

**Theme:** There is a strong tension between the demand of God for obedience and faith, and the compassion of God stirred by the suffering of his disobedient people. He responds to true repentance, but doesn’t always wait for it to act.

**Background:** Abimelek! Self-Proclaimed judge of Israel. Three years of horror and sorrow. How does God respond – and what do God’s people learn?

**Introduction:** We can all tell the difference between real repentance and “get me out of this” repentance. Whether it is in children, ourselves or nations.

## **I. A Picture of Compassion**

### A. Two minor judges

NOTE: Like the minor prophets - the length they receive is minor, not the message.

#### 1. Tola

- Know parentage, tribe, and home
- 22 years over the people

#### 2. Jair

- Know his home
- Know something of his ambition - 30 cities of Jair (Luke 17:10)

### B. Major grace

#### 1. Averting Abimelek’s legacy

- If rulers like Abimelek followed him for the next 45 years? They may not have survived.

#### 2. Responding to the suffering of his people

- 45 years of stability

## **II. A Picture of Oppression**

### A. A return to idolatry

#### 1. Multiplying “gods” – multiplying sin (6)

#### 2. Forsaking the Lord, they did not serve him!

- The Lord is absent from the pantheon

### B. The Lord’s burning anger (7)

#### 1. Sold – turned over to another owner

- See Romans 1:21-25

#### 2. To harsh “masters

- They were “shattered” and “crushed”
- Oppressed

### C. Affecting all Israel

#### 1. Tribes East of the Jordan

#### 2. Tribes west of the Jordan (9)

- For 18 years

Application: Understand the “insanity” of sin. Only the living, loving God of creation and life can satisfy our longings and needs.

### III. A Picture of Repentance? (10-18)

#### A. Israel “cries out”

1. We have sinned
  - Cries have not included this before
  - Seems like a good place to start
2. Appearances can be deceiving
  - Has form of “repentance”

#### B. The Lord answers

1. His rebuke
  - a. The Lord is their last resort
  - b. They have not changed!
2. His answer? No More!! (13)
  - Go to the “gods” you have trusted and served

Application: It is clearly possible to “turn from sin” in a sinful way.

#### C. The people repent? This is the strongest statement of confession, repentance we will see in Judges.

1. Do what seems good to you
  - We are in your hands.
2. Deliver us today!
  - Do these two sentences/statements really belong together?
3. Putting away the idols.

NOTE: What is true repentance?

  - a. Sorrow for the sin and not just for the consequences or suffering
  - b. Change of heart that leads to change in behavior
  - c. No “conditions”
4. Turning to the Lord? (18)

#### D. The Lord relents

1. In response to repentance?
  - The text doesn’t make reference to the “confession”
2. In compassion
  - It was not the sincerity of their repentance that moves the Lord, but their suffering

### IV. Deliverance – Not In a Picture, But In Reality

#### A. Dealing with the tension

1. Justice?
  - Justice/righteousness says, “No More”
2. Compassion?
  - These are his people; he will abandon not them to destruction

#### B. Righteousness and peace kiss (Psalm 85:10)

- Where holiness and love meet