

Judges 11:1-11

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 October 2022

[0 : 00] We are rapidly closing in on the final stages of the description of the judges in the book of Judges itself. We'll be introduced to Jephthah tonight.

And there's a few little minor judges of which we're just told that they come, they judge for a number of years and they die. And then we get into the account of Samson. Samson will be the last judge that we are introduced to before we kind of really get into this great depiction of the misery and the tyranny of that day and really how horrible things have gotten.

But tonight we're in Judges chapter 11. We'll be in verses 1 through 11. Let's open up with a word of prayer. We'll pray. Lord, we're so thankful to have the opportunity of gathering together.

Lord, we're thankful for these midweek services, for the chance we have to getting to your word together, for the chance of fellowship. Lord, I pray that it will be a renewing to our spirit.

Lord, that it would continue to draw us closer and closer to you. We thank you for those that are here this evening. We thank you for those who are in the back working with the children and youth. Lord, we pray for them.

[1 : 14] Pray that Christ would be exalted. Lord, that your word would be declared. Lord, we pray that you'd speak to us this evening. Pray that you would open up your word to us as we study it or as we seek to grow in it.

Lord, we pray that all things would bring you glory and honor. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. If I had to put a theme over the book of Judges, and I've done that over the years, it's man's desperate need for a kink.

You understand, as we go into the book of Judges, we start out pretty good. I mean, they're in the promised land. They're where God called them to be.

They're finally beginning to settle down, but there's this minor little issue in that they don't finish what God tells them to do. They begin to compromise. A man compromises and does not fully push out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

And we're told that there is one group which they could not push out, and then we're told with the remainder that they just did not push them out. And we find out that because of that compromise, they begin to concede and take on the practices and the habits of the people that are around them.

[2 : 34] See, God has a purpose and a reasoning for telling them to push them out. They had been counted for destruction, and they decided to use them for preservation. And that compromise led to concession, which began to lead to the collapse of the nation.

And believe it or not, I didn't intend to alliterate all three of those. It just came to my mind that way. Which they began just to really fall down and crumble.

Which each judge, things get better for a time, but when they go bad again, it gets worse. So we're not only in this circular motion of sin, rebellion, crying out to God, raising up of a judge, deliverance, and then right back to sin, rebellion, crying out, and suffering, and all this, we're actually going further and further and further down.

Which each judge is worse than the judge which preceded him or her. The model judge is the first judge, probably the most unlikely of judges, one that we don't want, is Samson.

He's the last one. Now, the irony of this is Samson is recorded in Hebrews chapter 11, the heroes of the faith. Which means that God can redeem even the worst of mankind, right?

[3 : 52] And we see this, but stay tuned for Sunday morning, if the Lord allows us to tarry, because we'll see that at the end of Hebrews 11, there's something they needed, and something they were waiting on.

But anyway, you said, I thought we were in Matthew. We are, but it ties together. So they keep going, and it's downward and downward and downward spiral, and things are going from bad to worse.

And we know it not only with the character of the judge that is raised up, even the condition of the people, but really the people themselves, how they choose their judges.

And we see it in particular in the passage we have before us as we'll read it. But all throughout the book of Judges, we see man's desperate need for a king. When we get through describing and looking at the judges themselves, and we finally end the book with those last few chapters that shows us really the condition of the nation of Israel, at the end of this 400-year period, there's this repeated phrase, in those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

In those days there was no king in Israel, and each man did what was right in his own eyes. Man needs a king. He needs someone to rule over him. He needs someone to lead him.

[5 : 11] He needs someone to deliver him. The same word for judge is redeemer or deliverer.

Ultimately, the book of Judges is not just about what happened in a 400-year period in history in the past to a people in the Middle East known as Israel.

It is not necessarily just about that. It is about mankind, even at his best, needs a redeemer and a deliverer. But he doesn't need one that will live for some time.

He needs an eternal redeemer, an eternal deliverer, an eternal judge. Because as we've seen, there can be periods of peace and prosperity as long as the judge is alive, but as soon as the judge dies, he goes back down.

Man can't deliver himself. And this is kind of where we're at in Judges 11, verses 1 through 11.

It says, So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead,

[7 : 20] If you take me back to fight against the sons of Ammon, and the Lord gives them up to me, will I become your head? The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, The Lord is witness between us.

Surely we will do as you have said. Verse 11, Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and chief over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah.

Judges 11, verses 1 through 11. Now, we know the rest of the story, right? So to say, as Paul Harvey would say, if we were to continue reading on, and we will, if the Lord allows us to on Sunday night, just to continue to make our way through this chapter.

