

## ~JEPHTHAH (1032)

(Jeph'thah) [May God Open, God Has Opened]

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- A judge of Israel, of the tribe of Manasseh.
- The sons of Manasseh were. Of Machir the family of the Machirites. And Machir became father to Gilead. Of Gilead the family of the Gileadites. (Numbers 26:29)
- Now Jephthah the Gileadite had become a mighty, valiant man, and he was the son of a prostitute woman, and Gilead came to be the father of Jephthah. (Judges 11:1)
- He administered justice over the territory of Gilead for six years perhaps during the priesthood of Eli and the early life of Samuel.
- And Jephthah continued to judge Israel for six years, after which Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in his city in Gilead. (Judges 12:7)
- Jephthah's reference to three hundred years of Israelite control East of the Jordan would seem to place the start of his six-year judgeship around 1173 B.C.E.
- While Israel was dwelling in Heshbon and its dependent towns and in Aroer and its dependent towns and in all the cities that are by the banks of Arnon for three hundred years, why, then, did you never snatch them away during that time? (Judges 11:26)

## • Jephthah A Legitimate Son

- The mother of Jephthah was a prostitute woman, not meaning, however, that Jephthah was born of prostitution or was illegitimate. His mother had been a prostitute prior to her marriage as a secondary

wife to Gilead, just as Rahab had once been a prostitute but later married Salmon.

- Now **Jephthah** the Gileadite had become a mighty, valiant man, and he was the son of a prostitute woman, and Gilead came to be the father of Jephthah. (**Judges 11:1**)
- Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men out secretly from Shittim as spies, saying; Go, take a look at the land and Jericho. So they went and came to the house of a prostitute woman whose name was Rahab, and they took up lodging there. (**Joshua 2:1**)
- Salmon became father to Boaz by Rahab. Boaz became father to Obed by Ruth. Obed became father to Jesse. (**Matthew 1:5**)
- That **Jephthah** was not illegitimate is proved by the fact that his half brothers by Gilead's primary wife drove him out so that he would not share in the inheritance.
- And Gilead's wife kept bearing sons to him. When the sons of the wife got big, they proceeded to drive **Jephthah** out and to say to him; You must have no inheritance in the household of our father, for you are the son of another woman. (**Judges 11:2**)
- Additionally, **Jephthah** later became the accepted leader of the men of Gilead, of whom **Jephthah's** half brothers seemed to be foremost.
- Consequently **Jephthah** went with the older men of Gilead and the people set him over them as head and commander. And Jephthah proceeded to speak all his words before Yehowah in Mizpah. (**Judges 11:11**)
- Moreover, he offered a sacrifice to God at the tabernacle.
- Then **Jephthah** made a vow to Yehowah and said; If you without fail give the sons of Ammon into my hand. (**Judges 11:30**)
- It must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, must also become Yehowah's, and I must offer that one up as a burnt offering. (**Judges 11:31**)

- None of these things would have been possible for an illegitimate son, for the Law specifically stated,
- No illegitimate son may come into the congregation of Yehowah. Even to the tenth generation none of his may come into the congregation of Yehowah. ([Deuteronomy 23:2](#))
- **Jephthah** was evidently the firstborn of Gilead. Consequently he would normally have inherited two portions in the property of his father Gilead, who apparently was dead at the time **Jephthah's** half brothers drove him out, and would also have been the head of the family.
- Only by illegally driving him away could **Jephthah's** half brothers deprive him of his rightful inheritance, for even though the firstborn son of a father was the son of a secondary wife, or even a less-favored wife, he was, nevertheless, to receive the firstborn's rights.
- In case a man comes to have two wives, the one loved and the other hated, and they, the loved one and the hated one, have borne sons to him, and the firstborn son has come to be of the hated one. ([Deuteronomy 21:15](#))
- It must also occur that in the day that he gives as an inheritance to his sons what he happens to have, he will not be allowed to constitute the son of the loved one his firstborn at the expense of the hated ones son, the firstborn. ([Deuteronomy 21:16](#))
- For he should recognize as the firstborn the hated ones son by giving him two parts in everything he is found to have, because that one is the beginning of his generative power. The right of the firstborns position belongs to him. ([Deuteronomy 21:17](#))

## • Idle Men Gather To Jephthah

- When **Jephthah** was driven away by his half brothers he took up dwelling in the land of Tob, a region East of Gilead, apparently outside the borders of Israel.
- Here **Jephthah** would be on the frontier, exposed to Israel's foreign enemies, particularly Ammon. Idle men, that is, men evidently made idle or put out of employment by Ammonite harassment, and revolting against servitude to Ammon, came to Jephthah and put themselves under his command.

