

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 3

This chapter gives an account of the nations left in Canaan to prove Israel, and who became a snare unto them, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:1-7); and of the servitude of Israel under the king of Mesopotamia for their sins, from which they were delivered by Othniel, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:8-11); and of their subjection to the Moabites, from which they were freed by Ehud, who privately assassinated the king of Moab, and then made his escape, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:12-30); and of the destruction of a large number of Philistines by Shamgar, with an ox goad, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:31).

Ver. 1. *Now these [are] the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them,* etc.] Which are later mentioned, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:3,5);

[even] as many [of Israel] as had not known all the wars of Canaan; those that Joshua, and the people of Israel under him, had with the Canaanites, when they first entered the land and subdued it; being then not born, or so young as not to have knowledge of them, at least not able to bear arms at that time.

Ver. 2. *Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know and teach them war,* etc.] That is, the following nations were left in the land, that the young generations of Israel might by their wars and conflicts with them learn the art of war, and be inured to martial discipline; which, if none had been left to engage with, they had been ignorant of: besides, their fathers in Joshua's time, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, had no need to learn the art of war, for God fought for them; they did not get possession of the land by their own arm, and by their sword, but by the power of God in a miraculous way; but now this was not to be expected, and the Canaanites were left among them to expel, that they might be trained up in the knowledge of warlike affairs, and so be also capable of teaching their children the military art; which they should make use of in obeying the command of God, by driving out the remains of the Canaanites, and not give themselves up to sloth and indolence; though some think that the meaning is, that God left these nations among them, that they might know

what war was, and the sad effects of it; and the difference of fighting with their enemies alone, as other men, and the Lord fighting along with them, and for them, as he did for their fathers:

at least such as before knew nothing thereof; being either unborn, or at an age incapable of bearing arms, or learning the art of war.

Ver. 3. [*Namely*], *five lords of the Philistines*, etc.] The places they were lords of were Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron; (see ^{<0633>}Joshua 13:3); three of these, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, had been taken from them by Judah, since the death of Joshua, (^{<0718>}Judges 1:18); but they soon recovered them again, perhaps by the help of the other two. The Philistines were a people originally of Egypt, but came from thence and settled in these parts, and were here as early as in the times of Abraham, and were very troublesome neighbours to the Israelites in later times; (see ^{<1014>}Genesis 10:14 21:32,33);

and all the Canaanites; these were a particular tribe or nation in the land so called, which inhabited by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan, (^{<0439>}Numbers 13:29); otherwise this is the general name for the seven nations:

and the Sidonians; the inhabitants of the famous city of Sidon, which had its name from the firstborn of Canaan, (^{<0115>}Genesis 10:15);

and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon; on the north of the land of Canaan:

from Mount Baalhermon; the eastern part of Lebanon, the same with Baalgad, where Baal was worshipped:

unto the entering in of Hamath; the boundary of the northern part of the land, which entrance led into the valley between Libanus and Antilibanus; (see ^{<0648>}Numbers 34:8 ^{<0613>}Joshua 11:3 13:5).

Ver. 4. *And they were to prove Israel by them*, etc.] They were left in the land, as to inure them to war, and try their courage, so to prove their faithfulness to God:

to know whether they would hearken to the commandments, of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses; even all the commandments of the Lord delivered to them by Moses, moral, civil, and

ceremonial, and particularly those that concerned the destruction of the Canaanites, their altars, and their idols, (^{<R00>}Deuteronomy 7:1,5).

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites*, etc.] As if they had been only sojourners with them, and not conquerors of them; and dwelt by sufferance, and not as proprietors and owners; such were their sloth and indolence, and such the advantage the inhabitants of the land got over them through it, and through their compliances with them; and this was the case not only of one sort of them, the Canaanites, but of the rest:

the Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites; who all had cities in the several parts of the land, with whom the children of Israel were mixed, and with whom they were permitted to dwell.

Ver. 6. *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons*, etc.] The Israelites intermarried with the inhabitants of the land, contrary to the express command of God, (^{<R03>}Deuteronomy 7:3); whereby they confounded their families, debased their blood, and were ensnared into idolatry, as follows: perhaps to these unlawful marriages, in their first settlement in the land of Canaan, reference is had in (^{<R04>}Ezekiel 16:3), “thy father [was] an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite”; an Amorite marrying a daughter of Israel, and an Israelitish man an Hittite woman:

and served their gods; this was the natural consequence of their intermarriages, which the Lord foresaw, and therefore cautioned them against them, (^{<R05>}Exodus 34:15,16 ^{<R06>}Deuteronomy 7:3,4).

