

Judges 3.12-30

Jolly Judgment

Reading Ancient Judges is like reading Headlines OUR HOMELANDS Today

Reading Judges is like reading the neo-colonial post-independence history of Africa. By 2004, approximately forty years after independence for most African nations, Africa has recorded over sixty successful military coups and numerous unsuccessful attempts at coups. Justice is trampled upon, corruption thrives and insecurity is rampant.

Tokunboh Adeyemo

NOT just AFRICA – ALL around the GLOBE – we See...

Justice TRAMPLED Upon, CORRUPTION Thrives, INSECURITY Rampant

Part of UNBROKEN Sacred Scripture – Studied & Taught by Jesus & Apostles  
Do NOT Know Human Author(s), DIVINE Author: Holy Spirit = Word of GOD

v. 12 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD  
Sin is BORING, Happens All the Time, Over and Over, Not Creative or Original

Just BEFORE our Text we Read > So the land had rest forty years. Judges 3.11

40 yrs of PEACE only to FALL INTO SIN AGAIN

Sin is PERVERSE – We should be GRATEFUL > HUMAN Responsibility

“although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him”

Romans 1.21

### 1. A Funny Fat Guy

Can ANYTHING be FUNNY in this SOMBER and DARK book of JUDGES?

Well this Morning we're Looking at a LITERARY CARTOON

Author of Judges needed to LIGHTEN the HEAVY Tone of this SOMBER Book

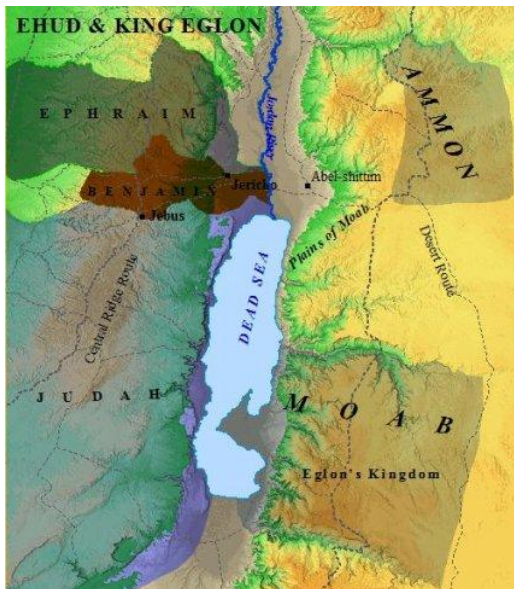
So MUCH Humor some Critical Scholars think this was ADDED to Book Later

The JOKE is man Named EGLON who was King of MOAB

a. Allies > Before we see what's Funny – See CLEVER Statesmanship

NOTHING Funny > Suffering during 18 yr Reign of KING EGLON of MOAB

1) Human – Extended his INFLUENCE Around the REGION of MOAB



v. 13 He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms.

These ENEMIES of ISRAEL were RELATIVES

Moab & Ammon kids Abraham's Nephew LOT

Amalek from Jacob's Brother ESAU

Confederacy of EXTENDED Family

Made Life Miserable for ISRAELITES

E. Commander of Men – Coalition of Nations led to PROSPERITY & POWER

ADDED Sting capturing CITY JOSHUA said would Never be REBUILT

...Jericho the city of palm trees

Deuteronomy 34.3

JOSHUA – Good EXAMPLE that all JUDGES Fail to FOLLOW....

Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, “Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.”

Joshua 6.26

EGLON FLAUNTED this OATH for more than DECADE

2) Divine

v. 12 the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD

Sin is ADDICTIVE – MASTER DRUG, Toxic, Enslaving, Habit Forming

Consequences of ISRAEL'S Sin > Enslavement to EGLON King of MOAB

People of ISRAEL'S Special Relationship with God Not give them Pass to Sin

YAHWEH will PUNISH ISRAEL BECAUSE they are His People

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”  
Amos 3.2

Joshua: “If you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.”  
Joshua 23.16



IMPORTANT > NO MODERN POLITICAL State  
is the ISRAEL of God Today

NEW Covenant in Jesus Christ is GLOBAL >  
All Peoples, Languages, Nations

God is King of Kings / Lord of Lords OVER All Nations > Benefit of CHURCH

God raised him (Christ) from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Ephesians 1.19-23 The Message

God never allows his people to sin successfully. Their sin will either destroy them or it will invite the chastening hand of God. Charles Spurgeon

b. Affluence v. 17 Now Eglon was a very fat man.

Author presents EGLON as a COMIC BUFFOON

We MODERNS Value SKINNY – NON Fat Latte's and Sugar Free DONUTS

Today Bible calls Eglon FAT - VIOLATION of CIVIL RIGHTS!! > Lawsuit?

