

Judges Chapter 10

Verses 1-18: The feature of the New Covenant emphasized here is Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. The author has frequently stated this point in the preceding chapters (compare 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28), but here it becomes the focal point of the discussion. First, this truth is highlighted by contrast with the repetitious service of the Mosaic system. Those sacrifices had to be offered "year by year continually". Later, the author demonstrates that Christ's single, one-time sacrifice is completed by His continuing position, seated at God's right hand (verses 11-14).

Despite the longevity of their reigns, very little is revealed about Israel's next two judges, "Tola" and "Jair", except that God raised them up to "defend Israel". However, their roles were important but very different. Tola delivered Israel while Abimelech destroyed it. Jair was blessed with 30 sons, while the succeeding "deliverer", Jephthah, had only one child and made a foolish vow that kept his line from continuing.

Judges 10:1 "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."

His is merely a note of time. Abimelech is not counted among the judges, though it is not improbable that, evil as was the episode of his rebellions, he may have kept foreign enemies in check.

"To defend Israel": Rather, to deliver, as in the margin and elsewhere (Judges 2:16; 2:18; 3:9).

"There arose": The phrase implies a less direct call and a less immediate service than that used of other judges (Judges 2:18; 3:9).

"Tola": The name of a son of Issachar (Genesis 46:13). It means "worm" (perhaps the kermes - worm), and may, like Puah, be connected with the trade in purple dyes. He seems to have been the only judge furnished by this indolent tribe, unless Deborah is an exception. Josephus omits his name.

"Puah": Also a son of Issachar (1 Chron. 7:1).

"The son of Dodo": The LXX renders it "the son of his uncle," but there can be little doubt that Dodo is a proper name (as in 1 Chron. 11:12; 2 Sam. 23:9; 23:24). It is from the same root as David, "beloved." Since Tola was of Issachar, he could not be nephew of Abimelech a Manassite.

"He dwelt in Shamir": The name has nothing to do with Samaria, as the LXX seems to suppose. It may be Sanûr, eight miles north of Samaria.

"In mount Ephraim": As judge, he would have to fix his residence in a town more central than any in his own tribe. There was another Shamir in Judah (Joshua 15:48).

Very little is known of Tola and his ancestors, except what we read right here. We know there was a need for a leader who would stand against the enemies of Israel, and he seemed to do that. We are not familiar with Puah or Dodo either. We are familiar with the tribe of Issachar. Really, the only thing we know about this Shamir, is that it is in mount Ephraim.

Judges 10:2 "And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir."

He did not take upon him to be king, as Abimelech did, but acted as a judge, in which office he continued twenty three years, and faithfully discharged it, and died in honor.

"And was buried in Shamir": The place where he executed his office. It is said, that in the first year of Tola, the son of Puah, Priam reigned in Troy.

There is very little known about the judgeship of Tola, except that it lasted 23 years. We read of no wars during this time, so we know the LORD was with them. Tola lived and died in Shamir.

Verses 3-5: Most likely, the judgeship of Jair was the time period of Ruth.

Judges 10:3 "And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years."

Who was of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead, and who is the first of the judges that was on that side Jordan. It pleased God, before the government was settled in a particular tribe, to remove it from one to another, and to honor them all. And to show that though the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were separated from their brethren by the river Jordan, they were not neglected by the Lord. And generally speaking judges were raised up in all those parts which were most oppressed, and liable to be oppressed by their enemies, as Gilead by the Ammonites. Wherefore this, and the next judge that followed him, Jephthah, were of Gilead.

"And judged Israel twenty two years": Protected them from their enemies, administered justice to them, and preserved them in the true religion.

Jair was believed to be of the half tribe of Manasseh on the eastern side of the Jordan, because that is where Gilead is. He was the son of Segub.

1 Chronicles 2:22 "And Segub begat Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead."

His inheritance was from his mother's side. She was of Manasseh. His 22 year reign shows he was a brave powerful judge.

Judges 10:4 "And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which [are] in the land of Gilead."

Which to ride on in those times was reckoned honorable, and on which judges rode in their circuit (Judges 5:10). And such might be these sons of Jair, who were appointed under him to ride about, and do justice in the several parts of the country. As Samuel's sons were judges under him (1 Sam. 8:1).

