

Key to Understanding THE JUDGES:

Judges 2:2 “And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?”

Judges 2: 10-11 “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Balaam:”



Ron Singleterry The Judges-part 7 Adult Bible Study
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The Judges-part7

Judges Chapter 10:6- 12:7

Judges 11:1-7 “Now Jephthah, the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he was the son of an harlot...”

Jephthah

Overview of Jephthah:

Judges 11:1 introduces us to the *ninth* judge of Israel: He is introduced in Judges as a mighty man of valor and the son of a harlot. In *Hebrews 11:32* He is listed in the “hall of fame” of people of great faith alongside great names like Moses , David, and Samuel.

Gilead fathers Jephthah. Then we get the story of how he was rejected by the legitimate sons of Gilead and run out of the country. Then, many years later the people that rejected him need Jephthah to use his skills as a military leader to save them against an outside enemy.

When Jephthah was asked to risk his life for people that had rejected him; Jephthah agreed to help **if** they would make him their tribal leader. This does not make any sense to me, personally. I would not want to be the leader of people that didn't respect me. Perhaps he was looking for approval or acceptance from them. We can only speculate, as scripture does not reveal the reasoning behind the agreement.

A Reckless Promise to the Lord-Jephthah's Awful Vow:

Judges 11:30-31 (KJV) And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

Hebrew “vau” vs. English “and/or”

In Judges 11:30 “and” may be an idiom in the sense of “or”. Instead of reading:...*shall surely be the Lord's, AND I will offer it up for a burnt offering;* perhaps the original is reading...*shall surely be the Lord's OR I will offer it up for a burnt offering.*

If this is the case, this would explain why she went to mourn her virginity in Judges 11: 36-40 rather than her death.

When his only daughter is the first to greet him from his house can you imagine how he felt?

He realized that he had put his foot in his mouth by making a promise to God that he should not have made.

Keep in mind that God did not ask for this. God has never wanted human sacrifices like the pagans practiced. God only wants living sacrifices: He wants us to live for Him, not be martyrs! This has always distinguished us from the false religions.

What is Jephthah to do? He could have said to God that he meant any **animal** that came from the house and clarified his promise. After all, God understood what he meant. However, mans pride can be an awful thing. It has cost more lives in fights and wars than this one little girl.

His daughter's Spirit of Obedience:

Bible scholars and theologians have a wide range of opinions about what happens next.

Some say she went to live like a nun in a convent while others say that the human sacrifice took place.

This was not explained in the Bible account.

The Bible only shows the obedience of this little girl. She was not the one that made the vow but she put her life in her father's hands. What a parallel could be made in a sermon to show how all children of God should put total trust in their Heavenly Father. If we would put total faith on God and say "whatever you want is OK with me", no matter the outcome, then we would be ready to see God do dramatic things in our lives.

Trail Tip:

Be careful what you promise to God.

Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon: Judges 12: 8-15

The next three judges are mentioned only in these verses and lives are similar to Tola and Jair. Study Eight concerns Samson, the thirteenth Judge.