

Jephthah – The Negotiating Judge – Jephthah Wars - Judges 11:30-12:7

<p>³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, ³¹ "then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." <i>Possibilities of the vow:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic (Dedication) – burnt offering always refers to an actual burnt offering. • An animal – an animal would not come out of his house to greet him. • A human sacrifice – seems to fit the text (and the culture) best. 	<p>1. Jephthah _____ with God</p> <p>a. Jephthah's _____ Vow</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Jephthah makes his vow ii. What was he expecting? iii. Was Jephthah's vow necessary? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judges 11:9 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?" • Judges 11:27 Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.' "
<p>³² So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands. ³³ And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith – twenty cities – and to Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.</p>	<p>b. God's _____ over Ammon</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Notice who gets the credit ii. This was a resounding victory for the Gileadites
<p>³⁴ When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she <i>was his</i> only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it."</p>	<p>c. Jephthah _____ His Vow</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Jephthah returns ii. His daughter comes out of his house iii. Jephthah mourns his decision
<p>Jephthah's Options <i>"But we need to ask ourselves another question and that has to do with the ethics of Jephthah's sacrifice. Should he have done this? His daughter says he must; he cannot back out. But should he have kept his vow? Actually, Jephthah had several options. He could have offered her up as a spiritual sacrifice to serve the Lord at the sanctuary all her life. In fact, that is a very common interpretation in evangelical circles. Second, assuming the irrevocability of a vow such as this, the valorous response would have been to sacrifice his own shalom, leave the vow unfulfilled, take on himself the curse, and let his daughter live. Third, he could have followed a clause in the Mosaic Torah and paid twenty shekels to the priest at the central shrine as compensation for the life of his daughter (Lev 27:1–8). Or fourth, he could have done as he, in fact, did. The narrator says he fulfilled the vow to the letter." – Daniel Block, "Book Study – Judges"</i></p>	
<p>³⁶ So she said to him, "My father, <i>if</i> you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." ³⁷ Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I."</p>	<p>d. Jephthah's Daughter's _____</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Jephthah's daughter argues to uphold his portion of his vow. ii. Jephthah's daughter asks for some time "Bewail my virginity" - probably that Jephthah's line would be cut off – he would have no more descendants.

<p>³⁸ So he said, "Go." And he sent her away <i>for</i> two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.</p> <p>³⁹ And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel</p> <p>⁴⁰ <i>that</i> the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.</p> <p>Micah 6:6-8 With what shall I come before the LORD, <i>And</i> bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn <i>for</i> my transgression, The fruit of my body <i>for</i> the sin of my soul? ⁸ He has shown you, O man, what <i>is</i> good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?</p>	<p>iii. Jephthah's daughter was killed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lev 18:21 'And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through <i>the fire</i> to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I <i>am</i> the LORD. • Deut 18:9-10 "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. ¹⁰ "There shall not be found among you <i>anyone</i> who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, <i>or one</i> who practices witchcraft, <i>or a soothsayer</i>, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, <p>iv. Could this have been prevented? Lev. 27:1-8 Micah 6:6-8</p> <p>v. A custom is started</p>
<p>^{12:1} Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!"</p> <p>² And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands.</p> <p>³ "So when I saw that you would not deliver <i>me</i>, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?"</p> <p>⁴ Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites <i>are</i> fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites <i>and</i> among the Manassites."</p>	<p>2. Jephthah _____ with the Men of Ephraim</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ephraim finds offense with not being called on to fight with Jephthah. This seems to be a pattern with Ephraim. (cf. Judges 8:1 ff) Ephraim threatens to burn down Jephthah's house Jephthah argues that they refused to help earlier – it is their own fault. It looks as if Jephthah was the aggressor Gilead defeats Ephraim
<p>⁵ The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites <i>arrived</i>. And when <i>any</i> Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No,"</p> <p>⁶ then they would say to him, "Then say, 'Shibboleth!'" And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce <i>it</i> right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.</p>	<p>f. Jephthah's _____ Justice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gilead cuts off Ephraim. What was Ephraim trying to do? Gilead makes a plan for identifying who is who. <p>ש ש ס sh s</p> <p>iii. The men of Ephraim are slaughtered.</p>
<p>⁷ And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in among the cities of Gilead.</p>	<p>3. Jephthah _____ and _____</p>

What can we say about Jephthah's legacy?

Jephthah's Character

"What does this response tell us about Jephthah? Now, although the present story ends with a death of the young girl, her father, here, is the tragic figure presenting a pathetic picture of stupidity. The vow was unnecessary brutality, ambition, and self-centeredness: "You have brought me very low."

Ironically, the one who appeared to have become master of his own fate has become a victim of his own word. The strong man of Tob, the conquering hero, was a captive in his own house. There's no sign here of the Spirit's empowerment as Jephthah seeks to extricate himself from his own foolish vow. The man who had tried to manipulate Yahweh to guarantee his shalom, his well-being, was doomed by the one whose life he was willing to sacrifice for his own well-being.

The last statement of verse 35 expresses his tragic resignation. Jephthah's own mouth had become his trap. This man who sought so desperately to be head and ruler of Gilead was a victim of his own vow and of his daughter's joy."

- Daniel Block, "Book Study – Judges"

1 Samuel 12:9-11 "And when they forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. ¹⁰ "Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashtoreths; but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' ¹¹ "And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, **Jephthah**, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety.

Hebrews 11:32-34 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and **Jephthah**, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Take Aways:

1. **God may use leaders for one _____ purpose but who are _____ and even _____ in other ways.**
2. **Jephthah responded with extreme _____ against his own people. He was leading like a Canaanite. (Much as Gideon lead – motivated by vengeance).**
Romans 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.
3. **Jephthah _____ truth with the idolatrous ideas of the culture around him.**
 - *He made a vow that God did not require.*
 - *He killed his own daughter instead of responding correctly to his own sin.*
4. **Negotiating for clarification is not _____ – there is a time to talk. Jephthah (in some situations) seemed to seek reason before he reacted.**

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.