

“JEPHTHAH”

Text: Judges 11:1-11; 12:1-7
Subject: How To Rebound From A Rough Beginning

Introduction

1. The book of Judges is a book of victory and defeat.
2. It records the history of Israel from the death of Joshua to Samuel.
3. It is a spiritual record of one continual cycle:
 - ◆ How Israel served God, then how Israel did evil.
 - ◆ How Israel was chastened by God, then how Israel cried out to God in repentance,
 - ◆ How Israel was given a judge to lead them, then how Israel was delivered by the hand of God.
4. Four seasons are seen in every cycle through Judges:
Disobedience.....Defeat.....Discipline.....Decay
5. The constant theme of Judges is:
“In those days there was no king in Israel; and every man did that which was right in his own eyes”
6. Yet, the constant theme of Judges is backsliding and the Grace of God in restoring what was lost.
7. It’s a book of weakness and failure, a book that tells how God gained ground over and over again.

(7 Apostasies Occur In Judges)

- ◆ In Judges 3:1-11, (Israel is conquered by Mesopotamia, yet delivered through Othniel).
- ◆ In Judges 3:12-31 (Israel is conquered by the Moabites and the Philistines, yet delivered through Ehud and Shamgar).
- ◆ In Judges 4:1-5:31 (Israel is conquered by Jabin, King of Canaan, yet delivered through Deborah and Barak).
- ◆ In Judges 6:1 – 8:32 (Israel is conquered by Midian, yet delivered through Gideon).
- ◆ In Judges 8:33-10:5 (Israel is in civil war, yet delivered through Abimelech, Tola and Jair)
- ◆ In Judges 10:6 – 12:15 (Israel is conquered by the Philistines and the Ammonites, yet delivered through Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon).
- ◆ In Judges 13-16 (Israel is conquered by the Philistines, yet delivered partially through Samson).

(Judges Ends In Confusion)

- ◆ Religious Apostasy (in the temple) chapters 17 & 18.
- ◆ Moral decline (in the home) chapter 19.
- ◆ Political Anarchy (in the state) chapters 20 & 21)

(And In The Midst Of It All – God Raises Up Jephthah Out Of The Ashes)

- ◆ He was the ninth of the thirteen judges.
- ◆ He is listed in Judges 11 to reveal to us an awesome truth: **(What is it?)**
- ◆ That no matter who you are, where you are from, what your heritage is, how you came to where you are and whatever your background may be...
- ◆ ...God has a plan that supersedes everything in your past that may have been painful, disappointing, sorrowful, hurtful, tearful and less than what you had expected.

(Follow An Amazing Turnaround)

I. Jephthah Is Illegitimate (V. 1)

“...And he was the son of a harlot”.

1. Gilead (Jephthah’s father) was married to a “strange woman”.
2. Josephus (the historian) tells us that Gilead’s wife was a Gentile.
3. So, Jephthah, was the son of a common heathen prostitute.
4. He was born as a child of shame, the fruit of idolatry and illegitimate.

5. He had a stigma from birth and was branded as an outcast.

(God Calls Jephthah In Verse 1) "...The Son Of A Harlot"

Question: Pastor, why is this in Scripture and how does it relate to me?

- #1. Not everyone enters this life with the same advantages.
- #2. Some are born with prestige while others are born with reproach.
- #3. Jephthah (in God's Providence) was born with a cloud over his head.
- #4. But there was no blame on Jephthah's part (because we are not responsible to whom we are born, when we are born, where we are born and why we are born).

Satan's #1 Lie: Is to blame you with guilt and responsibility that doesn't belong to you!

(His Lie...)

- ◆ ...Is to tell you that you'll never rise higher than the heritage delivered to you.
- ◆ ...Is to insinuate that the spiritual level of your life was pre-determined by the family you were born into.

(When The Truth Is:)

- ◆ ...No one can determine or inhibit the spiritual character of your life but you!
- ◆ ...And no one can hold you down when God wants to lift you up!

II. Jephthah Is Rejected (V. 2)

"...And they thrust out Jephthah and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou are the son of a strange woman".

1. Because Jephthah's father had other sons by his lawful wife, these other sons kicked Jephthah out of the house when they grew up.
2. Jephthah (for no fault of his own) was rejected, exiled and excommunicated.
 - ◆ He was dismissed by his own flesh and blood.
 - ◆ He was barred from the congregation of Israel.
 - ◆ He was told "You'll never inherit your father's estate".

Satan's Lie #2: Is, that, "adversity in your youth will cripple you for life and you will never rise above the sting of your past". **(When the truth is:)**

- ◆ God will use your affliction to advance His work inside of you (and),
- ◆ God will reverse the devils intention to destroy you (and increase you more and more into the likeness of Jesus).

III. Jephthah Is Isolated (V. 3)

"Then Jephthah fled from his brethren and dwelt in the land of Tob".