Ver. 7. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*, etc.] Both by marrying with Heathens, and worshipping their gods:

and forgot the Lord their God; as if they had never heard of him, or known him, their Maker and Preserver, who had done so many great and good things for them:

and served Baalim, and the groves; of Baalim, (see ^{<R07>}Judges 2:11); the groves mean either idols worshipped in groves, as Jupiter was worshipped in a grove of oaks, hence the oak of Dodona; and Apollo in a grove of laurels in Daphne: there were usually groves where idol temples were built; and so in Phoenicia, or Canaan, Dido the Sidonian queen built a temple for Juno in the midst of the city, where was a grove of an agreeable shade ^{f38}: so Barthius ^{f39} observes, that most of the ancient gods of the Heathens used

to be worshipped in groves. And groves and trees themselves were worshipped; so Tacitus says ^{f40} of the Germans, that they consecrated groves and forests, and called them by the names of gods. Groves are here put in the place of Ashtaroth, (^{<0013>}Judges 2:13); perhaps the goddesses of that name were worshipped in groves; and if Diana is meant by Astarte, Servius ^{f41} says that every oak is sacred to Jupiter and every grove to Diana; and Ovid ^{f42} speaks of a temple of Diana in a grove. But as they are joined with Baalim, the original of which were deified kings and heroes, the groves may be such as were consecrated to them; for, as the same writer observes ^{f43}, the souls of heroes were supposed to have their abode in groves; (see Gill on "^{<0343>}Exodus 34:13") and (see Gill on "^{<0305>}Deuteronomy 7:5"). It was in this time of defection that the idolatry of Micah, and of the Danites, and the war of Benjamin about the Levite's concubine, happened, though related at the end of the book; so Josephus ^{f44} places the account here.

Ver. 8. *Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,* etc.] Because of their idolatry; (see ^{<0014>}Judges 2:14,20);

and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; or Aramnaharaim; that is, Syria, between the two rivers, which were Tigris and Euphrates; hence the Greek name of this place is as here called Mesopotamia. Josephus ^{f45} calls him king of Assyria, and gives him the name of Chusarthus; and indeed Chushanrishathaim seems to be his whole name, though the Targum makes Rishathaim to be an epithet, and calls him Cushan, the wicked king of Syria; the word is of the dual number, and signifies two wickednesses; which, according to the mystical exposition of the Jews ^{f46}, refers to two wicked things Syria did to Israel, one by Balaam the Syrian, and the other by this Cushan. Mr. Bedford ^{f47} thinks it may be rendered,

“Cushan, king of the two wicked kingdoms;”

the Assyrian monarchy being at this time like two kingdoms, Babylon being the metropolis of the one, and Nineveh of the other; but it is question whether the monarchy was as yet in being. Hillerus ^{f48} makes Cushan to be an Arab Scenite, from (^{<0307>}Habakkuk 3:7); and Rishathaim to denote disquietudes; and it represents him as a man very turbulent, never quiet and easy, and so it seems he was; for not content with his kingdom on the other side Euphrates, he passed over that, and came into Canaan, to subject that to him, and add it to his dominions. Kimchi says that Rishathaim may be

the name of a place, and some conjecture it to be the same with the Rhisina of Ptolemy^{f49}; but it seems rather a part of this king's name, who came and fought against Israel, and the Lord delivered them into his hands:

and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years; became tributaries to him during that space of time, but when that began is not easy to say. Bishop Usher^{f50} places it in A. M. 2591, and before Christ 1413.

Ver. 9. *And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*, etc.] Towards the close of the eight years' bondage, as it may be supposed, groaning under the oppressive taxes laid upon them, and the bondage they were brought into: and

the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel; he heard their cry, and sent them a saviour, whose spirit he stirred up, and whom he qualified for this service:

who delivered them; out of the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, and freed them from his oppressions:

[*even*] *Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother*; the same that took Debir, and married Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, (<0012>Judges 1:12,13); who now very probably was a man in years.

