

# Judges 10 - The Judgeship of Tola; The Judgeship of Jair; Cycle 6: Jephthah

II. Failure in rescue of Israel through the seven cycles (Judges 3:7—16:31)

(7) Tola (10:1-2)

(8) Jair (10:3-5)

(9) Jephthah defeats the Ammonites (Judges 10:6—12:7)

(A) Sin (10:6)

(B) Suppression (10:7-9)

(C) Supplication (10:10-16)

(D) Salvation (Judges 10:17—12:6)

(a) Israel seeks a deliverer (10:17-18)

## Judges 10

(7) Tola (10:1-2)

**1** Now after Abimelech *died*, **Tola** the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, **rose up to save Israel**; and he lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.

**1** Now after Abimelech died, Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, arose to save Israel; and he lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.

**1** A man from the tribe of Issachar, Puah's son Tola, grandson of Dodo, arose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the mountainous region of Ephraim.

**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.

- The "judge" (leader) who followed Abimelech was not a local: he was a man of Issachar, but who dwelt in Ephraim.

— His Grandad: *Dodo*, "beloved one"

— His Dad: *Puah*, "splendid"

- "...Tola" - "worm" (see note below)

— In the days of David, the Clan of Tola would be known for its valor (1 Chr 7:1-2)

- "...rose up to save Israel" - there are no details given as to whom he saved Israel from

**2** He judged Israel for twenty-three years. Then he died and was buried in **Shamir**.

**2** He judged Israel twenty-three years. Then he died and was buried in Shamir.

**2** He governed Israel for 23 years and then died. He was buried in Shamir.

**2** And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

- Although he judged Israel for a long time, only two verses and seven basic facts about him are given

— There is no mention of war, so he probably ruled at a time of peace

- "...Shamir" - *Shamiyr*, "a point" or "thorn"; a town in the mountain district of Judah; a town in Ephraim where *Toia* was buried (Cf. Matt 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2,5; Gen 3:18)

(8) Jair (10:3-5)

3 After him, **Jair** the Gileadite rose up and judged Israel for twenty-two years.

3 After him, Jair the Gileadite arose and judged Israel twenty-two years.

3 After him, Jair the Gileadite arose and governed Israel for 22 years.

3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. Jair was from the tribes east of the Jordan, from the area known as Gilead.

- In the broadest sense, Gilead is the whole area east of the Jordan, given to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh

— Jair was from the tribe of (eastern) Manasseh (Num 32:41; Deut 3:14; 1 Kings 4:13)

- "...Jair" - *Ya'iyir*, "he enlightens":

(1) A descendant of Manasseh who conquered 60 towns during the time of the conquest

(2) A judge of Israel for 22 years during the time of the judges; father of 30 sons

— The Greek name for the Hebrew *Jair* is *Jairus* (Cf. Ruler of the synagogue in Mark 5:22, Luke 8:41)

4 And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities in the land of Gilead that are called **Havvoth-jair** to this day.

4 He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities in the land of Gilead that are called Havvoth-jair to this day.

4 His 30 sons rode on 30 donkeys, controlling 30 cities in the territory of Gilead named Havvoth-jair to this day.

4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havvoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead.

- The fact that Jair had 30 sons showed that he was a polygamist

— Jair must have been quite wealthy, with a plurality of wives: only wealthy people could afford to provide their children with their own personal donkeys (5:10; 12:9,14); in addition, each had a "city."

- "...Havvoth-jair" - the tent-villages of Jair, a group of towns in Bashan named by an earlier Jair (Num 32:39-42; Deut 3:14)

5 And Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

5 And Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

5 Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

- Thanks to the leadership of Tola and Jair, Israel enjoyed 45 years of peace and security (in contrast to the insecurity and danger characterized in the days of Shamgar and Jael).

— However, in the next cycle, when this same territory was being threatened by the Amorites, none of these inhabitants could be called upon to lead a Jewish army, a situation which led to the role of Jephthah.

### **The Dismal Pattern Continues**

*History teaches us that man learns nothing from history.* — Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

They had enjoyed 45 years of peace and security yet didn't take the time to thank the Lord for what He had done for them...comfortable living often produces weak character.

