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Judges 10

(2020)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Judges 10

Topics.

- Tola judges Israel twenty-three years.
- Jair judges Israel twenty-two years.
- Israel does evil in the sight of the LORD.
- God gives Israel over to the Philistines and the Ammonites.
- The Ammonites fight against Judah and Benjamin.
- Israel cries to the LORD and the LORD speaks to Israel.
- The Ammonites camp in Gilead, and Israel camps at Mizpah.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Israelites forgot the LORD, and worshipped false gods, so the LORD removed His protection and blessings from them, which resulted in them being oppressed by their enemies and crying to the LORD for deliverance. In answer to their prayer the LORD raised up twelve Judges to deliver them, but not Judges as we think of Judges today or preachers of righteousness, but rather military leaders and fighters, that led Israel to triumph over their enemies and delivered them from their wicked behaviour. Most suppose that Samuel (considered by some to be the last Judge) wrote some parts of the book, while other parts were written at a later time by someone of his generation or a later generation. The primary purpose of the Judges is best articulated in the following words, "The LORD raised up Judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. (Judges 2:16). For an overview of the entire book see the title:

- Overview of the Book of Judges (at the beginning of the index).

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER

Gideon lived with his mother's relatives. Abimelech hired worthless men to kill seventy of Gideon's brothers, after they had been murdered the people made Abimelech king. He attacked Shechem and killed the people in the field and burned the city. One thousand people sought shelter in a stronghold, and a woman threw a stone on Abimelech's head, he asked his armour bearer draw his sword and kill him and he did.

TOLA JUDGES ISRAEL TWENTY-THREE YEARS

JUDGES 10:1-2

- **Judges 10:1-2:** After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he lived at Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. ² And he judged Israel twenty-three years. Then he died and was buried at Shamir.

Abimelech was not counted as a judge who God raised up, or who the people choose, because he usurped his kingly power over them; and rather than save and defend them, he brought great trouble, affliction and distress upon them and his rebellious rule over them was one of a tyrannical dictatorship and at his end the people were steeped in idolatry and worshippers of Baal.

There arose to save Israel Tola: (v1) Tola means "crimson worm" or "scarlet stuff," perhaps connected with the trade in purple dyes. In the book of Chronicles, the following verse states that Issachar is the father of Tola and Puah.

- The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four. (1 Chron. 7:1).

But here in Judges we read that Tola's father was Puah. This contradiction is easily explained, in the following manner, throughout the Bible the word "sons," often means, "descendants," which means that Tola and Puah were descendants of a man named Issachar, and that Dodo who may have been a biological son or descendant of Issachar, was the father of Puah, and Puah was the father of Tola, and all four were of the tribe of Issachar. Tola lived at Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim and after judging Israel twenty-three years was buried at Shamir (Judges 10:1-2), of all biblical Judges the least is written about him. Unlike Abimelech who usurped his kingly power, Tola was chosen by the people and raised by the LORD as the other judges were, to Judge, deliver and save Israel from foreign invasion and aggression.

This he did, not by fighting against and overthrowing their enemies, but by a practical sensible and godly government, by which he kept them from treason, rebellion, oppression tyranny and from idolatry, which if not restrained and purged out, would have brought certain ruin upon them. Though there is no mention of enemies that he delivered the people from in his days, does not necessarily mean that there were none, but whether there was or not, he protected them in their liberties, civil and religious customs and traditions, and saved them from the idolatry they had fallen into during Abimelech's reign and during his twenty-three years peace covered the land.

Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim: (v1) it is called Shamir in Mount Ephraim to distinguish it from another place of the same name in the mountain of Judah (Josh. 15:48). After Tola became judge in Israel he moved to Shamir, for it was far more practical for a Judge to dwell in a town which was in the very heart and midst of the land, and more central than any in his own tribe and near the tabernacle of Shiloh. All these facts made Shamir a very convenient and practical place for a Judge to dwell, for the people could come from all parts of the land to have him administer justice and judgment to them.

Tola judged Israel twenty-three years: (v2) for all his time as Judge of Israel Tola faithfully served the LORD and the people and died in honour. He was buried with honour in Shamir where he served the LORD.

Snapshot: though Tola judged Israel twenty-three years very little is written of him, which evidences the reality that during his time the land was in peace, for had it not been, it is certain far more would have been written. This principle applies even today, for all TV and news produces know that if they are going to grab the viewing attention of the majority, they will not do it by showing good news, but bad.

