

How To Handle  
Hard Texts

## Judges 11:29-40

Then the Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.”

So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the LORD gave them into his hand. And he struck them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a great blow. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel. Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow.” And she said to him, “My father, you have opened your mouth to the LORD; do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the LORD has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites.” So she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone two months,

that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions.” So he said, “Go.” Then he sent her away for two months, and she departed, she and her companions, and wept for her virginity on the mountains. And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had made.

She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

Otherwise, what do people mean by **being baptized on behalf of the dead**? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? - 1 Cor 15:29

1) Is this mentioned anywhere else in Scripture?

No

2) Is there a “second chance” for people who have already died?

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment- Heb. 9:27

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God - Romans 14:10

Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.— 2 Tim 2:15

1) Is this mentioned anywhere else in Scripture?

No

2) Are there other passages that state how a person is saved?

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— Ephesians 2:8

yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ — Galatians 2:16

## Judges 10:10

And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, “We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals.”

## Judges 10:11-13

And the LORD said to the people of Israel, “Did I not save you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines?... Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore **I will save you no more.**”



Judges 10:14

Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress.”

*“Jephthah defeated the Ammonites, but in the process made a rash vow to the LORD and sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering. God was not to be worshipped in the way pagans worshipped their gods, namely by human sacrifice. As a deliverer, Jephthah did not show his people how to keep the covenant, despite giving evidence of his faith.”*

Behind the principle of the analogy of faith is the prior confidence that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. If it is the Word of God, it must therefore be consistent and coherent.

- R.C. Sproul

# DID HE SACRIFICE HIS DAUGHTER?

1. Others Would Stop Him
2. Daughter's Reaction
3. Doesn't Fit with a Literal Burnt Offering

*“You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.”*

Deuteronomy 12:31

# DID HE SACRIFICE HIS DAUGHTER?

1. **Others Would Stop Him**
2. **Daughter's Reaction**
3. **Doesn't Fit with a Literal  
Burnt Offering**

*So she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions."*

Judges 11:37

# DID HE SACRIFICE HIS DAUGHTER?

1. Others Would Stop Him
2. Daughter's Reaction
3. Doesn't Fit with a Literal Burnt Offering

*“...She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel <sup>40</sup>that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.”*

Judges 11:39b-40

*“It’s difficult to believe that the Daughters of Israel would establish a custom to commemorate the awful sacrifice of a human being, but we can well understand that they would celebrate the devotion and obedience of Jephthah’s Daughter in helping her father fulfill his vow.” She deserves to stand with Isaac as a faithful child, who was willing to obey both father and God no matter what the cost.”*

*Warren Wiersbe*

## Romans 11:33-36

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.



## 1 Corinthians 2:14

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

## Psalm 119:18

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

So many Christians are haphazard and lazy rather than diligent in their approach to God's Word. They don't systematically read, study, or memorize it. If they read it at all, they jump from passage to passage, pulling verses out of context. They aren't seeking to know God and how He wants them to think, to believe, and to relate to others.

- Steven Cole

2 Timothy 2:7

**Think over what I say, for the Lord will give  
you understanding in everything.**

Yes, it is the Lord who gives understanding. But he does it through our God-given thinking and the efforts we make, with prayer, to think hard about what the Bible says.

– John Piper

## 2 Peter 3:16-17

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

Peter doesn't say, "Well, since Paul is difficult to understand and he says some things that are difficult for me to swallow, I think I will dismiss his teachings when I am confused or find myself disagreeing." No. What he does is confirm for the church that everything Paul has written are the very words of Scripture.

- David Helm

## Jeremiah 23:29

Is not my word like fire, declares  
the Lord, and like a hammer  
that breaks the rock in pieces?

God's Word does not merely impart information; it actually creates life. It's not only descriptive; it's effective too, God speaking is God acting.

– Michael Horton