

Disobedience was repeated frequently through the centuries, and led God to use the Assyrians (2 Kings Chapter 17), and Babylonians (2 Kings Chapters 24 and 25), to expel them from the land gained here.

God had distinctly forbidden them to marry these people. Even worse than them marrying, was the fact that Israel starting worshipping the false gods of these people.

Deuteronomy 7:3-4 "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son." "For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

Verses 3:7 – 16:31: The heart of the Book of Judges is the “cycles” section, which tells the stories of Israel’s rebellion and God’s deliverance. Together, these cycles form a downward spiral as the quality of the deliverers and their leadership deteriorates. With each cycle, the Israelites became more like their pagan neighbors, the Canaanites.

Verses 7-11: “Othniel” was from Caleb’s family and grew up under the influence of his legendary uncle (1:12-13). He was a man of faith and courage, but his strength did not come from his family or from his capabilities: “The spirit of the LORD came upon him”. “Rishathaim” means “Double Wickedness”.

**Judges 3:7 "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves."**

Both by marrying with Heathens, and worshipping their gods. And forgot the Lord their God. As if they had never heard of him, or known him. Their Maker and Preserver, who had done so many great and good things for them.

"And served Baalim, and the groves": Of Baalim (see Judges 2:11). The groves mean idols were worshipped in groves, as Jupiter was worshipped in a grove of oaks, hence the oak of Dodona; and Apollo in a grove of laurels in Daphne. There were usually groves where idol temples were built. And so in Phoenicia, or Canaan, Dido the Sidonian queen built a temple for Juno in the midst of the city, where was a grove of an agreeable shade. So Barthius observes, that most of the ancient gods of the Heathens used to be worshipped in groves. And groves and trees themselves were worshipped. So Tacitus says of the Germans, that they consecrated groves and forests, and called them by the names of gods. Groves are here put in the place of Ashtaroth (Judges 2:13). Perhaps the goddesses of that name were worshipped in groves. And if Diana is meant by Astarte, Servius says that every oak is sacred to Jupiter and every grove to Diana. And Ovid speaks of a temple of Diana in a grove. But as they are joined with Baalim, the original of which were deified kings and heroes, the groves may be such as were consecrated to them. For, as the same writer observes, the souls of heroes were supposed to have their abode in groves (see note on Exodus 34:13 and note on Deut. 7:5). It was in this time of defection that the idolatry of

Micah, and of the Danites, and the war of Benjamin about the Levite's concubine, happened. Though related at the end of the book; so Josephus places the account here.

**Judges 3:8 "Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years."**

The source of the first Israelite oppression has been much debated. It is perhaps best viewed as an attack by Arameans from the western districts of "Mesopotamia". Although the attack was from the north, Othniel's relationship to Caleb (compare Joshua 15:17-19; Judges 1:11-15), would probably make him the most prominent figure among the Israelites, hence, the logical deliverer.

"Chushan-rishathaim" was an obscure Hittite conqueror. It appears, he ruled over the Israelites for 8 years. The anger of God allowed him to rule over the Israelites. God was chastising the Israelites for their worship of false gods.

**Judges 3:9 "And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, [even] Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother."**

Towards the close of the eight years' bondage, as it may be supposed, groaning under the oppressive taxes laid upon them, and the bondage they were brought into.

"The Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel": He heard their cry, and sent them a savior. Whose spirit he stirred up, and whom he qualified for this service: "Who delivered them; out of the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, and freed them from his oppressions.

"Even Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother": The same that took Debir, and married Achsah, the daughter of Caleb (Judges 1:12). Who now very probably was a man in years.

This is the same brave Othniel that won the hand of Caleb's daughter.

Joshua 15:17 "And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife."

Othniel was the first of the fifteen judges that God raised up to deliver His people. We read earlier that God's favor shined on the judges, and God delivered the people under their judgeship.

**Judges 3:10 "And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim."**

Old Testament saints were not permanently indwelt with "the Spirit of the Lord" as New Testament saints are. Rather, the Spirit temporarily "came upon" them, indwelling and

empowering them in times of need. This phrase is used of many of the judges, as well as Saul and David.