And we know that Jephthah calls an army about him. He ends up being one that the Lord uses to defeat the inhabitants or the raiders of Ammon. But we also know that Jephthah makes this rash vow.

And he says, the first thing that comes out of my house, I will sacrifice to you, O God, if you allow me to win this battle. And we know the story. We're not here as a spoiler alert, but we know that when he gets there, his daughter comes out of the house and meets him first.

[8 : 22] And we'll look at this, the sad reality of that as we continue going on. But this evening, we're just actually going to look at here the appointment or the calling of Jephthah. And I want you to see man's attempt at self-deliverance.

Man's attempt at self-deliverance. Because while man desperately needs a king, whether or not we admit that or we acknowledge that, because a lot of people would like to say, well, I am my own ruler.

I am the captain of my own ship, right? I am my own leader. I am my own king. I am my own raider. Jesus makes it very clear. You are the slave of one or two. You're either the slave of Satan or you're the slave of Christ.

There is no middle ground. And no man or woman is ultimately the captain of his own ship or the leader of his own party or the king of his own universe.

None. Nor will they ever attain that status. God has created man to rule, yes. To reign, absolutely. But we forfeited that.

[9 : 27] That's why we think that we can do it. We forfeited that. We traded that to the enemy of our souls. This is why when Christ is tempted in the wilderness there and Satan is there, Satan shows him all the kingdoms of the earth.

Remember that? And he shows him everything. He says, bow down and worship me and I will give these to you because all of these have been given over to me. Now, who gave that to Satan? Jesus didn't argue the fact with him.

He didn't say they don't belong to you. This is my father's world. He didn't say that. He didn't argue with him. He just said, I'm not going to worship you because he knew the reality that the kingdoms

of this earth were created to be ruled by man and man forfeited that and gave it, gave the keys to the kingdoms of this world to Satan.

And therefore, at this present time, he is the ruler of these things. But we also know that Jesus will use the world as his footstool. And when you rest your feet upon it, that means you rule over it. We understand that.

So Christ attains that through suffering and death and resurrection. But yet, while man was created to do that, man forfeited that right. Therefore, man cannot be his own king, but man still desperately needs a king.

[10:35] Stay with me because we see this. He needs one to rule over him. And something or someone will actually rule over him. But the sad reality is that the majority of people believe they have the right to choose.

They have the right to pick and they attempt self-deliverance. The psalmist cries out that man cannot pay the price of redemption for his own soul, let alone the price to redeem his brothers. And since man cannot afford to redeem himself, how can he ever, ever believe he could redeem anyone else? But God has so created this desire and this need in man, that man thinks he can self-deliver or appoint that which is going to rule over him.

All throughout the book of Judges, the people have suffered and they have struggled under the suppression of the consequences for their own sins. We are reading in the 11th chapter, which must be combined with the events of the 10th chapter.

Now, that shouldn't have to be said, but quite often in scripture we need to be reminded of that because in our own mind we're reading the 11th chapter and we keep everything kind of boxed in in the 11th chapter.

[11:50] But these events are tied to what has transpired in the 10th chapter. And if you remember in the 10th chapter, the sons of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and forsook the Lord their God and began to worship the people and the gods of Baal and the people of Ammon and worship all the gods of the people who inhabited them.

And then the people of Ammon would come in and they cried out. Remember this, about halfway through the 10th chapter, they cried out and said, God, deliver us. And remember what God said? God said, I'm not going to deliver you. Why don't you crawl out to those gods you've been worshiping and let them deliver you?

And he left them there. And it says, and their hearts were broken because God gave them over to their own desires.

Remember, that's the scariest portions of scripture. Three times in the book of Romans, it says, God gave them over, God gave them over, God gave them over. They wanted those idols to be their gods and God says, okay, you need a God to deliver you.

I'm going to let you have the God you choose. Why don't you call out to them? So God gave them over and it broke the people. And he finally got to the place of brokenness. It says, so they repented and they cast all the gods away from them and they repented and they cried out.

[12:57] And then there's this merciful thing where it says there in verse 16 of the 10th chapter, so they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord and he could bear the misery of Israel no longer.

There's a word in scripture, and I know I'm getting kind of preachy tonight, but stay with me. There's a word in scripture, loving kindness. For your mercies are new every morning and your loving kindnesses never cease.

Lamentations 3. Over and over again, we read of the loving kindness of God. The Hebrew word for loving kindness is hesed, H-E-S-E-D, or sometimes with two S's, hesed.

The reality is, is there is no translation of hesed into the English language. My computer is now trained in my office. It no longer gives me the red squiggly line under loving kindness because I've typed it so many times.