Ver. 10. *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him*, etc.] Moved him to engage in this work of delivering Israel, inspired him with courage, and filled him with every needful gift, qualifying him for it; the Targum interprets it the spirit of prophecy; it seems rather to be the spirit of counsel and courage, of strength and fortitude of body and mind:

and he judged Israel; took upon him the office of a judge over them, and executed it; very probably the first work he set about was to reprove them for their sins, and convince them of them, and reform them from their idolatry, and restore among them the pure worship of God; and this he did first before he took up arms for them:

and he went out to war; raised an army, and went out at the head of them, to fight with their oppressor:

and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim; gave him the victory over him and his army, so that he fell into his hands, became his captive, and perhaps was slain by him.

Ver. 11. *And the land had rest forty years,* etc.] As it should seem from the time of this deliverance; though, according to Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, the eight years' servitude are to be included in them; and Bishop Usher^{f51} reckons these forty years from the rest first settled in the land by Joshua; but the former sense seems best:

and Othniel the son of Kenaz died: not at the end of the forty years; it is not likely he should live so long, but when he died is not certain; Eusebius^{f52} says he judged Israel fifty years.

Ver. 12. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] Fell into idolatry again, which was a great evil in the sight of God, and what they were prone to fall into:

and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel; put it into his heart to invade them, and encouraged him to it, and gave him success; what kings reigned over Moab between Balak and this king we know not: it is a commonly received notion of the Jews, that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon; (see ^{<BOOK>}Ruth 1:4); and it was about this time that Elimelech with his two sons went into Moab, and when many of those things recorded in the book of Ruth were transacted:

because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord; which had greatly provoked him to anger, and was the cause of stirring up the king of Moab against them.

Ver. 13. *And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek,* etc.] Either the Lord gathered them to Eglon, inclined them to enter into a confederacy with him, to assist in the war against Israel; or the king of Moab got them to join with him in it, they being his neighbours, and enemies to Israel, and especially Amalek:

and went and smote Israel; first the two tribes and a half, which lay on that side Jordan Moab did, whom it is reasonable to suppose he would attack first; and having defeated them, he came over Jordan:

and possessed the city of the palm trees; Jericho, as the Targum, which was set with palm trees; (see ^{<OSMB>}Deuteronomy 34:3 ^{<OTOLG>}Judges 1:16); not the city itself, for that was destroyed by Joshua, and not rebuilt until the time of Ahab; but the country, about it, or, as Abarbinel thinks, a city that was near it; here Josephus says^{f53} he had his royal palace; it is probable he built a fort or garrison here, to secure the fords of Jordan, and his own

retreat; as well as to keep up a communication with his own people, and prevent the tribes of the other side giving any assistance to their brethren, if able and disposed to do it.

Ver. 14. *So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.*] Ten years longer than they served the king of Mesopotamia, (~~Q18B~~Judges 3:8), as a severer correction of them for their relapse into idolatry.

Ver. 15. *But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,* etc.] After being long oppressed, and groaning under their burdens, and brought to a sense of their sins, and humiliation for them, they asked forgiveness of God, and deliverance from their bondage; for it is very probable they were until towards the close of those years stupid and hardened, and did not consider what was the reason of their being thus dealt with:

the Lord raised them up a deliverer; another saviour, one that he made use of as an instrument of their deliverance:

Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded; who is described by his parentage, a son of Gera, but who his father was is not known; by his tribe a Benjamite, in which Jericho was, Eglon possessed, and so might be more oppressed than any other part; and therefore the Lord stirred up one of that tribe to be the deliverer; and by his being a lefthanded man, as several of that tribe were, (~~Q18C~~Judges 20:16); though a Benjamite signifies a son of the right hand; and he perhaps was one of those lefthanded Benjamites that fled to the rock Rimmon, as Dr. Lightfoot ^{f54} conjectures, (~~Q18D~~Judges 20:47); for that affair, though there related, was before this: the Septuagint calls him an “ambidexter”, one that could use both hands equally alike; but the Hebrew phrase signifies one that is “shut up in his right hand” ^{f55}; who has not the true use of it, cannot exercise it as his other hand, being weak and impotent, or contracted through disuse, or some disease; or, as Josephus ^{f56} expresses it, who could use his left hand best, and who also calls him a young man of a courageous mind and strong of body, and says he dwelt at Jericho, and was very familiar with Eglon, and who by his gifts and presents had endeared himself to all about the king:

and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab; either their yearly tribute, or rather a gift unto him, to soften him, and reconcile him to them, and make their bondage easier; or to give him

access to him with more confidence and safety, though it does not seem that they knew anything of Ehud's design.

