

An Unlikely Saviour

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[0 : 00] Well, good evening, brothers, sisters and friends, and of course, again, a special welcome. If you're visiting with us, we do ask once more of it, and we pray once more the Lord would bless his word to you.

We're here to worship God. We can sing to God's praise from Sing Psalms and Psalm 115, Sing Psalms, Psalm 115.

That's on page 152 of the Blue Psalm books. Sing Psalms, Psalm 115, and it's on page 152.

We can sing verses 1 down to verse 9 of the Psalm. Lord, not to us, O not to us, to your name be the praise, because your love and faithfulness endure, O Lord, always.

Why do the nations question us? Where is their God, they say? Our God inhabits heaven high, and over all holds sway. Psalm 115, verses 1 to 9.

[1 : 02] To God's praise. The Lord, not to us, O not to us, to your name be the praise, because your love and faithfulness, give us your love and faithfulness, and to your love and faithfulness.

Thank you, O Lord, all of us. I do not do, O buteth ■■■■■ and a paths with rain.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 49] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 51] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. who are with us regularly, who are with us perhaps every single week and have been for many years, if not many decades now. Some who have been family friends since the first day they could come to church, since the first day they came to this building. But as of yet, they have not joined the family. As of yet, they cannot call themselves your son or your daughter. As of yet, they cannot call Jesus their saviour, their king or their elder brother. Lord, we ask that even this evening, as your word goes out once more, that you would use your word to speak to their hearts and to encourage them, to encourage them to come and to find their hope and their life and all their worth and all their purpose and all their joy and all their peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who has come to make peace and to give peace to all who come to him. We pray also for ourselves this evening, Lord, for those of us who know and who love Jesus, those of us who are your servants here this evening, those of us you have called out of darkness and into your marvellous light. We ask we would be encouraged this evening as we come again around your word, that through the promises of your word, Lord, we'd find our hope, that through the warnings we'll find this evening in your word, that we'd be guided to serve you well, that through the narrative, through the account of what took place in Israel of old, that we would see reflected both our shortcomings, our failings, but also see reflected our hope. But you have sent a rescuer who does not just rescue a few people, not just rescue a few thousand people, but you have sent the ultimate and final rescuer of the Lord Jesus Christ, the final king, who came to conquer and to step on the head of the serpent, who came to destroy once and for all his ongoing power, who came and who took on himself the full wrath of all the sin of all his people, so that we this evening, we this evening who know him and who can call him our Lord and King, that we can be free. We can live a life of freedom, even at this very moment. Freedom from the worry of the wrath of God. Freedom from the worry of a punishment that awaits us one day. Freedom only to be found in having

Jesus as our saviour, having him as our own assurity, having him as our guarantee. And because he never changes, and because he never fails, we come this evening clinging on to him. We find our situations and our circumstances changing so much. Even ourselves and our moods and our temperaments, we change day to day. At times it feels we change hour to hour, but we come to the unchanging saviour of all his people, who does not change. A saviour who does not grow weary with us. A saviour who does not grow tired of hearing our cries. But a saviour who saves his people to the uttermost.

We ask that saving power, that saving knowledge will be known and seen throughout our village, throughout this district. As we prayed this morning, we do pray once more for this district.

We pray for the homes you've placed us in. We pray for our family members, those who are so close to us, those who we love so dearly and so deeply, but who as of yet show no gospel interest. Lord, we ask you would bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. Those who come to our minds just now, those we've often been in prayer for over many weeks and many years, and indeed many decades once more, those we have longed to see enter into your kingdom, but as of yet are distant, uncaring perhaps. We give you praise that the salvation of our loved ones does not depend on us.

The salvation of those we care for is not down to our prayers, or not down to how hard we trial. We give you praise that although we do, and we find ourselves crying out with tears for our loved ones, we give you praise that you alone change hearts and minds. As we pray for ourselves, we also pray for the wider world. We know there is much suffering in these recent weeks, Lord, we have seen what seems to be an outpouring of natural disaster, so-called natural disaster around this world. As we see fires and floods, hurricanes, Lord, we see the disaster appearing in country after our country. As we find ourselves still here in relative safety, we give you praise for that, but we ask you to be close to all who are suffering the consequences this evening of these various many disasters. Our minds are also drawn this evening once more to the ongoing places of warfare in this world. Lord, we come to Ethiopia. We pray for them. We pray for the ongoing reality of warfare and terror in the Middle East.

