

# 10/13/19 - Judges 3:12-30 - "Ehud, A Message from God"

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 13 October 2019

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word this morning. And Father, speak to this church. Speak to this church.

Let your word come alive in this sanctuary. Father, help me to proclaim this without tarnishing the original intent of this message.

But Father, let your words flow through clearly and concisely the message intended to the audience of this book. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So we are neck deep into the book of Judges. We are coming up on the second judge in this book. And I just want to preface you today.

We're going to be coming to a story that is a little bit odd and bizarre. And there's a lot of odd and bizarre stories, especially nursery rhymes.

[ 0 : 59 ] Like, there's some pretty dark and weird nursery rhymes out there that you're just like, how is this even a, how do you read this to a child and not give them nightmares? You know, the blackbird pie?

Like, really? I know there's some meaning or something about that, but I don't really know what that meaning is. It's just a really odd story. It's graphic, and the descriptors in the story make it kind of bizarre.

So we're not unfamiliar with odd stories, and what we get in here, in the book of Judges in chapter 3, is an odd story. So let's dive into that today and see.

I'm going to read the whole passage in its entirety from verse 12 to verse 30. So we will be in Judges chapter 3, verse 12.

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel because they had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

[ 2 : 02 ] He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites and went and defeated Israel, and they took possession of the city of Palms. And the people of Israel served Eglon, the king of Moab, 18 years.

Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Jerob, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon, the king of Moab, and Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length, and he bounded to his right thigh under his clothes.

And he presented the tribute to Eglon, king of Moab, Eglon. Now, Eglon was a very fat man, and when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute. But he himself turned back at the idols near Gilgal and said, I have a secret message for you, O king. And he commanded, Silence! And all his attendants went out from his presence.

And Ehud came to him, and as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber, and Ehud said, I have a message from God for you. And he arose from his seat, and Ehud reached with his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh and thrust it into his belly.

[ 3 : 19 ] And the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade. And he did not pull the sword out of his belly, and the dung came out. And Ehud went out into the porch and closed the doors of the cool roof chamber behind him and locked them.

When he had gone, the servants came, and when they saw the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, Surely he is relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber. And they waited until they were embarrassed. But when he still did not open the doors of the cool roof

chamber, they took the key and opened them.

And there lay the Lord dead on the floor. Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Sarah. When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim.

Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was their leader. And he said to them, Follow after me, for the Lord has given your enemies, the Moabites, into your hand. So they went down after him and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites and did not allow anyone to pass over. And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men.

[ 4 : 33 ] Not a man escaped. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel, and the land had rest for 80 years. We get to scene 1 where Israel serves the enemy from verse 12 to verse 14.

Look at it with me in verse 12. The cycle begins. Remember the cycle that we looked at last week with Othniel. The cycle begins in verse 12.

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Again, surprise, surprise, church. We talked about this cycle in the introductory, the book overview, but also back with Othniel, and now we see the cycle again occur.

And remember, this is deliberate rebellion in this passage. They know what they're doing.

Remember back in the introductory section of this book in Judges 2, verse 11.

They served the Baals. They went after other gods. They bowed down to them, and they provoked the anger of the Lord. This is deliberate rebellion against the Lord. And then also last week in chapter 3, verse 7, and the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

[ 5 : 50 ] They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherah. And the cycle continues. So Israel's unfaithful.

The cycle continues to the next phase. We see the Lord's discipline as the verse continues. We see through the oppression and the Lord strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab against Israel because they had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

The instrument of his discipline was Eglon. Remember, we spoke about this last week. That the Lord used the enemies. He treated the Israelites as if they were the enemies because they had broken the covenants.

Eglon, he was a selfish king. He was an evil Moabite king who caused great distress to God's children, the Israelites, by wielding his power against them.

But wait a minute, Brent, you might ask. We just saw Othniel, the testimony of the spirit of the Lord coming upon Othniel to empower him now.

[ 6 : 55 ] Now we're reading that the Lord strengthened Eglon. So whose side is the Lord on here? It raises a question, what's going on? How could this be for Eglon?

