

14.15 Tenth Judge, Ibzan (Judges 12:8–10)

(Lesson 14:17a is a composite lesson of the last three briefly-noted judges—Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.)

✓ “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. NOTE: Print two pages each of the fifteen men and fifteen women to get a total of thirty sons and thirty daughters. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

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.

- *secular*: attitudes, activities, or other things that have no Bible or spiritual basis
- *spouse*: husband or wife

Scripture: (ESV)

Judges 12:8 After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9 He had thirty sons, and thirty daughters he gave in marriage outside his clan, and thirty daughters he brought in from outside for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. 10 Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

Introduction/Review:

In secular history (or mythology) at about this time (around 1200 B.C.) the Trojan Wars (or wars with Troy) took place. Greece [locate] fought against the city of Troy [locate]. After ten long years of getting nowhere in the war, the Greeks constructed a huge wooden horse and hid soldiers in it. While the Greeks pretended to sail away, the people of Troy brought the horse into their city. At night the Greek soldiers in the horse came out, opened the gates of the city, and let in the Greeks, who then destroyed Troy. This story may or may not be true, but the one we will tell you today is true, for it is recorded in God’s Word.

Jephthah, rejected by his brothers in his early manhood, had been asked by those brothers to become the ninth judge. As judge, he drove out the Ammonites, descendants of Lot, but had to fight against his own Israelite brethren, the Ephraimites, upon his return home. What was the problem that caused war between Jephthah and Ephraim? [The men of Ephraim were angry because they had not been called to war against Ammon.] As the Ephraimites struggled to get back to their homes on the west side of the Jordan, they met Jephthah’s men at the river. How did Jephthah’s men discern whether the ones trying to cross the river were friends or enemies? [By asking them to pronounce the word *Shibboleth*, which means *stream*. If the men said, “*Sibboleth*,” they gave away the fact that they were Ephraimites.]

Story:

Jephthah, the ninth judge, had only one child, a daughter. The tenth judge, Ibzan, had many sons and daughters; so, obviously, he had many wives. His children numbered sixty in all—thirty sons and thirty daughters. The fact that he had so many children but especially that the large number of sons and daughters was equal was remarkable.

Ibzan got spouses for his children from “abroad,” “from outside.” This sounds as if Ibzan looked for husbands for his daughters and wives for his sons ✓outside of Israel or at least outside his tribe or territory. If so, Ibzan might have been trying to cement relationships with other tribes. However, some commentators disagree, saying that ✓he got spouses from outside his own extended family, yet from his tribe, Judah. ¹

Ibzan, whose name means *splendid*,² judged Israel seven years, ruling as other judges did. We do not read that Ibzan fought enemies, nor do we read anything about the work he did. When he died, he was buried in

his hometown of Bethlehem,³ which means *House of Bread* [locate]. What other Bible characters had the hometown of Bethlehem? [Ruth and Naomi, David, Jesus.]

¹“[H]is daughters he sent abroad, or married them, to persons not of another nation, nor of another tribe, but of another family of the same tribe, and these he dismissed from him to live with their husbands; and he took in daughters of families in the same tribe to be wives to his sons, and who seem to have dwelt together; it being the custom then for sons, though married, to abide with their father, and their wives with them”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-12-9.html>).

²Other meanings given are *father of a target* or *father of coldness*. What these meanings might signify is unknown by this author.

³Some scholars think Ibzan’s Bethlehem was in the tribe of Zebulun. On the other hand, he is sometimes identified as Boaz, who was from Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
Jesus’ earthly hometown was Bethlehem, but, being God, He came from heaven.

Activities:

- Play dough: man; woman; Trojan horse
- Snack: Bethlehem Bread. A recipe for this “House-of-Bread” bread is found at <https://theturquoisetable.com/bethlehem-bread-recipe/>.
- Sing the names of the judges to the tune, “Ten Little Indians.”
Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah,
Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair,
Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon,
Samson, and Samuel.
- Review questions: (Game: Print and cut apart the letters *I B Z A N* found below. For each correct answer, a student may place a letter in a pocket chart. If placed randomly, have students unscramble the name.)
 1. What was the name of the tenth judge? [Ibzan.]
 2. How many sons did Ibzan have? [Thirty.]
 3. How many daughters did Ibzan have? [Thirty.]
 4. What was Ibzan’s hometown? [Bethlehem.]
 5. Trick question: What work did Ibzan do, and what enemy did he fight? [No work or enemy is mentioned for Ibzan.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Micah 5:2—But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Handwork:

- For each student print the clipart of Bethlehem found at <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ba/3c/d3/ba3cd30ab72a26313ed97ee9c29944e4.gif>. Students will color the picture with crayons or water color paints. If doing the latter, supply smocks to protect clothing.

secular

spouse



<https://qph.fs.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-a39c8c1b49b29b1ff4027e7d1e8fd661-c>



<https://www.ancient.eu/image/1215/the-trojan-horse/>







Ibzan



IBZ

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