[11 : 33] We also remember the ongoing warfare in Russia and Ukraine, and we pray once more, Lord, for the work of your people in Ukraine. We pray also, Lord, for your people in Russia, those there who know you and who love you and who call Jesus their Savior.

Lord, we know that we live in a world where the politics of our age is darkened and complicated. We give you praise that we find no reliance in politics. We find only our reliance in you.

As we pray, Lord, for world politics, we also pray for our own country and our own nation. Lord, pray for our prime minister and pray for our first minister. We pray, Lord, for our local leaders also in the council.

We ask, Lord, you give them wisdom to make decisions that would benefit our nations. Lord, that would fervor our nations. We also ask, as we also remember our king, we ask for him also.

The same we ask for our first minister and prime minister. Lord, that you bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. You bring them to understand that that only in Jesus they have any real lasting treasure for all the power and wisdom this world has to offer, for all the place of authority that they possess and they have the burden to use well.

[12 : 51] It is only through knowing Jesus and serving Jesus that this life will matter in the life to come. Lord, we ask that would be a solemn burden on their hearts.

We ask that you bring them to that saving knowledge of Jesus. Amen. Lord, we pray these prayers. They often feel so big to us, so beyond our understanding.

As we pray for the salvation of world leaders and our country's leaders. As we pray for the salvation of Tolstain, the salvation and revival to be seen across this island. Lord, we pray these prayers, not looking to ourselves, not looking to our efforts, to our abilities, for we know nothing would happen if that was the case.

So we pray them to you, the living God, the furthest galaxies, which we will never see nor understand, to the most distant of planets, are in your full control.

All of time and space, from the atom to the galaxy, there is not one thing, not one part, outwith your control. So we pray that these prayers to you, knowing that reality.

[13 : 58] We pray to our God, who is in the full control of all things. As we pray for the salvation of our nation, the salvation of even this village. We know it's not a prayer that is too big for our eternal God.

Help us to be faithful in our prayers, privately and publicly. We do our prayer, Lord, that we be a church, a gathering known for prayer.

For we confess and we know that without prayer, we find very little power. Help us even to have hearts and minds focused on Jesus, focused on your word.

Help us to spend a time of stillness just now, as we read it, and later as we hear from it. Quell, Lord, and take away from us the various pains and burdens and anxieties that lay so heavy in our hearts this past week and this coming week.

For a short time together this evening, help us to enjoy this time of fellowship with one another and this time of fellowship with you, as we know your presence is here among us.

[15 : 05] We ask these things, confessing sin, known sin and unknown sin, willing sin, and at times, unwilling sin, sin which seems to cling on to us, sins we can't seem to let go.

Lord, we bring these sins to you just now. And those of us who know Jesus, we bring our sins to you, asking once more that you would remember, remember mercy and look to the finished work of our Saviour, He who cleanses His people from all the wrath of all our sins.

Help us to live lives that glorify you, that honour you. Let's go all these things in and through and for Jesus' precious name and for His sake. Amen.

Let's turn together to the book of Judges. We begin, perhaps we should carry on our series in the Judges. We began with an overview of the series just before we went on holiday.

Now we're back and we begin a series. Judges chapter 3. Judges 3, and we can, that's on page 188 of the Church Bibles.

[16 : 14] Judges chapter 3 on page 188. Again, this will be a series, but it's more an overview. We'll look at some of the Judges and some of the events as we go through this book.

It won't be like our morning series in Mark. It won't be verse by verse. It's just event by event. At times we'll slow down, and at times we'll take a broader overview. Judges chapter 3, page 188.

Let's again hear the word of God. Now these are the nations that the Lord left to test Israel by them. That is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan.

It was only an order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before. These are the nations, the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal, Hermon, as far as Lebo Hamath.

They were, for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Pizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

[17 : 45] And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

They forgot the Lord their God and served Baals and the Ashtoreth. Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cusham the Shahim, king of Mesopotamia.

And the people of Israel served Cusham the Shahidim eight years. But when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer from the people of Israel who saved them.

Of Niel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. The spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the Lord gave him Cusham the Shahidim, king of Mesopotamia, into his hand.

And his hand prevailed over Cusham the Shahidim, and so the land had rest 40 years. And Ophniel, the son of Kenaz, died.

[18 : 58] 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.

He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of Pams. 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 Gerah, 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 bound it on his right thigh under his clothes.

And he presented the tribute to Eglon, king of Moab. Now, Eglon was a very fat man, and when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute.

