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# Judges 10

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## Judges 10:1–18

## The Sons of Ammon Invade Israel

### Outline of Chapter 10:

- Vv. 1–2 **Judge Tola**
- Vv. 3–5 **Judge Jair, the Gileadite**
- Vv. 6–9 **Israel falls into idolatry and is disciplined by God**
- Vv. 10–16 **Israel comes crying to God/God's response**
- Vv. 17–18 **Israel prepares to go to war with the sons of Ammon**

### Charts:

**Introduction:** Judges 10 is a short and interesting chapter. We will be introduced to two minor judges, meaning that we know very little about them. Then the majority of Judges 10 sets us up for Judges 11 and the ninth judge, Jephthah. This chapter also introduces us to the beginning of the end of the period of the judges. Ammon and the Philistines will oppress Israel for several decades and despite the actions of the judges in the remaining chapters, the Philistines will remain a thorn in the side of the Israelites until the time of Samuel, the last judge whose life extends throughout the first half of the book which bears his name.

This chapter of Judges introduces an interesting response from God. In the past, when Israel cried out to God, God responded with help. This time, Israel will come crawling to God, repenting and in great pain, and God will spurn them (this is how it will appear at first). However, God will change His mind and come to their rescue (the changing of God's mind is an anthropathism). The person who will be raised up as a judge to fight against the Ammonites will not be named until the next chapter. This chapter will end abruptly with preparations to go to war.

Now what appears to be the case is that Israel has her primary enemies from the east and south east (Ammon) and from the southwest (the Philistines). Both are mentioned in Judges 10:6–7. What appears to be the case is that we have some simultaneous narrations that then take place. Judges 11–12 deal with Ammon and Judges 13–16 deal with the Philistines. Judges 10:6–7 sets the stage for these simultaneous invasions, but the following six chapters treat them as separate events. For the linear mind, it may appear as though the invasion by Ammon came first, and later on, the altercation with Philistia. This is important to note, as we cannot correlate a completely linear view of the book of the Judges with the time period within which we have to work. Therefore, some years need to be shaved off here and there for coterminous time periods, and this would be one of those. We do not know exactly when the oppression of the Philistines began nor do we know when the oppression of the sons of Ammon began; my thinking is that the Ammonites oppressed Israel first, and then, 10–15 years later, the Philistines began to dominate the Israelites. I do not find anything in Scripture yet to support or to invalidate that position. Furthermore, the time of Tola and Jair probably both overlap, as well as the time of the Ammonite oppression and resolution of same with the forty years time period of the Philistine oppression (which actually takes us into the time of Samuel). In fact, it appears as though the end of those forty years of Philistine rule ends in I Sam. 7.

For those of you who read ahead, you may be wondering, *well, this takes us to Judges 16, but there are still five chapters after that.* What we have here are incidents which took place during the time of the Judges, but just did not fit into the narrative, which was actually fairly well-defined.

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## Judge Tola

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

**And so arose after Abimelech to deliver Israel Tola ben Puah ben Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he is dwelling in Shamir in a hill country of Ephraim.**

Judges  
10:1

**And so after Abimelech, Tola ben Puah ben Dodo, a man of Issachar, arose to deliver Israel; and he was living in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.**

**After the death of Abimelech, Tola, the son of Puah, a descendant of Dodo, a man of Issachar, rose to prominence. He lived in Shamir, which was in the hill country of Ephraim.**

Keil and Delitzsch summarize the next five verses for us: *Of these two judges no particular deeds are mentioned, no doubt because they performed none.*<sup>1</sup> We will go into more detail than that, but that apparently is the short version of what is to come.

There are only two men named Tola in Scripture; the one we find here and the one who is a son of Issachar (Gen. 46:13 | Chron. 7:1). Puah is also mentioned here and a predecessor of his, a son of Issachar as well, is mentioned in Gen. 46:13 | Num. 26:23 | Chron. 7:1.<sup>2</sup> A sub-tribe of Israel was named after the latter Tola, as we see in Num. 26:23. The name means either *worm* or *crimson* (the two words possibly closely related as a red dye was made from the blood of worms, if memory serves). The sum total of what we know about this particular Tola is found in this verse and the next.

The second verb is the Hiphil infinitive construct of our old friend *yâshaʿ* (יָשַׁע) [pronounced *yaw-SHAHG*], which means *to deliver, to save*. Strong's #3467 BDB #446. Throughout the book of Judges there is this tie in between those who deliver Israel and those who judge Israel. They were generally the same person. Israel would get into a jam; a man, acting under God's direction, would deliver them from their trouble, and then that man would judge Israel. Now, I have oversimplified the matter. Othniel both delivered and judged Israel (Judges 3:9–10); as did Deborah (Judges 4:4, 14). Jephthah, who is to come, will both judge and deliver Israel (Judges 11:32–12:7). Tola will both save (or deliver), as well as judge Israel (Judges 10:1–2). That this is the generally *modus operandi* is given in Judges 2:16, which reads: **Then Jehovah raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.** What is significant about this is that Jesus Christ will both be the Judge of all the earth and the deliverer of same. **“For not even the Father judges any one, but He has given all judgement to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father Who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live; for just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.”** (John 5:22–27). **“And she will bear a Son; and you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”** (Matt. 1:21). **And many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.”** (John 4:41–42). **“And He ordered us to proclaim to the people and to solemnly testify that this is the One Who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead; of Him, all the prophets bear witness that through His name, everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”** (Acts 10:42–43).

Issachar and Ephraim are both bordered in the east by the Jordan River and Issachar is north of Manasseh which is north of Ephraim. A set of mountain range runs from Judah, through Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh and Issachar and further north. It is apparently this mountain range wherein Tola lived, perhaps 25–30 miles south of Issachar proper (see Joshua 15:48). The most reasonable guess is that when he gained prominence in Israel, he moved to Ephraim, a more prominent tribe and area, and this was likely from whence he judged, presiding over several

<sup>1</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Puah* is spelled slightly differently three times in these verses.

tribes.<sup>3</sup> Keil and Delitzsch suggest that he ruled over northern Israel, and perhaps eastern Israel, but *to the exclusion of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, as these southern tribes neither took part in Gideon's war of freedom nor stood under Abimelech's rule.*<sup>4</sup> However, Judah and Benjamin will soon be a part of the end of the Ammonite oppression in Judges 10:6–10, when Ammon comes across the Jordan and invades Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim (v. 9).

**And so he judged Israel twenty-three years and so he died and so he is buried in Shamir.** Judges 10:2 **And he judged Israel [for] twenty-three years and died, and was buried in Shamir.**

**Tola ben Puah judged Israel for twenty-three years and eventually died and was buried in Shamir.**

We do not know the location of Shamir other than it is in Ephraim. There is another Shamir also mentioned in Judah which is even further south of Ephraim (Joshua 15:48). In the Septuagint α, the burial place is called Samaria (Σαμάρεια).<sup>5</sup> Twenty-three years is a fairly long career, but we are told nothing about it.

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### Judge Jair, the Gileadite

**And so arose after him Jair the Gileadite and so he judged Israel twenty-two years.** Judges 10:3 **And so Jair the Gileadite arose after him and he judged Israel [for] twenty-two years.**

**Jair the Gileadite arose after him and he judged Israel for twenty-two years.**

We have covered in the introduction that Tola and Jair's judgeships could have been almost concurrent in the introduction to the book of the Judges. When Jair arose after Tola, this means that he could have come to his position of authority on the other side of the Jordan River after Tola came to his position of authority west of the Jordan (as opposed to after Tola's death). The end of their judgeships could have even been simultaneous.

We know about as much about Jair as we do about Tola. First of all, this is not the Jair of Num. 32:41 Deut. 3:14 Joshua 13:30 I Kings 4:13 I Chron. 2:22 (that Jair was a descendant of Manasseh who founded the cities which became known as Havoth-Jair). We also have an intervening 156–256 years after Joshua. At this time period, Moses' age of 120 was unusually long. Even if the Jair of the book of Numbers was the same Jair here, he would have had to have been at least 30 in the book of Numbers to have exerted that kind of influence, thus making him about 180 years old at the time of his rule as a judge. Whereas such a thing is conceivably possible, it is highly unlikely. This Jair was more likely a descendant of his, perhaps a descendant of Gad. We are now east of the Jordan, and the half tribe of Manasseh occupies the northern most area, with Gad immediately below. The cities of Havoth-Jair are in northern Gad and were possibly once a part of Manasseh. Gilead is the eastern portion of Gad. Gilead, the person, is a son of Machir and the grandson of Manasseh. The map found in the NIV Study Bible is probably the more accurate where East Manasseh stretches down into this area of Gilead, rather than Gilead lying entirely within the borders of Gad (as we find in the NASB map). All that we know about this Jair is found in vv. 3–5. What we have here is a leader of a prominent family of that area who has the same name as the family's patriarch. Such a thing is not unusual (recall that two of our presidents were name John Adams).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Barnes, here, wants these to be different Shamir's.

