

# JUDGES

## “Jephthah”

Series Objective:

Students will learn:

- The pattern of sin that Israel went through in Judges
- The story of Jephthah’s arrogance
- The story of Ruth’s faithfulness
- The story of Samson’s Nazarite vows

Series Theme Verse: “Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived.” –Judges 2:18

Lesson Objective: For students to understand that making oaths or promises to God is a serious practice that one should never take lightly.

Lesson Passage: Judges 10:6-11:40

Materials Needed: Bibles, Series Theme Verse on poster

Lesson Plan: Remind students that as the Book of Judges progresses, the Judges become more and more inept and less and less committed followers of God. Some even reflect the pagans around them more than they do the follower of God they should be. Today’s Judge is far removed from Ehud and Deborah, he is one of the more arrogant Judges.

Talking Points: Judges 10:6-18

- What was the evil that Israel did in the eyes of the Lord? (Worshipped idols and false gods)
- What was the result of their idolatry? (God allowed oppressors to overtake Israel)
- While under oppression, what did Israel do? (Repented and cried out to God)
- Did God save them immediately from their oppressors? (No, God was still angry, but the Israelites continued to pursue God and God raised up a Judge to rescue them)

Talking Points: Judges 11:1-13

- What was the name of the Judge God raised up to save Israel? (Jephthah)
- What was Jephthah known as? (A mighty warrior)
- What was so odd about his family relationships? (His mother was a prostitute, and his stepbrothers ran him off since his mom was a prostitute)
- When the Ammonites attacked Israel, what did the elders of Israel do? (Went to Jephthah and asked him to be their leader)

- How did he respond? (He reminded them that they kicked him out and didn't want him. The continued to ask him and after agreeing to make him their leader if he was successful in the battle against Ammonites, he agreed to lead them)
- Jephthah's first act was to ask the Ammonite king why they attacked Israel, what was the king's response? (He wanted back land that was taken when Israel left Egypt and entered the Promised Land)
- Jephthah tried to point out to the king that Israel did not take the land, instead, when they tried to pass through peacefully, the king of Ammon attacked Israel and lost the battle and Israel gained the land.

#### Talking Points: Judges 11:28-40

- The king of Ammon ignored Jephthah's response, and God led Jephthah to prepare to attack Ammon. With God on his side, Jephthah would never need to try to bargain with God, but he did. What was Jephthah's oath to God? (If he was victorious, he would sacrifice the first thing that came out of his house door when he returned)
- Was Jephthah victorious over Ammon? (Yes)
- Who came out of his door when he returned home? (His daughter, his only child)
- How did Jephthah respond at seeing his daughter? (He was devastated)
- When his daughter found out of the oath, what did she say? (Keep your vow to God, but allow me time to mourn with my friends)
- Did Jephthah sacrifice his daughter? (Yes, but some believe that he gave her up, not as a sacrifice, but as a servant in the tabernacle. So either he sacrificed her to God in death which God would have not wanted because that was a pagan practice, or he sacrificed her by giving her to serve God in the tabernacle)
- Either way, the story of Jephthah serves as a clear reminder that we should never make rash promises or vows to God.

#### The Story Retold:

- Have you ever been in a place where you promised God something if God would do something?
- Do you think God wants promises or oaths that have stipulations attached?
- God wants us to make commitments to God that are thought out and based on growing in our spiritual relationships with God, not something that is selfish.
- If you could rewrite the story of Jephthah, how would you change the story? Be specific; don't just say I wouldn't sacrifice his daughter. What are some character traits that led Jephthah to such a foolish decision? What needs to change in his life to change the outcome of the story?
- How do we reflect Jephthah's arrogance or flippant way of handling our relationships with God?
- How should we treat our relationships with God?

#### The Story and Me:

- Review the memory verse.
- Have the students create motions for the Series Theme Verse.
- Say the verse with the motions several times.