I remember when I was first typing outlines, every time I put loving kindness, it said, you spelt it wrong. You have to have a space there, but scripture doesn't put a space there. And so I keep it that way. But the best way we can translate it into English is loving kindness or mercies.

[14:09] And hesed is used over and over again. Sometimes it's translated one way or another. But the word hesed literally means all that is for our good, God will not withhold from us. And his compassion towards us is unceasing and undaunting.

So even in their misery, when they repent, God's loving kindness reaches out to them. And he could bear it no longer, it says. And then we see where it says, so the sons of Ammon were called. Still in the 10th chapter, the 17th verse. Then the sons of Ammon were summoned and they camped at Galid. And this is kind of where we left it last time we were together. Sometimes to deal with our enemy, God calls them into our own front yard.

Because sometimes when we want God just to get rid of them, sometimes he tells us we have to fight them. Rather than avoid it, God commissioned and called them to them, right?

So the sons of Ammon came. God could bear those miseries no longer. And they were crying out, God delivers from the sons of Ammon. So God called the sons of Ammon and brought them to Galid. And there's this question at the end of the 10th chapter.

[15:23] And then the elders and the leaders of Galid said, and this is, I'm going to just be honest with you, for about two weeks, it's been resonating through my mind. Who is the man that will go before us and begin to fight?

And that's where we left it. That's the sad reality. Who is the man that will go before us and begin to fight? Who said that? The elders and the leaders of Galid. Not the women, not the children, but the elders and the leaders of Galid.

So when the men of a nation can't decide who is going to fight for them, then we get in trouble, right? When no man was ready to stand up, they said, who's going to go?

Who's going to go? Who's going to go? They cried out. They asked God to deliver them. God brought the enemy before them. He put them in their own front yard and they're sitting there scratching their head going, who is the man? Now that's where we left it and that gets us into the 11th chapter because in the 11th chapter, now we see them.

They've posed the question and they ask one another that question. Pay attention to this. They said to one another, who is the man?

[16:26] Do you see it? In verse 18, then the people, the leaders of Galid said to one another, pay attention to this. I don't know why, but the Lord has just been really good and gracious and kind to me in my studies here lately and I'm so thankful for it.

What does it say? They said to one another, who is the man? Notice who they didn't say it to. They never asked the Lord their God, who is the man?

They said to one another. And now we go to the 11th chapter and since they've asked one another a question, they decide that they can come up with the answer on their own. And man's attempt at self-deliverance starts with the despised individual.

The despised individual is Jephthah, and I promise I'll be quick. I don't have time on me, so I need to have, Billy Graham on his pulpit had green, yellow, and red lights.

You ever seen Billy Graham's crusades on Tennessee, on TV, Billy Graham crusades? I actually stood behind one of the pulpits that he used. It's in the, at the cove in Asheville, North Carolina that he used.

[17:40] And there, I remember standing behind it. Nobody else could see it. It was kind of like behind the little lip there. There's a green light, a yellow light, and a red light. And whoever was in the back, as long as he had time, there's a green light was on.

And when it got like five minutes or 10 minutes, then the yellow light would come on. And then when it was time to stop, the red light would come on. Have you ever watched him preach? And all of a sudden, it seems like he wraps it up quick.

It's because the yellow light came on. So he wraps it up quick. He was very, but he was having crusades. And you know, there was, it was on time schedule, TV time schedule, stuff like that.

I've always been thankful I never had one of those lights. But anyway, Carrie said she was going to put one up for me one time. But we start with man's attempt self-deliverance with a despised individual.

We were introduced to Jephthah. And we're told that Jephthah is a descendant of Galit. Now the Galitites are the ones that are looking for someone who would be the man, right? So Jephthah is a descendant of Galit. But the problem is, is that Jephthah is a descendant of Galit through a harlot.

[18:39] And Jephthah has some half brothers, right? So Galit has a wife and has sons with his wife. And then the sons grow up and they say, Jephthah, you don't have anything to do with us.

No part of our inheritance. We're going to push you out. Sounds a lot like Genesis. Remember that, right? When you had Hagar and Ishmael and Isaac and all this stuff. And then we move on a little

bit into the book of Deuteronomy.

It says that the son of a harlot could not have any land, did not need to possess the land. So they kind of pushed him out. So Jephthah is pushed out and he has to go away. He's despised.

His brothers hate him. They don't want anything to do with him. Now pay attention because it tells us twice in the chapter, in the 11th chapter, where he lives. He lives in Tob. Tob doesn't make much sense to us. But if we go on a little bit further, we'll find that in the days of David, the sons of Ammon are again, are fighting and they're fighting against David.

And he's happened to fight them and they're fighting against the people of Israel. And the sons of Ammon call a larger army to them. So they get some of their partners, if you will.