<sup>4</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> This is according to *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 374. In my volume of the Septuagint, which must be the β version, it reads Σαμῖπ, which is Samir.

<sup>6</sup> In case you are wondering, Barnes claims that the two Jair's *could* be the same person; the NIV Study Bible has them as the different, but probably related people; and Keil and Delitzsch do not even consider that these men could have been one and the same, but explain some of the similarities in such a way to show that there are no contradictions or problems with this passage.

And so he was to him thirty sons (they) riding upon thirty asses and thirty asses [probable reading: cities] to them to call them Havvoth-jair until the day the this, which [are] in a land of Gilead.

Judges  
10:4

And he had thirty sons riders on thirty asses and thirty cities to them to call them Havvoth-jair until this day, which [are] in the land of Gilead.

And he had thirty sons who rode thirty asses and who presided over thirty villages, which are called Havvoth-jair (i.e., villages of Jair) even up until this time. This is in the land of Gilead.

JPS (He had thirty sons, who rode on thirty burros and owned thirty boroughs in the region of Gilead; these are called Havvoth-jair to this day.)

At the beginning of this verse, we have one of the many uses of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which usually means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, it often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the *wâw* consecutive). However, what we have here is immediately after the verb, we have the phrase *to him*; literally, this is *And so he was to him thirty sons*; or, *And it was to him thirty sons*. In plain English, we would understand this as *And he had thirty sons* (which is, essentially, even the rendering of Owen, Rotherham and Young). Strong's #1961 BDB #224.

*Riding* is a masculine plural, Qal active participle, so this acts more like a verbal noun. The impression that I have is that these kids hung out mostly together and that this was a common sight in Gilead to see Jair's sons riding around on thirty mules en masse.

After this we have *and thirty asses to them*. The word translated *asses* is *ʿayir* (עִיר) [pronounced *AH-yir* or *GAH-yir*], and it means *male ass, male donkey (young and vigorous)*. Strong's #5895 BDB #747. The Hebrew reads: *And so he was to him thirty sons (they) riding upon thirty asses and thirty asses to them to call them Havvoth-jair until the day the this*. This word is repeated in this verse, and it may seem unnecessary to you. What we have is a slip of the pen of the scribe—the word which should have gone there is *ʿayr* (עִיר) [pronounced *geer*], which means *encampment, city, town*. Strong's #5892 BDB #746. You will note the only difference between the words is the vowel points, which were added long after the fact, and the yodh (י). Some scribe, early on, screwed this up; it reads *cities* in the Septuagint (although it reads *thirty-two* and not *thirty* as well). If you will look at your English Bible, you will notice nothing. The translators that I am aware of (I use around twenty different versions of the Bible) take this fix as a given and do not even mention it. In fact, I believe only Owen acknowledges this.

What is actually occurring here is a play on words, which is found in the Tanakh translation found above. The similarity of the words resulted in a very minor problem with the text.

In Hebrew, the word *Havvoth* is actually *chavvôth* (חַוּוֹת) [pronounced *khahv-VOHTH*], which is a masculine construct which means *village, tent village*. In other words, although this apparently specifies a specific area, it means *villages of Jair*. Strong's #2334 BDB #295. This is followed by the masculine proper noun *yâʿayr* (יָאִיר) [pronounced *yaw-EER*], and it means *he enlightens* or *one giving light*. This is simply *Jair's name*. Strong's #2971 BDB #22. This causes us a problem, which is not obvious to the casual reader of Scripture. You might note something quite familiar about this verse. Back in Num. 32:39–41, we read: *And the sons of Machir ben Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. So Moses gave Gilead to Machir ben Manasseh, and he lived in it. And Jair ben Manasseh went and took its towns and called them Havvoth-jair (i.e., villages of Jair).*<sup>7</sup> We also read in Deut. 3:14: *“Jair ben Manasseh took all the region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called it Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth-jair, unto this day.”* The deal is that these are two different *Jair's*, although certain *Jair the Gilead* was a descendant of *Jair ben Manasseh* (perhaps a grandson or great grandson). Now, this is nothing unusual. When I went to work in Humble, it was a small town and there were a lot of names that you heard over and over again. These were family names of families who had lived in Humble for several generations and had risen to some sort of local prominence. Often a boy is

<sup>7</sup> The plural is correct.

named after his father and/or grandfather and that was the case here. Jair came from a prominent family, a sub-tribe of Manasseh which founded these villages; and his sons were likely each prominent persons in their cities. Now you may think that I am beating a dead horse to spend this much time showing you that there are two Jair's, but given that Barnes suggests they could be one and the same requires me to investigate this matter more fully.

I should also point out that Jair ben Manasseh was **not** a son of Manasseh but a descendant of Manasseh (who had died several hundred years previous). Jair ben Manasseh was actually the son of Segub, who was the son of a daughter (or female descendant) of Machir who was a son of Manasseh (1 Chron. 2:21–22 7:14). It is even possible for the reference to Jair in Numbers to be a family or a sub-tribe of Jair, although I doubt that is the case.

To take you back a ways into history, Gad, Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh settled in on the east side of the Jordan. Israel had gone to war against several groups of people in that area, prior to crossing over into the Land of Promise, and during the altercation, these two and a half tribes decided that they liked the area and asked Moses to give this land to them. It was given to them with the stipulation that they continue with their brothers and help to conquer the other side of the Jordan. Havvoth-jair is directly south of the Yarmuk River which flows east at a right angle from the Jordan River, their intersection being almost at the southern-most point of Sea of Chinnereth (which is the Sea of Galilee). Havvoth-jair is east of the Jordan. Some maps (e.g., the maps found in the NASB) call this area Gad's, although it is more likely Manasseh's (as Jair was a son of Manasseh). This is as it is found in the maps in the NIV Study Bible and in Scofield's Reference Bible.

As to the number of cities, this is a point of confusion. The original Jair had 23 cities (1 Chron. 2:22), which were taken by Geshur and Aram (they apparently took other cities as they had a total of 60—1 Chron. 2:23). They are said to be sixty cities that Moses gave to Manasseh (Joshua 13:30). A careful reading allows for the cities from that general area to be 60, with fewer belonging strictly to Havvoth-jair. In our passage, we have thirty villages and thirty sons. It would be more than reasonable to assume that more villages were settled as time went on. Finally, in its last mention in 1 Kings 4:13, these villages were listed in a group of sixty and they apparently were no longer villages but fortified cities. This is what we would expect (although whether they are a part of the sixty cities or an addition to the sixty cities, is not entirely clear; furthermore, it is not even clear whether these were the fortified cities referred to).

Now, with regards to the names of these villages—Havvoth-jair; this passage does not tell us that Jair of Judges 10 thought up that name and it was their given name from thereon in. Being the family name, he began calling these cities by that name, as it had been called years prior, and at the time of the writing, they were still being called Havvoth-jair. It was actually named this back in Num. 32 as we just mentioned. So we have no contradiction of any sort. Jair the Gileadite merely brought this name back into common usage. So, he did several things of note: (1) he gave the villages around him his own name; a name which they had a couple centuries ago; (2) he gave his children the latest in transportation vehicles (riding a donkey was a very prestigious thing to do); (3) he apparently gave his children positions of authority in the surrounding villages; (4) then he died and he was buried. A rather unimpressive existence.

Let me allow J. Vernon McGee to sum this up: *In Jair's story, I can see three things: (1) prosperity without purpose, (2) affluence without influence, and, (3) prestige without power. In that day a donkey was a mark of prosperity. That was the thing that denoted a man's wealth. For example, Judges 5:10 says, "Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way." This verse speaks about the upper echelon, or the establishment. The donkey was a mark of wealth, and was the animal that kings rode upon. There has always been a question about whether or not they had horses in that day. In scripture, the little donkey is the animal of peace and the horse is the animal of war (the horse was imported into that land). But the little donkey was actually the amrk of prosperity and the mark of a king.*

*You remember that the Lord Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on a little donkey. We misinterpret Zechariah 9:9 which says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, they King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah does not mean that the Lord Jesus is humble because He is riding on a little donkey. He is humble in spite of the fact that He is riding upon an animal which only kings ride. If He had not been King, it would really have been a*

presumption to ride into Jerusalem on that donkey as He did, and receive all of the adulation and hosannas from the crowd that day.

Jair was obviously a man of wealth and prominence to be able to afford thirty donkeys. He gave each one of his sons a donkey, so he must have had a thirty car garage! This was the mark of a benevolent father. He was generous, and I think he spoiled his sons. He got them what they wanted. They lived in the lap of luxury and with golden spoons in their mouths. Donkeys probably came in several models, and Jair bought each son the latest thing. But did these donkeys bring glory to God? Did they make Jair a better judge? Did they bring blessing to the people? Did any one of these boys go out as a missionary? No. They lived in Gilead.<sup>8</sup> In short, Jair obviously loved his sons, but then he spoiled them. He bought them the equivalent of a new car on their sixteenth birthday. He did nothing concerning their character or growth, and, as a result, none of them are noteworthy. Later on, at the end of this chapter, when a man is searched out to lead Israel into battle, none of his sons are mentioned.

