

SHAMGAR
Text: Judges 3:31

INTRO: The subject of our study is Shamgar, an obscure individual who appeared on the scene during the time of the judges & delivered Israel from Philistine oppression.

I. THE NATURE OF THE PHILISTINE OPPRESSION.

- A. Israel had been disarmed. It was the practice of the Philistines to disarm their enemies when they defeated them.

READ I SAMUEL 13:19-21; JUDGES 5:6-9

- B. Israel's villages were forsaken.
C. Her highways were deserted.
D. Almost certainly her crops & cattle had been destroyed or confiscated.
E. She had turned from God to worship the false gods of the surrounding nations.
F. Israel needed deliverance.

II. JUST AS THE PICTURE SEEMED DARKEST, GOD RAISED UP A DELIVERER--SHAMGAR, THE SON OF ANATH.

- A. Repeatedly, Israel would forsake God, go into oppression, cry out to God, & He would raise up a deliverer.

READ JUDGES 3:9, 15, 31

- B. Shamgar came from obscurity & soon passed into oblivion, but for a brief period of time, he was **the** hope and comfort of Israel.
C. By his faithful service, he secured a place for himself in the Divine record--and in the Divine reward.

III. SHAMGAR'S QUALIFICATIONS.

- A. Negative.
1. Not a professional soldier.

2. Not a scribe or military tactician.
3. Evidently a farmer, a driver of oxen.

B. Positive: Had at least 3 things going for him.

1. He possessed what one writer referred to as a spirit of noble discontent. He was not willing to settle for Philistine oppression. Very unlike those Israelites mentioned in **JUDGES 15:11-13**.

a. Most discontent is NOT noble. Most discontent is sinful.

i. based on selfishness, jealousy.
Ford/Lincoln; Timex/Rolex

ii. based on restlessness, desire to be constantly entertained, amused, pampered & coddled.

b. But in the Spiritual realm & in regard to our relationship with God we should never be content to fall short. The prodigal sinned by wasting his substance in riotous living. He would've compounded that sin by being content to remain in that condition.

c. Some have not obeyed the gospel. Tragic. Some are becoming content with that condition. Drastically more tragic! What have you gained of lasting value by rejecting Christ? You are being cheated every day. That's sad. But sadder still, you may be becoming content to be cheated.

d. "I'm satisfied with just a cottage below..." Some Christians don't like that song, think it's too materialistic. I understand their protest, but don't agree. When Jesus wanted His apostles to catch a

glimpse of the splendor & value & glory of heaven He said, "In My Father's house..." When He wanted John to know something of heaven's beauty & splendor & worth, He sent Him a vision of gold & precious stones & fruitful trees & sparkling waters. I don't suppose those things were meant to be applied literally, but the only way I can identify with heaven at all is to compare it to something of which I know the beauty, the value, the desirability. And I want it! I have no reason to suspect that there will be different degrees or different rewards in heaven, but if there are, I would like the best heaven has to offer. I can be content with just a cottage on earth--but I want to be a full participant in all the blessings of heaven. I think that's what the hymn writer was trying to say, & if so, I agree fully with him.

- e. We must learn to be content with the blessings God bestows upon us, even if others seem to have more--but we must NEVER be content to settle for less than wants us to have. Shamgar was not content to settle for Philistine oppression & slavery.
2. Shamgar was a man of faith. No doubt He was as aware as any man of the difficulties that abounded in Israel, but by faith he could see beyond those difficulties.
- a. He believed in God.
 - b. He believed in the willingness of God to use men to accomplish His will. He had Joseph, Moses, Joshua, etc.

- c. But most important, he believed God could use him.
- 3. He did what he could with what he had.
 - a. Negative: no sword, no spear, no chariot, no dagger, no slingshot...
 - b. Positive: Ox goad in his hand, God in his heart. The Philistines had read weapons, chariots if iron. Were well fed, furnished with protective clothing, trained in military preparedness. They numbered 600. Shamgar was a farmer, a plow boy with a sharpened stick.

IV. HE ALSO DELIVERED ISRAEL.

- A. Like Moses, EX 4:2.
- B. Mary, sister of Lazarus, Mark 14:8.
- C. Little boy in John 6 (5 barley loaves, 2 fish)
- D. **UN**like Felix, Acts 24:25.

NOTE: From a logical viewpoint, Shamgar did not have a chance. There's no way a farmer with an ox goad could defeat 600 armed Philistine soldiers--but by making himself & his possessions available to God, Shamgar was able to do it.

Compare the lame man, John 5:5-9.

CONCLUSION: Would you also step out in faith? If you have never obeyed the gospel, stop cheating yourself out of a right relationship with God & a heavenly inheritance. If you are a Christian, but have been holding out on God, take that step of faith. Give Him your whole heart; put yourself & your possessions at His disposal. Let it be said, "He/She has done what he/she could."

Exton, PA, February 11, 1990

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 1, 1991

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 9, 1997