Ancient ISRAEL – Many Places in Modern World - Fatness Not FUNNY

FAT means FORTUNATE > ALPHA Dog pushed further into FOOD BOWL

My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you  
with joyful lips Psalm 63.5

PROBLEM: EGLON Fat from Produce EXTORTED from Conquered ISRAEL

Word for TRIBUTE (Agricultural Economy) was GRAIN OFFERING

Eglon Oppressed People of Israel and FORCED them to PAY him TRIBUTE

Word for FAT v. 17 > Used to describe Fattened Cattle or Sheep

NOW this KINGLY COW is RIPE to be SLAUGHTERED

### c. Arrogance

LITERARY CARTOON makes a Powerful Point > Emperor has No CLOTHES!

v. 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.

Judges NOT just POKE FUN at EGLON’S GIRTH but his GULLIBILITY

Eglon foolishly dismissed all his SECURITY – Sat alone with EHUD

EHUD’S Message to the KING is DOUBLE-EDGED like his SWORD

Hebrew MESSAGE > “dabar” = “word” or “a thing” i.e. SOMETHING ELSE

Not just ANNOUNCE JUDGEMENT – he would ADMINISTER Judgment

Call for SILENCE > All his BODY GUARDS Leave their King Unprotected

TYRANTS of World do have Real Power but only GOD has ABSOLUTE Power

By its humor the Ehud story invites us to see the tyrants of this world as God sees them and to join in the laughter of Heaven...It is holy laughter, and perhaps the only thing that can keep us sane in our darkest days. Barry Webb

Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10.12

## 2. The Right Left Guy

### a. Rescuer

v. 15 Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, and the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud

NOT Really a CRY of REPENTANCE or CALL for FORGIVENESS

CRY of PAIN – DESPERATE WAIL for HELP from SILENT HEAVENS

DAY Came that their CRIES were ANSWERED....

vs. 27,28 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.



New JUDGE calls NATION to FINISH WORK he BEGUN

Ehud Went HIGHEST /CENTRAL Point of Whole REGION

TRUMPET Blast to All ISRAEL >

Public Presentation of Self as Deliverer

Word SPREAD QUICKLY – People RALLIED to him and FOLLOWED him

v. 29 And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped.

Went to STRATEGIC Military Location > Only PLACE of Possible ESCAPE

KILLED FLEEING Enemy as they tried to ESCAPE

One more POKE “able bodied” i.e. STOUT perhaps OVERWEIGHT,  
SOLDIERS have PROSPERED with King Eglon > Now Follow him into Death

They are TOO FAT to RUN AWAY!

v. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

NOT ONE Moabite Soldier ESCAPES > PEACE for 2 X long as OTHNIEL

b. Reject

1<sup>st</sup> Judge OTHNIEL – Spirit-filled HERO – Valiant family of CALEB, Upright

2<sup>nd</sup> Devious Assassin HANDICAPPED Sticker on License Plate, Despised Tribe

v. 15 Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man.

References to TRIBE of BENJAMIN in Book is NOT GOOD – esp End of Book

the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem  
Judges 1.21

Not only from WRONG TRIBE – He is WRONG HANDED

Benjamin = Son of my RIGHT HAND > EHUD is LEFT-HANDED

UNCLEAR Wording “Left Handed Man” > Deformed or Lame Right Hand?

RIGHT HAND wields the Sword > Symbol of MIGHT and STRENGTH

EHUD is Weak in MOST IMPORTANT Place to be STRONG

If Jews VOTED for LEADER he would Not Likely Receive ONE VOTE!

LEFT-handed Man becomes HERO in ISRAEL > Slays Foreign ARMY

EHUD = “where is the splendor OR majesty?” > DESPONDENCY of TIMES

Ehud turned DISABILITY into a POSSIBILITY > Trusting in the LORD

c. Rascal MISSION of EHUD > BETRAYAL & ASSASSINATION

How can CONQUERED Israelite ever come Face to Face with Oppressor King?

EHUD among DELEGATION to Present Tribute to Corpulent KING

Left Handed Man – possibly Deformed Man – Not seen as Security Threat

Israelites CRIED to God for Deliverance never Imagine Ehud Answer Prayers

vs. 16,17 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. And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab.

He was READY with Hand-made CONCEALED Sword strapped to Right HIP

If ELGON's Secret Service frisked his TOGA > It would have been LEFT Leg

NOW we're beginning to see why God TAPPED this LEFTY!

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

EHUD safely Passed thru METAL DETECTORS with SWORD on his Thigh

NOW he wants to get the Tribute Delegation OUT of Harm's Way – Go in Alone

CLEVER and RESOURCEFUL > Master of DECEIT and DECEPTION

v. 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.

Cool Roof Chamber – Hidden, Dark, Few Steps Down into COOL EARTH

Has REST ROOM Attached Like the Chief Executive's POSH OFFICE

Unsuspecting King STANDS to Receive this MESSAGE from God

Gets FULL MESSAGE SLID Right thru BIG TARGET of his STOMACH

v. 21 And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

NOW Camera switches to SLOW MOTION > Every Detail of Deadly DRAMA STOMACH Completely SWALLOWS Ehud's Hand-made SWORD

v. 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.

As SLAIN King falls to Ground his BOWELS DISCHARGE their CONTENTS COLORFUL Picture! SIGHTS AND the SMELLS of Eglon's Final Moments

v. 23 Then Ehud went out into the porch and closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them.

