

## Judges 10:1-18 – How to Restore Faithful Leadership

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ: One of the most repeated phrase in the Book of Judges is “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” The immediate thought that many have when they read this is to blame the people of Israel for their abandonment of God and their love for sin. To an extent, that is true. Taking personal responsibility is important. But Israel’s wilfulness was not in a vacuum. Israel’s failure started with a failure of leadership. Some did not want to be bothered by the hard work of leadership. Others sought leadership for power and profit. Only a few wanted to truly serve the Lord by leading his people. Today you will see one attempt to restore faithful leadership in Israel.

Our headings are:

True Leadership requires commitment(委身)

True Leadership rejects complacency(自满)

True Leadership rests on Courage

Our goals are: That you will see what would qualify and disqualify men from serving in Christ’s kingdom, and that you find and support those leaders so that Christ’s church will thrive.

### True leadership requires Commitment

1 After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim. 2 He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir. 3 After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, which are called "Havoth Jair" to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died and was buried in Camon.

**1. When the saga (英雄事迹, 传说) of Abimelech’s life was over, God raised up Tola to save (defend) Israel.** What do we know about Tola? His name means “worm.” God used a worm to defend Israel from idolatry (偶像崇拜) and internal corruption. Tola was the Son of Puah, and grandson of Dodo. Tola was Abimelech’s cousin, but was not like he. He worked for the people. He was from Issachar. Issachar was blessed with being the “strong donkey” who would carry the load of the people. (Genesis 49). Tola lived in Ephraim. This was the center of Israel, so it was convenient. His commitment caused him to leave his home!

**2. Tola judged Israel for 23 years. You have to take the depth of his work in context.** This was not sitting in a climate controlled room (空调房) with snack breaks, lunch breaks, and smoke breaks. This was hard work. He traveled on donkeys climbing up and down mountains. He had no cushioned leather seats and drive-through coffee shops. He couldn’t book a hotel room online. There were few hotels. There were no restaurants. It was a hard life. Tola was not just to be judge; he had to preserve Israel from its internal struggles-heart issues. This was even harder work.

**3. After Tola died, Jair judged Israel.** What do we know about Jair? He was a Gileadite. So he was from East of the Jordan from the tribe of Manasseh. Jair was judge for 22 years. Judges started from about 30, so you can see how worn out he was by his job. He worked until he died.

**4. Jair had his sons join him. He knew that good leadership requires sharing responsibility.** The fact that his sons rode on donkeys was not showing how rich they were, but how hard they worked. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law called him to share responsibility as well. In 1 Samuel 8, Samuel appointed his sons to be judges as well. Jair’s 30 sons traveled around Israel as itinerant (巡回的, 流动的) judges. (Deborah described judges on donkeys in Judges 5.) So Israel did not have to travel to Ephraim for justice. These judges sacrificed time with their families for the good of the church.

**5. Tola and Jair, though they are little known, were used by God for the good of his people.** They did not seek the acclaim of men, as Abimelech, rather they sought the adulation (奉承, 谄媚) of the Lord and the advancement of his people. Ever heard anyone naming his son Tola or Jair? Yet, these men were committed to helping God’s people.

### **6. Lessons:**

**a. Consider God’s qualifications for elders, husbands, or political leaders before you choose them.** Don’t choose the one who will give you stuff or do things you like. Chose the one who seeks God’s glory and his kingdom’s good.  
**b. Isn’t it a shame that some Christians waste the last 20 years of their lives-** these men whose wisdom should be guiding the church? Way too many people settle for the beaches in Florida instead of serving God’s people. They have more commitment to their comforts than they do to Christ. But you must do better. Won’t it be great to pass from this world while passing out tracts to strangers, or praying for your family?

## **True leadership rejects Complacency**

6 Then the children of Israel **again did evil** in the sight of the LORD, and **served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines;** and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.

**1. After 50 years of committed leadership, Israel became complacent and fell into terrible sin.** They worshiped idols (偶像) and push God's law aside. They worshiped idols because it was easier than worshipping Jehovah.

**2. Israel's backsliding (信仰滑坡) was more notable than before.** They "kicked it up a notch." They prostituted (行淫) themselves to many foreign gods (外邦神). They **invested the wealth God gave them to serve these other gods.**

a. Gods of Canaan - Baals –gods of the flies...or gods of the dung heap (粪堆).

b. Gods of the Syrians - Ashtoreths, moon goddesses, Venus (金星, gods with simulated sexual sins).

c. Gods of Sidon were also Ashtoreths.

d. Gods of Moab and Ammon – sons of Lot (罗得). These included **Chemosh**, or Baal Peor. (Baal Peor was related to Beelzebub) and Saturn 土星 and Mars 火星.)

e. Gods of the Philistines –Dagon, Beelzebub, Marnas, and Derceto.

In his complacency, Solomon later reintroduced the worship of Chemosh in Jerusalem, but this sinful practice was driven out by the godly Josiah.

7 So 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 people of Ammon.** 8 From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. 9 Moreover the people of **Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin,** and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was **severely distressed.**

**3. As a result of this complacency, God's anger was strongly aroused against Israel.** And God's anger is never internal.

His anger causes him to act. **So he sold Israel into captivity to the Philistines.** They needed to see the hopelessness of idolatry. And some he sent to Ammon. **Israel suffered for 18 years.** From the Southwest and the Northeast they were squeezed. And the Ammonites crossed over to the west side of the Jordan where most of Israel were and continued terrorize them. Israel's complacency caused distress – just as God had threatened.

