

**JUDGES 11:12-28**  
**JEPHTHAH JUDGES!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 11 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Judges.

And have you noticed what a wild ride this has been? It is kind of a roller coaster faith. They were doing well, and they prospered, and that caused them to move away from the Lord and follow after other gods.

And this sin against God caused them to be placed into bondage by the hands of one of their enemies, servitude.

From servitude, after several years many times, they repent before God and return to Him, asking the Lord to deliver them. They are making supplication before the Lord.

From there we see the salvation that the Lord brings to them as He raises up a Judge to deliver them.

But it doesn't end there. Because, once that Judge died, they were heading back down on this wild roller coaster ride. And that really is the book of Judges, up and down, up and down and we see this over and over again because they did not anchor their life in the Lord, and they drifted away!

Here in Judges chapter 11 the focus is on the eastern region of Israel. And this is what we are told of them in Judges 10:6-9, **“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. 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. 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. 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.”**

Their sin had brought them into bondage for eighteen years and then they repent and cry out to the Lord and as we saw last time, God raised up a Judge by the name of Jephthah, a Gileadite.

And we are told that he was a **“man of valor.”** That is awesome and then that word that is disheartening so often, **“but.”**

Jephthah was the son of a harlot and as he got older not only did his half-brothers throw him out of the family, but the leaders in Gilead were in agreement and kicked him out of town.

He then banded together with **“worthless men”** and they went out raiding and stealing from people.

Now keep in mind that Gilead did not have a leader to lead them into battle against the Ammonites, the ones who had them in bondage for eighteen years. And the Ammonites were making war with Gilead and the elders of the city go to Jephthah and they ask him to lead them in battle against the Ammonites.

Obviously his reputation as a warrior was well known and Jephthah agrees if they will not only follow him as their leader into battle, but that he would lead them even after the battle. And they agree to his demands.

We see that in Judges 11:11 where we are told, **“Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.”**

That is where we will pick up our study this morning as Jephthah is preparing for battle against the Ammonites.

I have called this study – ***JEPHTHAH JUDGES!*** And I have broken down the verses we will be looking at into five main points. They are,

***THE NEGOTIATION – JUDGES 11:12-13***

***A HISTORY LESSON – JUDGES 11:14-22***

***THE LORD GAVE ISRAEL THE LAND – JUDGES 11:23-24***

***THE LAND WAS ISRAEL’S FOR CENTURIES – JUDGES 11:25-26***

***YOU ARE FIGHTING AGAINST GOD – JUDGES 11:27-28***

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Judges chapter 11, beginning in verse 12 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at this Judge, Jephthah.

**JUDGES 11****VERSES 12-13**

Here we see – *THE NEGOTIATION!*

Instead of jumping right into a battle against the Ammonites, Jephthah tried to negotiate with them. He tried to talk with them, reason with them. And I think he just wanted to have this resolved so that no one would be killed. I guess you could say that this was a diplomacy approach instead of warfare.

Keep in mind that the children of Israel were there in the land and thus, Jephthah's question to them was simple, "**. . . 'What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?'**" Judges 11:12.

In other words, what is your dispute against me. We are living in this land, it is our land, and thus, why are you coming down and trying to take it from us?

And keep in mind that this nation that was coming down upon Israel were family. Ammon was a child of Lot born out of a relationship between one of his two daughters and he was the nephew of Abraham.

So as the messengers of Jephthah return with word of what the Ammonites said, how they responded, this was their answer, "**. . . '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. Now therefore, restore those lands peaceably.'**" Judges 11:13.

The King of Ammon was basically saying that this was their land in the first place, not yours and thus, we are coming to get back what is rightfully ours or you can just give it to us!

Keep in mind that Jephthah is a warrior and thus, he could have just gone into battle against the Ammonites, but he didn't. He sought to negotiate with them and try to resolve this problem.

I think that is a New Testament principle. Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 12:18, **“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”**

And prior to Paul saying that, in Romans 12:14 he wrote, **“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”**

If that is true, and it is. If that is what we are supposed to do, then why do we have such a hard time blessing those who come against us and living at peace with others? And please understand that I am not speaking of the unsaved, I am speaking to Christians, as Paul was. So why is this so hard?

It is simple – ***THE FLESH!***

You see, to behave in this manner, to do those things are contrary to our flesh nature!

Now you may be thinking, ***“But I am a Christian, I have a new nature. So why do I still struggle with this?”***

Because that ***OLD NATURE*** is still with us. Yes, the ***OLD MAN*** was crucified with Christ, those things that we did we are not in bondage to anymore and yet, that old nature tries to rise up and when we allow it, it manifests itself with hate, revenge, all kinds of evil things.

That ***OLD NATURE*** will not be taken away until we get our resurrection bodies, new bodies for our spirit and soul to dwell in!

And remember what Paul said, **“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”** Romans 12:18.

What Paul is saying is that on our part, we are to live at peace, if they refuse or reject to, then there is nothing we can do about it, but at least we have tried and that door is still open if they choose to change.

