

Jephthah's Sad Promise

A Bible Story for Kids

Find it in the Bible: Judges 11:1-40

Characters: Jephthah, Jephthah's Daughter, The Elders of Gilead, The Ammonites

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JEPHTHAH HAD A very hard life. His brothers were mean to him and sent him away from home. He had to live far away with a group of rough men.

But when the Ammonites attacked Israel, the leaders came to find Jephthah. 'Please help us! You're a mighty warrior. Lead us in battle!' Jephthah agreed to help, and God's Spirit came upon him to give him strength.

Before the battle, Jephthah made a promise to God. But it was a very, very foolish promise. He said, 'If You help me win, whatever comes out of my house first when I get home will belong to You.' He didn't think carefully about what he was saying.

God gave Jephthah a great victory! He defeated the Ammonites and saved Israel. Then he went home, happy and proud.

But as he got close to his house, he heard music. Dancing out the door came... his only daughter! She was so excited to see her daddy come home as a hero!

Jephthah's heart broke. He tore his clothes and cried, 'Oh no! My daughter! I made a promise to God, and I can't take it back!'

His brave daughter said, 'Father, if you made a promise to God, you must keep it. God helped you win.' She only asked for two months to say goodbye to her friends.

This is one of the saddest stories in the Bible. Jephthah kept his terrible promise, and his daughter died. He made a vow without thinking, and it cost him everything he loved.

This story teaches us something very important: Be very careful what you promise! Think before you speak. Words are powerful, especially promises made to God. It's better to not make a promise at all than to make a foolish one. Always think carefully before you say something you can't take back.