

## 14.04 Second Judge, Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- (optional) “Judges” Flash-a-Cards from A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL, ©2002
- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *tribute*: regular giving of required money or goods to a conquering king
- *to occupy*: to keep control over a people by staying in their land
- *fords*: places to cross a body of water

### Scripture: (ESV)

Judges 3:12 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. 13 He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms. 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.

26 Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah. 27 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. 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. 29 And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

### Introduction/Review:

What had God promised Israel if they obeyed? Blessing. What had God promised if Israel disobeyed? Cursing. What did Israel tend to do, obey or disobey? Disobey. What do we tend to do, obey or disobey?

That is a question each person must answer for oneself.

A king from Mesopotamia had conquered and subjected Israel for eight years. Othniel, the first judge, empowered by the Spirit of God, threw off the tyranny of Mesopotamia. Israel had rest from enemies forty years.

## **Story:**

### ***King Eglon***

After Othniel died, Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. How did they do evil? Who or what did they worship? [They worshiped other gods.] This time “the Lord strengthened” Eglon, king of Moab [locate all places mentioned], to war against Israel. Eglon got help from Amalek and Ammon, and together they took the “city of palm trees,” the area where Jericho had been before God made its walls fall down. It appears from the rest of the story that ✓Eglon built some kind of a palace in this region, perhaps near Gilgal, where Israel had first camped when entering the Promised Land.

For eighteen long years Israel served Moab and had to pay tribute to the enemy Moabite king, Eglon.

### ***Judge Ehud***

As in the first cycle, the people finally cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the second judge. He was from the tribe of Benjamin, a left-handed man, as several from that tribe were (Judges 20:16).

Ehud had a plan. Making himself an eighteen-inch, two-sided dagger, he holstered it on his right thigh under his clothes. Then he and others took the tribute or gift money to the king of Moab, Eglon.

After they presented their tribute and left Eglon, Ehud sent home those who had gone with him and turned back to visit the Moabite king again.

Once inside the king’s “summer parlor,” ✓which might have been a room upstairs or on a roof, Ehud said to the king, “I have a secret message for you, O King.”

Ooo! A secret message! ✓Perhaps it was from the God of Israel! Eglon commanded, “Silence! All but Ehud must leave this room.”

When everyone had departed, Ehud came close to the king to tell him the “secret message.” Imperceptibly, he quietly and swiftly moved his left hand to his right thigh and pulled out his dagger. He thrust it into the very fat belly of the king—“There!” Being so fat, Eglon’s body absorbed that dagger way up to the handle. The wound killed Eglon, king of Moab.

Leaving the dagger in the king’s belly, Ehud left through a porch, locked the doors to the summer parlor, and escaped to a ✓wooded area in Ephraim’s territory (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-3-26.html>).

When Ehud had left their king, Eglon’s servants returned to serve their master. Seeing the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, ✓“The king must want some privacy.” So they waited and waited until it seemed embarrassing to wait any longer. When they finally got the key and opened the doors, there was King Eglon—dead on the floor.

### ***Israelite soldiers***

Meanwhile, Ehud ascended the mountain in Ephraim [KJV] and blew a trumpet, a shofar or ram’s horn, to call warriors ✓from far and near to come to him. He said to them, “Follow after me, for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.”

Many men (we are not told how many) responded and followed Ehud’s leadership against the 10,000 Moabite soldiers occupying their land. The strategy was to control the fords of Jordan [locate at the blue

arrow head on the map below] so that ✓the Moabites could not escape back to their country nor get reinforcements from Moab. Controlling the fords, they didn't allow anyone to pass over the Jordan either from Israel or from Moab (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-3-28.html>).

Not intending just to defend the area or to let the Moabites remain in the land, Israel slew 10,000 Moabites whom the Bible describes as “all strong, able-bodied men.” Like King Eglon, ✓they might have been fat, having lived in “the land flowing with milk and honey” for eighteen years.\*

That was the end of the Moabite oppression, and Israel had rest eighty years from its enemies.