“The spirit of the Lord came”: Certain judges were expressly said to have the Spirit of the Lord come upon them (6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14); others apparently also had this experience. This is a common Old Testament expression signifying a unique act of God which conferred power and wisdom for victory. But this did not guarantee that the will of God would be done in absolutely all details, as is apparent in Gideon (8:24-27, 30), Jephthah (11:34-40) and Samson (16:1).

In Old Testament times the “spirit of the Lord” empowered certain individuals for a particular service. Such phrases as “came upon”, along with “rested upon”, “is upon”, “was upon”, “put upon”, and “made willing” illustrate the Holy Spirit’s employment of an individual for a particular task. Certain selected leaders were said to be “filled” by the spirit or that the spirit “was in” them (Gen. 41:38; Exodus 28:3; Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; Dan. 4:8; 5:14; 6:3), perhaps indicating the spirit’s use of them over extended periods of time. God’s leaders in Old Testament times gave witness to the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Gen. 6:3; Ezek. 3:12, 14; Haggai 2:5; Zech. 4:6; 7:12). However, the Holy Spirit did not deal with Old Testament believers in precisely the same way as with New Testament saints. This is seen from such phrases as “departed from” (1 Sam. 16:14) and “take not” (Psalm 51:11) with regard to the Holy Spirit. With Pentecost (Acts chapter 2), the “Age of the Spirit”, in which the Holy Spirit permanently indwells all believers, was inaugurated. Indeed, New Testament believers enjoy a foretaste of the complete salvation that God intends for them throughout all eternity (compare 2 Cor. 1:20-22; 5:1-5; Eph. 1:13-14 with Rom. 8:14-23).

Othniel was divinely ordained of God for the position of judge of all Israel. He was anointed with the Spirit of God to fulfill this job as judge. He led the Israelites in war against Chushan-rishathaim, and God defeated him for Israel.

### **Judges 3:11 "And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died."**

The periods of “rest” have a distinct historical correlation with the times of Egyptian presence during the reigns of strong Pharaohs of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties.

This too is part of the promise. As long as the judge was alive, God blessed Israel. There was peace for 40 years.

Verses 12-13: The Moabites and Ammonites were both descended from Lot (compare Gen. 19:30-38). The Moabites opposed “Israel” during its years in the wilderness (Num. 22:1-6; 9-11), and both peoples were to be a source of constant irritation to the Israelites throughout their history (compare Amos 1:13 – 2:3). The Amalekites were descended from the line of Esau (compare Gen. 36:10-12), and were among Israel’s bitterest enemies (compare Exodus 17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-18; 1 Sam. 15:2-3).

**Judges 3:12 "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD."**

The nation of "Moab" was founded by Moab, a son born of the incestuous encounter between Lot and his oldest daughter after Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Gen. 19:37).

It seemed that Israel would never learn. They immediately went back to their sinful way of life when Othniel died. As chastisement for the evil Israel did against God, God strengthens Eglon to overcome them. When Israel sins, God sends war for chastisement on them.

Verses 13-14: The "city of palm trees": (Jericho), was centrally positioned along major roadways and known for its many freshwater oases fed by the Jordan River. How ironic that Jericho, the first city conquered by the Israelites when they entered the land, was now back under Canaanite control! Although "Eglon" rules over Israel for nearly two decades, a consequence of the people's sin, he was unaware that there was a curse on anyone who overtook Jericho and build it up (Deut. 13:12-16; Joshua 6:26).

**Judges 3:13 "And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees."**

Either the Lord gathered them to Eglon, inclined them to enter into a confederacy with him, to assist in the war against Israel. Or the king of Moab got them to join with him in it, they being his neighbors, and enemies to Israel, and especially Amalek.

"And went and smote Israel": First the two tribes and a half, which lay on that side Jordan; Moab did. Whom it is reasonable to suppose he would attack first; and having defeated them, he came over the Jordan.