"And they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead": Or the villages of Jair. There were some of this name that belonged to Jair, a son of Manasseh, in the times of Moses (Num. 32:41). And these may be the same, at least some of them. For they were but twenty three he had, whereas these were thirty (1 Chron. 2:22). And these coming by inheritance to this Jair, a descendant of the former, and he being of the same name, and these cities perhaps repaired and enlarged by him. The name of them was continued and established, for it is not reasonable to suppose, as some have done, that this is the same Jair that lived in the times of Moses. Who, if so, must have lived more than three hundred years, an age men did not live to in those times.

It seems from this that each of his sons had a city. It seems each of these cities was called Havoth-jair. "Havoth-jair" means villages of Jair. Perhaps Jair had them to ride these ass colts to keep them humble.

Judges 10:5 "And Jair died, and was buried in Camon."

A city of Gilead, as Josephus calls it. Jerom, under this word Camon, makes mention of a village in his times, called Cimana. In the large plain six miles from Legion to the north, as you go to Ptolemais. But, as Reland observes, this seems not to be the same place, but rather this is the Camon Polybius speaks of among other cities of Perea, taken by Antiochus.

The only thing we really know about Camon, is that it was the city of Gilead where Jair was buried.

Judges 10:6 "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."

After the death of the above judges they fell into idolatry again, as the following instances show.

"And served Baalim, and Ashtaroth": As they had before (see Judges 2:11; 2:13). And besides these:

"Also the gods of Syria": Their gods and goddesses, Belus and Saturn, Astarte and the Dea Syria, Lucian writes of.

"And the gods of Zidon": The goddess of the Zidonians was Ashtaroth (1 Kings 11:5), and it seems they had other deities.

"And the gods of Moab": The chief of which were Baal-peor and Chemosh (Num. 25:3).

"And the gods of the children of Ammon": As Milcom or Molech (1 Kings 11:5).

"And the gods of the Philistines": As Dagon the god of Ashdod, Beelzebub the god of Ekron, Marnas the god of Gaza, and Derceto the goddess of Ashkalon.

"And forsook the Lord, and served not him": Not even in conjunction with the above deities, as Jarchi and others observe. At other times, when they worshipped other gods, they pretended to worship the Lord also, they served the creature besides the Creator. But now they were so dreadfully sunk into idolatry, that they had wholly forsaken the Lord". And his worship at the tabernacle, and made no pretensions to it, but entirely neglected it.

The children of Israel are the most ungrateful, unfaithful people I have ever heard of. They were so intent on worshipping false gods it seemed not to matter who the false gods were, they worshipped them. Of course, the most infamous of the false gods and goddesses were Baal and Ashtaroth. This is spiritual adultery. God counted Israel His wife.

Judges 10:7 "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."

His anger burned like fire, he was exceedingly incensed against them, nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry, as after mentioned.

"And he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon": That is, delivered them into their hands, and they became subject and were in bondage to them, as such are that are sold for "slaves". Part of them that lay to the west of the land of Israel, fell into the hands of the Philistines. And another part, which lay to the east, were oppressed by the children of Ammon, particularly those that were on the other side Jordan came into the hands of the latter.

The only reason Israel had ever been blessed was because they were worshipping the LORD. When they went to false gods, God took his blessings off of them and empowered their enemies. Over and over, God used their enemies to chastise Israel. This time he empowers the Philistines and the Ammonites to punish Israel for Him.

Judges 10:8 "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."

The Philistines on one side, and the children of Ammon on the other. Meaning either that year in which Jair died, as Jarchi. Or the first year they began to bring them into bondage, as R. Isaiah: "and from that year". As Kimchi and Ben Melech, that they vexed and distressed them. They continued to vex and distress them;

"Eighteen years": Or, as Abarbinel interprets it, "with that year", they vexed and oppressed them eighteen years, that is, so many more, or reckoning that into the number of them. And these eighteen years of their oppression are not to be reckoned into the years of Jair's government, and

as commencing from the fourth of it, as Bishop Usher, Lightfoot, and others. For it does not appear that there was any oppression in his days, but from the time of his death to the raising up of Jephthah a new judge. And the people oppressed by the children of Ammon during that time were;

“All the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan, in the land of the Ammonites, which is in Gilead”: Even the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

The very year the children of Israel started the worship of false gods, they were vexed by the Philistines and the Ammonites. It appears this lasted 18 years in Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan River.

