

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 11- "A sliding society"

Key text: Judges 10

Suppl. texts:

Introduction: Last time, we began by seeing a despicable act by a despicable man named Abimelech. He thought he was the heir apparent to his father, Gideon. He wanted to be Israel's first king. After gaining a following of ruthless wanderers, he killed his brothers & ruled over Shechem. In the murderous chaos, Jotham, one of the seventy brothers, escaped. He rose to speak against a parable against his brother, the thorny king. He also chided the people of Shechem for being complicit in Abimelech's murder of his family. Abimelech's short, three-year rule ended in disaster & more murder. He turned on the citizens of Shechem, who had since turned on him & his murderous rage while attacking another city, he paid a heavy price & was killed. The parable became a prophecy that enacted the judgment of God. Tonight, we move into chapter 10, which gives us two more judges & new sad details.

Outline: read Judges 10:1-18.

1. **Forty-five** years of **peace**

- After the horrors of Abimelech & the corruption of the people of Shechem, it seems like Israel experiences some sort of temporary reset.
- God gives two sequential judges, Tola & Jair, who led them during a time of peace.
- Tola, son of Puah, from Ephraim, judges Israel for twenty-three years.
- **Vs. 2:** "He led Israel twenty-three years; then he died and was buried in Shamir."
- Jair is said to be from Gilead.
- **Vs. 3:** "He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years."
- That is not a tribal distinction, but a descriptive location.
- Three tribes of Israel intersected in this mountainous area of Gilead, so it's possible that he was from Gad, Reuben, or Manasseh.
- Gilead is known for its balm, a plant resin used for its natural healing properties.
- While there's no mention of a return to Yahweh, the fact that there was such a long period of peacetime speaks to the possibility of some return.
- What is apparent is that they don't use their peacetime wisely.

2. **Cultural** failure

- We can identify at least four failures of the people of Israel during their time of peace & rest.
- First, no one is continuing to obey God's command to remove the Canaanites.
- Second, no one is teaching the children of Israel about the faith of their forefathers.

- Third, the priesthood hasn't been mentioned in a while. So, it is either corrupt or non-existent, which means they are not worshipping God acceptably.
- Fourth, they go back to doing what was right in their own eyes. In our day, we call that moral relativism. You live your truth & I'll live mine. I decide what's right or wrong. The absence of absolute truth rules the day.
- It is amazing to me how much their time sounds just like our day.
- We are so intertwined with the world & its pressures that we can't seem to separate ourselves from the enemies at the gate, and the results are disastrous.
- Many church-going families aren't disciplining their children & passing along their faith. The result is the 'graying' of the church & the fallout of the young people.
- Many churches & church leaders are focused on numbers, offerings, & presenting a culturally acceptable form of faith that is far from acceptable as worship to our Lord.
- How many people are living as practical atheists, rarely thinking if the things they do are offensive to our holy God? They live as if they are the gods of their lives.

3. Sold again

- **How do we know all this is true?** The story sharply turns in verse 6.
- **Vs. 6a;** *"Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines..."*
- Look at what the Israelites turned to: Baal & Ashtoreth, the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, & the Philistines.
- Theologians estimate that a minimum of twelve false deities were worshipped in Israel in addition to Yahweh.
- The story is a familiar one of idolatry after the passing of a good judge.
- God again responds in alignment with His promises & His holy nature.
- **Vs. 6b-8;** *"And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served Him, He became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years, they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites."* Eighteen years, in our day, is the time of upbringing of a child.
- Again, before we cast stones at the Israelites, let us consider how many times post-Christ, we are rebellious & adulterous to our Lord!
- **What was the result of this oppression?** **Vs. 9b;** *"and Israel was in great distress."*
- **Vs. 10;** *"Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, 'We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals.'" That repetitive cycle begins again.*
- Now, God has the attention. The Israelites become repentant in three ways.
- First, they confess their sins. This is always the first step of repentance.
- Second, they humbled themselves before the Lord. Humility is key to repentance.

- **Vs. 15;** *"But the Israelites said to the LORD, 'We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now.'"*
- Third, they **obey**. Obedience is the **proof** of repentance.
- **Vs. 16;** *"Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And He could beat Israel's misery no longer."*
- The final two verses set the stage for the next **warrior** judge to step up.
- **Vs. 17-18;** *"When the Ammonites were called to arms and camped in Gilead, the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever will launch the attack against the Ammonites **will be the head** of all those living in Gilead."*

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 11

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1. _____ - _____ years of _____

- After the _____ of Abimelech & the _____ of the people of Shechem, it seems like Israel experiences some sort of _____.
- God gives two _____ judges, Tola & Jair, who led them during a time of peace.
- That is not a tribal _____, but a descriptive _____.
- Gilead is known for its _____, a plant resin used for its natural _____ properties.
- While there's no mention of a return to Yahweh, the fact that there was such a long period of peacetime speaks to the _____ of some return.
- What is apparent is that they don't use their peacetime _____.

2. _____ failure

- We can identify at least _____ failures of the people of Israel during their time of peace & rest.
- First, no one is continuing to obey God's command to _____ the _____.
- Second, no one is _____ the children of Israel about the faith of their forefathers.
- Third, the _____ hasn't been mentioned in a while. So, it is either _____ or non-_____, which means they are not worshipping God _____.
- Fourth, they go back to doing what was right in their own eyes. In our day, we call that _____. The absence of _____ rules the day.

- We are so _____ with the world & its pressures that we can't seem to separate ourselves from the enemies at the gate, and the results are _____.
- Many church-going families aren't _____ their children & passing along their faith. The result is the ' _____ ' of the church & the _____ of the young people.
- How many people are living as _____, rarely thinking if the things they do are offensive to our holy God? They live as if they are the gods of their lives.

3. _____ again

- ***How do we know all this is true?***
- Theologians estimate that a minimum of _____ false deities were worshipped in Israel in addition to Yahweh.
- God again responds in _____ with His _____ & His holy _____.
- Again, before we cast stones at the Israelites, let us consider how many times post-Christ, we are _____ & _____ to our Lord!
- ***What was the result of this oppression?***
- Now, God has their _____.
- The Israelites become repentant in three ways.
- First, they _____ their sins. This is always the _____ step of repentance.
- Second, they _____ themselves before the Lord. Humility is _____ to repentance.
- Third, they _____. Obedience is the _____ of repentance.
- The final two verses set the stage for the next _____ judge to step up.

Small Group Questions:

- 1. Israel just drifted along during their 45 years of peace. Discuss why Christians tend to become so complacent & even apathetic when things are normal or good.**
- 2. Discuss the three failures of Israel during peacetime & how we still see these same things going on here in the Church in America today. What is the fix?**
- 3. Did you notice the unfailing love & tenderness of the Lord in this text today? The Word of God said, “*And He could bear Israel’s misery no longer.*” Discuss why we can trust & depend on God’s amazing love in the darkest times of life & especially when we sin & repent?**
- 4. While we know the repetitive theme of Judges is pervasive idolatry & a return to sinful ways, over & over again. Discuss the three things we noted about repentance. Are these steps that you regularly follow when you sin?**