[20 : 09] But he himself turned back of 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 as he was sitting alone in the 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, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. And the hilt also went in after the blade, and the flat closed over the blade, for he did not pull the sword out of his belly, and the dung came out.

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

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.

[21 : 27] 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 ten thousand of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men, not a man escaped.

So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel, and the land had rest for eighty years. Amen. We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word.

Let's again sing to God's praise, this time from Sing Psalms once more. Sing Psalms and Psalm 35. Sing Psalms and Psalm 35.

[22 : 43] That's on page forty-one of the Blue Psalm books. Sing Psalms, Psalm 35 on page forty-one. Psalm thirty-five. We can sing from verses two down to verse eight of the Psalm.

Psalm thirty-five verses two to eight. Take up your shield, come to my aid, speak to my soul and say, I am your salvation, with your spear cut off my enemy's way.

May those who seek to take my life endure disgrace and shame. May those who plot my overthrow turn back the way they came. Psalm thirty-five verses two to eight.

To God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[23 : 48] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. illos governor auxingly if Oh, should God my own earth roll, turn out the way they came.

emer enaria before the heaven behind him, and by the angels of the Lord be redeemed by the jadi The Lord be filled with God again.

Lord, may the path with Him secure in darkness are divine.

And let the angel of the Lord come behind.

Since they have set an end for me, without the cross alone, and for glory, send them up the valley of the glory of the home of my heart, The ■■■■■■■■ with thatlamide Thank you.

[27 : 13] Let's turn back to the chapter we had in Judges chapter 3. Judges chapter 3. We're taking verses 12 down to verse 30 this evening, the account of Ehud.

And we can take verse 12 for a text for ourselves. We're taking the whole section.

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 he had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

We've just sang together in Psalm 35. And as we read and sang that psalm together, if I were to ask you honestly, how comfortable were you singing that psalm?

How comfortable are you singing of the destruction that psalm sings about? Of the death and of the waste that psalm sings about?

[28 : 32] And for many of us, we sing these psalms, the so-called impeccatory psalms, that lay out and that call on God's justice.

And we sing these psalms sometimes. And because for some of us, not for all of us, but because for some of us our lives have been, relatively speaking, quite peaceful, these words feel foreign to us, they feel strange to us.

But if you were an Israelite under the reign of this king looking at this evening, if you're an Israelite for the 18 years of King Eglon's reign over you, you'd be singing these psalms and singing these verses with a feeling and with a longing and with a waiting that you couldn't even begin to describe.

As you're begging the Lord to take into his own hands the punishment due for this evil king who has killed your people, subjugated your people, taken you into slavery, has done awful things to your nation, and your praying the Lord would destroy him and destroy his people and give you freedom.

As we find ourselves starting off a real dig into the book of Judges, we come to an account that is, with respect, at some start.

[29 : 57] We could start earlier, I guess, in verse 7 if we wanted, but no, we're starting in verse 12. We come to the account, as we had, of Ehud. And as we read together, this is an account that is, with respect, full of action.

It's full of, it's almost a plot line. You can see it in front of you, and that's not by accident. We'll say more of that in a second. This is a story that's graphic.

We can't escape the graphic nature of it. It's an account about an assassin killing a king in a brutal way. That is how Scripture records it for us.

But more than that, as we'll see, the graphic nature, the grim detail, it's all not for nothing. There's nothing wasted in God's Word.

There's no wasted words, no wasted sentences. There's no wasted accounts. Everything is there to teach us something. As we know, all things point forward to Christ. And that is no different to our account this evening, as we'll see later on this evening.

[31 : 05] As we look together for a short time at this account, please note, this is not an account about how this king came to meet his end.

Well, that's important. It's not about that. This is a wee bit like when we studied the book of Jonah. The book of Jonah, as we said before, it's not about the whale.

The whale features in two verses, three verses, three half, well, two verses and a half verse. The book of Jonah is about God rescuing his people. Well, God rescuing our people.

God sending a reluctant servant. It's not about a whale. This account is not about the murder of a king. It includes that. But it's actually about God healing his people, rescuing his people, saving his people.

And that is our focus as we look to these verses. Under four very broad and very general headings just to help us. First of all, we see an enemy against Israel.

[32 : 09] An enemy against Israel. Then we see the cry of help from Israel. A cry of help from Israel. Then we see an assassin for Israel.

And finally, a hero for Israel. First of all, an enemy for Israel. Verses 12, roughly down to verse 14.

