

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

Judges 10:6–16

### The Cycle of Idolatry Continues

6 The Israelites again did evil in the LORD's sight. They worshiped the Baals and the Ashtars, as well as the gods of Syria, Sidon, Moab, the Ammonites, and the Philistines. They abandoned the LORD and did not worship him.

7 The LORD was furious with Israel and turned them over to the Philistines and Ammonites.

8 They ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites that eighteenth year—that is, all the Israelites living east of the Jordan in Amorite country in Gilead.

9 The Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight with Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. Israel suffered greatly.

### Israel Cries Out to God for Help

10 The Israelites cried out for help to the LORD: "We have sinned against you. We abandoned our God and worshiped the Baals."

11 The LORD said to the Israelites, "Did I not deliver you from Egypt, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines,

12 the Sidonians, Amalek, and Midian when they oppressed you? You cried out for help to me, and I delivered you from their power.

13 But since you abandoned me and worshiped other gods, I will not deliver you again.

14 Go and cry for help to the gods you have chosen! Let them deliver you from trouble!"

15 But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. You do to us as you see fit, but deliver us today!"

16 They threw away the foreign gods they owned and worshiped the LORD. Finally the LORD grew tired of seeing Israel suffer so much.

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

Judges 10:17–12:7

### The Winds of War

10:17 The Ammonites assembled and camped in Gilead; the Israelites gathered together and camped in Mizpah.

18 The leaders of Gilead said to one another, "Who is willing to lead the charge against the Ammonites? He will become the leader of all who live in Gilead!"

### The People Turn to Jephthah in Desperation

11:1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a brave warrior. His mother was a prostitute, but Gilead was his father.

2 Gilead's wife also gave him sons. When his wife's sons grew up, they made Jephthah leave and said to him, "You are not going to inherit any of our father's wealth, because you are another woman's son."

3 So Jephthah left his half-brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Lawless men joined Jephthah's gang and traveled with him.

4 It was some time after this when the Ammonites fought with Israel.

5 When the Ammonites attacked, the leaders of Gilead asked Jephthah to come back from the land of Tob.

6 They said, "Come, be our commander, so we can fight with the Ammonites."

7 Jephthah said to the leaders of Gilead, "But you hated me and made me leave my father's house. Why do you come to me now, when you are in trouble?"

8 The leaders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That may be true, but now we pledge to you our loyalty. Come with us and fight with the Ammonites. Then you will become the leader of all who live in Gilead."

9 Jephthah said to the leaders of Gilead, "All right! If you take me back to fight with the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me, I will be your leader."

10 The leaders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD will judge any grievance you have against us, if we do not do as you say."

11 So Jephthah went with the leaders of Gilead. The people made him their leader and commander. Jephthah repeated the terms of the agreement before the LORD in Mizpah.

### Jephthah's History Lesson

12 Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king, saying, "Why have you come against me to attack my land?"

13 The Ammonite king said to Jephthah's messengers, "Because Israel stole my land when they came up from Egypt—from the Arnon River in the south to the Jabbok River in the north, and as far west as the Jordan. Now return it peaceably!"

14 Jephthah sent messengers back to the Ammonite king

15 and said to him, "This is what Jephthah says, 'Israel did not steal the land of Moab and the land of the Ammonites.

16 When they left Egypt, Israel traveled through the desert as far as the Red Sea and then came to Kadesh.

17 Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "Please allow us to pass through your land." But the king of Edom rejected the request. Israel sent the same request to the king of Moab, but he was unwilling to cooperate. So Israel stayed at Kadesh.

18 Then Israel went through the desert and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab. They traveled east of the land of Moab and camped on the other side of the Arnon River; they did not go through Moabite territory (the Arnon was Moab's border).

19 Israel sent messengers to King Sihon, the Amorite king who ruled in Heshbon, and said to him, "Please allow us to pass through

your land to our land.”

20 But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. He assembled his whole army, camped in Jahaz, and fought with Israel.

21 The LORD God of Israel handed Sihon and his whole army over to Israel and they defeated them. Israel took all the land of the Amorites who lived in that land.

22 They took all the Amorite territory from the Arnon River on the south to the Jabbok River on the north, from the desert in the east to the Jordan in the west.

23 Since the LORD God of Israel has driven out the Amorites before his people Israel, do you think you can just take it from them?

24 You have the right to take what Chemosh your god gives you, but we will take the land of all whom the LORD our God has driven out before us.

25 Are you really better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he dare to quarrel with Israel? Did he dare to fight with them?

26 Israel has been living in Heshbon and its nearby towns, in Aroer and its nearby towns, and in all the cities along the Arnon for three hundred years! Why did you not reclaim them during that time? [*Israel in Transjordan Territory from 1406 to 1106*]

27 I have not done you wrong, but you are doing wrong by attacking me. May the LORD, the Judge, judge this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites!”

### **Jephthah’s Rash Vow**

28 But the Ammonite king disregarded the message sent by Jephthah.

29 The LORD’s spirit empowered Jephthah. He passed through Gilead and Manasseh and went to Mizpah in Gilead. From there he approached the Ammonites.

30 Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, saying, “If you really do hand the Ammonites over to me,

31 then whoever is the first to come through the doors of my house to meet me when I return safely from fighting the Ammonites will belong to the LORD and I will offer him up as a burnt sacrifice.”

