

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 10

This chapter gives an account of two judges of Israel, in whose days they enjoyed peace, (<sup><0700></sup>Judges 10:1-5), after which they sinning against God, came into trouble, and were oppressed by their enemies eighteen years, and were also invaded by an army of the Ammonites, (<sup><0700></sup>Judges 10:6-9), when they cried unto the Lord for deliverance, confessing their sin; but he had first refused to grant them any, though upon their importunity and reformation he had compassion on them, (<sup><0700></sup>Judges 10:10-16) and the chapter is concluded with the preparation made by both armies for a battle, (<sup><0700></sup>Judges 10:17,18).

**Ver. 1.** *And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel*, etc.] To save, deliver, and protect Israel; which does not necessarily imply that Abimelech did; for he was no judge of God's raising up, or the people's choosing, but usurped a kingly power over them; and was so far from saving and defending them, that he involved them in trouble and distress, and ruled over them in a tyrannical manner, and left them in the practice of idolatry: it only signifies that after his death arose a person next described to which this may well be attributed, that he was raised up as a judge by the Lord; and though we read of no enemies particularly, that he delivered the people from in his days, yet it is not impossible nor unlikely that there might be such, though not made mention of; besides, he might be said to save them, as the word signifies, in that he was an happy instrument of composing those differences and dissensions, which Abimelech had occasioned, and of recovering them from the idolatry they had fallen into in his times, and of protecting them in their liberties, civil and religious: and this was

*Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar*; he was of the tribe of Issachar, and bore the same name as the eldest son of Issachar did, as his father Puah had the name of the second son of Issachar, (<sup><1300></sup>1 Chronicles 7:1) and as for Dodo his grandfather, this is elsewhere mentioned as the name of a man, as it doubtless is here, (<sup><1300></sup>2 Samuel 23:9,24) though some copies of the Targum, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, the son of his uncle, or father's brother; meaning

that his father Puah was the son of Abimelech's uncle, or father's brother, and so was one of the family which was raised up to be a judge after his death; but it is not likely that Gideon, the father of Abimelech, and Puah, the father of this man, should be brethren, when the one was of the tribe of Manasseh, and the other of the tribe of Issachar:

*and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim*: that is, when he became judge in Israel he removed to this place, as being in the midst of the tribes, and near the tabernacle of Shiloh, and so fit for a judge to reside in, to whom the people might apply from all parts to have justice and judgment administered to them. It is called Shamir in Mount Ephraim, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the mountain of Judah, (~~(158)~~ Joshua 15:48) it seems to have its name from the thorns which grew about it.

**Ver. 2.** *And he judged Israel twenty three years, and died*, etc.] 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 honour:

*and was buried in Shamir*; the place where he executed his office. It is said <sup>f216</sup>, that in the first year of Tola, the son of Puah, Priamus reigned in Troy.

**Ver. 3.** *And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite*, etc.] 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 honour 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.

**Ver. 4.** *And he had thirty sons that rode upon thirty ass colts*, etc.] Which to ride on in those times was reckoned honourable, and on which judges rode in their circuit, (~~(150)~~ 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, (<sup><0801></sup>1 Samuel 8:1),

*and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair 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, (<sup><0824></sup>Numbers 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, (<sup><1322></sup>1 Chronicles 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.

**Ver. 5.** *And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.*] A city of Gilead, as Josephus <sup>f217</sup> calls it; Jerom <sup>f218</sup>, 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 <sup>f219</sup> observes, this seems not to be the same place, but rather this is the Camon Polybius <sup>f220</sup> speaks of among other cities of Peraea, taken by Antiochus.

**Ver. 6.** *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] 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 Gill on "<sup><0721></sup>Judges 2:11, 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, (<sup><1105></sup>1 Kings 11:5) and it seems they had other deities:

*and the gods of Moab*; the chief of which were Baalpeor and Chemosh, (<sup><0823></sup>Numbers 25:3 <sup><1107></sup>1 Kings 11:7)

*and the gods of the children of Ammon*, as Milcom or Molech, (<sup><1105></sup>1 Kings 11:5,7)

*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.

