

## ....Son of a Harlot

<<< *Judges 10:3 – 11:11*

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God is examining one sorry lot of men in the Book of Judges. The individuals we are considering, and have considered, had no conspicuous ability. None of them were outstanding leaders; they were just ordinary men – and women – perhaps LESS than ordinary, but God brought them into a position of leadership, guidance and direction, and marvelously and miraculously used them to deliver the nation Israel. I must say, Judges is an encouragement I really need today. I hope it is that for you, too.

Some Bible teachers may refer to Judges in various capacities, such as presenting some lesson from Gideon or Samson. Deborah is usually only pointed to when trying to support some sort of women's rights issue. Overall, almost none of our present-day Bible teachers even touch this book; most never even refer to it in their studies. Well, if God can use these people in Judges, I'm almost sure He can use me. That's the message of grace I receive. That sentiment probably applies to you, too, if you are honest with yourself. The first judge of chapter ten, Tola, was a man who had absolutely nothing from his life recorded except his death - as we saw in our last report.

The second judge of this chapter reveals God chooses the worst men of this world to rule over nations - Daniel chapter four verse seventeen. There are three things I see in this account: prosperity without purpose, affluence without influence and prestige without power. In the day we are studying, the donkey was a sign of prosperity. This animal denoted wealth: and all kings rode on the donkey. Back in chapter five, we saw the upper echelon of the establishment - and they all rode on their asses.

It is questionable whether horses had been broken for use at the time in which we are studying but, either way, in Scripture, the donkey was the animal that spoke of peace - whereas the horse always speaks of war. We do know the horse was imported into Israel from elsewhere, and that was likely done at some later time period. When we saw the Lord Jesus Christ

ride into Jerusalem on a donkey, I believe the Scriptures from Zechariah that says He was humble is wildly misinterpreted. Christ wasn't humble because He rode on a donkey; no, He was humble IN SPITE of the fact that He was riding on an animal reserved for royalty. If Christ were not the king, then Him riding into town on a donkey and receiving adulation and hearing hosanna was merely presumption....

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***3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.***

***4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead.***

~ Jair was, obviously, a man of influence and wealth. I guess he had a thirty-donkey garage in his palace. This would have been the equivalent of a stable full of sports cars. We see a benevolent father who was very generous to his children. His sons were spoiled; they each got what they wanted when they wanted it. Well, I guess what they wanted were donkeys. They lived in the lap of luxury, and they had all been born with silver – or golden spoons – in their mouths. I don't think the donkeys contributed much to the nation, but the donkeys were definitely the latest fad. The problem was the donkeys didn't seem to make Jair a better judge - and they didn't bring any glory to God. I don't see how any of these things brought blessings to the people, either - because none are mentioned; and we don't read about any of the sons riding a donkey out as a missionary to get the Word of God out. No, all they did was live down in Gilead and ride around on their asses. The Psalmist says there is "no balm in Gilead" – but there sure was a braying of donkeys, at least at this time that we are studying. There's nothing particularly wrong with donkeys, but there is something very wrong with a judge whose only mention in the Word of God is his spoiled sons and their wealthy possessions and nothing about the deliverance of the people.

The Lord Jesus was presenting Himself as king when He rode a donkey into Jerusalem. Satan was angry; and the religious rulers protested and crucified Him. However, when these thirty donkeys paraded around town, the mob was entertained, and Satan smiled - but the Lord didn't get any glory from any of this. Prosperity without purpose is a dangerous thing. That's exactly what we have today, too. In the days of Noah, they were marrying and giving in marriage. In Solomon's day, ships were sent out to bring back apes and peacocks. The peacocks were for beauty and the apes were for entertainment. I think Solomon also put on one pretty pageant as he built his zoo.

So, what's the goal in your life, friends? Is your life pointless and aimless? Do you find it all rather boring? Shakespeare had Hamlet say, "... how stale, flat and unprofitable seem to me the uses of this world." Many years ago, they had what was called the "angry young men" – and those all rose up to be a part of the so called "establishment." What we need today is a new direction and a new dimension in our life. We need a worthy cause; and the cause of the Word of God and presenting the Lord Jesus Christ in sound doctrine is still the biggest challenge any man could possibly undertake. Prestige without power is also present here because Jair was the outstanding man in his community, to be sure. I'm sure the family reaped all the benefits in the city simply because of their name and wealth....

### ***5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.***

~ There is no monument in Camon for Jair because he never performed a worthwhile act in his life. No exemplary deeds are recorded of him or his sons. No victories were gained, and the nation Israel was not a better place because of his judgeship. With all those donkeys, there was no horsepower in the kingdom whatsoever. There was certainly no spiritual power to be spoken of. We live in a day when the contemporary church has lost all of its spiritual power, too. The spiritual lesson of Jair is not a good one for any of us – not good at all....

### ***6 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of***

***Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.***

~ After the previous nine judgeship experiences, you would think Israel would have learned something - but they didn't. What they should have learned is that turning to idols brought them trouble in the nation and sent them into slavery each and every time. By this point in history, Israel should have been true to God and serving Him. Unfortunately, human nature is a fallen nature, and the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it? The answer is: you and I do not know how wicked our heart can be. It's easy to point the finger back a thousand years before the Lord Jesus came to the earth and say they did it wrong. What we need to ask ourselves is, ".... how are WE doing today?"

