

Judges Chapter 10 Commentary

1 ¶ "And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir."

Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, was the last Judge we studied about that was appointed by God. Abimelech, Gideon's son, rises up in self proclamation and promoted himself to king, which brought about a great turmoil of unrest and infighting within Israel. Now, we read of Tola, a man of Issachar, who is a God appointed Judge. We know this because God gave Israel twenty-three years of peace under his leadership.

I point out here that those judges that reigned in times of peace do not have much written of them. They simply reigned for a period of time, and they have no conflicts, or conquest, to be written about. Thus, their inclusion in history is very short. The same is true of those who had wars and unrest, when the enemy has been conquered, they reigned and then died. Peacetime history is very short.

3 "And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. 4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon."

Next, we have Jair, another God appointed judge, who judged Israel twenty-two years and died. After Gideon's death, Israel had several years of infighting. Under Tola and Jair, Israel has forty-five years of peace. A new generation is now coming on the scene. They will be like the new generations before them. They will turn from God to idolatry.

Another reminder to us of the importance of teaching our children about:

- Salvation by grace is the only way to heaven and immortal glory, and it was made possible, and is possible, only by and through Jesus Christ.
- The King James bible and its inerrancy.
- The need to follow God's commandment and be in the assembled church, where you can learn the truths of God.
- The need to learn to live a Christian life, and by the grace of God be a true Christian.

We prepare for war in times of peace. If we do not arm our children with the truth of God, they will grow up under the influence of the demonic world, in which we live, and they too, like Israel, will turn from God to idolatry.

6 ¶ "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. 7 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. 8 And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. 9 Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed."

Do you remember us telling you; Israel was disobedient to God, in the two- and one-half tribes that settled on the wrong side of Jordan? Now, we see that being in the wrong place is having diverse consequences. These two and one-half tribes are now conquered by the enemies, and an invasion into the land of promise is launched.

For eighteen years the Ammonites had oppressed the Israelites who lived on the wrong side of Jordan. Why was Israel suddenly sore distressed? The Ammonites are beginning to infiltrate the land of promise, and Israel sees that they may lose their God given habitation.

The lesson for us is to remember; God may grant us what we ask and desire, even if it is against his will; but we can rest assured that there will be a consequence to be suffered. Why? Because our will, if it is not aligned with God's will, is in conflict with God. There is always a consequence of going against the will of God. We are told of this in scripture in: *Isa 1:19-20; 19 "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."* We see this happening to Israel in this chapter.

10 ¶ "And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. 11 And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? 12 The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. 13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. 14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."

Israel, in their distress, cries unto God for deliverance from their enemies. God gives Israel a history lesson, pointing out; he has done enough in their lives that they knew not to turn to idolatry. He admonishes them further, by telling to cry to your idols and let them save you.

We are like Israel in that we have no excuse, and no one to blame but ourselves, for the messes we get into, when we turn from God. When we turn from God, we have done the same thing Israel did, we have turned to idolatry. Some will automatically say: we do not have any golden or brazen idols in our homes that we worship. Well, guess what, the truth is: the moment you choose to turn from God and do what you want to do, you have made yourself into your idol. You have placed your will ahead of God's will, and anything that you place ahead of God is an idol.

15 And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. 16 And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

Israel understands they have really messed up when God tells them he will not help them. However, knowing their idols are worthless and cannot deliver them, they destroy them and turning back to God, they begin to serve him again. Israel remembers that God is a God of mercy, and he is longsuffering toward his chosen people. Wherefore, they continue to plead with God for deliverance.

The lesson for us: when we mess up and sin against God, we know we can turn back to God with our whole hearts and find mercy, as seen in scripture in:

- **Isa 55:6-7; 6 ¶ "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."** If we do like Israel, put away our idols, and return to and serve the Lord only, we have this promise of God; he will have mercy and forgive.
- **Heb 13:5 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** God has made us the same promise, in the age of salvation by grace, that he will not forsake us, if we are one of his chosen children. If we continue in faithful service and worship of God; we will enjoy his blessing upon us. When we turn away from God; we will endure the consequence of our bad decision and lose the favor of God, and the joy of God's salvation.

"and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." Do not miss the mercy of God towards his chosen people. Just as God's heart was grieved over the destitution of Israel, so it is in our own lives. When we turn from God; God's heart is grieved for us. Though he may leave us in the "slough of despond" until our hearts are brought to repentance, and we turn back to him with our whole heart. We remember that God's love and mercy is everlasting, toward his people, seen in many places in scripture. Here are a few:

- **Jer 31:3 "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."**
- **Ps 100:5 "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."**
- **Ps 103:17 "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;"**
- **Isa 54:8 "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer."**

17 "Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. 18 And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

The Ammonites gather in number to begin a serious war against Israel. They have already made incursions into the land of promise, but their main force is still on the other side of Jordan. The Gileadites are now surrounded on three sides by the Ammonites and have no choice but to fight or be devoured. This reminds us of a scene back in Exodus, when Israel was brought forth from Egypt and was at the Red Sea with nowhere to go. God came to Israel's defense and wrought a great and mighty victory over the Egyptians. Israel gathers and inquires who will be the leader in the coming warfare, and we shall see the answer to this question, and Israel's deliverance, in the next chapter.

The lesson for us is: When we are surrounded by our enemies and have lost all hope of delivering ourselves, we know we can turn to God, in the name of Christ Jesus, our Saviour and Lord. God is our deliverance and Christ is our King. God the Father has already given us a King, and Christ is the one to lead us in battle of our enemies. Praise God that we know that the war, on the eternal scale, has already been accomplished by Christ. Praise God that we know God will be with us in all our battles in life, and though we may suffer much affliction, we will be victorious in Christ in the end. Hallelujah! Amen!