It's challenging, yes. But could it be the evil plans of which the enemy devised against Israel the Lord meant for good? He saw a different outcome.

The enemy saw an immediate oppression and distress that the enemy could cause upon Israel. But maybe the Lord was a little bit more concerned with a little bit later down the line of what he needed to do with this nation.

Did the Lord know what he was doing? I think so. As the text continues, verse 12, it explains better to why the Lord did this. So bring your questions.

Why would the Lord do this? In verse 12, it says, because, in this passage, because they did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. The author gives us great insights and understanding that the Lord's response was justified to strengthen the enemy against them because of the consequence for their actions.

[ 8 : 11 ] We spoke about in the book overview of the covenant that Israel had broken. in Deuteronomy 7. I'm going to read it real quick to you. This is back in Deuteronomy 7 when the Lord established a covenant with Israel.

He said, when the Lord, your God, brings you into the land that you are entering, which the Israelites are now in, to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, all the Ites, seven nations, more numerous and mightier than you.

And when the Lord, your God, gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.

You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me to serve other gods.

Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you and He would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them. You shall break down their altars and dash into pieces their pillars and chop down their shirim and burn their carved images with fire.

You see that this is the establishment of the covenant of Israel. This was passed from Moses to Joshua, successor after successor. And now we see a situation that Israel is in.

[ 9 : 41 ] They're serving King Eglon. They have been breaking the covenant. They are not driving out the enemy any longer. The Lord's anger was kindled just as He promised back in Deuteronomy 7.

There should be no surprise that the Lord would strengthen Eglon. And this nation enters into His discipline. And what a season that was.

In verse 13 it continues. It says, He, Eglon, gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Malachites and went and defeated Israel and they took possession of the city of Palms.

This is known as the capital of Jericho. And the people of Israel served Eglon, the king of Moab, 18 years. The enemy rallies against the Israelites.

Three nations, the Ammonites and the Amalekites along with the Moabites. All to destroy and take over this nation. However, this is a short-lived ego boost for this nation, for the enemy.

[ 10 : 46 ] The focus of the Lord was upon the effect of this discipline. Not necessarily the process. Because the process is very, very daunting. Church, isn't this interesting how the Lord always prevails when He engages His creation.

He comes for specific purposes, pointed and direct purposes. Even to the point of when He engages in creation, whether it's the enemy or God's people, either side will prevail.

We see that in His absolute sovereignty. The Lord comes down and He strengthens Eglon, but He also, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon these judges. When the Lord comes, He comes with a plan. He comes with a definite pursuit of producing something greater than what may meet the eye. Do you ever feel as if the Lord may be actively against you in your life?

And no matter what you do, you hit roadblocks. You almost feel like the Lord's hand is against you at times. It comes seasonally, I would say, when the Lord's kind of like trying to get us sinful human beings back on track and it's a painful process.

[ 12 : 07 ] You may ask, where's the Lord's blessing in your life? What might the Lord be trying to tell you through that? Could it be, church, that the Lord may be concerned with the result in you and not necessarily the process?

While His discipline might hurt when His plans, when you're like, man, I don't know why I did this Christianity thing, I signed up for the wrong thing, I think. You see all these people having fun and praising the Lord and then my life it just feels like I can't get anywhere.

Could it be that the Lord is more concerned with the result in you and not necessarily this painful process, the discipline to draw you back? As we get into the second scene, in this account of the second judge, Israel is left under oppression for 18 years.

This is quite a long time of oppression, right? It's the longest stretch of oppression thus far in this book of Judges. And we see in verse 15 it continues that Israel reached another breaking point in their rebellion, in their unfaithfulness, they've reached the point of complete and utter distress again. Scene 2, we see the Lord intervene. So the cycle continues. Verse 15, then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.

[ 13 : 34 ] And remember, just a side note, crying out is not to be understood as repentance. The Lord was after repentance but they were crying out in distress, which still is significant.

I don't want to knock them too hard because they could have been crying out to King Eglon, but they at least had the sense in them to cry out to the Lord who can actually help them.

