

A FEARLESS JUDGE IN ISRAEL

Introduction: The next major judge was Jephthah, who in many ways was an outstanding person. He became a worthy judge of Israel when he defeated the Ammonites, who demanded the land of Gilead on the east side of the Jordan River be given to them. The LORD also used Jephthah to squelch the jealousy of the Ephraim tribe. They claimed he did not invite them to fight against Ammon, so they threatened to destroy him and his house with fire. He met this threat with war which he won at great cost to the Ephraimites. However, he is most remembered for his "burnt offering" vow that he promised to give the LORD, if he defeated Ammon (11:31). The question persists: did he offer his daughter as a burnt offering to the LORD or not? Many believe that he did, others believe he did not, but gave her to the LORD as a virgin to serve Him instead of redeeming her with money as the Law provided in such cases. For six years he successfully ruled Israel on behalf of the LORD and was followed by three minor judges, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon (12:8-15).

Lesson Aim: To defend the humble and innocent and defeat the proud and guilty.

Memory Verse: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient toward all" (1 Thess 5:14).

Outline of the Lesson and Questions to Answer:

I. Power of Jephthah — 11:1-29

1. Why did the sons of Gilead cast Jephthah out of their house? 11:1-2
2. What did Jephthah do in the land of Tob where he fled? 1:3
3. How did Jephthah become the head of all the people of Gilead? 11:4-8; see 10:17-18
4. What condition did Jephthah demand, if he led Gilead in the war against Ammon? 11:9
5. What did the Ammonite king demand that Israel give to him? 11:13
6. Fill in the blanks to see how Jephthah proved that the Ammonites had no claim on Gilead. Israel got the land from the A_____, when Israel defeated them, not the A_____. 11:21

The L_____ gave Israel this land. 11:24

M_____ never tried to claim this land, so neither should the A_____. 11:25

Israel had possessed this land for _____ years before the Ammonites tried to claim it. 11:26

7. How was Jephthah able to defeat the Ammonites? 11:29

II. Pledge of Jephthah — 11:30-40

8. What did Jephthah do before he fought against Ammon? 11:30-31
9. What happened when he came home after his victory over Ammon? 11:34-35
10. How did his daughter respond when she heard what her father had vowed? 11:36
11. How could a vow be reversed? Lev 27:1-8
12. What does the Scripture imply that Jephthah gave the LORD in exchange for his daughter as a burnt offering? Money or his daughter to serve Him as a virgin (11:37-39).

III. Pettiness of Ephraim — 12:1-7

13. How did the Ephraimites threaten Jephthah for not asking them to help fight Ammon? 12:1
14. What did Jephthah say and do to the Ephraimites? 12:2-4
15. How many Ephraimites died at the hands of Jephthah and his army? 12:5-6

Battle of Jephthah

