

The Book of Judges

Lesson 3

Study notes

"Shamgar"

Instructor: Dr. Douglas Woody

Text: Judges 3:31 & Judges 5:6-7.

Looking at Shamgar reminds me a story I heard the late Dr. Ed McAbee tell, He told of a burning barn once and the man standing near had only one bucket of water in his hand, so he decided to throw his bucket of water on the burning barn, and thought within himself I can keep my bucket of water and say it's no use, or I can throw my bucket of water on the fire and know that I did what I could to put out the flame. We are given a choice to let God use what we have and see his mighty hand at work, or we can say what little we have is of no use and miss the blessing of the Lord. It can certainly be said of Shamgar he let God use what he had.

We David making use of this kind of faith in I Samuel 17:45-47.

Introduction: Shamgar was the Son of Anath, judge of Israel after Ehud, and immediately before Barak (Judges 5:6,8; 3:31). Probably a Naphtalite, as Beth Anath was of Naphtali. This tribe took a foremost part in the war with Jabin (Judges 4:6,10; 5:18). The tributary Canaanites (Judges 1:33) combined with the Philistines against Israel, rendering the highways unsafe and forcing Israelite travelers into byways to escape notice. The villages were forsaken, and as in later times the oppressors disarmed Israel of all swords and spears (Judges 4:3; I Sam. 13:19,22). With an ox goad, his only weapon (compare Judges 15:15-16, an undesigned coincidence marking genuineness; I Sam 17:47,50; spiritually II Cor. 10:4; I Cor 1:27) he slew 600 Philistines, thereby giving Israel deliverance from oppressors for a time. So, he prepared the way for Deborah and Barak's more decisive blow. The inadequacy of the instrument renders Jehovah's might the more evident (Fausset's Bible Dictionary).

What is significant about Shamgar was the weapon that he used. An _____ was strong pole about eight feet long. At one end was a sharp point for prodding the oxen and the other end a spade for cleaning the dirt of the plow.

The probable reason for his weapon was that the Philistines had forbidden the blacksmith to make _____ and _____.

1Samuel 13:19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears:

Note: Shamgar gave what he had to the Lord, and the Lord used it. I'm reminded of a song; "Little is much when God is in it."

Joseph Parker said, "What is a feeble instrument in the hands of one man is a mighty instrument in the hands of another, simply because the spirit of that other burns with holy determination to accomplish the work that has to be done."

We cannot tell from the Bible if Shamgar killed all of the 600 Philistines at once, or if the 600 is a cumulative total. What we do know is that he killed all 600 and God gets the glory.

Since we have so few words in Scripture about Shamgar we get the impression that he was a man of _____ faith in the Lord. To stand his ground against the enemy, having only a farmer's tool instead of a soldier's full military equipment, marks Shamgar out as a brave man with steadfast courage.

Some lesson goals:

1. Gain an understanding of the conditions of Israel at the time Shamgar judged Israel.
2. We'll see an unusual way of which God used Shamgar to deliver Israel.
3. We can learn some biblical principles about a life of faith in the Lord.

I. Shamgar's Realization (Faith Can't Sit Still).

A. The time of domination by the enemy.

They were afraid of the Philistines, taking away their grain, their cattle. "They were hopelessly defeated" It was in this time of hopelessness that God moved in and helped them. That is when God intervenes, when we've come to the end of ourselves. Jesus didn't come to "be ministered to but to minister" and as long as we're trying to help Him, we'll never see His strong arm of ministering, delivering power.

B. The times of desperation is when God likes to take over.

When we've come to the end of ourselves and confess that there is nothing that we can do unless our God bares His arm of deliverance.

C. The time of desperation is when God moved in and raised up "Shamgar."

Why did God use Shamgar?

Here are some reasons why God could not have used Shamgar.

1. No Special _____ — He never had one single day of military training.
2. No Special _____.
3. No Special _____.
4. No Special Position — Religiously, Politically, He was not a man with any royal blood in his veins.
5. Just a plain old ox driver — Simple, poor farmer, a hayseed who broke and drove a yoke of oxen.

II. Shamgar's Resolve. (Faith Can't be Satisfied).

A. Why did God use Shamgar?

1. His was not a _____ discontentment. The Bible teaches us that as long as we have food and raiment for us to be content.

2. His was a _____ discontentment.

His people were defeated. There was a time when God opened the Red Sea, rained manna down from heaven, gave them water out of the rock, a time when the walls of Jericho came tumbling down, and a

brazen serpent healed the people.

There were no more shouts in the camp, no glory —All they had was stories of what God had done but nothing was happening now.

He realized the reason they were content was because he was contented. He became sick when he himself was so cowed, whipped and humiliated. He became enraged when he saw the wheat of his neighbor carried off. When he saw his cattle driven away to become the food of the enemies, he couldn't take it anymore. The sight made him clench his fists. Now there was some hope for him! It's bad to be whipped, but to be content to remain so is infinitely worse

Note: Consider examples in Scripture where God used people who became discontented.

1. Moses-God's people in Egypt's bondage.
2. Joshua- on the wrong side of the Jordan river.
3. Nehemiah-and the ruins of the city walls and gates.
4. David-and the oppression of the Philistines.

We learn the greater the pressure-the greater the deliverance-the greater the bondage-the greater the victory.

III. Shamgar's Reward (Faith Can be Successful).

Shamgar's faith is seen because of the difficulties he faced and the circumstances he was living in. These do not determine what you do or can do, but they reveal what you really are. "Under the Circumstances" —Illustration —Mule in the well — A farmer had a sick mule that he needed to dispose of, and also an old well that needed to be filled up. He decided to take care of both problems at the same time by throwing the mule into the well and then piling dirt on top of him. As the dirt would hit the mule's back, he would shake it off and walk on it to pack it down. When the well was completely filled with dirt, the mule simply walked out!

Anybody can be a "Fair Weather Christian" but when circumstances and difficulties come, they reveal what you really are.

A. Faith Moved Shamgar to Make a Start.

1. *He may have said, "I may go home tonight without a bit of bread but I will at least carry some scars to show I tried."*
2. *He may have said, "I may not get home at all, but at least they'll know I didn't die a coward."*

B. Faith Made Him a Weapon. The simplicity of his weapon (ox-goad) has such power in the hands of God.

Shamgar had rather die fighting than die _____.

C. Faith Mastered a Victory for Shamgar.

I don't know how he did it but he gave God all he had and the best he had.

Conclusion: When we are living by faith; we know that faith does not wait for an easier time. We must believe we are here for such a time as this and God still honors the faith as of a grain of mustard seed.