So things may not be as bad as they could be yet in this book. And the cycle continues as we continue reading in verse 15. The Lord's provision, he provides Ehud.

The Lord raised up, read with me, the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Jerrah, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon, the king of Moab.

And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, cubit in length, and he bounded to his right thigh under his clothes. The Lord provides in their distress.

[14:39] Remember, the Lord is moved with compassion by their groanings. We spoke about that over the past weeks. So in this movement of compassion, he chooses to raise up a deliverer for this rebellious, unfaithful nation.

He raises up a savvy, sharp, and clever man named Ehud. But the Lord, we see, has covert plans in this. We see an instance of the Lord having a greater plan in mind.

What others meant for bad, the Lord meant for good. Israel sent tribute by Ehud. They actually thought that Ehud was going out. They didn't know that he was crafting a sword.

They didn't know that anything was strapped to his thigh. They were just worried about pleasing this king, taking this tribute to this king to please him. The Israelites were unaware of the Lord raising up Ehud, and all they were aware of was their servitude to Eglon.

But we see a tribute. A tribute is something to be understood as kind of like an offering to a king. In this passage, in this literal context, we don't really know what kind of tribute it is, but we get a good idea because the term used for this tribute is *mincha*, meaning grain offering, also known as agricultural produce, also known as food.

[16:05] We don't know what kind of food. It could have been a sirloin or whatever it might have been, but it was a very large plate of food. The tribute was probably an annual tribute that was required to be paid in acknowledgement of subjection to this king.

But who shall escort this tribute church to Eglon? We meet a man named Ehud. Ehud will take it. He'll escort it. Ehud was most likely already a known leader in this nation.

I mean, to be given such a task like this, to present a tribute, you can only imagine that he already had credibility with the nation of Israel at this time. And not only that, we see some courage and bravery in Ehud, a quest he chose to execute on his own.

He didn't let any of his friends know. All he knew is that he had a plan in mind he was going to hide a sword under his robe and see what he could do. You know that he wasn't planning to use that double-edged sword to cut any stake.

He was a careful, planned-out man. It is clear in the detail of this text that he was a planner and an executor. Pun intended, I guess. If there was an Ehud today, he would probably work as a field agent for the CIA.

[17:29] He just seems like a sharp man. He's always thinking ahead. He's risky. So the Israelites send the tribute, plate of food, and Ehud takes a sword, concealed under his robe.

And notice the clever sword positioning. He knows that in order to get into the king's dwelling, that he's going to have to be pretty convincing. You can't just say, oh yeah, this 18 inch, you know, one cubit is about 18 inches.

Oh yeah, this is just a steak knife. Yeah, it's nice and sharp, you know, it will do the job for this king. You know, you can't just sneak something in like that. It has to come in subtly.

So he was a left-handed man, he was a Benjamin knight. Benjamin knights were known as to, when they were growing up as boys, they would often like strap their right arms to their side and make it immobile so that they learn how to use their left hands.

This gave them an advantage in combat, it gave them an advantage in military conquests, more so than not. And so you see a Benjamin knight coming, approaching the castle.

[18:38] The last thing that the guards are probably worried about is anything on his right side. So he puts the sword on his right side for a purpose.

It's a clever sword positioning, but risky in and of itself. I mean, you're still risking your life of being caught. I mean, imagine the risk that Ehud puts himself in.

Ehud, just imagine the scene. Ehud is off to the king's dwelling. The unknowing servants carrying this plate of food with Ehud just marching along, leading the way, and the servants behind him taking this plate of food.

Israelites were concerned about proving their servitude to King Eglon. Ehud had another plan in mind. I mean, you could just imagine walking down the road with these servants, how almost comical it could be, but also how stressful it could be.

I mean, just thinking about Ehud, I'd be thinking about, okay, I'm done with this plan, I'm ditching this sword, I'm just throwing it in the weeds, this is just, nobody knows, I didn't tell my mom, you know, they're going to be worried, like if I don't come back, you know, all this stuff that could probably be going through his head, I could just imagine the anticipation, the adrenaline, how does this man keep his composure?