We finished in verse 11. We read that section. And verse 11 tells us the land had rest 40 years. Go back even more to that to verse 6.

And Judges carries on the way we know it does. Judges 6. And their daughters they took to themselves for wives. And their own daughters they gave to their sons.

And a short phrase which encapsulates so much. And they served other gods. And we'll see that in a second. Sin begins. As we said before, Judges.

[33 : 13] It's complicated at points. But it's quite simple really. Sin. Fervor sin. Deep sin. Graphic sin. Horrifying sin.

God's people wake up and realize the danger they're in. Cry out for help. God rescues them. And then the sin cycle begins. And the rescue begins.

And the sin cycle carries on. And God rescues. Again and again God rescues his people. And that is no different to the account we have this evening. They've had 40 years of rest.

40 years of peace under Othniel. About 40 years. They're getting itchy feet. The people of Israel are missing the old gods.

They're missing the old sins. And verse 12. And the people of Israel again. Did what was evil. In the sight of the Lord.

[34 : 08] We think. Well what did they do? Surely the Lord's reaction here. It's almost too strong.

The people did what was evil. And the Lord strengthened Eglon. This great king. This powerful king. The king of Moab. This king who's managed to unite to himself. In verse 13.

Israel's other enemies. For all his issues you may have. He was a king who has some. Obviously. Skills and diplomacy. He managed to unite enemies together.

To be united together. Against Israel. What was so bad? Yes we know worshipping false gods is bad.

But is it so bad. That God leads his people. To face this king. To then be 18 years. Under this evil king. Well what are people doing?

[35 : 08] For worshipping false gods. That's given to us. They did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. But if we're saying. They've worshipped false gods. As verse 6.

Amongst many our verses. Tells us. What's wrong with that? We covered last time. And we looked at. Chapter 2 together. The gods. They went to worship.

Was Baal. And Ashtaroth. That was the Canaanite gods. But the other tribes. Had also adopted these gods. Baal was the storm god.

He's the god of thunder. He is the god of war. He is the god. Who was. Sovereign. In Canaanite belief. Ashtaroth.

Was his. Queen. Was his wife. And in her own right. She was equally as powerful. To the Canaanites. They're worshipping Baal.

[36 : 05] And Ashtaroth. They are worshipping. These false gods. And you think. Well. That's bad. But. Is it that bad? How. Did.

The adherents. The followers. Of Baal. How did they worship him? How did they serve him? How do you show Baal. That you are truly. One of his worshippers.

How do you show him. That he is your god. And that. That he is worthy. Of your worship. It's not animals.

You give. It's not songs of praise. You give. Although that's included. And this is not even. From scripture. Well scripture tells us this. But also from. Secular sources.

From history. This is not some. Niche fact. This is known. And has been known. For many years. How did Baal. Receive worship? What was the ultimate way. To worship.

[37 : 04] The Canaanite. Storm. God. And his queen. The most common way. Was offering up.

Your children. To fire. And all that. Entails. Child. Child. Sacrifice. Was. What Baal.

Desired. And then you begin to see. What scripture. So quickly. And succinctly. Puts down. The people of Israel. Again. Did what was evil.

In the sight of the Lord. And the question. Of how. Does God react. So strongly. Begins. To make sense. Once again. They are offering up. Their sons.

And their daughters. To the fires. Of Baal. Often represented. As a bull. We don't know. Now. We can't say for certain. We shouldn't be certain. We can't say for certain.

[37 : 59] But one of the strong. Feelings is. That. He was a bull. With hands outstretched. At least for good idols. The well-made idols. A bronze bull. A brass bull. Often just a stone.

Depiction of a bull. With hands outstretched. But bent backwards. You place your child there. And they roll back. Into the flames. Graphic.

Grim. But this is what the Lord. Is talking about here. People of Israel. Have gone. So far. Into their sin. That they are now.

Seemingly quite willingly. And quite happily. Offering up their children. To false gods. They'd rather do that. Than follow God. Who brought them.

Out of Egypt. Who looked after them. These many years. Who has saved them. Again and again. And here we are back. Almost where we started. The details.

[38 : 54] Which are not for us. This evening. There's also much. Sexual immorality. Involved. In the worship of Baal. But that's a. For a different discussion. Perhaps for. A different day. But safe to see.

In verse 12. And verse 13. We see that. The people. Have gone back. To pagan worship. They've gone back. To offering. Their children to Baal. They've gone back. To evil ways. And God.

