



Therefore  
I have not  
sinned against  
you, but you  
wronged me by  
fighting against me.  
May the **LORD**,  
the **Judge**, render  
judgment this day  
between the children of  
**Israel**  
and the people of  
**Ammon.**

וְאֵינִי  
לֹא-חָטֵאתִי  
לָךְ, וְאַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ  
אֵתִי, רָעָה לְהִלָּחֵם  
בִּי. הַשֹּׁפֵט  
יִשְׁפֹּט בֵּינִי וּבֵין  
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבֵין בְּנֵי  
עַמּוֹן.

**Judges**  
**11:27**

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## **Judges 11:12-28** **(Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part II)**

In the passage today, there are remembrances from Israel's past that are brought back into the narrative to help explain what is going on and why certain things are the way they are.

For example, Israel ascended out of Egypt, but that is because Israel first went down to Egypt. They were in Egypt for a reason that goes beyond what the surface text says. In other words, the Lord told Abraham in Genesis 15 that his descendants would be strangers in a land not their own, they would serve another, and they would be afflicted four hundred years.

After that, the Lord told him that in the fourth generation his descendants would return to their land, "for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." The surface reason for what was coming is explained in that thought.

However, during all of that time, and in the Exodus itself, there was typology being portrayed in the movement of the people, in what happened to them as they moved, in the names that are highlighted, and so forth.

Each step of the way, each story presented, and each feature provided has led us through a history that is alive and brimming with details of what God is doing in the world and how that is anticipating other things as well.

As an example, Paul cites Scripture concerning Abraham and tells us that what is written is not simply isolated to that account...

**Text Verse:** *"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. <sup>22</sup> And therefore 'it was accounted to him for righteousness.'*

*<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, <sup>24</sup> but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." Romans 4:20-25*

Paul says that what was said to and written about Abraham was not merely an isolated story that only pertained to him. It was written to reveal what is on God's mind concerning justification. One might say, "Well, yeah, that is an instructive tool for us

concerning a particular doctrine, but that doesn't mean everything has this type of a purpose."

That would be an incorrect analysis shared by far too many people. If God wanted to teach us about justification by faith, all He needed to do was speak it out plainly and be done with it. But He didn't until many eons later. And more, Paul says to Timothy that all Scripture is given by God and is profitable for doctrine.

In other words, God having Israel bypass Edom and Moab is a part of something that is teaching us doctrine. If it wasn't, He would not have included it in His word. Israel did innumerable things that are not recorded in Scripture, but that detail about bypassing Moab and Edom is specifically recorded for us to learn something.

The name of a king of Moab, Balak, is mentioned over forty times in Scripture. The name of the king of Ammon, with whom Jephthah is now dealing, is never given. We are being taught points of doctrine in particular names of people and places.

Everything in Scripture is there for us to learn from. Let us pay heed to what is said and do our very best to process it as best as we can. The Lord is telling us more than just one story. He is giving us insights into other things as well.

Such great things are to be considered when reading His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. All the Land of the Amorites (verses 12-22)**

The verses set before us detail the words of Jephthah in his exchange with the people of Ammon. They are based on the words of Chapter 10 which introduced the events leading up to Jephthah's appointment as Israel's Judge –

"Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him. <sup>7</sup> So the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. <sup>8</sup> From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. <sup>9</sup> Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed. ... Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in

Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah. <sup>18</sup> And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, “Who *is* the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.” Judges 10:6-9 & 17, 18

After this came the details of Jephthah’s life that led to his selection by the people to lead them. Once he was made commander over the people, he takes his first steps as their leader...

<sup>12</sup> **Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon,**

*vayishlakh yiphthakh malakhim el melekh b’ne amon* – “And sends, Jephthah, messengers unto king sons Ammon.” Ammon has gathered for war in Gilead, land belonging to Israel. Israel is gathered in Mizpah where they agreed to make Jephthah their commander. It is from Mizpah that Jephthah sends out these messengers to the king of Ammon...