Ver. 16. *But Ehud made him a dagger, which had two edges, of a cubit length*, etc.] A little sword, as Josephus calls it ^{f57}, with two edges, that it might cut both ways, and do the execution he designed by it, and was about half a yard long; which he could the more easily conceal, and use for his purpose:

and he did gird it under his raiment; that it might not be seen, and give occasion of suspicion; this was a military garment, the "sagum", as the Vulgate Latin version, which was coarse, and made of wool, and reached to the ankle, and was buttoned upon the shoulder, and put over the coat ^{f58}; the Septuagint makes use of a word Suidas ^{f59} interprets a coat of mail:

upon his right thigh; whereas a sword is more commonly gird upon the left; though some observe, from various writers, that the eastern people used to gird their swords on their right thigh; or this was done that it might be the less discernible and suspected, and chiefly as being most convenient for him, a lefthanded man, to draw it out upon occasion.

Ver. 17. *And he brought a present unto Eglon king of Moab*, etc.] Accompanied by two servants, as Josephus says ^{f60}, and who doubtless bore the presents; for that there were such with him that did is clear from (~~QUBIS~~ Judges 3:18); nor can it be thought that so great a personage as a judge in Israel should go alone and carry a present in his own hands; though it is possible, when come to the king of Moab, he might take it from his servants, and deliver it to him with his own hands:

and Eglon [was] a very fat man: and so the less active, and unable to decline and avoid the stroke, he might see, when about to be given him.

Ver. 18. *And when he had made an end to offer the present*, etc.] Had delivered the several things contained in it, and very probably made a speech to the king in the name of the people of Israel from whom he brought it:

he sent away the people that bare the present; not the servants of Eglon that introduced him, as if they assisted in bringing in the present to the king; for over them he could not have so much power as to dismiss them at pleasure; but the children of Israel that came along with him, and carried the present for him: these he dismissed, not in the presence of the king of

Moab, but after he had taken his leave of him, and when he had gone on some way in his return home; and this he did for the greater secrecy of his design, and that he might when he had finished it the more easily escape alone, and be without any concern for or care of the safety of others.

Ver. 19. *But he himself turned again from the quarries that [were] by Gilgal*, etc.], For so far he accompanied the men that came with him. These quarries were places where they dug stones and hewed them, according to the Targum, and most Jewish writers; but some render the word “engravings”, and understand them of inscriptions engraved on pillars here, which remained from the times of Seth the son of Adam; of which see more on (⁽¹⁰⁸⁵⁾Judges 3:26); but according to the Vulgate Latin, and other versions, graven images or idols are meant, which the king of Moab set up here in contempt of the Israelites, it being a place where the ark remained some time, and circumcision had been performed, (⁽¹⁰⁸⁵⁾Joshua 5:3); or in order to draw them into idolatry, those idols perhaps being made of the twelve stones they had set up there, (⁽¹⁰⁸⁵⁾Joshua 4:20); or rather in honour of his gods, to invoke their assistance when he first entered into the land, or by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the subduing of it: and this it is thought by some stirred up the spirit of Ehud, and caused him to turn back, resolving to avenge this profaneness:

and said; when he came to the palace of the king of Moab, and into his presence:

I have a secret errand unto thee, O king; which he had forgot when with him before, as he might pretend; or something new had occurred unto him to acquaint him of, and which required privacy:

who said, keep silence; that is, the king of Moab said so either to Ehud, to be silent until he had sent out his servants that were about him, that they might not hear the secret; or to a person or persons that were speaking to him, whom he bid to desist and depart, it being his pleasure to hear Ehud before them; so Ben Gersom; but the former sense rather seems best:

and all that stood by him went out from him; his servants, his courtiers that were waiting upon him, or such as were admitted into his presence, to have audience of him, and deliver their messages, or make their petitions to him.

