

Ammonite Oppression (c. 1124 – c. 1106 BC)

Judges 10:6–16

The Cycle of Idolatry Continues

6 And again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yahweh. They served the Baals, the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites and Philistines; they abandoned Yahweh and did not serve him.
 7 And the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of *the* Philistines and the Ammonites.
 8 They crushed and oppressed the Israelites in that year; for eighteen years they *crushed* all the Israelites who *were* beyond the Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, which *is* in Gilead.
 9 The Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim; and Israel was very distressed.

Israel Cries Out to God for Help

10 Then the Israelites cried out to Yahweh, saying, “We have sinned against you; we have abandoned our God and served the Baals.”
 11 And Yahweh said to the Israelites, “*Did I* not *deliver you* from *the* Egyptians, the Amorites, from the Ammonites, and from the Philistines?
 12 And when *the* Sidonians, *the* Amalekites, and *the* Maonites oppressed you, you cried out to me, and I delivered you from their hand.
 13 Yet you have abandoned me and served other gods. Therefore I will no longer deliver you.
 14 Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your trouble.”
 15 And the Israelites said to Yahweh, “We have sinned; do to us accordingly as you see fit; only please deliver us this day.”
 16 So they removed the foreign gods from their midst and served Yahweh; and he could no longer bear the misery of Israel.

Judgeship of Jephthah (c. 1106 – c. 1100 BC)

Judges 10:17–12:7

The Winds of War

10:17 And the Ammonites were summoned, and they camped in Gilead. And the Israelites gathered and camped at Mizpah.
 18 The people, the ones commanding Gilead, said to each other, “Who *is* the man that will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He will be as head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

The People Turn to Jephthah in Desperation

11:1 Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior; he was the son of a prostitute, and Gilead was his father.
 2 Gilead’s wife also bore for him sons; and the sons of *his* wife grew up and drove Jephthah away, and they said to him, “You will not inherit the house of our father because you *are* the son of another woman.”
 3 So Jephthah fled from the presence of his brothers, and he lived in the land of Tob. And outlaws gathered around Jephthah and went with him.
 4 After a time the Ammonites made war with Israel.
 5 When the Ammonites made war with Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob.
 6 And they said to Jephthah, “Come and be our commander, so that we may make war against the Ammonites.”
 7 Jephthah said to the elders, “Did you not shun me and drive me out from the house of my father? Why do you come to me now when you have trouble?”
 8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “That being so, we have now returned to you, that you may go with us to fight against the Ammonites and become for us as head of all the inhabitants of Gilead.”
 9 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “If you bring me back to fight against the Ammonites, and Yahweh gives them over to me, will I be your head?”
 10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “Yahweh will be a witness between us; we will act according to your word.”
 11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before Yahweh at Mizpah.

Jephthah’s History Lesson

12 And Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, “What *is between* you and me that you have come to me to make war against my land?”
 13 And the king of the Ammonites said to Jephthah’s messengers, “Because Israel took my land from *the* Arnon up to the Jabbok and the Jordan when they came up from Egypt; so then, restore it peacefully.”
 14 Once again Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites,
 15 and he said to him, “Thus says Jephthah, ‘Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites,
 16 because when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and went to Kadesh.
 17 Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, “Please let us cross through your land,” but the king of Edom would not listen. And they also sent *messengers* to the king of Moab, but he was not willing. So Israel stayed in Kadesh.”

18 Then they traveled through the wilderness, went around the land of Edom and Moab, and came to the east side of the land of Moab, and they encamped beyond *the* Arnon; and they did not go into the territory of Moab because *the* Arnon was the border of Moab.

19 Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, ‘Please let us cross through your land to our country.’

20 But Sihon did not trust Israel to cross through his territory, so Sihon gathered all his people and then encamped at Jahaz; and he made war with Israel.

21 And Yahweh, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them; and Israel occupied all the land of the Amorites inhabiting that land.

22 They occupied all the territory of the Amorites from *the* Arnon up to the Jabbok, and from the wilderness up to the Jordan.

23 So then Yahweh, the God of Israel, has driven out the Amorites from before his people Israel, and you want to possess it?

24 Do you not possess what Chemosh your god gave you to possess? Whoever Yahweh our God has driven out before us, we will possess it.

25 So then, *are* you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel, or did he ever make war against them?

26 When Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages, and in all the towns that *are* along the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* at that time?

27 I have not sinned against you; but you *are* the one who is doing wrong by making war against me. Let Yahweh judge today between the Israelites and the Ammonites.”

Jephthah’s Rash Vow

28 But the king of the Ammonites did not listen to the message that Jephthah sent to him.

29 And the Spirit of Yahweh came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh. He passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed through *to* the Ammonites.

30 And Jephthah made a vow to Yahweh, and he said, “If indeed you will give the Ammonites into my hand,

31 whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return safely from the Ammonites will be Yahweh’s, and I will offer it *as* a burnt offering.”

32 And Jephthah crossed *over* to the Ammonites to make war against them; and Yahweh gave them into his hand.

33 And he defeated them *with* a very great blow, from Aroer as far as Minnith, twenty towns, up to Abel Keramim. And the Ammonites were subdued before the Israelites.

