

12/1/13

### Judges 11-12

God had turned the children of Israel over to the Philistines and the Ammonites for their idolatrous unfaithfulness. Judges 10:7

They cried out to God and repented of their sins and put away their foreign gods and served the Lord. Judges 10:16

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But Ammon was gathering to attack Gilead and the people of God at Mizpah area discussion who was going to lead them in battle. Judges 10:18

Chapter 11-12 deal with Jephthah, the eighth judge to deliver the people of God from their bondage.

#### 11:1-3 *The expulsion of Jephthah from his home.*

- 1) His name “the Gileadite”, refer to his father whose name was Gilead, as well as the city where he lived on the east side of the Jordan Rive. vs. 1a
- 2) He was a mighty man of valor “gibbowr chayil” meaning he was a man of strength, ability and efficiency and in warfare, a courageous man. vs. 1a
- 3) Jephthah was identified as “the son of an harlot”. vs. 1b

a. The Hebrew word “zonah” is used for a woman consecrated or devoted to prostitution in connection with the abominable worship of Asherah or Astarte, the Syrian Venus.

\* This word is used as a direct prohibition of sexual union, apart from holy matrimony, being treated as common. Deut. 23:17;  
Hos. 4:14

b) Some try to make her an innkeeper like Rahab, both are foreign to the text.

4) He is identified as “begotten of Gilead”.  
vs. 1d

a) The illegitimate son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.  
1Chron. 7:14, 17

b) Gilead means, Yahweh will open, the root means to ungird, loose or set free.

5) He was rejected by his half-brothers. vs. 2-3

a) The wife of Gilead “bore sons” to him and they did not want to affiliate with their illegitimate half-brother, so they cast him out. vs. 2a-c

b) The reason behind the expulsion was due to the inheritance rights, denying he had any right to it. vs. 2d-e

c) They expressed their disdain for him, calling his mother, another woman

- “acher” denoting she was not of Israel, as well as a prostitute. vs. 2f
- 6) He removed himself from his stepbrothers. vs. 3
- a) He “fled from his brothers”, indicating the idea of hast or quickly.
- b) He “dwelt in the land of Tob”.
- 1)) Tob was near Syria, a district on the east of Jordan, about 13 miles south-east of the Sea of Galilee.
- 2)) The northern boundary of Perea, between Syria and the land of Ammon, whose modern name is Taiyibeh. 2Sam. 10:6, 8
- c) The man Jephthah was joined by a group of men. vs. 3b
- 1)) The word worthless “reyq rake”, means empty, those whose pockets were empty; without money, no employment or property, nothing to live upon, just like Jephthah, as David’s men. 1Sam. 22:2
- 2)) “The son of Gilead being a valiant man, they enlisted themselves under him and went out with him; not on any bad design, as to rob and plunder as the italicized word “raiding” implies, but to get their living by hunting; or rather by making excursions into the enemy's country, and carrying off booty, on which they lived.”

**11:4-11** *The return of Jephthah to his home.*

- 1) The solicitation was for the help of Jephthah. vs. 4-6
- a) The descendants of Lot’s younger daughter, the Ammonites, threatened them with war vs. 4
- \* God had delivered them up to Ammon and the Philistines, so they were looking for a leader. Judges 10:7, 18
- b) The delegation traveled to seek Jephthah at Tob. vs. 5
- c) They proposed he be their military leader to fight against the people of Ammon. vs. 6
- 2) The consternation toward the elders was expressed by Jephthah. vs. 7-8
- a) He rebuked them for being opportunists. vs. 7
- b) The elders admitted their self-seeking motive for seeking to defend them against Ammon and he would be their head leader. vs. 8
- 3) The negotiation was settled to secure the help of Jephthah. vs. 9-11
- a) He did not trust them, in view of their past rejection of him, so he proposed the condition of being their leader after delivering them. vs. 9
- b) The elders verified their words by an oath to Yahweh. vs. 10

- c. Jephthah returned back home and was made military commander and head of Gilead, before the LORD in Mizpah. vs. 11
- 1)) Mizpah means “watch-tower” the look-out, the place in Gilead named by Laban, who overtook Jacob. Gen. 31:49
  - 2)) The idea behind the name was that Laban could not trust Jacob, so God would have to watch him, the same idea is here for Jephthah and the Gileadites, no coincidence.

