

14.13a Shamgar, Tola, Jair (Judges 3:31; 5:6; 10:1-5)

(Three of the briefly-noted judges—Shamgar, Tola, and Jair—are combined in Lesson 14.13a.)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Map of the time of the judges in order to locate Gilead

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *ox goad*: a wooden tool, approximately eight feet long, fitted with a point at one end, which was used to spur oxen as they pulled a plow or cart

Scripture: (ESV)

Shamgar: Judges 3:31 After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed 600 of the Philistines with an oxgoad, and he also saved Israel.

5:6 In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways.

Tola: Judges 10:1 After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he lived at Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty-three years. Then he died and was buried at Shamir.

Jair: Judges 10:3 After him arose Jair the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities, called Havvoth-jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

Shamgar’s Introduction and Review:

Two judges and an additional two serious episodes preceded the work of the third judge. Those two judges were Othniel, who delivered Israel from the king of Mesopotamia, and Ehud, the left-handed judge who delivered Israel from the Moabites. The first episode involved Micah’s idol and priest and their being stolen for false worship for the whole tribe of Dan. The other episode involved the near extinction of the tribe of Benjamin because of serious sin.

Shamgar’s story:

Shamgar was the third judge, between Ehud and Deborah. One of the two verses that tell about Shamgar also tells about Jael, the wife of Heber. We learned about Jael in our lesson about Deborah. [Teacher, see if anyone remembers Jael’s part of Deborah’s story.] She is the woman who invited Sisera, the commander of the Canaanites, into her tent, gave him some milk, and, when he had fallen asleep, slew him, giving victory to Israel.

The verse about Jael and Shamgar reads, “In the days of Shamgar . . . in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways.” Why were the highways abandoned so that travelers had to go on out-of-the-way country roads to get anywhere? The other verse about Shamgar gives a clue. It states that he slew 600 Philistines [locate Philistine territory on the Mediterranean coast]. Therefore, commentators tell us ✓the Philistines infested the highways, robbing all who traveled there. No doubt this caused quite a problem for traders and farmers who depended on the highways to get their goods to various markets.

Shamgar, ✓probably a man who plowed his fields with oxen, had had enough of this Philistine harassment. He took his eight-foot long ox goad with its sharp point at one end* and used it as a weapon against these intruders. How many Philistines did we read that he destroyed with this long pointed stick? [Six hundred.] That's a lot of men.

That was a sufficient number of Philistines for the problem of robbers on the highway to be solved. The Bible states Shamgar "saved Israel." Therefore, although we know little about him and only two verses about him are recorded, he was a very important hero to Israel while he lived.

*"Mr. Maundrell, who saw many [ox goads] . . . found them to be eight feet long, at the bigger end six inches in circumference, at the lesser end was a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end a small spade, or paddle of iron, for cleansing the plough from the clay" (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-5-6.html>).

Lessons from Shamgar's lesson:

- We see Jesus:

In the New Testament, when Jesus appeared to the Apostle Paul on his way to slay Christians, Jesus called, "Why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." Paul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:4, 5; 26:14, 15)

[Added information for the teacher: "[This] is a proverbial expression, taken from beasts that are goaded, who kick against the goads or pricks, and hurt themselves the more thereby; and Christ uses it, suggesting hereby, that should Saul go on to persecute him and his people, to oppose his Gospel, and the strong evidence of it, in doctrine and miracles, and notwithstanding the present remonstrances made in such an extraordinary manner; he would find himself in the issue greatly hurt by it, and could not rationally expect to succeed against so powerful a person"

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/acts-9-5.html>).

Tola's Introduction and Review:

Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal/Gideon, put sixty-eight of his brothers to death so that he could become king over the people. Despite our disgust for ✓his utter disdain for his father, shown by this act against his family, we are pleased that Abimelech did rid the country of some pockets of false worship.

Tola's Story:

The Bible tells us that after Abimelech a judge named Tola arose to save Israel. His name was the same as the first son of Jacob's son, Issachar, the tribe [locate] from which Tola came.

The Bible names no enemies of Israel for Tola to fight, but it does say he *defended* Israel. This fact indicates that ✓he prevented invading armies from doing harm before they established themselves in the land. Perhaps he was a judge in the sense that we think of today—a judge making decisions between conflicts. His term as judge lasted twenty-three years, quite a long time for someone who has so little recorded about himself.

