

## Judges 2-3 Chapter Study

### INTRO

Critics of the Bible like to point at the difference between Joshua & Judges & claim there's a contradiction.

Joshua narrates about a 5 year long military campaign that broke the back of Canaanite domination of The Promise Land.

We're told Joshua conquered the native inhabitants, then divided the land among the tribes.

But when we get to Judges it seems like we're reading a different story –the Canaanites were still alive and well in the land.

While Joshua tells of great victories, Judges is a book of defeats.

Israel, dominant in Joshua, is oppressed in Judges.

And the critics like to point to this as an example of contradiction.

Their solution is to say that Judges tells the true story.

That there never was an Exodus from Egypt. There never was a Joshua.

What there was, was a slow, steady migration of Semitic people into Canaan.

Small at first, they were dominated by the native Canaanites.

But over time their numbers grew and they eventually took over.

Really, not much differently than immigration from Mexico is doing to the US today.

Then, once the Jews were in the dominant position, they rewrote their history with a spiritual twist – so the whole Exodus under Moses & Conquest under Joshua was made up to give Israel a mythic origin.

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This is all a lot of hog-wash!

And it proves the critics don't really *read* the Bible.

Joshua is quite clear –

He broke the back of Canaanite dominance in the land by conquering the main cities & kings.

But the minor cities & villages were left alone.

Having divided the land among the tribes it was their individual duty to clean out the last Canaanite hold-outs.

In Deut. 7:22 Moses had told them

**The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at**

**once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.**

The population of Israel was too small to make a full occupation of the land.

If the entire Conquest had been completed in just the 5 years of Joshua's leadership, the land would have reverted to wilderness instead of the cultivated fields and warm homes God wanted to give them.

The occupation had to be gradual – to provide them the fullness of blessing wanted to give, as well as to keep them dependent on God.

So, the critics are wrong; Joshua & Judges do not present contrasting views of the conquest of Canaan, one historical & one mythic.

They present the true narrative of Israel's history in Canaan.

While the period under Joshua was one of Victory, under the Judges it was one of Failure & Defeat.

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### ***Outline***

**I. Possessing Canaan            1-2:10**

**II. The Judges                    2:11-16:**

**III. Examples of Decadence   17-21**

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Last week in Ch. 1 we began with Judah's incomplete conquest of their territory in the south.

They were able to take everything except the region occupied by those Canaanites who possessed iron chariots.

Then we read about Ephraim & Manasseh's partial conquest of their territories.

As the list of tribes goes on, the record of failure becomes more pronounced.

At first it says the tribe allowed the Canaanites to live among them.

Then a few of the tribes lived among the Canaanites.

The record ends in ch. 1 with the tribe of Dan running to the hills because they can't even settle among the Canaanites in their region.

### ***C. A Warning from God 2:1-6***

**<sup>1</sup> Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to**

**Bochim, and said: “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. <sup>2</sup> And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?**

This “angel of the Lord” must be the Lord Himself because He speaks in the first person as the one who led them out of bondage & into the Promised Land.

It was His commands they were breaking.

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In Ch. 1, we read that 3 of the tribes of Israel put the Canaanites

[\[1\]](#)  
under tribute to them.

Putting them under tribute was a kind of *protection-scheme*.

You know how protection rackets work, right?

Some tough goes into a small business & roughs up the owner, maybe busts some of his equipment.

Then he says, “If you don’t want this to happen again, you gotta’ pay me \$100 a week. I’ll be by every Friday afternoon around 2 to pick it up. Pay me, or the damage will be worse next time.”

3 of the tribes of Israel had effectively done the same thing with the Canaanites in their region.

They couldn’t totally conquer them, but they could make life hard on them.

So instead of going to the trouble to eradicating them, they put them under tribute, saying, “Look, we’ll leave you alone if you’ll just pay up.”

The Canaanites were allowed to continue living in the midst of their territory, worshipping at their altars.

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There’s a lesson in this for us . . .

