

OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 15 — “The Value of Thinking Rightly About God”— August 31, 2025

Introduction: What do we think?

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...[for] no people has ever risen above its religion, and man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as a worshiper entertains high and low thoughts of God.” —A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

Main Point: The Jephthah narrative shows us the great value of knowing about the wonderful _____ of God in human history.

Judges 11:1-28

Following the death of Abimelech Israel experienced a period of 45 years under the leadership of two lesser known judges. Unfortunately, this season of peace and prosperity once again gave way to a time of idolatry and unfaithfulness. Faced with the threat of the Ammonites, Israel appeared to seek the Lord’s aid even as they actively sought a deliverer from among themselves.

Exposition:

I. The text describes the background of _____, a potential leader of Israel. (vv.1-3)

Observations:

(1) Certain aspects of Jephthah’s background make him an _____ man to lead Israel.
“the Gileadite” *“a mighty warrior”*

(2) Other aspects of his background make him an _____ man to lead Israel.
“the son of a prostitute”

(3) Having been disinherited by his family, he surrounded himself with others like himself and likely became a _____.

“Just like Abimelech, Jephthah is on the margins of society, deprived of a family and an inheritance, and out to seek his own fortune.”
—Boda & Conway

Key Point: Although the _____ of our parents can have a lasting impact upon us, they do not prevent the Lord from using us for His glory and His purposes.

II. Jephthah came to power following _____ with the leaders of His people. (vv.4-11)

Observations:

(1) The elders of Gilead offered Jephthah the opportunity to be the _____ of their forces in battle.
“leader”— *qāṣîn* — a chief, ruler, or commander; likely a military position of leadership

(2) After pushback from Jephthah, they offered him the chance to be their _____.
“head”— *rō’s* — head, chief; likely a governing position of leadership

(3) The negotiation was agreeable to both parties and they _____ all of these things before the Lord.

⇒ The people’s negotiations with Jephthah recall those with the _____ in the prior chapter (10:10-15).

“The Israelites are now treating Jephthah as if he were their deliverer instead of YHWH, desperately resorting to trust in him after their negotiations with YHWH came to naught.” —Boda & Conway

Key Point: Confidence in the Lord as the ultimate _____ allows us to deal rightly with those who seek to take advantage of us.

III. Jephthah then sought to negotiate with the king of the _____. (vv. 12-28)

Observations:

- (1) The Ammonite king accused Israel of having stolen his land on their way to conquer Canaan.
- (2) Jephthah denied the king's accusation by reviewing the history of Yahweh's guidance of Israel into the land (Num. 20-21).
 - ⇒ Because of their historical connection to the people of Israel, the Lord had specifically instructed His people to avoid conflict with both the Edomites, descendants of _____, (Deut. 2:4-5) and the Moabites, descendants of _____ (Deut. 2:8-9)
 - ⇒ The Lord had promised to give to Israel victory over the Sihon, the king of the Amorites (Deut. 2:24-25). Sihon refused to allow Israel to peacefully pass through his land and then attacked the people and was defeated.
- (3) Jephthah's primary argument against the king's demand was _____.

Judges 11:12-24—²³ So then the Lord, the God of Israel, dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel; and are you to take possession of them? ²⁴ Will you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? And all that the Lord our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess.

 - ⇒ Yahweh, Israel's God, had demonstrated that He was the God of _____ by giving victory to Israel. The land was ultimately His, and He had given it to His people.
 - ⇒ He even references the _____ of the Moabites who he assumes the Ammonite king would agree had allowed him to conquer portions of that territory.

“Just as the king of Ammon claims title to the lands of Moab south of Arnon which bisects it, given to him by Chemosh, so the Israelites have a legitimate claim to the lands between the Arnon and Jabbok given to them by YHWH.”
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- (4) He then warned the king that not even _____, the great Moabite king, dared to contend with the Lord and His people in direct combat (Num. 22-24).
- (5) Jephthah then reminded the king that in 300 years they had not sought to remove Israel and if they sought to now, the Lord would decide between them.

Key Point: Confidence in the Lord allows us to deal rightly with those who would _____ us.

Assessing Jephthah

- Jephthah's knowledge that God is actively _____ in the world gave him the confidence to gain a position of leadership among own people and to stand firm in the face of pressure from their enemies.

Applying the Text

1. **Knowing the powerful works of God allows us to properly _____ and _____ one another.**

Eph. 5:1-2—“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

John 13:34-35—“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
2. **Knowing the powerful works of God allows us to properly _____ _____ in the face of our enemies.**

Eph. 6:13—Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

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Key Point: Although the choices of our parents can have a lasting impact upon us, they do not prevent the Lord from using us for His glory and His purposes.

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