

**Tell a story**  
**Haftara Chukat**  
**by Julie Zhuk on 2022-07-23**

**Comments**

Judges 11:1-33

This part will go into depth about the nation of Ammon attacking the Jewish people. The time period this was happening was known as Judges. Unity was rare back then, it most likely happened when the Jews found themselves in trouble. We find out in the reading that the reason why they were in a heap of trouble was for following in their idolatrous ways. G-d had set it up for the Jewish people's enemies, this nation of Ammon to want to attack the Jews. The nation of Ammon had been known for harassing the Jewish people for a long time. It took time as always for the Jews to realize where they had gone wrong, but when they did they turned to G-d. They begged G-d that He forgive them and save them as well. G-d did forgive them and He did save them again. His way of saving them was sending Jephthah their way. The Jewish people engaged a man named Jephthah to help lead them in battle against this horrible nation. He was a judge who presided over the Jewish people for six years.

There had been no king or state of union in Israel that were in charge of the Jewish people. The first thing Jephthah did was send a missive to Ammon declaring that he only wanted peace. This missive was a message where he discussed how the Jews had captured the lands of Sichon and Og. The victories Jews had is shared in this particular week's reading. This Jephthah was the son of a woman who happened to be a harlot. He had a father and half-siblings who sent him away from home and he settled into the land of Tob. It doesn't say in so many words in this reading the reason for this, we think it's because of the situation with his mother. Some people think that his mother was a concubine to his father, Gideon. The wife of Gideon (the mother to Jephthah's half brothers) didn't believe he was a rightful heir to Gideon. According to the reading in the Torah, the half brothers of Jephthah did this illegally, because the laws of inheritance dictate any son of a man has equal rights in his estate. There were some people who believed that Jephthah's mother was actually a prostitute. There was never any way to truly prove whether Gideon was Jephthah's father, he couldn't legally get a share of the estate from his half brothers.

Jephthah never had a good relationship with his half brothers. Some sources believe that they wanted to kill him. That was why he left and ended up in the city called Tov, that means good. It was in Tov, he became a great warrior. He was known as a "mighty man of valor". He agreed to lead the Jews in battle against the nation of Ammon on one condition. That condition was, "if you bring me back to fight with the children of Ammon and G-d will deliver them before me. Then I will lead you, the Jewish people, I will become your head." When going to war with the nation of Ammon, he tried to bring a peaceful resolution. In this message he asked the king of Ammon, what is the what is there between you and me? His way of doing that was sending messengers to try and reason with the king of Ammon. The king of Ammon wouldn't budge, he stayed pretty stubborn. The king of Ammon wanted to reclaim the territory that the Jews took from Ammon when Moses was alive.

The Jews took this piece of land three hundred years before. Jephthah sent a long response explaining why the land belonged rightfully now to the Jews, but the king of Ammon still stood

his ground. Since making peace wasn't something the nation of Ammon wanted, Jephthah decided he would send the Jewish troops to fight. The Jewish people were stronger than the nation of Ammon. Before the war was over, Jephthah turned to the king of Ammon and told him that "G-d miraculously gave the Jewish people the land the Ammon people were living in now. You are not going to take it away from us now. It has been three centuries that no king of Moab has tried to take away this land from the Jewish people. Even the famous Moabite king Balak didn't try to hurt the Jewish people. He turned to the king and stated how he was just looking for any excuse to attack the Jews, it wasn't just about taking land. It was true, the people of Ammon wanted to fight the Jewish people for no reason whatsoever. There was a G-d'ly spirit of power that rested upon Jephthah during that battle between the Jewish people and the nation of Ammon. G-d struck a mighty blow against Ammon and that caused them to not raise their head against Israel for a long time. It definitely helped to have Jephthah by their side, but G-d was present as well.