

## Judges 10 - 12

### Jephthah & the Minor Judges

### Lesson 6

Israel had a total of 12 judges during their history. Six were considered major judges and six minor judges. Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon are mentioned only briefly. They seemed to have lead Israel in battle so their inclusion here may be for historical continuity.

#### **The Minor Judges - 10:1-18**

1. What do we learn about Tola? (vs. 10:1-2)
  
2. What do we learn about Jair? (vs. 10:3-5)
  
3. In verse 6 we are brought back to the cycle again. How was the spiritual condition of Israel described? Please comment.
  
4. Joshua had warned them, "If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, He will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after He has been good to you." Joshua 24:20 How was that warning being fulfilled? (vs. 10:7-9)
  
5. Israel finally cried out to God. What did they say to Him? (vs. 10:10)
  
6. What was God's answer? (vs. 10:11-14)
  
7. I wonder if the Song of Moses went through their minds. Moses had said "Take to heart all the words of this Law I have solemnly declared to you today, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this Law. They are not just idle words - they are your life." Deut. 32:46, 47 What were Joshua's words to Israel? Joshua 24:23

8. What did Israel finally do? (vs. 10:15-16)

**Jephthah - 11:1-40**

9. This time the oppressors were the Ammonites and they were camped in Gilead (Transjordan Gad & Manasseh) ready to attack. God raised up Jephthah as the new judge to save Israel. What was his background? (vs. 11:1-3)

10. Who were the Ammonites? (Genesis 19:36-38)

11. With the Ammonites warring in Gilead, the elders took action. Explain what took place in Judges 11:4-11.

- Why do you think Jephthah “repeated all his words before the Lord at Mizpah”? (Numbers 30:1,2)

12. Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king to find out why they were attacking Israel. What was the king’s reason? (vs. 11:13)

13. Once Jephthah knew what the Ammonites wanted, he gave them a history lesson. What was Jephthah’s “bottom line”? (vs. 11:14-27)

14. But, the Ammonite king didn’t listen. “Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,” and he advanced against the Ammonites. Prior to the battle, Jephthah had made a vow. What was the vow and why did he make it? (vs. 11:29-31)

**Note:** In the Old Testament, the unique empowering of the Spirit was given to an individual, at a specific time, for a specific purpose of carrying out God's mission.

15. With Jephthah empowered by the Spirit, how did the battle go? (vs. 11:32-33)

16. What happened when Jephthah returned home after battle? (vs. 11:34-40)

- What are your thoughts on this?

**Jephthah & Ephraim - 12:1-6**

17. What did the tribe of Ephraim say when they took their military forces over to Jephthah? (vs. 12:1)

18. The last time we heard from Ephraim was in 8:1. What was recorded then?

19. How did Jephthah describe the situation as he saw it? (vs. 12:2-3)

- What was the real issue? (vs. 12:4 and Joshua 22:21-25)

20. How many Ephraimites died because of this disagreement? (vs. 12:4-6)

**More Minor Judges - 12:7-15**

21. We're told that Jephthah led Israel for six years then he died. He was followed by three more minor judges. What information was given about each of them?

- Ibzan (vs. 12:8-10)
  
- Elon (vs. 12:11-12)
  
- Abdon (vs. 12:13-15)

**Think about it!**

In today's section, God provided a victory for His people but there were consequences not part of God's plan. Jephthah, intent on looking out for his own interests, mixed pagan practices (sacrifice for favors) with following God. He thought he needed to bargain with God. The result was the loss of his only child. Nowhere in the Bible does God say He will bargain with us for His favor. God has said that the way to His blessing is through obedience. God's people are commanded to love the Lord, walk in His way and keep His commands. It is the result of a life of love and obedience that brings God's blessing. (Deut. 30:16) Think about it!