32 Jephthah approached the Ammonites to fight with them, and the LORD handed them over to him.

33 He defeated them from Aroer all the way to Minnith—twenty cities in all, even as far as Abel Keramim! He wiped them out! The Israelites humiliated the Ammonites.

34 When Jephthah came home to Mizpah, there was his daughter hurrying out to meet him, dancing to the rhythm of tambourines. She was his only child; except for her he had no son or daughter.

35 When he saw her, he ripped his clothes and said, “Oh no! My daughter! You have completely ruined me! You have brought me disaster! I made an oath to the LORD, and I cannot break it.”

36 She said to him, “My father, since you made an oath to the LORD, do to me as you promised. After all, the LORD vindicated you before your enemies, the Ammonites.”

37 She then said to her father, “Please grant me this one wish. For two months allow me to walk through the hills with my friends and mourn my virginity.”

38 He said, “You may go.” He permitted her to leave for two months. She went with her friends and mourned her virginity as she walked through the hills.

39 After two months she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. She died a virgin. Her tragic death gave rise to a custom in Israel.

40 Every year Israelite women commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for four days.

### **Ephraim Confronts Jephthah (As They Had Gideon)**

12:1 The Ephraimites assembled and crossed over to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, “Why did you go and fight with the Ammonites without asking us to go with you? We will burn your house down right over you!”

2 Jephthah said to them, “My people and I were entangled in controversy with the Ammonites. I asked for your help, but you did not deliver me from their power.

3 When I saw that you were not going to help, I risked my life and advanced against the Ammonites, and the LORD handed them over to me. Why have you come up to fight with me today?”

4 Jephthah assembled all the men of Gilead and they fought with Ephraim. The men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because the Ephraimites insulted them, saying, “You Gileadites are refugees in Ephraim, living within Ephraim’s and Manasseh’s territory.”

5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan River opposite Ephraim. Whenever an Ephraimite fugitive said, “Let me cross over,” the men of Gilead asked him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” If he said, “No,”

6 then they said to him, “Say ‘Shibboleth!’” If he said, “Sibboleth” (and could not pronounce the word correctly), they grabbed him and executed him right there at the fords of the Jordan. On that day forty-two thousand Ephraimites fell dead.

7 Jephthah led Israel for six years; then he died and was buried in his city in Gilead.

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

- 1 The Israelites again did evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD handed them over to the Philistines for forty years.
- 2 There was a man named Manoah from Zorah, from the Danite tribe. His wife was infertile and childless.
- 3 The LORD's angelic messenger appeared to the woman and said to her, "You are infertile and childless, but you will conceive and have a son.
- 4 Now be careful! Do not drink wine or beer, and do not eat any food that will make you ritually unclean.
- 5 Look, you will conceive and have a son. You must never cut his hair, for the child will be dedicated to God from birth. He will begin to deliver Israel from the power of the Philistines."
- 6 The woman went and said to her husband, "A man sent from God came to me! He looked like God's angelic messenger—he was very awesome. I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name.
- 7 He said to me, 'Look, you will conceive and have a son. So now, do not drink wine or beer and do not eat any food that will make you ritually unclean. For the child will be dedicated to God from birth till the day he dies.'"
- 8 Manoah prayed to the LORD, "Please, Lord, allow the man sent from God to visit us again, so he can teach us how we should raise the child who will be born."
- 9 God answered Manoah's prayer. God's angelic messenger visited the woman again while she was sitting in the field. But her husband Manoah was not with her.
- 10 The woman ran at once and told her husband, "Come quickly, the man who visited me the other day has appeared to me!"
- 11 So Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he met the man, he said to him, "Are you the man who spoke to my wife?" He said, "Yes."
- 12 Manoah said, "Now, when your announcement comes true, how should the child be raised and what should he do?"
- 13 The LORD's messenger told Manoah, "Your wife should pay attention to everything I told her.
- 14 She should not drink anything that the grapevine produces. She must not drink wine or beer, and she must not eat any food that will make her ritually unclean. She should obey everything I commanded her to do."
- 15 Manoah said to the LORD's messenger, "Please stay here awhile, so we can prepare a young goat for you to eat."
- 16 The LORD's messenger said to Manoah, "If I stay, I will not eat your food. But if you want to make a burnt sacrifice to the LORD, you should offer it." (He said this because Manoah did not know that he was the LORD's messenger.)
- 17 Manoah said to the LORD's messenger, "Tell us your name, so we can honor you when your announcement comes true."
- 18 The LORD's messenger said to him, "You should not ask me my name, because you cannot comprehend it."
- 19 Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and offered them on a rock to the LORD. The LORD's messenger did an amazing thing as Manoah and his wife watched.
- 20 As the flame went up from the altar toward the sky, the LORD's messenger went up in it while Manoah and his wife watched. They fell facedown to the ground.
- 21 The LORD's messenger did not appear again to Manoah and his wife. After all this happened Manoah realized that the visitor had been the LORD's messenger.
- 22 Manoah said to his wife, "We will certainly die, because we have seen a supernatural being!"
- 23 But his wife said to him, "If the LORD wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted the burnt offering and the grain offering from us. He would not have shown us all these things, or have spoken to us like this just now."

**The Birth of Samson**

24a Manoah's wife gave birth to a son and named him Samson.

**Samson Grows Up**

- 24b The child grew and the LORD empowered him.
- 25 The LORD's spirit began to control him in Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

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