[ 19 : 56 ] Just, yep, here for a tribute to present to the king, and I want to kill him. I don't understand, but it happens, and so we see the delivery of Ehud's tributes in verse 17, look with me, in verse 17, and he presented the tribute to Eglon, king of Moab.

So Ehud successfully presents it to Eglon, but how in the world is he going to pull this off? If you can imagine just being in a room with this very large man, we'll get into that in a bit, with the servants, with the guards, and standing there with a sword just awkwardly attached to your thigh, I mean, looking around the room, how are you going to pull this one off?

There's so many people in the room, he's going to have to pull a Jackie Chan in order to pull this thing off. But that's going to cause quite a loud scene, and definitely a sure demise of Ehud's life. Ehud has to get Eglon alone. How is he going to pull this one off? We see a descriptor here in verse 17. It says, Now Eglon was a very fat man.

While it is clear that we know that Eglon is the king of Moab, he used his power to crush and to wield his authority over this nation, we get quite a descriptor here about his shape, about his size.

[ 21 : 31 ] And this is culturally significant. Well, we can kind of read this and have a little chuckle under our breath and be like, what does that have to do with anything? It has everything to do with it.

In our current age where slimness is valued as a sign of fitness, beauty, and self-discipline, and obesity is like a sign of a problem, this may register to us as a negative comment toward Eglon. Like, how could they say that about that king? This is the word of God. How could this be in here? However, in this particular time and culture, fatness was not regarded as something negative ever. It was more of a sign of prosperity and good fortune because it shows that while everyone else is skinny and barely making it by, you got this king who obviously, he doesn't have to worry about where his next meal is.

He has prosperity. He has good fortune. So in Eglon's case, it meant that this guy has been feasting on quite a few tributes. Bring him on, my servants.

[ 22 : 39 ] Show me that you are bowing down to me. And verse 18 continues, And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute.

And Ehud sees a way here, church, of getting him alone. All Ehud has to do is stroke a little ego to get this king in this chamber alone.

In 19, it says, But he himself turned back at the idols of Gilgal and said, I have a message. I have a message for you, O king. And he commanded silence, and all his attendants went out from his presence.

Ehud and the men started to exit this chamber. You can imagine the doubt, like, it's like, now or never, Ehud, this is your moment. You've got the king right here. Why are you exiting?

He comes up with a plan. And Ehud hangs back for a minute. Okay, you guys go, go ahead and take that, take that back, and I'll meet up with you on the trail, on the road. And so he turns back to Eglon, and he says, oh yeah, one more thing, O king.

[ 23 : 47 ] And as you can imagine, Ehud throws a line out in the water, and he's officially caught Eglon's ego. Silence!

Silence! Eglon said, as if he didn't want anyone else to hear his message. This is a special message for him, a secret message. So Eglon clears the room.

He wants all silence. It just needs to be Eglon and Ehud in there. Obviously, presenting a tribute of that size, Ehud has officially been proven to be a trustworthy man, to send the guards and everyone, and he wanted to hear what this message was.

Could it be a secret message from God, maybe an oracle, maybe a special blessing, a prophecy of blessing, maybe some juicy intelligence about the nation of Israel?

What could this secret message be? You have captured my attention, Ehud. So in this room, Ehud and Eglon are alone.

[ 24 : 50 ] Crafty Ehud has capitalized upon Eglon's ego. And remember, just the oddity of this situation. This situation could have went so many different ways. Like, you don't plan this.

You don't just go scope out the layout beforehand. This is all on-the-fly accounts of Ehud navigating with his craftiness. Ehud read the situation perfectly on how he can get a moment alone with King Eglon.

And so we move into scene three, which is a message from the Lord. verse 20 reads, and the cycle actually continues here, for any note-takers.

Israel is delivered in this passage, and Ehud came to him as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber, and Ehud said, I have a message from God for you.

He arose from his seat. Ehud advances Eglon, I have a message from God for you, and Eglon arose. He got out of his seat because obviously Ehud saw that saying that he has a secret message is good enough to get the guards out but is not good enough to get this large man off of his chair so he can have some sort of something to work with here.