[19 : 40] They get some people who are in league with them. And one of the places that they call that is in league with the sons of Ammon is from the city of Tob. Okay?

So Jephthah moved to an area that was an ally of the sons of Ammon. We don't necessarily know where his mother's from, but you just don't go hang out there if you're a descendant of Israel and you know the sons of Ammon are enemies here.

So anyway, so he goes over there and he's going in and out. Now the good thing is about Jephthah, even though nobody likes him, nobody wants anything to do with him, he's a pretty good warrior.

Hey, he's a pretty good fighter and he can go out and he's winning these battles.

He's making these raids. And this is often the case. It says that worthless fellows gathered around him. Now this is not like David's mighty men in which David raised them up, right?

This is literally, as the text tells us, worthless fellows that gathered around him. So there's our despised individual. Nobody over here wants anything to do with him because they correctly count him as someone who, God says, does not have an inheritance among them because of the descendants of this or how it came about.

[20 : 48] We're not here to judge that. We're just here talking about what scripture says in the book of Deuteronomy that he was not to have an inheritance in the land and therefore he was put out of the land and the rightful heirs of the nation of Israel, again, because in the Old Testament in particular, and I don't let this fact bother you, but let this fact just stay with you.

God was concerned about the preservation of the purity of his people. Okay? This is why people were counted as, reckoned as destruction, to destruction.

Okay? We're going to meet that Sunday morning where we have the Sadducees talking about a man being married to a woman to have no child so the man's brother marries her and then all, it goes down, down, down, that leave right law where if he dies childless then the brother should come.

It's about the preservation of people. Just, you need to know there's really no record in the Old Testament, not really, there is no record in the Old Testament of anyone actually doing that and by the time Christ came that custom was kind of cast aside, not necessarily forsaken but just not utilized because there were so many Jews by that time they didn't have to do it.

So, in the Old Testament here in the formative days God's concerned about the preservation of his people. Why is he concerned about the preservation of his people? Because he was making his people a billboard to a watching world of what God looked like.

[22 : 02] Right? And he was going to use his people to attract the world to himself. He was not being mean in that. The greater attraction comes with purity than with, you know, being like assimilation.

Greater attraction comes by being different than it does by being like something. So, he was maintaining his purity. So, Jephthah's put out. He's over here. He's got these worthless people around him.

He's living among an ally of the sons of Ammon and he's making these raids and it's okay over there. He's fine. Everybody's leaving over there. So, there's the despised individual. But, meanwhile, back in Gilead there's a problem because they cried out to God.

They want to be delivered from the sons of Ammon and they're there and God brings the enemy on their doorsteps and they're right there before them and they're camped opposite each other and they're asking themselves this question, who is the man?

And rather than waiting on God to raise up a man, they decide, hey, we know someone. If you heard about that guy, Jephthah, he can fight. So, now all of a sudden we move from a despised individual to a desperate people because I can promise you in your desperation the world always has an answer that seems to be fitting for your circumstances.

[23 : 13] Any problem you face, any concern you have, any enemy that God brings before you to fight, the world's always got a solution. And that shouldn't surprise us because Satan is an angel of light.

And he is one who is a, for lack of a better word, a copycat. He mimics the things of God. He does it just a little bit different, right?

He doesn't come with blatant falsehood. He comes with half-truths. He lies, steals, kills, destroys, and deceives. So they have this problem and right over there in Taub, which is, the Gleeed is kind of on the Transjordan side, so on the western side, or the eastern, forgive me, the eastern side of the Jordan River.

Sons of Ammon are a little bit, so if you're looking at a map, Gleeed's here, I know my back's to you. Ammon's here, Taub's way up here. So they said, there's this guy in Taub up here who is already fighting them, so let's just go get him.

And they go to him, so they go to Jephthah, and they say, why don't you come and be among us? And Jephthah asked the question, he said, why did you hate me, but now all of a sudden that you're in need, you want me?

[24 : 29] Because the reality is this, many things that man hates in the moment, they will love when it seems to fit the need. That the things we despise, the things that we want nothing to do with, the things that we'll cast out, when it gets bad enough and we're desperate enough, it is amazing how quick we will run back to it.

Because it seems to be a quick fix. It seems to be an instantaneous moment. Now I'm going to go ahead and tell you that you can read Bible scholars and Bible scholars will say that this is one that God raises up.

I don't think that Jephthah is one God raises up because we never see the statement of God raised up Jephthah as we do with the other leaders, right? Even Samson, God declares that he's coming, the angel of the Lord comes and declares that Samson is coming and that he needs to be a Nazirite from the womb.

