

Life Lessons from Judge Jephthah

the drama king of Gilead

Book of Judges

Spans the 350 years after Joshua dies.

Judges is the story of the '*Canaanization*' of God's people, and how they (*we*) will deteriorate when they do not follow God but follow their own way.

Without an intervention from God, they (*we*) will perish or be put under bondage

Key verse/theme = Judges 21:25

*"In those days there was no king in Israel:
every man did that which was right in his own eyes."*

What is a "judge" in the Book of Judges ?

A judge was a man or woman from the tribes of Israel whom God used to deliver the nation of Israel from those who oppressed them.

Judges would also mediate between civil matters for the people.

Each of the judges foreshadow Christ in some manner.

Judges 11



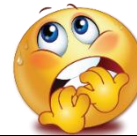
Oops! ... I vowed it again

Name	What is it in our story ?	The name means
Gilead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A man's name - Jephthah's father A region - Gilead was a lush hilly region on the east side of Jordan and was home to the tribes of Gad, Rueben, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh 	Mountains of testimony
Jephthah	The 9th judge of Israel – rejected by family, but chosen by God	God doth open
Tob	An area north of Gilead where Jephthah flees to and leads baser men	Good
Ammonites	<p>The longtime enemies of Israel – they came from the incestuous relationship with Lot.</p> <p><i>(they can represent moral compromise, corrupt influences, opposition, and ungodly pressures that come against believers)</i></p>	Kinsman (my people)
Jephthah's daughter	<p>The real heroine of the story. She was totally submitted to her father's will and authority, and she courageously accepted the consequences of her father's word. She had a strong reverence for God and willingly gave up her future.</p>	

a few lessons from the story of Judge Jephthah

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| 1) God delivered his people after their genuine _____ | 2 nd Chronicles 7:14 |
| 2) Our past does not dictate our _____ | 1 st Corinthians 1:27-29 |
| 3) Be a _____ (Romans 12:18) while _____ the truth | 2 nd Timothy 4:1-5 |
| 4) Don't try to _____ with God | Ecclesiastes 5:2 Matthew 6:8 |

THE VOW !!



What did Jephthah do ?

common arguments & evidence for each possibility

SYMBOLIC

*Jephthah's daughter was not actually sacrificed.
Rather, she was dedicated to perpetual
virginity – possibly in temple service*

LITERAL

*Jephthah went through with his vow.
His daughter was actually put on the
altar and sacrificed*

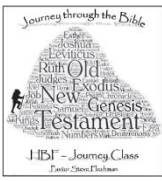
1	We are not explicitly told he literally sacrificed her	His vow was specific – burnt offering (<i>olah</i>)
2	God condemned human sacrifice <i>Deut 18:9-14</i>	Verse 39 “who did with her according to his vow”
3	He was a man of faith, he would not do this	What did Jephthah “think” was in his house ?
4	The High Priest would have known better	Verse 40 – seems extreme if it was symbolic
5	There would have been a national uproar	Who said God approves or accepted it ?
6	Jephthah continued as a judge for 6 years	The lack of detail suggests he did it
7	God speaks highly of Jephthah – <i>Hebrews 11:32</i>	Remember the theme of Judges

TEACHING POINT : Where did Jephthah get the idea to vow such a vow ?

hint : Deuteronomy 12:30-32

What can we learn from Jephthah's foolish vow ?

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| 1 | Understanding of God's Word will help protect us (<i>and those around us</i>) from hardships |
| 2 | Be careful not to make rash vows or decisions in the flesh.
** <i>Jephthah could have redeemed his daughter for ~10 shekels according to Leviticus 27:1-8</i> |
| 3 | Just because we do something great for God, doesn't mean we can't do something foolish
** <i>you can serve God on Sunday, yet ruin your life on Monday</i> |
| 4 | Don't allow pop culture to influence your theology |



The judges of Israel

The men & women God used to judge and deliver Israel are a perfect example of 1st Corinthians 1:26-27. God always chooses the weak and foolish things of the world to accomplish his mission and bring glory to himself.

He will use anyone who is willing, and anything that is in your hand.

