

Last week we looked at the FIVE Judges mentioned in 10:1-5 and 12:8-15 and saw a **GOD WHO SEES THE BIG PICTURE!!**

We discovered that:

1. **GOD NEVER FORGETS HIS PROMISES.**
2. **GOD WORKS IN AND THROUGH FAMILIES.**
3. **GOD TIMING IS PERFECT.**
4. **GOD KNOWS WHERE YOU LIVE.**
5. **GOD CHOOSES EACH PERSON PURPOSEFULLY.**

### **THE BIBLE ALWAYS POINTS US TO JESUS.**

Today I want to look at Jdg10:6-12:7 and look at the Judge known as Jephthah.

*Judges 10:6-12:7 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, v7 he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, v8 who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites. v9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin and the house of Ephraim; and Israel was in great distress. v10 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals." v11 The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, v12 the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? v13 But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. v14 Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!" v15 But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." v16 Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And he could bear Israel's misery no longer. v17 When the Ammonites were called to arms and camped in Gilead, the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. v18 The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever will launch the attack against the Ammonites will be the head of all those living in Gilead."*

*v11:1 Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. v2 Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." v3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a group of adventurers gathered around him and followed him. v4 Some time later, when the Ammonites made war on Israel, v5 the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. v6 "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites." v7 Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?" v8 The elders of Gilead said to him, "Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be our head over all who live in Gilead." v9 Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me back to fight the*

Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me--will I really be your head?" v10 The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say." v11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah. v12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king with the question: "What do you have against us that you have attacked our country?" v13 The king of the Ammonites answered Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came up out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peaceably." v14 Jephthah sent back messengers to the Ammonite king, v15 saying: "This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. v16 But when they came up out of Egypt, Israel went through the desert to the Red Sea and on to Kadesh. v17 Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Give us permission to go through your country,' but the king of Edom would not listen. They sent also to the king of Moab, and he refused. So Israel stayed at Kadesh. v18 "Next they traveled through the desert, skirted the lands of Edom and Moab, passed along the eastern side of the country of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was its border. v19 "Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and said to him, 'Let us pass through your country to our own place.' v20 Sihon, however, did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. He mustered all his men and encamped at Jahaz and fought with Israel. v21 "Then the LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his men into Israel's hands, and they defeated them. Israel took over all the land of the Amorites who lived in that country, v22 capturing all of it from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the desert to the Jordan. v23 "Now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before his people Israel, what right have you to take it over? v24 Will you not take what your god Chemosh gives you? Likewise, whatever the LORD our God has given us, we will possess. v25 Are you better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel or fight with them? v26 For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn't you retake them during that time? v27 I have not wronged you, but you are doing me wrong by waging war against me. Let the LORD, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites." v28 The king of Ammon, however, paid no attention to the message Jephthah sent him. v29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. v30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD : "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, v31 whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." v32 Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands. v33 He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon. v34 When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. v35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, "Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break." v36 "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. v37 But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry." v38 "You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and the girls went into the hills and wept because she

would never marry. v39 After the two months, she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite custom v40 that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

v12:1 The men of Ephraim called out their forces, crossed over to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, "Why did you go to fight the Ammonites without calling us to go with you? We're going to burn down your house over your head." v2 Jephthah answered, "I and my people were engaged in a great struggle with the Ammonites, and although I called, you didn't save me out of their hands. v3 When I saw that you wouldn't help, I took my life in my hands and crossed over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave me the victory over them. Now why have you come up today to fight me?" v4 Jephthah then called together the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. The Gileadites struck them down because the Ephraimites had said, "You Gileadites are renegades from Ephraim and Manasseh." v5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No," v6 they said, "All right, say 'Shibboleth.'" He said, "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time. v7 Jephthah led Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in a town in Gilead.

## Introduction

The story of Jephthah is all about WORDS.

Israel's WORDS to God

God's WORDS to Israel

Jephthah's family's WORDS to him and Jephthah's WORDS to his family

Jephthah's WORDS to Israel's Enemy and Israel's Enemies word to Jephthah

Jephthah's WORDS to GOD, and the consequences of those words.

As we consider the topic of the message in the light of our overall theme, "WHEN A NATION TURNS THEIR BACK ON GOD", we will discover just how significant the message of this sermon is to our accountability to the LORD.

STORY of Politicians word. Sitting in a Foreign Land as a South African soldier listening to a news broadcast of the then Foreign Minister, Pik Botha say, "I categorically deny that there are any South African soldiers in that country!"

## WORDS MATTER!!

**As we consider the topic of WORDS MATTER notice:**

### **1. GOD IS TIRED OF INSINCERE WORDS.**

*Judges 10:6-12:7 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, v7 he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, v8 who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the*

Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites. v9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin and the house of Ephraim; and Israel was in great distress. **v10 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals."** **v11 The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, v12 the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? v13 But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. v14 Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!"**

Israel was doing just what we do to GOD ALL THE TIME.

## **WE ONLY TURN TO HIM WHEN WE ARE IN TROUBLE!!!**

When it's dry and have a drought. – NATIONAL PRAYER MEETING

When there is danger of violence. – CALL TO PRAYER

When there are elections. – TIME TO PRAY.