✓We assume he judged with honor, unlike Abimelech.

A town named Shamir in Mount Ephraim [locate] was his home, and that is where he was buried.

The most interesting thing we read about Tola is the names of his father and grandfather—Puah [pronounced POO ah] and Dodo [pronounced DOH doh]. We shouldn't laugh at someone's name, but some of us just can't help it with *Dodo*. However, we wouldn't dare laugh in the presence of Tola or his relatives from Issachar, for they were mighty warriors of their generations (1 Chronicles 7:2).

Lessons from Tola's lesson:

- We see Jesus:

(With only two verses to tell us about Tola, we have to stretch a bit to find a similarity to Jesus.) The Bible tells us Tola was buried in his hometown. Jesus was buried in a tomb outside Jerusalem, but He did not stay buried. He arose from the dead.

Jair's Introduction and Review:

Interspersed among notable judges and events we find judges who might have governed several years but who are given very little space in the record of the Bible. We have already learned about two of these, Shamgar and Tola. Shamgar slew 600 Philistines with an ox goad, and Tola defended Israel twenty-three years. (He's the one whose father and grandfather had amusing names—Puah and Dodo.)

Jair's Story:

The next briefly-noted judge, Jair, has only three Scripture verses about him, but his description is more interesting than Tola's. Listen to this: He came from Gilead, which was in the tribe of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan River [locate], and judged Israel twenty-two years.

Do you remember how many sons Gideon/Jerubbaal had? [Seventy.] Well, Jair had less than half that many, but he had a bunch—thirty! This is what he did for those thirty sons: he got each of them a donkey to ride and gave them each a city—thirty cities!

Now, where in the world did Jair get thirty cities? We learn from other Scripture passages that he might have had as many as sixty cities in all. Way back when Israel first came into the land, one-half tribe of Manasseh, and the tribes of Reuben, and Gad stayed on the east side of the Jordan River [locate]. At that time an ancestor of Jair, who happened to have the same name, and other Manassites conquered “the whole kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of [that became] Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty cities” (Joshua 13:30; Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14). These were “great cities, with walls and bronze bars” (1 Kings 4:13)—impressive cities indeed! We see from these Scriptures that the family of Judge Jair had possessed these mighty cities for some time.

Another judge, Samuel, who lived later, had sons that helped him judge. Some commentators think that's what Jair did in giving thirty cities—✓he gave them authority to govern their cities.

Another thing to think about is the matter of riding donkeys. That sounds quite humble to us. We think we would look more important on a tall horse. However, ✓in those days, to ride a donkey showed the rider had distinction and honor.

So, Jair judged Israel twenty-two years, protecting them from their enemies, administering justice to them, and preserving them in the true religion (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-10-3.html>).

Lessons from Jair's lesson:

- We see Jesus:

On the Sunday before Jesus was crucified, He entered Jerusalem on a donkey as the people proclaimed, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”

- Believers look for a heavenly city: “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16).

Activities:

- Play dough:

Shamgar: ox; ox goad
Tola: the letters *T O L A*
Jair: donkeys; mini-cities

- Snack: [Teacher, choose one of these snacks.]

Shamgar: Cheese or fruit speared with a toothpick

Tola: Small tomatoes for *T*; orange sections for *O*; lettuce for *L*; and apple slices for *A*

Jair: Donkey-shaped sugar cookies or horse crackers as described at this site:
<https://i.pinimg.com/1200x/f4/49/5f/f4495fb9ee4d62818f853db3588858b2.jpg>

- Start learning the names of the judges by singing the following to the tune, “Ten Little Indians”:

Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah,
Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair,
Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon,
Samson, and Samuel.

- Review questions:

Shamgar: (Game: Print on cardstock the ox goads found below. A correct answer allows a student to place an ox goad in a pocket chart.)

1. Who was the third judge? Hint: He fought against Philistine robbers. [Shamgar.]
2. How many Philistines did Shamgar smite? [Six hundred.]
3. What weapon did Shamgar use? [An ox goad.]

Tola: (Game: Print and color the letters *TOLA* found below. A correct answer to a question allows a student to place a letter in a pocket chart or on the flannel board.)