- So **Jephthah** ran away because of his brothers and took up dwelling in the land of Tob. And idle men kept bringing themselves together to Jephthah, and they would go out with him. (**Judges 11:3**)
- The people living in the territory East of the Jordan River, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, were mainly cattle raisers, and the forays of the Ammonite raiders, who even crossed the Jordan at times, had apparently taken away the possessions and the means of livelihood from many of the inhabitants of Gilead.
- And the sons of Israel again proceeded to do what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah, and they began to serve the Baals and the Ashtoreth images and the gods of Syria and the gods of Sidon and the gods of Moab and the gods of the sons of Ammon and the gods of the Philistines. So they left Yehowah and did not serve him. (**Judges 10:6**)
- At this Yehowah's anger blazed against Israel, so that he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon. (**Judges 10:7**)
- Hence they shattered and heavily oppressed the sons of Israel in that year, for eighteen years all the sons of Israel that were on the side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites that was in Gilead. (**Judges 10:8**)
- And the sons of Ammon would cross the Jordan to fight even against Judah and Benjamin and the house of Ephraim, and Israel was greatly distressed. (**Judges 10:9**)
- And the sons of Israel began to call to Yehowah for aid, saying; We have sinned against you, because we have left our God and we serve the Baals. (**Judges 10:10**)

### •• Ammonites Threaten War

- For 18 years oppression by the Ammonites continued. This was permitted by God because the Israelites had unfaithfully turned to serving the gods of the nations round about.
- But now the sons of Israel were brought to their senses, repenting of their folly and calling on Yehowah for help. They began to

**do away with their idols and to serve Yehowah. At this point Ammon gathered together in Gilead for large-scale warfare.**

- **At this Yehowah's anger blazed against Israel, so that he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon. (Judges 10:7)**
- **Hence they shattered and heavily oppressed the sons of Israel in that year, for eighteen years all the sons of Israel that were on the side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites that was in Gilead. (Judges 10:8)**
- **And the sons of Ammon would cross the Jordan to fight even against Judah and Benjamin and the house of Ephraim, and Israel was greatly distressed. (Judges 10:9)**
- **And the sons of Israel began to call to Yehowah for aid, saying; We have sinned against you, because we have left our God and we serve the Baals. (Judges 10:10)**
- **Then Yehowah said to the sons of Israel; Was it not from Egypt and from the Amorites and from the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines. (Judges 10:11)**
- **And the Sidonians and Amalek and Midian, when they oppressed you and you went crying out to me, that I proceeded to save you out of their hand? (Judges 10:12)**
- **As for you, you abandoned me and took up serving other gods. That is why I shall not save you again. (Judges 10:13)**
- **Go and call for aid to the gods whom you have chosen. Let them be the ones to save you in the time of your distress. (Judges 10:14)**
- **But the sons of Israel said to Yehowah; We have sinned. You yourself do to us according to anything that is good in your eyes. Only deliver us, please, this day. (Judges 10:15)**
- **And they began to remove the foreign gods from their midst and to serve Yehowah, so that his soul became impatient because of the trouble of Israel. (Judges 10:16)**
- **In time the sons of Ammon were called together and pitched**

- camp in Gilead. So the sons of Israel gathered themselves together and pitched camp in Mizpah. ([Judges 10:17](#))
- And it came about after a while that the sons of Ammon began to fight against Israel. ([Judges 11:4](#))
  - This fact indicates that it was actually the great invisible enemy of God, Satan the Devil, who incited the pagan nations against Israel and that the real issue was worship of the true God.
  - So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth, he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. ([Revelation 12:9](#))
  - For all the gods of the peoples are valueless gods, but as for Yehowah, he has made the very heavens. ([Psalms 96:5](#))
  - No, but I say that the things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God, and I do not want you to become sharers with the demons. ([1 Corinthians 10:20](#))