JAIR JUDGES ISRAEL TWENTY-TWO YEARS

JUDGES 10:3-5

- **Judges 10:3-5:** After him arose Jair the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years.
⁴ And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities, called Havvoth-jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. ⁵ And Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

Jair: was of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, that inhabited the land of Gilead. He was the first of the judges that dwelt on the east side of the Jordan river. It is very likely that this Jair is the same Jair spoken of in the following verses:

- Jair the son of Manasseh went and captured their villages, and called them Havvoth-jair. (Numbers 32:41).
- Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-jair, as it is to this day). (Deut. 3:14).

The Jair spoken of in these verses was a son of Manasseh in the times of Moses. It is very possible that these villages called Havvoth-jair are the same cities, though at this time there were only twenty-three

- Segub fathered Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. (1 Chron. 2:22).

Whereas here in Judges there are thirty, however, it is reasonable to suppose that Jair here in Judges was a descendant of the previous Jair and inherited these twenty-three villages.

Following are two facts that support this idea:

1. These twenty-three villages, called Havvoth-jair are now, in the time of the Judges referred to as thirty cities, which indicates that Jair over sometime enlarged the villages to cities, and kept the same name.
2. It is not reasonable to suppose, (as some have done), that the Jair that lived in the times of Moses, is the same as the Jair in Judges, for if this was so it would mean that he had lived for more than three hundred years, which is an age people did not live to in the time of the Judges.

History of the Judges shows the following two things:

1. They were generally raised up in those parts of the land, that were most oppressed by enemies as the people of Gilead were by the Ammonites.
2. Prior to Israel's government being settled in a specific tribe, it moved from one tribe to another, which shows that even though the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were separated from their brethren by the river Jordan, the LORD had not forsaken them.

Jair had thirty sons: (v4) thirty sons sounds a big number, but Gideon had seventy sons (Judges 8:30), however such large numbers indicate that they probably had a wife and various concubines, which also shows he was a man of high rank and wealth.

Jair sons rode on thirty donkeys: (v4) the following verses show that it was customary for kings, nobles and the wealthy in Judea and other countries to ride on donkeys:

Nobles and the wealthy to rode on donkeys.

- Tell of it, you (nobles and the wealthy) who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. (Judges 5:10).

Judges rode on donkeys.

- He (Abdon a Judge of Israel) had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys, and he judged Israel eight years. (Judges 12:14).

Kings' sons rode on donkeys.

- The servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each mounted his mule and fled. (2 Samuel 13:29).

Solomon rode on king David's donkey.

- The king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, (1 Kings 1:33).

- Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. (1 Kings 1:38).

The fact Jair's thirty sons rode on their own donkey and owned a city each, shows that Jair was able to bring up his numerous household in wealth. Though Israel's did not use horses at this time in Palestine they did become popular in the days of Solomon as the following shows.

- Solomon also had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen. (1 Kings 4:26).

Jair died and was buried in Kamon: (v5) after judging and protecting Israel from their enemies and administering justice and keeping them faithful in their religion for twenty-two years, Jair died and was buried in Kamon (Camon in KJV). The location of Kamon is unknown for it is not mentioned again.

ISRAEL DOES EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD

JUDGES 10:6

- **Judges 10:6:** The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals (Baalim in KJV) and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon (Zidon in KJV), the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. And they forsook the LORD and did not serve him.

There were times when Israel turned to idols and other gods, but didn't totally forsake the LORD, but added these other gods to their religion and continued to maintain their religious traditions and customs at the Tabernacle, but now they were so deeply sunk into idolatry that they had wholly forsaken the LORD and His worship at the tabernacle. They grew worse as the years passed by, bringing affliction and ruin upon themselves for this apostasy seems to have exceeded every previous one in the wickedness and the vast number of idols and gods they had embraced.

Following is a list of some (there was no doubt many more) of the foreign gods, (strange gods in KJV) that people in the land worshipped:

- Asarah, Asarim, Asaroth, Astarte, Attart and the goddess Ashtaroth (also Ashtoreth) and various other goddesses.
- Bel, or Baal and the Baals (there were many various ones) and Belus.
- Chemosh, Dagan, (Lord of Gods and Lord of the Land) and El, Resheph, (the storm god).
- Ishtar, Milcom, Moloch, Saturn and Thammuz.

By their evil ways and their idolatry and worship of foreign gods Israel brought ruin upon themselves as the following verses show.

GOD GIVES ISRAEL OVER TO THE PHILISTINES AND AMMONITES

JUDGES 10:7-8

- **Judges 10:7-8:** So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites, ⁸ and they crushed and oppressed the people of Israel that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.