This was a dark period in Israel's history. Two judges and two cycles of forsaking God had already taken place. Eleven more judges and cycles would follow. Just think, in their first 300 to 500 hundred years in the Promised Land, the people squandered God's blessing by turning from Him to other gods.

May we be careful to love, serve, and worship the Lord our God with a pure, devoted heart.

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\*[T]he word for “lusty” [KJV] signifies “fat”, living in ease for a long time, and in a plentiful country were grown fat; and, according to Ben Gersom, it signifies rich men, such as had acquired wealth by living in the land of Canaan; or who came over Jordan thither and settled about Jericho, because of the delightfulness of the place, and others were stout and valiant soldiers, whom the king of Moab had placed there to keep the land in subjection he had subdued, and to subdue what remained of it; but they were all destroyed (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-3-29.html>).

#### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:  
“Now this act of Ehud's may justify itself because he had special direction from God to do it, and it was agreeable to the usual method which, under that dispensation, God took to avenge his people of their enemies, and to manifest to the world his own justice. But it will by no means justify any now in doing the like. . . . Christ bade Peter sheathe the sword, and we find not that he bade him draw it again” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/judges/3.html>).

#### **Activities:**

- Play dough: dagger; left hand; ram's horn (shofar)
- Snack: Use sword-shaped plastic toothpicks (if possible) for students to skewer fruits (grapes, strawberries, pineapple chunks, *etc.*). Or serve Bugles<sup>®</sup> a General Mills snack.
- Let students wield (with limitations and supervision) plastic or foam swords with their left-hands.
- If a shofar (ram's horn) is available, allow students to blow it, pursing lips tightly. Disinfect the horn after each student blows it. (The teacher might choose to use this activity to reward students who answer correctly review questions found below.)
- Attempt to do things (drawing, writing, picking up things) with left or non-dominant hands.
- Review questions: (Game: Print either on cardstock (if using a pocket chart) or paper (if using a flannel board) the shofars found below. Paper shofars should be backed with paper towel. Cut out in rectangles. Students who answer questions correctly may place a shofar in the pocket chart or on the flannel board. Or, if you have a real shofar, let students who answer a question correctly blow the horn.)
  1. What country subdued Israel after Othniel died? [Moab.]
  2. Near what former city did Eglon, king of Moab, set up his palace? [Jericho, where the city of palm trees, had been.]

3. What did Ehud and other servants bring to King Eglon? [Tribute and/or gifts.]
4. What weapon did Ehud make? [An eighteen-inch, two-sided sword or dagger.]
5. Where did Ehud conceal his dagger? [In a holster on his right leg under his clothes.]
6. Why did King Eglon dismiss everyone from his room? [Because he wanted to hear the secret message Ehud had.]
7. What did Ehud do to King Eglon? [Stabbed him to death with his dagger.]
8. What did Ehud do when he escaped Eglon's palace? [Went to a mountain in Ephraim and blew a trumpet to call soldiers to him.]
9. How did Ehud keep Moabites from escaping Israel? [Controlled the fords of the Jordan.]
10. How many Moabites were slain by Israel? [10,000.]

**Memory Verse[s]:**

- Judges 2:11, 12: And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. . . . And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger.

**Handwork:**

- Print the last page found below, one for each student. Have students trace their left hands on this page.

