

Saturday, April 30, 2022

From Darren:

Judges 11:1-12:15 - A devastating vow

Ps 101:1-8 - "I will search for faithful people to be my companions"

Pro 14:13-14 - Laughter conceals, Jesus heals

John 1:1-28 - "In the beginning..."

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Judges 11:1-12:15

11 1 Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute.

2 Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute."

3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Soon he had a band of worthless rebels following him.

4 At about this time, the Ammonites began their war against Israel.

5 When the Ammonites attacked, the elders of Gilead sent for Jephthah in the land of Tob.

6 The elders said, "Come and be our commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!"

7 But Jephthah said to them, "Aren't you the ones who hated me and drove me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now when you're in trouble?"

8 "Because we need you," the elders replied. "If you lead us in battle against the Ammonites, we will make you ruler over all the people of Gilead."

9 Jephthah said to the elders, "Let me get this straight. If I come with you and if the LORD gives me victory over the Ammonites, will you really make me ruler over all the people?"

10 "The LORD is our witness," the elders replied. "We promise to do whatever you say."

11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their ruler and commander of the army. At Mizpah, in the presence of the LORD, Jephthah repeated what he had said to the elders.

12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon, asking, "Why have you come out to fight against my land?"

13 The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messengers, "When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they stole my land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and all the way to the Jordan. Now then, give back the land peaceably."

14 Jephthah sent this message back to the Ammonite king:

15 "This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not steal any land from Moab or Ammon.

16 When the people of Israel arrived at Kadesh on their journey from Egypt after crossing the Red Sea,

17 they sent messengers to the king of Edom asking for permission to pass through his land. But their request was denied. Then they asked the king of Moab for similar permission, but he wouldn't let them pass through either. So the people of Israel stayed in Kadesh.

18 “Finally, they went around Edom and Moab through the wilderness. They traveled along Moab’s eastern border and camped on the other side of the Arnon River. But they never once crossed the Arnon River into Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.

19 “Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled from Heshbon, asking for permission to cross through his land to get to their destination.

20 But King Sihon didn’t trust Israel to pass through his land. Instead, he mobilized his army at Jahaz and attacked them.

21 But the LORD, the God of Israel, gave his people victory over King Sihon. So Israel took control of all the land of the Amorites, who lived in that region,

22 from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River, and from the eastern wilderness to the Jordan.

23 “So you see, it was the LORD, the God of Israel, who took away the land from the Amorites and gave it to Israel. Why, then, should we give it back to you?

24 You keep whatever your god Chemosh gives you, and we will keep whatever the LORD our God gives us.

25 Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he try to make a case against Israel for disputed land? Did he go to war against them?

26 “Israel has been living here for 300 years, inhabiting Heshbon and its surrounding settlements, all the way to Aroer and its settlements, and in all the towns along the Arnon River. Why have you made no effort to recover it before now?

27 Therefore, I have not sinned against you. Rather, you have wronged me by attacking me. Let the LORD, who is judge, decide today which of us is right—Israel or Ammon.”

28 But the king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah’s message.

29 At that time the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the Ammonites.

30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD . He said, “If you give me victory over the Ammonites,

31 I will give to the LORD whatever comes out of my house to meet me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

32 So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the LORD gave him victory.

33 He crushed the Ammonites, devastating about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near Minnith and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

34 When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing for joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters.

35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anguish. “Oh, my daughter!” he cried out. “You have completely destroyed me! You’ve brought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the LORD, and I cannot take it back.”

36 And she said, “Father, if you have made a vow to the LORD, you must do to me what you have vowed, for the LORD has given you a great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites.

37 But first let me do this one thing: Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with my friends for two months, because I will die a virgin.”

38 “You may go,” Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never have children.

39 When she returned home, her father kept the vow he had made, and she died a virgin. So it has become a custom in Israel

40 for young Israelite women to go away for four days each year to lament the fate of Jephthah’s daughter.

12 1 Then the people of Ephraim mobilized an army and crossed over the Jordan River to Zaphon. They sent this message to Jephthah: "Why didn't you call for us to help you fight against the Ammonites? We are going to burn down your house with you in it!"

2 Jephthah replied, "I summoned you at the beginning of the dispute, but you refused to come! You failed to help us in our struggle against Ammon.

3 So when I realized you weren't coming, I risked my life and went to battle without you, and the LORD gave me victory over the Ammonites. So why have you now come to fight me?"

4 The people of Ephraim responded, "You men of Gilead are nothing more than fugitives from Ephraim and Manasseh." So Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and attacked the men of Ephraim and defeated them.

5 Jephthah captured the shallow crossings of the Jordan River, and whenever a fugitive from Ephraim tried to go back across, the men of Gilead would challenge him. "Are you a member of the tribe of Ephraim?" they would ask. If the man said, "No, I'm not,"

6 they would tell him to say "Shibboleth." If he was from Ephraim, he would say "Sibboleth," because people from Ephraim cannot pronounce the word correctly. Then they would take him and kill him at the shallow crossings of the Jordan. In all, 42,000 Ephraimites were killed at that time.

7 Jephthah judged Israel for six years. When he died, he was buried in one of the towns of Gilead.

8 After Jephthah died, Ibzan from Bethlehem judged Israel.

9 He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He sent his daughters to marry men outside his clan, and he brought in thirty young women from outside his clan to marry his sons. Ibzan judged Israel for seven years.

10 When he died, he was buried at Bethlehem.

11 After Ibzan died, Elon from the tribe of Zebulun judged Israel for ten years.

12 When he died, he was buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.

13 After Elon died, Abdon son of Hillel, from Pirathon, judged Israel.

14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. He judged Israel for eight years.

15 When he died, he was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

Psalm 101:1-8

101 1 I will sing of your love and justice, LORD . I will praise you with songs.

2 I will be careful to live a blameless life— when will you come to help me? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home.

3 I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar. I hate all who deal crookedly; I will have nothing to do with them.

4 I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil.

5 I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors. I will not endure conceit and pride.

6 I will search for faithful people to be my companions. Only those who are above reproach will be allowed to serve me.

7 I will not allow deceivers to serve in my house, and liars will not stay in my presence.

8 My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the LORD from their grip.

Proverbs 14:13-14

14 13 Laughter can conceal a heavy heart, but when the laughter ends, the grief remains.
14 Backsliders get what they deserve; good people receive their reward.

John 1:1-28

1 1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He existed in the beginning with God.
3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.
4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.
5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.
6 God sent a man, John the Baptist,
7 to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony.
8 John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light.
9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.
11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.
12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.
13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.
14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.
15 John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"
16 From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.
17 For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.
18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.
19 This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?"
20 He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."
21 "Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?" "No," he replied. "Are you the Prophet we are expecting?" "No."
22 "Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"
23 John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the LORD's coming!'"
24 Then the Pharisees who had been sent
25 asked him, "If you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?"
26 John told them, "I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize.
27 Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal."

28 This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.