"And possessed the city of the palm trees": Jericho, as the Targum, which was set with palm trees (see Deut. 34:3). Not the city itself, for that was destroyed by Joshua, and not rebuilt until the time of Ahab. But the country, about it, or, as Abarbinel thinks, a city that was near it. Here Josephus says he had his royal palace. It is probable he built a fort or garrison here, to secure the fords of Jordan, and his own retreat. As well as to keep up a communication with his own people. And prevent the tribes of the other side giving any assistance to their brethren, if able and disposed to do it.

The children of Ammon were the Ammonites, and Amalek's children were the Amalekites. Moab was the leader in this, and they were known as the Moabites. The city of palm trees is speaking of Jericho.

**Judges 3:14 "So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years."**

Ten years longer than they served the king of Mesopotamia (Judges 3:8). As a severer correction of them for their relapse into idolatry.

They serve Eglon for 18 years while there is no judge in the land.

**Judges 3:15 "But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab."**

“Ehud” was the second judge over Israel and was a member of the tribe of Benjamin. Israel had lapsed into idolatry (verse 12), so the Lord reinforced Eglon, king of Moab, against them. Eglon captured Jericho with the aid of the Ammonites and the Amalekites (verses 12-13), and subjugated Israel under tribute 18 years (verse 14). Ehud, a left-handed man, gained a private interview with Eglon under the pretense of a secret errand connected with payment of Israel’s tribute. Ehud slew Eglon and then killed 10,000 Moabites at the fords of the Jordan. So the land had rest for 80 years (verses 20-30). During his leadership, Israel remained faithful to God (Judges 3:12 – 4:1).

The word that "deliverer" was translated from can and also means savior. It seemed, the Benjamites had many warriors who were left handed.

Judges 20:16 "Among all this people [there were] seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at a hair [breadth], and not miss."

It is even more strange, because "Benjamin" means son of the right hand. Ehud is the second judge. The present they send to Eglon the king of Moab, is a way of getting in to see him.

**Judges 3:16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.**

A little sword, as Josephus calls it. With two edges, that it might cut both ways, and do the execution he designed by it, and was about half a yard long. Which he could the more easily conceal, and use for his purpose.

"And he did gird it under his raiment": That it might not be seen, and give occasion of suspicion. This was a military garment, the "sagum", as the Vulgate Latin version. Which was coarse, and made of wool, and reached to the ankle, and was buttoned upon the shoulder, and put over the coat. The Septuagint makes use of a word Suidas interpreted as a coat of mail.

"Upon his right thigh": Whereas a sword is more commonly gird upon the left. Though some observe, from various writers, that the eastern people used to gird their swords on their right thigh. Or this was done that it might be the less discernible and suspected, and chiefly as being most convenient for him, a lefthanded man, to draw it out upon occasion.

"Ehud" means joined together. The dagger he made was one and a half feet long. Notice it had two edges. The Bible is spoken of a two-edged sword. He hid it under his coat on the right side, where no one would expect a dagger to be.

**Judges 3:17 "And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon [was] a very fat man." The present got him in to see Eglon.**

There is irony in this description of Eglon", no doubt he had fattened himself on all the goods he extorted from the Israelites. His name means "Calf", so the author foreshadows his fate, portraying him as a fattened calf ready for slaughter.

**Judges 3:18 "And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present."**

Had delivered the several things contained in it, and very probably made a speech to the king in the name of the people of Israel from whom he brought it.

"He sent away the people that bare the present": Not the servants of Eglon that introduced him, as if they assisted in bringing in the present to the king. For over them he could not have so much power as to dismiss them at pleasure. But the children of Israel that came along with him, and carried the present for him. These he dismissed, not in the presence of the king of Moab, but after he had taken his leave of him, and when he had gone on some way in his return home. And this he did for the greater secrecy of his design, and that he might when he had finished it the more easily escape alone. And be without any concern for or care of the safety of others.

This present was large enough that it took several people to carry it. Ehud sent the people away that had carried the present, so they would not be blamed for what he was about to do.