## .. Israel Gathered Its Forces At Mizpah

- The half brothers of **Jephthah** were evidently prominent among the older men of Gilead.
- In time the sons of Ammon were called together and pitched camp in Gilead. So the sons of Israel gathered themselves together and pitched camp in Mizpah. ([Judges 10:17](#))
- But **Jephthah** said to the older men of Gilead; Was it not you that hated me so that you drove me out of my father's house? And why is it that you have come to me now just when you are in distress? ([Judges 11:7](#))
- They saw the need for proper leadership and direction.
- And the people and the princes of Gilead began to say to one another; Who is the man that will take the lead in fighting against the sons of Ammon? Let him become the head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. ([Judges 10:18](#))

- They realized that they must be under the headship of a God-appointed man if they were to defeat Ammon.
- And it came about that when the sons of Ammon did fight against Israel, the older men of Gilead immediately went to take **Jephthah** out of the land of Tob. (**Judges 11:5**)
- Then they said to **Jephthah**; Do come and serve as our commander, and let us fight against the sons of Ammon. (**Judges 11:6**)
- In turn the older men of Gilead said to **Jephthah**; Let Yehowah prove to be the listener between us if the way we shall do is not according to your word. (**Judges 11:10**)
- Undoubtedly **Jephthah** and his men had been performing exploits in Tob, suggesting that he was God's designated choice.
- Now **Jephthah** the Gileadite had become a mighty, valiant man, and he was the son of a prostitute woman, and Gilead came to be the father of Jephthah. (**Judges 11:1**)
- The men of Gilead decided to go to **Jephthah**, whom they had despised, to ask him to be their head.

### •• **Jephthah Becomes Head Of Gilead**

- **Jephthah** agreed to lead them in the fight against Ammon on one condition; If Yehowah gave him victory, he would continue as head after returning from the fight. His insistence on this was not a selfish demand. He had shown himself concerned with the fight in behalf of God's name and his people.
- Now, if he defeated Ammon, it would prove that God was with him. **Jephthah** wanted to make sure that God's rule would not be forsaken again once the crisis had passed.
- Also, if he was indeed Gilead's firstborn son, he was only establishing his legal right as head of the house of Gilead. The covenant was then concluded before Yehowah in Mizpah.
- Here again Jephthah showed that he looked to Yehowah as Israel's God and King and their real Deliverer.

- At this the older men of Gilead said to **Jephthah**; That is why now we have returned to you, and you must go with us and fight against the sons of Ammon, and you must become for us the head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. (**Judges 11:8**)
- So **Jephthah** said to the older men of Gilead; If you are bringing me back to fight against the sons of Ammon, and Yehowah does abandon them to me, I, for my part, shall become your head! (**Judges 11:9**)
- In turn the older men of Gilead said to **Jephthah**; Let Yehowah prove to be the listener between us if the way we shall do is not according to your word. (**Judges 11:10**)
- Consequently **Jephthah** went with the older men of Gilead and the people set him over them as head and commander. And Jephthah proceeded to speak all his words before Yehowah in Mizpah. (**Judges 11:11**)
- **Jephthah**, a man of action, lost no time in exercising vigorous leadership. He sent a message to the king of Ammon, pointing out that Ammon was the aggressor in invading Israel's land. The king replied that it was land Israel had taken from Ammon.
- Then **Jephthah** sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon, saying; What do I have to do with you, seeing that you have come against me to fight in my land? (**Judges 11:12**)
- So the king of the sons of Ammon said to the messengers of **Jephthah**; It is because Israel took my land when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok and as far as the Jordan. And now do return it peacefully. (**Judges 11:13**)
- Here **Jephthah** showed himself to be, not a mere rough, uncultured warrior, but a student of history and particularly of God's dealings with his people. He refuted the Ammonite argument, showing that
- Israel did not molest Ammon, Moab, or Edom.
- But **Jephthah** sent once more messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon (**Judges 11:14**)
- And said to him; This is what **Jephthah** has said; Israel did not



