

Joshua, Judges & Ruth

In Those Days There
Was No King in Israel

Lesson 8 • June 5 • Judges 11-16
Jephthah & Samson

As the rollercoaster ride of Israel's history continues, **Judges 11** introduces us to _____, a mighty warrior, but hated and driven out by his brothers because he was "the son of another woman." When the Ammonites made war against Israel, his people decided they would like to have this mighty warrior as their leader. Jephthah is probably best known for a tragic vow he made to the LORD:

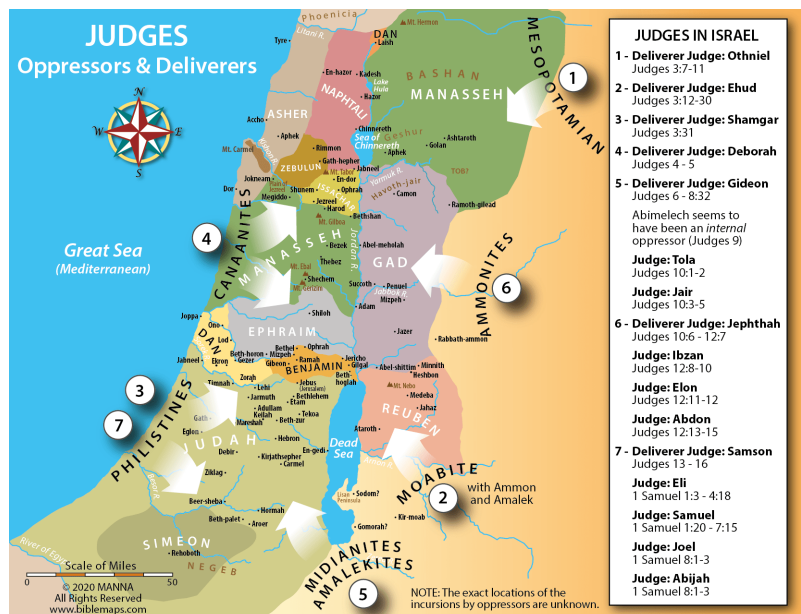
"If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then _____ comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a _____ offering" (11:30-31).

When he came home? His _____ came out to meet him.

Judges 13-16 tell the story of Samson, a child of miraculous birth given to a barren couple, told from the beginning of his life that he was to be a _____ to God from the womb. Samson was a man of incredible God-given strength.

- Killed a young _____ with his hands (14:5-6)
- Struck down _____ Philistines (14:19)
- Caught 300 _____, set fire to torches between their tails and burned the grain of the Philistines (15:4-5)
- Struck _____ with the jawbone of a donkey (15:14-15)
- Carried a city _____ 40 miles (16:3)

But Samson had a weakness. On more than one occasion, he wanted women more than he wanted God. His greatest temptations came from a Philistine woman named _____ who ultimately tricked him and turned him over to the Philistines. In the end, Samson's revenge cost him his life. He had judged Israel for _____ years.



For Class & Family Discussion:

- We heard Samson say multiple times to Delilah, “then I shall become weak and be like any other man” (16:7, 11, 13, 17). Think about that. Samson was a man of incredible physical strength, but in what very critical ways was he just like “any other man”?
- **Proverbs 6:27-28** seems to be a really important warning along these lines. In your own words, what do we need to understand from this wise warning?
- **James 1:13-15** and **1 Corinthians 10:11-13** are very relevant New Testament texts on temptation. Using these to shine light on Samson’s case, where did he get himself in trouble? What did he not see or appreciate in the moments of temptation? What do we need to see?
- **Judges 16:20-22** shows us a side of temptation and sin that we might not always see, especially when we are *being* tempted. What important lessons can be learned from what Samson had to go through? Are there any ways that some of those lessons still apply to us today?
- In the middle of the accounts of Jephthah and Samson, we heard something familiar about the Israelites (13:1). Why did all of this keep happening, over and over again? What needed to change in order to break the destructive cycle?
- In **Judges 12**, we read about Israelites fighting with each other and eventually 42,000 from the tribe of Ephraim dying. How does this add to our understanding of what life and hearts were like during the time of the judges?
- What do you think about Jephthah’s vow in **Judges 11:29-31**? Why do you think he did that? Do you think it was wise or foolish?
- After all that, what might surprise us is finding Samson and Jephthah’s name in **Hebrews 11:32**. So as we walk away from these troubling chapters, what should we remember and carry with us?