

A circular illustration in the background shows a man with a beard and a woman. The man is wearing a grey tunic and a yellow sash, and is gesturing with his hand. The woman is wearing a pink dress and a purple headscarf, and is looking towards the man. The scene is set in a room with wooden walls and a doorway in the background.

Jephthah A Foolish Father

Booklet from
Judges 11:1-11,30-32-34-39

By Felicia Mollohan

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant warrior. And Gilead was the father of Jephthah. Gilead's wife 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." So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob; and worthless fellows gathered themselves about Jephthah, and they went out with him.

It came about after a while that the sons of Ammon fought against Israel. When the sons of Ammon fought against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob; and they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our chief that we may fight against the sons of Ammon." Then Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me and drive me from my father's house? So

why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?" The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "For this reason we have now returned to you, that you may go with us and fight with the sons of Ammon and become head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me back to fight against the sons of Ammon and the Lord gives them up to me, will I become your head?" The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The Lord is witness between us; surely we will do as you have said." Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and chief over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah.

2 Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." So Jephthah crossed over to the sons of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord gave them into his hand. He struck them with a very great slaughter from Aroer to the entrance of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim. So the sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel. When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now she was his one *and* only child; besides her he had no son or daughter. When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you are among those who trouble me; for I have given my word to the Lord, and I cannot take *it* back." So she said to him, "My father, you have given your word to the Lord; do to me as you have said, since the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the sons of Ammon." She said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go to the mountains and weep, I and my companions." Then he said, "Go." So he sent her away for two months; and she left with her companions, and wept on the mountains. At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did to her according to the vow which he had made.