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) **saying, “What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?”**

*l’mor mah li va’lakh ki batha elay l’hilakhem b’artsi* – “to say, ‘What to me and to you for come unto me to fight in my land?’” These are the words of Jephthah, even if they are transmitted by messengers. As the leader of Israel speaking to the king of Ammon, the words are in the first person and second person singular.

As for the words “to me and to you,” they are a proverbial expression that extends into the New Testament. In this case, they mean something like, “What is going on between you and me that you are preparing to wage war?”

At other times, the same expression can mean something like “Please leave me alone and let me live my life” (1 Kings 17:18) or “We have nothing in common in the matter at hand” (2 Kings 3:13). In John 2:4, Jesus uses the expression with the Greek *Ti emoi kai soi gynai*, or “What to me and to you, woman?” There, His words convey the sense of “Why are you bothering me with this?”

Jephthah, before aligning his troops for battle wants to know the reason for the Ammonites coming into Israelite territory and setting up in military formation, intending to engage in battle. If diplomacy can handle the matter, that is the first and preferred option.

As for the names, Jephthah means He Opens. Ammon means A People.

In response to Jephthah's inquiry, it next says...

**<sup>13</sup> And the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah,**

*vayomer melekh b'ne amon el malakhe yiphtakh* – “And says, king sons Ammon unto messengers Jephthah.” The meaning is, “Here is my response to take back to Jephthah. These are messengers receiving the response as if it is spoken directly to Jephthah, just as an emissary or ambassador would do today. And his words are...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **“Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan.**

*ki laqakh Yisrael eth artsi ba'aloto mimitsrayim me'arnon v'ad ha'yaboq v'ad ha'yarden* – “For took, Israel, my land in his ascending from Egypt from Arnon, and until the Jabbok and until the Jordan.” The basis of the issue here rests upon the words “my land.” Several points must be remembered.

First, Israel, when ascending from Egypt, was prohibited from coming against his relatives, Esau, Moab, and Ammon. The record of these is found in Deuteronomy 2. The specific record for Ammon says –

“So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, <sup>17</sup> that the Lord spoke to me, saying: <sup>18</sup> ‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. <sup>19</sup> And *when* you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon *as* a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.’” Deuteronomy 2:16-19

Israel was obedient to this command and never came against these relatives. Second, this once was Ammon's land, but it was no longer his at the time of Israel's ascending –

“And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. <sup>34</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.” <sup>35</sup> So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.”  
-Numbers 21:33-35.

The land Israel occupied east of the Jordan once belonged to Moab and Ammon, but Sihon and Og had taken it from them. Therefore, it no longer belonged to them. As such,

what is happening now means that the king of Ammon either doesn't know the history of the land, or he is counting on Israel not remembering what occurred.

Either way, the land was lost by Moab and Ammon in battle, becoming the possession of the Amorites. That, in turn, was taken in battle by Israel, thereby becoming the territory of Israel. Ammon had no claim on the land they had previously lost.

As for the names, Egypt means Double Trouble. Arnon means Roaring Stream, but it carries the sense of Rejoicing. Jabbok means Pouring Out. The Jordan means The Descender.

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **Now therefore, restore those *lands* peaceably."**

*v'atah hashivah ethen b'shalom* – "And now, returning these in peace." The king, either depending on a faulty memory among his people or the hope of a faulty memory in Israel, is looking to regain land from Israel that they had legitimately lost in battle. He offers first to receive it without a battle.

<sup>14</sup> **So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon,**

*va'yoseph od yiphtakh vayishlakh malakim el melekh b'ne amon* – "And adds again, Jephthah, and sends messengers unto king sons Ammon." The words of the king of Ammon were received. From there, unless Jephthah was schooled in Israel's history, he would have consulted the scribes who kept such matters either verbally or in writing, compiled the facts, and again addresses the king of Ammon...

<sup>15</sup> **and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: 'Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon;**

*vayomer lo koh amar yiphtakh lo laqakh Yisrael eth erets moav v'eth erets b'ne amon* – "And said to him, 'Thus said Jephthah, "No took, Israel, land Moab and land sons Ammon."'" To begin his response to the king, he doesn't just address the king's immediate request, but expands upon it, including Moab in the response.

