

Shibboleth

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Baby Dedication - Eric & Rosanna Mize. *Emma Christine*(8 mnth) & *Charlotte Lucille*(4yr).

II. Slide3 Intro: Shibboleth

- A. The Political Climate in the Early Iron Age [3 age system, to classify ancient societies: *Stone - Bronze - Iron*]
1. Slide4a In the **Late Bronze Age** (1550–1200 b.c.) there was an ongoing struggle between **major political powers** seeking control of **Palestine**.
 2. With the arrival of **the Sea Peoples** (*Philistines*) around 1200, all of the major powers were either **wiped out** (e.g., the Hittites) or **neutralized** (Egypt).
 3. Moving into the **Iron Age** (just about this point in the book of Judges), the **power stalemate** has been replaced by a **power vacuum**.
 - a) The absence of **major powers** vying for control of the region allowed **the smaller states** to test their strength, develop and build regional *empires*.
 - b) The **Philistines** were able to take advantage of this early in the period.
 - c) **Then David** and **Solomon** were able to build a substantial empire in **Syro-Palestine** without needing to be concerned about political powers in *Mesopotamia, Anatolia or Egypt*.¹ [*The IVP Bible background commentary*]
- B. Slide4b Jephthah's judgeship is framed by a brief mention of the 5 so called *minor judges*
- C. Israel slides *further and further* down the slippery slope.
1. **Jephthah & Samson** use their position for **revenge & personal gain**, adding to the sins of the previous generation.

III. Slide5 MINOR JUDGES (10)

- A. Slide6 **TOLA**, 6th JUDGE (1,2)
- B. *Tola, son of Puah, son of Dodo* (just love the way that sounds)
- C. Slide7a **JAIR**, 7th JUDGE (3-5)

¹ Matthews, V. H., Chavalas, M. W., & Walton, J. H. (2000). *The IVP Bible background commentary: Old Testament* (electronic ed., Jdg 10:5). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- D. Known for 30 sons, who rode 30 donkeys, owned 30 villages *who walked a crooked mile*. He found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked stile. He bought a crooked cat, which caught a crooked mouse. And they all lived together in a little crooked house. :)
- E. Slide7b Tola & Jair brought justice to Israel for over a generation.
- F. No great *deeds of valor* are recorded for either man, but they gave nation 45 yrs of peace.
1. No foreign invaders are named, so these 2 judges served by solving the *internal problems* of the nation.
 2. They were administrators rather than generals; we need both.
 - a) Maybe these men can be likened to the *disciples of Jesus* whom we know *only by name*. These judges provide an example of *quiet but effective leadership* in Israel.
 - b) *Their service* was important enough to warrant *mentioned* in the Bible.
 3. But, when there're *no battles to fight*, we tend to take our blessings for granted, which often leads us to sin. *So it did*.
- G. So God has to send an *invasion of Ammonites* to get their attention...
- H. Slide8 ISRAEL' OPPRESSION (6-18)
- I. So Israel again *turns from God* & falls under the hand of foreign invaders.
1. This time the enemies were the Philistines on the coast (from West) & the Ammonites in Transjordan (from East). *Caught in the middle?* Judah, Benj & Ephraim
- J. (14) I love God's divine Sarcasm.
- K. Ask: What is the difference between their confession of vs.10 & vs.15,16?
1. **Remorse**(mind) & **Regret**(mind, heart) are different from **Repentance**(mind, heart, will)
 2. In vs10 it was *insincere*, born out of *suffering*. In vs.15,16 it was accompanied by repentance & the putting away of sin. God wants *true repentance*, not just *lip service*.
 3. Ask: Has God *changed* on this in the NT or does He desire the same from us?
 4. Ask: What do we *learn about our God* from 16b?

IV. Slide9 JEPHTHAH, 8TH JUDGE (11)

- A. Slide10 JUDGE JEPHTHAH (1-28)

B. **Son of a harlot** - no person should be blamed for the circumstances surrounding his or her birth.

1. Why permit the things you **cannot control** to **burden** your life? Learn to **accept them**, and **the Lord** will work out **His purposes** in **His own time**.

a) **Slide11** Ps.139:13-16_{nlt} *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous - how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

b) **Opposition** will one day give way to **opportunity**. Warren Wiersbe

C. **Slide12** His band of merry men - men living off the grid.

1. There would be groups of men like this who would follow a charismatic personality, living largely under their own authority.

a) Sometimes they would **cooperate** with existing authority structures. **Other times opposing** them. **They were gangs**. They flourished during times where centralized authority was weakened.

b) **So Abimelech, Jephthah, Ishbosheth, Jeroboam, & even David** became **commanders** of **bands of men** who had withdrawn from society.

D. **Note**: he was able to **defeat the enemy on the battlefield**, **but unable** to maintain peace **at home**.

E. **Slide13 JEPHTHAH'S VOW & VICTORY** (29-33)

F. **On one hand** he was a man who had **faith & courage** & who **depended** on **God's power for victory**. But all is not well...he makes **a rash vow**.

G. Compare Jephthah's vow to Eccl.5:2-6

1. This teaches us about the sacredness of a promise to God **&** the necessity of 1st considering what such a promise may involve.

H. **Slide14 JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER** (34-40)

I. **His daughter**...his only child...the one who danced with joy at daddy coming home.

J. **Human sacrifice** **or prevented from marrying**, thus not able to carry on his name (39).

1. Text is unclear. Dedicated her to Temple service, to serve the Lord (unmarried)?
 2. Weight lands on that he *did* sacrifice her. *But it doesn't* mean he was **right**, *didn't* mean the Lord **accepted** it or **approved** of that offering.
- K. *Note: Israel do not deserve to be *delivered*. And **Jephthah** did not deserve to be *used*.
1. Can you relate? Sometimes God's ways are difficult to understand, **but His** purposes always prevail.
- L. God provided the *victory*, **but His people** marred the *consequences*.

V. Slide15 SHIBBOLETH (12)

- A. Slide16 CIVIL WAR (1-7) *who wins in a civil war?* no one.
- B. Jephthah's men had *seized* the natural crossing points along the river.
1. They used a **linguistic test** to determine which of the men crossing the Jordan were *escaping Ephraimites*.
 2. Some scholars have argued Gileadites said *Thibboleth* & the Ephraimites said *Shibboleth*. But either way, they pronounced it with an *accent*.
 - a) *Shibboleth* = flowing stream, **or** ear of grain.
 - b) *Shibboleth* in our Eng dictionary today means *a test for determining if you belong*.
 - (1) If you don't **conform exactly** to what a group demands, you're **rejected**.
 - (2) Some Christians make these **minor matters** a test of **spirituality** and **fellowship** and bring *division* to the church.
- C. Last 3 minor Judges:
- D. Slide17 IZBAN, 9th JUDGE (8-10)
- E. Slide18 ELON, 10th JUDGE (11,12)
- F. Slide19a ABDON, 11th JUDGE (13-15)
- G. Note his *identity* was found **not in a tribe** but in a local clan (*Pirathon*/hill country of Ephraim)
1. In tribal society, allegiance was *first to one's family, then to one's extended family or clan, next to one's tribe, finally to one's nation*.
 2. **Tribal unity was** next to *impossible* to maintain during the times of the judges.
- H. Slide19b Next week...**Samson**. *A he-man with a she-weakness*.