

**LESSON 7**  
October 18, 2026

## Unit II: Lacking Leadership and a Moral Compass

# A Hero Who's Not a Hero

DEVOTIONAL READING: Ecclesiastes 7:1-13

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Judges 3

PRINT PASSAGE: Judges 3:15-23, 30

### KEY VERSE

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. (Judges 3:15a, KJV)

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Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a lefthanded man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. (Judges 3:15a, NIV)

### Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Trust in God's continuous work in the world.
- Understand God's purpose in calling imperfect people into faithful service.
- Work to help God's divine plan come to fruition.

### \*Key Terms

**Deliverer (verse 15)**—Hebrew: *yâsha'* (yaw-shah'): one who saves, rescues, gives victory to, brings to safety. The Lord provided the people of Israel with Ehud as their deliverer after they cried out to Him.

**Made an end (verse 18, KJV)**—Hebrew: *kâlâh* (kaw-law'): completed; finished; accomplished; consumed; determined.

**Message (verse 20)**—Hebrew: *dâbâr* (daw-bawr'): speech; word; speaking; thing; utterance; advice; counsel. Ehud told the King of Moab that he had a secret message for him.

**Present (verse 15)**—Hebrew: *minchâh* (min-khaw'): a gift, offering, donation, oblation, sacrificial offering; "tribute" (NIV). The people of Israel sent King Eglon a tribute through Ehud.

**Rest (verse 30)**—Hebrew: *shâqat* (shaw-kat'): quietness; idleness; tranquility; "peace" (NIV). The land of Moab was at rest after Ehud defeated King Eglon.



### The Biblical Context

Judges 3 unfolds during a time when Israel repeatedly turned away from the Lord. Without consistent leadership, the people drifted into idolatry and injustice. As a result, they experienced oppression from surrounding nations. In Judges 3, Israel is oppressed by Moab, and their suffering leads them to cry out to the Lord.

God's response is consistent with the pattern found throughout Judges. When the people repent and cry out, God raises a deliverer. These deliverers, known as judges, were not kings or priests. They were ordinary individuals empowered by God for a specific moment (Beldman, 52-54). Their role was to rescue the people and restore a measure of peace.

Ehud's story reflects the deeper message of Judges. Israel's deliverance does not depend on military strength or ideal leadership. It depends on God's mercy and faithfulness (Keck, 773-775). The narrative also highlights the moral confusion of the time. The repeated statement that Israel had no king underscores lawlessness and the absence of moral direction.

This context helps explain why the judges were often flawed and surprising choices. God works through imperfection, not because imperfection is ideal, but because God's grace is greater than human weakness. Ehud's story allows us to see that God's deliverance often comes through unexpected people and methods.

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

## Introduction

Many people grow up with clear ideas about what a hero should look like. Heroes are often imagined as strong, confident, and admired. They appear prepared, capable, and fearless. In everyday life, however, those expectations rarely match reality. Most people who make a difference do so quietly, imperfectly, and without public recognition.

The story of Ehud challenges popular ideas about heroism. Ehud does not fit the image of a warrior or leader. He comes from a tribe that had lost status, and he is described in a way that would have set him apart physically and socially. Yet when Israel finds itself oppressed and desperate, God chooses Ehud as the one who will bring deliverance to the nation.

This lesson invites adults to reconsider what it means to be used by God. It reminds us that God's purposes are not limited by human expectations or social labels. God often works through people who feel inadequate, overlooked, or unprepared. As you explore Ehud's story, consider how God may be at work through ordinary lives and unexpected means. God's deliverance does not always arrive in the form we expect, but it always arrives according to God's faithfulness.

### ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

## An Unlikely Deliverer Raised by God (*Judges 3:15-18*)

### KJV

**15 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.**

**16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.**

**17 And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man.**

**18 And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.**

#### **NIV**

**15 Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab.**

**16 Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a cubit long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing.**

**17 He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man.**

**18 After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way those who had carried it.**

The passage begins with Israel crying out to the Lord. Their desperation leads to prayer, and prayer leads to God's action. God raises up Ehud, a man described as left-handed and from the tribe of Benjamin. In the ancient world, this detail would have marked Ehud as unusual and possibly weak. Yet God chooses him as the deliverer. Ehud's difference becomes part of God's plan. He carries a weapon in a way that would not be expected, allowing him to approach the enemy king without suspicion. The story emphasizes that God's deliverance does not depend on strength, status, or appearance. God uses what others may overlook.

Many people disqualify themselves from serving God because they do not fit an imagined standard. Ehud's story challenges that assumption. God does not wait for perfect people. God works through willing people who respond when called (Brueggemann, 148-150). These passages are also a reminder that God's deliverance begins when people cry out. Israel's rescue is not earned by cleverness or bravery. It begins with repentance and prayer. God responds to the cries of the people, raising a deliverer at the right time. God's grace often enters situations that seem hopeless, using means that surprise everyone involved (Coogan and Chapman, 222-223).

