

Jephthah Part 1

Intro/Review:

- Judges 2:11-14 “Did evil in the sight of the Lord.....He gave them into the hand of the plunderers”
- Judges 2:20-21 “They have not obeyed Me, I will no longer drive out the nations before them”
- Judges 3:7-8 “They did evil in the sight of the Lord.....He gave them over to king of Mesopotamia”
- Judges 3: 12 “They did evil in the sight of the Lord...He gave them over to King of Moab.”
- Judges 4: 1 “They did evil in the sight of the Lord...He gave them over to Jabin King of Canaan.”
- Judges 6:1 “They did evil in the sight of the Lord...He gave them over to the hands of Midian”
- Judges 10:6-8 “They did evil in the sight of the Lord...He gave them into hands of Philistines”

Something Unique Occurs In Israel’s Plea & God’s Heart

- Vs. 10 *“We have sinned against You, and served the false gods.”*
- Vs. 14 *“Go cry out to the false gods you have chosen.....let them deliver you in your distress.”*
- Vs. 15 *“We have sinned, do whatever seems good to you, but please deliver us this day.”*
 - Only real sign of repentance we have seen from Israel yet
 - The fact that they repeat their understanding of sin could indicate a true repentance
 - Psalm 51 David understood that God was just & right & accepted any consequences of sin.
 - True repentance respects God’s judgment even while still asking for deliverance.
- Vs. 16 *“Put away foreign gods, served the Lord, He could bear their misery no longer.”*
 1. “Put away” = (Literally) Turn the other direction. No longer worship false gods
 2. Turned back toward God. Text says “**SERVED** Him.”
 3. God’s turns back toward Israel (literally His soul was short w/ the misery)

Illustration: Taught all our babies basic sign language when little.
We are slow to respond until we see a genuine attempt to communicate
They can’t just get away w/ half-hearted effort to sign.

It appears God is slow in turning to Israel until they truly show intent to serve only Him

I. Jephthah Is Chosen to Lead Sons of Israel (10:17-11:11)

- Vs. 17 *“Sons of Ammon were summoned, & camped in Gilead, Israel camps in Mizpah.”*
- Vs. 18 *“Who is the man who will fight Ammonites? He will become head over all Gilead.”*
 - Israel identifies need for a deliverer, but immediately think about a man – not God.
 - Israel falls back into ruler or a “king-like” mentality.
 - The author gives us a prelude to procedure Israel will employ to fix their situation
 - We get a contrast of Israel crying to God for help but then selecting their own ruler.

Jephthah’s Background (A Flash-Back or Bump-Out to our Current Text) 11:1-11:4

- Vs. 1 *“Jephthah was a valiant warrior, son of a harlot. Gilead was his father”*
 - We learn that he had skills as a warrior
 - His mother was a “Harlot” (not a wife or concubine) she sold herself
- Vs. 2 *“...Step brothers run him off....worthless fellows follow him.”*
 - “Worthless” NIV adventurers, KJV vain, HCSB lawless, some disenfranchised rabel.
 - They see Jephthah as a leader. These guys gravitate to him. He attracts these rebels.

Illustration: Friend in our wedding used to always attract “bad-boys”
She is saved w/ great foundation in Christ.....but loves the bad-boy image.

Elders of Gilead Seek out Jephthah to be their general against Ammon (4-8)

- Vs. 5-6 ***“....Elders travel to Tob and request Jephthah’s help/services.”***
- Vs. 7 ***Jephthah responds “You drove me out and called me unworthy, now you need help?”***
 - Subtle parallel Jacob’s sons and Joseph.
 - Joseph & Jephthah both operate later in life as deliverers for their people.
 - Joseph hated for being the favorite. Jephthah was hated for being a hybrid
 - Jews of Jesus’ day “nothing good can come from Nazareth”
 - “isn’t he just the son of Joseph the carpenter?” “Jesus is cornerstone the builders rejected”
- Often times we see a motif in Bible of rejection later followed by redemption through the rejected.
- Vs. 8 ***“For this reason we have returned to you.....”***
 - Notice it is elders themselves who seek Jephthah.
 - Humble themselves to go personally to him.
- Idea of “returning” carries loose implication of apology / admission of guilt for previous treatment

