

**PLEASE NOTE** - The references below are taken from the 86-21 Index. Many verses have additional references that have not been included due to time & space. We are encouraged to do additional personal research.

(Judges 10:6-8) 6 Again the Israelites did what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, and they began to serve the Ba'als, the Ash'to-reth images, the gods of A'ram, the gods of Si'don, the gods of Mo'ab, the gods of the Am'mon-ites, and the gods of the Phi-lis'tines. They abandoned Jehovah and did not serve him. 7 Then Jehovah's anger blazed against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Phi-lis'tines and the Am'mon-ites. 8 So they crushed and greatly oppressed the Israelites in that year—for 18 years they oppressed all the Israelites on the side of the Jordan that had been the land of the Am'or-ites in Gil'e-ad.

\*\*\* rr chap. 7 p. 75 pars. 14-15 The Nations "Will Have to Know That I Am Jehovah" \*\*\*

14 The Philistines had migrated from the island of Crete to the land that Jehovah later promised to Abraham and his descendants. Both Abraham and Isaac had dealings with these people. (Gen. 21:29-32; 26:1) By the time the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the Philistines had grown into a powerful nation with a formidable military force. They worshipped false gods, such as Baal-zebub and Dagon. (1 Sam. 5:1-4; 2 Ki. 1:2, 3) At times Israel joined in worshipping those gods.—Judg. 10:6.

15 Because of Israel's unfaithfulness, Jehovah allowed the Philistines to dominate his people for many years. (Judg. 10:7, 8; Ezek. 25:15) They imposed oppressive restrictions on the Israelites and slaughtered many of them.

(Judges 10:8) 8 So they crushed and greatly oppressed the Israelites in that year—for 18 years they oppressed all the Israelites on the side of the Jordan that had been the land of the Am'or-ites in Gil'e-ad.

\*\*\* w07 5/15 p. 8 Jephthah Keeps His Vow to Jehovah \*\*\*

A Crisis in Israel

Jephthah lives in a time of crisis. His fellow Israelites have forsaken pure worship and are serving the gods of Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia. Jehovah therefore abandons his people to the Ammonites and the Philistines, who oppress them for 18 years. The residents of Gilead, east of the Jordan River, are especially distressed.

\*\*\* w07 5/15 p. 8 Jephthah Keeps His Vow to Jehovah \*\*\*

The Ammonites were capable of great cruelty. Not even 60 years later, they threatened to bore out the right eye of each of the inhabitants of a Gileadite city they terrorized. The prophet Amos spoke of a time when they slit open the pregnant women of Gilead.—1 Samuel 11:2; Amos 1:13.

(Judges 11:2) 2 But Gil'e-ad's wife also bore him sons. When the sons of his wife grew up, they drove Jeph'thah out and said to him: "You will have no inheritance in our father's household, for you are the son of another woman."

\*\*\* w16 April p. 6 par. 7 Being Faithful Leads to God's Approval \*\*\*

However, Jephthah's challenges came not only from the enemy nations but also from his own brothers and the leaders of Israel. Jealousy and hatred moved his half brothers to drive him away, illegally depriving him of his rightful inheritance as firstborn.

(Judges 11:31) 31 then whoever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Am'mon-ites will become Jehovah's, and I will offer that one up as a burnt offering."

\*\*\* w17 April p. 4 pars. 5-6 "What You Vow, Pay"

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Earnestly desiring a victory, Jephthah vowed: "If you give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites will become Jehovah's." The result? The Ammonites were conquered, and it was Jephthah's beloved daughter who came out to meet him upon his victorious return. She would be the one who would "become Jehovah's." (Judg. 11:30-34) What did that mean for her?

6 To pay her father's vow, Jephthah's daughter had to serve Jehovah full-time at his sanctuary. Was it a thoughtless vow that Jephthah had made? No, for he might well have known that his daughter could be the one who would come out of his house to meet him.

\*\*\* Ifb lesson 36 p. 88 par. 2-p. 89 par. 1 Jephthah's Promise \*\*\*

A warrior named Jephthah was chosen to lead the people in battle against the Ammonites. He said to Jehovah: 'If you help us win this battle, I promise that when I return home, I will give you the first person who comes out of my house to meet me.' Jehovah listened to Jephthah's prayer and helped him win the battle.

When Jephthah returned home, the first person to come out to meet him was his daughter, his only child. She was dancing and playing the tambourine. What would Jephthah do? He remembered his promise and said: 'Oh no, my daughter! You have broken my heart. I made a promise to Jehovah. To keep it, I must send you to serve at the tabernacle in Shiloh.'

(Judges 12:3) 3 When I saw that you would not save me, then I decided to risk my life and go against the Am'mon-ites, and Jehovah handed them over to me. So why have you come today to fight against me?"

\*\*\* w07 5/15 p. 10 Jephthah Keeps His Vow to Jehovah \*\*\*

Jephthah says that he did call the Ephraimites, but they did not respond. In any case, God won the battle. Are they now upset because the Gileadites did not consult them when selecting Jephthah as commander? Actually, Ephraim's objection denotes rebellion against Jehovah, and there is no alternative but to fight them.

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\*\*\* ws18 April pp. 17-18 pars. 10-11 Imitating Jehovah—A God Who Gives Encouragement \*\*\*

10 Jephthah's daughter also needed encouragement. Her father, Judge Jephthah, was going to fight the Ammonites. He promised that if Jehovah helped him to win the battle, the first person who met him when he returned home would go to serve Jehovah at the tabernacle. Israel won the battle, and the first person who came to meet Jephthah was his daughter, his only child. Jephthah's heart was broken. But he kept his promise and sent his daughter to serve at the tabernacle for the rest of her life.—Judges 11:30-35.

11 Although this was difficult for Jephthah, it must have been even more difficult for his daughter. However, she was willing to do what her father had promised. (Judges 11:36, 37) This meant that she would never get married or have children. The family line would end. She needed a lot of comfort and encouragement. The Bible says: "It became a custom in Israel: From year to year, the young women of Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year." (Judges 11:39, 40) Jephthah's daughter makes us think of Christians today who stay single so that they can do more for Jehovah. Could we commend and encourage them?—1 Corinthians 7:32-35.