

Deliverance from the Son of a Harlot

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet Sources)

Introduction:

- A. Judges 10 - 11
- B. Judges chronicles the years in Israel between the death of Joshua and the appointment of Saul as their first king. The book is a series of scenes of lawlessness - Judges 21:25
- C. Israel would abandon the Lord for idolatry. God would chasten them for their sins by allowing their enemies to defeat and enslave them. After a period of enemy oppression, Israel would repent, and God would raise up a judge to deliver them. They would be set free from their enemies, and the cycle would repeat itself.
 - 1. God never completely forsook His people. They failed Him and He chastised them, but He always took them back when they returned to Him in genuine repentance.
 - 2. A few people in Judges stand out as bright lights against the darkness, and they teach profound lessons for us.
- D. Jephthah was a man rejected by his family, cast out by society, and written off by everyone who should have cared about him. But in the end Jephthah became the leader of his people.
 - 1. But he was not a completely righteous man. He was chosen to lead the people by the people - Judges 11:5-6.
 - 2. Jephthah was a mixture of the spiritual and the worldly. While he was not the Lord's choice as Judge in Israel, the Lord enabled Jephthah to lead the people to victory. God had a plan in using Jephthah; we just do not know all the details of that plan

I. JEPHTHAH IS A PARIAH

- A. Judges 10:6-18 - Israel had no right to judge others as unworthy.
- B. Jephthah's character - Judges 11:1 - "a mighty man of valor" meaning "strength, ability and courage"
- C. Jephthah's challenge - "he was the son of a harlot" and his father's name was "Gilead". Evidently, Gilead was a man who frequented prostitutes.
 - 1. According to Josephus, Jephthah's father was of the tribe of Manasseh, and his mother was a Gentile prostitute of the Ishmaelites
- D. Jephthah's conflict - Judges 11:2 - Jephthah's father also had children with his own wife.
 - 1. When the legitimate children reached maturity, they turned on Jephthah and forced him out of the family home.
 - 2. They refused to share their inheritance with Jephthah.
 - 3. Jephthah's presence in the family was a constant reminder of their father's infidelity.
 - 4. They may have despised Jephthah all their lives, envying him as he was a strong, able and brave man. He was everything they were not and they turned on him. He represented everything they could never be.

- E. Ex. 34:7 - This does not mean that God punishes us for what our parents did. It does mean that what our parents did can often be reproduced in our lives
 - 1. Children often develop attitudes similar to their parents, with the same likes and dislikes. We carry the influence of our family with us throughout life.
 - 2. However, some break the cycle. Just because your parents did certain things to you or around you does not mean that you have to.
 - 3. Jephthah was not like his father, scattering children all around the country; he had an only child at home - Judges 11:34
- F. Jesus experienced the same rejection from his family and neighbors
 - 1. John 7:3-5; Mark 3:21
- G. Jephthah's companions - Judges 11:3 - When Jephthah left the family home, he went to Tob, located east of the Jordan River in Syria.
 - 1. Unemployed, empty, worthless men looking for something to fill their time and stomachs, gathered to Jephthah, a leader, and formed a band of raiders.
 - 2. Not Robin Hood and his Merry Men; more like highwaymen, plunderers
- H. God can use flawed vessels to accomplish His purposes - Psalm 37:23-24
 - 1. Birds of a feather flock together. Men like Jephthah came to Jephthah
- I. Jephthah's life experiences prepared him for this duty. Rejection made him a better man.

II. JEPHTHAH IS PETITIONED

- A. Judges 11:4-5 - The cause of the request: the nation is under attack and they have no leader
 - 1. Ammonites are trying to dominate Israel. The children of Ammon were the descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot through an incestuous relationship with one of his own daughters. The Ammonites were cousins to the Jews, but they were also perpetual enemies.
- B. Judges 11:6 - The character of the request: they ask Jephthah, the man they drove out to become an outlaw, to come back and become their leader.
- C. Judges 11:7-8 - The commitment of the request: Jephthah recounts their past attitude towards him.
 - 1. Their treatment of him is sad. They had no use for him when times were good, but when matters became desperate, they went to him for help
 - 2. This is how many treat the Lord. They refuse to be faithful. They refuse to serve Him. They refuse to honor His word, His will or His house. They treat Him like He is an unwanted intruder in their lives. They treat Him like He is the spare tire on the car of their life. He is to stay in the trunk and keep quiet, but He better be ready when they have a flat and pull him out.

III. JEPHTHAH IS PROVEN

- A. Judges 11:9-11a - Jephthah's acceptance: he consents to go with them and to lead them to victory.

1. His treatment of them is very different from their treatment of him; he is not bitter. He was able to get over the things they did to him.
 2. He was able to get past their self-centered treatment of him and did the right thing because it was the Lord's will and his own nation
 3. He risked his life for the nation that rejected him
 4. Whether we will accept it or not, how we treat others is a direct reflection of the place God holds in our hearts. If we can spitefully mistreat those who are made in God's image and bought by His love and the blood of His Son, it does not say much for our opinion of Him.
 5. When we love Him as we should, we will love others as we should
 - a. Matt. 22:36-40; 1John 3:14-16, 4:20
- B. Judges 11:11b - Jephthah's advancement: The people honored their word and they elevated the reject to the position of ruler.
- C. Judges 11:11c - Jephthah's acknowledgement: We are told that "Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh" (means "watchtower").
1. Gen. 31:33-55 - The place is called "Mizpah" where Jacob and Laban made an agreement that they would not attack the other. They called upon the Lord to witness their covenant.
 2. God gave Jephthah the victory - Judges 11:29; 1Cor. 15:57

Conclusion:

- A. The reject became the ruler, but he never lived down his past among the people; many never acknowledged his leadership - Judges 12:1-4
 1. We all have strengths and weaknesses, but the Lord can use us and make something special out of our lives.
 2. There may be a pattern of sin in our background, but it can be broken
 3. God can use you in spite of your past, your family or your failures.
 4. Your treatment of others reveals how you really feel about God.
 5. Faithful service to God, with or without the validation of others around you, ensures His regard for you.
 6. Just do the right thing and trust God for the results and rewards.