[ 26 : 08 ] Ehud had to adapt to heighten the interest of Eglon. Maybe a message from God will get this king all razzled up. And boom, like an excited dog awaiting its arrival of its owner, the body language is significant here.

He gets up. What is this message from God? And verse 21 continues, Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh and thrust it into his belly and the hilt also went in after the blade and the fat closed over the blade for he did not pull the sword out of his belly and the dung came out.

In the climax of this story, Ehud kills Eglon. Israel is delivered at this time with a very vivid depiction of this account.

And many of you are probably like, Brent, you can't talk about that from stage, the dung coming out? What are you thinking? How could you preach on that? We could preach on the other guys. Why preach on this? Well, we preach God's word and God's word says it. These descriptors are actually very useful in understanding this passage.

[ 27 : 30 ] So it's important to the audience. So whoop, there it is. We're talking about it. The dung came out. Deal with it. For Eglon, that meant immediate incapacitation.

There wasn't even a scream that let out. What a strike from this trained warrior for battle, this Benjaminite. Ehud manages to escape.

escape. So what was the message from God? Was it all made up? Was it a devious scheme that he had planned on maybe figuring it out along the way?

Or was this actually a message from God? And I will say it was a message from God. It was a message of death to the enemy for Israel's deliverance.

Verse 23 continues, Now it's an interesting, we're not necessarily familiar with the architectural layout, but Kenneth Way describes this layout of this facility as modeled after a Syrian-style palace known as a bit halani.

[ 28 : 42 ] It appears that the throne room has two double doors with tumbler locks, which Ehud was able to secure from the outside. And Ehud then proceeds down the portico, which is likely a pillared entryway, and makes his escape before any servants, anybody even knows that something just took place in this chamber.

So Ehud escapes without a trace. He did it. Can you imagine the adrenaline running through this man's body? If it wasn't enough adrenaline and anticipation coming up to the dwelling place of King Eglon, I mean, what was going through his mind?

I know what I'd be saying as I'm running out of the room, I'd just be like, go, go, go, go, go. Oh no, oh no. Run, Forrest. Run, Jenny. Just pack up.

I wonder if he met with the servants on the way back from the road as he's running and dashing back. But let's read in this humorous scene of Eglon's servants coming back because the story shifts from death of King Eglon to embarrassment.

Read with me in verse 24. It says, When he had gone, the servants came. And when they saw the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, surely he's relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber.

[ 30 : 11 ] I know, an interesting scene. It has a little bit of humor in it as well because you've got these two servants that they return, the doors are locked to the roof chamber.

And remember the vivid descriptor back in the passage before, the dung coming out. The author had something in mind that he's trying to tell us today in the original audience to explain the convincing elements of the servants and their embarrassment.

The story had to be set up in a way that you can believe it. Not only does this bring comedy, but it also makes the story more believable too. I mean, I could just imagine, well, maybe I don't want to imagine what the smell was like.

You know, coming back to this chamber, the servants just like, okay, it's been a while, let's go see what's going on here, and getting to the door and just being like, whoa, danger, Will Robinson.

something's happening in there.

Let's just, you know, he's obviously busy, so we'll just come back in a little bit. Now you understand why we got that description in the passage before.

[ 31 : 23 ] And how long could they have been waiting for this man to get finished? I mean, like, it could have been 30 minutes, it could have been 60 minutes. I don't know what the official check to see if they're dead in there is in our culture today. I don't know what that time limit is, but it was obviously enough time that Ehud crafted to allow his escape.

And verse 25 continues with these servants. It explains their reaction, and they waited until they were embarrassed, but when they still did not open the doors of the cool roof chamber, they took the key and opened them, and there lay their Lord dead on the floor.

Church Ehud is long gone. Eglon is dead. Not only a message of death from God, but also now a message of embarrassment has been delivered.

The message has been received, now what? We get to the last scene of this morning, Israel serving the Lord in verse 26.

We see the cycle, Israel serving the Lord finally again. They're back to the covenant, they're driving out the enemy. In verse 26, it says, Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Sarah.

[ 32 : 39 ] When he arrived, he sounded the trumpets in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was their leader.