There is a frightful apostasy in our modern churches and society at large that is utterly debased, inhumane, insincere, uncaring, fraudulent and altogether wicked. As a result, we are in a nation, indeed, a world that is in BIG trouble; and, yet we have tried every method mankind knows and every political scheme and trick – to no avail. The problem is: we have turned away from God wholesale and we have turned to the wrong things. The only hope we have today, as individuals, is to turn to Christ and learn the Word of God properly, correctly and completely. I understand this all sounds contrite and out-of-date; and no marvel, it sounded out-of-date a thousand years before Christ came to the earth, too....

***7 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.***

~ God can afford to remove His instrument when that instrument fails, friends. Most people seem to think God must have a particular church and most think that God couldn't live without THEM as individuals. Most people think they are such a talented missionary that there is no possible way the Lord will get along if they are gone. May I say? - God doesn't have to have a single one of us around. God isn't dependent on us to further His Word or His causes. We happen to be dependent upon Him. Jesus saith, "without Me, ye can do nothing." Here, I think the nation Israel sank to the lowest possible level they could have ever reached....

**8 And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.**

**9 Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.**

**10 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.**

**11 And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines?**

**12 The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.**

**13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.**

**14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.**

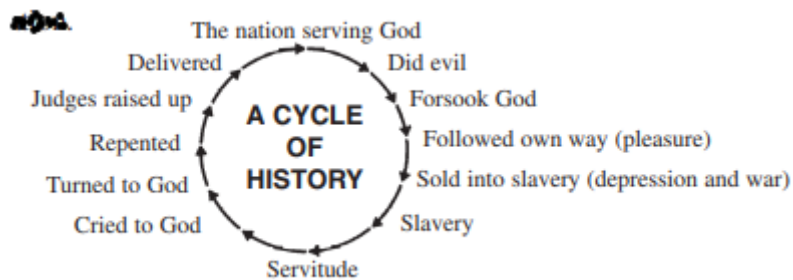
**15 And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.**

**16 And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.**

**17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh.**

**18 And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.**

~ Once again, the “hoop of history” rolls on; and the children of Israel are attempting to turn to God again at this apex. God is so gracious and merciful to these people and God is gracious and merciful to us today, too. Unfortunately, they found themselves at a time where they lacked any form of leadership. This is always characteristic of men who have turned away from God. We have that problem in our generation. The leadership in our country, the United States, has been growing worse and worse for at least the last hundred years. We have not had ANY of the vital exemplary leadership needed to remain the leader of the world. Our presidents and legislators have consistently grown debased.



In the next chapter, Israel will turn to a man they would never have turned to under normal circumstances. We meet that man in this report; and, in the next leg of our safari, we'll see if he really offered his daughter as a human sacrifice on an altar. Jephthah was, apparently, an outstanding leader; but, with a black mark that would have excluded him from consideration under any other circumstances. This man was a stranger from outside the nation; and when Scripture says "... Gilead begat Jephthah" – that means they had NO IDEA who his father was. Proverbs tells us to beware of the strange woman. That means the strange woman who was his mother came from outside the camp of the nation Israel. Josephus says she was a Gentile; and the Jewish writings call her an Ishmaelite! Let's suffice it to say that Jephthah was the son of a common, heathen prostitute. His stigma branded him with a bad mark from birth. Jephthah was exiled, excommunicated and ostracized. Moses told us a bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

Many kings, emperors, generals, poets, popes and princes have overcome the handicap of illegitimacy. William the Conqueror never signed his name as such – he always signed his name “William the Bastard!” That’s what he was. Don John of Austria and several popes from the cult of Catholicism are all the same status; and we could cite many others. Well, as we read on, we see Jephthah flee and gather vain men; meaning they had no purpose in their lives. These are men that had been put out of their society. Jephthah was a sort of ancient Robin Hood. So, we see Jephthah with three hurdles he will have to get over to become a leader. The son of a harlot, exiled by his brethren and his leadership is that of a despised and rejected group! If you add all of that together, the sum is that Jephthah was not very likely to be used by God. However, to the contrary, this is the type of man God DOES use. The rejected and abused man is the one God uses in His most mysterious of ways. God chooses the despised things in this world and God always humbles those men He intends to use. Joseph, Moses, David, all the previous judges we have examined - and the Lord Jesus Himself - had said of Him that He was despised and rejected of men. Remember, Christ is the Stone that the head of the builders rejected. The Pharisees said they wouldn’t have Jesus to rule over them; but God Himself gave Him a Name above ALL names. Many people claim to be sons of God today, friends - but they are simply illegitimate....

## XI

***1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.***

***2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman.***

***3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.***

***4 And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel.***

***5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:***

***6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.***

***7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?***

***8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.***

***9 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head?***

***10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.***

~ The man that does not recognize his sorry state will be rejected by God every time. The only way we can ever become a legitimate son of God is when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin. Jephthah's life can be wrapped up in three words: exiled, exalted and excited. Jephthah demands challenging terms in response to the proposition from the men of Gilead. They are forced to swallow their pride and accept him. As our safari rolls on from here, we'll see the extreme vow he made, and we'll examine closely whether or not Jephthah offered his daughter as a human sacrifice to God. That is a question that comes up often. Of course, that would be unthinkable to the Christian today....

***11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh ~***



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