

ANOTHER REST
--JUDGES 12:8-15--

INTRODUCTION:

Tola, Jair, and Shamgar, these three plus the three that we will meet this morning have been termed the minor judges, they are minor only in the respect that we do not have much written about them, not like the major judges who we have extensive histories surrounding them and the way in which they saved Israel.

This morning we are going to meet the three remaining minor judges, and like Tola and Jair, these three judges ruled in another time of peace in the land. Counting the six years that Jephthah ruled and the years that these three minor judges ruled means that this rest lasted 31 years, enough time for the nation to recover from the oppression of the sons of Ammon and to begin to prosper again.

I. IBZAN – THE BETHLEHEMITE (Judges 12:8-10)

- a. The first _____ that we meet this morning is Ibzan of Bethlehem.
- b. The _____ that is mentioned here as the hometown of Ibzan is not the Bethlehem with which we are all familiar. (Joshua 19:14-16)
- c. The basic _____ about Ibzan’s life and the other two judges in this section are given with very few details and in systematic terms.
- d. If we look closely at verse nine, we will find another dimension to Ibzan’s success in having so many _____.
- e. He used _____ to establish relationships and build alliances, not just within his own clan and tribe, but outside to other clans and other tribes.
- f. Perhaps the most that can be said about Ibzan’s conduct is that in the circumstances it most likely did Israel more _____ than harm, at least in the short term.

II. ELON – THE ZEBULUNITE (Judges 12:11-12)

- a. Like Ibzan, Elon is from _____.
- b. In Elon’s case a point is made of the fact of his _____ identity.

- c. The first reference to the tribe of Zebulun is in chapter one in the list of _____ by the northern tribes to fulfill the mandate that Joshua had given them to drive the Canaanites out of the land of their inheritance.
- d. Things do begin to look _____ as we move on.
- e. By the time we reach chapter 12 the failure of Zebulun in chapter one has faded into history and the bravery and willingness to go into battle even at the risk of their own lives has become what is known and _____ about the tribe of Zebulun.

III. ABDON – THE PIRATHONITE (Judges 12:13-15)

- a. As we move on in this passage, we come upon a new judge but that is about all, there is little _____ here.
- b. The new judge, _____, the son of Hillel the Pirathonite gives a little more information than we received for Elon the Zebulunite.
- c. Most puzzling of these verses is the reference to the _____.
- d. Like Ibzan, we are told about Abdon’s family. “*He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy _____.*” (Judges 12:14a, NASB95)
- e. This tendency toward large families began with Gideon, from then on _____ was on the verge of turning to kingship.
- f. When we look at the promotion of Abdon’s sons and grandsons, it was in part what finally led the people of Israel to demand that the time of the judges end and that they should go the whole way and appoint a _____ to rule them so that they could be like all the other nations.

CONCLUSION:

Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Tola, Jair, and Shamgar are the judges in this book that have been labeled as the minor judges, what can we learn from their presence in the book of Judges?

- 1.) Even though they are minor judges they are people, real people who ruled for a time in Israel.

- 2.) Even though these are all ranked as minor, and they did nothing that set them apart, they are still different from one another.
- 3.) Just because they are minor judges does not mean they are completely undistinguished.
- 4.) Little or minor people can be great too, and God can and does use such people to accomplish His purposes. The Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians that most of them were not great or famous, or well known when God chose them to be His. Listen to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, "*For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.*" (1 Corinthians 1:26–29, NASB95) In the world that we live there are few stars and many that are like the minor judges. Thank God for stars like Othniel, Deborah, Barak, and Gideon who inspire us by their example. But thank God for those like Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon who remind us, by simply just being there with their modest achievements and all too human failures, that little people like minor judges also have a contribution to make to the great sweep of God's saving purposes in the world that reaches its climax in Jesus Christ and flows on into our own day and age. Most of us are Tolas, Jairs, Ibzans, Elons, and Abdons, few are Othniels, Deborahs, Baraks, and Gideons. Most of us fit into the category with the minor judges. But praise God, that we too have a noble calling and can be used to display God's astonishing wisdom to a fallen world. May it be our joy to reflect God's glory through the witness of our lives, with God's help, to the world that desperately needs the Good News of Jesus Christ.