Sees. The evil. Of Israel. And he raises up. An enemy. Against Israel. He raises up. Then. This king.

Eglon. This powerful king. This king. Who was. As we said. Obviously. Very diplomatic. Who obviously had. Some great skills. As king. He's united. His own enemies.

Together. With him. To then. Face against. Israel. Of course. We know. The Lord. Made that happen. The Lord. Allowed that to happen. The Lord. Is involved.

[39 : 49] In it happening. And then. God. Uses. The enemies. Of Israel. To punish. Israel. For their sins. 18 years. 18 years.

Dear brothers and sisters. Dear friends. God is merciful. God is full of. Long. Suffering. Long.

Suffering. Kindness. And justice. And mercy. But God is not mocked. And when sin. When grievous sin.

Goes on. For a time. For a long time. Whether it's God's people. Or not God's people. The Lord is just.

He is just. And God. After allowing them. To fall into the sin. After allowing them. Chance.

[40 : 42] After chance. We are sure. To repent of the sin. He then sends Eglon. To enslave. And capture. And surround. The people. 18 long years.

Pass. 18 years. Of subjection. Under. This evil. King. Then we see.

A cry. From help. From Israel. A cry of help. From Israel. Verse 15. Then the people. Of Israel. Cried out. To the Lord. And the Lord.

Raised up. For them. A deliverer. Ehud. The son of Gerah. The Benjaminite. A left handed. Man. And so on. It took 18 years. The wording.

Implies. And the grammar. Itself. Implies. That no cries. No. Perhaps unified. Cry. Came from Israel. Until 18.

[41 : 38] Full years. Had. Passed. They would. Rather. Be under. The reign. And rule.

Of this evil king. Than repent. And come back. To the Lord. That shows us. In a horrifying way. The stubbornness. That sin causes.

In our hearts. Sin causes us. To be so stubborn. We would rather. Endure. So many other things. Than come back. To God. It's even in some.

I know. There's some here. And that's your testimony. Some Christians here. That you faced. Life situations. And circumstances. And you perhaps. Made promises to God.

If you get me through this. I'll come to church. If you get me through this. I'll. I'll put my faith in you. But you didn't. And you didn't. And eventually. For some here. I know. It took a lot.

[42 : 33] Of life circumstances. Of providences. For the Lord. To bring you to himself. There's some here. I'm sure. And you're still making promises. If my condition.

Gets better Lord. I'll come. And be a Christian. If you. If you look after. My family. If you look after. My children. If you do this. If you do that. Then I'll probably.

Come to you. I'll give my life. To you then. The stubbornness. Of sin. Friends. It can blind us. It can keep us. Stuck. It kept Israel.

Stuck. 18 long years. They can have cried out. At any point. But they don't. They don't. They keep on going. Keep on under the subjection.

Of this king. And 18 years later. They call out. To God. What does God do.

[43 : 31] When his people call out to him. The Lord raised up. From them. A deliverer. If we.

Didn't see. The rest of verse 15. If we just stopped at. When it says. That the people of Israel. Cried out to the Lord. And you had to guess. The rest. You could easily guess.

The people of Israel. Cried out to the Lord. And because of their rebellious ways. The Lord. Ignored their cries. Because they sacrificed. Their children. To Baal. And did other.

Horrifying things. The Lord. Ignored them. The Lord. Gave them. Another 18 years. Of oppression. The Lord. Utterly abandoned them. Forever. But no.

They cried out. And yet again. The long suffering. Graceful God. Yahweh. Yahweh. Hears.

[44 : 32] The cry of the people. And we can note here. We do see. The Lord. Is in capitals. All the way throughout. Our section here.

All the way throughout. And that's a common theme in Judges. It's a really common theme in Judges. We'll see this more. As we go on through the weeks. But just to point it out. At the start here. When we see and read our scriptures.

And Judges. Look at how the Lord is spelt. Always. Almost always. Capital. L-O-R-D. Yahweh. I am what I am. The highest name we could say.

That we can understand God by. All reigning. Self-sufficient. He is sovereign God. And that's on purpose. Because as they deal with all reigning.

Sovereign God. They'd rather spend 18 years. Under Eglon. A man. And as time goes on.

[45 : 27] Under all these other judgments. They find themselves. They'd rather go to humans. They'd rather look to themselves. Than look to Yahweh. Capital L-O-R-D.

Anyway. What does God do? God listens. God. Has an instant response. And he raises up for them. A deliverer.