These people descend from the two sons of Lot, Moab and Ben Ammi. This was a great swath of land east of the Jordan controlled by these two brothers. The Jabbok divided the two portions between the two brothers with Moab to the south and Ammon to the north.

The Amorites invaded the land and took it from them. Thus Moab lived in their remaining land southward while Ammon lived in their remaining land northward. Israel

had taken this land from those who possessed it. But more, when Israel asked Sihon and Og permission to pass through their land, those kings had come against them to wage war.

Israel did not initiate the events that led to their control of the land. Instead, they responded to the attack of the foes accordingly. As for the name Moab, it means From Father.

**<sup>16</sup> for when Israel came up from Egypt, they walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and came to Kadesh.**

*ki ba'alotham mimitsrayim va'yelekh Yisrael ba'midbar ad yam suph va'yavo qadeshah* – “For in our ascending from Egypt, and walking, Israel, in the wilderness until Sea Ending, and comes Kedesh-ward.” This refers to the time from leaving Egypt, spending a year at Sinai, departing from there and finally arriving at Kadesh. This covers the narrative from Exodus 12 until Numbers 13.

The name Yam Suph means Sea *of the* Ending, coming from the verb *suph*, to come to an end or cease. Kadesh means Holy or Sacred.

It was at Kadesh that Israel sent spies into Canaan, were told to go in and take the land, and failed to believe the Lord (Numbers 13 & 14). Because of that, they were sentenced to wander in the wilderness, until the disobedient generation had perished.

Jephthah skips over that period of time and simply refers to the end of those years. When they were complete...

**<sup>17</sup> Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, “Please let me pass through your land.”**

Here, Israel is spoken of as a single entity: *vayishlakh Yisrael malakhim el melekh edom l'mor ebrah na b'artsekha* – “And sends, Israel, messengers, unto king Edom to say, ‘Let me pass through, I pray, in your land.’” This is recorded in Numbers 20:14-17 –

“Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. ‘Thus says your brother Israel: ‘You know all the hardship that has befallen us, <sup>15</sup> how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. <sup>16</sup> When we cried out to the Lord, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. <sup>17</sup> Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go

along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.”

17 (con't) **But the king of Edom would not heed.**

*v'lo shama melek edom* – “And no heard, king Edom.” His refusal and Israel's repeated request, followed by Edom coming out against Israel to prohibit them from entering is recorded in Numbers 20:18-21.

17 (con't) **And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not *consent*. So Israel remained in Kadesh.**

*v'gam el melek moav shalakh v'lo avah vayeshv Yisrael b'qadesh* – “And also, unto king Moab, sent. And no willing. And dwells, Israel, in Kadesh.” This is not recorded in the account in Numbers, but it is an obvious verbal tradition. As such, we can see that those things recorded in Scripture have been given for the sake of typology.

If this event had been recorded at the time it occurred, it would have marred the typology being presented. This is a logical inference to be made from the ongoing narrative.

18 **And they went along through the wilderness and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab,**

*vayelekh ba'midbar vayashav eth erets edom v'eth erets moav* – “And walked in the wilderness. And skirts, land Edom and land Moab.” This is seen in Numbers 21 and it is substantially repeated in Deuteronomy 2. From this point they...

18 (con't) **came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon.**

*vayavo mimizrakh shemesh l'erets moav vayakhnun b'ever arnon* – “And comes from ascension sun to land Moab. And encamps in side Arnon.” This continues the record of Numbers 21, particularly verses 11-15. Israel went all the way around the lands of Edom and Moab, came to where Jephthah is now, and camped on the north side of the Arnon because the south belonged to Moab. This would have been in the territory of Sihon that once belonged to Moab.

18 (con't) **But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon *was* the border of Moab.**



*v'lo bau bigvul moav ki arnon g'vul moav* – “And no entered border Moab, for Arnon border Moab.” This was due to the specific command of the Lord. Not only did Moab not give permission for Israel to pass through their land, but the Lord also instructed Israel to not even skirt within their border –

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land *as* a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.’” Deuteronomy 2:9

<sup>19</sup> **Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon;**

*vayishlakh Yisrael malakhim el sikhon melekh ha'emori melekh khashbon* – “And sends, Israel, messengers unto Sihon, king the Amorite, king Heshbon.” Other than the last two words, this is a letter for letter repeat of Numbers 21:21 with one exception. The name Sihon is spelled with an additional letter, *vav*.

