

# What was Gideon's downfall?

Pride

Depending on the spoils of war

Living like a king!

Not calling for a revival and a  
commitment to the Lord like Josiah

Enabling the cycle to repeat itself

# Who else had problems after victory?

David – how so?

Elijah – how so?

New converts?

# Theological Lessons

***“We must be as watchful after the victory as before the battle”*** A. Bonner

Wars may be over, but the dangers have not vanished.

56 nations – stuck with land mine issues

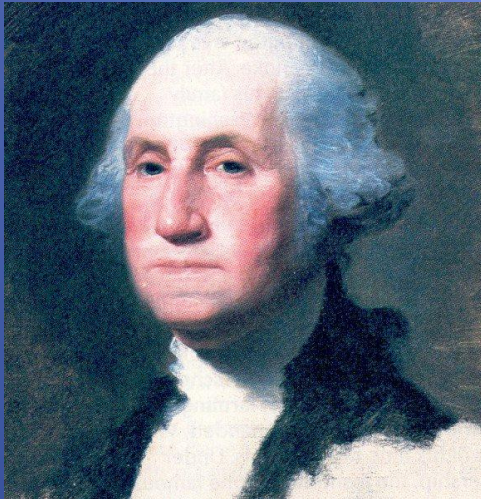
What are some of the pitfalls of victory?

# Theological Lessons



“The real test of a man’s character is not adversity, but power.” A. Lincoln

Prov 24:10



What did he do after he won the war?

# Judges

“Israel’s ‘Dark Ages’”

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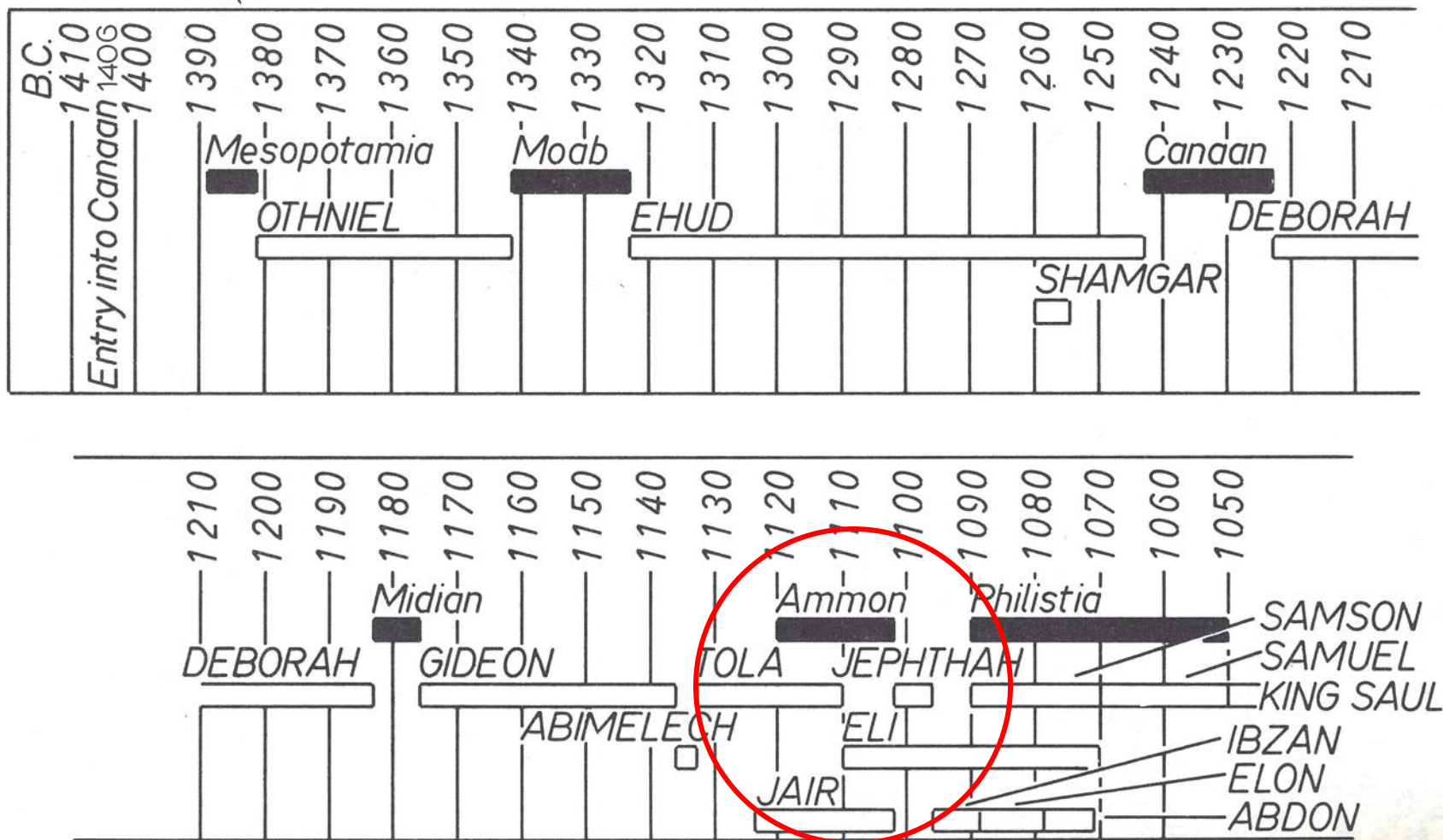
*"Jephthah; Ibzan; Elon;  
Abdon"*

