

**Lesson 8: Judges 10 and 11 Tola and Jair, Oppression by Ammonites and Philistines, Jephthah's Vow**  
Israel was not supposed to have a king, but if they did, it was to be one that the Lord approved of and he needed to follow the LORD and the Law. Abimelech set himself up as king. He killed 70 of his brothers, the sons of Gideon, so there would be no one to challenge his inheritance or kingship. Abimelech had a murderous ambition for power. When his own people from Shechem opposed his actions, Abimelech killed them too. Ultimately his only surviving brother, Jotham, cursed Abimelech and the people of Shechem. A woman fractured Abimelech's skull by dropping a millstone on his head from a tower. Abimelech asked his armor bearer to kill him with a sword so that no one could say he was killed by a woman.

**1. Read Judges 10: 1-5. Here we are introduced to two minor judges.**

**What do we know about Tola?**

**What do we learn about Jair?**

**How long did these judges reign?**

**2. Read Judges 10:6-9. The Israelites again did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord. Which gods did the Israelites worship this time?**

**Reflection: What does it really mean to “*abandon the LORD*”? (See 10:6)**

**3. Read Judges 10:10-16 and footnotes.**

**Why did the LORD bring the Israelites back to Him? (More than one reason.)**

**How long were the Israelites oppressed by their enemies?**

**4. Read Judges 10:17-18 and Judges 11:1-11.**

**Who or what is threatening the Israelites in Judges 10:17-18?**

**What do we know about Jephthah?**

**Why did the elders, at first, reject Jephthah as their commander?**

**What evidence is there that Jephthah and the elders of Gilead had faith that the LORD was with them? (See 11:10—11.)**

## 5. Read Genesis 21: 9- 13. How are Ishmael and Jephthah similar?

**Genesis 21: 9-13** But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, <sup>10</sup> and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." <sup>11</sup> The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. <sup>12</sup> But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. <sup>13</sup> I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

## 6. Read Judges 11:12-24 and footnotes.

**How does Jephthah first approach his enemy? (See 11:12-13.)**

**Why do the Ammonites wish to attack Israel?**

**How does Jephthah explain Israel 's possession of the land? (See 11:15-23.)**

**What does Jephthah say or imply about the god of the Ammonites? (See 11:23-24.)**

## 7. Read Judges 11:25-40 and footnotes. Share any interesting information you find in the footnotes with your group.

## 8. What was Jephthah's vow? (See 11:30-31) Read also, Lev. 20:2-5 below.

**Reflection: Why do you think he made such a vow? Did he regret doing so?**

**Reflection: Do you think the LORD cursed Jephthah for this vow?**

**Lev. 20:2-5** <sup>2</sup> Tell the Israelites: Anyone, whether an Israelite or an alien residing in Israel, who gives offspring to Molech shall be put to death. The people of the land shall stone that person. <sup>3</sup> I myself will turn against and cut off that individual from among the people; for in the giving of offspring to Molech, my sanctuary was defiled and my holy name was profaned. <sup>4</sup> If the people of the land condone the giving of offspring to Molech, by failing to put the wrongdoer to death, <sup>5</sup> I myself will turn against that individual and his or her family, and I will cut off from their people both the wrongdoer and all who follow this person by prostituting themselves with Molech.

## 9. How did the LORD bless Jephthah? (See Judges 11: 29 and 11:32-33.)

**How do the women of Israel remember Jephthah's vow? (See 11:39-40.)**