

## Sample Study

## Judges 11-21

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**Read - Ju. 10:17-12:15; other references as given.**

1. When the sons of Israel were confronted by the Lord, they repented of their wickedness, put away their foreign gods, and served the Lord (Ju. 10:16).
  - a. What did the Lord do when Israel repented (Ju. 10:17)?
  - b. Since Israel put away the foreign gods among them and served the Lord, why did God summon the Ammonites and allow the Israelites to face more trouble (Ju. 11:24, 32, 33)?
  - c. No doubt some of the Israelites were surprised when their repentance was followed by more trouble. Has there ever been a time in your life when you made an important spiritual decision and anticipated God's blessing but only experienced more trouble? How could you use this passage (Ju. 10:16, 17) to comfort someone who has experienced tribulation immediately after he repented?
2. Even though Israel had already mustered a volunteer army at Mizpah to fight against the Ammonites (Ju. 10:18), they lacked a strong military leader. Give a brief description of the military leader they chose who eventually became Israel's eighth judge (Ju. 11:1-3; 12:7; Heb. 11:32-35).
3. The son of a harlot (v. 1), Jephthah was driven from his home by his own family. Instead of allowing the prejudices and injustices of others to defeat him, Jephthah appropriated the grace of God and allowed his new surroundings to become God's school of learning. He became a valiant warrior and a godly man (cf. Ju. 11:11, 34, 35). Name at least one negative situation you experienced during your childhood that God eventually used to develop godly character in your life?
4. Jephthah had earned such a reputation as a mighty warrior and leader that the leaders of Gilead sought his military leadership (vv. 5-7).
  - a. What did the Gileadites promise Jephthah if he would become their military leader (vv. 8, 9)?
  - b. Jephthah seemed to be suspicious of the elders of Gilead. What did Jephthah do to solemnize his agreement with the leaders of Gilead (vv. 10, 11)?

5. Even though Jephthah was a valiant warrior (Ju. 11:1), he showed great wisdom as he attempted to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the Ammonites (vv. 12-27).
  - a. How did Jephthah try to resolve the conflict with the Ammonites (vv. 12, 14)?
  
  - b. At first glance the king of Ammon appears to be a man of diplomatic wisdom (v. 13). What did he demand from Israel (v. 13)?
  
6. The Scriptures never promise Christians freedom from conflict in this world (cf. Job 5:7; 14:1; Ecc. 2:23). However, God has promised His guidance, wisdom, and peace during the struggles of life. Take a moment to seriously examine your life. Are you like Jephthah, a man who sincerely wanted peace and did all he could to resolve conflict or like the king of Ammon, a man who wanted conflict even though he made a token offer of peace?
  
7. The Ammonites wanted the Israelites to return some land (i.e., the land of Gilead) they believed Israel had wrongfully taken when Moses led the people from Egypt to the edge of the Jordan River (v. 13). Jephthah's second messenger gave the king of Ammon three reasons why the land in question should remain in Israel's possession. What are they (Ju. 11:14-27)?
  
8. Jephthah communicated with the king of Ammon through two groups of messengers (vv. 12, 14 ff.). Their communication with the king of Ammon reveals two important principles that can help all believers resolve interpersonal conflict. What are these two principles (vv. 12, 14-26)?
  
9. Jephthah was unable to resolve the conflict with the king of Ammon with diplomatic negotiations. What three things did Jephthah's messengers tell the king of Ammon (v. 27)?

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1.
  - a. The Lord motivated the Ammonites to attack Israel.
  - b. The Lord summoned the Ammonites so that He could use Israel to be His instrument of judgment against the Ammonites (Ju. 11:32, 32). The Ammonites were idolaters who worshipped the pagan god Chemosh (Ju. 11:24).
  - c. Answers will vary. This passage is an excellent example of the wisdom and sovereignty of God. As soon as the Israelites repented, the Lord sought to use them for His glory and to show them the majesty of His power. It is very possible that the Israelites thought that the Lord was summoning the Ammonites to chasten them for turning away from the Lord when He had already begun to use them in His service. In the same way God will use a believer as soon as he truly repents of his sin.
2. Jephthah was the son of a man named Gilead who was from the tribe of Gilead (Ju. 11:1). His mother was a harlot, which probably indicates that she was a Canaanite, since prostitution was almost unknown among the ancient Israelites at this time. He experienced rejection from his half brothers, who drove him from his family and home (v. 2). He settled in the land of Tob (Ju. 11:1) where he became a valiant warrior. He eventually became Israel's eighth judge (Ju. 11:1; 12:7). His inclusion in the 'hall of faith' in Hebrews 11 is evidence of his godly character and sincere faith in God.
3. Answers will vary.
4.
  - a. They promised him the leadership of the tribe of Gilead if he led them in a successful military campaign over the Ammonites.
  - b. He called on God to witness the commitment he and the elders of the tribe of Gilead had made.
5.
  - a. He sent two groups of messengers who met with the king of Ammon and attempted to resolve the problem. The first group was sent to simply determine the nature of the offense (v. 12) and the second group was sent to explain Israel's perspective (v. 14 ff.).
  - b. The king of Ammon wanted Israel to return a portion of land to the Ammonites. The king of Ammon believed this land was originally taken by Moses and the children of Israel during their journey to Canaan. The disputed land lay between the Arnon and Jabbok rivers in the land of Gilead (v. 13).
6. Answers will vary.
7.
  1. The land in question never belonged to the Ammonites. The land of Gilead was taken from the Amorites, not the Ammonites (v. 15).
  2. Sihon, king of the Amorites, had originally attacked Moses and the Israelites when they attempted to enter the land. Israel defended herself and defeated the Amorites, giving them legitimate claim to the land (vv. 16-22).
  3. The land had remained in the possession of the Israelites for three hundred years without anyone questioning their occupation of the land (v. 26).
8.
  1. At a time of conflict you should ask the other party to explain the grievance as completely as possible (v. 12). As he explains the problem, you should listen carefully and offer no immediate justification. It is important to take some time to digest the allegation(s).
  2. In a calm and rational way you should then explain your understanding of the situation, giving logical support for your perspective.
9.
  1. Israel had not sinned against the Ammonites (i.e., their accusation was unjustified).
  2. Ammon was wrong to instigate war with the Israelites.
  3. The Lord, who is the Judge, would ultimately judge the situation in righteousness. It is likely that Jephthah is saying that the Lord would fight for the Israelites and against the Ammonites if they decided to attack the Israelites. (Note: This is the only time in the book of Judges where the Lord is called by this name, i.e., Judge.)