

## Episode #529 Judges 10 – Tola and Jair

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. After the death of Gideon, the fifth judge, Abimelech, his son through his slave woman, conspired with the men of his mother's city of Shechem to execute all his brothers and pronounce himself king. Of all his brothers only Jotham, the youngest, escaped, and cursed Abimelech and Shechem that they would destroy each other. Last time we saw how Abimelech and his home city turned against each other and he ended up slaughtering the people of the city.

III. Abimelech destroys Shechem. Judges 9:42-49.

- A. Verse 46. The men of the inner fortress of Shechem hear the slaughter, and they run into a fortified place in the temple of their god Ba'al Berith (Lord of the Covenant).
- B. Verse 47. Abimelech hears of these men holding up in this place.
- C. Verse 48. He goes to Mount Zalmon (Shady Mountain) with his men. He uses an axe to cut a bough from the trees (brushwood) and puts it on his shoulder. He told his people to hurry and do the same thing.
- D. Verse 49. They all did this. For camouflage? As wood to start the fire? They set the fortified place on fire so that the mortal men of the tower died as well. This was about a thousand men and women. So Shechem is paid back for their wickedness. This fulfills what Jotham said in verse 20.

IV. Abimelech's Destruction. Judges 9:50-57.

- A. Judges 9:50. Next he attacks Thebez (Brightness). He encamps around it and captures it as well.
- B. Verse 51. The city had a strong tower where the men and women flee. They closed it up and went up to the top of it.
- C. Verse 52. Abimelech tries the same plan to set the tower on fire and kill those in it.
- D. Verse 53. Yet when Abimelech is close, a woman casts the top part of a millstone on his head. It crushes his skull.
- E. Verse 54. He asks his armor-bearer to quickly finish him to avoid the shame of a woman killing him. The young man does as he asked.
- F. Verse 55. When the men of Israel saw Abimelech was dead his court, such as it was, broke up, and all went back to their homes. His attempt to start a royal court fails.
- G. Verse 56. God sums up. He returned on Abimelech's head his wickedness which he did to his own father when he killed his seventy brothers.
- H. Verse 57. The calamity caused by the men of Shechem also falls on their heads. This Jotham's curse comes on them, proving prophetic of what God would do.

V. The sixth judge: Tola. Judges 10:1-2.

- A. Verse 1. Tola (Worm) the son of Puah (Splendid, or Mouth) son of Dodo (Belonging to Love) of Issachar is the sixth judge. Issachar (Recompense) not one of the greatest tribes. The only judge from Issachar. Later the wicked Baasha of Issachar took the throne of the northern kingdom. Though from Issachar, (Sharp Point or Thorn) in the larger and more governmental tribe of Ephraim.
- B. Verse 2. He judged twenty-three years, died, and was buried in Shamir. (Remember that we overlap his judgeship with Abimelech.)

VI. The seventh judge: Jair. Judges 10:3-5.

- A. Verse 3. Jair (He Enlightens) a Gileadite (dwelt east of the Jordan) is the seventh judge. Gilead technically belonged to the half tribe of Jordan, but sometimes used for all the land east of the Jordan. He judged twenty-two years, one less than Tola.
- B. Verse 4. He had thirty sons, no doubt from more than one wife. They rode on thirty donkeys, showing that he obeyed the law about horses, Deuteronomy 7:15-17 (but not wives!). He also made them rulers over thirty cities. They were still called Havoth Jair “The Villages of Jair” in the author’s days (Samuel?).
- C. Verse 5. Jair died and was buried in Camon (Raised or Abounding in Stalks), no doubt in Gilead.

VII. Further apostasy. Judges 10:6-9.

- A. Verse 6. The cycle of judges starts again. They did the evil again and served many other gods. The Ba’alim and Ashtoreths from the Canaanites (in their land and south), from Aram (north), Sidon (northwest), Moab (southeast), Ammon (northeast), Philistines (southwest). On top of this they forsook the LORD, their true God.

VIII. Abimelech met his deserved end after destroying Shechem. Jehovah took care of this bold usurper to the throne and his wicked supporters. Tola and Jair judged in relative peace, but then Israel again forsook God for the gods of all the nations around them. Are we more faithful to God than His nation was?