Ver. 20. *And Ehud came unto him*, etc.] Somewhat nearer him than he was before; it seems probable that Eglon retired from the presence chamber, where he received company, into his summer parlour; which was smaller

and more private, and in which he had used to be alone, as follows, and whither Ehud went in unto him, as he directed him:

and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone: into which he was wont to go and sit alone, for the sake of coolness and refreshment in the hot season of the year, which it seems it now was; a room this was, in which, as Kimchi and others observe, were many windows to let in air to cool and refresh; or it was in such a part of the palace that was cool, and sheltered from the heat of the sun; (see ^{<ORIS>}Amos 3:15);

and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee; which was to kill him; and undoubtedly he was sent of God on this errand to him: whether it be rendered a “word” or “thing” from God, as it signifies both, it was true, and no lie; for it was the Lord that spoke to him by an impulse on his spirit, and the thing was from the Lord he was to do, for nothing less could have justified him in such an action; and therefore this instance can be no warrant for the assassination of princes; as Ehud did not this of himself, but of the Lord, so neither did he do it as a private man, but as a judge of Israel. Josephus ^{f61} says, he told him that he had a dream at the order of God to declare unto him; but for this there is no warrant; however it seems pretty plain that his view in making mention of the name of God, and of Elohim, a name given to false gods as well as the true, rather than Jehovah, was to strike his mind with awe and reverence, and cause him to rise from his seat, that he might the better thrust him with his dagger; and it had the desired effect:

and he arose out of [his] seat; in reverence of God, from whom he expected to receive a message; this he did, though in his mind a blind ignorant idolater; in his body fat, corpulent, and unwieldy; and in his office a king, and a proud and tyrannical man. The above writer says, that, for joy at the dream he was to hear, he rose from his throne.

Ver. 21. *And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh,* etc.] Being, as before observed, a lefthanded man; (^{<ORIS>}Judges 3:15), and this he could the better do, without being taken notice of by the king, who, if he saw him move his left hand, would have no suspicion of his going to draw a dagger with it, and which also was hidden under his raiment, (^{<ORIS>}Judges 3:16);

and thrust it into his belly; Josephus ^{f62} says into his heart; it is certain the wound was mortal, and must have been in a part on which, life depended.

Ver. 22. *And the haft went in, after the blade*, etc.] The handle of the dagger, as well as the blade; so strong and violent was the thrust, he determining to do his business effectually;

and the fat closed upon the blade; being an excessive fat man, the wound made by the dagger closed up at once upon it, through the fat:

so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; being not able to take hold of the haft or handle, that having slipped in through the fat after the blade, so that he was obliged to leave it in him:

and the dirt came out; the margin of our Bibles is, “it came out at the fundament”; that is, the dagger did, the thrust being so strong and vehement; but that is not so likely, the dagger being so short, and Eglon a very fat man. The Targum is,

“his food went out;”

which was in his bowels; but as the wound was closed up through fat, and the dagger stuck fast in it, it could not come out that way: rather therefore this is to be understood of his excrements, and of their coming out at the usual place, it being common for persons that die a violent death, and indeed others, to purge upon it; some, as Kimchi observes, interpret it of the place where the guards were, the guard room, through which Ehud went out, but that is expressed in another word in (^{<OR2>}Judges 3:23); the Syriac and Arabic versions read, “he went out in haste”, that is, Ehud.

Ver. 23. *Then Ehud went forth through the porch*, etc.] Which the Targum interprets by “exedra”, a place, as Kimchi, where there were many seats, either for the people to sit in while waiting to have admittance into the presence of the king, or where the guards sat, and may be called the guard room; through this Ehud passed with all serenity and composure of mind imaginable, without the least show of distress and uneasiness in his countenance, being fully satisfied that what he had done was right, and according to the will of God:

and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them; joined the doors of the parlour, as the Targum, the two folds of the door, shut them close together upon Eglon within the parlour, and bolted them within, or

drew the bolt on the inside, which he was able to do with a key for that purpose; of which see more on (^{<00B>}Judges 3:25); and which it is probable he took away along with him; this must be understood as done before he went through the porch, and therefore should be rendered, “when” or “after he had shut the doors”, etc. ^{f63}; wherefore in the Vulgate Latin version this clause is put first.

