

# Judges 11:28-40– Leadership: Two Wars You Have To Fight

TSK, Handfuls, HebrewLexicon, Gill, Geneva, JFB, Poole, Trapp, Clarke, Barnes, Geisler, Kaiser, Rhodes, Delitzsch, Henry Beloved in the Lord: There are unique challenges that leaders face. They surely have to face threats that pose a danger to their people, and then they have to face inward wars, often arguing with themselves about what they should have done, what they should do, or how they should do it. Leaders face these challenges fully knowing that they are vessels of clay (瓦器). Today you will see both of these battles in the life of Jephthah, Israel's judge.

Our headings are:

**Jephthah's War with Ammon**

**Jephthah's War with himself**

Our goals are: **That you will be prepared to endure internal and external wars as a leader, or as a follower, that you will pray for and support those who rule over you** so they might lead Christ's kingdom well and bring glory to him.

## **Jephthah's War with Ammon**

28 However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.

29 Then the **Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah**, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon.

### **1. Jephthah tried a diplomatic solution (外交途径) to the threat Israel faced from the Ammonites but was unsuccessful.**

Ammon simply repeated a lie about Israel stealing their land. **Ammon's bogus 假的 argument was obviously made because they did not want to give up the yearly tribute they had received from Israel** who was turning back to serving the living God. Ammon wanted Israel to continue serving them!

### **2. Know that war with the Ammonites was inevitable (不可避免的), God had already prepared Jephthah ready to be an effective commander of his army. How?**

**a. Jephthah had put his trust in God.**

**b. Jephthah was providentially prepared to fight. When he was forced from his home by his brother, he lived in Tob where he learned the art of war.**

**c. Jephthah had extra spiritual help** from the Holy Spirit who came in an extra-ordinary way. How did the Holy Spirit help him? **The Holy Spirit made him extra bold** for the fight. When God's Holy Spirit came **on Samson** he was emboldened to destroy the enemies of God's people. At Pentecost God gave people his Spirit to equip them with special ability to speak different languages and he made them bold to fight and destroy the Devil's kingdom. Also!

**Matthew 10:19 "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.**

### **3. Jephthah then traveled east across the Jordan, through Gad and Manasseh,** and to Ammon, east of Gad and Manasseh.

The Ammonites were prepared for battle.

32 So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and **the LORD delivered them into his hands**. 33 And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, **with a very great slaughter**. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

### **4. Jephthah engaged and utterly destroyed the enemies of God's people.** He conquered 20 cities. He killed many. This guaranteed Israel peace from these murderers.

## **5. Lessons:**

**a. The Devil wants to steal what the church has and destroy her faith in Jesus.** You can see this in the way the homosexual lobby (游说团) has worked against Christians. First, the homosexual lobby wanted tolerance for their wickedness. The church acquiesced (默认, 默许). Then it wanted acceptance. Many churches acquiesced again. Now it wants support. When the churches start to balk (畏缩), they want to cut the legs out from under the churches. This past week a judge fined a Christian couple who refused to bake a cake for a perverted homosexual marriage \$135,000, for the hurt feelings of the homosexuals. Homosexuals now want the Christian's conscience. **A brave leader will train his spiritual children to learn to confront their spiritual.** He will give them good arguments to demolish their challengers. Leading is more than memorizing catechism (教理问答) and Bible verses. It is training your charges to understand the faulty arguments or the wicked and destroy them.

**b. Any good leader must start with strong faith in Christ** to fight the Devil. The enemy is too great to fight alone. So He will understand the need to study God's Word and gain experience, and will depend upon the help of the Holy Spirit as he does these things. This is the kind of man to look for in a husband, elder, or politician.

**c. Physical killing of the wicked in battle for physically attacking you or your loved ones is justified.** Love for the Lord's worship and love for your family must make you willing to fight and to kill. ("Turning the other cheek" was when one was slapped was for insult not injury. "连左脸也转过来自他打"是当一个人因受羞辱而被打, 而非因受伤害。) Out of love you are bound to self-defense (自我防卫).

## Jephthah's War Within Himself

30 And Jephthah **made a vow to the LORD**, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 "then it will be that **whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me**, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up **as a burnt offering** (燔祭)."

**1. Jephthah developed skills while raiding enemies in the Tob, but he knew that success wasn't wrapped in his ability to wield his sword.** He knew that if God did not work through his efforts, they would come to nothing. **So he made an oath to the Lord that if God would give him victory over the Ammonites that he would give God a burnt offering of whatever was the first thing or person to meet him when he returned home.** This vow was an expression of thankfulness and it was a serious promise. **He knew that he should never make oaths feebly** (牵强地). Jephthah did not care if it were his prized bull or his favorite servant. He was willing to give the best. **And yet, there was a degree of carelessness about it.** He could have specifically said what he would give to the Lord if he won.

34 When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels (鼓) and dancing; and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

**2. As Jephthah returned home, the first thing to meet him from his house was his only daughter.** Not only was it his daughter, but she was his only child. She came out singing and dancing that God had given her father victory over the abominable Ammonites.

**3. Now did he really mean that he was going to sacrifice a human being as a burnt offering?** Surely not! Jephthah made this oath directly to God. He knew God's law. He knew Jewish history. He had just recounted much of it. He was praying as he made this oath. **So for Jephthah, the judge (士师), to ask God for special favor and then promise to do something so contrary to what God would want makes no sense.** And linguistically (在语言上), the word translated "burnt offering" could simply mean to "offer up" (奉献) or "to give up to service." **But God does not accept human burnt offering.** He rejected Isaac and provided the ram—a picture of Christ. Surely it would have been noted as a sin if he sacrificed his daughter. He had to keep a hard vow, but not a sinful vow. If this vow was wrong, surely he would have thought of it and repented (悔改).