God's anger: the expression, "the anger of the LORD," means the LORD is against Israel for their harm. The expression occurs after the LORD has many times warned Israel not to turn to idols and foreign gods, yet

despite His many warnings they totally ignore Him, and passionately turn their hearts to the worship of multitudes of pagan idols and gods and serve and bow down to them. Had God allowed Israel to continue in such pagan worship and idolatry, the truth of the true God would not only have been totally lost to the generations of the Old Testament, but also to all future generations. It was only by bringing harm upon His people Israel, that they returned to Him, and by doing so preserved the knowledge of God and the Scriptures we have today. It also manifested the greatness of God's mercy, for no matter how committed to their idols and false gods they became, the LORD always saved them out of the hand of their enemies when they humbled themselves, repented, turned from their idols and foreign gods and returned to Him.

With all this in mind, we see that the expression, "the anger of the LORD," does not mean that He is emotionally out of control, as humans often are, (as some think it does), but rather that He brings harm upon His people (the outward manifestation of anger), but not to hurt physically or verbally the one he is directing his anger toward, like the passion of human anger, for the purpose of God's anger is to bring harm upon His people for their good, with the goal that they would turn from their wicked ways to Him and the right way, and by doing so would come under His blessing and dwell which each other in peace.

He sold them into Philistines and the Ammonites: (v7), the Philistine's land is located along the Mediterranean Sea, while the Ammonite's land is located on the west side of the Jordan river which means one was on the west, the other on the east, so Israel was crushed and oppressed on both sides of the river Jordan.

The previous mention of the Philistines in Judges chapter three as oppressors of Israel (Judges 3:31) seems to be limited to the south of Judah, when they aligned with Moab. It appears that over the following years they continued to increase in power until they attained to their height during the time of Saul. Now at this present time it appears they have the western tribes of Israel subdued, while the Ammonites have the tribes on the east of Jordan subdued.

For eighteen years: (v18) from the beginning of this oppression the Philistines and the Ammonites oppressed all the people of Israel who were on the west side of the Jordan river for eighteen years. This implies that those on the east side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, where not subdued for the full eighteen years.

THE AMMONITES FIGHT AGAINST JUDAH AND BENJAMIN

JUDGES 10:9

- **Judges 10:9:** And the Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.

The destructive invasions of the Philistines and the Ammonites was mostly against tribes and nations that were closest to them, but the Ammonites being driven by a spirit of conquest and the desire to extend their territory moved a great portion of their army across the Jordan river to subdue Judah and Benjamin.

ISRAEL CRIES TO THE LORD

JUDGES 10:10

- **Judges 10:10:** And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals."

Back in the book of Leviticus the LORD said to Israel:

- If you will not listen to me and spurn commandments and statutes, then I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. ¹⁸ And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins. (Lev. 26:14-18).

God is using the Philistines, the Ammonites and the Amorites to carry out His threat, that they would be struck down before their enemies and that those they hate will rule over them. (Lev. 26:14-18). By their evil ways and their idolatries and worship of foreign gods they brought this threat and punishment upon themselves. The Ammonites passing over the Jordan river was God's master stroke, for it resulted in the Israelites to crying out to the LORD, saying:

- We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals." (v10).
- We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please deliver us this day."
¹⁶ So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. (v15-16).

THE LORD SPEAKS TO ISRAEL

JUDGES 10:11-14

- **Judges 10:11-14:** And the LORD said to the people of Israel, "Did I not save you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines?
¹² The Sidonians (Zidonians in KJV) also, and the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, and you cried out to me, and I saved you out of their hand. ¹³ Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. ¹⁴ Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress."

The seven nations mentioned that the LORD saved Israel from

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1. The Egyptians.
2. The Amorites.
3. The Ammonites.
4. The Philistines.
5. The Sidonians.
6. The Amalekites.
7. The Maonites.

The Sidonians (Zidonians in KJV): (v12) we do not read of any oppression of Israel, especially by the Sidonians, but this should not surprise us for the storyline of the entire book is brief rather than comprehensive, and many things were done that are not recorded.

The Maonites: possibly refers to:

- One of the tribes of the children of the East, who came with the Midianites and Amalekites in the time of Gideon.
- Those who lived in or near the wilderness of Maon in the south of Judah, such as the Edomites or others.
- The Mehunims, a people living near the Arabians, for in the Hebrew, the letters of both names are the same, except one is singular, while the other is plural.
- The old inhabitants of Maon, a city in the mountains of Judah, near to a wilderness of this name.
- Some feel it refers to the Midianites supposing the name should be Midianites and not Maonites.

You cried out to me and I delivered you: (v12) out of the hands of the seven powerful mighty and fierce nations mentioned in (v11-14), yet they totally deserted Him to serve and worship foreign gods.

I will deliver you no more: (v13) this is not to be understood as absolute, for the following verse shows that if they repented God would suspend the threat of His punishment as the following verses show.

- If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. (Jer. 18:7-8).