#### **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

**In what ways do you feel overlooked or unqualified in your life? How might God be inviting you to trust that your difference can be used for good?**

### **God Working through Imperfect Means** (*Judges 3:19-23*)

#### **KJV**

**19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.**

**20** And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.  
**21** And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:  
**22** And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.  
**23** Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

#### **NIV**

**19** But on reaching the stone images near Gilgal he himself went back to Eglon and said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you."  
The king said to his attendants, "Leave us!" And they all left.  
**20** Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his palace and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his seat,  
**21** Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly.  
**22** Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it.  
**23** Then Ehud went out to the porch; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

Throughout these passages there are some considerably graphic episodes that can be unsettling. Scripture does not sanitize the violence of this period. Instead, it reveals the chaos and brutality of a time when there was no consistent moral leadership.

Ehud's actions are not presented as a model to imitate. Rather, they show how God works within a broken world to bring deliverance. God's purposes move forward even when the circumstances and methods are troubling. The text does not celebrate violence, but it shows that God's mercy reaches into dark situations to rescue the oppressed. For adult learners, these passages require careful reading. They invite honesty about the complexity of Scripture and the realities of human sin. God's deliverance comes in a context shaped by human failure and moral disorder (Buttrick, 205-206). The focus remains on God's faithfulness to respond when the people cry out.

This section also reminds believers that God's work does not always unfold in clean or comfortable ways. That does not mean God endorses every action described. It means that God is not absent when situations are messy. God remains active, guiding history toward restoration. For seekers and believers alike, this passage invites humility. It encourages readers to wrestle with Scripture honestly while trusting that God's purposes are larger than human understanding. God's mercy operates even in circumstances that reveal the depth of human brokenness (Brueggemann, 105-106).

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do you respond when Scripture describes difficult or disturbing events and situations? What helps you trust God's purposes even when the story feels uncomfortable?

## Peace That Comes through God's Deliverance (Judges 3:30)

### KJV

**30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest four-score years.**

### NIV

**30 That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.**

The story ends with a rather surprising outcome. After the chaos and violence, the land has been granted rest for a period of eighty years. This rest is not credited to Ehud's skill alone. It is the result of God's deliverance. The text emphasizes that peace follows when God intervenes on behalf of the people. Rest in the book of Judges is always fragile. Rest is dependent upon on continued faithfulness to God. When the people remain attentive to God, the community experiences stability. When they drift again, trouble returns. This pattern reinforces the lesson that peace is a divine gift and not an act of human achievement.

In this section there is a bold offering of hope. Even after seasons of failure and confusion, God can restore peace. Deliverance may come through unexpected people and difficult circumstances, but God's goal remains the same. God desires restoration, not destruction. This passage also invites reflection on long term impact. God's deliverance affects generations. Eighty years of peace suggests that obedience and repentance can have lasting effects. Adults understand the value of stability, especially for families and communities. God's work in one generation can bless many who follow (Brueggemann, 150-151).

The story of Ehud reminds us that God's grace is not limited by human weakness. God's deliverance creates space for healing and rest (Beldman, 55-56). When people turn back to God with sincere hearts, the result is renewal and peace that reaches beyond the moment.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Where do you long for peace and restoration in your life or community? How might trusting God's deliverance open the door to lasting renewal?

## A Closing Thought

Ehud's story challenges our assumptions about heroes and leadership. God raised an unlikely deliverer to rescue Israel, showing that God's power works through unexpected people and situations. Though the story includes violence and complexity, the focus remains on God's mercy and faithfulness. This lesson reminds believers that God responds when people cry out and that peace follows when deliverance comes from the Lord rather than human strength.

## Your Life

Think about a situation where you feel unqualified or overlooked. Rather than withdrawing, consider one small way you can respond faithfully this week. Take that step with courage, trusting that God often works through ordinary people who are willing to act when called.

## Your World!

Notice how easily people around you dismiss others as unimportant or incapable. When that happens, speak a word that affirms God's ability to work through unlikely people. Let your actions challenge narrow definitions of strength and success, pointing others toward a God who delivers through ordinary faithfulness.

## Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your mercy that reaches us in weakness. Help us trust Your purposes, respond in obedience, and rest in Your deliverance. Shape our lives to reflect Your faithfulness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Conclusion

### (Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

The lesson topic for Sunday, October 25, 2026, is "Religious but Not Righteous." The Devotional Reading is Deuteronomy 6:10-16, the Background Scriptures are Judges 17-18 and the Printed Passage is Judges 17:1-6; 18:18-19, 27.

| Home Daily Bible Readings |                                 |                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| MONDAY, October 19        | "No Other Gods but the Lord"    | (Exodus 20:1-7)       |
| TUESDAY, October 20       | "One God and One Lord"          | (1 Corinthians 8:1-6) |
| WEDNESDAY, October 21     | "Worship God Alone"             | (Matthew 4:1-11)      |
| THURSDAY, October 22      | "There's Nothing There!"        | (Isaiah 44:9-20)      |
| FRIDAY, October 23        | "Return to the Lord"            | (Isaiah 44:21-28)     |
| SATURDAY, October 24      | "No One Can Serve Two Masters"  | (Luke 16:13-17)       |
| SUNDAY, October 25        | "The People Cast Off Restraint" | (Judges 17:1-6)       |