Judges 10:9 "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."

Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan. Not content with the oppression of the tribes on the other side Jordan, which had continued eighteen years, they came over Jordan into the land of Canaan to ravage that, and bring other of the tribes into subjection to them. Particularly the three next mentioned, which lay readiest for them, when they were come over Jordan.

"To fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim": Who lay to the south and the southeast of the land of Canaan, and were the first the Ammonites had to fight with and subdue, when they had crossed Jordan to the east of it.

"So that Israel was sore distressed": By the Ammonites in the east, threatening those three tribes, mentioned. And the Philistines on the west, who gave disturbance to the tribes that lay nearest them, as Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, Issachar, and Dan. And this distress was begun the same year in different parts, by different enemies.

They had such good success on the eastern side of Jordan that the Ammonites crossed over Jordan into the land of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim and vexed them.

Judges 10:10 "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."

In this their distress, seeing nothing but ruin and destruction before their eyes, their land being invaded by such powerful enemies in different quarters. This opened their eyes to a sense of their sins, the cause of it, and brought them to a confession of them.

"Saying, we have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim": Had been guilty not only of sins of omission, neglecting the pure of God, but also of sins of commission. Even gross idolatry, in serving Baalim, and other gods, before mentioned.

“We have sinned”: Confession is followed by true repentance (verses 15-16).

You can easily see they knew exactly why they were having these problems. The Israelites all knew better than to worship these false gods, but they did it anyway. They were a rebellious house from the very beginning. Every time they got in serious trouble, they cried out to the LORD.

Judges 10:11 "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?"

By a prophet he sent unto them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel (see Judges 6:8). Or the uncreated one, the Son and Word of God, who might appear in a human form, and to whom all that is here said is applicable.

"Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians": By bringing them out of subjection and bondage to them, and by delivering them out of their hands at the Red sea?

"And from the Amorites": The kings of Sihon and Og, whose countries were taken from them, and put into their hands, when they attempted to stop them in their march to the land of Canaan.

"From the children of Ammon": When they joined with the Moabites against them (Judges 3:13).

"And from the Philistines?" In the times of Shamgar (Judges 3:31).

He indeed had delivered them over and over. He defeated Pharaoh with the ten plagues He brought on Egypt. He brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. He had already defeated The Amorites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines for them. All they had to do, was remain faithful to God. They did not, and God let these people rise up against them again.

Judges 10:12 "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."

Who were left in the land to distress them, though there is no particular mention of them, and of the distress they gave them. And of their deliverance from it, which yet is not at all to be questioned.

"And the Amalekites": Both quickly after they came out of Egypt (Exodus 17:13). And when they were come into the land of Canaan, joining the Moabites and the Midianites against them (Judges 3:13).

"And the Maonites did oppress you": Meaning either the old inhabitants of Maon, a city in the mountains of Judah, near to which was a wilderness of this name, (Joshua 15:55). Or rather a people of Arabia, called by Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, Minaeans, the same with Mehunim, mentioned with the Arabians (2 Chron. 26:7). And who perhaps came along with the Midianites, when they oppressed Israel. Though some have thought of the old inhabitants of Beth-meon and Baal-meon (Num. 32:38).

"And ye cried unto me, and I delivered you out of their hands": All those mercies and deliverances are mentioned to aggravate their sins. That notwithstanding the Lord hath so often and eminently appeared for them. Yet they deserted him and his worship, and fell into idolatry. Jarchi observes, that here are seven salvations or deliverances mentioned in opposition to the seven sorts of false gods or idols they had served (Judges 10:6).

This had been the story over and over. They were punished for their idolatry by countries attacking them. They would repent, cry out to God, and He would forgive them. When they were in right standing with God, they could not be defeated by their enemies. God fought for them.

Verses 13-14: Here is the form of God's wrath, by which He abandons persistent, willful sinners to the consequences of their sins. This aspect of divine judgement is referred to in the case of Samson (16:20), as well as the warnings of (Prov. 1:20-31 and Rom. 1:24-28). It is a pattern of rejections seen throughout history (compare Acts 14:15-16), even among the Jews (compare Hosea 4:17; Matt. 15:14).

Judges 10:13 "Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more."

Since they had been so remarkably saved, time after time, and delivered from so many powerful enemies, which was dreadful ingratitude.