It'd be a miss for us. Not to make the clear connection. That is for us. Here to be made. Dear friends. If you're waiting this evening.

For God to send. A deliverer to you. For your situation. There's no need to wait. There's no need for Ehud.

To wait for an Ehud. To grow up. And to gain his skills. If you're this evening. Crying out to the Lord. That he would somehow deliver you. From your sin. There's no waiting period.

[46 : 25] He has sent the deliverer. The final deliverer. The one who Ehud points towards. We'll see in a second. He has sent Jesus. And in his finished work.

You can have full assurance. Of full rescue. From sin and rebellion. From the punishment that hangs over you. And Jesus. The ultimate deliverer.

Of his people. That's the promise this evening. That's a reminder we have. Even from this section. That took place. All those many years ago. God raises up a man.

Who does God raise up? He raises up Ehud. The son of Gerah. The Benjaminite. A left-handed man. A left-handed man.

From the tribe of Benjamin. The most useless. Imaginable. Person. That you'd want God to raise up. If you were an Israelite. God. The tribe of Benjamin.

[47 : 22] Even at this point. Had a less than. A perfect past. A less than. A perfect history. And of course. To be left-handed.

Even our own culture. Not about long ago. Was something. Bad. I say this as a left-handed person. Myself. Life is still often hard. For those who are left-handed. But. In Israeli culture.

And it wasn't scriptural. But. In the culture. And in the. The wording used. The right hand. Of course. The hand of power. The hand of strength. The hand that showed.

You're a warrior. There. What's even more interesting. Is the word used here. For left hand. It almost implies. His right hand.

Completely useless. He is reliant. In his left hand. There's other Hebrew words. They could use. For left-handed. But the writer here. Uses a certain word. Which implies.

[48 : 15] He is reliant. Only on his left hand. Is he missing an arm. Is his right hand useless. We don't know. But he is only using his left hand. It's all he has available to him.

He's from a useless tribe. That's made an embarrassment of itself. Throughout history. A tribe. Which. Which has no real. Importance. So far.

No real. Shining members. So far. And he's left-handed. He's weak-handed. This is the last man.

You'd want God to raise up. To rescue you. From this great king. Who's managed to amass nations. And armies of nations. Together. This is not just.

Grammatical interest for us. This is God doing what God. Always does. What God tells us. That he always does. He takes the fools.

[49 : 15] To shame the wise. He takes the small. To shame. Those who are powerful. And here we see. God uses. An unlikely person.

From an unlikely tribe. With no. Seen ability. As a rescuer. As a rescuer. Of Israel. What does this rescuer do.

What does this assassin do. Well we read the story. Together. Ehud is sent to pay tribute. All the nations. Eglon has obviously conquered.

All the tribes. Like we know. Like took place. We assume yearly. Perhaps more often than that. Had to pay tribute. Had to bring the king.

Some form of offering. To show that. They were very good servants. Very obedient servants. And great king. We love you. And here's our gold. Or our food. And interestingly.

[50 : 13] We'll come back to this. The word used for tribute here. It's only used for a food tribute. So Ehud is bringing. A food. A grain offering. That doesn't have to be. Literally grain.

It could be any sort of food. But anyway. Israelites are saying. To Eglon the king. Here's our offering. This shows. We're still yours. And you're still over us.

As they send this tribute. They send it. With this man. Probably one armed. Left handed man. Who comes in. And who looks unassuming. Who looks probably quite useless.

And he appears before. Eglon. Now scripture. We know is blunt. But often scripture. Doesn't tend to be too blunt. When it comes to people's physical features.

In a sense. But we see. For Eglon. Scripture is clear. In the end of verse 17. Eglon was a very fat man. Now that's not just there.

[51 : 12] To give us a funny mental image. That's there for a very interesting reason. As we said. They are bringing tribute. Grain tribute. Food. Food. Ehud brings food.

To this very fat king. And the word for fat there. The very fat. It's taken in the very. The Hebrew term there. It's excessively fat.

He's not just a big king. He is excessively big. And the implication is. Because he's eating of a tribute. He requires.

Grain tribute. From all his people. And this is the image. Is it not. Of sin. And evil. It requires.

And takes. And requires. And takes. But gives nothing back. But oppression. And evil. Oppression. And evil. Here is Eglon. This powerful.

