

# Jephthah Answers God's Call

**Key Verse:**  
***“Jephthah said  
unto the elders of  
Gilead, If ye bring  
me home again to  
fight against the  
children of  
Ammon, and the  
LORD deliver them  
before me, shall I  
be your head?”***  
**—Judges 11:9**

**Selected Scripture:**  
***Judges 11:4-33***  
not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman.” (Judg. 11:1,2) Rather than causing bitter feelings or diminishing Jephthah's character, this experience would make his nobility stand out.

The Gileadites had come under persecution by the Ammonites, whom they did not have the wherewithal to resist. Their only hope was to look to their alienated brother, Jephthah, because he was a skilled man of war. “They said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.” (vs. 6) His answer showed perplexity. “Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of

## **GOD'S GIFTS AND CALL-**

ings are a source of wonderful lessons. Our Key Verse finds the elders of Gilead begging Jephthah to return as their commander. Previously, he had been estranged by his brethren. “Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt

my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" (vs. 7) He did not lash out in anger or chide them, but his words were heart-searching. We may take great instruction from this example.

We must not harbor ill feelings toward those who have wronged us, but be ready to forgive and assist. Jesus tells us, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: . . . if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?"—Matt. 5:44-46

If Jephthah had been of a reprehensible character, surely his brethren would not have asked him to be their leader. He must have been of good character and zealous faith. It is written of him in the gallery of the faithful, "What shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; . . . Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, . . . out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."—Heb. 11:32-34

Jephthah's character is further revealed by his wise attempt at a diplomatic solution to the conflict with Ammon. He appealed to the king to be reasonable, saying, "What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?" (Judg. 11:12) Jephthah then recounted the history of Israel's passage into the promised land, which was mandated by God. (vss. 14-23) In conclusion, Jephthah told the king to let Chemosh, the god of the Ammonites, give them the land he wished them to have, and the Lord would give Israel the land he desired them to possess. However, it would be wrong to go to war with Israel. (vss. 24,27) The king of Ammon gave no heed to Jephthah's words. War ensued and God gave the victory to Jephthah, who was formerly reproached. (vss. 28-33) We can also gain the victory, even when reproached, by standing firm in faith. ■