Ver. 24. *When he was gone out, his servants came*, etc.] When Ehud was gone through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual:

and when they saw that behold the doors of the parlour [were] locked; which they supposed were done by the king himself with inside, having no suspicion of Ehud:

they said, surely, or “perhaps”, as Noldius ^{f64} renders it,

he covereth his feet in his summer chamber; that is, was easing nature; and, as the eastern people wore long and loose garments, when they sat down on such an occasion, their feet were covered with them; or they purposely gathered them about their feet to cover them, and so this became a modest expression for this work of nature, (see ^{<00B>}1 Samuel 24:3); though some think that in that place, and also in this, is meant lying down to sleep; and that Eglon’s servants supposed that he had laid himself down on his couch in his summer chamber to take sleep, when it was usual to cover the feet with long garments, to hide those parts of nature which otherwise might be exposed; and it must be owned that this seems more agreeable to a summer parlour than the former, and better accounts for the servants waiting so long as they did; and Josephus ^{f65} is express for it, that his servants thought he had fallen asleep. Indeed, the Jews in later times used the phrase in the first sense ^{f66}, which seems to be taken from hence.

Ver. 25. *And they tarried until they were ashamed*, etc.] And knew not what to think of it, or what methods to take to be satisfied of the truth of the matter, and what should be the meaning of the doors being kept locked so long:

and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; this was what surprised them, and threw them into this confusion of mind, that they knew

not what course to take for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, and yet wondered the doors were not opened for so long a time:

therefore they took a key and opened [them]; this is the first time we read of a key, which only signifies something to open with; and the keys of the ancients were different from those of ours; they were somewhat like a crooked sickle ^{f67}, which they put in through a hole in the door, and with it could draw on or draw back a bolt, and so could lock or unlock with inside, (see ^{<2184>}Song of Solomon 5:4,5); and at this day the keys in the eastern countries are unlike ours. Chardin ^{f68} says, that a lock among the eastern people is like a little harrow, which enters half way into a wooden staple, and the key is a wooden handle with points at the end of it, which are pushed into the staple, and so raise this little harrow:

and, behold, their lord [was] fallen dead on the earth; lay prostrate on the floor of the parlour, dead.

Ver. 26. *And Ehud escaped while they tarried*, etc.] While the servants of the king of Moab tarried waiting for the opening of the doors of the parlour, this gave him time enough to make his escape, so as to be out of the reach of pursuers; or else the sense is, that even when they had opened the doors, and found the king dead, while they were in confusion at it, not knowing what to ascribe it to, the dagger being enclosed in the wound, and perhaps but little blood, if any, issued out, being closed up with fat, and so had no suspicion of his being killed by Ehud; but rather supposing it to be an accidental fall from his seat, and might call in the physicians to examine him, and use their skill, if there were any hopes of recovery; all which prolonged time, and facilitated the escape of Ehud:

and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped to Seirath; he got beyond the quarries, which were by Gilgal, which shows that it could not be at Jericho where the king of Moab was, as Josephus thinks, but either in his own country beyond Jordan, though no mention is made of Ehud's crossing Jordan, or however some place nearer the fords of Jordan; since Gilgal, from whence he returned, and whither he came again after he had killed the king of Moab, lay on that side of Jericho which was towards Jordan; and this Seirath he escaped to was in or near the mountain of Ephraim, as appears from (^{<0027>}Judges 3:27); but of it we have no account elsewhere; but it is thought by some learned men ^{f69} to be the place where Seth's pillars stood, and they to be the engravings here spoken of, which we translate "quarries": the words of Josephus ^{f70} are, that the posterity of

Seth, who very much studied astronomy, having heard that Adam foretold the destruction of the universe at one time by fire, and at another by water, erected two pillars, one of stone, and the other of brick, on which they inscribed their inventions (in astronomy), that they might be preserved, and which remain to this day in the land of Siriad; but this account of Josephus seems to be taken from a fabulous relation of Manetho, the Egyptian, and is abundantly confuted by Dr. Stillingfleet^{f71}. Jarchi interprets this of Seirath, a thick wood or forest, the trees of which grew as thick as the hair on a man's head, and so a proper place to escape to, and hide in: it may be it was the woody part of the mount Ephraim, (see ~~417B~~ Joshua 17:18).