Ingratitude is a tragic thing. Thanksgiving glorifies God (Ps 69:30). That's why some say their blessing after a meal (Deut 8:10).

This can be a strong defense against selfishness and idolatry. If they had only reviewed their own history and learned from it, their lives and future would have been quite different. From the time of Othniel to the days of Gideon, they endured over 50 painful years of oppression from their enemies. By now they should have known that their blessings were a response to obedience, and their chastening a response to their rebellion (3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; et al.).

These were the terms of the covenant that they had accepted when they entered the land: Joshua 8:30-35. The Lord had given them victory over seven different nations (v11-12); but now they were worshipping seven different varieties of pagan gods (v6).

(9) Jephthah defeats the Ammonites (Judges 10:6—12:7)

(A) Sin (10:6)

**6** Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they served the **Baals and the Ashtaroth**, the **gods of Aram**, the **gods of Sidon**, the **gods of Moab**, the **gods of the sons of Ammon**, and the **gods of the Philistines**; so they abandoned the LORD and did not serve Him.

**6** Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.

**6** Later on, the Israelis again practiced what the LORD considered to be evil by serving the Baals, the stars, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the

descendants of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. In doing so, they ignored the LORD and wouldn't serve him.

**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.

- What foolishness to worship the gods of the enemies they defeated!

- "...Baalim and the Ashtaroth" - the two main gods of Canaan

- "...gods of Aram" - Hadath, Baal, Moath, Anath

- "...gods of Sidon" - same as Syria plus the Phoenician Astarte (1 Kings 11:5); the Sidonian religion also included syncretism (the combining of many religions/gods)

- "...gods of Moab" - Chemosh (1 Kings 11:33)

- "...gods of the children of Ammon" - Molech (1 Kings 11:7; 11:33)

- "...gods of the Philistines" - Dagon and Baal (16:23)

- After 45 years of peace and prosperity under Tola and Jair, Israel rebelled again and worshipped seven categories of gods

— This shows the full-scale Canaanization of Israel continuing...

#### (B) Suppression (10:7-9)

**7** And the **anger of the LORD** burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the **Philistines**, and into the hands of the **sons of Ammon**.

**7** The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon.

**7** In his burning anger against Israel, he sold them into domination by the Philistines and the Ammonites,

**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.

- "...anger of the LORD" - the Canaanization of Israel was now coming to a climax

— This is the first time it is stated that God's anger is behind His selling the Israelites into the hands of the enemy

- For the first time since 3:8, God handed His people into the power of two different nations:

- "...Philistines" - to the west; this anticipates the saga of Samson (Judges 13-16)

- "...sons of Ammon" - Ammonites to the east; this anticipates the saga of Jephthah (Judges 10-12)

### **Ammonites**

A nation sprung from Israel's distant relatives: Ben-ammi, Abraham's nephew Lot's son by his younger daughter (Gen 19:38; Ps 83:7,8), as Moab by his elder, after Lot escaped from Sodom. Ammon and Moab appear continually together; both are said to have hired Balaam (Deut 13:4), though Moab alone is mentioned in the detailed account (Num 22-23).

The land from the Arnon river to Jabbok is assigned to both (Judges 11:12-18,25). The Israelites dispossessed the Amorites of land which afterward Ammon occupied, between Arnon and Jabbok, but did not, as Jephthah will reason (v12-28), dispossess Ammon of it, though they now claim it as theirs (Num 21:24,26,29).

Ammon had destroyed the aboriginal Rephaim (post-flood *nephilim*), named Zamzummim, and occupied their land, Jabbok being their boundary (Deut 2:20-21,37).

Moab was probably the more civilized half of Lot's descendants; whence we read of the plentiful fields, hay, summer fruits, vineyards, presses, songs of the grape treaders, of Moab (Is 15-16; Jer 48). Ammon was the more fierce, plundering, Bedouin-like half; whence we read of their threat of thrusting out the right eye of all in Jabesh Gilead (1 Sam 11:2), ripping up pregnant women in Gilead (Amos 1:13), treacherously murdering, as Ishmael, Baalis' agent, did (Jer 40:14; 41:5-7), suspecting and insulting their ally David to their own ruin (2 Sam 10:1-5; 12:31).