McGee goes on: *Jair's days were also marked by prestige without power. He was the outstanding man in the community. The traffic cops probably never gave any of his sons a ticket. But verse 5 does not speak of a monument for Jair. He was buried in an unknown spot. He never performed one conspicuous act. He never did a worthwhile deed. He never gained a victory. He may have had thirty donkeys, but he had no spiritual power.*<sup>9</sup> You will note that we hear nothing about any accomplishment of Jair or of any of his sons. He do not know their names, in fact. He was the greatest man of his day and he has no outstanding accomplishments worth noting by the historian of the book of Judges. And we know nothing about any of his sons; not even their names. What kind of a testimony is that? Jair simply took up space in God's Word. His name is mentioned to account for the time of his judgship; it is not mentioned for any other reason.

McGee: *[Today] we have prosperity but without purpose. May I ask you what the goal of your life is? Is it pointless? Is it aimless? Have you found life pretty boring? Shakespeare's Hamlet said, "How stale, flat and unprofitable seem to me the uses of this world." What we need today is direction and dimension in our lives. We need a cause, and the cause of Jesus Christ is still the greatest challenge any man can have.*

*Right before World War II, the city of Pasadena was having their annual Rose Parade. The float which was entered by the Standard Oil Company was covered with American Beauty roses. It was a sight to behold. The theme of the parade was, "Be Prepared." Right in the middle of the parade the Standard Oil Company's float ran out of gas. It stopped right where I was standing viewing the parade. I couldn't help but laugh. If there was one float that should not have run out of gas, it was that one. Standard Oil Company should have had plenty of Gas! As I looked at that float, I saw a picture of many Christians today. They are beautiful, but they have no power in their lives. They have beauty and prestige, but no power. That was judge Jair for you. He did nothing [other than spoil his children], died, and was buried.*<sup>10</sup>

**And so died Jair and so he was buried in Kamon.**

Judges  
10:5

**Jair then died and was buried in Kamon.**

**Jair then died and he was buried in Kamon.**

Kamon is mentioned only here and it is reasonable to suppose that this is one of the villages of Havvoth-jair.<sup>11</sup> And so we end with an encapsulation of the life of Jair—he lived, he was a judge, he gave his children Mustangs or Jeeps, as well as perhaps a position of power to each one, and then he died and buried. Have you ever had that dream where you have accumulated some amount of valuables—whether it be money or possessions, and you

<sup>8</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 170–171.

<sup>9</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 171.

<sup>10</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 171–172.

<sup>11</sup> Keil and Delitzsch go into considerable detail here in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 269, just incase you want to see what it is like to beat a dead horse (which is something which I often have the occasion to do).

either lose it in the dream or you lose it when you wake up, and there is this moment of sadness. The only thing that you carried from that dream into consciousness was a sad memory of what you have lost. For many of you, that is what heaven will be like. Everything that you have done and achieved will be left here on earth as a sad memory of what you spent your entire life—none of it goes with you into heaven. All that you take into heaven with you is a sad memory and nothing else. That will be the experience of most believers. And they will live through that complete failure for all of eternity. Now, don't get me wrong, you will be happy and you will be blessed, and you will spend eternity with God. However, the time here that you spent on earth will have been a complete and total waste. You might as well have spent your time in your back yard digging up holes and filling them in again because you have accomplished nothing. So there is no misunderstanding, this is **not** God's game plan for you. All of us are given a great deal of time on this earth and many opportunities. It takes surprisingly little effort on your part to spend eternity in a mansion and in a position of authority and responsibility—and you can be the lowest person socially on this earth and achieve that. You can be unattractive, unintelligent, poor and have a bad personality—and you can achieve the greatest of all eternities. God has a plan for your life and you only need to do two simple things: either stay in fellowship or get back into fellowship; and study God's Word through a pastor-teacher who teaches the Bible verse-by-verse. God will provide the direction and the opportunity.

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## Israel Falls into Idolatry and Is Disciplined by God

From Judges 10:6 through 12:7, we have the story of Jephthah, *a social outcast whom they had driven from the land and caused to become an outlaw without an inheritance in Israel. The author notes this to Israel's shame.*<sup>12</sup> The early portion of Judges 10 dealt with two minor judges and the end of Judges 12 will deal with three minor judges.

**And so sons of Israel to do the evil in [the] eyes of Y<sup>h</sup>owah and so they served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth and the gods of Aram and the gods of Sidon and the gods of Moab and the gods of the sons of the Ammonite and the gods of the Philistines; and so they forsook Y<sup>h</sup>owah and did not serve Him.**

Judges  
10:6

**And so the sons of Israel did evil in the eyes of Y<sup>h</sup>owah; they served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, as well as the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. So they forsook Y<sup>h</sup>owah and did not serve Him.**

**Then, again, the people of Israel participated in evil activity in the sight of Jehovah; they both served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, as well as the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, and gods of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. Therefore, they forsook Jehovah and chose not to serve Him.**

Recall that the Ashtaroth was a figurine which represented Ashtoreth, the goddess of fertility, love and war. In all reality, she was the goddess of sex and there were several sexual practices which occurred as a part of religion in the ancient world. Baalim is the plural of Baal (I find it easier to render this as Baals; it communicates the plural to the person who does not know any Hebrew). This was essentially the Canaanite pantheon of gods whom they worshipped, which was, essentially, a pantheon of demons. The peoples whose gods they worshipped are then given.

The way all of this likely occurred was through intermarriage. Satan attacks in a number of ways, but his most tried and true method is through the woman. Men have a hard time saying no to the person they love, which is what Satan counts on when he approaches the believer through the opposite sex.

The pattern for this was given back in Judges 2:11–16: **Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of Jehovah and they served the Baals, and they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of**

<sup>12</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 343.

Egypt, and followed other gods from the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked Jehovah to anger. So they forsook Jehovah and they served Baal and the Ashtaroth. And the anger of Jehovah burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed. Then Jehovah raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. Moses warned of this back in his song, in Deut. 32:16–18: They made Him jealous with strange gods and with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons who were not God and to gods whom they had not known—new gods who had come in lately whom your fathers did not dread. You neglected the Rock who begot you and you forgot the God Who gave you birth. And Moses wrote that, as God had warned him in Deut. 31:16–18: And Jehovah said to Moses, “Observe, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will rise up and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and they will forsake me and they will break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will burn against them in that day, and I will forsake them and I will hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, ‘Is it not because our god is not among us that these evils have come upon us?’” This latter passage describes exactly what will happen in this passage.

Since the peoples and their gods are mentioned, this might be a good time to mentioned who belonged to whom (there is a similar passage in II Kings 23:13). The first people mentioned are Aram. In the Hebrew, this is ʾārām (אֲרָם) [pronounced *uh-RAWM*], which simply refers the Aram, the Aramæans, Syria or the Syrians. Strong’s #758 BDB #74. We covered these people back in Deut. 26:5. Aram was never a united empire, but rather a loose group of cities which were in northeast Palestine and beyond, Damascus being one of their chief cities. It was about this time or a little later when Syria attained her greatest power. It is not really clear to me whether their *father* was Aram, the son of Shem, or Aram the grandson of Nahor (Abraham’s brother). I suspect the latter. Even though they occupied a rather broad area, Aram was better defined by whatever specific portion of that area was occupied at any given time. Their gods were Hadad (Baal), Mot, Anath and Rimmon.<sup>13</sup> We don’t have any Scripture mentioning these gods (although there are people and places with these names).

Sidon is one of the coastal cities along Israel’s northern coast which belonged to the Phœnicians. They essentially worshipped Baal, son of El, as well as Asherah (who was the chief consort of El) and Astarte (or, Ashtoreth), who was the chief consort of Baal).<sup>14</sup> They worshipped the Phœnician version of these gods (see I Kings 11:5). Moab and Ammon were the sons of Lot and their descendants occupied the area east and south east of Israel. Their chief gods were Chemosh (I Kings 11:33) and Molech (Num. 21:29) (or, Milcom; see I Kings 11:5, 33 II Kings 23:13), respectively.<sup>15</sup> *Both Molech and Milcom are forms of a Semitic word for “king.”*<sup>16</sup> Molech was occasionally worshipped by human sacrifice (Lev. 18:21 20:2–5 II Kings 16:3 17:17 21:6 23:10).