Text: Judges 10:6 – 12:15



Oppression   
 JUDGESHIP 

# THE JUDGES



# Local Reject Makes Good

## Judges 10 – 12:15

A nation in **D**ecay (10:1-18).

A leader in **D**emand (11:1-33).

A Father in **D**espair (11:30-40).

A Ruler in **D**efense (12:1-15).

# Local Reject Makes Good

## Judges 10 – 12:15

### A NATION IN **D**ECAY (10:1-18)

- Lack of **gratitude** to the Lord  
(11:1-5)
- Lack of **submission** to the Lord  
(10:6-16)
- Lack of **adequate leadership**  
(10:17-18)



# Why did they lack Gratitude?

## Judges 10:1-5

Tola and Jair had given them 45 years of peace & prosperity!

- Ignored Moses' command to be thankful and bless the Lord (Deut 8:10).

## Why is thanksgiving so important?

- It is a defense against pride, selfishness, & idolatry (Ps 69:30).

# Why did they lack Submission?

## Judges 10:6-16

When we are comfortable, we tend to forget God and assume we can sin and get away with it!

What would happen if the consequences of sin occurred immediately?

Comfortable living often produces weak character!

How *unfaithful* had the nation become?

What gods did Israel, serve (10:6)

They served:

- *the Baals and the Ashtaroth*
- *the gods of Syria*
- *the gods of Sidon the gods of the Ammonites*
- *the gods of Moab the gods of the Philistines*



Did this seem to win them any favor with the neighboring nations?

*NO! Although they seemed to be very ecumenical or polytheistic about their choice of gods, it didn't seem to convince their neighbors to be nice to them.*

*It always eventually resulted in the curses of the covenant!*

#2

When the people cried to God for relief (10:10), what was His response? How did they answer Him?

*He told them that even though He had defeated the gods they were serving; they had decided to serve them. Therefore, He would let the Israelites turn to those gods for assistance.*

*It was only after they decided to 'put away' the foreign gods that God relented and listened to their pleas. There hope should be in God's power and character!*

Rom 1:24-28

God gave them up!

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# **What does a lack of good Leadership mean?**

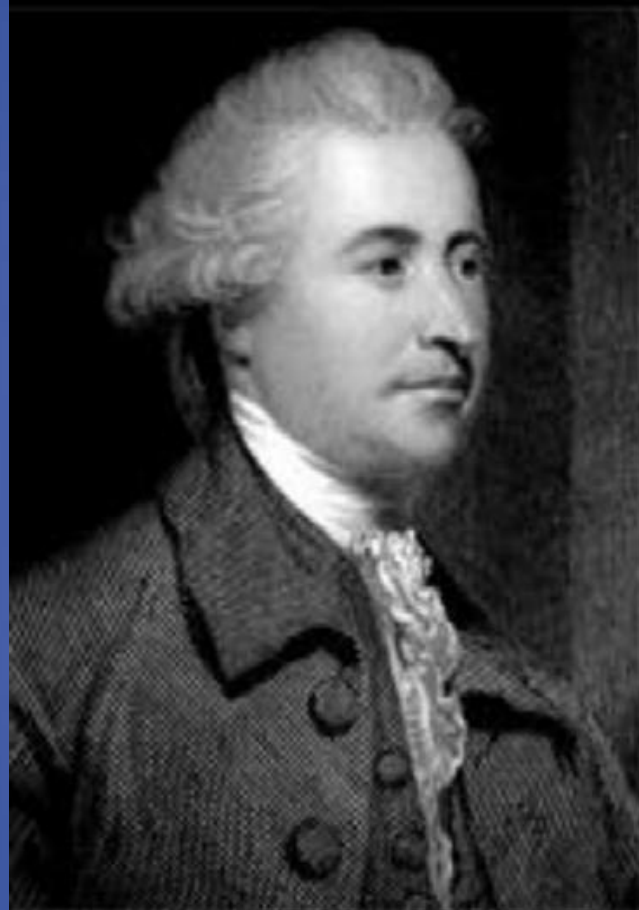
**They had an army, but no general!**

**Often a judgement and evidence of moral decay.**

**What a contrast to Acts 13:1-4!**

A nation often gets the leaders they deserve. A very sad time! (Isa 57:1)!

