



MESSAGE: “THE DIFFICULTIES & PRIDE OF A FATHER”. JUDGES 11:34-40

Samson was likely a younger contemporary of Jephthah. Egypt was extremely weak during this period around 1120 BC. Eli also became High Priest during this time frame [see 1 Samuel]. It was an especially difficult time in Israel. At the end of Chapter 10 we see a tribal confederation of the western tribes establish a fortification at the mouth of the Jabbok River on the east bank of the Jordan River. The threat from the east was the Ammonites and the Jabbok valley was their route in. The western tribes blocked their entry to the Jordan River valley. This also left the other Israelite tribes on the eastern side at the mercy of the Ammonites. The eastern tribes formed a confederation comprised of 2½ tribes known as Gilead. They evidently established a leader called “Roshe” who exercised powers comparable to a Prime Minister in modern times.



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Jephthah’s father was a leader in Gilead [his name was also Gilead]. He had lived a pretty loose life before settling down with a wife from one of the noble families. He had a son by a prostitute, who like his father was an able leader and military man, his father, evidently, placed a great deal of trust in his son. When his father died, Jephthah’s legitimate brothers, fearing his abilities went to the elder’s assembly and had Jephthah expelled.

Jephthah went far to the east of the Golan Heights and led raids against the Ammonite territory with other displaced and landless men.

When the Ammonites threatened to invade Gilead the elders sent for Jephthah to be their commanding general, but Jephthah held out for the position of Roshe. The battle would make or break Jephthah and due to his own insecurities, he made a vow that would have devastating consequences.



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34 When Jephthah **came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter**, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; **and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.**

35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, “**Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it.**”

36 So she said to him, “My father, **if you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth**, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon.”



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37 Then she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: **let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I.**”

38 So he said, “Go.” And he sent her away for two months; and **she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.**

39 And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and **he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel**

40 that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

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JUDGES 11:34-40



Jephthah was likely a member of the tribe of Manasseh. The name Gilead was a common name among them. The 2 ½ tribes that remained on the east side of the Jordan were essentially cut off from aid from western tribes when the tribe of Ephraim led a coalition that fortified the mouth of the Jabbok River on the East side of the Jordan. This was the route that the Ammonite raiders used to enter the Jordan valley and raid across the river. At the mercy of the Ammonites the Gilead tribes as the eastern coalition was called set up the concept of a “Roshe” a Head Leader to organize their defenses.

Ancient Ammonite “Watchtower” in Amman Jordan. The word “Mizpah” in the Bible means “Watchtower”. A fortified citadel used for forward operations.

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JUDGES 11:34-40



Judges 10:17-18

17 Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah.

18 And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, “Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

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JUDGES 11:34-40



Above, the 2 most likely locations of Ramoth Gilead. Ar-Ramtha and Tell-el-Husn. Ramoth Gilead was one of the cities of Refuge established by Joshua. It is likely at this city Jephthah set up his “Mizpah”. Ramoth Gilead was the most important city in the north of Gilead.

Jephthah’s father was a leader in Gilead, likely one of the elders. His position had probably been earned through skillful military tactics and diplomacy. He had lived a wild life before his marriage and fathered Jephthah by a prostitute. Later his father married into a noble family and had sons with his wife. Jephthah who had been his father’s right hand man, found himself on the outside when his father died. His half-brothers and their mother’s family had the ruling elders assembly exile Jephthah. Jephthah was likely above the age of forty at this time. He had no land or income.

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JUDGES 11:34-40

Mark 9:21-24

21 So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood.

22 “And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

23 Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”



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Enameled ware was originally invented in the mid-1800's. Enameling is an ancient technique used with precious metals. It was not used on iron products until the late 1700's because it was difficult to get the surface of iron clean enough for the enamel glaze to stick.

Enameled ware is common today...tubs, sinks, stove interiors, exterior signs, and chemical production vats, cook and table ware. The advantage was that porcelain enameled steel was light, resistant to rusting and sticking & impervious to heat.

A layer of glass covers the steel. The "frit" is applied to the surface of the steel after it is thoroughly cleaned. It is run through a kiln bringing the temperature to around 1500 degrees for 30 minutes. A second color coat is immediately applied to the super heated surface and it is placed back in the kiln for another 30 minutes. A very low carbon [soft] steel is used and a cobalt enriched frit [blue color] is used 1st to improve adhesion.

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Hebrews 11:32-34

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and **Jephthah**, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **out of weakness were made strong**, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

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While enameled ware is strong and has many benefits. It has several weaknesses. Because the steel is so soft it will bend easily causing the porcelain surface to break away exposing the interior metal which will rust unless properly cared for. Another weakness is that the thin edges resist adhesion of the "frit" so are often covered with a metal band to protect the enamel from breaking free.

However, enameled ware when used properly is better than many other products for cooking, chemical mixing and protection from rust.



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Hebrews 11:6

But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*



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As people, we deal with our own insecurities and if we are not circumspect about them we may end up doing harm to ourselves and those around us.

We cannot escape where we came from or the circumstances we have lived through but we can learn to have faith in God in the face of such things. In Christ, we do not need to allow our own insecurities dominance in our decision making.