



Lesson 65

Lesson 65: What Is Faith? (Part 21) Faith of Jephthah

Scripture: Hebrews 11:32; Judges 11:1-40

The Men of Hebrews 11:32

- **Men of God:**

- Gideon, a farmer
- Samson, a religious Nazirite
- David, a child become King
- Barak, an Army General
- Jephthah, a bastard
- Samuel, a child become a Prophet

- **What Do These Men Have In Common?**

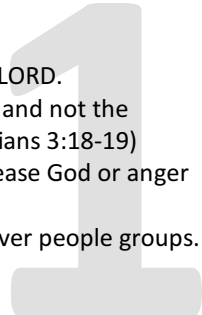
- ① **ALL** ruled Israel during very dark times.
- Consider Judges 2:6-13; 21:25
- ② **ALL** had faith that was far from perfect.
- ③ **ALL** were raised up by God to do extraordinary things.

CONSIDER . . .

- ① **WE** live in very dark times when Christianity is becoming less and less acceptable.
- ② **WE** only have to look at our faith and realize that our faith is far from perfect.
- ③ **WE** have been called upon to earnestly contend for our faith (Jude 4).

The Times (Judges 10:6-18)

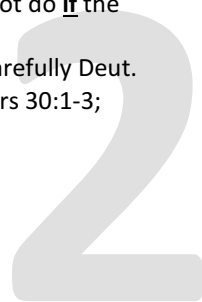
- (v. 6) The children served any and all gods except the LORD.
→ We live in times when people serve “their” gods and not the LORD. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 16:18; Philippians 3:18-19)
- (vv. 7-8) We find that God’s people’s actions either please God or anger God.
→ Again, we see the **absolute** sovereignty of God over people groups.



- Learn this: God has used **unbelievers** to discipline His people and when His disciplining is finished He judges the unbelievers. (Isa. 10:5-6, 12)
- (v. 10) The people cry out to God.
- (vv. 11-14) God **rebukes** His people and tells them to go and cry to their ‘gods.’
- (vv. 14-15) The people **repent**, put away their ‘gods’, and **serve** the LORD.
 - ★ They began to take God seriously. (Acts 17:30)

Jephthah (Judges 11)

- (vv. 1-3, 7) His **rejection**.
 - Remember Joseph, Moses, and Christ!
- (vv. 4-11) His **commissioning**.
 - He confronts them with their sin.
 - He looks to the LORD for deliverance.
 - He speaks all his words before the LORD.
- (vv. 12-28) His **diplomacy**.
 - His argument with the Ammonites:
 - ① (vv. 14-22) He used **history** or **facts** as recorded in Scripture.
 - ② (vv. 23-24) He **states** that it was the LORD that had given the land to Israel.
 - ③ (vv. 25-26) Israel had lived on the land for 300 years! Why now?
 - ④ (vv. 27-28) Ammon’s fight was with the LORD, not Israel.
- (vv. 29, 32-33) His **determination** for the truth.
 - When diplomacy did not work, filled with the Spirit of God, Jephthah went to war. It was **unjust** for another nation to take land from another nation.
 - God delivers the Ammonites into Jephthah’s hand.
- (vv. 28-31) His **foolish** vow.
 - It is absolute foolishness and sin to **bargain** with God. Who is the creature to tell his Creator what he will do or not do **if** the Creator will do such and such?
 - However, God takes **vows very serious!** (Read carefully Deut. 23:21-23; Lev. 5:4-6; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; Numbers 30:1-3; Proverbs 20:25; Matthew 5:37)



The Vow of JEPHTHAH

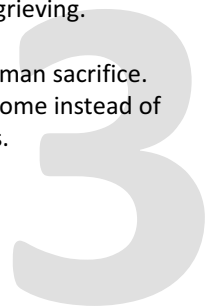
Judges 11:30-31, 34-40

QUESTIONS

- Foolish vows: How did he know who or what would come out of his door first?
 - unclean animal?
 - neighbor's child?
 - total stranger?
- What right did Jephthah have to take either life and thereby offer to God a sacrifice that cost him nothing? (2 Samuel 24:24)
- Jephthah knew that Yahweh did not approve of or accept human sacrifice.
- Jephthah knew about Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22) and Leviticus 18:21 and 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10.
- Jephthah's friends would not allow him i.e. King's Saul's soldiers didn't let him kill Jonathan.
- Was required to go to Shiloh. Leviticus 17:1-9 and had her offered by the Levitical priests (Deuteronomy 16:2, 6, 11, 16)
- Could pay for his daughter (Leviticus 27:1-8).
- Burnt offering was to be a male. (Leviticus 1:3)
- Why lament virginity if she was to die?

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- v. 31 – the Hebrew letter “waw” translated “and” could also be translated “or”. — “Whatever met him would be dedicated to the Lord (if a person) or sacrificed to the Lord (if animal).
- Since he was met by his daughter he dedicated her to the Lord to serve Him at the tabernacle (Exodus 38:8; 1 Samuel 2:22)
- She would miss the joy of motherhood (every dream of a Jewish woman) – reason for two months of grieving.
- Nowhere are we told that he actually killed – no one grieving.
- Emphasis is that she remained a virgin.
- Difficult to believe a custom established related to human sacrifice.
- If Jephthah was going to kill her, he would want her home instead of running through the mountains with her girlfriends.



Last Thoughts

BAD

- All the above are “reasonable” solutions **but** we must remember that the Israelites were living in **depraved** times.

GOOD

- Jephthah is listed with other judges in Hebrews 11:32.

What Does the Bible Teach About Making Vows?

→Deuteronomy 23:21-23

- Do not be slow in fulfilling
- The LORD will demand it of you
- You are guilty of sin

→Leviticus 5:4-6

- Even thoughtlessly made
- Good and evil vows
- Aware or Unaware of making them (i.e. singing hymns)

→Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

- Do not delay in fulfilling
- God has no pleasure in fools
- Better not to make a vow

→Numbers 30:1-3

- Must do everything he said
- (Mark 10:1-12)

→Galatians 6:7-8

- God will not be mocked

→God's Example: Psalms 89:30-34

→Proverbs 20:25

- Rash vows and then considered later!

→Also see Matthew 5:37

Learning from Jephthah

- ① He was a man who feared the Lord. (Judges 11:9-11)
- ② He believed what was recorded in Scripture not just as “religious” writings but as **history, fact**, – the **TRUTH!**
- ③ He boasted in the LORD and gave the LORD the glory for his victories.
- ④ We learn that God takes our vows seriously. God holds us to our word.
- ⑤ It is sin to bargain with God. Our desire must be “HIS WILL” not ours!
- ⑥ The Holy Spirit tells us to “present **our bodies** (whole selves) as living sacrifices, **holy**, and **acceptable** to God, this is our reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1)