

# JEPHTHAH'S OBEDIENT FAITH

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Hebrews chapter 11 gives many great examples of faith, beginning with righteous Abel and continuing with Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. These great examples of faith then proceed to the judges and beyond. Hebrews 11:32-34 says, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Jephthah is one of the judges of Israel who is specifically named with the "great cloud of witnesses" of Hebrews chapter eleven to encourage us in running our spiritual race today (see Heb 12:1).

## **Strength**

Jephthah was truly one who "out of weakness was made strong." Though he was cast out of his father's house because he was born of a harlot (Judg 11:1-3), God made Jephthah the deliverer of Israel from the Ammonites. From a castaway, Jephthah became captain over Gilead (Judg 11:4-11) and judge of Israel (Judg 12:7). Before his battle with the Ammonites, Jephthah demonstrated his faith in God when he "uttered all his words before Jehovah in Mizpeh" (Judg 11:11). Seeking God's blessings and help before embarking on his endeavor shows that Jephthah knew who was really in control of all things, and who would really be giving Israel the victory over Ammon (Heb 11:6). Jephthah displayed a good knowledge of God's word in his refutation of the Ammonites' false accusation that Israel had dispossessed them (Judg 11:12-27). He also showed his belief that God was the one who had given Israel their land (Judg 11:21-24). Because of this belief, Jephthah refused to give any of Israel's God-given inheritance to the Ammonites. Jephthah was willing to face the wrath and violence of the powerful Ammonites in order to obey God and keep the land that He had given to His people. This was a *living* faith (see Jas 2:14-26). Jephthah showed no fear whatsoever in facing the Ammonites, utterly believing that God would righteously judge on Israel's behalf, which is exactly what happened as Jephthah totally routed Ammon (Judg 11:27-33).

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(continued)

## **Faithfulness**

The vow that Jephthah made showed his faith in God's ability to give him the victory

over Ammon, and also his reverence for and thanksgiving to God in desiring to give him the very best that he had in his house, which happened to be his daughter (Judg 11:30-31,34-40). In fulfilling his vow, Jephthah demonstrated utter faithfulness to his word, like few others ever do (Judg 11:30-31,34-40).

## **Endurance**

Jephthah endured the undeserved persecution and rejection from his own brethren (Judg 11:1-3). Jephthah had not committed adultery with a harlot, his father Gilead had. But Jephthah was the one who was cast out and had to flee for his safety. Jephthah had to endure the company of "vain men" while in exile in Tob (Judg 11:3; see also David in 1 Sam 22:1-2; 30:22; Psa 57:4; 142:4). Jephthah also endured the great threat presented by the Ammonites (Judg 11:4-33), and the jealousy of his countrymen the Ephraimites who came and fought him without any cause (Judg 12:1-6).

## **An example for us**

Jephthah's display of faith, faithfulness, courage, and endurance is a great example for Christians today. Speaking of Jephthah and the other examples of faith, obedience and endurance given in Hebrews chapter 11, Hebrews 12:1-4 says, "*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*" We have the race set before us of becoming perfect (complete) like Christ (1 Cor 9:24-27; Php 3:11-15; 2 Tim 4:7-8). We are striving to resist and overcome all sin (Eph 6:16; Jas 3:2; 1 John 2:1; 5:4). In running this race, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, including Jephthah. We need to take these witnesses as good examples to encourage to lay aside every weight and sin and run our race with the endurance and faith that we see in Jephthah and the others.