**Leviticus 26:17** I will set My face against you, and **you shall be defeated by your enemies.**

Those who hate you shall **reign over you,** and you shall **flee when no one pursues you.**

### **4. Lessons:**

**a. Do you see the danger Israel's sins posed to the coming Redeemer (救贖主)?** They just wanted the easy life of worshipping idols, but their impact could have been severer than they thought. If they had been drive out of the land permanently, what would happen to the world's salvation?

**b. Do you see how the church's complacent leadership has brought curses upon God's people?** Young children – teenagers- suffered through no fault of their own. **But there was no leader to stop this complacency!** People today who argue that homosexual marriages (同性婚姻) hurt no one, or their drug use hurts no one, or their lack of worshipping God hurts no one, or their wasting their own money hurts no one, lack a sense of truth! Your sins hurt others. So where are our leaders warning against the idolatry of our age...the obsession with creature comforts? **As a father, husband, or elder, learn to confront sin rather than leave your charges in complacency!**

## **True leadership rests on Courage**

10 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "**We have sinned against You,** because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!" 11 So the LORD said to the children of Israel, "**Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians** and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines? 12 "Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand. 13 "Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more. 14 "**Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen;** let them deliver you in your time of distress."

**1. Finally, after seeing the futility (无益, 枉然) of worshipping idols, some leaders arose from Gilead, confronted sin, and called on Israel to cry out in repentance (悔改).**

**2. God did not respond positively at first but threatened to annihilate 毁灭 them.** They had rejected God's love and care over them from Egypt to Canaan, and during their capture of Canaan. This was not a new threat.

**Deuteronomy 32:37** He will say: `Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? 38

Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, *And* drank the wine of their drink offering? **Let them rise and help you, And be your refuge.**

15 And the children of Israel said to the LORD, "**We have sinned!** Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray." 16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And **His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.**

**3. But Israel reiterated (重申) their guilt before God, pleaded for mercy, and put away their idols. (Restoration starts with reformation.)** Talk was not sufficient. Question: What made Israel see the futility of worshipping idols and return to serving God with such strong desires? **The only way men will repent is through faithful and direct preaching (讲道, 教导).** God called faithful men to preach because his soul could no longer bear to see his covenant people suffering the way they were. How wonderful are God's mercies!

Jeremiah 31:20 *Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? **For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; Therefore My heart yearns for him;** I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD.*

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He **delights in mercy.** (神啊, 有何神象你, 赦免罪孽, 饶恕你产业之余民的罪过, 不永远怀怒, 喜爱施恩?)*

**4. Yet, this strong and clear and courageous preaching calling Israel to repent was fraught with dangers.** The Israelites might not have wanted to unsettle their captors who might hear of their returning to God. Their tormenters (压迫者) would not want to **hear of anything that might threaten yearly tributes (进贡).** Further, it is **normal to try to maintain peace and quiet,** even though life is hard! Even Christians are reluctant to make revolutionary changes.

17 Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah. 18 And the people, **the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon?"** He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

**5. Seeing the change of desire of Israel from serving them to serving Jehovah God, the people of Ammon gathered together to do battle against Israel.** Israel's individualism (个人主义) brought death. But courageous leadership, which led to faithful teaching, brought life and courage! But their courage also brought out their enemies.  
2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

## **6. Lessons.**

- a. Preaching the Word is the only means that a nation will cry to God for salvation.** And **true leadership is essential for the faithful preaching of the Word.** Yes, we can try responding the same poor way that we are treated, and we can try going to a bakery run by homosexuals and say: Make me a cake that says "homosexuals are perverted (不正当的, 败坏的)," but doing this will do nothing to change the heart. You see, this is a spiritual fight. Similarly, taking a knife to the throat of Muslims is not the answer. **Bold preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer!**
- b. Preaching the word is the only means of revival (复兴) in the church.** Preachers have to make Christians uneasy when they are complacent. Christians need to see the danger they are in...the danger from God because of sin. And preacher must boldly call on **Christians to stand for truth**...and not be embarrassed by it.
- c. You can expect that the world will collaborate against you when you try to live well. So be bold.**

## **Conclusion:**

**The church needs robust 坚定的 leaders who are committed to truth,** not those who change what they say to meet your desires. The church **needs leaders who have the courage of their own convictions (信念),** not those who shy away from fear of dangers and death. The church needs to **remove weak leaders,** as they will save their own skins (安然逃脱) rather than confront sin.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Look for qualified people in the church, home, and nation.** Avoid falling for the one who is just nice, or just generous, or just a sweet talker. If possible, remove or run away from those who are weak or those who use their position for their only pleasure and profit. Look for the one who **promotes Christ's cause.** Look for the one who **looks like Christ.** Look for the one who **looks to Christ.** **2. Your ultimate leader is the Lord Jesus.** He came and **taught you God's truth.** He **laid down his life** for you. He **rules over you and defends (辩护) you.** It is he who qualifies you to be a leader! This is the one to emulate.

Finally, though you might eke out living (艰难度日) in this world, your troubles will not end, unless you have a home in heaven. To have a home in heaven, you have to fix the sin problem of your life, sin that brings you under the hatred and condemnation (咒诅, 定罪) of God. Only when you plead Christ's blood as your own will God remove yours sins and make you his child.