**take the land of Moab and the land of the sons of Ammon.  
(Judges 11:15)**

- **For when they came up out of Egypt Israel went walking through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and got to come to Kadesh.  
(Judges 11:16)**
- **Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying; Let me pass, please, through your land, and the king of Edom did not listen. And also to the king of Moab they sent, and he did not consent. And Israel kept dwelling in Kadesh. (Judges 11:17)**
- **When they walked on through the wilderness, they went their way around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, so that they went toward the rising of the sun as respects the land of Moab and took up camping in the region of the Arnon, and they did not come within the boundary of Moab, because Arnon was the boundary of Moab. (Judges 11:18)**
- **Yehowah then said to me; Do not molest Moab or engage in war with them, because I shall not give you any of his land as a holding, for to the sons of Lot I have given Ar as a holding.  
(Deuteronomy 2:9)**
- **And you must get close in front of the sons of Ammon. Do not molest them or engage in strife with them, because I shall not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a holding, for it is to the sons of Lot that I have given it as a holding.  
(Deuteronomy 2:19)**
- **Only you did not go near the land of the sons of Ammon, the whole bank of the torrent valley of Jabbok, nor the cities of the mountainous region, nor anything about which Yehowah our God had given command. (Deuteronomy 2:37)**
- **And now here the sons of Ammon, and Moab and the mountainous region of Seir, whom you did not allow Israel to invade when they were coming out of the land of Egypt, but they turned away from them and did not annihilate them. (2 Chronicles 20:10)**
- **Yes, here they are rewarding us by coming in to drive us out from your possession that you caused us to possess. (2 Chronicles 20:11)**

- **Ammon had not possessed the disputed land at the time of the Israelite conquest, because it was in the hands of the Canaanite Amorites and God had given their king, Sihon, and his land into Israel's hand,**
- **Ammon had not disputed Israel's occupation for the past 300 years, therefore, on what valid basis could they do so now**
- **After that Israel sent messengers to Sihon the king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon, and Israel said to him; Let us pass, please, through your land to my own place. (Judges 11:19)**
- **And Sihon did not feel sure about Israel's crossing through his territory, and Sihon went gathering all his people together and camping in Jahaz and fighting against Israel. (Judges 11:20)**
- **At this Yehowah the God of Israel gave Sihon and all his people into Israel's hand, so that they struck them and Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites inhabiting that land. (Judges 11:21)**
- **Thus they took possession of all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok and from the wilderness as far as the Jordan. (Judges 11:22)**
- **And now Yehowah the God of Israel it was that dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and you, for your part, would dispossess them. (Judges 11:23)**
- **Is it not whomever Chemosh your god causes you to dispossess that you will dispossess? And every one whom Yehowah our God has dispossessed from before us is the one we shall dispossess. (Judges 11:24)**
- **And now are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab? Did he ever contend with Israel, or did he ever fight against them? (Judges 11:25)**
- **While Israel was dwelling in Heshbon and its dependent towns and in Aroer and its dependent towns and in all the cities that are by the banks of Arnon for three hundred years, why, then, did you never snatch them away during that time? (Judges 11:26)**

- As for me, I have not sinned against you, but you are dealing wrong with me by fighting against me. Let Yehowah the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon. (**Judges 11:27**)
- **Jephthah** got at the heart of the matter when he showed that the issue revolved around the matter of worship. He declared that Yehowah God had given Israel the land and that for this reason they would not give an inch of it to worshipers of a false god.
- He called Chemosh the god of Ammon. Some have thought this to be an error. But, although Ammon had the god Milcom, and though Chemosh was a god of Moab, those related nations worshiped many gods. Solomon even wrongly brought the worship of Chemosh into Israel because of his foreign wives.
- Is it not whomever Chemosh your god causes you to dispossess that you will dispossess? And every one whom Yehowah our God has dispossessed from before us is the one we shall dispossess. (**Judges 11:24**)
- And King Solomon himself loved many foreign wives along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite women. (**1 Kings 11:1**)
- It was then that Solomon proceeded to build a high place to Chemosh the disgusting thing of Moab on the mountain that was in front of Jerusalem, and to Molech the disgusting thing of the sons of Ammon. (**1 Kings 11:7**)
- And that was the way he did for all his foreign wives who were making sacrificial smoke and sacrificing to their gods. (**1 Kings 11:8**)
- The reason why is that they have left me and begun to bow down to Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, to Chemosh the god of Moab and to Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon, and they have not walked in my ways by doing what is right in my eyes and my statutes and my judicial decisions like David his father. (**1 Kings 11:33**)
- And the high places that were in front of Jerusalem, that were to the right of the Mount of Ruination, that Solomon the king of Israel had built to Ashtoreth the disgusting thing of the

Sidonians and to Chemosh the disgusting thing of Moab and to Milcom the detestable thing of the sons of Ammon, the king made unfit for worship. (**2 Kings 23:13**)

- Furthermore, Chemosh may mean, **Subduer, Conqueror**, according to some scholars. [See Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, translated by S. Tregelles, 1901, p. 401]
- **Jephthah** may have called attention to this god as being given credit by the Ammonites for **subduing** or **conquering** others and giving them land.

