

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Tola, Jair, Jephthah
Lesson 20

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VII. TOLA (JUDGES 10:1-2)

- A. All we know of Tola is found in these two verses:
 - 1. He judged Israel for 23 years.
 - 2. He was from the tribe of Issachar.
 - 3. He was buried in Shamir.

VIII. JAIR (JUDGES 10:3-5)

- A. All we know of Jair is found in these three verses:
 - 1. He judged Israel for 22 years.
 - 2. He was a Gileadite.
 - 3. He had 30 sons who rode on 30 donkeys and had 30 towns.
 - 4. He was buried in Camon.

— **Judges 10:6-18** describes the condition of Israel:

- 1. The Israelites continued to worship other false gods. (**v. 6**)
- 2. The Lord was angry with them and sold them into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites for 18 years. (**vs. 7-9**)
- 3. Yet, again, Israel called out for God to deliver them. (**v. 10-16**)
- 4. The Israelites assemble together but have no leader. (**vs. 16-18**)

IX. JEPHTHAH (JUDGES 11:1 - 12:7)

- A. Jephthah, the son of Gilead, was a mighty man of valor. But he was the son of a harlot and his family drove him out. (**vs. 1-2**)
- B. The elders of Israel went to find him to become their commander to overtake the Ammonites. (**v. 5**)
- C. Jephthah negotiates with the King of the Ammonites. (**vs. 12-27**)
- D. He gathers troops and makes war against the Ammonites. (**v. 29**)
- E. Then Jephthah makes a vow to the Lord. (**v. 30**)
- F. The Lord delivered the Ammonites into his hands. (**v. 33**)
- G. When Jephthah returned, his only child, a daughter was the first one to greet him so he had to fulfill his vow to God. (**v. 34**)
- H. The men of the tribe of Ephraim were angry with Jephthah because he did not ask them to go fight the Ammonites. (**12:1**)
- I. Jephthah gathered the men of Gilead and fought against the men of Ephraim. (**v. 4**)
- J. The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites got there. (**v. 5**)
- K. They would not let any Ephraimites cross the fords and 42,000 Ephraimites were killed. (**v. 6**)
- L. Jephthah was judge of Israel for six years. (**v. 7**)
- M. He died and was buried in among the cities of Gilead. (**v. 7**)

N. LESSONS:

Keeping Our Word!

- 1. Recall Jephthah's vow in (**11:30-31**).
 - a. God granted Jephthah's request and now it is time for Jephthah to keep his vow to God.
 - b. Obviously, Jephthah did not expect his daughter to meet him.
 - c. The keep the vow has to have been very hard since his daughter is his only child. (**v. 34**)

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- 1) This means his lineage would not continue anymore.
- d. Jephthah told his daughter... (v. 35).
- e. As difficult and heartbreaking as this had to be, Jephthah keep his vow to God.
- 2. As Christians, there is a vital lesson that we must learn from this story.
 - a. David spoke about the characteristics of people who will dwell with the LORD. (**Psalms 15:4**).
 - 1) One of the characteristics of the people who will dwell with the LORD are the people who keep their word.
 - 2) This is what describes Jephthah and this should also be the same thing that can be said about us.
 - b. May we never make promises we are not able to keep.
 - 1) When we don't keep our word, we lose our credibility.
 - 2) God holds us accountable for the words we say."
(**Matthew 12:36-37; Matthew 5:37**).
 - a) Can people trust us with our words?
 - b) Are they able to believe us when we say something?
 - c) Are we truthful with the words we say?
- 3. Jephthah, though he made a hasty vow, he still kept his word.

We May Suffer Because Of The Sins Of Others!

- 1. As was stated in verse 1, Jephthah's mother was a prostitute.
 - a. There was likewise an act of fornication on the part of his father.
 - b. His father sinned and Jephthah came into the world with the fact that he is an illegitimate son and obviously at a very young age Jephthah had to deal with the results of his father's sin.
- 2. When his half brothers grew up and it was time to divide the inheritance of their father, Jephthah was rejected by his brothers. (**11:2**)
 - a. This had to be a very painful experience for Jephthah.
 - b. Starting from childhood, he could have been the subject of ridicule from his brothers and the people around him.
 - c. Imagine how we would feel that even our own family has turned against us!
- 3. The main lesson here is people can suffer because of the sins of others.
 - a. It's wrong to automatically assume people suffer because of their own sins.
 - b. And indeed our own sins and bad choices can cause us to suffer.
- 4. As Christians, we must always remember our sins will not just affect us, but also the people around us.
 - a. This should be one of the reasons that should prevent us from committing a sin.
 - b. We must realize sin will lead to our own suffering **AND** the suffering of others.
- 5. What should we do if we suffer because of the sin of others?
 - a. There are a lot of circumstances in our lives that we don't have any control over.
 - b. However, we **CAN CONTROL HOW WE REACT!**

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6. Jephthah did not let his past or the sin of his father direct his future.
 - a. Instead of pitying himself and dreading the fact that he was an illegitimate son, he tried to compensate by accepting his weakness and building on his strengths.
 - b. He has become a mighty warrior and a man of valor. (11:1)
 - 1) The people recognize his strengths to the point that they looked to him as their leader instead of just a kid from a prostitute mother.
7. We must do likewise: Instead of being sad and disheartened over the suffering we experience because of the sins of others, we need to realize that there is always hope
 - a. Let us all remember **James 1:2-4**.

Let Us Be Close To God Not Only During The Bad Times!

1. Jephthah was an unwanted and unappreciated man in his family and the entire community.
 - a. His brothers saw him as someone who would just decrease the inheritance they would receive from their father.
 - b. There can be no doubt that they treated Jephthah so bad that he was forced to leave home.
2. But when things went bad for the Gileadites, where did they turn?
 - a. They turned to the same person they rejected!
 - b. Just because they didn't see any benefit from having Jephthah around, they are more than happy to get rid of him.
 - c. Yet, when the going got rough, they are so quick in calling the man who can deliver them from the hand of the Ammonites. Reread their conversation in **Judges 11:5-8**
3. Sadly, the same attitude is very prevalent today.
 - a. We see people who easily forget God when they lack nothing.
 - b. They are too proud to call on the Lord, bend their knees, and pray to God because of the many blessings they enjoy.
 - c. But when things get difficult and all else fails, they turn to God as the last resort.
4. God is not a spare tire that we only notice when we have a flat tire.
 - a. We must have a close relationship with God to the point that He is the center of our lives.
 - b. It is better to live a life constantly close to God rather than just remembering Him when tragedy strikes.
 - c. We must remember, there very well may come a time when we will seek God and He will no longer be found.
Isaiah 55:6; Proverbs 1:24-29

Lesson 21

Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson

Read - Judges 12:8 - 16:31