The Covenant is Made Between Jephthah, & Elders (9-11)

- Vs. 9 Jephthah repeats statement of Elders. Clarifying the terms of the contract or the pledge.
- Jephthah says; ***“I’ll come to your aid if you promise to make me ruler over all of Gilead”***
- We see a very strategic side to Jephthah here.
- I’ll come to aid, but only for reward or compensation
- Gideon rejected offer to be king w/ his lips, but still required tribute from spoils like others kings

II. Jephthah Slaughters the Ammonites (11:12-33)

Jephthah Initially Tries to Negotiate with the King of Ammon (12-27)

- Vs. 12 ***“Why have you invaded our land and come to fight.”***
- Vs. 13 ***“Because Israel took our land when you came out of Egypt.”***
- Jephthah Responds w/ 3 Separate Rebuttals of Historic Events

1. “We did not take your land leaving Egypt, others took it from you” (15-22)

- a. Vs. 16-18 Jephthah recounts how Israel asked permission to go through territories of Edom & Moab & was refused passage.
- b. Israel went around these territories instead.

(Explain God directing Israel to go up against Amorites, rebelled, then got routed)

- c. Duet. 2:5 Lord said “Do not provoke the Edomites (Esau)”
- d. Duet. 2:9 Lord said “Do not harass Moab”
- e. Duet. 2:19 Lord said “Do not harass Ammon”
- f. Duet. 2:32 “Lord delivered King Sihon into our hands”
- g. Duet. 2:37 “Israel did not go near Ammon’s land.”
- h. Num. 21:26 “Sihon (Amorites) fought against Moabites and won”

2. “You Keep land your god gives you, why can’t we keep land Lord gives us?” (23-24)

3. “Israel has lived here for 300 years, why haven’t you taken back the land yet?”

Jephthah concludes that he is not at fault, rather Ammonites are at fault. (27-28)

- Vs. 27 ***“Let the Lord, the Judge be the judge today.”***
- (In other words, God is going to squash you and your false god Chemosh)

(This is another subtle reference author has been reinforcing throughout Judges ---- God's preeminence over false gods of men)

Jephthah Wins the Battle Strikes Ammon w/ "Very Great Slaughter" (29-32)

- Vs. 29 *"Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah"*
 - Similar parallel to Gideon and others. Spirit resides for an assignment (32,000 men)
 - Not an indwelling, but temporary resting for God's expressed empowerment
- Vs. 32 *"Lord gave them into his hand"*
 - Author is very clear to indicate how this victory was accomplished.
 - Even Jephthah's skill as a warrior is still only a tool at God's disposal
 - Joshua was a mighty warrior, God reminded him who was really going to dispose the land.

Conclusion:

What is noticeably missing from this story? Or Maybe we should ask "WHO" is missing?
God.

Yehweh is Mentioned Throughout, But We Don't See His Active Hand In Selecting a Deliverer

Vs. 16 *"God could bear the misery of Israel no longer"*

Vs. 29 *"Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah"*

Vs. 32 *"Lord gave sons of Ammon into Jephthah's hand"*

1. Israel Pleas to God – "Please deliver us this day". Then they found their own solution.

- Just because God worked through Jephthah can we say He condoned this plan?

Not Necessarily:

1. Abraham & Hagar –Where will my inheritance go? Abraham then tries to fulfill the promise.
2. Moses struck the rock water came- but God did not approve.
3. Joshua made a peace treaty w/ Gibeonites. It was against the law, but God honored it.
4. Israel asked for a king like nations around them – God warned them but gave them Saul

2. Do we do this in our own lives today? Do we ask God for help but then find our own solutions?

- Peter in the garden cut off the soldier's ear.
 - Jesus had to literally fix that situation by putting the ear back on.
- Crowds chose Barrabas (probably a personality much like Jephthah)
 - God still used that decision for His glory to redeem mankind back to Himself.

Think About Times When We Have Taken Matters Into Our Own Hands:

- God's grace through Christ Jesus is completely sufficient to cover our own failed solutions
- **Romans 8:28** "God causes all things to work for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose."

Isaiah 3:6-7 In a dark season of Israel a man will say to his brother you have a cloak, you take charge of this heap of ruins and you be our leader."

We often look around us to substandard solutions/deliverers for help.