### •• **Jephthah's Vow**

- **Jephthah** now saw that a fight with Ammon was God's will. With God's spirit energizing him, he led his army to the fight. Similar to Jacob's action some 600 years previously, **Jephthah** made a vow, demonstrating his wholehearted desire for Yehowah's direction and attributing any success he would have to Yehowah.
- Then **Jephthah** made a vow to Yehowah and said; If you without fail give the sons of Ammon into my hand. (**Judges 11:30**)
- It must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, must also become Yehowah's, and I must offer that one up as a burnt offering. (**Judges 11:31**)
- And Jacob went on to vow a vow, saying; If God will continue with me and will certainly keep me on this way on which I am going and will certainly give me bread to eat and garments to wear (**Genesis 28:20**)
- And I shall certainly return in peace to the house of my father, then Yehowah will have proved to be my God. (**Genesis 28:21**)
- And this stone that I have set up as a pillar will become a house of God, and as for everything that you will give me I shall without fail give the tenth of it to you. (**Genesis 28:22**)
- Yehowah heard his vow with favor, and the Ammonites were subdued.
- So **Jephthah** passed along to the sons of Ammon to fight against them, and Yehowah proceeded to give them into his hand.

**(Judges 11:32)**

- And he went striking them from Aroer all the way to Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim with a very great slaughter. Thus the sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel. **(Judges 11:33)**

**.. Did Jephthah Have In Mind Human Sacrifice By His Vow**

- Some critics and scholars have condemned **Jephthah** for his vow, having the view that **Jephthah** followed the practice of other nations, offering up his daughter by fire as a human burnt offering. But this is not the case.
- It would be an insult to Yehowah, a disgusting thing in violation of his law, to make a literal human sacrifice. He strictly commanded Israel;
- When you are entered into the land that Yehowah your God is giving you, you must not learn to do according to the detestable things of those nations. **(Deuteronomy 18:9)**
- There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, a practicer of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer. **(Deuteronomy 18:10)**
- Or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. **(Deuteronomy 18:11)**
- For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Yehowah, and on account of these detestable things Yehowah your God is driving them away from before you. **(Deuteronomy 18:12)**
- Yehowah would curse, not bless, such a person. The very ones **Jephthah** was fighting, the Ammonites, practiced human sacrifice to their god Molech.
- And they continued to make their sons and their daughters pass through the fire and to practice divination and to look for omens, and they kept selling themselves to do what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah, to offend him. **(2 Kings 17:17)**

- And he made his own son pass through the fire, and he practiced magic and looked for omens and made spirit mediums and professional foretellers of events. He did on a large scale what was bad in Yehowah's eyes, to offend him. (**2 Kings 21:6**)
- And he made unfit for worship Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. (**2 Kings 23:10**)
- And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, a thing that I had not commanded and that had not come up into my heart. (**Jeremiah 7:31**)
- Therefore, look! Days are coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, when it will no more be said to be Topheth and the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the killing, and they will have to bury in Topheth without there being enough place. (**Jeremiah 7:32**)
- And they built the high places of the Baal in order to burn their sons in the fire as whole burnt offerings to the Baal, something that I had not commanded or spoken of, and that had not come up into my heart. (**Jeremiah 19:5**)
- Therefore, look! There are days coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, when this place will be called no more Topheth and the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the killing. (**Jeremiah 19:6**)
- When **Jephthah** said; It must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me must also become Yehowah's, he had reference to a person and not an animal, since animals suitable for sacrifice were not likely kept in Israelite homes, to have free run there.
- Besides, the offering of an animal would not show extraordinary devotion to God. **Jephthah** knew that it might well be his daughter who would come out to meet him. It must be borne in mind that Yehowah's spirit was on **Jephthah** at the time, this would prevent any rash vow on **Jephthah's** part.