1. Jephthah becomes a leader of a band of desperados.
2. He is in preparation, boot camp and training, to become a leader to deliver Israel.
3. He's the son of a harlot, exiled by family members and told he will never amount to anything in father's house.
4. He ends up in the land of Tob, a place 15 miles East of Ramoth – Gilead.
5. The word "Tob" (where Jephthah fled to) is a Hebrew word that means 5 things:

- ◆ Good
- ◆ Pleasant
- ◆ Sweet
- ◆ Fair
- ◆ Beautiful

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Jephthah's lot in life will be what he makes of it:

- #1. He can sit down in Tob and gripe, murmur, complain and blame his parents, ("I'm just the product of a generational curse") **(Or)**
- #2. He can scale higher with God by remembering this: **My present field may be limited, but I am not limited by my field!**

Satan's Lie #3: Is your lot in life is determined by someone else other than yourself, and it's determined by what's been done to you. **(When the truth is:)**

- ◆ Jesus has done more for you and in you than life has done to you. (Repeat) **(and)**
- ◆ The facts of your life are never greater than the Christ in your life. (Repeat)

(Never Forget Tob)

- ◆ Tob (where Jephthah was) was beyond the boundary of Israel.
- ◆ Tob was a land where idolatry was universal. (Full of vice and sin)

(Yet Jephthah Was Kept By God)

- ◆ He was despised by all of those around him.
- ◆ He was the captain of an army band.
- ◆ He was nothing much to everyone back home,

(But While Stuck In The Land Of Tob)

- ◆ God was making Jephthah good, pleasant, sweet, fair and ready for battle.

IV. Jephthah Is Requested (Vs. 4-28)

(Vs. 5 & 6) "And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob; and they said unto Jephthah, come, and be our captain".

(What A Reversal Of Things)

- ◆ In time, the Amorites invaded Israel
- ◆ Israel was in trouble and in need of a leader

(And What Do The Elders Of Israel Do?)

- #1. They run to Tob and ask Jephthah to come back home and help them.
- #2. They approach the very one that they had expelled from themselves.
- #3. They make a bee-line to the one God has been preparing.

(Remember Lest You Become Discouraged)

- ◆ Jephthah has been in exile for some 18 years.
- ◆ Jephthah had been deprived of his rights for 18 years.
- ◆ And now he is asked to help the very ones who betrayed him and expelled him 18 years ago.

Satan's Lie #4: Is that, God has forgotten you, forgotten where you are, and man has control of your destiny.

(When The Truth Is:)

- #1. Even in Tob, Jephthah stayed in fellowship with God. (And so can you)
- #2. God will always vindicate His truth in your life.
- #3. God will always (in time) use what you've gained in the wilderness for His glory.
- #4. What you thought was tough, tearful, and turmoil (God will use for your glory to promote His work in a greater way).
- #5. What you believed to be wasted and hurtful seasons (God will reverse and justify in your sight).
- #6. If you remain loyal in the down times, God will exalt you in His time.
- #7. Your dents and detours are really blessings in disguise if you'll only remain true to God in the meantime.

V. Jephthah Is Anointed (V. 29)

"Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah".

Question: How could the Lord anoint Jephthah after all that he went through?

Answer: Because God has irreversible principles that govern His Kingdom:

- #1. Jephthah refused to take revenge on his family members that expelled him. **(Forgiveness)**

- #2. Jephthah refused to get sour and blame his location on what his mother was, a prostitute. **(Faith)**
- #3. Jephthah refused to go eat worms, die and quit because God was taking so long. **(Faithfulness)**
- #4. Jephthah refused to take matters into his own hands and vindicate himself. **(Focus upward)**
- #5. Jephthah refused to give in to:

Satan's Lie #5: Which is: The Lord cannot anoint you with power from on high unless the circumstances surrounding your life are perfect!

(When The Truth Is:)

- ◆ No devil or demon in hell can keep God from anointing you with power from on high.
- ◆ No man on earth can scheme or plot your downfall when Jesus is Lord of your heart.
- ◆ No man, woman, group, family member, or enemy can keep you from God's intention when you wait on God with faith.
- ◆ No flesh and blood mortal human being can stop God's will for your life (but you).

(In Other Words)

"If God be for you, who can be against you?"

VI. Jephthah Is Victorious (V. 32)

"So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them and the Lord delivered them into his hands". (v. 33) "...with a very great slaughter".

Question: How could Jephthah take 20 cities and in chapter 12, v. 6 slay 42,000 of the enemy?

Answer: Because of Judges 11:29 **"The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah"**

- ◆ Jephthah had cultivated loyalty to God.
- ◆ Jephthah had cultivated communion with God.
- ◆ Jephthah had cultivated forgiveness from God.
- ◆ Jephthah had cultivated a pure heart in a pagan culture.

Satan's Lie #6: The enemy of your soul can steal your victory in Jesus? (When the truth is:)

- ◆ "We are more than conquerors through Him that loves us".

VII. Jephthah Is Remembered (Hebrews 11:32-34)

"And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah...who out of weakness were made strong". (vs. 32 & 34)

(Has The Enemy Lied To You By Saying...

- ◆ "Your past mistakes have robbed you of future victories".
- ◆ "Your previous generation has cursed you with an unchangeable destiny".
- ◆ "Your ex-spouse has power to destroy your character".
- ◆ "Your limitations cannot be overcome by God's spirit".
- ◆ "Your former battle scars have ruined you for life".
- ◆ "Your pain in your youth will not be used by God for your good".
- ◆ "Your future is determined by what others say about you".
- ◆ "Your past and present wounds cannot be healed by God.

(If So, Believe The Report Of The Lord)

"I will restore unto you the years that the locust hath eaten". (Joel 2:25)

- #1. God has the plan to complete in your life!
- #2. God has the purpose for all you go through!
- #3. God has the power to anoint you for service!

AMEN!

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