The people of God decided to *make a profit* off the Canaanites instead of dealing with them as God commanded, which was to either *expel* them or *wipe them out*.

Either way, there was to be no Canaanite left in the land.

But the Israelites saw a way to *enrich* themselves off the Canaanites.

Oh, they tried at first to expel them, but when it proved harder than they wanted to put put the effort for, they settled down to a

more accommodating arrangement – tribute.  
We can do the same thing with the “Canaanites” in our lives – the sins that resist our efforts at overcoming.  
While we get a quick victory over *some things*, there are *others* that defy us.  
Like the ancient Canaanites who lived in fortified cities, those sins retreat behind thick walls of habits & hurts.  
Our efforts at overcoming them have done *some good*, they’ve been driven into their little forts where they don’t bother nearly as much as they used to, but more often than we’d like.  
And after a while, we learn to live with them, & begin to think like ancient Israel, “Since I can’t root this thing out, how can I use it? How can I profit from it?”  
We turn it into a secret sin we draw comfort from now & then.  
When we’re feeling stressed, we buy a six-pack.  
When we’re feeling neglected, we log on and visit websites that offer some comfort.  
When we’re angry, we light up and take a hit.  
And being the good little Canaanite it is, it renders it’s tribute to our flesh.  
What we don’t realize is that our inner Canaanites know something we don’t – that sin is progressive, and what is *today’s tribute* is *tomorrow’s torment*.  
Israel allowed the Canaanites to stay & to carry on their worship at their high places.  
When Israel came round to collect their tribute, they saw the incredibly licentious practices of the Canaanites, & were seduced.  
Let me describe what happened at these pagan altars mentioned in v. 2 here.  
Baal, the chief deity of the Canaanites, was the God of the weather. He was responsible for the rains that brought life to the fields. His consort was Asherah, the goddess of fertility.  
The Canaanites believed that it was Baal & Asherah’s sexual union that brought about the rain & fertility of their crops & herds.  
So they would attempt to *excite* Baal & Asherah into having celestial sex by staging orgies in front of their altars.

When the *Israelites* witnessed these rites, they were seduced & began to attend these ceremonies themselves, eventually importing the practice back to their own cities & homes. The same thing happens to those who strike a compromise with sin. Though they may be able to keep it hidden at first, thinking they can draw comfort from it just every now and then, it will grow and eventually take over if it isn't defeated & expelled. If you don't think so, ask the alcoholic, the drug-addict, or the person who's lost everything to sexual addiction.

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God told Israel to wipe out the Canaanites because if they didn't, the Canaanites would be *their* undoing.

**<sup>3</sup> Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be *thorns* in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.' ” <sup>4</sup> So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>5</sup> Then they called the name of that place *Bochim*; and they sacrificed there to the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.**

This all takes place *before* Joshua's death.

He'd sent the tribes to possess their territories but they hadn't. So he called the leaders of the tribe together to troubleshoot and find out why they'd not followed through on the Conquest. It was at this gathering at *Bochim* that the Lord came to rebuke them.

They realized their error, repented, & renewed their covenant with God.

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God gives them an important warning in v. 3 – if they will not wholeheartedly follow Him & make no compromise with the enemy, then He will *not* give them victory.

Here's the point –

- When Israel prevailed against the Canaanites, it was evidence of God's blessing because of their whole-hearted devotion to Him.
- When Israel was not able to defeat the Canaanites, it was evidence of a lack of blessing because of her divided affection

for God.

The parallel to our lives is so obvious I don't need to spell it out.

#### **D. Joshua's Generation Passes 2:7-10**

**<sup>7</sup> So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.**

Note this – that entire generation loved & served God & so experienced His blessing as they moved to take possession of the land.

**<sup>8</sup> Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. <sup>9</sup> And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.**

When the conquest was complete & Joshua finally settled down, he made his home in Timnath Heres, which was close to Shiloh where the tabernacle was located.

That's where we'd expect to find Joshua, living close to the tabernacle because his all consuming passion was to know & serve God.