**Ver. 7.** *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel*, etc.] 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.

**Ver. 8.** *And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel*, etc.] 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.

**Ver. 9.** *Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan,* etc.] 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.

**Ver. 10.** *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,* etc.] 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.

**Ver. 11.** *And the Lord said unto the children of Israel,* etc.] By a prophet he sent unto them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, (see <sup><0008></sup>Judges 6:8), whom Ben Gersom takes to be Phinehas, but he could not be living at this time; or by an angel, a created one, sent on this occasion; or the uncreated one, the Son and Word of God, who might appear in an 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, (<sup><0813></sup>Judges 3:13)

*and from the Philistines*? in the times of Shamgar, (<sup><0813></sup>Judges 3:31).

**Ver. 12.** *The Zidonians also*, etc.] 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, (<sup><02713></sup>Exodus 17:13) and when they were come into the land of Canaan, joining the Moabites and the Midianites against them, (<sup><0813></sup>Judges 3:13 6:3)

*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, (<sup><0655></sup>Joshua 15:55 <sup><0234></sup>1 Samuel 23:24) or rather a people of Arabia, called by Strabo <sup>f221</sup>, and Diodorus Siculus <sup>f222</sup>, Minaeans, the same with Mehunim, mentioned with the Arabians, (<sup><0807></sup>2 Chronicles 26:7) and who perhaps came along with the Midianites, when they oppressed Israel; though some have thought of the old inhabitants of Bethmeon and Baalmeon, (<sup><0823></sup>Numbers 32:38 <sup><0423></sup>Jeremiah 48:23)

*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, (<sup><0706></sup>Judges 10:6).

**Ver. 13.** *Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods*, etc.] 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.

**Ver. 14.** *Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen*, etc.] 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.

**Ver. 15.** *And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned*, etc.] By serving other gods particularly; and they seemed to have a true sense of their sin, and their confessions of it to be ingenuous, by what follows:

*do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee*; inflict what punishment he would upon them, as famine or pestilence, they could not but own it would be just and righteous, and what their sins deserved:

*deliver us only, we pray thee, this day*; out of the hands of men; they chose rather to fall into the hands of God; and however he thought fit to deal with them, they entreated that this once he would save them out of the hands of their enemies.

**Ver. 16.** *And they put away the strange gods from among them*, etc.] Which was an evidence of the truth of their repentance, and showed their confessions and humiliations to be genuine:

*and served the Lord*; and him only, both in private and public; in the observance of duties, both moral and ceremonial; in an attendance on the service of the sanctuary, and by offering sacrifices to God there, according to his will:

*and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*; which is to be understood after the manner of men; for grief properly does not belong to God, there being no passion in him; but it denotes a carriage or behaviour of his, which shows what looks like sympathy in men; a love and affection for Israel, notwithstanding their ill behaviour to him, and a change of his dispensations Providence towards them, according to his unchangeable

will; so Maimonides <sup>f223</sup> understands it of the good will and pleasure of God, to cease from afflicting the people of Israel; but Abarbinel is of opinion that this refers to the soul of Israel, which was shortened and contracted, as the word signifies, because of the labour of servitude, the affliction and distress they were in.

**Ver. 17.** *Then the children of Ammon were gathered together*, etc.] By a crier, as Jarchi; they had passed over Jordan, as in (<sup><0700></sup>Judges 10:9) and had been distressing three of the tribes of Israel on that side; but now being informed, by an herald at arms, that the children of Israel, on the other side Jordan, were risen up in defence 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 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 <sup><0134></sup>Genesis 31:49 <sup><0103></sup>Joshua 11:3).

**Ver. 18.** *And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another*, etc.] 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.