

## *Judges Chapter 11*

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- This chapter and story actually begin in Chapter 10:17-18.

V: 1 Jephthah = “God will open” from Gilead. ([Map / East side of Jordan](#))

- Born at a disadvantage, the son of a harlot, fathered by the king of Gilead. Considered an illegitimate son, thus making him an outcast.
- An outcast to man, but accepted of God – he is included in the hall of faith in Hebrews Ch. 11.

V: 2-3 Gilead’s wife, different than the harlot produced legitimate sons who drove Jephthah away so as not to have a share in the inheritance.

- Jephthah reminds us of Jesus in some ways: there was a shadow over the birth of Jesus, Jesus was rejected by His brothers.
- As we’ll read, Jephthah wasn’t content just to be their savior, he wanted to be their Lord as well – Just as Jesus does.
- Jephthah flees to Tob (Map) just to the East of Gilead – and becomes the leader of a band of robbers, and makes a name for himself as a mighty man of valor.

V: 4-11 They are not particularly oppressed, nor are they crying out for deliverance. As the children of Ammon came out against the children of Israel; on the East side of the Jordan in the land of Gilead they were looking for a leader, a general to save them.

- Sadly they were looking look for a military leader as opposed to crying out to God or even to a Godly man – instead they turn to a robber.

**Matthew 27:17** “Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?”

- They chose Barabbas – a robber.
- This was no doubt a humbling experience for the elders of Gilead, which no doubt included the legitimate sons of Gilead.
- First you kick me out, then when you have need you come with your proposals
- They not only ask Jephthah to be their general, but to be their king – “**head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.**”
- The elders then make an oath before God to that regard.

- **Mizpeh:** Genesis Ch. 31 - Jacob / Laban – “The Lord watch after me and thee while were absent from one another” – Necklaces, etc. “Since I can’t watch you or trust you – may the Lord watch you...”

V: 12-13 Jephthah demonstrates wisdom and character that wouldn’t be expected from an outcast, robber, and son of a harlot.

- 2 things become evident about Jephthah:
  1. He wasn’t a hot head looking for a war.
  2. He knew the scriptures.

V: 14-22 Jephthah tries to reason with the Ammonites and if possible to avoid a war. He presents the facts of history. Ammonites are different than the Amorites.

**Romans 12:18** “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

- Jephthah asks the king of Ammon why he wants to come out to war against Gilead.
- The answer comes back: “because you’ve taken our land.”
- Jephthah then recites their history and the events that have taken place from the time of the Exodus out of Egypt.
- Jephthah demonstrates that he has an understanding of the history of Israel, and that Israel had attempted in the past to avoid a conflict with Moab – but they wouldn’t allow it.

V: 23 Jephthah accurately give God the credit for defeating the Amorites and giving them the land – and why should you (Ammon) possess what we took from the Amorites?

V: 24 You should possess whatever your god, Chemosh has the power to give you.

- Jephthah correctly understand that this conflict is a spiritual battle between the God of Israel and the god of the Amorites.

**Ephesians 6:12** “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

**2 Corinthians 10:4** “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;”

V: 25-28 Jephthah asks somewhat rhetorically – are you any better than Balak?

- Balak was the king who hired Balaam to curse the children of Israel – they were later all killed by the Israelites.
- It's been 300 years since all these things took place.
- Jephthah claims innocence all of which is rejected by the Ammonites.

V: 29 As the Spirit of God comes upon Jephthah – he is empowered to do that which he could not normally do – he is given supernatural power – he moves forward into battle.

**Zechariah 4:6** “... not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

- We're not given any numbers.

V: 30 As Jephthah moves forward into battle he takes an oath, he vows a vow.

- “Lord if you will..... then I'll....”

**Ecclesiastes 5:2** “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

- This vow seems to be rather rash, “*whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me...*”
- Does he keep livestock in his house that are trained to come out to greet him?
- He would certainly only expect his wife, kids, servants to be the ones to come out to him.
- Making a burnt offering: this was the offering of consecration, of being set aside for God's exclusive use.

