



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE
JUDGES 11:4-11, 29-31
LESSON: JEPHTHAH'S ANSWER AND VOW —June 18, 2017

INTRODUCTION:

11:1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. The name "*Jephthah*" means "*God opens the womb.*" He was the son of a Gileadite named Gilead, probably from the ancestor Gilead, the grandson of Manasseh (Numb.26:29). Jephthah was not the blame for his birth, and even though he was the son of a harlot and his father acknowledged him, he was also known as "**a mighty man of valour.**"

11:2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. For Gilead had a wife and she bore sons for Gilead and those sons grew up, but didn't want any part of Jephthah, the illegitimate son. They threw him out of his father's house calling him the son of a strange woman. When Gilead died and the other sons divided up the inheritance, Jephthah was not to receive any of it

11:3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. Disinherited by his half-brothers, Jephthah moved northeastward into the land of Tob. It was there that he gathered around him a group of vain men, meaning empty and reckless ones. These men allied with Jephthah, thereby, he was able to gather a band of outcasts to follow him.

LESSON: I. THE AMMONITE INVASION Judges 11:4

11:4 And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. The time came when Israel was ¹attacked by the Ammonites who were trying to take their land. The children of Ammon were the descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot through an incestuous relationship with one of his own daughters. The Ammonites were cousins to the Jews, but they were also there perpetual enemies.

II. THE CHOICE OF JEPHTHAH Judges 11:5-11

11:5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:— So when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead found themselves needing Jephthah who had been disinherited by his brothers and had fled to the land of Tob. The elders went to Tob, for they needed to have a strong leader and Jephthah was known as a "*mighty man of valour*" (v.1). He has boldness and determination in facing great danger, especially in battle.

11:6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. The elders of Gilead asked Jephthah to come and be the captain of their army and fight against the children of Ammon. I don't think the people went to God first or prayed about it.

¹ http://www.sermonnotebook.org/judges/Judges%2013%20-%20Judges%2011_1-11.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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11:7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, **Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?**— But Jephthah answered the elders of Gilead with a question. *"Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?"* Well, I can see Jephthah's concern and puzzlement. Undoubtedly the elders had gone along with the brothers and expelled him from his father's house, but, at their time of distress they made the decision to bring him back. Probably saying, *"oh he's not so bad!"*

11:8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, **Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.** WOW! Can you imagine: being kicked out of your house; want to bring you back to fight a war, and then put you the head over all the inhabitants without a "I'M SORRY; FORGIVE US?"

11:9 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, **If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?**— Jephthah is now asking the elders can I really trust this? Can I really trust what you said? Jephthah is really saying But if that happens: if he comes back with them and fight against the Ammonites, and the Lord puts them at his mercy, shall he be their chief over Gilead?

11:10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, **The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.** The elders swore to Jephthah that God was their witness between them and he; that the words they spoke were true and would come to pass.

11:11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh. At their word Jephthah seemed to be able to get over the things they had done to him. He did not stay bitter. He went with the elders of Gilead, and he was acclaimed captain; their leader. And before the Eternal God in Mizpeh, Jephthah repeated all his conditions in a solemn public meeting as the elders acted as representors of the people invoking God as witness.

III. THE ILL-ADVISED VOW Judges 11:29-31

11:29 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. The king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message (11:28). God graciously empowered Jephthah and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. As Jephthah leads the armies of Gilead to battle, he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, then he passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from there he passed over unto the children of Ammon.

11:30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, **If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon**

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into mine hands,— Jephthah wanted victory over the Ammonites so badly that he made a foolish vow to God. It was not required. ³The Spirit of God helped him to free his people. However, he did not understand God's plans. He did not trust God's power. He wanted to please God by what he did. But God did not want people to praise him in this way. In God's Law, a vow was a promise to God that should not be broken; carrying as much force as a written contract.

11:31 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. The vow: the first thing that walked through the door of his house to meet him when he returns home from the battle shall be offered up to the Lord as a burnt offering. We will learn that it would be his only daughter.

SUMMARY:

God used Jephthah to be Israel's **eighth Deliverer and judge**. And a time came that the Ammonites began to make war against Israel. The elders of Gilead sought after Jephthah to be their captain and commander to fight against the Ammonites. Jephthah knew that they hated him and drove him from his father's house, so he's wondering why they are coming after him when they're in trouble for this position. The elders still want him and to be head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. Jephthah couldn't believe them and asked again *"I will be your head?"* The elders went so far as to say that the Lord will be their witness between the two of them. Jephthah finally accepted after having some reluctance and began to utter all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh (**11:4-11**).

God graciously empowered Jephthah and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he led his army across the land of Gilead and many more. But Jephthah made a foolish vow unto the Lord which was not required, that if God would help him deliver the Ammonites into his hands, that when he returns home in peace, the first person coming out of his house to meet him would be sacrificed as a burnt offering to the Lord. (**11:29-31**).

NOT APART OF THE LESSON BUT TO END THE CHAPTER VERSES 12-40

Jephthah then learns that the Ammonites believe that Israel had stolen some land from them. And to avoid battle, Jephthah attempts to explain how the Israelites got the land. That didn't satisfy them. Therefore, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jephthah and he leads an army against the Ammonites. Jephthah makes a vow that if the Lord gives him victory over the Ammonites, upon returning, he will sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that comes out of his house to greet him. Well they completely defeat the Ammonites and to Jephthah's surprise, his only daughter is the first one to come out of the house (*his only child*) to greet him. He is in tears, tearing his clothes. She said *"Let this thing be done unto me: leave me alone two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions."* And after the two months she returned to her father and the vow was carried out. and it became a custom that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.