

April 7 Answers

- 1) The judgeship of Jephthah and the birth of Samson (Jdg 10:6–13:25). Israel once again left God for the Baals, and God sold them into the hands of the **Philistines** and the **Ammonites**. They cried out to God for help, but He refused to listen to them: “Go and cry out to the **gods** whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress” (Jdg 10:14). God’s rejection was designed to **test** their sincerity (cf. Matt 15:21–28). Would they genuinely **repent** and turn away from their idols? Sure enough, they did! The people “put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer” (Jdg 10:16 NASB). How great is God’s **mercy**! It was no coincidence that God used Jephthah to bring peace to the Transjordan. The man they had **cast** aside was the one who became their savior (cp. Jdg 10:11–14 to 11:7). Jephthah was not perfect; in fact, he is a sobering example of someone who made a **rash** vow (cf. Deut 23:21–23). His daughter, his one and **only** child, ended her life in either permanent service to the **Tabernacle** as a **living** sacrifice (cf. Num 3:12–13; Exod 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22) or in **death** as a burnt offering. While we aren’t certain of the girl’s fate, we *are* certain that Jephthah’s mistake stands as a **warning** to us against making foolish vows (cf. Ecc 5:4–6). It also shows us that people have a tendency to make **long-term** promises in order to realize **short-term** benefits. We need to watch out for this tendency in our own lives.