

JUDGES CHAPTER 11

JUDGES FEATURED IN THIS CHAPTER

OTHNIEL

ABIMELECH

ELON

EHUD

TOLA

ABDON

SHAMGAR

JAIR

SAMSON

DEBORAH

JEPHTHAH

ELI

GIDEON

IBZAN

SAMUEL

WHEN

- Most scholars place the period of the Judges between 1450 B.C. and 1000 B.C.
- The precise dates are still debated.
- Leading up to Judges 11, the Ammonites had oppressed Israel for 18 years (10:8).

WHERE

- Most of Judges 11 centers around the land of Gilead. Gilead was on the east side of the Jordan River (see map). Gad's land and the southern part of Manasseh's territory were in Gilead.
- The lands of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the lands of the Ammorites are also central to the story in Judges 11. These lands were on the east side of the Jordan River.



CHARACTERS

- **The Ammonites** – They “crushed and oppressed the people of Israel” and wanted to take Israel’s land as their own (10:8).
- **Jephthah** – A mighty warrior from Gilead. He was the son of a prostitute.
- **Jephthah’s Daughter** – Jephthah’s only child who became the victim of a foolish vow made by her father.

OUTLINE

- JEPHTHAH IS CALLED TO LEAD ISRAEL (11:1-11):
 - + Jephthah, a man from Gilead, was a mighty warrior, but he had been kicked out of his homeland because he was the son of a prostitute.
 - + He lived in the land of Tob and made friends with “worthless fellows.”
 - + When the Ammonites made war with Israel (10:17-18), the men of Gilead begged Jephthah to come back and lead their army.
 - + They promised him he would be the leader of all the land of Gilead if he managed to fight off the Ammonites. Jephthah accepted their offer and returned to help Israel.
- JEPHTHAN SENDS MESSENGERS TO THE AMMONITES (11:12-28):
 - + Jephthah dispatched messengers to ask the king of the Ammonites why he was intent on making war with Gilead.
 - + The king responded he was taking back his land that Moses and the Israelites stole from his descendants when they came out of Egypt.
 - + Jephthah replied by correcting the king’s history. Israel did not launch an unprovoked attack on Moab or Ammon to take their land when Moses led the people out of the wilderness.
 - + The Israelites went around the land of Edom and Moab when they moved north to east side of Jordan.
 - + The Israelites did conquer the lands belonging to the Amorites, but the Ammonites didn’t have a legitimate claim to that land.
 - + Furthermore, Jephthah argued the king’s claim on the land was weak because the disputed land had belonged to Israel for around 300 years.
 - + But the king of Ammon wouldn’t listen to Jephthah and his intention to make war on Israel was not swayed.
- JEPHTHAH’S VOW (11:29-41):
 - + Jephthah made a vow to the Lord that, if God would give him victory over the Ammonites, he would sacrifice the first thing he saw from his household when he returned from battle.
 - + Jephthah met the Ammonites on the battlefield and God gave Israel victory.
 - + After the war, as Jephthah approached his house, his daughter came out to meet him with music and dancing.
 - + Upon seeing her, Jephthah tore his clothes because of his promise to God.
 - + He explained his vow to his daughter and, shockingly, she agreed that he needed to keep his word to the Lord.
 - + She asked her father for 2 months to “go up and down on the mountains” and weep for her virginity.
 - + Jephthah granted her request.
 - + When the 2 months were complete, she returned to her father, and he “did with her according to his vow.”

APPLICATION

- Be careful with your words and the promises you make.
- Speaking impulsively and not considering the potential consequences of your commitments is a recipe for disaster.

OTHN
EHUD
SHAN
DEBO
GIDEC
ABIM
TOLA
JAIR
JEPHT
IBZAI
ELON
ABDC
SAMS
ELI
SAMU