**tribute**

**to occupy**

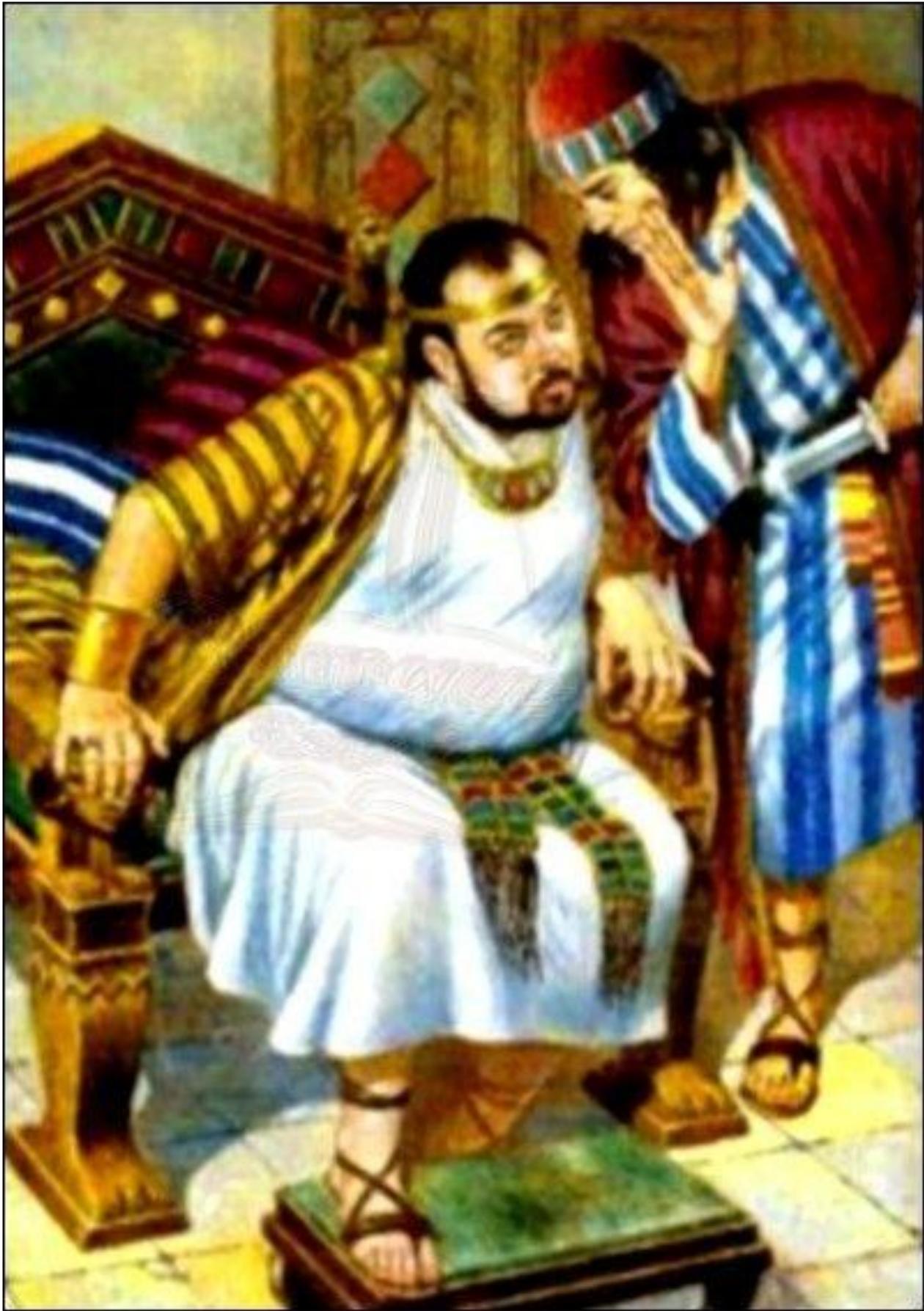
**fords**

# The Judges

-  Moabite invasion
-  Invasions of Midianites and Amalekites into the South and into the Valley of Jezreel
-  Ammonite penetrations into Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah
-  Philistine raid into Judah