We understand this. It's never said this about this. And if this was an individual that God raised up, would God raise up someone who's going to make the vow that he makes? We just have to reconcile these in our head.

Rather, this is man turning to something that he claimed to despise. Now he's going to embrace it simply because of this desperate need in his life. See, desperation creates a vacuum.

[25 : 50] And when we don't know where the solution comes from, I promise you, we can always look around and the world has something to offer. Quite often, what the world offers us is the one thing that we have cast away from us because there's always an option.

In desperation, they were sitting here saying, who is the man? And if you look around long enough, you can find the man, but just finding a man is not finding the man. Okay, you just need to know that.

When they found a man who would do it, it was not that they found the man who could do it. And in their desperation, they were blinded from the realities of what they had done and therefore cried out to him.

And when the circumstances moved them far enough, they were willing to do that which they claimed to want nothing to do with.

And these desperate people bring us to this third reality of the account of man attempting self-deliverance. And it is, they make, there's the deal that is ratified and made.

[27 : 06] Because not only do they go to Jephthah and say, will you come fight for us? They didn't just say that. Like, Jephthah is the despised one that they've cast away from him.

They want nothing to do with him. He has no inheritance, right? He has no inheritance among them. He's over here, he's making all these party raids and he's doing all this stuff and he's a valiant warrior. So since he can fight good, it seems to be the right man.

So they go to this man and not only do they say, hey, we want to hire you as a mercenary. That's not what they say. They go to him and they say, why don't you come and fight the sons of Ammon for us and we'll make you the ruler over us.

Did you see that? That thing that they had cast off now was about to rule them. That one that they said they wanted nothing to do with because it made them unclean, now was going to rule over them because it could meet the need of the moment.

And if it would meet the need of the moment, then they were willing to allow him to be the ruler, their leader, and their captain.

[28 : 12] And he says, now, did I hear you right? So if I come and I battle the sons of Ammon, which by the way he was already doing over here in Tob, because that's the only people around him.

On the other side is the wilderness. There's nobody out there to make raindle parties at. There's only the sons of Ammon. So if I come and do here what I've been doing over there, you're going to make me ruler over you.

I say, yes, as the Lord lives, this is what we'll do. So it says he went with them. Now you do notice that even before he fights the first battle, it tells us in verse 11, then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead and the people made him head and chief over them.

Now the agreement was if you fight and deliver us then we will. The word tells us that even before he fought, they went ahead and made him leader and ruler over them. And then we have this and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah.

That literally means that's where he made his, that's where he ratified it, that's where he made his declaration, he swore himself in as their leader and ruler if you will. He made his vows of commitment to be their leader and ruler at Mizpah which was in Gilead.

[29 : 27] So he went with them and now the deal that is made is that he's going to be their leader and their ruler and the authority over them.

Now does he deliver? Yes he does. He will win the battle. He makes a rash vow. He does something so horrible that the sons of Israel remember it each year, that is he sacrifices his daughter.

he causes a civil war with the men of Ephraim. So the Gilead and Ephraim who are side by side, there's a civil war.

Some 42,000 men of Ephraim die. We'll see that at the end of this chapter. So see, when man thinks that he can choose his own king, when man thinks he's in charge that he can appoint his own deliverer, it may free him from the need of the moment, but the outcome is never what you expected.

It may meet the pressing need, that is it may satisfy the desire, but in the end, the misery is worse than the need. An innocent girl dies, 42,000 men die of the nation of Israel.

[30 : 49] By the way, more than the sons of Ammon ever slew. They kill one another, all because man thinks they can appoint their own deliverer. See, the reality is this, and I'm wrapping up.

We don't have the right to choose our own deliverer. God alone reserves the right to appoint the one who will deliver us from the enemy that suppresses us.

We don't have the right. Now, we have the freedom to follow the one that God appoints, but we can't say, well, I don't want Jesus to be my king, I'd rather have so-and-so to be my king, or I'd rather have this to be my king, or I'd rather have that to be my king.

man can't pick and appoint his own deliverance. He can only respond to the deliverer that God raises up, and that is the only time we find true freedom.

That's the only time we find true restoration. But sadly, man finds themselves in a position, scratching their head, crying out, who is the man, and nobody stands up, so they look around, and they pick the first one that comes up, rather than waiting on the Lord.

[32 : 22] Listen, if God brought the enemy to them, then surely God was going to raise up from them the one that would fight the battle. Raise up from them.

We're always in jeopardy when we look beyond God's leading and calling and choose who we think will be the right one. And we see this in Judges 11, verses 1-11.

Thank you, brother. so, so, so, so, so, Thank you.

Thank you.