

Judges 11

Judges 11.1-3

V1 – What is the description of Jephthah Judge #8? –a valiant warrior but of illegitimate birth
(His mother was a prostitute, another sign of the moral decline of Israel)

V2 – What did Jephthah's half-brothers do? Drove him out of the family; they did not want to share the inheritance with him

V3 – What did Jephthah do? Began to gather a "gang" around him
-a rough background for Jephthah

Judges 11.4-11

V4 – Which group invaded Israel? Ammonites

V5 – Whom did the elders of Gilead go to for leadership? Jephthah

V6 – They asked Jephthah to lead them against the enemy

V7 – What was his answer? You kicked me out of the family – why bother me now?

V8 – Answer? We want to make up by making you our leader

V9 - Jephthah wanted the deal to be clear – if he was victorious, he would be the head of the people

V10 – The elders said that God would be a witness to this agreement

V11 – Jephthah agreed to these terms (before God)

Judges 4.12-28

V12 – What was the first thing that Jephthah did? He asked the Ammonites why they were attacking Israel

V13 – The Israelites had taken land on the trip from Egypt to Palestine

V14 – Jephthah sent message back to the Ammonites

V15 – Message of Jephthah? Israel did not take any land

V16-17 – What had the Israelites done? They had asked permission to pass through the land

of the Moabites (Numbers 20.14ff)

-Were they given permission to pass through the land? No

V 18 – The Israelites had therefore bypassed that territory

V 19 – The Israelites asked the Amorites for permission to pass through their territory

V 20-21 – **Did the Amorites give permission?** No

-In the battle, the Amorites were defeated

V 22 – So Israel gained control of the territory of the Amorites

V 23 – The Lord drove the Amorites out (according to Jephthah)

V 24 – A little sarcasm here

-Jephthah: "You can have any land that your god Chemosh lets you have?"

-In other words, you have a very weak god

V 24 – **Whom did Jephthah remind the Ammonites about?** Balak (who hired Balaam)

V 25 – **Did Balak take up arms against Israel?** No

V 26 – Israel has been here c. 300 years – Why haven't you pressed your claims before now?

V 27 – **Whose side was God on?** Israel

V 28 – **Response of the Ammonites?** They disregarded Jephthah's message

-Conclusion? There was no legitimate reason for them to attack Israel

Judges 11.29-33

V 29 – **Was God going to help Jephthah?** Yes

-Why did Jephthah go through other territories? To get more men and more support

V 30 – **Condition of Jephthah's vow?** If God would help him defeat the Ammonites

V 31 – **The vow?** To sacrifice whatever he first saw coming out of his door upon returning home

-This was a tragic mistake that Jephthah made

-Did God require Jephthah to make this vow? No – similar to the lie that Rahab told about the two spies

-People should not make rash vows

-People should not assume what is pleasing to God

V 32 – Jephthah defeated the Ammonites

V 33 – There was a great slaughter of the Ammonites

Judges 11.34-40

-One of the most debated passages in the Old Testament

V 34 – Jephthah was returning home from the battle

-**Who came out the door?** Jephthah's daughter (his only child)

V 35 – **Jephthah's reply?** This is terrible – I have made a vow to God

V 36 – **His daughter's reply?** Carry out your vow to God

V 37 – **What did she request?** Two months to weep her virginity (not married)

V 38 – Jephthah sent her away for two months

V 39 – Simply stated: Jephthah kept his vow

V 40 – A yearly event to commemorate this

Two possibilities:

1. That she was forced to remain unmarried

-V 31 – Some translations have "or" instead of "and"

-V 39 – She wept for her virginity

See *Leviticus 27.1-8* – it was possible to redeem a person condemned to death by sending that person to the Tabernacle to serve God there for the rest of his/her life

-The person would serve the priests there and be servants to God

-This would also explain her comments about mourning her virginity

2. That Jephthah practiced human sacrifice

-If so, it again indicates the lawless nature of this period of time

Notice: Problem in *Heb. 11.32* – Jephthah is mentioned as a faithful person from the Old Testament

-This would point to the #1 explanation

-God never, ever endorsed child sacrifice!

For more discussion: See *Beacon Bible Commentary*, II, 161

Notice: The author of these notes see #1 as the only possibility concerning Jephthah's vow.

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