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when he was come,* That is, to Seirath, (~~403B~~ Judges 3:26), in the tribe of Ephraim:

that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim; which being an high mountain, the sound of the trumpet was heard afar off; and if Ehud's design was known to the Israelites, what he intended to do, this might be the token agreed on, should he succeed, to call them together, (see ~~281B~~ Jeremiah 31:6);

and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them; being there assembled together, and which might be the place before appointed for their rendezvous, and where and when he took the command of them, and went before them as their general.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto them, follow after me,* etc.] This he said to encourage them, putting himself at the head of them showing himself ready to expose his own life, if there was any danger:

for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands; which he concluded from the success he had had in cutting off the king of Moab which had thrown the Moabites into great confusion and distress, and from an impulse on his mind from the Lord, assuring him of this deliverance:

and they went down after him: from the mountain of Ephraim:

and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab; where the river was fordable, and there was a passage into the country of Moab, which lay on the other side Jordan; this they did to prevent the Moabites, which were in the land of Israel, going into their own land upon this alarm, and those in the land of Moab from going over to help them:

and suffered not a man to pass over; neither out of Israel into Moab, nor out of Moab into Israel.

Ver. 29. *And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men*, etc.] Who had been sent into the land of Israel to keep it in subjection, or had settled themselves there for their better convenience, profit, and pleasure; it is very probable there were some of both sorts:

all lusty, and all men of valour; the word for “lusty” 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:

and there escaped not a man; for there being no other way of getting into the land of Moab but at the fords of Jordan they fell into the hands of the Israelites possessed of them, as they made up unto them.

Ver. 30. *So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel*, etc.] Or the Moabites were broken, as the Targum, that is, their forces in the land of Israel; for the land of Moab itself was not subdued and brought into subjection to the Israelites; but they were so weakened by this stroke upon them, that they could not detain the Israelites under their power any longer:

and the land had rest fourscore years; eighty years, which, according to Ben Gersom, are to be reckoned from the beginning of their servitude, and that the rest properly was but sixty two years, and so both rest and servitude were eighty years, as R. Isaiah; and, according to Abarbinel, the rest was from the death of Othniel; and our Bishop Usher^{f72} reckons this eightieth year from the former rest restored to it by Othniel; but others^{f73} are of opinion that there were several judges at a time in several parts of the land, and that the land was at rest in one part when there was war in another; and so that at this time it was only the eastern part of the land that had rest, while the western parts were distressed by the Philistines, and the northern parts by Jabin king of Canaan, as in (^{<OR>}Judges 3:31 4:1).

Ver. 31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath*, etc.] That is, after the death of Ehud, when the people of Israel were in distress again from

another quarter, this man was raised up of God to be a judge and deliverer of them; but who he was, and who his father, and of what tribe, we nowhere else read:

which slew of the Philistines six hundred men; who invaded the land, and came in an hostile manner into it; or rather, as it seems from (^{<0706>}Judges 5:6); they entered as a banditti of thieves and robbers, who posted themselves in the highways, and robbed travellers as they passed, so that they were obliged to leave off travelling, or go through bypaths, and not in the public road; and this man, who seems to have been called from the plough to be a judge of Israel, as some among the Romans were called from thence to be dictators and deliverers of them from the Gauls:

with an ox goad; which he had used to push on his oxen with at ploughing, cleared the country of them, and with no other weapon than this slew six hundred of them, either at certain times, or in a body together; which is no ways incredible, being strengthened and succeeded by the Lord, any more than Samson's slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, (^{<0715>}Judges 15:15). So Lycurgus is said to put to flight the forces of Bacchus with an ox goad ^{f74} which is said to be done near Carmel, a mountain in Judea, which makes it probable that this is hammered out of the sacred history; or that Shamgar and Lycurgus are the same, as Bochart conjectures ^{f75}. The ox goad, as now used in those parts, is an instrument fit to do great execution with it, as Mr. Maundrell ^{f76}, who saw many of them, describes it; on measuring them, he found them to be eight feet long, at the bigger end six inches in circumference, at the lesser end was a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end a small spade, or paddle of iron, for cleansing the plough from the clay:

and he also delivered Israel, from those robbers and plunderers, and prevented their doing any further mischief in the land, and subjecting it to their power, and so may very properly be reckoned among the judges of Israel; but how long he judged is not said, perhaps his time is to be reckoned into the eighty years of rest before mentioned; or, as Abarbinel thinks, into the forty years of Deborah, the next judge; and who also observes, that their Rabbins say, Shamgar judged but one year.