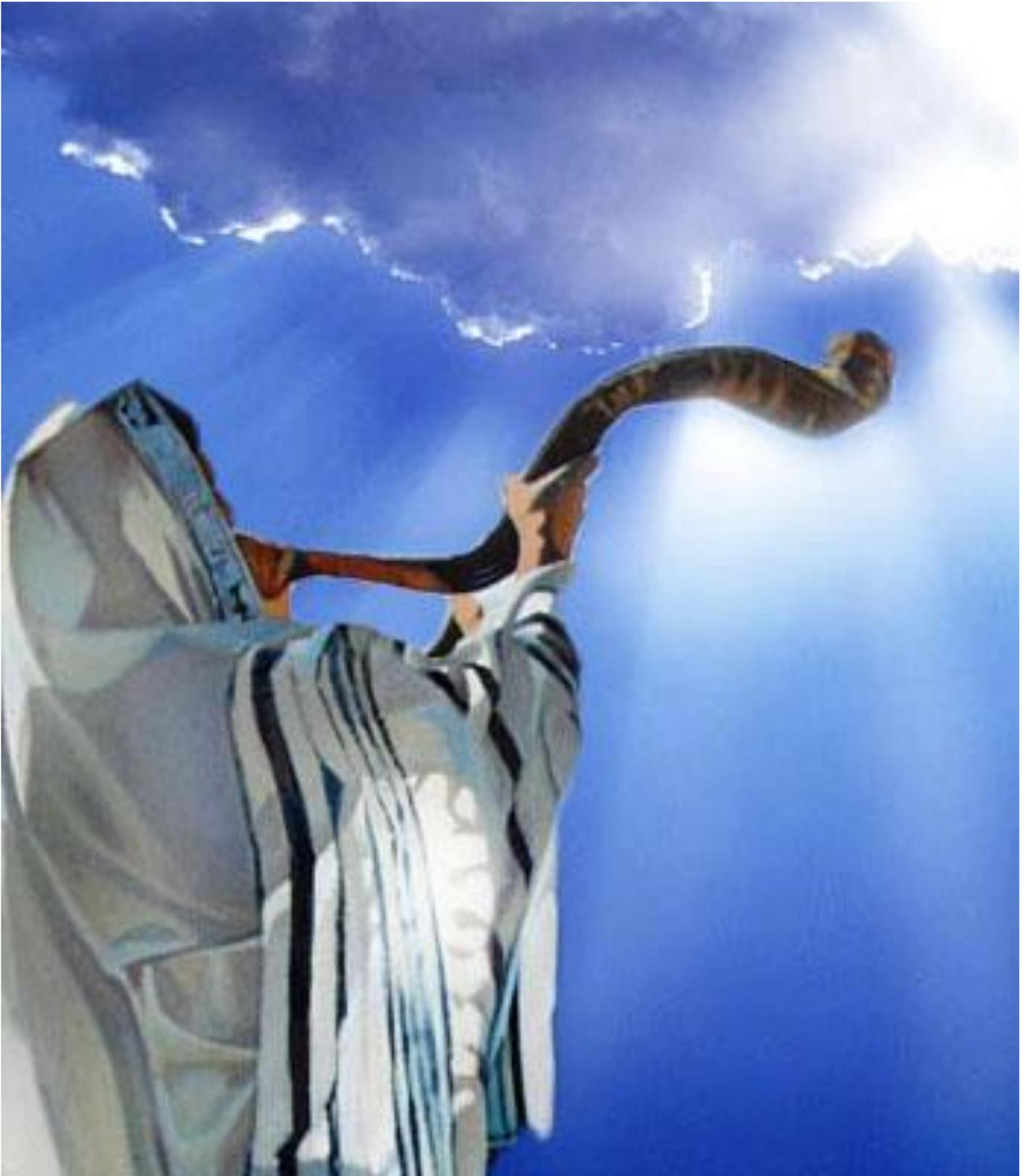
- SAMSON** Major Judges
- TOLA** Other Judges
-  Major battle





<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/7c/b3/b3/7cb3b310ced67f35607196b0419f03bb.jpg>





<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/rrr/files/styles/medium/public/201509/Rosh-Hashanah-shofar-blowing-2.jpg>



The River Jordan (the Fords) by W. Warwick





<https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/b/rosh-hashanah-jewish-new-year-holiday-concept-shofar-horn-traditional-symbol-rosh-hashanah-jewish-new-year-holiday-concept-shofar-121482390.jpg>

Ehud 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; not a man escaped. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years (Judges 3:27–30).

Ehud was a left-handed judge. Trace your left hand.