The Philistines primarily occupied the southern coast of Israel. Although they primarily worshiped the Canaanite gods (i.e., Baal, El, Asherah and Ashtoreth), they also worshiped the deities Dagon and Baal-Zebub. *Dagon* is the same as the Hebrew words for *grain*, suggesting that he was a god of harvest or of vegetation and we find him in history going back to the second millennium B.C. Actually, Baal-zebub is a slur by Israel against the Philistine god Baal-Zebul. *Baal-zebub* means *Lord of the flies*; whereas *Baal-zebub* means *Baal the prince*.<sup>17</sup> Actually, *Lord of the flies* is the more genteel version; *prince of dung* perhaps being a bit more accurate. Baal-zebub (or, Beelzebub) is mentioned several times in the New Testament: Matt. 10:25 12:24 Mark 3:22 Luke 11:15. Given that there was primarily desert south of Palestine, these make up all of the peoples who surround Israel.

Now two of my sources make a big deal out of their being a mention of seven gods here and how God later is spoken of as delivering Israel from seven nations—making the number significant. However, if you will go back and

<sup>13</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 343.

<sup>14</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 329.

<sup>15</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 343.

<sup>16</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 343.

<sup>17</sup> Paraphrased and quoted from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 343.



count the *gods* of this verse, you will find them difficult to total up as some overlap and some nations had several. It is a nice sounding theory but one which cannot be applied here. The sevenfold deliverance of Israel by God does speak of God's perfection, however.

Now, you would think that the people of Israel would have caught onto this by now—when they sinned and fell into idolatry, God disciplined them big time. They would know this from historical records and from the information given them from their fathers. However, isn't there is sin that you commit over and over again that you get disciplined for over and over again, and you still do it? That is Israel—our very nature is in absolute rebellion against God. **The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?** (Jer. 17:9). Israel knows what is right, Israel knows her relationship to God, yet Israel chooses to learn the hard way over and over again. Does that sound like anyone you know? (No, I wasn't referring to the person next to you, your wife, or your husband; I was talking about you). McGee: *How are we doing today, by the way? May I say that there is a frightful apostasy today in the church. Human nature is like that, and we are in a nation that is in trouble. We have tried every method, political scheme, and political party, and none of them has worked. What is wrong? We have gone to the wrong place for help. Only a turning to God will get us on the right path. I know that sounds square and out of date, but it sounded that way one thousand years before Christ also. The Israelites turned to other gods, refused to serve the living God, and look at what happened.*<sup>18</sup>

What we have in this passage will be a major change for the nation Israel. Israel has chosen to follow the gods of the Ammonites and the Philistines—now she will find herself under the attack and then the control of the Ammonites and the Philistines—and this time, God will not raise up a judge so that Israel is delivered and at peace for “x” number of years. God will tell Israel, **“Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress.”** (Judges 10:14).

**And so burned anger of Y<sup>e</sup>howah against Israel and so He sold them in a hand of [the] Philistines and into a hand of [the] sons of Ammon.** Judges 10:7

**So the anger of Y<sup>e</sup>howah burned against Israel, so He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon.**

**Therefore, Jehovah's anger burned against Israel so that He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of Ammon.**

With this verse, we have a fork in the road. One road takes us on a journey with the oppression of the Ammonites and the deliverance of Israel by Jephthah (this would be an attack from the east). The other road, which is picked up in Judges 13, is the partial deliverance by Samson from the Philistines (this would be an attack from the southwest). The implication of this verse is that these two narratives should be placed side-by-side, however, there is no way to do that and still retain some semblance of historical context; therefore, like the book of Judges, we will study these separately. Another reason for this is that we have no way of knowing exactly what events in Judges 1):8–12:15 took place before the individual events of Judges 13:1–16:31. In fact, some even believe that the rule of the Philistines carries into I Sam. 7.<sup>19</sup> Personally, I believe the whole purpose of this verse is to indicate that we are dealing essentially with simultaneous events. Covering these events by going back and forth between them as they happened would be a rather disjointed approach, so these attacks are covered separately. Our other option is that the writer of this portion of the book of Judges is simply organizing the final chapters for us: *we will look at the attack of the Ammonites and then the attack of the Philistines.*

The Philistines lived along the southwestern coast of Israel, occupying varying amounts of territory. Ammon lived in the desert area along side eastern Israel. Apparently both countries began to make their in-roads from these sides. What apparently happened was that Israel became involved with foreign women from within (Israel never completely eradicated the population of hostile and heathen forces) and was then taken over from hostile forces

<sup>18</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 172. That portion of McGee's book pretty much was paraphrased in the rest of the paragraph as well. What was not was inspired by that portion of McGee's book.

<sup>19</sup> I do not, however, and discuss this matter in great detail in I Sam. 4:intro.

from without. Another things that we should understand. Because Israel never completely removed the heathen peoples from their land, the border between Israel and the nations heretofore named were not always clear-cut. That is, it was not unusual for Israelites and heathen to live side-by-side in adjacent areas as well as in the same cities. Therefore, it was common for them to intermingle and to intermarry. When a concentration of heathen moved further into Israel proper, this constituted an invasion. When the concentration was high enough, with their power and strength sufficient, they would then, often by force, take over various regions of Israel. However, the key is the internal degeneration of Israel took place first; then an invasion from without. This is typical for any country—they are corrupted from the inside and then countries from the outside destroys them.

Barnes suggests a coalition between Ammon and Philistia; however, the narrative really does not suggest such an alliance. Rather, when one invaded, the other invaded from the other side acting more like opportunists than allies. The idea is that there would be some pie to cut up and both groups wanted to be in on the cutting.

**And so they shattered and so they crushed sons of Israel to the year the that—eighteen years all sons of Israel who [were] beyond the Jordan in a land of the Amorite which [was] in the Gilead.**

Judges  
10:8

**And they shattered and crushed the sons of Israel from that year—[for] eighteen years [they shattered and crushed] all the sons of Israel who [were] beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorite, which [was] in Gilead.**

**And Ammon crushed and oppressed the sons of Israel from that year (the point at which God's anger reached a boiling point) and for eighteen years they crushed and oppressed the sons of Israel who were east of the Jordan in the land of the Amorite (which was in Gilead).**

Part of the wording in this verse is a bit difficult; particularly the way the time frame is stated.

*The Emphasized Bible*

...and they enfeebled and oppressed [Lit., brake and crushed"] the sons of Israel in that year,— eighteen years did they this unto all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, that was in Gilead.

NASB

And they afflicted [Lit., shattered] and crushed the sons of Israel that year [Lit., in that year]; for eighteen years they *afflicted* all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in [Lit., which is in] Gilead in the land of the Amorites.

*Young's Lit. Translation*

...and they crush and oppress the sons of Israel in that year—eighteen years all the sons of Israel *who* are beyond the Jordan, in the land of the Amorite, which *is* in Gilead.

You will note that, unlike the previous chapter, we are spending relatively little time in the Hebrew. The Hebrew of this chapter is much simpler and more straightforward. The first verb in this verse is the Qal imperfect of *râ ʿats* (רָעַץ) [pronounced *raw-GAHTS*], which means *to shatter, to crush*. Strong's #7492 BDB #950. The second verb is the Poel imperfect of *râtsats* (רָצַץ) [pronounced *raw-TSAHTS*], which means *to crush, to bruise, to oppress*. This was the verb used of the woman *crushing* the skull of Abimelech. Strong's #7533 BDB #954.

*In that year* apparently refers to the year that God's anger burned against Israel when he sold them into the hands of the Philistines and Ammon (v. 6). Apparently, they oppressed the people of Israel east of the Jordan for eighteen years and then they crossed over the Jordan after that (v. 9).

This is one of the few times where it is clear that the attack is only upon a specific portion of Israel. This again was the area east of the Jordan where Israel first went to war. Their intention was to cross over the Jordan and to take the land west of the Jordan which God had promised to them. However, they were attacked so they responded in kind, taking much of the land from the Dead Sea and northward on the east side of the Jordan. This is spoken of as the land of the Amorites in Num. 32:33 and Joshua 12:2.

**And so pass over sons of Ammon the Jordan to fight also with Judah and with Benjamin and with a house of Ephraim. And so she showed hostility to Israel exceedingly.**

Judges  
10:9

**Then the sons of Ammon passed over the Jordan to fight with Judah and with Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim. She [i.e., the hand of Ammon] showed extreme hostility to Israel.**

**Then the sons of Ammon crossed over the Jordan and continued their fight with Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim. They showed extreme hostility toward Israel.**

The Ammonites apparently made some great inroads in eastern Israel; in fact, they were strong enough to then cross the Jordan River to attack Israel. It appears as though they spent eighteen years oppressing Israel on the other side of the Jordan. We are not given a time frame while they are on the west side of the Jordan. The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *ʿâḇar* (עָבַר) [pronounced *aw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716.