1. Who was the judge after Abimelech? [Tola.]
2. Tell one way he was different from Abimelech. [He was not greedy for power; he defended Israel.]
3. Tell the name of either Tola’s father or grandfather. [Puah; Dodo.]
4. How many years did Tola judge Israel? [Twenty-three.]

Jair: (Game: Print, color, and cut out the letters *J A I R* found below. For each correct answer, a student will place a letter in a pocket chart.)

4. How many sons did Jair have? [Thirty.]
5. What huge, huge thing did he give to each of these sons? [One city each.]
6. What did Jair give his sons to ride? [Donkeys.]
7. How did Jair probably get this many cities? [His ancestors had conquered them when they first came into the land.]

Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)

- Revelation 2:10—Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Handwork: [Teacher, choose one or two of the following craft ideas.]

- **Shamgar:** Color and page of a man and woman and their oxen found below.
- **Tola:** Color the shield found below.
- **Jair:** Make a “Pin the Tail on the Donkey” game. Print on cardstock the clipart and tails found below. Students may color these pictures. Cut out the tails, and play the game.

The Judges of Israel

- Gideon** Major Judges
- Tola Other Judges
- City
- City (uncertain)
- ▲ Mountain Peak



The following 4 pages are for Shamgar's lesson.

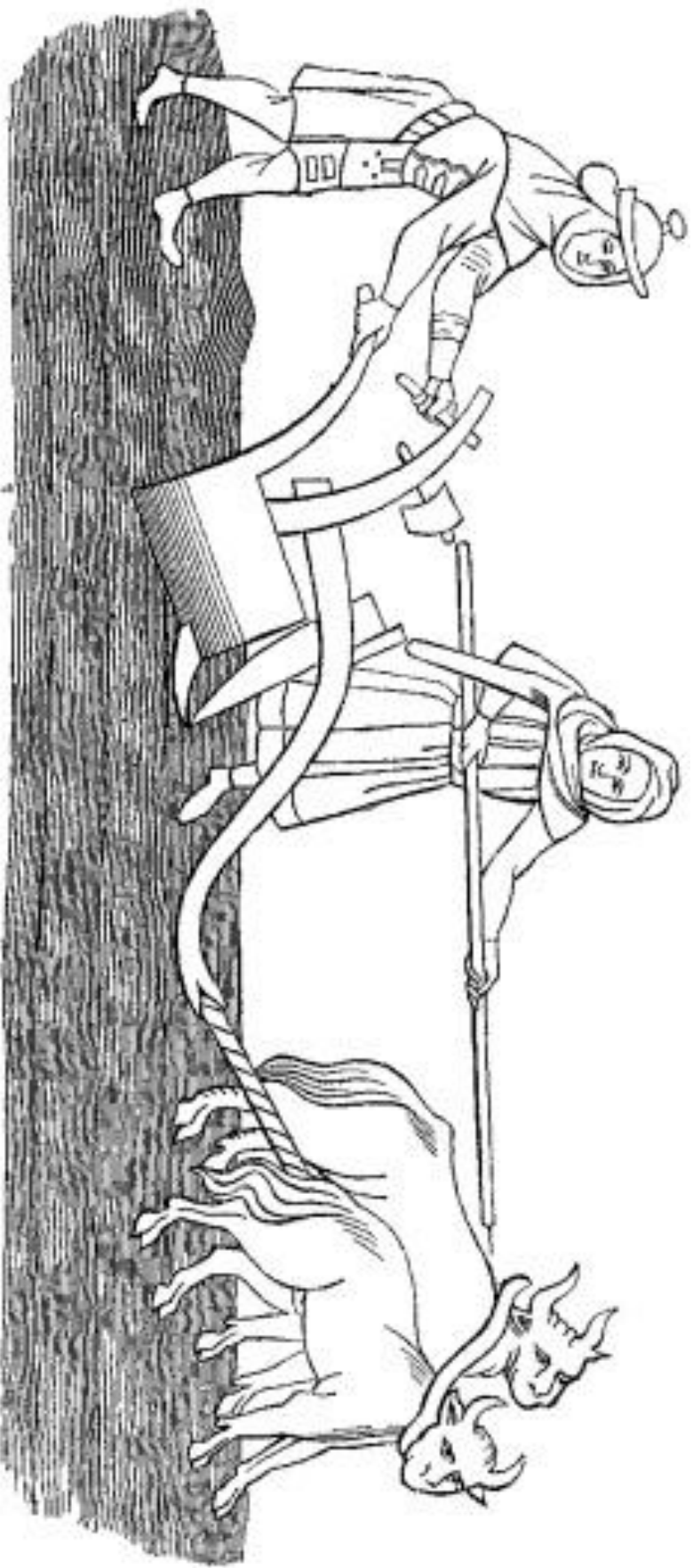
ox goad



<https://jacobpannell.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/shamgar-1-900x500.jpg>



Shamgar, Israel's third judge,
slew 600 Philistines with an
ox goad (Judges 3:6; 5:31).