**Judges 3:19 "But he himself turned again from the quarries that [were] by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him."**

As if he had forgot and neglected some important business.

"From the quarries": Either, first, where they hewed stones. Or, secondly, the twelve stones which Joshua set up there. By the sight whereof he was animated to his work. Or, thirdly, the idols, as the word also signifies, which that heathen king might place there. Either in spite and contempt to the Israelites, who had that place in great veneration. Or that he might ascribe his conquest of the land to his idols, as the Israelites did to the true God, by setting up this monument in the entrance or beginning of it.

"Keep silence till my servants be gone": Whom he would not have acquainted with a business which he supposed to be of great and close importance.

Ehud played on his vanity. The king sends his people away, so they will not see the secret that Ehud has for him. The king would not even let him speak of it, until everyone had left the room.

**Judges 3:20 "And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlor, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of [his] seat."**

"I have a message from God unto thee": Ehud claimed he came to do God's will in answer to prayer (verse 15). Calmly and confidently, Ehud acted and later credited the defeat of the wicked king to God (verse 28; compare Psalms 75:6-7, 10; Dan. 4:25), though it was by means of Ehud, as Jael used her way (4:21), and Israel's armies used the sword (4:16). By God's power, Ehud's army would slay a greater number (verse 29). Men's evil provokes God's judgment (Lev. 18:25).

**Judges 3:21 "And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:"**

Being, as before observed, a lefthanded man (Judges 3:15). And this he could better do, without being taken notice of by the king, who, if he saw him move his left hand, would have no suspicion of his going to draw a dagger with it. And which also was hidden under his raiment (Judges 3:16).

"And thrust it into his belly": Josephus says into his heart. It is certain the wound was mortal, and must have been in a part on which, life depended.

This parlor was a place the king went to be alone. He usually had some men waiting in attendance in the next room. It appears that even they had been dismissed, so they might not overhear the message Ehud had from the LORD for him. It was a great surprise, when Ehud stabbed him using his left hand. The king would have suspected it more had he used his right hand.

**Judges 3:22 "And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out."**

The handle of the dagger, as well as the blade. So strong and violent was the thrust, he determining to do his business effectually.

"And the fat closed upon the blade": Being an excessive fat man, the wound made by the dagger closed up at once upon it, through the fat.

"So that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly": Being not able to take hold of the grip or handle, that having slipped in through the fat after the blade, so that he was obliged to leave it in him.

"And the dirt came out": The margin of our Bibles is, "it came out at the opening". That is, the dagger did, the thrust being so strong and vehement. But that is not so likely, the dagger being so short, and Eglon a very fat man. The Targum is, "his food went out, which was in his bowels". But as the wound was closed up through fat, and the dagger stuck fast in it, it could not come out that way. Rather therefore this is to be understood of his waste matter, and of their coming out at the usual place, it being common for persons that die a violent death.

It appears that the king was so fat the one and a half foot blade went completely into the stomach of the king, handle and all. There was no way to pull the dagger out. The dirt, spoken of here, was the refuse that came out of his stomach or bowel.

**Judges 3:23 "Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlor upon him, and locked them."**

Which the Targum interprets by a room or a place, as Kimchi, where there were many seats. Either for the people to sit in while waiting to have admittance into the presence of the king, or where the guards sat, and may be called the guard room. Through this Ehud passed with all serenity and composure of mind imaginable, without the least show of distress and uneasiness in his countenance. Being fully satisfied that what he had done was right, and according to the will of God.

"And shut the doors of the parlor upon him, and locked them": Joined the doors of the parlor, as the Targum, the two folds of the door. Shut them close together upon Eglon within the parlor, and bolted them within. Or drew the bolt on the inside, which he was able to do with a key for that purpose. Of which see more on (Judges 3:25). And which it is probable he took away along with him. This must be understood as done before he went through the porch, and therefore should be rendered, "when" or "after he had shut the doors", etc.

It appears that Ehud escaped by going through the porch to the other side. He locked the door from the inside, so the servants could not get to the king.