**“The righteous perish and no man layeth it up in their heart!”**



**“All that is required  
for evil to triumph  
is for good men  
to do nothing.”**

**- Edmund Burke**

# Local Reject Makes Good

## Judges 10 – 12:15

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A leader in **D**emand (11:1-33).



#3

# What do we know about Jephthah?

*He was a Gileadite (from the tribe of Manasseh?)*

*He was a mighty warrior*

*He was the son of a prostitute*

*His brothers drove him away to Tob*

*He seemed to attract 'worthless fellows' (11:1-3)*

*At some point, he located his home in Mizpah (11:34)*



***THE TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS  
OF ISRAEL***

*JOSH. 13:8–19:49*

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak

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#4

What observations can you make about the elders of Gilead asking Jephthah to lead them?

*First of all, as Jephthah points out, it is a bit ironic that first they want to expel him from their midst and later they want him to be their leader.*

*Secondly, their trust seems to be more in a person's physical abilities than in his spiritual abilities.*

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#5

What reason did the Ammonites give for attacking Gilead?

*The king of the Ammonites said that they were going to take back the land that the Israelites had taken from them when they came up out of Egypt (11:13).*

#6

In his response, Jephthah provided a 4-point answer. What were those points?

1. *Israel did NOT take the land from the Ammonites; rather, they took it from the Amorites who had taken it from the Ammonites*
2. *Jehovah pushed out the Amorites, not the god of the Ammonites; hence, the land belongs to the Israelites, not the Ammonites; if the god of the Ammonites had pushed the Amorites out, the land would belong to the Ammonites.*

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#6

In his response, Jephthah provided a 4-point answer. What were those points?

3. *Do you honestly believe that you are more powerful than Balak who knew better than to try and attack Israel?*
4. *Why, after 300 years, are you so keen on suddenly trying to get the land back?*

#7

Who did Jephthah claim was the wronged party in the dispute? Who did he say would decide the matter?

*Jephthah indicated that Israel was being wronged in the matter (11:27).*

*He then indicated that it would be Jehovah that would decide the matter (11:27). While this is certainly a statement of faith, it is also another way of saying that the Israelites would be victorious in the matter because their God would save them.*



#8

What problems do you see with Jephthah's vow?

*First, it seems that Jephthah was trying to 'bargain' with God about the matter.*

*Secondly, the vow seems to indicate a lack of faith in the outcome of the battle in that God needed some sort of inducement to give them the victory.*

*Thirdly, he assumes it would be an animal that would come out to greet him. He should not have made a rash vow that might include a person.*

Do you think Jephthah killed his only daughter, or did he do so by not giving her to marriage?