Ammon's one stronghold, Rabbah, "the city of waters" (20 cities are mentioned v33, perhaps some Moabite cities), forms a contrast to Moab's numerous towns with their "high places" (Jer 48). Ammon's idol, Moloch, accordingly, they worshipped in a tent—the token of nomad life—not a fixed temple or high place, such as was appropriated to the god of the more settled people of Moab (Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43). Ammon crossed Jordan and seized Jericho [Beth Yerah, House of the Moon God] for a time (Judges 3:13). Jephthah and Saul sorely punished them (Judges 11:33; 1 Sam 11:11; 14:47). In Jehoshaphat's reign, Ammon joined with Moab in the expedition for uprooting Judah from its possession, (2 Chr 20; Ps 83:3-7). So utterly were the confederates routed that the Jews spent three days gathering the spoil.

They had to bring gifts to Uzziah (2 Chr 26:8). Jotham reduced them to pay 100 talents of silver, 10,000 measures of wheat, and 10,000 of barley. Ammon seized on the cities of Gad from which Tiglath Pileser had carried the Israelites (Jer 49:1-6; Zeph 2:8-9). On the return to Jerusalem Tobiah, an Ammonite, joined with Sanballat, of Horonaim of Moab, in opposing Nehemiah's restoration of the city walls (Neh 2:10,19). Naamah, Solomon's wife, mother of Rehoboam, was an Ammonite.

Their idol, Moloch, appears also under the varied form Milcom and Malcham, as the Heb. for "their king" may be rendered. Compare Zeph 1:5 with 2 Sam 12:30. Solomon's Ammonite wives seduced him to rear an altar to this "abomination," to his own hurt (Jer 49:1,3). Nahash, perhaps a common title of their kings, means a serpent.

8 And they **afflicted** and **oppressed** the sons of Israel that year; for **eighteen years** they *oppressed* all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan, in Gilead in the **land of the Amorites**.

8 They afflicted and crushed the sons of Israel that year; for eighteen years they *afflicted* all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in Gilead in the land of the Amorites.

8 who trampled and troubled the Israelis during that year—eighteen years for the Israelis who lived east of the Jordan River in Gilead, the land occupied by the Amorites.

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.

- "...afflicted" - *vayiratz*, "shattered" (Cf. Ex 15:6)

- "...oppressed" - *vayertzetz*, "crushed" (Cf. 9:53)

- "...eighteen years: - the same length as that of the earlier Moabite servitude (3:18)

- "...land of the Amorites" - the territory of Sihon the king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan (Num 32:33)

— The territory bounded by the river Jabbok on the north, and the Arnon river on the south, by the wilderness on the east, and the Jordan on the west, belonged to Moab, but the Amorites had taken it from them before the conquest of Sihon by the Israelites (11:13-22)

The climax of Israel's apostasy is shown now with the description of the last two judges and in the two appendices to follow. The result of God's anger over the Israelites' apostasy was twofold. First: he sold them into the hand of the Philistines on the west side of the Jordan. Second: He sold them into the hand of the children of Ammon on the east side of the Jordan.

The duration of the oppression was 18 years. The main geographical focus first was the Trans-Jordan: beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. He is focusing in this passage on the east side of the Jordan.

9 And the sons of Ammon crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was in great difficulty.

9 The sons of Ammon crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was greatly distressed.

9 The Ammonites crossed the Jordan River to fight against the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim. As a result, Israel was deeply distressed.

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.

- It would seem that at this time the king of Ammon may have also been king of the Moabites, since he laid claim to the land which once belonged to Moab (11:13,24)

(C) Supplication (10:10-16)

**10** Then the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, for indeed, we have abandoned our God and served the Baals."

**10** Then the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, for indeed, we have forsaken our God and served the Baals."

**10** Then the Israelis cried out to the LORD and told him, "We have sinned against you because we have abandoned our God to serve the Baals."

**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.

- As history repeats itself, they cry out for help...but this time God announced that He wouldn't help them anymore

— They should ask their new gods for help (Cf. Deut 32:36-38)

**11** And the LORD said to the sons of Israel, "*Did I not save you* from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the sons of Ammon, and the Philistines?

**11** The LORD said to the sons of Israel, "*Did I not deliver you* from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the sons of Ammon, and the Philistines?

