

Judges, Sermon #36

Judges 10 is a chapter describing the decay of Israel—the decay of a nation. It was so bad that God said, I will deliver you no more—vs. 13

Three evidences of decay:

- First, lack of gratitude toward God
- Second, lack of submission to God
- Third, lack of leadership

Let us pray.

Israel's lack of leadership (v. 17-18)—Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua

Leaders are desperately needed.

There is a tragic lack of qualified leaders—leaders committed to their responsibilities and to their service to others.

There is a critical lack of leaders who have strong character, integrity, and commitment to the position they hold.

A critical lack of leadership spells doom for a nation, church, or family.

Leadership just doesn't happen—must be developed, groomed, and matured by those in authority.

There was a serious lack of leadership in Israel.

The Ammonite army mobilized to attack the Israelites (vs. 17a).

The people were ready to defend themselves, but there was no one to lead them in battle—there was no judge.

This enemy had to be dealt with but the concern of God's people was "Who will lead us?"

In order to get a volunteer to command their army, the leaders of Israel promised that their commander would be named head over all Gilead.

Whoever would fight with the Ammonites would be their leader.
That's not a wise way to choose a leader.

King David did this—who will kill the first Jebusite will be the captain of the host!
Joab—he was no Jonathan.

Many times, America chooses a leader based on this type of concept.
Who can fix our economic problems, or our fuel problems, he can be our next leader!

They offered the rule of all Gilead to any qualified person who stepped forth to take the position of commander (v. 18).
Doesn't appear that anyone volunteered?

In their desperation for a leader, they turned to a man who had been born as an illegitimate son and ranked at the bottom of his family (11:2).

All of this brings us to chapter eleven as we are introduced to a man named Jephthah.

Judges 11:4-6

What kind of man was Jephthah? What was his past?—vs. 1
His father Gilead had only one wife, but he fell into sin with a prostitute and fathered a son.

Jephthah's mother was a prostitute.
He is the son of a harlot.

His mother is not mentioned again in Scripture.

Nothing is known about her—not her name, nor any other facts.

It seems as though Gilead took the child from her when the child was born and the mother just passed from the scene.

Children born to prostitutes or born out of wedlock have often been looked down upon and rejected by society.

Because of this rejection, illegitimate children have often faced an uphill battle as they walked throughout life.

Despite the fact that the child had no choice regarding the circumstances of his birth—that the decision was made solely by the adult man and woman—the child suffers.

At least Gilead acknowledged the boy and took him into his home, but his other sons didn't accept this "son of a strange woman"—vs. 2

We see right up front the valleys and mountains in Jephthah's life.

He was a mighty man of valor and also the son of a harlot.

He was an illegitimate son—unwanted by his family, unwanted by his brothers.

Jephthah had a step family—how difficult it is.

Jephthah's presence was a constant reminder of his father's sin—wife, children, and Gilead.

Jephthah grew up with scars from his dad's sin.

He paid the price for his father's failures.

When Gilead died and the inheritance was to be divided, the regular sons drove Jephthah away.

Jephthah, family history—there was the rejection and exile of Jephthah by his brothers.

He was exiled by them because of their greed—vs. 2e.

Greed drove Jephthah's brothers to threaten his life and drive him away from his home. They wanted all of the inheritance.

Greed—coveting and lusting after more and more—can cause all kinds of problems.

It often drives a person . . .

- to steal and lie in order to get more
- to assault a person in order to get what he or she has
- to murder in order to get some property or possession
- to cheat, even family members, in order to get more

Being greedy often damages relationships and lives, including the person who is guilty of greed

Proverbs 15:27a, *“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house.”*

So, the elders of Gilead, in spite of his half-brothers, call on Jephthah to lead Israel, to deliver and save Israel.

Vs. 7

Israel's lack of leadership

Let us stand for prayer