

Recap of 6/25/17 (Judges 10:6-11:11):

1. In Judges 10:6-18, Israel once again turns away from God to serve and worship the false gods of the land. Once again God disciplines them by sending them into bondage, this time, to the Ammonites.
2. “Israel soon discovered the sin of idolatry promised a great deal but delivered little. It promised freedom, pleasure, and prosperity, but delivered bondage, guilt, shame, and death” (Campbell). This is still true in our day. The “gods” of lust, sex, pleasure, material, self-fulfillment, technology, nature, etc. cannot satisfy ultimately, and cannot save from insignificance, or deliver lasting satisfaction.
3. Israel, at last, turns to God once again for deliverance. They confessed their sin to God, acknowledged God’s right to punish them, put away their idols and once again served God.
3. Jephthah (Israel’s next Judge) is introduced in chapter 11. He had a sketchy past, having been born the son of an Israelite man and a Canaanite prostitute. He was resented by his siblings, driven from his home, becoming the leader of a ‘group of adventurers’ who protected Israelite villages from marauders, learned military skills that would stand him in good stead later. Humanly speaking, he was an outcast, a ‘loser’ according to some. But God always has the last word, and uses Jephthah as a mighty way to deliver his people. Jephthah is mentioned alongside Gideon, Samson, Barak, and David as one of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11:32.
4. God used Jephthah’s time as an outcast to train him and to prepare him for future leadership. God often uses unwanted circumstances in our lives to prepare us for a greater service for Him later on.
5. C.S Lewis has said: “Everyone has noticed how hard it is to turn our thoughts to God when everything is going well with us. We ‘have all we want’ is a terrible saying when ‘all’ does not include God. We find God an interruption. As Saint Augustine says somewhere, ‘God wants to give us something, but cannot, because our hands are full—there’s nowhere for Him to put it.’ Or as a friend of mine said, ‘We regard God as an airman regards his parachute; it’s there for emergencies but he hopes he’ll never have to use it.’”
6. The people of Gilead make Jephthah the commander of their forces, as well as their leader.