

JUDGES CHAPTER 11

¹ And Jephthah the Gileadite *was* a mighty man; and he *was* the son of a harlot, who bore Jephthah to Gilead. ² And the wife of Gilead bore him sons; and the sons of his wife grew up, and they cast out Jephthah, and said to him, "You shall not inherit in the house of our father, for you are the son of a concubine." ³ And Jephthah fled from the face of his brothers, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men gathered to Jephthah, and went out with him.

⁴ And it came to pass when the children of Ammon prepared to fight with Israel, ⁵ that the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah from the land of Tob. ⁶ And they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our leader, and we will fight with the sons of Ammon." ⁷ And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me, and cast me out of my father's house, and banish me from you? And why have you come to me now, when you need me?" ⁸ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "Therefore have we now turned to you, that you should go with us, and fight against the sons of Ammon, and be our leader over all the inhabitants of Gilead." ⁹ And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you turn me back to fight with the children of Ammon, and the Lord should deliver them before me, then will I be your leader." ¹⁰ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The Lord be witness between us, if we shall not do according to your word." ¹¹ And Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and ruler over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.

¹² And Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, saying, "What have I to do with you, that you have come against me to fight in my land?" ¹³ And the king of the children of Ammon said to the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel took my land when he went up out of Egypt, from Arnon to Jabbok, and to the Jordan: now then return them peaceably and I will depart." ¹⁴ And Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, ¹⁵ and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: Israel did not take the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon; ¹⁶ for in their going up out of Egypt Israel went in the wilderness as far as the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh. ¹⁷ And Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'I will pass, if it please you, by your land'; and the king of Edom would not consent. And *Israel* also sent to the king of Moab, and he did not consent; and Israel sojourned in Kadesh. ¹⁸ And *they* journeyed in the wilderness, and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab. And they came by the east of the land of Moab, and encamped in the country beyond Arnon, and did not enter the borders of Moab, for Arnon is the border of Moab. ¹⁹ And Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorite, king of Hesbron, and Israel said to him, 'Let us pass through your land to our place.' ²⁰ And Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory; and Sihon gathered all his people, and they encamped at Jahaz; and he set the battle in array against Israel. ²¹ And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they struck him; and Israel inherited all the land of the Amorite who dwelt in that land, ²² from Arnon and to Jabbok, and from the wilderness to the Jordan. ²³ And now the Lord God of Israel has removed the Amorite from before His people Israel, and shall you inherit his *land*?

²⁴ Will you not inherit those possessions which Chemosh your god shall cause you to inherit; and shall not we inherit the *land of* all those whom the Lord our God has removed from before you? ²⁵ And now are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he indeed fight with Israel, or indeed make war with him, ²⁶ when Israel dwelt in Hesbron and in its coasts, and in the land of Aroer and in its coasts, and in all the cities by the Jordan, three hundred years? And why did you not recover them in that time? ²⁷ And now I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me in preparing war against me: may the Lord, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon." ²⁸ But the king of the children of Ammon did not heed the words of Jephthah, which he sent to him.

²⁹ And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed by the watchtower of Gilead to the other side of the children of Ammon. ³⁰ And Jephthah vowed a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, ³¹ then it shall come to pass that whosoever shall first come out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, he shall be the Lord's: I will offer him up for a whole burnt offering."

³² And Jephthah advanced to meet the sons of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hand. ³³ And he struck them from Aroer till *one* comes to Arnon, twenty cities in number, and as far as Abel-Keramim, with a very great destruction. And the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

³⁴ And Jephthah came to Mizpah, to his house; and behold, his daughter came forth to meet him with timbrels and dances; and she was his only child, *for* he had no other son or daughter. ³⁵ And it came to pass when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter, you have indeed troubled me, and you are the cause of my trouble; and I have opened my mouth against you to the Lord, and I shall not be able to return from it." ³⁶ And she said to him, "Father, have you opened your mouth to the Lord? Do to me accordingly as *the word* went out of your mouth, in that the Lord has worked vengeance for you on your enemies of the children of Ammon." ³⁷ And she said to her father, "Let my father now do this thing: let me alone for two months, and I will go up and down on the mountains, and I will lament my virginity, I and my companions." ³⁸ And he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months. And she went, and her companions, and she lamented her virginity on the mountains. ³⁹ And it came to pass at the end of the two months that she returned to her father; and he performed upon her his vow which he vowed; and she knew no man. ⁴⁰ And it was an ordinance in Israel, *that* the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for four days in the year.