35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he **tore his clothes**, and said, "Alas, my daughter! **You have brought me very low** (你使我甚是愁苦)! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it."

**4. It tortured Jephthah that because of his rash vow his only daughter, his only child, would not have a normal life of having children and carrying on the family name.** To him, this was like death to her and so he tore his clothes as Job and Jacob did when their family faced death. The torture was real. **What a struggle!** How hard it is for a parent to know that his child will not be able to do what is normal...maybe through a handicap...or maybe through death? But this child was perfectly normal, so the pain was greater. One careless mistake...and it was painful to his heart.

**Ecclesiastes 5:4** When you make a vow to God, **do not delay to pay it;** For *He has no pleasure in fools.* Pay what you have vowed--5 **Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.**

**5. It was possible that Jephthah could have redeemed (贖出) his daughter with 30 pieces of silver in lieu of (代替) life-service, but Jephthah didn't take the easy way out.** (Leviticus 27:2-4). Substitution was part of the law. For example, if he had been met by a dog, he would have substituted (用...取代) it with a clean animal.

36 So she said to him, "My father, if you have given your word to the LORD, **do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies,** the people of Ammon."

**6. Jephthah's daughter encouraged her father to complete the oath he had made to his heavenly Father. You can see her faith in the Lord.** She credited Jehovah for success. What an incredible thing to have a faithful daughter like that. She knew God's Word well. She could not go to war to fight in service of the Lord, but she could serve him in the tabernacle(会幕). Her words showed that Jephthah wasn't a hoodlum (流氓,恶棍) robbing and pillaging (抢劫) without

thought. He was a wise man who was committed to his job and yet was not negligent as a father. This also showed that it **was not a wicked oath.** No one was bound to keep a sinful oath. It is unreasonable to believe that a young woman of obvious faith would encourage her father to kill her in violation of God's law.

37 Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: **let me alone for two months**, that I may go and wander on the mountains and **bewail my virginity**(好哀哭我终为处女), my friends and I."

38 So he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and **she went with her friends**, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.

**7. Jephthah's daughter was hurt, though. And she kindly asked for time to mourn that she would not have a normal life.** And there was nothing at all wrong with this. Our loved ones in Christ who have died have gone to heaven, but we still mourn. So Jephthah's daughter went with her friends and mourned for the fact that her life was being sacrificed. This might not seem like a big thing to live as a spinster (未婚女人) these days, but it was an extraordinary concession (让步) for her. **It was a shame to die childless. This was why she cried.** She did not cry because she was going to die! This disproves those who say that Jephthah really did sacrifice his daughter.

39 And it was so at the end of two months that **she returned to her father**, and he carried out his **vow with her which he had vowed.** She **knew no man.** And it became a custom in Israel 40 that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament(哀哭) the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

**8. Then she returned home** and her father did what he has promised. **So what did Jephthah do if he didn't literally offer up his daughter as a burnt offering?** He likely gave his daughter wholly as a servant of the temple and she willingly submitted to that task. After all, a burnt offering was a voluntary sweet aroma offering and it signified a total dedication (献身) of the animal's life to God. And surely this was better than to offer the blood of bulls and goats. Like Anna, she probably served the Lord in prayer and singing and in assisting the priest for the rest of her life. And what a sacrifice she was! She would rather give her whole life to God rather than run the risk of God being angry with Israel's judge and bring punishment upon the whole nation.

**9. After she was committed to God's service, she remained a virgin and** the women of Israel remembered her for her service to the Lord.

#### **10. Lessons:**

**a. Oaths, which are only to be made to God, are serious business.** They are only to be made if you intend to keep them, if you are able to keep them, and if they are being made for a serious matter.

**b. Wouldn't it be great if your child were so committed to(委身于) the Lord that she would be willing to make great sacrifices to the Lord** – maybe willing to give up a career or a potential spouse or even her life so God would be honored? How attached in your child to his phone, or her clothes? Children learn from what you do!

**c. You are all called to give a sacrifice to your greatest leader of all, the one who sacrificed himself for you.**

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice(活祭), holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

**d. And how are you able to be a sacrifice?** Jesus gained the victory over sin, death, and hell.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death...

#### **Conclusion:**

Jephthah's first fight was with Ammon. He knew he had to get God's help. He asked for it. He got it. So he won. But he had a second fight in his heart because of a careless vow he made. But by God's grace and his daughter's help, he won.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **1. Leaders have a tough job.** They have to **fight to protect their charges from attacks by the Devil and the Devil's people in Canada** and leaders **struggle with challenges in their own lives.** Pray for them. Encourage them. Submit to them. Make their jobs easy. 2. If you are a leader, draw from the one who made you leader – Jesus Christ. When threats come to your charges, **don't fight alone.** Pray to your heavenly Father for strength. You are his son with his promises! And when you feel overwhelmed by sins and struggles in your life, **don't suffer alone.** Jesus will give you freedom! Don't pick up the filth(污秽) from your body that was washed away on the cross.

Finally, the biggest challenge you will have if you are not a Christian is death. To gain victory over death, you need eternal life. You can only get eternal life if you receive eternal life that Jesus offered, having gained that for sinners when he died on the cross and rose again.