- How, then, would the person coming out to meet Jephthah to congratulate him on his victory become Yehowah's and be offered up as a burnt offering.
- It must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, must also become Yehowah's, and I must offer that one up as a burnt offering. ([Judges 11:31](#))
- Persons could be devoted to **Yehowah's exclusive service** in connection with the sanctuary. It was a right that parents could exercise.
- Samuel was one such person, promised to tabernacle service by a vow of his mother Hannah before his birth. This vow was approved by her husband Elkanah.
- As soon as Samuel was weaned, Hannah offered him at the sanctuary. Along with him, Hannah brought an animal sacrifice.
- And she went on to make a vow and say; O Yehowah of armies, if you will without fail look upon the affliction of your slave girl and actually remember me, and you will not forget your slave girl and actually give to your slave girl a male offspring, I will give him to Yehowah all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head. ([1 Samuel 1:11](#))
- As for Hannah, she did not go up, for she had said to her husband; As soon as the boy is weaned, I must bring him, and he must appear before Yehowah and dwell there to time indefinite. ([1 Samuel 1:22](#))
- At this Elkanah her husband said to her; Do what is good in your eyes. Stay at home until you wean him. Only may Yehowah carry out his word. So the woman stayed at home and kept nursing her son until she weaned him. ([1 Samuel 1:23](#))
- Accordingly just as soon as she had weaned him, she brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a large jar of wine, and she proceeded to enter the house of Yehowah in Shiloh. And the boy was with her. ([1 Samuel 1:24](#))
- Then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli. ([1](#)

### **Samuel 1:25)**

- With that she said; Excuse me, my lord! By the life of your soul, my lord, I am the woman that was standing with you in this place to pray to Yehowah. (**1 Samuel 1:26**)
- It was with reference to this boy that I prayed that Yehowah should grant me my petition that I asked of him. (**1 Samuel 1:27**)
- And I, in my turn, have lent him to Yehowah. All the days that he does happen to be, he is one requested for Yehowah. And he proceeded to bow down there to Yehowah. (**1 Samuel 1:28**)
- Then Elkanah went to Ramah to his house, and as for the boy, he became a minister of Yehowah before Eli the priest. (**1 Samuel 2:11**)
- **Samson was another child specially devoted to God's service as a Nazirite.**
- Meanwhile there happened to be a certain man of Zorah of the family of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had borne no child. (**Judges 13:2**)
- In time Yehowah's angel appeared to the woman and said to her; Look, now, you are barren and have borne no child. And you will certainly become pregnant and give birth to a son. (**Judges 13:3**)
- And now watch yourself, please, and do not drink wine or intoxicating liquor, and do not eat anything unclean. (**Judges 13:4**)
- For, look! You will be pregnant, and you will certainly give birth to a son, and no razor should come upon his head, because a Nazirite of God is what the child will become on leaving the belly, and he it is who will take the lead in saving Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. (**Judges 13:5**)
- At that Manoah got up and accompanied his wife and came to the man and said to him; Are you the man that spoke to the woman? To which he said; I am. (**Judges 13:11**)
- Then Manoah said; Now let your words come true. What will become the child's mode of life and his work? (**Judges 13:12**)



- So Yehowah's angel said to Manoah; From everything that I mentioned to the woman she should keep herself. (**Judges 13:13**)
- Nothing at all that comes forth from the wine vine should she eat, and no wine or intoxicating liquor let her drink, and no unclean thing of any sort let her eat. Everything that I have commanded her let her keep. (**Judges 13:14**)
- The fathers authority over a daughter as outlined in;
- And in case a woman makes a vow to Yehowah or she does bind herself with a vow of abstinence in the house of her father in her youth. (**Numbers 30:3**)
- And her father actually hears her vow or her abstinence vow that she has bound upon her soul and her father does keep silent toward her, all her vows must also stand, and every abstinence vow that she has bound upon her soul will stand. (**Numbers 30:4**)
- But if her father has forbidden her on the day of his hearing all her vows or her abstinence vows that she has bound upon her soul, it will not stand, but Yehowah will forgive her, because her father forbade her. (**Numbers 30:5**)
- These are the regulations that Yehowah commanded Moses as between a husband and his wife, as between a father and his daughter in her youth in the house of her father. (**Numbers 30:16**)
- When **Jephthah** brought his daughter to the sanctuary, which was in Shiloh at that time, he undoubtedly accompanied his presentation of her with an animal burnt offering.
- According to the Law, a burnt offering was slaughtered, skinned, and cut up, the intestines and shanks were washed, and its body, head and all, was burned on the altar.
- If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, a male, a sound one, is what he should present. At the entrance of the tent of meeting he should present it of his own free will before Yehowah. (**Leviticus 1:3**)