WHY DO WE PRAY BEFORE A LONG CAR JOURNEY AND NOT TO SPAR!

– Most accidents happen within 10km of house.

**As we consider the topic of WORDS MATTER notice:**

### **2. GOD'S MERCY EXTENDS BEYOND OUR INSINCERE WORDS.**

*v15 But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." v16 Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. **And he could bear Israel's misery no longer.** v17 When the Ammonites were called to arms and camped in Gilead, the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. v18 The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever will launch the attack against the Ammonites will be the head of all those living in Gilead."*

NOTICE:

## **GOD HAD A PLAN LONG BEFORE WE ASK!!!**

**As we consider the topic of WORDS MATTER notice:**

### **3. EVERY WORD WE UTTER HAS CONSEQUENCES.**

*v11:1 Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. v2 Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." v3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a group of adventurers gathered around him and followed him.*

NOTICE the consequences of the words of Jephthah FAMILY:

**1. HE RAN AWAY FROM HIS FAMILY.** – In the past we said, "STICKS AND STONES CAN BREAK YOUR BONES, BUT WORDS CAN NEVER HARM YOU"!! But **THAT IS A LIE!!!**

## **ALL WORDS HAVE CONSEQUENCES!!!**

*James 3:1-12 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. v2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. v3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. v4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. v5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. v6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. v7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, v8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. v9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. v10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. v11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? v12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

## **IF YOU CANNOT SAY SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT SOMEONE, DON'T SAY ANYTHING**

**2. HE JOINED THE ROUGH CROWD.** – The Phrase, “a group of adventurers” is just a euphemism for “the other side of the railway line”.

**3. HE STOPPED TRUSTING IN PEOPLE.** –

*v4 Some time later, when the Ammonites made war on Israel, v5 the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. v6 "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites." v7 Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? **Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?**" v8 The elders of Gilead said to him, "Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be our head over all who live in Gilead." v9 Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me--**will I really be your head?**" v10 The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say." v11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. **And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.***

**Once trust is broken, it is almost impossible to rebuild.**

**As we consider the topic of WORDS MATTER notice:**

**4. PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE A LIE IF IT IS REPEATED OFTEN ENOUGH.**

*v12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king with the question: "What do you have against us that you have attacked our country?" v13 The king of the Ammonites answered Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came up out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peaceably." v14 Jephthah sent back messengers to the Ammonite king, v15 saying:*

*"This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. v16 But when they came up out of Egypt, Israel went through the desert to the Red Sea and on to Kadesh.*

The Ammonites were attacking Israel because they had been fed a lie that ISRAEL HAD STOLEN THEIR LAND.

(From "BE CAREFUL LITTLE MOUTH WHAT YOU SAY")

*Jephthah answers the Ammonites with several convincing arguments that prove they are wrong in attacking the people of Israel.*

- **Verses 14-22** – *The Israelites did not take the land from the Ammonites. They took it from the Ammorites who originally took it from the Moabites. The Ammonites had no stake in the land at all.*
- **Verses 23-24** – *The Lord had given the land to Israel. God was given all the glory and credit for giving them the land. Jephthah tells them to take what their god has given them and be satisfied.*
- **Verses 25-26** – *Israel had lived in the land for hundreds of years. The Ammonites had not tried to claim the land during the three hundred years Israel had possessed, why were they attempting to claim it now?*
- **Verse 27** – *The Ammonites are reminded that by attacking Israel, they are in fact attacking God! He will judge who is right and He will give the victory to whom He chooses!*

## **IF YOU LIE TO YOURSELF OFTEN ENOUGH, YOU WILL EVENTUALLY BELIEVE YOUR OWN LIE!!!**

**As we consider the topic of WORDS MATTER notice:**

### **5. GOD TAKES OUR PROMISES SERIOUSLY.**

*v30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD : "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, v31 whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." v32 Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands. v33 He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon. v34 When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. v35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, "Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break." v36 "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. v37 But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry." v38 "You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and the girls went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. v39 After the two months, she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite custom v40 that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite*

The consequences of Jephthah promise are profound.

1. HE LOSES HIS ABILITY TO HAVE ANCESTORS.
2. HIS DAUGHTER FORGOES HER RIGHT TO HAVE A FAMILY

## **GOD TAKES OUR PROMISES SERIOUSLY!!!**

*Ecclesiastes 5:4-7 When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. v5 It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. v6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? v7 Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God.*

As we consider the topic of WORDS MATTER notice:

### **6. THE WAY YOU SAY SOMETHING IS JUST AS SIGNIFICANT.**

*12:5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No," v6 they said, "All right, say 'Shibboleth.'" He said, "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time. v7 Jephthah led Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in a town in Gilead.*

The way the Ephraimites said a particular word got them killed.

**Sometimes HOW we say something is just as important as WHAT we say!!!**

### **CONCLUSION**

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

**BECAUSE OF JOHN 1:1**

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**

**Our MESSAGE are our WORDS  
and  
Our WORDS are our MESSAGE.**