	Judge	Verse	Name means	Oppressor	Foolish or weak thing that God used	Lesson we can learn from this judge
1	Moses	Exodus 18:13	Drawn out	Egypt	Staff	Moses may have started out reluctant and with little confidence, but he became the friend of God and a great prophet, deliverer, and judge of Israel
2	Othniel (1)	Judges 3:9-10	Powerful one	Mesopotamia	The younger brother	He was from a family of leaders and faithful men (Caleb's nephew) He was the only man brave enough to fight the enemy in order to win a bride and inheritance for himself
3	Ehud (2)	Judges 3:15	Strong or Union	Moabites	Left handed Benjamite	<p>An unassuming left-handed man from the smallest tribe in Israel. Ehud teaches us the method for one-on-one evangelism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ehud had a "message from God" for the worldly fat man • Ehud needed to get up close and personal to deliver the message • Ehud used a two-edged dagger to stick the worldly fat man (Jeremiah 48:10 , Ephesians 6:12 , Hebrews 4:12) • The Word of God brings out the dirt on the inside • When someone is "stuck" , they are stuck for good
4	Shamgar	Judges 3:31	A stranger	Philistines	ox goad	Was probably not an Israelite by physical birth, but joined Gods people by choice. In a time when the enemy controlled their weapons, Shamgar used the tool he had to deliver God's people.
5	Deborah (3)	Judges 4:4	Bee	Canaanites	A weak man (Barak), a woman, and a nail	<p>Deborah is a role model for today's ladies. She used her God given abilities to serve Israel. She held a rare position of leadership in a male dominated culture. She was full of faith, courage and confidence in God's power and promises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deborah was faithful to God in spite of the weak male leadership around her (including her husband) • She was a prophetess and judged under the "palm tree of Deborah" • Deborah was the head, Barak was the feet. Together they accomplished the mission to deliver Israel • Jael did not side with her husband (who was an ally of Sisera), Jael sided with the God of Israel • Jael used her abilities, and the resources God had given her (a nail & hammer) to overcome the enemy • It took a lot of courage and determination for Jael to overcome Sisera. We need to have the same courage and determination to overcome our oppressors
6	Gideon (4)	Judges 6:14	One who cuts down	Midianites	Pitcher, lamp & trumpet	Initially, Gideon was a fearful humble man who did not trust in himself and was wore down from the years of oppression. He questioned if God really cared. He had no hope. However, he began trusting in God and God assured him that he was in the will of God and that God was with him. Gideon was faithful in the small tasks God gave him. As Gideon's faith grew, God gave him great victories. Unfortunately, Gideon became prideful and his son became an oppressor to Israel
7	Tola (5)	Judges 10:2	Scarlet	Abimelech	millstone	A faithful judge for 23 years. He delivered Israel after the destructive reign of Abimelech (Gideon's murderous son)

	Judge	Verse	Name means	Oppressor	Foolish or weak thing that God used	Lesson we can learn from this judge
8	Jair	Judges 10:3	Jehovah Enlightens	Abimelech		Also reigned 23 years and judged Israel after the destructive reign of Abimelech
9	Jephthah (6)	Judges 12:7	He doth open	Ammon	Jephthah	<p>Jephthah illustrates the high cost of ignorance. He was a rejected son of a harlot who ran with a rough group of men. Due to Jephthah's pride and ignorance of the law, he lost out on the best God had for him. Many of us know what the book says, but we are too prideful to repent and are willing to live with the consequences. In spite of his foolish vow, Jephthah earned a spot in the Hebrews 11 "Hall of Fame"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was an outcast who rose to leadership and was led by the Spirit • He was an unlikely Judge and deliverer chosen by God – he was the son of a harlot • He tried to "witness" to the enemy and get them to understand the truth. But they rejected him • Foolish vows are addressed in Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 - <i>Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin</i> • Leviticus 5 covers the law for escaping foolish vows and how to seek God's forgiveness. Unfortunately, Jephthah was unaware of Leviticus 5 or too prideful to repent.
10	Ibzan	Judges 12:9	Splendid or Active			A rich faithful and fruitful judge for 7 years. He had 30 sons, 30 daughters, and many wives. The Jewish Talmud claims this guy is Boaz from the book of Ruth
11	Elon	Judges 12:11	An oak or Strong			From the tribe of Zebulun, he judged Israel for 10 years
12	Abdon	Judges 12:13	Service			From the tribe of Ephraim, he judged Israel for 8 years. He had 40 sons, 30 nephews and they rode 70 ass colts. This signified he was a wealthy distinguished man
13	Samson (7)	Judges 15:20	Distinguished or Strong	Philistines	Jawbone of a donkey	<p>He was an unrepentant fornicator who was mighty in physical strength, but weak in resisting carnal appetites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He enjoyed playing games with temptations and getting too close to the line. • He put himself in vulnerable positions • He was often motivated by revenge, not things of the Lord • He was separated by a vow, but he associated with the enemy • He grew up in a Godly home, but forsook the counsel of his parents • In spite of this, he had faith and trust in God when he needed it most. • When he lost his physical sight, he finally gained his spiritual sight
14	Eli	1st Samuel 4:22	Jehovah is high			<p>Eli was a faithful priest who did well in training Samuel, but he neglected to train his own two sons.</p> <p>The sin in Eli's home affects the whole nation of Israel</p>
15	Samuel	1st Samuel 7:15	Offering of God			<p>Samuel was the last of the judges. He had a godly mother (Hannah) who committed him to the Lord before he was born.</p> <p>Samuel was also under the vow of the Nazarite. He was a faithful prophet, priest, and judge and was sensitive to the voice of God. He let none of God's words fall to the ground (1st Samuel 3:19). Samuel also failed to instruct his own two sons and it affected Israel. Because of the gross sin of his sons, Israel demanded they have a king instead of judges</p>

Highlighted judges are in the Hebrews chapter 11 "Hall of fame"

(#) judges with numbers are which cycle of apostasy they delivered Israel from. There were 7 apostacies in the book of Judges