This will be the case all four times here in Judges, but it is a variant spelling seen elsewhere as well –

Judges 12:19 - יִהְיֶה

Numbers 21:21 - יִהְיֶה

Sihon means Warrior. Amorite means Renown.

<sup>19</sup> (con't) **and Israel said to him, “Please let us pass through your land into our place.”**

I only found two Catholic Bibles that are close in the translation. It is first person singular and the first verb is cohortative: *vayomer lo Yisrael nabrah na b'artskha ad m'qomi* – “And says to him, Israel, ‘We are passing, I pray, in your land unto my place.’”

This is recorded in Numbers 21:22 where it is also first person with a cohortative verb. Israel is stating that they will pass through, but it will only be with the consent of Sihon.

Remember that at this time, the lands in question here were not a part of Israel's land grant. Jephthah is careful to restate this to the king of Ammon. In essence, “We were on our way to our land, explicitly telling Sihon that was our destination. And yet, he would not allow our passage.

It should also be remembered why Sihon the Amorite refused this. Israel is claiming Canaan is their place. However, Amorite not only dwelt east of the Jordan but also west in Canaan. Israel is claiming land where Sihon's own kin lived. Therefore, despite the request...

<sup>20</sup> **But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory.**

Almost all translations say “trust.” That doesn’t seem likely: *v’lo heemin sikhon eth Yisrael avor bigvulo* – “And no confirmed, Sihon, Israel passing through his border.” This is recorded in Numbers 21:23. Here, it uses the word *aman*, to confirm or support. In Numbers, it uses the word *nathan*, give.

It isn’t that he didn’t trust Israel. Rather, Sihon did not give permission, and thus, he did not confirm passage. Israel intended to go to his place, Canaan, but that is where more Amorites dwell. Sihon would not allow this.

<sup>20</sup> (con’t) **So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.**

*vayeesoph sikhon eth kal amo vayakhanu b’yehatsah vayilakhem im Yisrael* – “And gathers, Sihon, all his people, and encamps in Jahaz, and fights with Israel.” The words here are recorded with variations in Numbers 21:22. Jahaz means Trodden Down.

Jephthah includes this detail so that it is understood by the king of Ammon that it was Sihon, possessor of the land, who came out against Israel. He encamped against them and fought with them. Israel was the victor of a battle they did not initiate. Thus, they had every right to possess the land of Sihon. As it says...

<sup>21</sup> **And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them.**

*vayiten Yehovah Elohe Yisrael eth sikhon v’eth kal amo b’yad Yisrael vayakum* – “And gives, Yehovah God Israel, Sihon and all his people in hand Israel. And struck them.” This is recorded in Numbers 21:24. However, there it said, “Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword.”

Here, however, in order to show the ultimate Power behind the victory, Jephthah says that it was the Lord God of Israel who gave Sihon and his people into Israel’s hand. As such...

<sup>21</sup> (con’t) **Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country.**

*vayirash Yisrael eth kal erets ha’emori yoshev ha’arets ha’hi* – “And dispossessed, Israel, all land the Amorite dwelling the land, the it.” In Numbers, it simply says, “And dispossessed his land.” Here, Jephthah is sure to remind the king that this is “all land the

Amorite, dwelling in the land.” Therefore, any claim to the land by Ammon died when Sihon was defeated. And again...

**<sup>22</sup> They took possession of all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.**

*vayirshu eth kal gevul ha'emori me'arnon v'ad ha'yaboq u-min ha'midbar v'ad ha'yarden* – “And possessed all border the Amorite from Arnon and until the Jabbok, and from the wilderness and until the Jordan.” This continues to loosely cite Numbers 21:24. Jephthah is carefully detailing the exact borders of the land that was taken from the Amorite.