V: 32-33 The Lord delivered the Ammonites into the hands of Jephthah and the children of Israel.

V: 34-35 Jephthah's only child, his daughter is the first one out of the door to celebrate.

- Jephthah immediately passed the buck – blaming his daughter for his vow – it's the woman's fault...

- We are called to keep our word – letting our yes be yes, and our no be no – and we are specifically called to keep our vows to the Lord.

**Numbers 30:2** “If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”

- Jephthah realizes his mistake, but he can't take it back, or go back.

V: 36-38 Jephthah's daughter is incredibly gracious – I'm under your authority, do whatever you've said you would do.

- First allow me to grieve and mourn for the future that won't be, the children that will not be for two months.

V: 39 At the end of the two months she voluntarily came back to her father who honored his vow.

- This doesn't necessarily mean that she was made into a human sacrifice? I don't know, I can only throw some things out there and try to understand the options.

**Psalms 15:1-4** “<sup>1</sup>Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? <sup>2</sup>He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. <sup>3</sup>He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. <sup>4</sup>In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”

- No where in scripture does it say that she was sacrificed.
- There are several scriptures that forbid human sacrifice:

**Deuteronomy 18:9-10** “<sup>9</sup>When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. <sup>10</sup>There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire....”

**Jeremiah 7:31** “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.”

- With these prohibitions already in place against human sacrifice it is much more likely that Jephthah fulfilled his vow by consecrating his daughter to the Lord for the rest of her life – perhaps in the service of the Tabernacle in some way – much like being sent to a convent.
- Notice in **V: 38** that she and her friends bewailed her virginity, not her death.

**Leviticus 27:1-5** “<sup>1</sup>And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when a man shall make a singular vow (special, difficult) the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation. <sup>3</sup>And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. <sup>4</sup>And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels. <sup>5</sup>And if it be from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.”

- In other words; according to the law Jephthah could simply have redeemed his daughter for between 10-30 shekels of silver.

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## *Judges Chapter 12*

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V: 1 The men of Ephraim gathered themselves together to fight against Jephthah and Gilead – this seems un-provoked.

- Previously they tried the same thing with Gideon, who was much more diplomatic with them, trying it now with Jephthah it has a much different result.

V: 2-3 I called for you to help and you didn't come.

- The Lord delivered them into my hand – so why are you come out to fight against me?

**Joshua 22** – as the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh were returning to their inheritance on the East side of the Jordan – they stopped to build an altar and almost got into a war with the rest of the tribes of Israel.

- The issue was obedience to God, honoring God, and keeping from national sin – things worth fighting for.
- Now Ephraim wants to go to war with their brethren over stupid pride issues.

**Proverbs 16:18** “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

V: 4-7 Jephthah and the men of Gilead fought and defeated Ephraim.

- When some of the men of Ephraim were trying to escape back across the Jordan river, if they couldn't pronounce Shibboleth properly then the men of Gilead knew that they were Ephraimites – and they killed them.

- Shibboleth means “crossing” as in crossing the river – in the dialect of the Ephramites they couldn’t pronounce the “sh” sound.
- They would have been better off staying home in the first place.
- 42,000 men died because their words betrayed them.

**Matthew 12:37** “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

- Jephthah judged Israel 6 years.
- Jephthah is listed in Hebrews Chapter 11, the hall of faith – an ordinary guy with humble beginnings used for extraordinary things.

V: 8-10 Ibzan = “Quick” / “Agile”

- Noted for his political expediency – contrary to the law regarding intermarriages.
- He sent his daughters out to foreigners to marry them, he brought foreign women in to marry his sons, an ancient way of developing relations and keeping the peace.

V: 11-12 Elon = “Great Tree” or “Tree of God” – judged Israel 10 years.

V: 13-15 Abdon = “Service” – judged Israel 10 years.

- Pirathonites were from Ephraim.
- 331 years since crossing the Jordan into the promised land.

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**Joshua 22:5** “But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Next we’ll get into the exciting story of Sampson, the 13<sup>th</sup> judge of Israel.