

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Judges And Ruth: Personal Blessing Amid Group Apostasy

Part II: History Of The Era Of The Judges

B. The Record Of Specific Judges, Judges 3:7-16:31

9. Jair's Judgeship: A Warning About A Spiritually Artificial Life And Ministry (Judges 10:3-5, 6-14)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Artificial spirituality, a false claim to be in a good relationship with God, is all too common in today's world:

(1) A letter by Mario Fusco, Sr. of Middlebury to the editor of the Waterbury, Connecticut Republican-American, December 26, 2015, p. 6A told how for "the past half-century, I have become very involved in politics. During this time, I've heard the same story over and over again: it doesn't matter what politicians say. Politicians say only what the people want to hear. Once elected, they do what they want, never keeping their word."

(2) However, artificial spirituality affects evangelical leaders, too: citing Robert Parry's article, "The GOP's Own Asian Connection: Rev. Moon," in the Los Angeles Times, November 16, 1997, Brannon Howse in The Coming Religious Reich, 2015, p. 373, noted how "Christian right leader Jerry Falwell, who feared his fundamentalist Liberty University in Virginia was slipping into bankruptcy . . . made an unannounced trip to South Korea in January 1994 where" he "solicited help from [Moon's] Unification" Church. In the end, "Moon's organization funneled \$3.5 million to Liberty University through a clandestine channel." (Ibid.)

(3) Artificial spirituality exists in evangelicals in our area: years ago, I was loaned a book on church ministry by a pastor of a Baptist Church in our area, but when I read it, I saw it had no Bible references, no divine authority for its assertions as the book dealt only with political and marketing strategies. Thus, I refused to apply it here at Nepaug.

Today though that Church is very large and has extensive programs, it has had a joint worship service with an area Roman Catholic Church that teaches a false gospel of salvation by faith plus works. Such ecumenism counters Paul's call in Galatians 1:8-9 for believers to separate from those with a false gospel!

Need: *So we ask, "What does God direct us to do to avoid a spiritually artificial life and ministry?!"*

I. **Jair's judgeship showed both a positive and a negative, artificial reaction to the two previous judgeships:**

- A. On the one hand, Jair's judgeship displayed the positive influence of Tola's judgeship that had aimed to get Israel returned to peaceful order after Abimelech's destructive, dysfunctional rule, Jud. 10:3-4 with 9:1-10:2:
1. Abimelech had slain Gideon's full-sons so he as Gideon's son by his mistress could rule Israel, Jud. 9:1-6.
 2. The dysfunction of that rule left Israel in a state of spiritual decay, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 399.
 3. Accordingly, God had raised up Tola to judge as an example of peaceful order in Israel, Judges 10:1-2.
 4. Tola's success is seen in the subsequent judge Jair's judgeship: he mimicked Gideon's judgeship, for, like Gideon, Jair had many sons, revealing Israel had learned under judge Tola to respect Gideon's era and his seventy sons whom Abimelech had unjustly assassinated, Judges 10:3-4a with 8:30 and 9:1-5.
- B. However, Jair's judgeship negatively built on Gideon's *latter worldly* ministry, **not** his *earlier spiritual* one:
1. After defeating the Midianites, and being asked by Israel's grateful warriors to establish a dynasty over them, Gideon had initially rightly refused this request, asserting that God was Israel's King, Jud. 8:22-23.
 2. Nevertheless, attempting in his own might to honor the Lord outside of the guidance of Scripture, Gideon had formed an ephod out of gold to commemorate God's guidance in having helped him overcome the Midianites, but this effort backfired as Israel idolatrously worshiped the ephod itself, Judges 8:24-27.
 3. With all of Israel coming to worship his ephod, Gideon turned proud, and started to **act** in the king role he had first refused for himself, for he wed many women and sired many sons, Judges 8:30-31; Ibid., p. 396.
 4. Such pride was inexcusable, for Gideon's victory over the Midianites had been God's provision by faith:
 - a. When God's Angel first appeared to him to call him to save Israel from Midian, Gideon was a typical timid farmer in Israel who was threshing his wheat in a winepress to hide it from the enemy, Jud. 6:11-12.
 - b. Only when (1) **God** had led Gideon to destroy his father's false Baal god (Jud. 6:25-32), (2) only when **God** had filled him with the empowering Holy Spirit (Jud. 6:35), (3) only when **God** had led Gideon to trim down Israel's attack force to 300 men lest she claim any human might had wrought the victory (Jud. 7:1-8), (4) only when **God** by three miraculous signs had encouraged Gideon to attack the Midianites (Jud. 6:37-40; 7:9-15) and (5) only when **God** had terrified the enemy when Gideon and his 300 men had made themselves known to them in battle (Jud. 7:16-22) had Gideon defeated the Midianites, Judges 7:23-8:21.