- [52 : 07] Massive. King. Who is. As it were. Eating tribute. After tribute. Of the nations. And the tribes. He has conquered. And he gives them back. Nothing.
- But evil. And conquest. And slavery. And pain. What an image. Of sin. What an image. Of our own.
- Sinful nature. We feed our sin. And our sin. Gives us nothing back. But pain. Nothing back. But misery. Anyway. Ehud has a message.
- For Eglon. We know that. Eglon assumes. There is probably. Some praise. For him. Eglon seems quite happy. To hear the message. So much so.
- In verse 20. He gets up from his seat. Ehud does. Have a message. For Eglon. A message from God. But it is not praise. It is not well wishes.
- [53 : 01] The message. That Ehud has. For Eglon. Of course. Is the sword. And he kills. This king. And follows.
- As an escape. But is worthy. Of the history books. As this. Well trained. Assassin. Escapes. From the upper chambers. And gets away.
- Just in time. Before the guards. Find out. Their king is dead. There is one. Interesting. Note. Given to us. About the escape.
- Of Ehud. You might miss it. Perhaps. If you read it quickly. Verse 26. Ehud escaped. While they delayed. The servants.
- And he passed. Beyond the idols. And escaped. To Sarah. What idols. What idols. Did Eglon have.
- [53 : 56] Baal. And Ashtaroth. Baal. And Ashtaroth. Did not keep. King. Eglon. Very safe. In fact. Quite the opposite. They are powerless. They are powerless.
- Against the. Plan of Yahweh. To rescue his people. It's a common theme. We'll look for again and again. Idols are mentioned. Every time.
- Almost every time. God has. Shows his victory. Every time God. Overcomes. And rescues his people. We see idols. Being mentioned. Because a reminder for us is.
- Even the so-called. Most powerful idols. And we touched on this. In Thursday night. And we won't go over it again. But. Idols are wood and stone. Yes. But no one who worships an idol. Worship the wood and stone.
- They're worshipping. The power behind the idol. And that power behind the idol. Is real. Satan and his demons. Are real. And idols. At times. Can be very.
- [54 : 52] Good gods. So-called. G small g. Gods to worship. They will give you things. They will do things for you. Satan doesn't care. He is happy to do what he can. To take it away from the Lord.
- But nonetheless. The idols. Did nothing. To save Eglon. From his death. He passes by the idols.
- And he goes. And he rallies. His nation. Dear brothers and sisters. And dear friends. God will bring about his purposes. Through most unlikely ways possible.
- We are always unwise. To try and work out. And try and pre-plan. Or think ahead. To the mind. And the plans of God. We will.
- I'm happy to say. Never be right. Never be right. God. As we know ourselves. Those who know the Lord. He works in ways. We can't begin to imagine.
- [55 : 55] He puts things together. In ways. We would never dream. Would come together. He uses people. We would never dream. But he would use. But yet. Yet he accomplishes his purposes.

The saviour. Born. From a poor family. Born into poverty. Becomes the saviour king. The messiah. Prophesied from the start.

The poor Christian. From Tulsa. Who God uses. To bring. And to point someone. To Jesus.

Who then God changes their heart. And brings them to salvation. Dear brother sisters. God uses. Whom he chooses. How he chooses. Whether it's Ehud. The assassin. Or it's us.

In our service. Towards him. It brings us briefly. To a hero for Israel. We see just finishing off. Our account here. At 27. Down to verse 30. Ehud.

[56 : 54] Escapes. And he goes. And he rallies the troops. And he gives this amazing. Encouragement to them. To the people of Israel. In verse 28. And he said to them.

Follow after me. For Yahweh has given. Your enemies. The Moabites. Into your hand. With the people of Eglon.

His government. His nation. His leaders. In disarray. You can only imagine. The carnage. And chaos. Ehud. The hero. Takes the chance. To lead the people. This left-handed leader.

Of a useless tribe. He now leads the people. And he leads them. Into a guaranteed. Battle. One that. They are guaranteed. To win. It's not just a turn of phrase.

In verse 28. The Lord. Has given your enemies. The Moabites. Into your hand. If you look at the tenses there. It's strange. Isn't it? The battle hasn't happened yet.

[57 : 51] We haven't left our homes yet. So to speak. But Ehud can say quite. Quite triumphantly. Quite sure. That the Lord has given. To be very literal.

Here. You've already won. Go and fight them. You've already won. You will win. They will be destroyed. Utterly destroyed. And so followed.

Eighty years. Of rest. For Israel. Now we know. There's a series ahead of us. So we know. That our rest. Does not last forever. Eighty years of rest.