And in his mighty return, Ehud's running down the mountain. I imagine just something like Braveheart or something like Pirates of the Caribbean, just, you see Captain Jack just running down this mountain.

Just the craziest situation just took place. I killed the king, we don't have time to talk about it, but here's a trumpet, get the people together, we're going in, it's time to take back our land.

And the people went down and he was their leader. Isn't it interesting how the people of Israel didn't even realize up until this point, until they see this man coming back down with the report that it's time to go, it wasn't until this time that Ehud was recognized as their deliverer until this moment, and he was their leader in verse 27.

Isn't that interesting that a true leader called by God is one that doesn't need affirmations of the people he leads? Ehud was confident, he knew what the Lord was calling him to do.

[ 33 : 51 ] The identity of any good leader is secured in the identity calling which comes from the Lord. The Lord placed on their lives and works out in our lives and your life as well.

And as the scene kind of comes to the end, in verse 28, and he said to them, follow after me for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand. So they went down after him and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites and did not allow anyone to pass over and they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong and able-bodied men, not a man escaped.

Ehud's concern was finishing what he started and his concern was on point. Look at the passage in verse 28, follow after me for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabite into your hands.

This indicates to the readers that despite his devious plans, he knew the battle belonged to the Lord and so did the victory. And so the Israelites rise to the action, they defeat 10,000 able-bodied men.

And then verse 30, so Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel and the land had rest 80 years. The effects of the Lord's intervention of delivering Israel in this cycle in Ehud's life of raising him up was 80 years, meaning two whole generations.

[ 35 : 19 ] until, of course, the Israelites inevitably forgot and turned from the Lord again in the next account of the judges. Now, there was a lot of kind of odd descriptors, vivid depictions of some details that we'd rather not talk about on a Sunday morning, nonetheless.

Descriptors of people's size, descriptors of people's stench. But through the laughter, through the humor, we also get a glimpse of how God sees all these situations which consumes our minds at times, situations which at times have to be humorous from the Lord's perspective.

See, the Lord will often bring about a difficult process in our lives, church, in order to produce a certain quality product, like refinement, of gold.

He will often use a difficult process in order to produce a quality product. By this account of Eglon and the Israelites, the Moabites and the Israelites, it invites us all to the reality of these situations to see how God sees them and join in the laughter in heaven, especially when we read about the Lord getting the last words in these situations.

the tyrants of this world truly have no real power. Remember back in our summer series in Psalms, we read in Psalm 2, verse 1, why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

[ 37 : 00 ] The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their courts from us.

He who sits in heaven and laughs. The Lord holds them in derision, also known as mockery. The enemy of God can only operate within the limits of which the Lord allows.

This could be very comforting to us in the midst of trials, in the midst of hardships and difficult situations, but this can also be equally as challenging when we're experiencing pain in life, when we're experiencing loss.

At the moment, the enemy seems as if they have the upper hand, the Lord reveals humorously from his point of view, no, no, no. You don't got any power. Let me show you. And so the same is for you today.

The Lord is in control of all these seasons of your life, and the hardships that are used in our lives will often benefit us as a result. So take hope in that process.

[ 38 : 10 ] More often, persecution will result and correlate with an increase in growth of the church. When the church is attacked, we can rest assured that God is going to restore, and not only that, he's going to multiply the church.

You can look at this in various organizations like Voice of the Martyrs over across seas. You see the church is getting ambushed and attacked, and what is the result? Multiplication and growth. This happens. This is what the Lord uses. So yes, it was a comical and humorous account of Ehad. But what about that message?

What about that secret message? What about that message from God that raised Ehad off of his seat? Was Ehad bluffing about that message from God?

Was he kind of stretching the truth, and actually this is my vengeance for Israel? All jokes and graphic details aside, church, no, not at all. There was a message from the Lord.

[ 39 : 15 ] It was a message of death and embarrassment for the Moabites. You think you're all powerful? Well, it's time to put you in your place. The Lord is on the throne, and he laughs in derision.

What made this message, though, so enticing that got Ehad off of his feet? This man after eating, God only knows what was on that plate. I mean, we fall asleep and pass out after just a plate of turkey on Thanksgiving.

What was on that plate, man? He was probably sitting there fat and happy. What made this message so enticing that it got this man off of his seat? Because you saw different messages being translated through this occurrence.

You saw the message of the tribute being carried. That sent a message to King Ehad. It got his ego boosted, like, okay, good Israelites, they're still serving me, and I got my tribute, and I got my feast for the day.

But a message from God perked his interest even more so than the message that any tribute could. Compared to a divine word of the Lord, the tribute was old news at that point.

[ 40 : 24 ] So could it be the power of this message lies solely within the one who crafted the words, the author of this message? The message inherits authority based on the authorship of that message, something that Ehad arose to his feet to receive.

Could it be Ehad was no stranger to a higher power in his pursuit of a higher power on earth, more authority? Maybe he was going to give him a message of Ehad's going to be king of the whole land.

You know, what could this be? And possibly had some interest in hearing from God in order to receive from him. What else are you going to give me? Church, we have a message from God today as well.

And it goes deeper than the message because there is an infinite God who desired to make himself known to us today through a message. Within this message is a God who originally created this earth, it's accounted for in this book, message.

It's a message that expresses how mankind rebels constantly against him since the fall of man. This message points forward to the coming Messiah to atone for our sins and through this sacrifice of one man, all who enter are free from sin by trusting in this message.

[ 41 : 50 ] This message is still being translated today. Revealed within are those who are under the retribution of God, the judgment of God, those outside of the covenants who have not trusted in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

But also there's a message of warning to them. There's also a message today translated in this day of hope. While it is a message of retribution, it's a message of hope, church.

It's a message of Jesus Christ, the ultimate judge, capital J. judge, who has saved all those who have ears to hear and a heart to receive this message.

By faith in him we are transferred from the dominion of darkness under retribution and placed into the dominion of light. And the message was clearly received by Eglon.

It was a message of death and retribution to this evil king. The red receipt was verified by all of Moab as they experienced that same death and retribution.

[ 42 : 56 ] Or as Paul puts it in Colossians 3.15, he disarmed, the Lord disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

Church, is this message also getting you off your feet this morning? Not because of the benefits of this message like King Eglon was after, like, ooh, yeah, I love this message, I get all this stuff, I'm free, I can do what I want now.

But the person of this message, not just the benefits, but the person of this message. Too many people today want the things of Christ and they don't want Christ. The message of this book is about Christ.

And similar to Ehud's sword, this is also a message that is like a double-edged sword that cuts no matter which way you swing it. It penetrates the depths and reaches the hardest of hearts, just as King Eglon experienced in real time.

The message for those outside the covenant of God is death and embarrassment, but the message of those under the covenant of grace is life and a message of hope. Is this message clearly being received by you today?

[ 44 : 18 ] Just as Eglon acknowledged through his body language of getting up, rising to this message, let me hear this message from God. This is a message from God to us today. It has nothing to do with me.

I am merely just a lowly messenger. This message was authored a long time ago and the authorship by a divine author. It is inspired without error today.

Those who have ears to hear and a heart to receive through this message find life, true life, and that power points back to the author and the power that the author gave this message.

If you are not in Christ this morning, if you kind of just straggled in from outside and just saw the doors open, it is warm in here, so why not?

What is this message communicating to you? Because there is a fine line, there is the retribution, then there is the hope. Have you accepted this message of Jesus Christ?

[ 45 : 22 ] Have you accepted the message that He is the Lord and Savior of your life, that He hung on a cross for a purpose to save you from your sins, that through His blood it exchanged blood for your sin?

You are set free from the power of sin. This message is for you to receive. this should get you off your seats.

And church, if you have been a Christian for any length of time, this message is sometimes just another message. How could this become a mundane message? The life that Christ has given to us has set us free, has broken the chains of our lives.

How could this message not get us off our feet? How could it not bring about great adoration and awe to our great Savior and King Jesus Christ? There is a message to us today.

Are you hearing it? Let's pray. Let's pray.