The second sentence is rather interesting. The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of *tsârar* (צָרָה) [pronounced *tsaw-RAHR*], which has two sets of meanings: *to bind, to tie up, to be restricted, to be cramped*. Strong's #6887 (and #3334) BDB #864. The second set of meanings is *to show hostility toward, to vex, to oppress, to persecute*. Strong's #6887 BDB #865. After the verb, we have the lamed prefixed preposition and Israel. Although it is difficult to make into a sensible sounding English sentence, it proclaims what came to Israel or was what given to Israel. There are no feminine singular nouns anywhere, making the identification of the subject difficult. The closest feminine subject would be *hand*, back in v. 7. Then we have the adverb *m<sup>o</sup>ôd* (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m<sup>o</sup>-ODE*], which means *exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*. Strong's #3966 BDB #547.

Israel has never been lacking for enemies. Despite the fact that Gideon completely annihilated the Midianites, thus removing them from Israel's serious enemies list, there were a number of enemies in line to take their place. Recall that Ammon were the sons of Lot, the nephew of Abraham.

This verse appears to be coterminous with Judges 11:4, which reads: **And it came to pass after awhile that the sons of Ammon fought against Israel.** At the beginning of Judges 11, we have information given about Jephthah, the next deliverer that we will study. The remainder of Judges 10 indicates the frustration of Israel and the unwillingness of God to intervene this time. God will then repent and Israel will ask herself *who can she find as their human deliverer?* This is a nice shadow of our Lord to come which is rarely if ever mentioned. Even though the people must ultimately depend upon God, they must also find a human deliverer. They must have a man on whom they can trust to deliver them. Jesus Christ is the man Who delivers us; He is the man upon Whom we can place our faith. **“And there is deliverance in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** (Acts 4:12).

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## Israel Comes Crying to God/God's Response

**And so cried sons of Israel unto Y<sup>e</sup>howah to say, “We sin with respect to You and because we have forsaken our God and so we are serving the Baalim.”**

Judges  
10:10

**So the sons of Israel cried to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, saying, “We are sinning against You both because we have forsaken our God and are serving the Baals.”**

**Then the sons of Israel cried out to Jehovah, saying, “We realize that we have sinned against you both because we have forsaken our God and because we are serving the Baals.”**

In the middle of this verse, we have the wâw conjunction next to the conjunction kîy (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], means *when, that, for, because* and it gives us *how* Israel sinned against God. The two together means *both because*. Of course, a wâw consecutive must follow. Strong's #3588 BDB #471.<sup>20</sup>

Israel was not just aware that she was sinning against God, but she realized why or in what way she had sinned against God. Most believers, when put under severe discipline, usually have a clue as to why they are under discipline. If not, God often finds a way to tell them why they are under discipline. It gets more and more difficult as a society moves further and further from divine viewpoint. In the 50's, most teenagers understood that pre-marital sex and living together is wrong. In the 90's, very few teenagers actually realize that not only is this a sin against God, but this is the quickest way to insure that they will never hook up with their right man or their right woman. We are so far gone as a society that we have believers shacking up together, allowing the television to morally guide them, never once grasping that a great deal of television, even apart from an attempt to garnish an audience in any way possible, is depraved older men, acting as producers and directors, who want to place attractive young women in sexy situations. A man in heat has a number of strategies that he uses to sleep with women and one of those involves directing or producing films and television which places women in compromising positions. My point here is, due to the influence of television and movies on our lives, we sometimes do not immediately grasp how it is that we have fallen out of fellowship. However, whenever you allow television to be your moral guardian, you will be out of fellowship in no time at all. The Israelites during this time period, even though it was acceptable to be involved in idolatry (which did involve temple prostitutes), realized what they were doing was wrong and that their discipline could be attributed directly to this idolatry.

Allow me another tangent, if you will: fundamentalist Christians constantly have times when they have these spiritual revivals and many times these are not for unbelievers, but they are times for believers to rededicate their lives to God and a bunch of other hoohah. After this coming forward and rededicating or weeping great tears of repentance, people often have a period of time during which their have a spiritual reawakening or a period of time in their lives where things run smoother. You may fall for this yourself and you may wonder why does it work, because there is, after all, no Scriptural basis for this behavior. There are several things that explain this phenomena: (1) it is a cathartic experience which releases a lot of built-up tension and guilt; (2) closely related to #1, a person makes their mind up, at least for a time, to turn from doing that which is wrong, to doing that which is correct and acceptable. Anyone, believer or unbeliever who does this will find an improvement in their lives. After all, whenever you choose to do the right thing over doing the wrong thing, you will notice a marked improvement in your life. (3) However, this is the most important reason that there is a beneficial change: in the midst of all of this hoohah, the believer, who has been out of fellowship for the past five years, finally names his sins to God and is back in fellowship and might even keep relatively short accounts with God for awhile when it comes to naming their sins to Him. You see, there are a huge number of believers who do not even know how they get in and out of fellowship with God, so, following salvation and their first bout with carnality, they remain out of fellowship pretty much for the majority of their Christian lives. Now, some become religious, but most fall by the wayside. However, what this Christian revival thing does is gets them to name their sins to God, which puts them back into fellowship.

In the Old and New Testaments both, we get back into fellowship by naming our sins to God. We see this over and over again in the Old Testament. [So the people came to Moses and they said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah and you. Intercede with Jehovah and He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people \(Num. 21:7\). "We know our wickedness, Jehovah, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You." \(Jer. 14:20\). I acknowledge my sin to You and my depravity I did not hide. I said, "I will confess my transgression to Jehovah and You forgave the guilt of my sin." \(Psalm 32:5\).](#)

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<sup>20</sup> However, we do have a minor problem here. It is written *both because*; read simply *because*; and the *both* is not found in the Septuagint, Syriac codex or in the Vulgate. In the Aramaic, the Septuagint and the Vulgate, we later have *Yahweh our God* instead of simply *our God*.

And so said Y<sup>e</sup>howah unto sons of Israel, “Not from the Egyptian and from the Amorite and from the Ammonite and from the Philistine...

Judges  
10:11

So Y<sup>e</sup>howah said to the sons of Israel, “[Was it] not from the Egyptian, and from the Amorite, and from the Ammonite, and from the Philistine,...

So Jehovah then said to the sons of Israel, “Haven’t I already delivered you from the Egyptians, and the Amorites, and the Ammonites, and the Philistines,....

This is one of the goofier places to put in a change of verse—the sentence is continued into v. 12 where the whole sense of what is being said here is explained. God will give a list of people that Israel has been oppressed by, where Israel cried out to God and God delivered them from those people. If you have ever had a relative who is a drug addict or an alcoholic and you have bailed them out of trouble time and time again; there is this point at which you just want to cut them off. This is the read that we get from God. Now don’t panic and go into some sort of a tizzy over this. God does not have emotions like we do and God doesn’t finally get fed up with us. This is a way to communicate God’s actions on a level that we can understand. The Bible often attributes human emotions and motivations to God which He does not possess in order to communicate to us.

The first here was Egypt. Israel was moved to Egypt by God to allow Israel to grow. Egypt eventually enslaved Israel to the point where it was completely unbearable. Israel finally called out to God in pain and distress, and God delivered Israel out of Egypt (the first dozen chapters of Exodus). [Thus Jehovah delivered Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore](#) (Ex. 14:30).

When on the east side of the Jordan, God had not ordered Israel to engage in any aggressive behavior. Their focus was to be on the Land of Promise on the other side of the Jordan. Therefore, as they moved up along the Salt Sea and the Jordan River, they implored the semi-hostile nations to allow them to pass through. Israel sent messages to Sihon, who was the king of the Amorites, asking for a peaceful and temporary passage through his country in Num. 21:21–22. [But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. Therefore, Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon was Jazer. Then Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all her villages \(for Heshbon was the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon\)](#) (Num. 21:23–26).

In the next chapter, we will examine the **Doctrine of the Sons of Ammon**; however, here I will give you just a brief run down of Israel’s history with Ammon. Israel, first of all, was told to keep her relationship with Ammon non-violent. In Num. 21:24, they took a territory right up to the border of Ammon; and, in Deut. 2:19, 37 Moses warns Israel not to harass the sons of Ammon. In fact, we pretty much go through the first six books of the Bible without a mention of war between Israel and Ammon. Ammon went for a long time on the steam of blessing by association. Then, in this book, we have the first mention of hostilities. In Judges 3:13, we read: [And he \[Eglon, the king of Moab\] gathered to himself sons of Ammon and Amalek, and he went and defeated Israel, and they possessed the city of the palm trees.](#) This is the point at which God raised up Ehud to deliver Israel from Moab (Ammon is not mentioned again, although the sons of Ammon were definitely involved in this attack upon Israel).

The fourth hostile group mentioned here are the Philistines, who will play a much greater part as the enemies of Israel late in this book and early in the book of I Samuel. Only one direct altercation with the Philistines has been mentioned previously, and that was when Shamgar ben Anath struck down 600 Philistines with an ox-goad (Judges 3:31). We are never made privy to the circumstances, although we can rest assured that it was the familiar cycle of the book of Judges which transpired.