- **And he must lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it must be graciously accepted for him to make atonement for him. (Leviticus 1:4)**
- **Then the young bull must be slaughtered before Yehowah, and the sons of Aaron, the priests, must present the blood and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar, which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Leviticus 1:5)**
- **And the burnt offering must be skinned and cut up into its parts. (Leviticus 1:6)**
- **And the sons of Aaron, the priests, must put fire on the altar and set wood in order on the fire. (Leviticus 1:7)**
- **And the sons of Aaron, the priests, must set the pieces in order with the head and the suet over the wood that is on the fire that is on the altar. (Leviticus 1:8)**
- **And its intestines and its shanks will be washed with water, and the priest must make all of it smoke on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering made by fire of a restful odor to Yehowah. (Leviticus 1:9)**
- **The wholeness of such offering represented full, unqualified, wholehearted dedication to Yehowah, and when it accompanied another offering, as, for example, when the burnt offering followed the sin offering on the Day of Atonement, it constituted an appeal to Yehowah to accept that other offering.**
- **With the following Aaron should come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. (Leviticus 16:3)**
- **And from the assembly of the sons of Israel he should take two male kids of the goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. (Leviticus 16:5)**
- **And Aaron must present the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and he must make atonement in behalf of himself and his house. (Leviticus 16:6)**
- **And Aaron must present the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement in behalf of himself and his**

- house, and he must slaughter the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself. (**Leviticus 16:11**)
- And he must slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and he must bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood the same as he did with the bull's blood, and he must spatter it toward the cover and before the cover. (**Leviticus 16:15**)
  - And he must bathe his flesh in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and render up his burnt offering and the peoples burnt offering and make atonement in his own behalf and in behalf of the people. (**Leviticus 16:24**)
  - It was a real sacrifice on the part of both **Jephthah** and his daughter, for he had no other child.
  - Finally **Jephthah** came to Mizpah to his home, and, look! His daughter coming out to meet him with tambourine playing and dancing! Now she was absolutely the only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. (**Judges 11:34**)
  - Therefore no descendant of his would carry on his name and his inheritance in Israel. **Jephthah's** daughter was his only hope for this. She wept, not over her death, but over her virginity, for it was the desire of every Israelite man and woman to have children and to keep the family name and inheritance alive.
  - And she went on to say to her father; Let this thing be done to me: Let me alone for two months, and let me go, and I will descend upon the mountains, and let me weep over my virginity, I and my girl companions. (**Judges 11:37**)
  - At this he said; Go! So he sent her away for two months, and she kept going, she with her girl companions, and weeping over her virginity upon the mountains. (**Judges 11:38**)
  - Barrenness was a calamity. But **Jephthah's** daughter never had relations with a man. Had these words applied only to the time prior to the carrying out of the vow, they would have been superfluous, for she is specifically said to have been a virgin.

- That the statement has reference to the fulfilling of the vow is shown in that it follows the expression, He carried out his vow that he had made toward her.
- Actually, the record is pointing out that also **after** the vow was carried out she maintained her virginity. **KJ, Dy, Yg, NW**
- And it came about at the end of two months that she made her return to her father, after which he carried out his vow that he had made toward her. As for her, she never had relations with a man. And it came to be a regulation in Israel. (**Judges 11:39**)
- Moreover, **Jephthah's** daughter was visited from year to year, by her companions to give her commendation.
- From year to year the daughters of Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of **Jephthah** the Gileadite, four days in the year. (**Judges 11:40**)
- The **Hebrew** word *ta-nah'*, used here, also occurs at;
- Some of the voices of the water distributors among the places of drawing water; There they began to recount the righteous acts of Yehowah, the righteous acts of his dwellers in open country in Israel. It was then Yehowah's people made their way down to the gates. (**Judges 5:11**)
- And in that text is variously rendered, recount [**NW**], rehearse **KJ**, recounted **AT**, repeat **RS**. The word is defined in **A Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon** (edited by B. Davies, 1957, p. 693), as **to repeat, to rehearse**.
- From year to year the daughters of Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of **Jephthah** the Gileadite, four days in the year. (**Judges 11:40**)
- The **King James Version** renders the term **lament**, but the margin reads, **talk with**. As **Jephthah's** daughter served at the sanctuary, doubtless like other Nethinim, **given one's**, devoted to sanctuary service, there was much she could do.
- These persons served in gathering wood, drawing water, doing repair work, and undoubtedly performing many other tasks as assistants to the priests and Levites there.

