

Judges 3:31

SHAMGAR

Introduction:

1. Shamgar is one of six judges about whom little information is given in Scripture.
2. In fact, he is mentioned in only two verses in the Bible, both in Judges.
3. Yet, in these brief statements there are great and powerful lessons to be learned.

I. The Facts about Shamgar

- A. His name is not Hebrew.
 1. It is probable that Shamgar was a Canaanite (Gentile) who converted to Judaism after Israel conquered the land.
 2. If this is the case, what an amazing story it is!
 3. Not only did he “change religions,” but Shamgar also went to battle against his former allies and friends to defend the people of God.
 4. If he were a Jew whose parents gave him a Gentile name, then we have some insight into the kind of family that he came from.
 5. Either way, Shamgar stands out as a man of faith among a people of disobedience.
- B. His father’s name, Anath, is connected to the Canaanites’ goddess of war, Anat.
 1. It is possible that Shamgar was born in the town of Beth-anath and he was a son of the town (Joshua 15:59).
 2. Or, could it be that when he was born his parents named him in honor of the goddess of war?
- C. He was a mighty warrior with an unconventional weapon.
 1. Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad.
 - a. The ox goad was a common tool used by Israelite farmers.
 - b. It was a pole about 8 feet long and about 6 inches in circumference.
 - c. One end was sharpened to a point (or was fitted with an iron spike) and used to prod oxen as they pulled a plow.
 - d. At the other end was a spade or small paddle (usually of iron) that was used to remove mud and clay from the plow.
 2. The number 600 may refer to one decisive battle or to a cumulative total over a period of time.
- D. Thus, Shamgar delivered Israel from her oppressors.

II. The Faith of Shamgar

- A. Shamgar trusted in God to give him victory.
 1. According to Judges 5:6, the Israelites were unable to use or travel by the roads in the land.
 2. Instead, they had to walk in hiding on the byways.
 3. This indicates that the Philistines were, in essence, an occupying force in the land.
 4. It is possible that they had removed all weapons from the Israelites (cf. Judges 5:8; 1 Samuel 13:19-22).
 5. So, Shamgar fought with what he had in his hand.
 6. He understood that it was not the weapon that was his means of deliverance; rather, it was his God.

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- B. Samson slew 1,000 men with the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15).
 - C. David defeated Goliath with a sling and a stone (1 Samuel 17:45-50).
 - D. Jonathan defeated the host of the Philistine with just his armor bearer (1 Samuel 14:6-7, 13-16).
 - E. Moses worked miracles with just a rod (Exodus 4:1-5).
- III. What Is In Your Hand?
- A. What has God given you (Luke 19:12-26)?
 - B. Have we hidden our talents in a napkin?
 - 1. He did not want to lose it, so he hid it in a napkin.
 - 2. He did not want to dirty it, so he hid it in a napkin.
 - 3. He did not want to use it, so he hid it in a napkin.
 - C. Consider the terrible sins committed by this servant of God.
 - 1. He did not use what God had given him.
 - 2. He would not let God use what He had given him.
 - 3. He allowed fear to cripple his service to God.
 - 4. He allowed a misunderstanding of God to hinder him from his duty. {*The word "austere" means, "rough, severe, harsh."*}
 - D. God can do great things through the simplest of means (reap where He has not sown). [Cf. Isaiah 55:11]
 - E. So, what is in your hand?
 - 1. A pen – to send a card or a note
 - 2. A phone – to encourage or help
 - 3. A prayer
 - 4. A songbook
 - 5. A tract
 - 6. A Bible
 - F. Will we learn to trust God as Shamgar did – to use what He has given us to serve Him and know that He will give the increase?

Conclusion:

- 1. Othniel was an old man – at least in his 80's.
- 2. Ehud was a left-handed man from Benjamin – possibly handicapped.
- 3. Shamgar was a Gentile farmer with no weapon but an ox goad.
- 4. Deborah was a woman!
- 5. Do you think God can use you?