**Judges 3:24 "When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlor [were] locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber."**

"He covereth his feet": The dead king's servants guessed he was indisposed in privacy, literally "covering his feet", a euphemism for bathroom functions.

Ehud had left the parlor where the king was. Because the door was locked from the inside the servants assumed the king was privately indisposed or sleeping.

**Judges 3:25 "And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlor; therefore they took a key, and opened [them]: and, behold, their lord [was] fallen down dead on the earth."**

And they knew not what to think of it, or what methods to take to be satisfied of the truth of the matter. And what should be the meaning of the doors being kept locked so long.

"And, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlor": This was what surprised them, and threw them into this confusion of mind. That they knew not what course to take for fear of incurring the king's displeasure. And yet wondered why the doors were not opened for so long a time.

"Therefore they took a key and opened them": This is the first time we read of a key, which only signifies something to open with. And the keys of the ancients were different from those of ours. They were somewhat like a crooked sickle, which they put in through a hole in the door, and with it could draw on or draw back a bolt. And so, could lock or unlock with inside (see SOS 5:4).

"And, behold, their lord was fallen dead on the earth": Lay prostrate on the floor of the parlor, dead.

They perhaps waited several hours before they discovered something might be wrong. When they got a key and opened the door, the king lay on the earthen floor dead.

**Judges 3:26 "And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath."**

While the servants of the king of Moab tarried waiting for the opening of the doors of the parlor, this gave Ehud time enough to make his escape, so as to be out of the reach of any pursuers. Or else the sense is, that even when they had opened the doors, and found the king dead, while they were in confusion, not knowing what had happened. The dagger being enclosed in the wound, and perhaps little blood if any, poured out, being closed up with fat. And so they had no suspicion of his being killed by Ehud. But rather supposing it to be an accidental fall from his seat. And might call in the physicians to examine him, and use their skill, if there were any hopes of recovery. All which prolonged time, and facilitated the escape of Ehud.

"And passed beyond the quarries, and escaped to Seirath": He got beyond the quarries, which were by Gilgal. Which shows that it could not be at Jericho where the king of Moab was, as Josephus thinks. But either in his own country beyond Jordan, though no mention is made of Ehud's crossing Jordan, or however some place nearer the fords of Jordan. Since Gilgal, from whence he returned, and whither he came again after he had killed the king of Moab, lay on that side of Jericho which was towards Jordan. And this Seirath he escaped to was in or near the mountain of Ephraim, as appears from (Judges 3:27).

The hours that the king's door was locked gave Ehud ample time to get away. He hid in the wooded area of Ephraim.

**Judges 3:27 "And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them."**

That is, to Seirath (Judges 3:26), in the tribe of Ephraim.

"That he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim": Which being a high mountain, the sound of the trumpet was heard afar off. And if Ehud's design was known to the Israelites what he intended to do, this might be the sign agreed on if he should succeed, to call them together (see Jer. 31:6).

"And the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them": Being there assembled together, and which might be the place before appointed for their rendezvous. And where and when he took the command of them, and went before them as their general.

**Judges 3:28 "And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over."**

This he said to encourage them, putting himself at the head of them showing himself ready to expose his own life, if there was any danger.

"For the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands": Which he concluded from the success he had had in cutting off the king of Moab which had thrown the Moabites into great confusion and distress. And from an impulse on his mind from the Lord, assuring him of this deliverance.

"And they went down after him": From the mountain of Ephraim.

"And took the fords of Jordan towards Moab": Where the river was fordable, and there was a passage into the country of Moab, which lay on the other side of Jordan. This they did to prevent the Moabites, which were in the land of Israel, going into their own land upon this alarm. And those in the land of Moab from going over to help them.

"And suffered not a man to pass over": Neither out of Israel into Moab, nor out of Moab into Israel.

Again, the LORD had sent them a leader who would go with them into battle. God was with Ehud and delivered the Moabites into the hands of the Israelites.