**11:12-28** *The diplomatic dealing of Jephthah with the king of Ammon.*

- 1) Jephthah sent envoys to the king of Ammon. vs. 12-13
  - a) He asked the King what he had against him. vs. 12
  - b) The King accused Israel of having taken his land when they came out of Egypt. vs. 13
- 2) Jephthah sent a second envoy to the King of Ammon to correct his accusations by reviewing their history. vs. 14-23
  - a) He denied the accusations of Israel taking the land of Moab and Ammon illegally. vs. 14-15
  - b) He retraced the steps Israel took and the request to pass through the land, as they come out of Egypt. vs. 16-20

- 1)) From Egypt they came through the Red Sea to Kadesh. vs. 16
  - 2)) Israel sent messengers to the Kings of Edom and Moab, for permission to pass through the land, but were refused, so they went along the wilderness bypassing their land. vs. 17-18
  - 3)) Israel did the same with Sihon King of the Amorites and Heshbon, but Sihon did not trust Israel, so he gathered all his people at Jahaz and fought against Israel. vs. 19-20
    - \* The charge was false. Num. 20:14-22; 21:21-35; Deut. 2:10
- 3) He declared that Israel had acquired the land by defeating the king of the Amorites. vs. 21-23
    - a) The Lord delivered Sihon and Israel defeated him. vs. 21a-b
    - b) The people of Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, from Arnon to the Jabbak and from the wilderness to the Jordan. vs. 21c-22
      - \* About the middle of the Dead Sea, north about 50 miles, on the east side. Deut. 3:16; Josh. 13:16
  - c) The Lord had dispossessed the Amorites before Israel, how could

they think of repossessing the land? vs. 23

- 4) Jephthah denounced the King of Ammon by open rebuke. vs. 24-26
  - a) He rebuked him by appealing to his devotion to Chemosh his god to possess what Chemosh gave him. vs. 24
  - b) He rebuked him by thinking that he was better able to come against them than Balak, the King of Moab, who attempted to curse Israel by Balaam. vs. 25  
\* Num. 21-23
  - c) He rebuked him by his long procrastination to recover the land of 300 years. vs. 26
- 5) Jephthah declared the king of Ammon had no legitimate claim on the land. vs. 27-28
  - a) He was innocent in the matter as Israel's representative. vs. 27a-b
  - b) He commended himself the ultimate judge, the LORD, Yahweh, the covenant God. vs. 27c-d
  - c) His words fell on deaf ears, Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him." vs. 28

### 11:29-33 *The rash vow of Jephthah.*

- 1) He was chosen and prepared by God to defeat the Ammonites. vs. 29

- a) He was super-naturally empowered as the eighth judge, "Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah." vs. 29a
  - a. The Spirit of God enabled him to be victorious, just as Gideon and the other judges for 6 years. Judges 12:7
  - b) The natural ability of being a mighty man of valor without the Spirit of God means nothing.
- 2) His route towards the battle is recorded from Gilead to the people of Ammon." vs. 29b-d  
\* Gathering men from Israel to advance right into the enemies land.
- 3) He was moved to make a vow to God to insure his victory over the Ammonites. vs. 30-31
  - a) Jephthah vows as a religious man, attempting to get God on his side, in his time of need. vs. 30
  - b) Jephthah vowed as a pagan offering a human sacrifice, the first to come out of his house, at his return. vs. 31  
\* He vowed a burnt offering, of dedication and consecration to God, totally consumed on the altar. Lev. 1:14-17
- 2) He was given victory by the Lord. vs. 32-33

- a) Jephthah as God's instrument rode into battle and the LORD delivered them into his hands. vs. 32
- b) Jephthah details of the conquered against the Ammonites is stated. vs. 33

**11:34-40** *The fulfillment of the vow of Jephthah.*

- 1) Jephthah arrived home to be greeted by his daughter. vs. 34
  - a) She was the first person to come out of his house. vs. 34a
  - b) She came out celebrating his victory with timbrels and dancing." vs. 34a-b
    - \* Much like Mirium, after the victory over the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Ex. 15:20-21; 1Sam. 18:6-7
  - c) She was the only child. vs. 34c-d
- 2) Jephthah played the fool, despite knowing he would be childless, cutting of his descendants. vs. 35
  - a) He expressed his grief emotionally by his clothes. vs. 35a-c
  - b) He blamed his daughter for his sad circumstance, "and said, "Alas, my daughter! vs. 35d-h
  - c) He was too religious to retract his vow or acknowledge his error. vs. 35i-j
    - 1))  
The Law never required a vow, but if one was made the person had to keep it, giving provision for

- annulling the vow. Num. 30; Lev. 18:21
- 2)) The vow of Jephthah was a direct contradiction of the Law, it did not require or allowed human sacrifice.
  - \* This was a practice of the heather, an abomination before God. 2Kings 3:27; 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; Jer. 7:31; Mic. 6:7
- 3)) The vow is in accord with the time of the judges when every man was doing what was right in their own eyes, due to the fact that there was no King on the throne of Israel. Judges 17:6; 21:25
- d) Jephthah is named as one of the hero's of faith for trusting God to deliver him, yet God did not condoned this heinous act, just like He did not condoned the sexual escapades of Samson. Heb. 11:32
- 3) Jephthah allowed his daughter to go along with his religious vow to her own destruction. vs. 36
  - a) She was committed to the pagan practice, encouraging her father vs. 36a-d
    - \* This is religious ignorance that believes they are pleasing God.
  - b) She syncretized the pagan practice with Yahweh. vs. 36e

\* This is a religious abuse of the power that holds people bound in ignorance by perpetuating ignorance about God and the things of God.