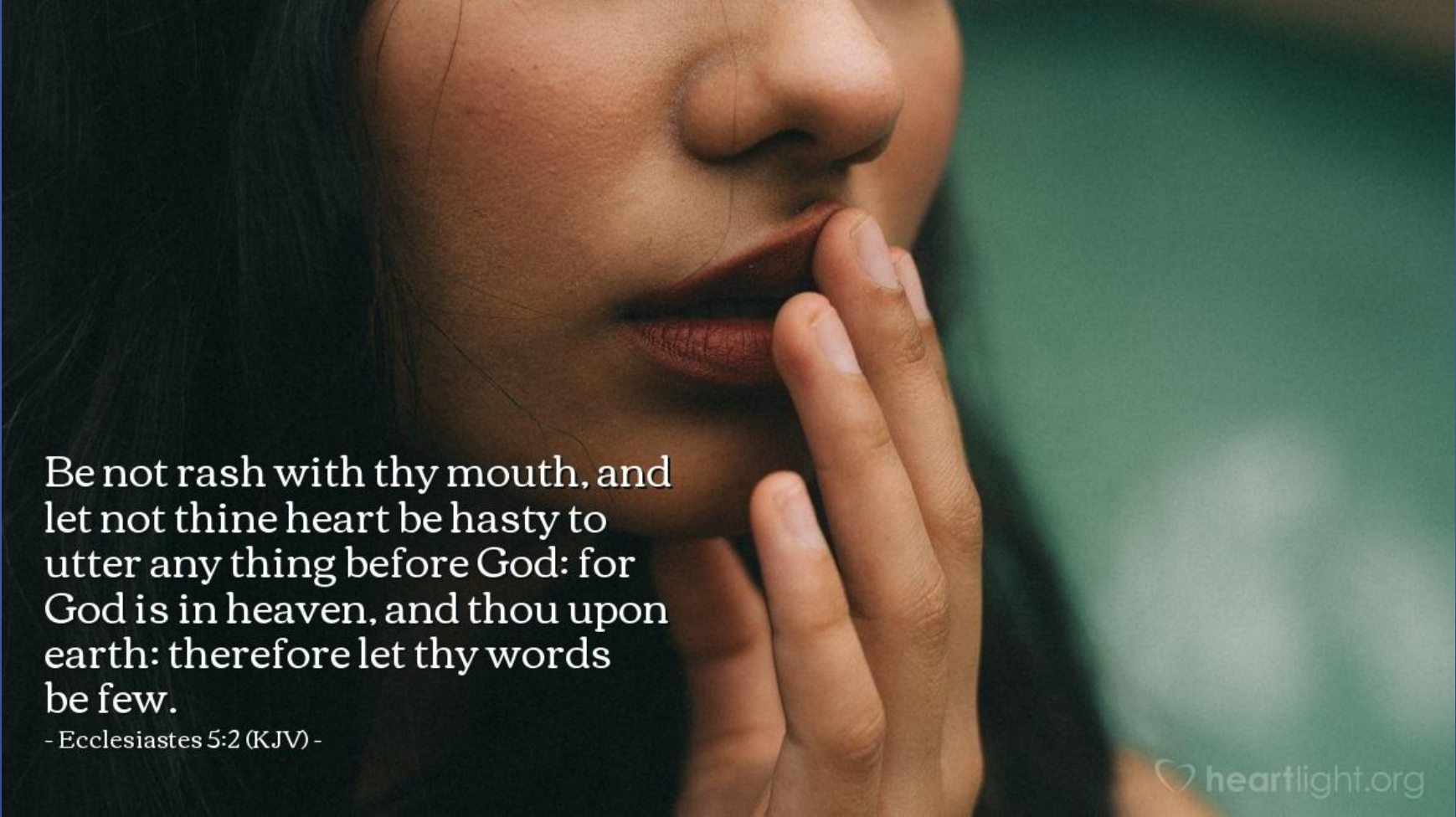
*Judges 11:39 – “He did with her according to his vow!”*

*Is this an example of them behaving like the Ammonites they defeated?*

**Lev 18:21** is clear. Never offer up your seed as a sacrifice!

**Judges 11:29** says he had the **“Spirit of the Lord”** upon Him!

**Judges 11:39** says she “bewailed her virginity,” not her death.



Be not rash with thy mouth, and  
let not thine heart be hasty to  
utter any thing before God: for  
God is in heaven, and thou upon  
earth: therefore let thy words  
be few.

- Ecclesiastes 5:2 (KJV) -

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#9

What observations can you make concerning Jephthah's conflict with Ephraim (12:1-6)?

*While Jephthah's response to the Ephraimites may not have been as diplomatic as Gideon's, it must be remembered that Gideon was not threatened like Jephthah was (8:1).*

*Further, the statements in 12:1 & 12:4 are downright hateful and don't seem to leave any room for negotiation.*

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#9

What observations can you make concerning Jephthah's conflict with Ephraim (12:1-6)?

*Assuming Jephthah's statement to be true (that they did not respond to his call to arms), then their attack on him was really nothing more than greed for the spoils.*

*Even if what they said was true, it was not justification for their actions.*



#10

What do we know about Ibzan? What do we know about Elon? What do we know about Abdon?

Ibzan –

*He was from Bethlehem (infers tribe of Judah)*

*He had 30 sons and 30 daughters; all 60 married outside their clan*

*He judged Israel for 7 years*

*He was buried in Bethlehem (12:8-10)*

Elon –

*He was from the tribe of Zebulun*

*He judged Israel 10 years*

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*He was buried in Aijalon in Zebulun (12:11-12)*

#10

What do we know about Ibzan? What do we know about Elon? What do we know about Abdon?

Abdon –

*He was the son of Hillel the Pirathonite*

*He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons, all who rode on donkeys*

*He judged Israel for 8 years*

*He was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim (12:13-15)*

# TRUE/FALSE

11. T F *If an Ephraimite said "shibboleth", he would be killed. (12:6)*
12. T F *The Ephraimites threatened to burn Jephthah's house. (12:1)*
13. T F *The daughters of Israel lamented Jephthah's daughter for 4 weeks in the year. (11:40)*
14. T F *Jephthah's daughter met him playing a lyre and dancing. (11:34)*
15. T F *The god of the Ammonites was Chemosh. (11:24)*

