

After brief accounts of the judges Tola and Jair, we come to the story of Jephthah. Verse 11:1 calls him a mighty warrior. Gideon, too, was called a mighty warrior by the angel of the Lord in 6:12. But there's a difference: Gideon's might is only apparent in the eyes of the Lord while Jephthah appears to enjoy a well earned military reputation among the Gileadites. So it is with spiritual leaders. Some exercise their obvious natural abilities. But others have strength that is known only to them and their Lord, and which can only bear fruit and gain victory through complete dependence on Him

In this portion we read of a temporary revival in verse 16 but there is over all a sense of decline. Jephthah has a dubious family history and is head of Gilead only, not a

judge of Israel like Deborah and others. God's people have lost much of the unity He intended for them and are breaking into fragmented tribal groups. Sound familiar?

### Notes

**10:3** Gilead was a hilly region east of the Jordan divided among the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. It also appears as a personal name, as in the father of Jephthah.

**10:6** Various regions mentioned in this verse are north (Sidon), south (Moab), east (Ammon), and west (Philistia) of Israel, so they were importing idolatry from all directions.

**11:12-28** Much of the history that Jephthah recounts to the Ammonites can be found in Numbers 20-22.

**11:24** Chemosh was a fish god of the Moabites.

**11:28** Ammon is the same as the modern capital of Jordan, Amman.

### Questions:

1. Do we have any hints of the character of Jair, the eighth judge?
2. In verse 10:14, the Lord tells the Israelites to go cry to their new gods. Where else in Judges was a false god mocked this way?
3. In 10:18, the people of Gilead say that whoever fights the Ammonites will be made head over them. What's wrong with that?

4. Who selects Jephthah to lead the campaign against the Ammonites?

5. Does Jephthah have the Lord's blessing?

6. Does the argument in 11:12-27 have any echoes in our day?

7. Some commentators see Jephthah as a type of Christ. In what aspects?