A question that people often have, particularly as new believers is, *how come this book is a part of God’s Word and this one is not?* This is the study of canonicity. I.e., why do some books belong to the canon of Scripture and why are others excluded? One way that this is determined is whether one book of Scripture either quotes from or

makes reference to another book (the quotes must take the previous book as being authoritative and accurate). Much of the book of Judges is summed up when Samuel addressed Israel in I Sam. 12:9–11: “**But they [the fathers of the audience; i.e., Israel] forgot Jehovah their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried out to Jehovah and said, ‘We have sinned because we have forsaken Jehovah and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.’** Then Jehovah sent Jerubbaal and Bedan [or, Barak] and Jephthah and Samuel, and He delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security.” You will notice that in this little quote we have two-thirds of the book of the Judges summarized (and you will note how closely some individual passages have been quoted). I have done a separate work on the **Doctrine of Canonicity** which explores this point more fully.

**and Sidonian and Amalekite and Maonite—they oppressed you [all] and so you cried out unto Me and so I delivered you from their hands?**

Judges  
10:12

**and the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites—they oppressed you and you cried out to Me and I delivered you?**

**“...and the Sidonians and the Amalekites and the Maonites? They oppressed you and then you cried out to Me and then I delivered you out from their control and oppression.**

Up until this point of time in Scripture, very little has been said about Sidon. The national origins, which go all the way back to Canaan, are give in Gen. 10:15, 19. When Joshua was taking the northern portion of Israel, he chased the enemies all the way to Sidon, indicating that he did not go into Sidon and take it (Joshua 11:8). The Sidonians are described in terms of living in the land in Joshua 13:4, 6; and they are spoken of in general terms in Judges 1:31: **Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob.** Israel also fell under the influence of the gods of Sidon (as well as those of the of Philistine cities) in Judges 3:3–4, which caused Israel to be placed under the control of Cushan-rishathaim, the ruler of Mesopotamia, for eight years. In Judges 3–4, Sidon is not mentioned directly, but there is a great coalition of Canaanites which very likely included those from Sidon (see Judges 4:2). If there was any more direct confrontations, which there likely were, we are not told of them.

The Amalekites went against Israel in conjunction with the Midianites in Judges 6:3, 33 7:12. Gideon delivered Israel here (Judges 6–8).

It is the Maonites who are a mystery here. Barnes hypothesizes: *[The Maonites are] probably one of the tribes of the “children of the East,” who came with the Midianites and the Amalekites in the time of Gideon, and may have been conspicuous for their hostility to Israel, and for the greatness of the discomfiture, though the record has not been preserved.*<sup>21</sup> In other words, he doesn’t know, but he gives us a good and reasonable guess. The Hebrew is מַעֲוֵי (מַעֲוֵי) [pronounced *maw-OHN*], and this is a city mentioned in Judah (Joshua 15:55) and a people found here I Sam. 23:24, 25 25:2 I Chron. 2:45.\* The I Sam. passages refer to the city in Judah and the passage in Chronicles refers to a particular person who may or may not be the forerunner of the Maonites. Strong’s #4584 BDB #733. At best, it has been speculated that they might be equivalent to the Meunites (or, the Meunim). This Hebrew word is מַעֲוֵיִם (מַעֲוֵיִם) [pronounced *m<sup>e</sup>-oo-NEEM*], which, except for a couple of vowel points, would appear to be the plural of Maon. This word is found only in II Chron. 26:7 Ezra 2:50 Neh. 7:52.\* Strong’s #4586 BDB #589. Even if these words are equivalent, we still don’t know much about these people and we have no history between them and Israel prior to this passage. Therefore, although this indicates that this people oppressed Israel and that God threw them off; we don’t know anything else. We won’t be able to answer each and every question or each and every detail which is found in this book. Who these people were and if even calling them *Maonites* is accurate will remained an unanswered question. To take a step back a few paces, our understanding has not been decimated by this lack of information. The big picture is that there is a small coalition causing Israel trouble from the east.

<sup>21</sup> Barnes’ Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 444.

There is an alternative to these Maonites. In several of the Greek manuscripts, we find the word *Midianites*. My first response to that is that they were thrown in later because no one knew who the Maonites were. However, Keil and Delitzsch provide the best counter argument, pointing out that, considering how recent was the altercation with the Midianites, and how total was their defeat, it would make little sense to exclude them here.<sup>22</sup>

Psalm 106:42–46 sums this up: **Their enemies also oppressed them and they were subdued under their power. Many times He would deliver them. They, however, were rebellious in their counsel and so they sank down in their iniquity. Nevertheless, He looked upon their distress when He heard their cry and He remembered His covenant for their sake and He relented according to the greatness of His grace. He also made them objects of compassion in the presence of all their captors.**

**“And you [all] [even] you [all] forsake Me and so you [all] served gods other therefore I will not continue to deliver you [all].**

Judges  
10:13

**“And you [even] you forsake Me and so you serve other gods; therefore, I will no longer continue to deliver you.**

**“And because you have forsaken Me and because you are serving other gods, I will no longer continue delivering you.**

We do not know exactly how this dialog occurred and whether or not it was audible to anyone. Certainly, many Israelites prayed to God for their deliverance and God answered them *no*. There is no reason or indication here that this was an audible answer, but that this was God’s answer to them and that they knew this. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that it was the High Priest who gave them this information. It could have been simply from the praying outside the Holy Tent and hearing the reading of God’s Word (which I think is the mostly likely scenario). It does not have to even been a *group thing*; i.e., there are no requirements for all of Israel to approach God all at once and to get a big booming response all at once. What is the most likely is that many Israelites prayed at many different times and that they received their answers separately—but the essence was that Israel placed herself at God’s mercy and understood that they had repeated these sins of idolatry time and time again. Some would learn that at the Sacred Tent from the reading of God’s Word; some would read it for themselves on the stones written on by Joshua. Some would have enough doctrine to recognize what was going on. Under this kind of a scenario, the actual mechanics of how God spoke, as it would have been in multifarious ways over a long period of time, would have detracted from the narrative.<sup>23</sup>

The second to the last verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *yâçaph* (יָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*], which means *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. It is here followed by an infinitive to indicate what activity would be continued (or, in this case, discontinued because of the negative). Strong’s #3254 BDB #414.

All of the *you*’s in this verse are plural and it is emphasized strongly at the beginning of the verse. Moses had warned Israel about this many years previous: **“Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and I will hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, ‘Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?’ But I will certainly hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do for they will turn to other gods.”** (Deut. 31:17–18). Hundreds of years later, Solomon will build a temple for God and God will warn Solomon and the people of Israel: **“But if you or your sons turn away from following Me, and do not keep My**

<sup>22</sup> This is the gist of their argument, with some minor points thrown in, from Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 272.

<sup>23</sup> Surprisingly enough, of the sources which I use, only Keil and Delitzsch reasonably considered the mechanics of this exchange. Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 271. One quote of theirs, worth passing on is: *[the answer] was evidently given in front of the tabernacle, where the people had called upon the Lord, and either came through the high priest, or else through an inward voice in which God spoke to the hearts of the people, i.e., through the voice of their own consciences, by which God recalled to their memories and impressed upon their hearts first of all His own gracious acts, and then their faithless apostasy*. Edersheim also mentions these mechanics, but says that God’s response came through Urim and Thummim, which is nonsensical, as Urim and Thummim was used for *yes and no* answers, as well as a designation of a particular tribe or tribe of Israel.

commandments and My statutes which I have set before you and if you go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, 'Why has Jehovah done this to this land and to this house?' And they will say, 'Because they forsook Jehovah their God, Who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and they worshiped them and served them., Therefore, Jehovah has brought all of this adversity upon them.' " (1 Kings 9:6–9).

God again and again delivered Israel against great, aggressive forces, and He manifested His love and faithfulness to them again and again. Their response was to forsake Him and pursue other gods. This is no difference from the errant husband whose wife manifests love and faithfulness to him, and he pursues other women. The natural human response would be to dump such a one; God's response is one of grace—He forgave Israel and delivered her again and again. Still, even today, Israel has pursued another God—not one made with hands, but one fashioned from the mind of man. In fact, they have made a God in their own image and they worship that image (which is what most people do nowadays). God is still faithful to Israel and there is still a place for Israel in the plan of God. God has never and will never completely forsake Israel.

Now, here is an interesting thing about this passage that you did not catch before. Israel was oppressed for only eighteen years here, which, although that is not particularly a short time, Israel was under the oppression of the Eglon, king of the Moabites, for 18 years. Let me explain something here: when you are far away from God's plan, oppressive circumstances seem to be longer and more difficult. The more wrapped up a person is in himself, the more likely problems will seem even more insurmountable than they are. These people of Israel during this time period were far away from God and immersed in idolatry. Eighteen years under the Philistines and the sons of Ammon seemed to be eternal in nature. When you are out of fellowship, almost any kind of pressure is devastating. To these Israelites at this time, it appeared as though God had deserted them forever.