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Unlike Moses, when Joshua died, he didn't appoint a successor.

The tribes had been dispersed to their regions & civil leadership would now fall to the tribal elders.

The religious leadership was resident in the high priest who served at the tabernacle in Shiloh.

Any time the nation needed to hear from God on what they ought to do, they would go to the high priest who had the Urim & Thummim, which was the device God had given for them to discover His will.

The renewal of the covenant with God and one another would be accomplished 3 times a year when they went to the required feasts at the Tabernacle.

At least, this is what was supposed to happen. The problem is, it didn't.

For the most part, the people didn't attend the feasts, and the nation fragmented into regional disputes.

**10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.**

When Joshua's generation died off, another generation arose to maturity without a commitment to the God of Israel.

Why? Whose fault was this? The parents! They had embraced the blessing of the land God gave them but weren't diligent with their calling as parents to pass on their faith to their kids. They hadn't taken them to Shiloh to worship God.

So God became *unimportant* to the new generation.

But there were plenty of Canaanites around who were willing to share their religious ways with the children of Israel.

Some Christian parents wring their hands because their children show no interest in God.

Rather, they are fascinated with the fashions and ways of the world.

Their clothes, makeup, music, & styles all scream of worldliness, and parents are heart-broken over their kids choices.

But a look at the parents often shows a flaky commitment to church, no family devotional time, & a compromised lifestyle the kids have grown up in.

There's a very real disparity between what they hear at church and the lifestyle of their parents and they draw the conclusion that God is really not all that important to mom & dad, so why should it be to them?

Their parents let them watch MTV & listen to KROQ – then wonder why they want to wear their pant-waist half-way down their bumm or their spaghetti-strap tops at mid-belly.

This Summer, Pastor Jeff has taken a dozen & a half teens on an intense discipleship course called "Summer Servants."

They've been immersed in the Word, service, fellowship, worship, and the Lord.

The effect on their lives as been remarkable.

Jeff has modeled the life & person of Jesus to those young adults, & they've been trained in the basics of true discipleship.

Now, here's the deal – what Jeff did with those teens is what every Christian parent **OUGHT** to be doing with his/her children

*every day!*

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Let's read v. 10 again –

**10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.**

They didn't know it because they weren't taught it.

Are we teaching our children?

The answer to that is - **YES!** The real question is – **WHAT** are we teaching them?

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## **II. The Judges 2:11-16:**

### **A. The Setting For the Judges 2:11-3:6**

Now we get into the story of the Judges.

Before we launch into this, let's do a brief overview of Israel's history to the time of Jesus.

- Abraham & Patriarchs: *Genesis*
- Egyptian Sojourn: *Genesis – Exodus*
- Exodus & Conquest: *Exodus – Joshua*
- Judges: *Judges – Ruth*
- Monarchy & Divided Nation: *1 Samuel – 2 Chronicles*
- Captivity & Return: *Ezra – Esther*

### **1. Israel forsakes God 2:11-13**

**11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; <sup>12</sup> and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. <sup>13</sup> They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.**

In v. 11, Baal is spoken of in the plural because each region had its own version of Baal.

- Baal Peor, Num. 25:3
- Baal Gad, Josh. 11:17
- Baal-Berith, Jud. 9:4
- Baal-Zebub, 2 Kings 1:2

The word “baal” was Canaanite for “*lord*” & “*husband*.”<sup>[2]</sup>

It’s fitting that the word is a synonym for both because God likens idolatry to spiritual adultery.

When Israel worshipped Baal, she not only committed *idolatry*, she was committing *spiritual adultery* by forsaking her covenant with Yahweh to attach herself to another lover.

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Ashtoreth, or Asherah as she is sometimes called, was the Canaanite version of the Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, the deity of fertility & sexuality

As I mentioned earlier, she was the consort of Baal.

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In v. 13, it’s said that Israel forsook Yahweh to serve Baal, singular, & the Ashtoreths, plural.

The distinction is that the worship of Baal was centered at a specific altar located on a high place.