**11** The LORD replied to the Israelis, "Aren't you away from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines?

**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?

- God reminds Israel of seven previous deliverances...

- From the Egyptians: as in Exodus; from the Amorites (Num 21:3); from the children of Ammon: along with with Moabites under Ehud (3:12-14); from the Philistines (3:31)

**12** And when the **Sidonians**, the **Amalekites**, and the **Maonites** oppressed you, you cried out to Me, and I saved you from their hands.

**12** Also when the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hands.

**12** And when the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites harassed you, you cried out to me, and I delivered you from under their domination.

**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.

- "...Sidonians" - northern Canaanites under Jabin, king of Canaan (Judges 4; 5; 18:7,27)

- "...Amalekites" - at Sinai (Ex 17:8-16); in alliance with the Moabites (3:13); with Canaanites (4:14); and with the Midianites (6:3)

- "...Maonites" - Midianites [LXX] (of Judges 6-8)

- The Lord had given them victory over seven different nations (v11-12); but now they were worshipping seven different varieties of pagan gods (v6)

13 Yet you abandoned Me and served other gods; therefore **I will no longer save you.**

13 Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you.

13 But you have abandoned me and served other gods. Therefore I will no longer be delivering you.

13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.

- God reminded Israel of their failure...

- "...I will no longer save you" - a conditional threat, depending upon how they would respond

14 Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress."

14 Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."

14 Go and cry out to the gods that you have chosen for yourselves. Let them deliver you in your time of trouble."

14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

- The greatest judgment God can send His people is to let them have their own way and not interfere!

— "Wherefore God gave them up...God gave them up...God gave them over" (Rom 1:24,26,28)

After God reminded them of seven previous deliverances (v11-12), He laid out three basic historical facts of each deliverance:

(1) Israel's enemies oppressed them

(2) Israel cried unto God

(3) God saved them out of their hand

So now, once again, Israel cried out for help, but what will they do with the gods and idols that they were worshipping? The point is that repentance must be followed by action. God reminded them of seven great deliverances that the seven gods they worshipped could not deliver them from, and so they must put away their idols and their gods; for up until now, they had credited the seven deliverances to the other seven gods.

15 Then the sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please save us this day."

15 The sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day."

15 The Israelis replied to the LORD, "We have sinned, so do to us anything that's right to do in your opinion, just please deliver us right now."

**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.

- First, Israel responded in word: this was too much for Israel, so they repented and told God He could do to Israel whatever He wanted to do

16 So they removed the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could no longer endure the misery of Israel.

16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer.

16 When they put away their foreign gods and served the LORD, he brought Israel's misery to an end.

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.

- Second, they responded in deed: they put away their foreign gods

- "...grieved" [KJV] - "shortened"; implies impatience

— Their hope wasn't in their repenting or their praying, but in the character of God

- Israel's repentance and plea for help resulted in God's response

— When the soul of God is grieved for the misery of Israel, it will lead to divine intervention

— Neh 9:31 - Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

Representing the character of God is a prime consideration when evaluating various doctrinal differences: amillennialism, Calvinism, et al.

#### (D) Salvation (Judges 10:17—12:6)

##### (a) Israel seeks a deliverer (10:17-18)

**17** Then the sons of Ammon were summoned, and they camped in Gilead. And the sons of Israel gathered together and camped in Mizpah.

**17** Then the sons of Ammon were summoned and they camped in Gilead. And the sons of Israel gathered together and camped in Mizpah.

**17** The Ammonites were summoned and they encamped in Gilead. The Israelis assembled together and encamped in Mizpah.

**17** Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpah.

- Two armies had mustered: the Ammonite army in Gilead; the Israelite army in Mizpeh

18 And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who is the man who will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? He shall become head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

18 The people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who is the man who will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? He shall become head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

18 The people and Gilead's officials inquired among themselves, "Who will begin our attack against the Ammonites? He'll become head over everyone who lives in Gilead."

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 search for a leader for the Israelite army, to lead them in the fight against the Ammonites

— After 18 years of oppression, the people were prepared to act, but there was nobody ready to take the lead. An army without a general. As an incentive, they promised that the leader would be named head over all of Gilead.

— Here again, the possibility of a king is raised (Cf. Abimelech, Judges 9)