

ANCIENT HEROES

August 26, 2018

Pastor Steve Luxa

Jephthah

Introduction

1. Jephthah, the Judge

¹ Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute. Gilead was the father of Jephthah. ² And Gilead's wife also bore him sons. And when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out and said to him, "You shall not have an inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman." ³ Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and worthless fellows collected around Jephthah and went out with him." (Judges 11:1-3, ESV)

¹⁰ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The Lord will be witness between us, if we do not do as you say." ¹¹ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah." (Judges 11:10-11, ESV)

2. Jephthah's Faith

²⁷ I therefore have not sinned against you, and you do me wrong by making war on me. The Lord, the Judge, decide this day between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon." (Judges 11:27, ESV)

²⁹ Then the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites." (Judges 11:29, ESV)

³² And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, *Jephthah*, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.” (Hebrews 11:32-34, ESV (emphasis mine))

3. Jephthah’s Understanding

³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹ then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.”” (Judges 11:30-31, ESV)

³⁹ And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had made. She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.” (Judges 11:39-40, ESV)

“If your concept of God is radically false, then the more devout you are, the worse it will be for you. You're opening yourself to be molded by something base. In terms of your practical life, you'd better be an atheist.” (Archbishop William Temple)

(On God forbidding child sacrifice, see Leviticus 18:21, 20:2-5, Deuteronomy 12:31, 18:10. On God’s provision for a vow that would end in sin, see Leviticus 5:4-6, 27:2-8)

Digging Deeper

This week’s passages:

Monday: Judges 10

Tuesday: Judges 11

Wednesday: Judges 12

Thursday: Hebrews 11

Friday: 2 Timothy 3 (especially v. 15)

Weekend: Review the most meaningful passages of the week.

Each day this week you are invited to read the day’s passage and then respond to the following questions. Take special note of what God is saying to you. You might find it beneficial to use a journal or notebook to record insights.

1. Read the passage prayerfully, listening for the voice of God and asking him to speak to you.
2. Record or write down the word, phrase, or verse that God impresses upon you.
3. Reflect and write down what it is about this word, phrase or verse that is meaningful to you.
4. Respond by writing a prayer or recording what it is that you think the Lord wants you to do in response to his word (“*Be doers of the word and not hearers only*” James 1:22).