The following 3 pages are for Tola's lesson.



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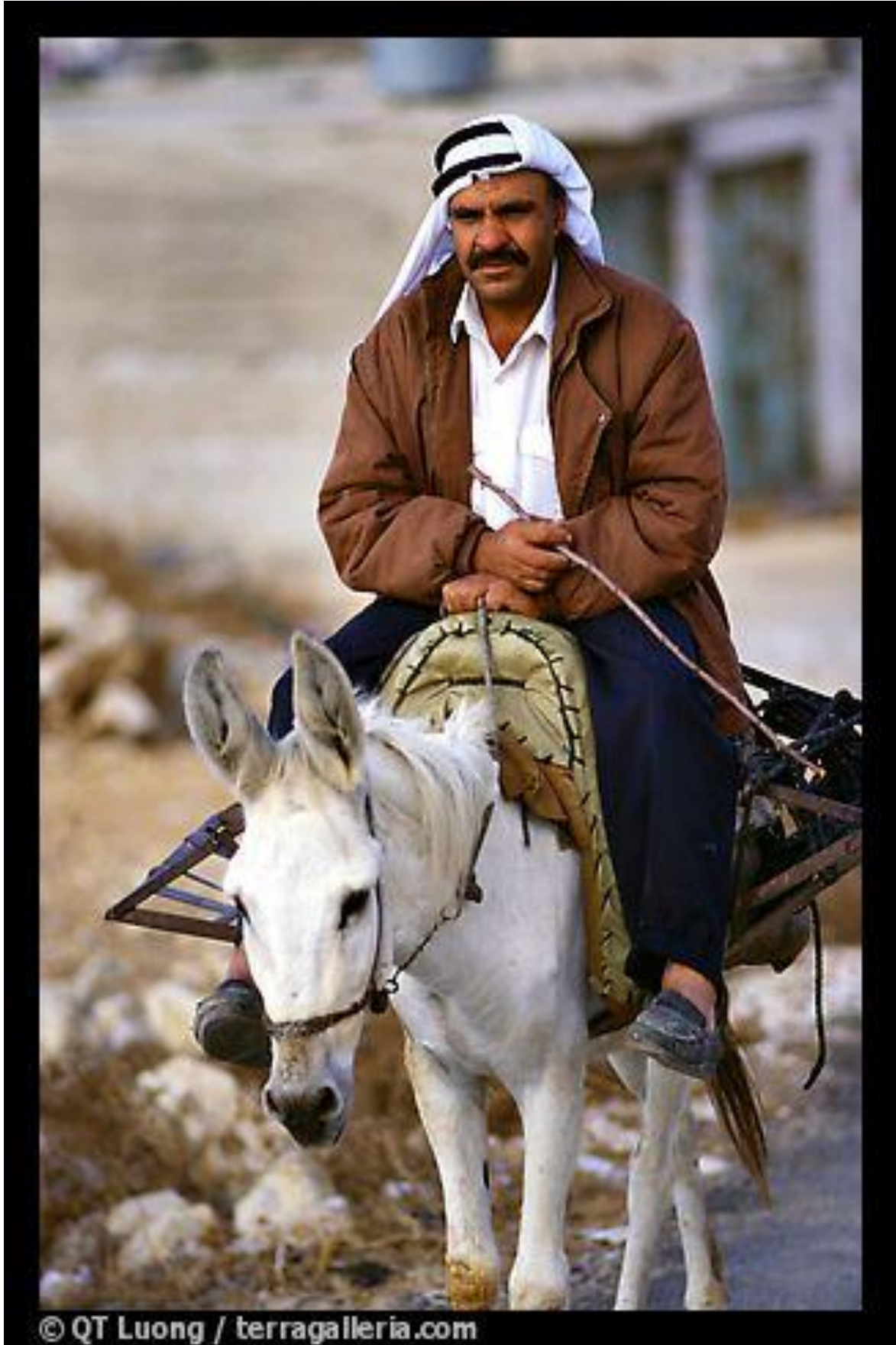


