

An illustration in a circular frame showing a man with a beard and a woman in a pink dress. The man is pointing towards the woman, who has her hands raised in a gesture of surprise or distress. The background shows a simple room with a doorway.

Jephthah A Foolish Father

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

By Felicia Mollohan

Now Jeph-thah the
Gil-e-a-dite was a val-iant
war-rrior. And Gil-e-ad was
the fath-er of
Jeph-thah. Gil-e-ad's wife
bore him sons; and when
his wife's sons grew up,
they drove Jeph-thah
out and said to him, "You
shall not have an
in-her-i-tance in our
fath-er's house, for you
are the son of a-noth-er
wo-man."

² So Jeph-thah fled from his bro-thers and lived in the land of Tob; and worth-less fell-ows gath-ered them-selves a-bout Jeph-thah, and they went out with him. It came a-bout af-ter a while that the sons of Am-mon fought a-gainst Is-ra-el.

3
When the sons of Am-mon fought a-gainst Is-ra-el, the eld-ers of Gil-e-ad went to get Jeph-thah from the land of Tob; and they said to Jeph-thah, "Come and be our chief that we may fight a-gainst the sons of Am-mon."

⁴ Then Jeph-thah said to the elders of Gil-e-ad, "Why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?" The elders of Gil-e-ad said to Jeph-thah, "For this reason we have now returned to you, that you may go with us and fight with the sons of Am-mon and become head over all the inhabitants of Gil-e-ad."

So Jeph-thah said to the elders of Gil-e-ad, "If you take me back to fight against the sons of Am-mon and the Lord gives them up to me, will I become your head?" They said to Jeph-thah, "Surely we will do as you have said." Then Jeph-thah went and the people made him head and chief over them; and Jeph-thah spoke all his words before the Lord.⁵

⁶Jeph-thah made a vow to the Lord and said, "If You will in-deed give the sons of Am-mon in-to my hand, then it shall be that what-ev-er comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I re-turn in peace from the sons of Am-mon,

it shall be the Lord's, and ⁷I will off-er it up as a burnt off-er-ing." So Jeph-thah crossed o-ver to the sons of Am-mon to fight a-against them; and the Lord gave them in-to his hand.

⁸When Jeph-thah came to
his house at Miz-pah,
be-hold, his daugh-ter was
com-ing out to meet him
with tam-bour-ines and
with danc-ing. Now she was
his one *and* on-ly child; be-
sides her he had no son or
daugh-ter.

When he saw her, he tore⁹
his clothes and said, "A-las,
my daugh-ter! You have
brought me ver-y low, and
you are a-mong those
who trou-ble me; for I
have giv-en my word to
the Lord, and I can-not
take *it* back."

¹⁰ So she said to him, "My fath-er, you have giv-en your word to the Lord; do to me as you have said, since the Lord has a-venge-d you of your en-e-mies, the sons of Am-mon." She said to her fath-er, "Let this thing be done for me; let me a-lone two months, that I may go to the moun-tains and weep, I and my com-pan-ions."

Then he said, "Go." So he¹¹ sent her a-way for two months; and she left with her com-pan-ions, and wept on the moun-tains.

At the end of two months she re-turned to her fath-er, who did to her ac-cord-ing to the vow which he had made.

An illustration within an oval frame showing a man and a woman. The man, on the right, has a large, bushy beard and is wearing a grey tunic with a red sash and a yellow sash. He is looking towards the woman. The woman, on the left, is wearing a pink dress and has her hands raised in a gesture of surprise or distress. The background is a simple room with a doorway.

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