Ammon was to the north of the Jabbok. It was fortified, and Israel did not venture into their land. However, everything between the Arnon to the Jabbok (south to north) and between the wilderness and the Jordan (east to west) was conquered by Israel in the defeat of the Amorite.

*This is our inheritance and possession  
Given by the Lord God of Israel  
We did not take it by aggression  
When the Amorites attacked, for them, things didn't go well*

*What was theirs now belongs to us  
It wasn't yours to lose  
So over it, please don't make a fuss  
We will defend our land, if that is what you choose*

*May the Lord, the Judge decide the matter  
And settle this issue once for all  
Surely your hopes He will shatter  
When in the battle, out to Him we call*

## **II. I Have Not Sinned Against You (verses 23-28)**

**<sup>23</sup> ‘And now the Lord God of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel;**

*v'atah Yehovah Elohe Yisrael horish eth ha'emori mipne amo Yisrael* – “And now, Yehovah God Israel, dispossessed the Amorite from faces His people: Israel.” It is the Lord God of Israel who accomplished the action, even if He used Israel to have it come about. The Amorite was dispossessed from his land and from before the Lord’s people,

Israel. Thus, Israel is set in contrast to the Amorite. He now is identified with the land. With that, he says...

<sup>23</sup> (con't) **should you then possess it?**

Not a single translation gives what I believe is a proper rendering of this. The words are emphatic and incredulous. They are in the singular because of the construction: *v'atah tirashenu* – “And you, you dispossess him?”

Lange says, “[תִּירָשְׁנֵנוּ, תִּירָשְׁנֵנוּ] lit. ‘seize him.’ ‘The construction of יִרָשׁ with the accusative of the people,’ says Keil, ‘arises from the fact that in order to seize upon a land, it is necessary first to overpower the people that inhabits it.’ Both he and Bertheau, however, refer the suffix to ‘the Amorite,’ and are then obliged to make the Amorite stand for the ‘and of the Amorite.’”

That isn't what Jephthah is saying. He is no longer referring to the Amorite as the reference. Rather, the meaning is that the Lord had dispossessed the Amorite. The people stood for the land. He did this before His people, Israel. Israel now stands for the land. Israel is the nearest antecedent in the words. As the Lord placed Israel, His people, in the land, Jephthah refers to Israel in the singular – “Would you dispossess him?”

“And now, Yehovah God Israel, dispossessed the Amorite from faces His people: Israel. And you, you dispossess him?” (CG).

That may seem like too much explanation for two Hebrew words, but the matter in question is possession of the land. Possession signifies an inheritance because it is from the Lord and is the inheritance of Israel. Therefore, Ammon has no right to the inheritance. That seems evident from the next words...

<sup>24</sup> **Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the Lord our God takes possession of before us, we will possess.**

*halo eth asher yorishkha k'mosh elohekha oto tirash v'eth kal asher horish Yehovah elohenu mipanenu oto nirash* – “Not which you possessing, Chemosh your god he possesses? And all which dispossesses, Yehovah our God, from our faces – it we possess.”

The land is identified with the people. However, the people are identified with their God (or god). The Amorite dispossessed Ammon, and so, the land belonged to them. The Lord dispossessed the Amorite, and so, the land belongs to Israel to possess.

As for the name, Strong's lists Chemosh under an unused root meaning "to subdue." If so, it means something like Vanquisher. Abarim, however, lists it as a prefix, meaning As If, along with the word for salvation or a word for being ambulant or for feeling.

Thus, they say to a Hebrew it will sound like As If He Saves, As If He Moves, or As If He Feels. The k prefix is more precisely identified with "According to" rather than "as if." Thus, I would refine it to According to His Saving.

For context, it appears Jephthah is reaching back to a proverb that is recorded in Numbers 21 –

"Come to Heshbon, let it be built;  
Let the city of Sihon be repaired.  
<sup>28</sup> "For fire went out from Heshbon,  
A flame from the city of Sihon;  
It consumed Ar of Moab,  
The lords of the heights of the Arnon.  
<sup>29</sup> Woe to you, Moab!  
You have perished, O people of Chemosh!  
He has given his sons as fugitives,  
And his daughters into captivity,  
To Sihon king of the Amorites.  
<sup>30</sup> "But we have shot at them;  
Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon.  
Then we laid waste as far as Nophah,  
Which *reaches* to Medeba."  
<sup>31</sup> Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

Israel defeated Sihon the Amorite. But Sihon had defeated the people of Chemosh, god of Moab who Jephthah is associating with Ammon. As Israel defeated Sihon who defeated the people of Chemosh, Israel's God, Yehovah, is greater than Chemosh.