**Judges 3:29 "And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valor; and there escaped not a man."**

Who had been sent into the land of Israel to keep it in subjection. Or had settled themselves there for their better convenience, profit, and pleasure. It is very probable there were some of both sorts.

"All lusty, and all men of valor": The word for "lusty" signifies "fat", living in ease for a long time, and in a plentiful country were grown fat. And, according to Ben Gersom, it signifies rich men, such as had acquired wealth by living in the land of Canaan. Or who came over Jordan there and settled about Jericho, because of the delightfulness of the place. And others were stout and valiant soldiers, whom the king of Moab had placed there to keep the land in subjection he had subdued, and to subdue what remained of it. But they were all destroyed.

"And there escaped not a man": For there being no other way of getting into the land of Moab but at the fords of Jordan they fell into the hands of the Israelites possessed of them, as they made up unto them.

The blessings of God were upon them and they slew 10,000 brave Moabites. They annihilated them, there was not one left to fight of Moab here.

**Judges 3:30 "So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years."**

Or the Moabites were broken, as the Targum. That is, their forces in the land of Israel. For the land of Moab itself was not subdued and brought into subjection to the Israelites. But they were so weakened by this stroke upon them, that they could not detain the Israelites under their power any longer.

"And the land had rest fourscore years": Eighty years, which, according to Ben Gersom, are to be reckoned from the beginning of their servitude.

God delivered Israel out of bondage that day by the hand of Ehud the judge. They lived at peace for 80 years.

**Judges 3:31 "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."**

“Shamgar”: His extraordinary exploit causes me to think of Samson (15:16). In Shamgar’s time, the land was so filled with evil that it was not even safe to travel the roads (see 5:6). “Shamgar” was an unlikely deliverer because he may not have even been an Israelite. Yet God used him and his “ox goad” to deliver the Israelites.

“An ox goad”. This was a stout stick about 8 to 10 feet long and 6 inches around, with a sharp metal tip to prod or turn oxen. The other end was a flat, curved blade for cleaning a plow.

“Anath” preserves the name of a Canaanite deity. The sister and wife of Baal, she was a goddess of love and war who often assisted Baal in his conflicts with his rivals. Her activities are recorded in the literature from ancient Ugarit. Her worship would still be remembered at this early time.

The only other place there is a mention of Shamgar is in Deborah's song. This seems like he single handedly killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad. He was the third judge. His brave act would give courage to Israel. He had no weapons, just the ox goad.

### **Judges Chapter 3 Questions**

1. Why had God left these nations?
2. What had happened to those who fought with Joshua?
3. What were they to learn, if they were to keep their inheritance?

4. Who were the 5 lords of the Philistines speaking of?
5. Goliath was a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Verse 4 tells us, God did this to find out what?
7. The children of Israel dwelt among whom?
8. What forbidden thing did they do, that was mentioned in verse 6?
9. Who did Israel turn and worship, instead of the Lord their God?
10. What are the groves in verse 7?
11. Chushan-rishathaim was an obscure \_\_\_\_\_ conqueror.
12. How long did he rule over Israel?
13. Who was the first judge?
14. Othniel was the first of \_\_\_\_\_ judges.
15. What empowered him to judge?
16. Othniel was \_\_\_\_\_ ordained of God for the position of judge.
17. After Othniel won the war, how long did Israel rest?
18. Who was the king of Moab that came against Israel?
19. What is the city of the palm trees?
20. How long did the children of Israel serve Eglon?
21. What was unusual about Ehud?
22. What does "Benjamin" mean?
23. How did Ehud get in to see the king?
24. Describe the dagger that Ehud made?
25. What does "Ehud" mean?
26. Eglon was a very \_\_\_\_\_ man.
27. How large was the present?
28. Who sends the servants away?

29. The parlor was a place the king went to be \_\_\_\_\_.
30. How did Ehud escape?
31. When the servants came to the door, and it was locked, what did they think the king was doing?
32. How did they get in the king's parlor?
33. What did Ehud do, when he got to the mountain of Ephraim?
34. Who was the third judge?
35. How many Philistines did he kill?
36. What did he use for a weapon?