- So the chieftains said to them; Let them live and let them become gatherers of wood and drawers of water for all the assembly, just as the chieftains have promised them. (**Joshua 9:21**)
- And now you are cursed people, and a slaves position and being gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God will never be cut off from you. (**Joshua 9:23**)
- Accordingly Joshua constituted them on that day gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the assembly and for Yehowah's altar, down to this day, at the place that he should choose. (**Joshua 9:27**)
- And to you men it is being made known that, as respects any of the priests and the Levites, the musicians, the doorkeepers, the Nethinim, and the workers of this house of God, no tax, tribute or toll is allowed to be imposed upon them. (**Ezra 7:24**)
- And from the Nethinim, whom David and the princes gave to the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim, all of whom had been designated by their names. (**Ezra 8:20**)
- And the Nethinim themselves happened to be dwellers in Ophel, they did repair work as far as in front of the Water Gate on the east and the protruding tower. (**Nehemiah 3:26**)

## •• Ephraimites Resist Jephthah

- The Ephraimites, who considered themselves the dominant tribe of northern Israel, including Gilead, proudly refused to acknowledge **Jephthah** and sought to justify themselves.
- So they worked up a false charge as an excuse for taking offense against him. A like attitude had been shown by them years before, in Judge Gideon's time.
- Then the men of Ephraim said to him; What sort of thing is this that you have done to us in not calling us when you went to fight against Midian? And they vehemently tried to pick a quarrel with him. (**Judges 8:1**)

- They claimed that **Jephthah** failed to call them to the fight against Ammon, and they threatened to burn **Jephthah's** house over him.
- Then the men of Ephraim were called together and crossed over northward and said to **Jephthah**; Why is it that you crossed over to fight against the sons of Ammon, and to us you did not issue a call to go with you? Your very house we shall burn over you with fire. (**Judges 12:1**)
- **Jephthah** replied that he had called them but they had refused to respond. He argued; **Yehowah** gave them Ammon into my hand. So why have you come up against me this day to fight against me?
- But **Jephthah** said to them; I became a special contender, I and my people, with the sons of Ammon. And I proceeded to call to you for aid, and you did not save me out of their hand. (**Judges 12:2**)
- When I got to see that you were no savior, then I determined to put my soul in my own palm and go over against the sons of Ammon. At that Yehowah gave them into my hand. So why have you come up against me this day to fight against me? (**Judges 12:3**)
- The Ephraimites contended about **Jephthah's** forces; Men escaped from Ephraim is what you are, O Gilead, inside of Ephraim, inside of Manasseh.
- Immediately **Jephthah** collected all the men of Gilead together and fought Ephraim, and the men of Gilead went striking Ephraim down, for they had said; Men escaped from Ephraim is what you are, O Gilead, inside of Ephraim, inside of Manasseh. (**Judges 12:4**)
- By this they may have been slurring **Jephthah** by reference to his formerly being driven out and having associated with him idle men, unemployed, as fugitives.
- So **Jephthah** ran away because of his brothers and took up dwelling in the land of Tob. And idle men kept bringing themselves together to Jephthah, and they would go out with him. (**Judges 11:3**)

- In the fight that ensued, Ephraim was beaten and routed. **Jephthah's** men stopped them at the fords of the Jordan. When the fleeing Ephraimites tried to conceal their identity, their pronunciation gave them away.
- When tested by being asked to say the word Shibboleth, they were unable to pronounce the harsh, but could only form a soft Sibboleth. For taking rebellious action against one whom Yehowah had appointed for their salvation, 42,000 Ephraimites lost their lives.
- And Gilead got to capture the fords of the Jordan ahead of Ephraim, and it occurred that when the escaping men of Ephraim would say; Let me pass over, then the men of Gilead would say to each one; Are you an Ephraimite? When he would say; No! (**Judges 12:5**)
- Then they would say to him; Please say Shibboleth. And he would say; Sibboleth, as he was unable to say the word correctly. And they would lay hold of him and slay him at the fords of the Jordan. So there fell at that time forty-two thousand out of Ephraim. (**Judges 12:6**)
- Approved by God.
- And Yehowah proceeded to send Jerubbaal and Bedan and **Jephthah** and Samuel and deliver you out of the hand of your enemies all around, that you might dwell in security. (**1 Samuel 12:11**)
- **Jephthah** is named as being sent by Yehowah as a deliverer, and at;
- And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, **Jephthah**, David as well as Samuel and the other prophets. (**Hebrews 11:32**)
- He is listed among the faithful **cloud of witnesses**.
- So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (**Hebrews 12:1**)