**"Go and cry unto the gods whom you [all] choose in yourselves; they [even] they will deliver for you [all] in a time of your distress."**

Judges  
10:14

**"Go and cry to the gods whom you choose against yourselves; they [even] they will deliver you in [this] time of your distress."**

**"Go and call out to the gods that you have chosen for yourselves; see if they can deliver you during this time of distress and affliction."**

Let me give you just a couple of other renderings:

*The Emphasized Bible* God and make outcry unto the gods whom ye have chosen, —they must save you, in the time of your tribulation.

NASB "Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."

*Young's Lit. Translation* 'Go and cry unto the gods on which ye have fixed; they—they save you in the time of your adversity.'

After the two imperatives, we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect of bâchar (בָּחַר) [pronounced *baw-KHAHR*] means *to choose*. Strong's #977 BDB #103. In case you wonder, I choose to insert these definitions because some of your translations may not have this; for instance, Young, who has probably the most literal translation, does not have the verb *choose* but instead uses the verb *to fix*. I do not know where this came from for him. None of the translators really tell us all that is found in this verse. After this verb we have the bêyth preposition (*in, against, at, with*) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix. This is pretty much ignored or taken in with the verb. This should literally read: *whom you have chosen in yourselves*. Even the Septuagint, which is at times rather free form, includes this prepositional phrase. What would make more sense, at first, is the kaph preposition, which looks almost exactly like the bêyth preposition, and it means *to, for* (the way the Septuagint rendered this phrase). However, my thinking is that this is bêyth, as we have in the Massoretic text, and it can be rendered *against yourselves*.



I like this verse for one primary reason—God is sarcastic. These gods to whom Israel prayed were powerless. They could not hear Israel and they could not deliver Israel. Now and again God chooses to be sarcastic, and that is what we have here—some divine sarcasm. When the Israelites chose gods other than Jehovah, then they were choosing these gods against themselves. They had been warned repeatedly by Moses and by Joshua concerning idolatry. **“Now, therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst and incline your hearts to Jehovah, the God of Israel.”** (Joshua 24:23).

The time involved here is in a time of the feminine singular noun *tsar* (צָר) [pronounced *tsahr*], which means *distress, affliction*. Strong’s #6862 BDB #865. The song of Moses’ says the same thing: **“And He will say, ‘Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge? Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, drank the wine of their libation? Let them rise up and help you. Let them be your hiding place.’”** (Deut. 32:37–38). Isa. 57:13: **“When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you. But the wind will carry all of them up and a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in Me will inherit the land and he will possess My holy mountain.”** Jeremiah says the same thing: **“But where are your gods which you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble; for as the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah.”** (Jer. 2:28; see also Jer. 11:12). And Habak. 2:18: **“What profit is the idol when its maker has caved it? Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols.”** Isa. 63:9–10: **In all their affliction, He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them. In His love and in His mercy, He redeemed them and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. Therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy and He fought against them. Let’s complete this with Isa. 44:7–8: “And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yet, let him recount it to Me in order from the time that I established the ancient people. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble and do not be afraid. Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock?”**

Now, unfortunately, when we read through several chapters at a time, or study this verse by verse, where it may take an hour to cover a couple of verses, we sometimes miss the forest for the trees. What we have in Judges 10 is not the simple *Israel falls into idolatry, God sends an oppressor, Israel repents, and finally, God delivers* formula. Israel will find herself under simultaneous attacks from the sons of Ammon and the Philistines. Although there will be deliverance from the Ammonites, there will be continued problems with the Philistines from this point on all the way through to I Sam. 7.

**And so said sons of Israel unto Y<sup>h</sup>owah, “We have sinned. Do You to us as all of the good in Your eyes, only deliver us, please the day the this.”**

Judges  
10:15

**And so the sons of Israel said to Y<sup>h</sup>owah, “We have sinned. Do to us as all of the good in Your eyes, only please deliver us this day.”**

**Therefore, the sons of Israel said to Jehovah, “We have sinned. Do to us whatever You think is fair; only, please, deliver us this day!”**

The believers in Israel, after eighteen years of servitude and oppression by Ammon on one side and the Philistines on the other, confess their sins to God and cry out for His mercy. They set up the terms of their forgiveness. God is to do whatever He thinks is right; however, no matter what, but he is to separate them from the discipline of being under these foreign peoples right now. This prayer is prayed by a number of believers who have slipped in and out of idolatry for most of their lives, as have their fathers before them.

Some of you might become confused by these events. After all, in our dispensation, if you have sinned, you get back into fellowship as quickly and easily as naming your sins to God (I John 1:9). There are several similar promises made to Israel: **“If my people, who are called by My name, humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.”** (II Chron. 7:14). **Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress when He heard their cry and He remembered His covenant for their sake, and he repented according to the greatness of His grace. He also made them objects of compassion in the presence of all their captors** (Psalm 106:44–45). **“If that nation against which I have spoken**

turns from its evil, I will repent concerning the calamity I planned to bring upon it." (Jer. 18:8). By doing this—naming your sins to God, all of your sins are forgiven and you are no longer under discipline. Now, you may wonder exactly what is the dang deal—can't Israel enjoy the same privileges? Can't they name their sins and be forgiven? Absolutely—when Israel came to God and named her sins to Him, they were immediately forgiven and back in fellowship. However, in the Old and New Testament, we cannot set up the terms conditions of our fellowship, which is what they were trying to do. When we are out of fellowship, the suffering that we face si meant for discipline and sometimes we are disciplined quite heavily. That is, God really lets us have it. When we return to fellowship by name our sins to Him, then sometimes the suffering is removed entirely, sometimes it is lessened and sometimes it is maintained. The important difference is the suffering which continues after returning to fellowship is for our blessing. Sometimes we need a reminder. Let me give you a New Testament example: Paul, had suffering related to his eyes, which was not even necessarily a result of discipline, but it was given to him to keep him humble, as he had seen and experienced heaven—fellowship with God in death. When it comes to discipline, Paul was not to go to Jerusalem, but he was to go to the Gentiles, as Israel was quite negative. However, being a Jew himself, he was hell-bent to speak to his fellow Jews in Israel. Despite all of the warnings and all of God's attempts to change his mind about what he was going to do, Paul went to Jerusalem, and, in order to get an audience, compromised the gospel, and was immediately placed under God's discipline, resulting in his imprisonment for the last several years of his life. We know that he got back into fellowship, as he wrote four letters from prison, all of which became his prison epistles. However, God did not take him out of prison. He remained in prison, although he certainly named his sins to God. In fact, the effects of his discipline continued for years afterwards. In other words, you can sin and you can name that sin and you can get immediately back into fellowship. That does not mean that your sin will not have some lasting repercussions. I have committed sins years and years ago for which I have been completely and totally forgiven years ago—and there are still repercussions for these sins up until today. I am completely *off the hook*; but that does not mean that these sins of long ago have no effect upon my life today.

Let's approach this from a different angle. Some pastors whine on incessantly about sin and its ill effects and how it ruins everything and for us not to sin no matter what. The simple fact of the matter is that they will sin and we will sin and we should immediately seek to get back into fellowship by naming our sins to God. Now, there are some sins which are devastating and might take years to overcome. A simple example is adultery. This is a sin which might last 15 minutes or an hour and it can completely devastate a marriage and a family. With a good, strong marriage, it might take several years before there is a peace, and a trust and a calm in that marriage, although the repercussions can last still for the entirety of that marriage. Therefore, there are some sins for which God gives us a lasting reminder of the results of that sin. This is not because God is mad at us or indignant or horrified at our behavior; it is for our own good. There are some sins that it might take some serious teaching before we realize that we don't want to ever participate in that sin every again. What occurs after confession of sin can be a simple reminder, in love, from God, concerning that sin.

Let me give you a simple, simple example of the effects which may follow after a sin which are just natural results of some sins: you might commit a crime and you might confess it immediately afterwards. This does not mean that you will be exempt from serving time in jail. You might spend the rest of your life in jail for a crime for which you are completely exonerated in the eyes of God. In fact, there are myriads of people on death row who have committed crimes for which they deserve death, and they are cleansed and they will spend eternity in heaven. However, they are under suffering for blessing, which includes incarceration. These crimes may have even been committed prior to believing in Jesus Christ—however, there are a great many sins which have effects for months and even years after the sin has been committed and forgiven. Let me add one mor thing: even apart from discipline and even apart from suffering for blessing, there are natural results of sins committed which are not erased with forgiveness of sin. I myself was once faced with doing a crime which I thought was akin to j-walking. Then I found out that the consequences could include fines up to \$5000 and a year in jail. Needless to say, I decided against committing that crime. I could have committed that crime, been forgiven, and still, after all of that, been fined, placed in prison, and, very likely, lost my job. When you choose to take drugs, when you choose to have sex outside of marriage, when you choose to hate or to malign someone—keep in mind that the results of that sin might last years longer than whatever meager satisfaction that you received from committing that sin.