"Wherefore I will deliver you no more": Which is not to be understood absolutely, since after this he did deliver them, but conditionally. Unless they repented of their idolatries, and forsook them. This is said to bring them to a sense of their sin and danger.

The LORD is about to give up on them. He has forgiven them over and over, and they never seemed to learn. Every time they are free from trouble, they become unfaithful to Him. He has become very tired of their unfaithfulness.

Judges 10:14 "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."

For they were their choice, and not what they were obliged to serve through persecution. And by compulsion of others, and whom they needed not, having the Lord Jehovah to be their God. And they are bid not seriously, but in an ironical or sarcastic way, to call upon them for help in this their time of distress, in whose power it was not to relieve them.

"Let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation": If they can, whom you have served in your prosperity.

They are so set on worshipping these false gods that God tells them to turn to the ones they have put their faith in. If these false gods are who they worship, why are they coming to Him for help?

Judges 10:15 "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."

"Do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good": Genuine repentance acknowledges God's right to chasten, so His punishment is seen as just and He is thereby glorified. It also seeks the remediation that chastening brings, because genuine contrition pursues holiness.

They know they deserve to be punished. They are willing for God to chastise them. They just do not want it to be by these Philistines, Ammonites, and Amorites. They are begging God to save them this day.

Judges 10:16 "And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

The author's report that the Lord "was grieved for the misery of Israel" sounds like a compassionate response. But the verb translated *endure* is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to describe impatience or abhorrence (Job 21:4; Zech. 11:8). Yahweh, who is rich in grace and forgiveness (Exodus 34:5-7), had tired of His people's insincere confession and exploitation of His goodness.

To show their loyalty to God, they put away these false gods. They began again to worship the LORD, and Him alone. As always, God feels sorry for their misery. He forgives them.

Judges 10:17 "Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh."

By a crier, as Jarchi. They had passed over Jordan (as in Judges 10:9), and had been distressing three of the tribes of Israel on that side. But now being informed, by a herald at arms that the children of Israel, on the other side Jordan, were risen up in defense of their country, rights, and liberties. The children of Ammon came back and crossed over Jordan again.

"And encamped in Gilead": In the land of Gilead, part of which belonged to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other part to the half tribe of Manasseh.

"And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped at Mizpeh": Of which name there were several cities in the land of Israel, on both sides of Jordan. This must design a place on the other side Jordan, either in the tribe of Gad or Manasseh, for it seems there was of this name in each (see Gen. 31:49).

They did not attack them right now. They encamped where they could attack at any time. It appears that the children of Israel gathered in Mizpeh to make a stand, if necessary.

Judges 10:18 "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."

Being thus assembled and encamped.

"What man is he that will begin to fight with the children of Ammon?" For though the forces were assembled together for battle, yet it seems they had no general to command them, and lead them on to it.

"He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead": This they ordered to be proclaimed, to encourage some person to take the command of them, and go before them to battle. Promising him that he should be judge or governor over all the tribes on that side Jordan.

The men of Israel are asking for a strong judge, to come and be their leader. Someone who God will be with and will keep them safe from their enemies.

Chapter 10 Questions

1. Who was the next judge, after Abimelech?
2. Who was his father?
3. What tribe was he from?
4. Where did he live?
5. How long did he judge Israel?
6. Where was he buried?
7. Who was the next judge, after Tola?
8. How many years did he judge Israel?
9. Jair was a _____.
10. What tribe was he believed to be from?
11. Who was his father?
12. How many cities did he have in Gilead?
13. How many sons did Jair have?
14. What was peculiar about them?
15. What was the name of their cities?
16. What does the name of their cities mean?

17. After the death of Jair, what did the children of Israel do?
18. What were the names of the false gods?
19. What sin is the worship of false gods?
20. How did the LORD feel about this?
21. What did He do about it?
22. How many years did they oppress Israel?
23. Who did the children of Ammon fight on the other side of Jordan?
24. What did the children of Israel cry out to the LORD?
25. How did the LORD answer them?
26. What does the LORD threaten in verse 13?
27. Who does the LORD tell them to ask for help?
28. What does Israel say in verse 15?
29. When they put away their false gods, what effect did it have on the LORD?
30. Who do the princes and the people of Gilead ask for?