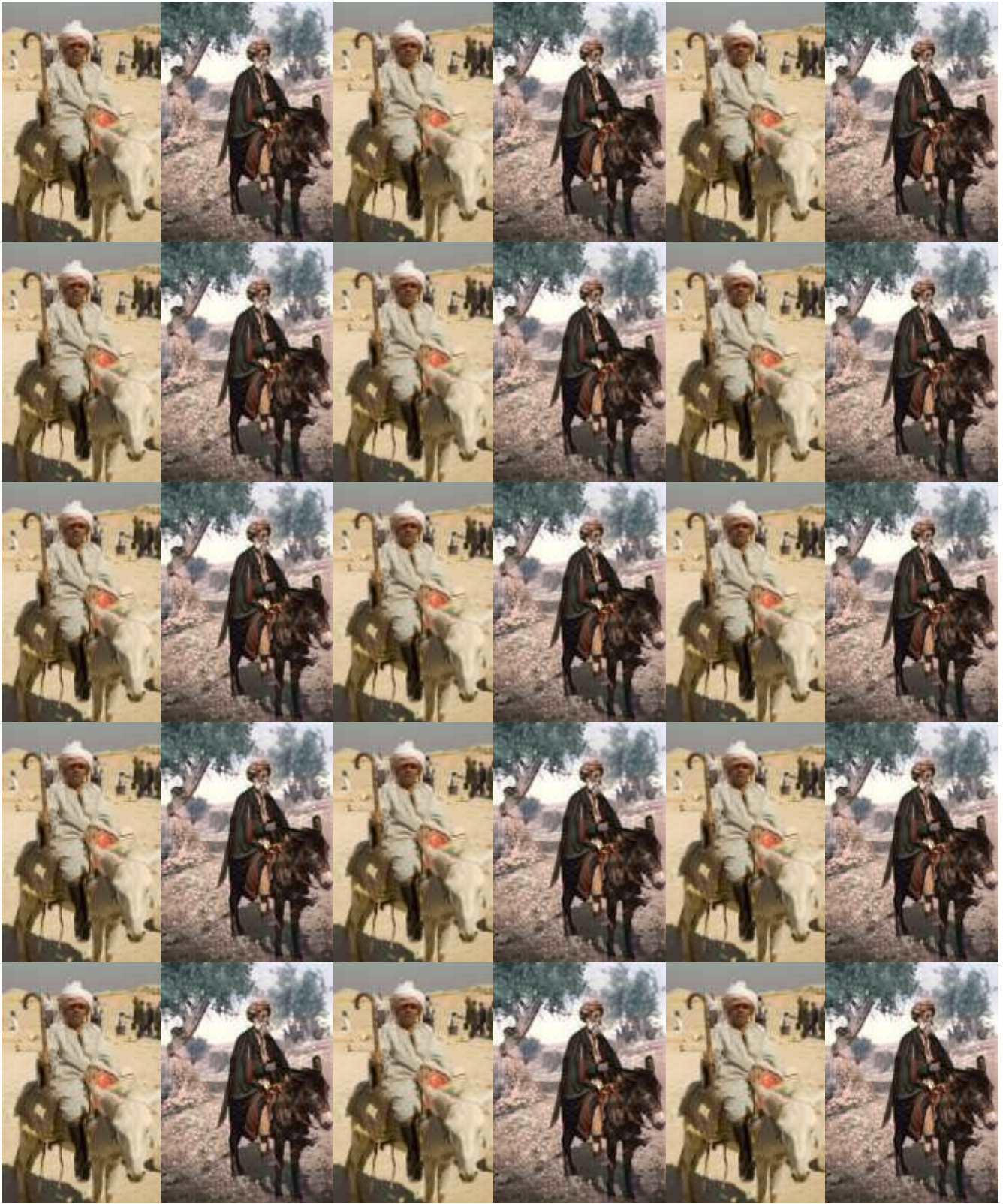
**Tola
defended
Israel.**

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The following 5 pages are for Jjair's lesson.





Thirty sons on thirty donkeys

J A

I R

Pin the Tail on Jair's Donkey