<sup>25</sup> **And now, *are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them?***

The translation is fine, but it misses the beauty of the Hebrew. The verse is filled with verbal expression: *v'atah hatov tov atah mibalak ben tsipor melekh moav harov rav im Yisrael im nilkhom nilkham bam* – "And now, gooding good, you, from Balak, son Zippor, king Moab? Striving, he strove with Israel? If fighting he fought in them?"

The words of Jephthah seem contradictory to Joshua 24, where it said that Balak the son of Zippor arose to make war against Israel. Arising to wage war is not the same as waging war. He called Balaam to curse Israel so that he could wage war, but that plot failed and no war was ever waged. As such, because of the Lord, the superiority of Israel was seen in that account.

But more, Balak wasn't concerned with retaking lands previously lost. He was, instead, troubled with the thought of being overtaken in the land he still possessed. Jephthah is asking the king of Ammon to determine if he is any greater than Balak was.

As for the names, Balak means something akin to Devastator, Empty, or Wasting. Zippor comes from *tsippor*, a little bird.

**<sup>26</sup> While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* within that time?**

The word "within" is incorrect: *b'sheveth Yisrael b'khashbon u-vivnotheha uvaror u-vivnotheha uvkhal hearim asher al yede arnon sh'losh meoth shanah u-madua lo hitsaltem baeth ha'hi* – "In dwelling, Israel, in Heshbon and her daughters, and in Aroer and her daughters, and in all the cities which upon hands Arnon, three hundreds year. And why not deliver in time, the it?"

The meaning is not that they should have taken the land during those three hundred years. It is that Israel dwelt in the land and in these key cities of that time. But if Ammon wanted the land, they should have retaken it at the time of the original defeat of the Amorite by Israel, but they didn't. Rather, Israel moved in, and they have lived there ever since.

As for the three hundred years, the total years listed from Numbers to here in Judges do not specifically match. But this does not account for the times when some judges overlap. The timeline is not necessarily chronological unless the text specifically says so, such as using the word "after" to define an event. The number itself is what the text is focusing on.

Three hundred is a multiple of three and ten. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

"The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things.

Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

In the Gideon series, the number three hundred was shown to be a picture of the work of Christ and the cross.

As for the names, Heshbon signifies an explanation of things, or Intelligence. Aroer means Stripped, Bare, or Naked.

**<sup>27</sup> Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me.**

His words are emphatic: *v'anokhi lo khatati lakh v'atah oseh iti raah l'hilakhem bi* – “And I, not I sinned to you. And you do me evil to fighting in me.” Jephthah is speaking for Israel in the singular. Israel has done nothing against Ammon. But Ammon is now doing evil to Israel by coming against them for battle.

This is obviously his intent because Israel defeated the Amorite, not the Ammonite. The Lord God of Israel gave Israel what Chemosh lost to the Amorite. And Israel has had the right of possession since the time they defeated the Amorite. Therefore, Ammon is the perpetrator of evil against Israel, who is guiltless before the Lord. Therefore...

**<sup>27</sup> (con't) May the Lord, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.”**

*yishpot Yehovah ha'shophet ha'yom ben b'ne Yisrael u-ben b'ne amon* – “Judge, Yehovah, the Judge, the day between sons Israel and between sons Ammon.” The meaning is either Ammon will release its claim against Israel and thus the Lord will have judged the case through the words of His leader, or Ammon will go to battle against Israel, and the Lord will determine the outcome based on the results of the battle.

In other words, the king of Ammon will either heed Jephthah's words or he will reject them. He chooses the latter...