Israel thought that they could name their sin to God and that God would remove the discipline entirely. That simply isn't the way it works. No where in the Bible are we given the ability to pick and choose the results of the sins that we commit. If anything, the Bible teaches us that we have no idea as to what a tremendous impact committing these sins can be on our lives and on the lives of those around us.

I guess that I should have warned you that now and again there will be some real life application from these verses.

**And so they removed gods of the foreign from their midst and so they served Y<sup>e</sup>howah and so cut short His soul in [the] misery [of forced labor] of Israel.**

Judges  
10:16

**So they removed the foreign gods from their midst and they served Y<sup>e</sup>howah so His soul cut short with the misery [of forced labor] in Israel.**

**So they still removed the foreign God from their midst and they began to serve Jehovah so that He cut short their discipline of slavery.**

There are some rather different translations, particularly at the end of this verse, so let's see a couple of examples:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And they put away the gods of the stranger out of their midst, and served , —and his soul was impatient of the misery of Israel.
NASB	So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the ; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer [lit., His soul was short with the misery].
Owen's Translation	So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh and he became indignant over the misery of Israel.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And they turn aside the gods of the stranger out of their midst, and serve Jehovah, and His soul is grieved with the misery of Israel.

The first verb is the Hiphil imperfect of צוּר (סוּר) [pronounced *soor*] generally means *to turn aside*, however, in the Hiphil, it means *to cause to depart, to remove, to take away*. Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693. The gods which they put away were of the masculine plural noun נֶאֱכָר (נִכָּר) [pronounced *nay-KAHR*], which means *that which is foreign, foreignness, that which is alien*. Strong's #5236 BDB #648.

When they both put away these gods and served Him, the verb which describes what God did is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of קָצַר (קָצַר) [pronounced *kaw-TSAHR*], which means *to be short, to come short of, to cut off [with regards to grain], to reap, to harvest*. Strong's #7114 BDB #894. This means that God is not the subject of this verb. The subject follows, which is *His soul*.

This is followed by bēyth preposition and the masculine singular noun אִמָּל (עָמַל) [pronounced *aw-MAWL*], which means *misery, wickedness, trouble, mischief, sorrow, painful, labor, travail, grievousness, grievances*. It's primary usage is connected with extreme labor. Strong's #5999 (and #5998) BDB #765.

The result is that, after this occurring time and time again, it would have been reasonable for God to completely and totally kick Israel's butt in discipline—however, the way that they put away the foreign gods and the way that they chose to serve Him changed His mind—so to speak—and His soul cut short their misery. Now, what really happened? God was suddenly caught off guard by Israel's behavior. He didn't look down and say, "Well, I'll be damned, they cleaned up a lot more than I expected them to. Let Me rethink this discipline." However, to Israel, this is what it would have seemed like. It would have appeared that they should have gotten more discipline than they actually got. God does not change His mind nor is there anything that we do that catches Him off guard. He never looks down and says to Himself, "Holy shit, I didn't know he was going to do that..." He's known from eternity past everything that we would ever do or think. In eternity past, He made provision for that. Now, to us on this earth, it may seem occasionally as though God has changed His mind, but that is never the case. However, because of that sort of perception, we have here what is known as an anthropopathism—the ascribing to God human feelings and actions.

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## Israel Prepares to Go to War with the Sons of Ammon

**And so summoned were sons of Ammon and so encamped in the Gilead and so were gathered sons of Israel and so encamped in the Mizpah.**

Judges  
10:17

**Then the sons of Ammon were summoned so they encamped in Gilead. Also the sons of Israel were assembled and then they encamped in Mizpah.**

**The young men of Ammon were drafted and they set up camp in Gilead; similarly, the young men of Israel set up an opposing camp at Mizpah.**

The first verb in this verse is the Niphal imperfect of tsâ'âq (צִאֲק) [pronounced *tsaw-GAHK*], which means *to cry, to cry out, to call*. The Niphal is the passive of the verb, which therefore means *to be called, to be summoned*. Here, it essentially means *to be drafted*. Strong's #6817 BDB #858. It is difficult to determine if this is another attack by the sons of Ammon against Israel, or whether this was the oppression spoken of in the first place back in v. 9. My guess, at this point, is that Israel has put away the foreign gods, making Ammon concerned, and so they attack Israel.

Now, the Gilead is the area between the two seas east of the Jordan. This land borders Ammon and apparently, Ammon moved into this area and took quite a chunk out of it and is now moving in to quash the rebellion they sense is about to occur.

The third verb is the Niphal imperfect of 'âçaph (אָצַף) [pronounced *aw-SAHF*], which means *transfer, transport, relocate, gather, to gather and remove, to remove*. In the Niphal, it means *to be assembled, to be gathered, to assemble, to gather*. Strong's #622 BDB #62. On the southern end of the Gilead, below the Jabbok River, is Mizpah. When Laban and Jacob split up, this dissolution of their partnership occurred at what was then named Mizpah. Although several places were called Mizpah (*Mizpah* means *watchtower* or *lookout*), this is Ramath Mizpah, mentioned in Joshua 13:26 and Judges 11:29, which is in northern Gilead. The person who wrote this knew exactly where the Israelites were gathered. They knew approximately where the Ammonites were gathered.

What we have in these last two verses is the set up for the battle between Israel and Ammon. It appears as though the men of Israel gathered together first, even prior to having a leader over them.

**And so said the people, heads of Gilead, a man unto his associate, "Who [is] the man who will begin to fight with sons of Ammon? He is for a head to all dwellers of Gilead."**

Judges  
10:18

**So the people, the leaders of Gilead, said, one to another, "What man will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? He would become head to all the inhabitants of Gilead."**

**Then the people, the leaders of Gilead, gathered and said to one another, "What man will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? He will eventually become the leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead."**

Let's look at this last verse in a bit more detail:

*The Emphasized Bible*

Then said the people, the princes of Gilead, one to another, Who is the man that will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? he shall become head to all the inhabitants of Gilead.

NASB

And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who is the man who will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? He shall become head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

*Young's Lit. Translation*

And the people—heads of Gilead—say one unto another, 'Who is the man that doth begin to fight against the Bene-Ammon? he is for head to all inhabitants of Gilead.'

The ones speaking are literally *a man to his associate*; these phrase is generally rendered *one to another*.

What has happened so far in Israel's history is that her military leader also naturally becomes a leader in times of peace. Israel, apart from Abimelech, does not have a king or a head over all of Israel, but their military leaders will become civil leaders over a fairly large area. The men, the elders, who have to seek out a man to lead Israel, are cognizant that whomever they choose to lead them in battle will then lead them in peace for an additional 20–40 years; therefore, they give this a great deal of thought. Quite interestingly, this observation will lead to some rather subtle negotiations with Jephthah in the next chapter—subtle negotiations which most people do not fully appreciate in their speed read through the Old Testament.

You will note in this narrative that these people appear to be acting independently of the other tribes of Israel. That is, even though Ammon spread her influence over a greater area, it does not appear as though we are dealing with a coalition of several tribes of Israel, but with those from the area of Gilead, which is primarily the tribe of Gad (north of Gad is one half of the tribe of Manasseh and south of Gad is Reuben).

Gilead was occupied by both the Israelites, who had lived there for several hundred years, and the sons of Ammon, who had recently moved into the land and occupied it as a hostile force. The people of Gilead hereto referred are Israelites.

McGee summarizes for us: *The Israelites lacked leadership. That is always characteristic of men, or of a generation, that has turned from God. Lack of leadership has definitely characterized our nation for the last twenty-five years. In fact, there has been a lack of leadership in the world for many years. We need vital leadership, but we cannot seem to find it. This was Israel's experience. Now they are going to turn to a most unusual man for guidance. Under normal circumstances they would not have turned to him at all.*<sup>24</sup>

This has got to be one of the oddest ways to end a chapter because this sets up the battle between Israel and Ammon. What is called for is a man to lead Israel into battle. The man who will step into the gap is Jephthah in the next chapter—the son of a prostitute. We will meet him in the next chapter and he will become head over that portion of Israel, a position that he negotiates before taking the helm of Israel. What we will also find in the next chapter is that it will appear that Judges 11 was edited into the book of Judges. This in no way makes it false, or less reliable; it probably means that a person closer to the action of Judges 11 recorded the events and a later editor inserted his observations, attempting to smoothly integrate them into the narrative. More about that in the next chapter.

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<sup>24</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 174.