- 4) Jephthah allowed his daughter to bewail her virginity. vs. 37-38
  - a) The request was hers. vs. 37
  - b) The event is recorded. vs. 38
- 5) Jephthah perpetuated his religious ignorance. vs. 39-40
  - a) He sacrifice her to God by carrying out his vow. vs. 39a-b
    - 1)) All commentators and historians taught he literally sacrificed her, until the Middle Ages, in attempt to soften the horrible act.
    - 2)) God may use a person, but it does not mean all that they do is of the Lord or in accord with His word.
    - 3)) Some would have the text to teach that Jephthah committed her to a life of perpetual virginity, much like the Catholic convents for women.
      - a)) The context would hinder that interpretation by observation.
      - b)) The words of Jephthah imply a person walking out of his house. 11:31a-c

c)) The offering was a burnt offering, for dedication and consecration. Judges 11:31d

d)) The response of Jephthah as his daughter walked out confirms his understanding of his vow to mean her death. Judges 11:35

- 5)) Others have attempted to make a topological teaching of Christ and the Father in the offering of Jephthah's daughter, spiritualizing it completely out of context. (Alexander White)
  - b) He sacrificed her as a virgin, "She knew no man." vs. 39c
    - \* Being a virgin was commendable, in view of the time she was living, but not so for going along with the foolish vow.
  - c) He caused the heinous act to become a commemorated religious custom, as the ruling judge, each year for four days. vs. 39d-40
    - 1)) Religious customs and practices are hard to brake, they hold people bound in their ignorance!
    - 2)) Religious customs at times add to the persons hurt in doing things that may hinder, destroy or waste their lives away in solitude as in a monastery reaching no one!

**12:1-3** *Jephthah was confronted by Ephraim, regarding the battle.*

- 1) Ephraim complained that he had not called them to the battle. vs. 1a-e  
\* Jephthah was different than Gideon with the Ephraimites, who were haughty and arrogant complainers!  
Judges 8:1-3
- 2) Ephraim threatened to burn down his house with fire. vs. 1f
- 3) Jephthah told them of his distress and call to them but they responded not. vs. 2
- 4) Jephthah told them that he decided to take things into his own hand and crossed over and God, delivering him from Ammon. vs. 3a-c
- 5) Jephthah then asked them why then had they had come up to fight with him. vs. 3d

**12:4-7** *Jephthah confronted Ephraim.*

- 1) Jephthah fought against Ephraim. vs. 4a
- 2) Jephthah defeated Ephraim. vs. 4b
- 3) Ephraim accused the Gileadites of being fugitives of Ephraim and Manasseh, insulting them. vs. 4c-d
- 4) The Gileadites seized the fords of Jordan before the Ephraimites arrived. vs. 5-6
  - a) Under Gideon, the Ephraimites took the fords and slew the Midianites.  
Judges 8:24

- b) Now the Ephraimites would escape and attempt to cross the ford taken by Jephthah, asking if they were Ephraimites and if they said no, they would ask him to say “Shibboleth”.  
vs. 5
- b) The Ephraimites could not pronounce the “sh” sound and would say “Sibboleth”, giving himself away and losing his life. vs. 6
  - 1)) Sometimes Christians or Bible teachers become like Jephthah and the Gileadites, if someone does not see a particular view of Scriptural interpretation as they do, and assassinate their character.
  - 2)) The carnal doctrines that deal with the Atonement, deity, the virgin birth, the second coming and some others we must be in agreement but on other such as the gifts, the rapture and others we can differ without having to fight or argue.
- 5) The man Jephthah was considered as one of the judges of Israel.
  - a) He judged Israel for six years. vs. 7a
    - 1)) He was the ninth judge of Israel.
    - 2)) He was a Gileadite as his predecessor Jair. 10:3a-b
    - 3) ) He judged Israel for twenty-two years. 10:3c

- b) He died and was buried in among the cities of Gilead. vs. 7b
  - 1)) The time of his death is not specified.
  - 2)) The city of his burial is not named.

**12:8-15** *The ninth through the eleventh judge.*

- 1) The ninth was Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel, he lived wealth and comfort. vs. 8-9
  - a) Bethlehem is not the one in Judah, where Jesus was born, but in the south-west corner of Zebulum. vs. 8
  - b) He married his children to upper society, both sons and daughters, securing their wealthy status. vs. 9
  - c) He judged Israel seven years. vs. 9
  - d) Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. vs. 10
- 3) The tenth was Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. vs. 11-12
  - a) And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. vs. 12
  - b) Different from the Valley of Aijalon, where the sun stood still. Josh. 10:12
- 4) The eleventh was Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. vs. 13-15
  - a) He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy

young donkeys. He judged Israel eight years. vs. 14

- b) Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites. vs. 15
  - \* Thirty years total from Jephthah, the eighth judge, to Abdon, the twelfth judge.