And after this they did repent and He did deliver them. God's strong statement, "I will deliver you no more," is made conditionally, unless they repented of their idolatries, and turned from them, it is perhaps said to bring them to a sense of their sin and of danger.

Go and cry out to the gods who you have chosen: (v14) since they had been so remarkably saved, time after time, and delivered from so many powerful enemies, turning to other gods, manifests an enormous lack of gratitude. The statement, "go and cry out to the gods who you have chosen," carries the following idea, you have freely chosen to worship the idols and gods of your oppressors before me, neither your oppressor or their gods forced you, you chose to serve them, so cry to them and let them save you from your great time of oppression and distress.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK TO THE LORD

JUDGES 10:15-16

- **Judges 10:15-16:** And the people of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please deliver us this day." ¹⁶ So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD, and he became impatient over the misery of Israel (his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel in KJV).

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We have sinned, by serving other gods, by this confession they seemed to have a true sense of their sin and their confession of it seems to be honest and sincere.

Do to us whatever seems good to you: (v15) carries the idea, not to give them into the hands of their cruel enemies, but do to them according to His hand, for they understood, they deserved to be punished, and knowing this, preferred God would punish them rather than have the enemies come against them, for they knew God was a God of mercy and that He would be just and righteous and punish them according to what their sins deserved.

Only please deliver us this day: (v15) they would rather fall into the hands of God, than fall into the hands of their enemies, so they confessed their sins, and put away their strange gods and utterly forsook them, evidencing the sincerity of their sorrow. The moment God saw the sincerity of their repentance He moves toward them for good, rather than harm.

His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel: (v16) meaning God turned away His anger, had compassion upon them on account of their miseries, and acted toward them like one that felt their sufferings. He changed his attitude toward them, and punished their enemies as sorely as if they had grieved and injured Him.

The LORD, became impatient over the misery of Israel: (v16) (his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel in KJV), this means that after God saw their true repentance and their misery, He acted towards them like one that felt their sufferings, and upon seeing their misery He had pity upon them and changed his attitude from proceeding against them, and instead set His hand against their enemies as though they had grieved and inflicted harm upon Himself. From this chapter we see the amazing

depravity of human nature, and how quickly it falls from one degree of degeneracy to another. God, who fully knows human nature, foresaw that apostasy to idolatry would be the certain consequence of the Israelites dwelling among the heathen nations, which is why He strictly commanded them to utterly cast the nations of Canaan out of the land, so they would have no communication with them. By neglecting this single command to drive these nations out of the land, Israel fell into all the errors, crimes, and miseries, that God had forewarned them would be the consequence of leaving these nations in the land.

SNAPSHOT: God multiplied Israel's punishments according to the number of their sins and idols, but there is forgiveness, when sinners cry to the LORD for help, and lament their ungodliness. Israel, acknowledged what they deserved, yet prayed to God not to deal with them according to their wickedness. They submitted to God's justice, knowing they deserved His wrath, while at the same time having hope in His mercy.

In the same way that the disobedience and misery of an earthly child are a grief to a loving father, likewise, disobedience and misery of God's children are a grief to him. Let us all cast ourselves on the mercy of God and humble ourselves under the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ and seek his forgiveness and not abuse the grace of God as Israel did, but refuse to live a lifestyle of sin, that we might stand before God and rejoice with joy in our salvation.

AMMONITES CAMP IN GILEAD, ISRAEL CAMPS AT MIZPAH

JUDGES 10:17-18

- **Judges 10:17-18:** Then the Ammonites were called to arms, and they encamped in Gilead. And the people of Israel came together, and they encamped at Mizpah. ¹⁸ And the people, the leaders (princes in KJV) of Gilead, said one to another, "Who is the man who will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

Mizpeh: (also called Ramoth-Mizpeh and Ramoth-Gilead) means "watch-tower" or "look-out," because of this, it was a very common name, for there were cities in the land of Israel, on both sides of the Jordan river, however, the Mizpeh in focus here is in Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan river, either in the tribe of Gad or the half tribe of Manasseh, for it appears there was a place with this name in both of these tribes. The Ammonites called all their warriors together ready for war and set up their camp in Gilead on the east side of the Jordan river with the intention of driving Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh out of their land. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh hearing of this, called their men of war together and camped at Mizpah, also on the east side ready to go to battle against and Ammonites and defend their territory.

He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead: (v18) all the inhabitants of Gilead refer to the tribe of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. Even though they had gathered their forces together ready for battle, it appears that they had no military general to lead them in the battle. The promise to make the man that leads them into battle against the Ammonites the Judge or governor over all the two and a half tribes was made to encourage some man amongst them to rise up and take command of their forces and led them into battle.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