5. Yet, Jair mimicked Gideon's **LATTER WORLDLY** ministry **INSTEAD OF** his **EARLIER SPIRITUAL** one, and he developed this **WORLDLY** ministry **OVER TIME** into **FULL-BLOWN WORLDLINESS**:
 - a. Not only did Jair take many wives and sire many sons like Gideon, he also arranged for each son to ride on his own donkey, indicating lofty social status in the Ancient Near East, Judges 10:4b; *Ibid.*, p. 399.
 - b. Going further, Jair arranged for each son to rule a city in Gilead, forming a mini-kingdom, Judges 10:4c.
 - c. This worldliness developed gradually over time: the Hebrew verb *hayah* beginning Judges 10:4 (Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 384), means "came to be" (B. D. B., *A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 224-228), so the lusts of the world increased for Jair and his kin in a series of compromises that led to full-blown worldliness.
 - d. Thus, Jair's judgeship over Israel came to appeal in full bloom to the lusts of the eyes (donkeys) and the pride of life (mini-kingdom) to his prestige as a judge over Israel in full-blown worldliness! (1 Jn. 2:15-16)

II. This worldliness opened the door for great idolatry and God's withdrawal of blessing, Judges 10:6-14:

- A. As with Gideon who had failed to stay true to his pledge that God would be Israel's King by his acting like a king and his judgeship subsequently being marked by Israel's turning to worship the ephod, Jair's mimic of Gideon's latter, worldly judgeship opened the door for Israel to worship multiple false gods, Judges 10:6.
- B. The Lord was infuriated by these events, so He let Israel be oppressed by the Philistines and the Ammonites, with first the Ammonites vexing Israel for 18 years, Judges 10:7-9; *Ibid.*, *Bible Know. Com.*, O. T.
- C. Israel reacted by crying unto the Lord for deliverance, confessing that she had sinned in forsaking Him to serve false gods (Judges 10:10), but God replied that He would no more help her, Jud. 10:11-14 (as follows):
 1. The Lord explained that He had delivered Israel from multiple Gentile oppressors, from the Egyptians in the Exodus to the Philistines and Ammonites who now oppressed her, Judges 10:11.
 2. God added that He had also delivered Israel from other the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites, but that Israel had still forsaken Him to serve other foreign gods, Judges 10:12-13a ESV.
 3. Accordingly, God said He would no longer help Israel, that she should try crying unto the pagan gods she had chosen to follow in place of Him to see if they might deliver her in her time of trial, Judges 10:13b.

Lesson: *Though following Tola's influence to return to the peaceful order of Gideon's era, Jair copied Gideon's latter worldly ministry instead of his earlier spiritual one, so Jair's judgeship developed over time by compromise into full-blown worldliness. It led Israel into great idolatry and oppression, with God refusing to aid her anymore.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ as Savior from sin to have eternal life, John 3:16. (2) As believers, may we REFUSE to mimic worldly ministries of others, efforts that appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust the eyes and the pride of this life, but opt instead to heed God's Word in dependence on the Holy Spirit for success, 1 John 2:15-16. (3) May we refuse to take even tiny compromises with worldly lusts as they only lead to other compromises and apostasy. (4) In the end, we will avoid God's discipline and withdrawal of blessing and enjoy His blessings.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) In our sermon introduction, we reported that when Reverend Jerry Falwell feared his Liberty University might go bankrupt, he secretly appealed to cultic leader Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church for money.

As in Jair's case, such a level of compromise did not occur overnight: years earlier, Reverend Falwell had involved himself in politics and started a university opposite Scripture that directs pastors to be entirely focused on the ministry of God's Word (1 Timothy 4:12-16). This compromise over time led him to yield to the pressure of looking to cultists to obtain bail-out money to keep his university afloat as a reputation-saving move!

(2) We also reported in our introduction on a local Baptist Church that was built by extra-biblical political and marketing strategies and not by Biblical directives, and that though that ministry today has become large and extensive, it has now had a joint worship service with a local Roman Catholic Church in violation of Galatians 1:8-9.

Again, this compromise developed over time as one small departure from heeding Scripture led to other gradually escalating degrees of departures from Scripture until the Church came to fellowship with apostates.

(3) In view of these things, I am very grateful that our Church is in the position it is right now in contrast to these other ministries! Our current position has come at the cost of consistently over three decades refusing to yield to the lusts of the world in all aspects of ministry, what has at times proved to be very costly short-term. However, in the long-term, I wouldn't trade our current ministry status for either of the other two ministries for any price! I can honestly sleep at night without regrets for the direction our Church and ministry have taken!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, may we REFUSE to mimic worldly ministries, but heed God's Word in living by faith in God in reliance on the Holy Spirit's power for success as Scripture defines it!