**<sup>28</sup> However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.**

*v'lo shama melekh b'ne amon el divre yiphtakh asher shalakh elav* – “And no heard, king sons Ammon, unto words Jephthah which sent unto him.” The king of Ammon saw the state of the land, weighed out his options in regard to the size and power of Israel in relation to his own mustered troops, and decided that he could prevail in the battle.

The problem with his analysis of the situation is that he either failed to consider the power of the Lord God of Israel, or he felt that Chemosh was a suitable god to battle against the Lord. Whatever he was thinking, he had made a miscalculation that will end in disaster for him and his people.

We are done with the verses for today. There has been a lot of information to review and I hope that the passage is beginning to make sense on a typological level. Remember, God has placed these stories in His word to tell us more than the surface story.

Everything is being woven together to tell us details of other things. In the next sermon, we will be able to deduce what those things are and the typology will be carefully explained. Keep in mind that the story of Israel is leading inextricably to the coming Messiah. Above everything else, this is the overarching reason for recording these things.

Once the Messiah came, there was still more to the story because the Lord promised that not only would Israel have a Messiah, but that they would rule with Him someday as a nation. In the interim, the Lord has established His church and we have been selected to carry the message of Jesus to the world.

There is not much of the world left that needs to hear about Jesus, and the times of the Gentiles must be coming to an end. But until it does, we still have business to attend to personally, as a congregation, and as the collective body of Christ.

Let us be active participants in what the Lord has set forth for the church to do. Eventually, our individual spans of time will be over. Collectively, the time of the church will end as well. Until these things come to pass, be sure to love the Lord and cherish the word that tells us of Him.

**Closing Verse:** *“He who heeds the word wisely will find good,  
And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.” Proverbs 16:20*

**Next Week:** Judges 11:29-33 *It's not 'Blah, blah, blah', but 'This is swell,' just wait and see...* (Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part III) (35<sup>th</sup> Judges Sermon)



The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## **Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part II**

Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king  
Of the people of Ammon, saying words bold and grand  
“What do you have against me  
That you have come to fight against me in my land?

And the king of the people of Ammon answered the  
-----messengers of Jephthah  
“Because Israel took away my land when they came up, you see  
Out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok  
-----and to the Jordan  
Now therefore, restore those lands peaceably

So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king  
Of the people of Ammon, and said to him because he did moan  
“Thus says Jephthah: ‘Israel did not take away the land of Moab  
Nor the land of the people of Ammon

For when Israel came up from Egypt  
They walked through the wilderness  
As far as the Red Sea  
And came to Kadesh facing much distress

Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying  
“Please let me pass through your land  
But the king of Edom would not heed  
Instead, Israel was banned

And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab  
But he would not consent  
So Israel remained in Kadesh  
Because these kings would not relent

And they went along through the wilderness  
And bypassed the land of Edom and Moab’s land  
Came to the east side of the land of Moab

And encamped on the other side of the Arnon  
----- at the Lord's command

But they did not enter the border of Moab  
For the Arnon was the border of Moab  
Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites  
-----King of Heshbon  
An appeal to him was their next stab

And Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land  
-----into our place  
But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory  
So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz  
And fought against Israel. You certainly know the story

And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people  
Into the hand of Israel, and them they defeated  
Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites  
Who inhabited that country, so they were unseated

They took possession  
Of all the territory of the Amorites, every Tom, Dick, and Gordon  
From the Arnon to the Jabbok  
And from the wilderness to the Jordan

'And now the LORD God of Israel  
Has dispossessed the Amorites, none He did omit  
From before His people Israel  
Should you then possess it?

Will you not possess  
Whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess?  
So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us  
We will possess, so to you I address

And now, are you any better than Balak  
The son of Zippor, king of Moab?  
Did he ever strive against Israel?  
Did he ever fight against them, giving war with us a stab?

While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages  
In Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along  
-----the banks of the Arnon, in that clime  
For three hundred years  
Why did you not recover them within that time?

Therefore I have not sinned against you  
But you wronged me by fighting against me, this I bemoan  
May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day  
Between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon

However, things started looking grim  
The king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words  
-----which Jephthah sent him

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

*Hallelujah and Amen...*