

## Episode #530 Judges 11 Part 1 – Jephthah 1: Jephthah the Prostitute’s Son

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God’s works and ways.

II. After the deaths of Tola and Jair, the sixth and seventh judges, the sad cycle of Judges starts once again. They serve other gods, the Ba’alim and Ashtoreths from Canaan, as well as the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia, all the nations surrounding them. They forsook the LORD. We will see what came of this today.

III. Further apostasy. Judges 10:6-9.

- A. Verse 7. Jehovah in his anger gives them into the power of the Philistines on the southwest and the Ammonites on the northeast.
- B. Verse 8. The Ammonite oppression lasted eighteen years in Gilead. We have had 8 Mosopotamia + 18 Moab + 20 Canaan + 7 Midian = 53 years of servitude so far. If we + 18 we get 71 years of servitude. But note: this is just Israel on the eastern side of the Jordan, not over the whole nation. So we do not add this 18. Still 53 years.
- C. Verse 9. The people (sons) of Ammon crossed the Jordan to oppress Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim (southern and middle tribes) as well.

IV. The Israelites submit to the LORD. Judges 10:10-18.

- A. Verse 10. Pricked by their oppression, they admitted their sin to Yahweh.
- B. Verse 11. The LORD reminds them of past deliverances. Starting from Egypt, then the Amorites east of Jordan, Ammon and the Philistines.
- C. Verse 12. Sidon and Amalek and Maonites (Ammon and Moab combined?) also. Note: they were worshiping the gods of these very nations!
- D. Verse 13. In spite of these gracious deliverances, they still forsook him to serve other gods. Therefore, He will no longer deliver them.
- E. Verse 14. He speaks ironically. Why don’t they ask their new gods for deliverance?
- F. Verse 15. They will not do this. They admit their sin. They are willing to accept what seems good to Him, but ask for deliverance. (Well, not being delivered would have been good justice, but God is also the God of grace.)
- G. Verse 16. They put away the foreign gods and serve the LORD. His soul (emotions) can no longer endure their misery. He is a gracious and loving God indeed!
- H. Verse 17. Ammon gathers their army and camps in Gilead. The sons of Israel assemble at Mizpeh (Watchtower) in Gilead. A battle is prepared.
- I. Verse 18. Israel looks for a man to lead them in the battle against Ammon. They will promote this man to judge when he does so.

V. The eighth judge: Jephthah. Judges 11:1-11.

- A. Verse 1. Jephthah (Whom God Sets Free) of Gilead is the eighth Judge, a mighty man of strength. Son of Gilead (perhaps a ruler? Far too late to be the grandson of Manasseh, who had this name.) and a (religious?) prostitute. Gideon of an insignificant family, Abimelech of a slave wife, now Jephthah of a prostitute! But, though Abimelech was a rebel, Jephthah is a Godly man.
- B. Verse 2. Gilead’s wife’s sons kicked him out of the household. They do not want him to inherit since he is the son of another woman.

- C. Verse 3. He fled from his brothers' presence to Tob (Good, perhaps in Aram?) and collected followers with nothing better to do. (Not always negative. David's followers were described as this, though with a different word.)
- D. Verse 4. Then arose the war with the sons of Ammon.
- E. Verse 5. Gilead's elders (representative leaders) think of the famous and powerful bastard of their former leader, and they send for him.
- F. Verse 6. They ask him to be their commander in the fight against the sons of Ammon.
- G. Verse 7. He recalls their former poor treatment of him. They kicked him out, and now they come to him when they are in trouble?
- H. Verse 8. They can offer no excuse. They just point out what they are doing now...turning to him for help in the battle with Ammon. They offer him to be the head (the top position) over all who dwell in Gilead. Like Joseph, Moses, David.
- I. Verse 9. He does not trust them. If he does return to fight and Jehovah gives him the victory, how does he know he will be their head? Note he credits Jehovah!

VI. Israel again forsook God for the gods of all the nations around them. Israel, particularly those east of Jordan suffered under Ammon. They turned back to Yahweh, and though they did not deserve it, His soul felt for them and He determined to save them. How great a God of grace we have! They sought a commander, and Jephthah, whom they had formerly exiled, seems to be their best choice. Though he was of bad parentage, yet he shows a Godly attitude. It is not our family background that matters, but our attitude towards our Lord. Let us all serve him, no matter who our parents were or how legitimate or illegitimate we may be!