Often there would be only one altar for Baal for a large region.

Asherah didn’t really have altars.

She had standing stones that were phallic symbols.

They did not stand as symbols *for her*, but rather were supposed to draw her attention & interest so that she would deliver her power by bringing fertility to the crops & fields.

So, while Baal had just one altar in a region, Asherah had lots of standing stones.

People would bring sacrifices to Baal’s altar while they would go have sex with a ritual prostitute priestess next to one of the standing stones.

This is what it meant to “serve” Baal & the Ashtoreths.

## **2. God afflicts Israel 2:14-15**

**14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.**

When the people would turn away from God, He would discipline them by sending trouble.

### **3. God sends judges 2:16-19**

**16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.**

Once the people had known a season of trouble, they would cry out for help & God would send a deliverer.

As we mentioned last week, when you see the word “judge” don’t think of some guy in a black robe swinging a gavel.

These judges were military leaders who brought political and economic liberty from oppression.

Then, once the peace was secured, they settled into their role as civil rulers.

**17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so.**

After a judge had brought relief from oppression, the people quickly returned to the errors that had led to their oppression and trouble – proving the well-worn adage –

Those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.

**18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.**

So, as long as a judge lived, the people followed his/her legacy of faith.

But as soon as the judge passed, they reverted to form and fell away.

There’s something to be said here about the importance of a godly leader.

It seems that *even one* person is capable of bringing God's will & blessing to bear for an entire nation or enterprise.

How important it is that we pray for our leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-2  
**I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.**

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#### 4. The nations left in Canaan 2:20-3:6

**<sup>20</sup> Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, <sup>21</sup> I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, <sup>22</sup> so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not." <sup>23</sup> Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.**

God left these nations because really, Israel *wanted* them.

They got a little taste of the Canaanites sensual practices & were enticed.

God said, "Okay, you don't want to expel them as I commanded, then I'll give you what you want."

The presence of the Canaanites *proved* where the heart of Israel was.

They ended up staying in Israel until the time of David.

Then, when David led the nation in revival & renewal of the covenant with God, the army of Israel was able to finally expel the Canaanites altogether.

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Right now, in each & every one of our lives there's spiritual territory God has given us but we've allowed to remain unclaimed & under the feet of the enemy.

As we saw just a few minutes ago, instead of pressing in to appropriate the blessing God intends to give us through *victory over* sin, we've struck a deal *with it*, trying to bargain a little covert profit from sin while it stays.

If our hearts were *wholly the Lord's*, then no sin could endure

because He'd give us victory over it.  
Here's the bottom line – here's what God is saying in v. 22 – the presence of sin, is the sign of a divided heart.

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Now, I know it sounds like I am getting dangerously close to the error of *perfectionism*; that we can come to a place of sinless perfection in our daily lives.

That is not what I'm saying.

As long as we are in these bodies we will stumble and fail.

As 1 John 1:10 tells us, the one who says he is without sin calls God a liar, because God says *all sin*, even the best of us.

We will not attain to sinless perfection until the day the Lord takes us home.

But there's a vast difference between *imperfection & immorality*.

*Imperfection* cause sins of omission & ignorance.

*Immorality* are sins committed with full awareness they're wrong.

It's those sins were; talking about here.

Things we know displease the Lord but we do not move to end.

It *is possible* to be a person who lives without such stuff.

When our hearts are totally sold out to God, He will give us the strength to overcome such sins.

**<sup>1</sup> Now these are the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan <sup>2</sup> (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it),**

God wanted the succeeding generations of Israel to know the need for dependence on Him, & how whole-hearted dependence on Him produces the blessing of victory.

The only way to teach them that was through battle.

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In the same way, every Christian has to learn the same truths as every other Christian.

We learn those common truths by dealing with our own unique stuff we have to surrender to the Lord.

But just as each faithful generation in Israel could overcome its opponents & settle down to enjoy the benefits of dependence on God, God desires that mature Christians move *beyond* the

lessons of battle *into* the lessons of peace.

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Now we get a list of the groups left in the land to test Israel & teach them dependence on God . . .

**<sup>3</sup> namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. <sup>4</sup> And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. <sup>5</sup> Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>6</sup> And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.**  
There you go – they began to enter into covenant with pagans, the very things God told them *not to do*.

### **B. Othniel 3:7-11**

**<sup>7</sup> So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. <sup>8</sup> Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. <sup>9</sup> When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.**

We read about Othniel in ch. 1; he led the conquest of Debir & was rewarded by Caleb with the gift of his daughter Achsah, as wife. He was the first Judge.

Since he lived in the very next generation after Joshua & Caleb, that meant the children of Israel turned away very quickly. It says it took 8 years of oppression before the children of Israel became truly repentant.

8 years!?!? Why so long?

The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 7:10 . . .

**Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation,**

**not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**

Salvation comes only to the *repentant*, not the *regretful*.

*Godly sorrow* is a *sadness* over having *sinned against God*.

*Worldly sorrow* is nothing more than *regret* for getting the *consequences* of sin.

All sin ultimately ends up paying off in death & destruction.

While the short term result of sin is often pleasure, the long term result is always pain.

That produces *regret*, but by then it's too late.

Obedience to God may begin with a bit of pain, but the ultimate end is *always* guilt-free pleasure.

The initial pain of obedience to God comes from rejection by the world, or it's simply the pain of discipline, of saying no to immediate pleasure.

Think of it this way –

Johnny gets a dollar a week allowance. He gets it every Saturday at 2 PM.

At 3 PM every Saturday, the ice cream truck comes down the street with its nasty little song playing.

And every Saturday Johnny runs out & blows his dollar on candy.

One Tuesday afternoon he's walking with his mother through the store when he sees a brand new toy he really wants and asks her to buy it.

She tells him that if he wants it, he needs to save his allowance. The toy costs \$15.

Johnny is bummed and starts thinking . . .

What's he got to show for the last year's worth of allowance - \$52?

Nothing! Every penny was spent on candy, which lasted as long as it took to eat it.

He does a quick calculation and realizes that if he'd just saved a little over 3 months, he'd have been able to buy that toy and take it home to enjoy it any time he wanted to.

When the next Saturday comes and he gets his dollar, he takes it to his room and puts it into the new piggy bank his mom bought

him.

But an hour later when the ice cream truck comes, he gets all excited, and takes a hammer to the piggy bank to get the dollar out so he can buy more candy.

Across the street from Johnny is Sally.

She gets a dollar allowance every week too.

And while she likes candy, she puts her money to a much better use.

She puts it into savings where at first it doesn't earn much interest because it's such a small amount.

But her parents have shown her the magic of compounding interest, & she knows that if she puts a dollar a week into her savings account at 6% interest, when she turns 55 she'll have a tad over \$16,000 & if she leaves it for just 20 *more* years, that \$16,000 will have more than tripled to well over \$53,000.

There's a small pain of deferred desire when Sally hears the ice cream truck.

But when she's older & wiser & eating dessert at Dukes on Kauai, she won't be missing the ice cream truck.

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Israel took so long to repent because at first she only *regretted* that her sin had resulted in oppression.

It wasn't until she admitted her real error, turning away from God, that the Lord sent deliverance.

**<sup>10</sup> The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. <sup>11</sup> So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.**

### ***C. Ehud & Shamgar 3:12-31***

**<sup>12</sup> And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms.**

Moab is located on the Southeastern border of Israel.

The Ammonites & Amalekites were nomadic peoples of the Arabian Peninsula who were always looking for easy pickings. Eglon planned on using his forces to attack the main centers of Israelite occupation along the Jordan valley.

The Ammonites & Amalekite raiders would keep the outlying villages busy defending *themselves* & so not able to reinforce the main fortresses, making Eglon's conquest easier.

One of the cities Eglon conquered was Jericho, an important city that dominated all trade through the region.

It's likely Eglon set up his headquarters there.

**14 So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years. 15 But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab.**

It was a common practice in the ancient world to conquer neighboring territories, then put them under tribute, again, in much the same mode as modern protection schemes.

Ehud was the guy who was charged with taking the Moabite king the tribute.

**16 Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length – [about 18 inches]) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. 17 So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.)**

For the Word to make mention of that meant he was *ginormous*.

**18 And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.**

The tribute was probably in the form of gold, silver, & bronze boxed in chests, as well as certain precious trade goods.

Ehud would have led an entire armed caravan to the Moabite palace to deliver this tribute.

But now that the tribute is paid, he releases them & sends them home.

**19 But he himself turned back from the stone images that**

**were at Gilgal, and said, “I have a secret message for you, O king.” He said, “Keep silence!” And all who attended him went out from him.**

Ehud returned alone to Eglon a short time later saying that he had a confidential word for him.

As a king, Eglon would always be on the look out for conspiracies against his house & throne.

It was not at all uncommon for a snitch to warn a king about an impending conspiracy, hoping such a warning would get him appointed to a special position.

Ehud had earlier given the appropriate forms of reverence & honor for Eglon, so the king had no reason to suspect Ehud was being anything other than sincere and helpful.

So he sent all his attendants out to hear Ehud’s message in private.

**<sup>20</sup> So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.” So he arose from *his* seat. <sup>21</sup> Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. <sup>22</sup> Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out.**

Talk about spilling your guts . . .

**<sup>23</sup> Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.**

He locked the doors from the inside and went out the back way.

**<sup>24</sup> When he had gone out, *Eglon’s* servants came to look, and *to their* surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, “He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber.”**

They think he’s taking a potty break.

**<sup>25</sup> So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened *them*. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor. <sup>26</sup> But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. <sup>27</sup> And it happened, when he**

arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them. <sup>28</sup> Then he said to them, “Follow *me*, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.” So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. <sup>29</sup> And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. <sup>30</sup> So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

Moab is mostly a dry wilderness, so the Moabites had moved their capital to Jericho.

With Eglon’s death, there was no one to lead the Moabites and they fell before the Israelites who cut off the route of their retreat back to Moab.

**<sup>31</sup> After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.**

We’re not told much about this guy other than he pushed back a Philistine incursion into the territory of Israel.

An ox goad is a tool used in plowing.

It’s a stout stick, about 8’ long with a point on one end & a chisel shaped head on the other.

Made of hardwood, it’s usually several inches around.

The pointy end is used to poke the back flank of an ox and goad it to move along

The chisel end is used to scrape mud off the plow blade.

The setting for Shamgar’s killing of 600 Philistines isn’t given.

We don’t know if this was one battle or if he was something of a guerilla fighter who attacked raiders who were troubling the villages of Israel.

The lesson of Shamgar is his use of a humble tool to bring such a resounding defeat to the enemy.

One man – 600 dead; with an ox goad.

The key for discerning the lesson God has for us from this is found by remembering the problem Judah had in 1:19 –

They weren't able to drive out the Philistines of the lowland because they had chariots of iron.  
In other words, they had the latest & greatest of military technology.  
An iron chariot was equivalent to an M1A1 Abrams battle tank.  
And all Israel had as pea shooters.  
We'll Shamgar proves that 1 man who's sold out to God doesn't even need a pea shoot, a pea is enough!  
Dependence on God turns an ox goad into an invincible sword, a sling into grenade launcher, & a shepherd's staff into a whole army.  
One, with God will always be the majority & victor, no matter how many troops the enemy may field, and no matter what weapons they may deploy.  
Some trust in chariots & horses, our hope is in the Lord.  
Shamgar used what came to hand to do a mighty work for God & His people.  
What's in your hand? What has God called you to?  
Are you being faithful with it?  
He's called you to your place because there's a special mission for you to accomplish there no one else can. Be faithful there.

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[1] Judges 1: 28,30, 33

[2] Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.