

How Can One Person Make a Difference?

International Bible Lessons

Judges 3:15-25, 29-30

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“But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to King Eglon of Moab” (Judges 3:15—NRSV).

“Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, and the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab” (Judges 3:15—ESV).

“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” (Judges 3:15—KJV).

One person can make a difference, if God is with them. In the Book of Judges, we learn how God raised up one leader after another to save His people when they called out to Him in distress. Instead of speaking directly to the people in some amazing or miraculous way, God worked through His chosen leaders and gave them special gifts to aid them in His service. When God raised up Ehud as a judge over Israel, God inspired him to use his gift of being left-handed to free His people from the oppression of King Eglon of Moab, who had placed such a heavy tribute on the Israelites that they cried out to God for tax relief.

God did not save the Israelites because of their right way of living, for God had sentenced them to suffering under the Moabites as punishment for their rebellion, their immorality, and their worship of false gods. God saved them because they had come to the end of their sentence, and He took pity upon them as they cried out for help. Pure grace moved God to prepare Ehud and inspire him to use his left-hand to deliver God’s people.

Ehud fashioned a double-edged sword and strapped it to his right thigh so he could enter the presence of the king armed but undetected. After he killed the king, he rallied the army of Israel and they conquered their oppressors. Then, the land had rest for eighty years, until the Israelites again rebelled against God.

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Thinking Further

1. Why do you think God used a variety of different types of judges and a variety of ways to free the Israelites from oppression? For examples, compare Ehud to Joshua or Gideon or Samson.
2. Why do you think God almost always used the Israelites in battle to free His people from their oppressors rather than just doing it himself in some astonishing and obviously miraculous ways (as He had freed His people from Pharaoh and the Egyptian army).
3. Why do you think the Israelites so quickly turned away from the LORD to worship the idols of their neighbors? Do people today ever turn away from God to serving idols? If so, why do you think they do so?
4. What more did the judges need to do, or should have done, to help the Israelites stay true to the LORD after God used them to free His people from their oppressors?
5. How did the Israelites recognize a judge as a God-appointed leader? How can we recognize God-appointed leaders and/or potential leaders today?