34 Jephthah came to Mizpah, to his house, and behold his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and dancing. She *was* his only child; he did not have a son or daughter except her.

35 And the moment he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Ah! My daughter, you have caused me to bow down, and you have become my trouble. I made an oath to Yahweh, and I cannot take *it* back.”

36 She said to him, “My father, you made an oath to Yahweh. Do to me according to what has gone out from your mouth, since Yahweh gave vengeance to you against your enemies, the Ammonites.”

37 And she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: grant me two months so that I may go wander on the mountains and lament over my virginity, I and my companions.

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

39 At the end of the two months she returned to her father, and he did to her *according to* his vow; and she did not sleep with a man. And it became an annual custom in Israel

40 for the daughters of Israel to go and lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for forty days of the year.

Ephraim Confronts Jephthah (As They Had Gideon)

12:1 The men of Ephraim were called to arms, and they crossed *over* to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, “Why did you cross *over* and make war against the Ammonites, and why did you not call us to go with you? We will burn down your house over you with fire.”

2 And Jephthah said to them, “I and my people were engaged in great conflict with the Ammonites; I called you, but you did not deliver me from their hand.

3 I saw that you would not deliver *us*; I risked my own life, and I crossed *over* to the Ammonites, and Yahweh gave them into my hand. Why have you come up to me this day to fight against me?”

4 Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead, and he made war with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim because they said, “You *are* fugitives of Ephraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh.”

5 Then Gilead captured the fords of the Jordan from Ephraim, and whenever a fugitive of Ephraim said, “Let me cross *over*,” the men of Gilead said to him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” *When* he said, “No,”

6 they said to him, “Please say Shibboleth,” and *if* he said, “Sibboleth”—because he could not pronounce it correctly—they grabbed him and executed him at the fords of Jordan. At that time forty-two thousand from Ephraim fell.

7 Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and he was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

Philistine Oppression / The Birth of Samson (c. 1124 – c. 1104 BC)**Judges 13****Samson's Birth Foretold**

- 1 And again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and Yahweh gave them into the hand of *the* Philistines forty years.
- 2 There was a certain man from Zorah, from the tribe of the Danites, and his name *was* Manoah; his wife *was* infertile and did not bear children.
- 3 And an angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman, and he said to her, "Behold, you *are* infertile and have not borne *children*, but you will conceive and bear a son.
- 4 So then, be careful and do not drink wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean,
- 5 because you *will* conceive and bear a son. No razor will touch his head, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth. And it is he who will begin to deliver Israel from *the* hand of *the* Philistines."
- 6 And the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A man of God came to me, and his appearance *was* like the appearance of an angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him from where he *came*, and he did not tell me his name.
- 7 And he said to me, 'Look, you *will* conceive and bear a son, so then, do not drink wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean, for the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death.'
- 8 Then Manoah prayed to Yahweh and said, "Excuse me, my Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent again come to us and teach us what we should do concerning the boy who will be born."
- 9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and an angel of God came again to the woman; she *was* sitting in the field, but Manoah her husband was not with her.
- 10 The woman quickly ran and told her husband, and she said to him, "Look! The man who came to me the *other* day appeared to me."
- 11 So Manoah got up and went after his wife, and he came to the man and said to him, "*Are* you the man that spoke to the woman?" And he said, "*I am.*"
- 12 And Manoah said to him, "Now when your words come true, what will be the boy's manner of life and work?"
- 13 And the angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, "Let the woman be attentive to all that I said.
- 14 She should not eat of anything that comes from the vine, or drink wine or strong drink, or eat anything unclean; she should keep all that I commanded."
- 15 And Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, "Please stay, and let us prepare a young goat for you."
- 16 The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, "If you keep me, I will not eat your food, but if you prepare a burnt offering for Yahweh, you can offer it (for Manoah did not know that he *was* an angel of Yahweh)."
- 17 And Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, "What *is* your name so that when your words come *true* we may honor you?"
- 18 But the angel of Yahweh said to him, "Why do you ask my name? It *is too* wonderful."
- 19 And Manoah took the young goat and the grain offering, and he offered *it* to Yahweh on the rock, to the one who performs miracles. And Manoah and his wife *were* watching.
- 20 And when the flame went up toward the heaven from the altar, the angel of Yahweh went up in the flame of the altar to heaven while Manoah and his wife *were* watching. And they fell on their faces to the ground.
- 21 The angel of Yahweh did not appear again to Manoah and his wife, and then Manoah knew that he *was* a messenger of Yahweh.
- 22 And Manoah said to his wife, "We will certainly die because we have seen God."
- 23 But his wife said to him, "If Yahweh wanted to kill us he would not have taken from our hand the burnt offering and the grain offering, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us things such as these."

The Birth of Samson

24a The woman bore a son, and she called him Samson;

Samson Grows Up

24b the boy grew big, and Yahweh blessed him.

25 And the Spirit of Yahweh began to stir him in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

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