Is all too short a time. For the Israelites. They will soon be back. To Baal. They will soon be back. To Asheroff. But for now. There's eighty years. Of rest.

If we don't get too distracted. By what takes place. In this story. If we don't get too. Sidetracked. By the. The account.

[58 : 52] Of the fat king. Being assassinated. Which is important. But. As we said at the start. It's not about that. Is it? It's about God. Bringing his plans.

To bear. God rescuing. His people. As he said. He would. Besides. And apart from.

Their failings. And there are many. As we look to the judges. In this book. The various judges. God raises up. Again and again. Every one of these judges. They are pointing forward.

This is no hidden theology. It's clear. As day for us. Isn't it? They are pointing forward. To who? To the final judge. To the coming.

Perfect judge. The coming. Perfect. Rescuer. Of his people. A Benjaminite. Left handed. A useless hero.

[59 : 49] Does he not. Show us. Does he not. Give us a shadow. Of one. About whom will be said. Can anything good. Come out of Nazareth. Our.

Saviour. Our ultimate rescuer. The Lord Jesus Christ. His birth. His. Earthly origins. To then being. The eternal rescuer.

Of his people. We see. Hints of that. And glimmers of that. In the account of Ehud. In Egalon. As we said. In King Egalon.

We see. Embodied for us. Sin. And rebellion. Idol worship. This King. Growing fat. On the evil. Worship of idols.

Growing fat. On the tribute. Of those. He has conquered. A visceral image. Of sin. As it grows. And grows. And feeds. And feeds. Takes all. And gives nothing.

[60 : 51] And this King. For all his power. Is destroyed. By an unassuming. Unassuming. Unknown. Humanly speaking.

Nothing special. Man. He had secured. Rescue for his people. But rescue that lasted.

80 years. When we come to Christ. We come to one. Who secures rescue for his people. That lasts. For how long? Time without end.

For all the evil. You will face in your world. In your life. In your story. For all the evil. You might be facing just now. All the sin. And all the pain. You are facing.

Dear brother. Dear sister. We have a saviour. Who has gone before us. Who does much more. Than kill. Some earthly king. But one. Who has subdued. And taken on himself.

[61 : 46] The full wrath. Of all the sin. That we deserve. To be punished for. Who stepped. Who crushed. Who stamped. On the head. Of a serpent. That is the one we worship.

This evening. That is the one we see. Glimmers and shadows of. In the head. Not 80 years of peace. For his people. But an eternity. Of peace. For his people.

Let's bow our heads. Now. A word of prayer. Lord God. We thank you once more. For the wonderful gift. Of your word. Through it. And then. We can read. Of these accounts.

Of so many years ago. Of these accounts. Of old. Of how you used some. To rescue your people. Again and again. As we find ourselves. Confessing to be a sinful people.

We do not look this evening. To Ehud. We do not look to any human. Around us. Precious name. We look to the. Lord and Savior. Fully man. And fully God.

[62 : 41] The Lord Jesus Christ. Who rescues his people. Eternally. Helped us to find. All our hope. And all our rescue. In him. And him alone. Ask all these things.

For his precious name's sake. Amen. Let's bring our time. To a conclusion. This evening. By singing. Again in sing psalms. This time in Psalm 49.

Sing psalms. In Psalm 49. Sing psalms. Psalm 49. We can sing verses 12. Down to verse 20.

That's on page 65. Psalm 49. On page 65. Verse 12. Man despite his wealth is mortal.

Like the beasts he fades away. Thus the self assured will perish. Though renowned for what they say. Death will feed upon their bodies. Just like sheep they meet their feet.

[63 : 41] In the grave their forms will perish. Far from where they lived in state. And listen to this. But. This is the hope of the Christians here this evening. But the upright ones will rule them.

Once the morning light has shone. From the grave God will redeem me. He will take me for his own. Psalm 49. Verses 12 to 20.

To God's praise. On these wicked wealth has talked. Like a beast he fades away.

Thus the self assured will perish. Glory night for what they say.

Then will be the heart of their bodies. Just like sheep they meet their feet.

[64 : 44] And the grave and force will perish. Far from where they lived in state.

But the upright ones will rule them. Once the morning light has shone.

From the grave God will redeem me. He will give me for his own.

Do not wake before our last night. Though as her children rose the hands.

Of his own. And instead of from state undone. Your Athens. God is earth the ■ of his hands.

[65 : 55] He will remember nothing.

Pastor signed by me. He will let over mediu. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS