

EHUD, GOD'S SECRET WEAPON
2ND ADVENT SERVICE

JUDG 3:14-16
DEC. 7, '16

¹⁴ And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length, and he bound it on his right thigh under his clothes. ¹⁷ And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. ¹⁸ And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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." And he arose from his seat. ²¹ And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. ²² 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. ²³ Then Ehud went out into the porch and closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them.

²⁴ When he had gone, the servants came, and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, "Surely he is relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber." ²⁵ And they waited till they were embarrassed. But when he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them, and there lay their lord dead on the floor.

What do you have to do this week?

Not just what things to you have that you can do
but what things do you absolutely have to get done?
Life can seem full of have-tos, but what is it we really must do?
One thing we have to do is obey the law, do right.
but sometimes, when we don't do what we should
it seems that we really have to do wrong.
For example, if I don't leave on time to go someplace
it seems I have to drive over the speed limit.
Or if I do something I know will make another mad,
it seems I have to tell a lie to cover it up.
If I get addicted to something, it seems I have to get it.
Having things I have to do, whether I like it or not
is what it means to be a slave.
The Bible talks about being a slave to God's law.
We have to obey it.

But when we don't keep God's law and think as a result
that we have to do other things that are wrong,
then, the Bible says, we are slaves to sin.

In fact, it says everyone who sins is actually a slave to sin.
The people of Israel, after they entered the promised land
had things God told them they had to do.

They had to obey and worship him faithfully.

They also had to stay away from and drive out
the others in the land who would lead them astray.

But they didn't do what they had to do
and so they ended up becoming slaves to others
and then had to make tribute payments.

This happened over and over in Book of Judges,
but when they finally repented and cried out to God for help
he sent a Judge, not the courtroom kind,
but more like an old west sheriff who came along
to save them day, then rode off into the sunset.

The judge was a deliverer, a savior.

One of the more well known ones was Samson.

He was strong enough to defeat enemies all by himself.
but his greatest victory, ironically was after he did wrong
and ended up captured and enslaved himself
but when he was able to push over pillars he was chained to
& brought down pagan temple, he not only killed himself
but at same time more enemies than he killed in life.

His singlehandedly saving his people
and defeating his enemy by his own death
is a picture of what Christ does for us.

Text is about another, less well known judge
who also foreshadows our savior, Jesus.

**EHUD SAVES HIS PEOPLE WITH A SURPRISE WEAPON
JESUS ACTS SINGLE-HANDEDLY AS OUR SAVIOR
THE GOSPEL SAVES US FROM SLAVERY TO LAW**

EHUD SAVES HIS PEOPLE WITH A SURPRISE WEAPON

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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.

I confess, Ehud is one of my favorite judges,
even though are some other pretty grisly stories in Judges.
Different judges were from different tribes.

Ehud was from tribe of Benjamin, which is noteworthy
because they tended to be left handed, which he was.
People were expected to use weapons in right hand.
This is source of custom of shaking right hands
when meeting someone, way to show you are not armed.
Right handed people carried sword on left side,
not right side, like gun, because of room to draw it.
So, if he is checked for weapons, no one checks right side.
So it looks like Ehud is simply coming with tribute money,
obediently doing what he had to do.
But he has a secret message for the king from God.
The message is that God is delivering his people.
He does it in a surprising way that seems backwards.
This is how Ehud foreshadows Jesus.

JESUS ACTS SINGLE-HANDEDLY AS OUR SAVIOR

We, like the Israelites, don't do all we should do,
we don't fear, love, trust and obey God faithfully
and we are not careful to avoid association
with everything that leads us astray,
So we also end up as slaves under the control of evil,
feeling compelled to do things that are not good for us,
not as subjects of an obese Moabite king
but of the Devil and his temptations & accusations.
The New Testament says we are under the law,
both the law that says we must perfectly do right
and the law that says we don't & deserve punishment.
We owe tribute. The wages of sin is death.
But Jesus has come as one of us to offer the tribute for us.
But what was kept hidden by his birth & during his ministry
is that he is also true God,
So he was able to single-handedly pay all the debt we owe
First perfectly obeying law for us, then also dying for us.
His death is worth enough to pay for sins of whole world.

What would seem to make sense to religious people of world
and may have been expected by that despot the Devil,
is that we follow him by learning from him
how to keep the law perfectly ourselves
as the man in Gospel reading expected,
and that we learn from him to patiently endure suffering.
This system doesn't worry the Devil at all because he knows
good and well what others fail to realize, that
there is no way we can ever do enough or suffer enough
to finish paying the tribute.
With man it is impossible but with God all is possible.
After paying in full for us by his suffering and death,
Jesus turns around with a surprise message from God.
It is the gospel of forgiveness for the imperfect.

THE GOSPEL SAVES US FROM SLAVERY TO LAW

As Ehud had a two edged sword,
Paul says God's word is a two edged sword.
It includes both Law and Gospel.
On the one hand, God is just and righteous.
He gives us his law which is true and right
and does intend and expects for us to obey it faithfully.
If we do not, we rightly deserve punishment.
But God has another hand. On the other hand he is gracious.
As the judge of all he has the power to declare us innocent.
He can free us from our sins by what he does for us.
When people are right or left handed, one hand is dominant.
God's dominant hand is the one that holds out the gospel.
The gospel is his secret weapon.
The gospel sets us free from being slaves to sin and the law.
Because God promises to take care of us by his grace,
We don't have to keep doing what we know is wrong
to avoid consequences of what we did before.
We do obey God's law but not as slaves,
we do it not because we have to but because we want to.
So what do you have to do?
We still have many things to get done,
but the relief is knowing there is only one thing
we really have to do, trust in Jesus & all he does for us.
No matter what we ourselves do or don't get done,
We have been set free by God's secret weapon.

as EHUD SAVES HIS PEOPLE WITH A SURPRISE WEAPON,
going to pay tribute but doing the unexpected,
so JESUS ACTS SINGLE-HANDEDLY AS OUR SAVIOR
who pays in our place and then totally defeats the devil
by pulling out the gospel.

THE GOSPEL SAVES US FROM SLAVERY TO LAW
because God's grace is always dominant
and Jesus has kept the whole law for us
so that we can be set free by forgiveness.