

BIRDS OF A
FEATHER
FLOCK
TOGETHER

JUDGES 11

THEN JEPHTHAH FLED FROM HIS
BROTHERS AND LIVED IN THE LAND
OF TOB, AND WORTHLESS FELLOWS
COLLECTED AROUND JEPHTHAH AND
WENT OUT WITH HIM.

JUDGES 11:3



Judges 11: 1-9, 12-17, 29-40

1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute. Gilead was the father of Jephthah. 2 And Gilead's wife also bore him sons. And when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out and said to him, "You shall not have an inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman." 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and worthless fellows collected around Jephthah and went out with him. 4 After a time the Ammonites made war against Israel. 5 And when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob. 6 And they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our leader, that we may fight against the Ammonites." 7 But Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me and drive me out of my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?" 8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we have turned to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the Ammonites and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead." 9 Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you bring me home again to fight against the Ammonites, and the Lord gives them over to me, I will be your head." [...]

12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites and said, "What do you have against me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?" 13 And the king of the Ammonites answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel on coming up from Egypt took away my land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan; now therefore restore it peaceably." 14 Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites 15 and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: Israel did not take away the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites, 16 but when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. 17 Israel then sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let us pass through your land,' but the king of Edom would not listen. And they sent also to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained at Kadesh. [...]

29 Then the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. 30 And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, 31 then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." 32 So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand. 33 And he struck them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a great blow. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel. 34 Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow." 36 And she said to him, "My father, you have opened your mouth to the Lord; do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites." 37 So she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for 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." 38 So he said, "Go." Then he sent her away for two months, and she departed, she and her companions, and wept for her virginity on the mountains. 39 And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had made. She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel 40 that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.



Break into 3 small groups and complete the following tasks:



1. Read carefully the passage once more.



2. Identify the 4R cycle in the story and write down the verses and a short description.

- Rebellion (*verses:*)

- Ripples (*verses:*)

- Redemption (*verses:*)

- Restoration (*verses:*)



3. Find verses that prove or disprove the following statements in regards with Jephthah. Explain.

- Jephthah is a great negotiator and a skilled leader (Group 1).
- Jephthah is a godly leader, concerned more about the well being of Israel than about his personal affirmation (Group 2).
- Jephthah is a man of his word, even when that disadvantages him (Group 3).
- Find at least one irony in the text (all groups).



ANALYZE

1. LIST WORDS FROM THE TEXT THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

- elders (here)
 - Older people of the city trusted to be wise and given the authority to rule over and judge the city.

2. WHO ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THIS PASSAGE?

3. WHAT WAS THE ELDERS' REQUEST FOR JEPHTHAH AND WHAT WAS HIS RESPONSE?

4. WHAT WAS JEPHTHATH'S VOW?



DISCUSS

1. Why do you think that Jephthah allowed worthless men to collect around him? What does that suggest to you about your friends?

2. Who raised Jephthah as judge over Israel? What is different here than the previous stories?

3. What were the results of Jephthah winging it instead of God leading him? How may "winging" our lives lead to compromise?

4. Why would God have agreed to such a pact with Jephthah? Does God accept human sacrifices?



LEARN THE TEXT

Compromise in the name of God. Jephthah is a restless man of compromise. His life seems to have offered him lemons, and he is not fine with that. He is sent away and compromises himself for the first time by allowing immoral and criminal men to become his companions. He then compromises again when he sees the opportunity of leading over those who sent him away and accepts to temporarily forget that he was cast away. Third, he compromises when he tries to negotiate with the enemies of Israel, with whom he was not meant to negotiate. Fourth, he compromises his family and the commandments of God when he makes the vow to sacrifice the first person who will come to meet him at his return. Jephthah's opportunism and restlessness are the perfect combination for compromise any time occasions arise to fix his failed life. However, Israel had isolated themselves from God in Jephthah's judging and his compromises caught up to him and created an even worse life for him.



APPLICATION

WHAT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD AND US CAN YOU APPLY TO YOUR LIFE FROM JUDGES 11?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



TOOLS

NEVER TRY TO SECURE PRESENT VICTORIES BY COMPROMISE, BECAUSE IT MAY COST YOU AND THOSE AROUND YOU THE FUTURE. INSTEAD OF TAKING YOUR LIFE IN YOUR OWN HANDS AND THINK THAT THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS, ALLOW GOD TO GUIDE YOUR LIFE AND FIND PEACE AND JOY IN HIS PLANS.



CONTEXT

Human sacrifice in the Old Testament-

Human sacrifices were a common and ultimate form of sacrifice in crisis situations for the majority of pagan religions around Israel. However, this is one of the abominable practices that God warns Israel to stay away from. It is against the character of God to allow human sacrifice, but this did not stop corrupt leaders like King Ahaz (2 Kings 16:2-3) or Jephthah to sacrifice their own children.



MIDWEEK

HIGHSCHOOLERS & MIDDLESCHOOLERS



READ THE TEXT

And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.

Matthew 12:7



DISCUSS

1. Whose fault was it for the vow of Jephthah? Who does he blame? Whom do we tend to blame when we sin and someone has to suffer?

2. Why is God so absent in the story of Jephthah? Did you ever feel like God was absent in your life? When did that feeling change?

3. Why do you think that the Spirit of God was with Jephthah and how could he make such a horrific vow if the Spirit was with him?

4. Can Jephthah find peace and fulfillment of his own doing without submitting to God? Where do you look for peace and fulfillment?

5. Why do you think that the Israelites, the people of God, couldn't find a more godly leader than Jephthah to deliver them from the enemy?

6. How does it all end for Jephthah? Did he manage to fix his life? Did he get rid of the frustration of his past? Was he a better father than his own father?

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

READ THE PASSAGE OF JUDGES FOR THE NEXT LESSON



READ JUDGES 12

DAY 1 - JUDGES __: __ - __



THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM THE TEXT



QUESTIONS THAT I HAVE FROM THE TEXT

1. ?
2. ?
3. ?
4. ?

NOTES

DAY 2 - JUDGES __: __ - __



THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM THE TEXT



QUESTIONS THAT I HAVE FROM THE TEXT

1. ?
2. ?
3. ?
4. ?

NOTES

DAY 3 - JUDGES _:_-__



THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM THE TEXT



QUESTIONS THAT I HAVE FROM THE TEXT

- 1. ?
- 2. ?
- 3. ?
- 4. ?

NOTES

PRAYER REQUESTS

ANSWERED PRAYERS

THIS WEEK I PRAYED FOR (PEOPLE THAT GOD HAS PUT IN YOUR LIFE):

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____