EHUD the Assassin LOCKS the Doors > Maybe Slipped out a BACK DOOR?

v. 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."

ATTENDANTS Slowed by DOOR AND the DUNG

With THAT SMELL they were Pretty Sure what King was DOING in There

WANTED to Give him PLENTY of Time for all the MOPPING UP

v. 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.

Got ANXIOUS as Wait got UNCOMFORTABLY Long!

More HUMOR > Followers Saw & Smelled their LORD in all his Glory!

3 Times in Vs 24/25 Equiv of Word BEHOLD > 3 HUGE SURPRISES

Doors LOCKED / King Not RESPONDING to Call / King was DEAD!



v. 26 Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah.

EHUD Escaped > Passed the IDOLS --- Perhaps a DMZ Border with Israel

The remarkable thing about God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else. Oswald Chambers

### 3. Who is Laughing Now?

#### a. Mystery of God's Judgment

HUMOR can be DECEPTIVE – Sometimes Quick Turn from Laughter to Tears

CLEVER Story Teller has TWISTS and SURPRISES in his TOOL KIT

Gets you LAUGHING then JABS Sword – like EHUD into EGLON!

Realize you're LAUGHING at Yourself and Your Failures...soon CRYING

Author of Judges > Writing to GOD'S PEOPLE and Calling them to Holiness

The Book of Judges was not written primarily to mock foreigners; it challenges the Israelites to reflect on their own condition. Daniel I. Block

They did not destroy the peoples, as the LORD commanded them, but they mixed with the nations and learned to do as they did. They served their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they became unclean by their acts, and played the whore in their deeds. Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he abhorred his heritage; he gave them into the hand of the nations, so that those who hated them ruled over them. Their enemies oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their power. Many times he delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes and were brought low through their iniquity. Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress, when he heard their cry. For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love. Psalm 106.34-45

Reading Story QUESTION Not only Integrity of Judge but GOD the Judge?  
Story LACED with HUMOR but Seems its Hardly a LAUGHING MATTER

Sin Not Only Weakens Individuals > It weakens ENTIRE NATIONS

...the consequences of sin are neither simply natural nor simply supernatural...  
this is part of how God has set up the world, in some cases calamities are specific  
acts of judgment. In most cases we simply don't know how God is involved or  
why he causes or allows such things to happen. But every time they do happen  
should be challenge to humble ourselves before God and seek his forgiveness for  
every way we have offended him and contributed to the world's ills. Barry Webb

“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he  
receives.” Hebrews 12.6

## b. Mercy of God's Joy

Focus of Author NOT on Israel's SUFFERINGS but on their SALVATION

Try to hear this story as an Israelite...who for eighteen years had been oppressed  
and taxed to the bone under blubbery King Eglon...living in persisting poverty,  
eking out some sort of borderline existence in the hill country of Ephraim – then  
you won't be surprised but rather understand the pure enjoyment, the devastating  
humor, the biting satire, the sheer hilarity of the narrative. Dale Ralph Davis

What is NEVER BORING is God's MIGHTY SALVATION

People who know YAHWEH as their God will Never Lack for EXCITEMENT

How ASTONISHING that God continues to SAVE his Habitually Sinful People!

This was NOT GLOATING > Sheer DELIGHT at what God has Done for Them

Thru MOST of Judges the Emotion is GROANING and WEEPING!

God DELIVERS people Out of their Messes and REJOICES with Them

Weeping may last thru the Night but KINGDOM JOY comes in the Morning

God's People Now INVITED to LAUGH with Him in His Victory...

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 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 cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

Psalm 2.1-4

LAST LAUGH of God was the RESURRECTION

And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption Acts 13.32-34

No LEFT Handed man can SAVE US > Only One with NAIR Scarred Hands

Only Jesus can BREAK the Bonds of Sin and RIP the IDOLS out of our Hearts

Jesus COMMITTED NO SIN – Jesus had NO GUILF

He faced ENEMY ALONE and OVERCAME HIM

God saves by GRACE Alone so the GLORY goes to HIM ALONE

v. 28 Ehud "...the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand"

Won VICTORY ALONE and calls His People to SHARE the Joy of Salvation

There was NOTHING in his APPEARANCE that we should DESIRE Him

But HE WON his VICTORY Alone > And shared SPOILS with His People

Ehud brought 80 yrs of PEACE > Jesus brings ETERNITY of God's Rule

...nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Colossians 2.15

God wins Victory thru WEAKNESS > Scandal of Cross Wisdom & Power God

Nothing in my hand I bring

Simply to thy Cross I cling August Toplady / Rock of Ages

God still uses LEFT-HANDERS – Lamé & Disabled – People like Us

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong 1 Corinthians 1.26,27

When God gives His People Victory – He gives them JOY

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

Psalm 126.1-3

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Judges 3.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms.<sup>14</sup> And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man.<sup>18</sup> And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> Then Ehud went out into the porch and closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them.<sup>24</sup> 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."<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; 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.