We should not be responsible for the lack of peace, we should be peacemakers but that is not always possible, not because of us, but because of others refusing it.

That great scientist, George Washington Carver once said, ***“I will never let another man ruin my life by making me hate him.”***

That is good advice. We need to try to live at peace with people, to do all that we can to be peacemakers!

And let me say this. The kind of love, the kind of forgiveness that is being spoke of is not natural to us because the flesh always wants to get back. But what we see is that this is a supernatural love that comes from God. Yes, the flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and which one you feed the most will be manifested in your life.

Let me give you this example of supernatural love. We are told,

Some years ago, in the store where he was working, a nephew of mine was murdered by an addict looking for drug money. Although deeply grieved by this tragic loss, my brother-in-law has refused to become bitter or hateful. Instead, his continued desire and prayer has been for the salvation of the man who took his son’s life. He even visited him in prison to give him the greatest blessing, the gospel. Such is the kind of distinctive Christian love that seeks to bless those who do us terrible harm.

- John MacArthur

I think we can all agree that this is not a human love, a natural love, but a supernatural love that comes to us from God but unless you surrender, that love will not flow in you and through you.

And I truly believe that God will give you that love when you need it.

We think of this now and say, ***“I could never do that!”***

And that is true, you can't, and you are not in that situation, but if it did happen, or some other situation, God would give you that kind of love! And then it is up to you to follow what God is showing you or let the flesh manifest itself in that situation!

We are also told of this story and again, this is not a natural love but a supernatural love that can only come from God. We are told,

Bruce Goodrich was being initiated into the cadet corps at Texas A & M University. One night, Bruce was forced to run until he dropped - but he never got up. Bruce Goodrich died before he even entered college.

A short time after the tragedy, Bruce's father wrote this letter to the administration, faculty, student body, and the corps of cadets: “I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my family for the great outpouring of concern and sympathy from Texas A & M University and the college community over the loss of our son Bruce. We were deeply touched by the tribute paid to him in the battalion. We were particularly pleased to note that his Christian witness did not go unnoticed during his brief time on campus.”

Mr. Goodrich went on: “I hope it will be some comfort to know that we harbor no ill will in the matter. We know our God makes no mistakes. Bruce had an appointment with his Lord and is now secure in his celestial home. When the question is asked, ‘Why did this happen?’ perhaps one answer will be, ‘So that many will consider where they will spend eternity.’”

- Our Daily Bread, March 22, 1994

Again, that is a supernatural love that can only come from God as we surrender to His will and not ours!

For Jephthah, he is trying to make peace in a difficult situation and now, the letter that is before him he has to deal with.

Remember what the King of Ammon wrote to Jephthah, the reason that they were attacking Israel, “**. . . ‘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. Now therefore, restore those lands peaceably.’**” Judges 11:13.

So we see *THE NEGOTIATION* and it is not going well. But with this letter that Jephthah received, he is going to give the Ammonites – *A HISTORY LESSON!*

#### VERSES 14-22

So we see Jephthah send this letter to the King of the Ammonites and he wants them to remember why they don’t have this land.

First of all, to put this in perspective for us, the land location goes like this. The Arnon River made the southern border of Ammon and flowed into the Dead Sea.

The Jabbok River was the northern boundary of Ammon and it flowed into the Jordan River, on the east side of the Jordan River.

And the land that the Ammonites were talking about was the land that was taken from them in a previous battle against the Amorites.

You see, the Amorites conquered the Ammonites and took their land.

Then, when the children of Israel came in and defeated Sihon the King of the Amorites, they took their land, which was previously the land of the Ammonites.

Are you with me?

The point that Jephthah was making was that this was not their land for some time, and it was land that had been given to the children of Israel.

They lost this land to the Amorites and then the children of Israel took it from the Amorites, and not the Ammonites!

***“And if that is true, and it is, then why are you coming against us, we did not take the land from you”*** is the point that Jephthah is making!

What I think is important here is that Jephthah knew his history. He knew what the children of Israel did and that is important.

Look at what is going on in our country today where we are trying to destroy our history, alter our history, and so many people are jumping on the band wagon regarding this issue.

Let me show you what I mean, and I am sad to say, many Christians buy into the lies of what the socialists are telling them. We are told,

The U.S. Constitution states that American citizens have the right to free speech and the right of the people to peaceful assembly and to petition the government for redress of grievances.

However, looting, destroying public and private property, and vandalizing historic monuments is not free speech. These actions not only border on anarchy but show a real lack of understanding history.

During the riots and protests following the death of George Floyd, killed by a white police officer, many monuments across the country honoring America's heroes were damaged.

In Washington, D.C., the World War II Memorial was spray-painted with the words "Do black veterans count?" The memorial was built to honor all races and creeds who served to defend America during WW2.

Did the one who scrawled the questionable epithet realize that a million Americans of African descent, men and women, served bravely during WW2 defending this country, often with their lives, knowing that when they returned home they would be facing racism.

In New Jersey, the Veterans Advisory Council at the VA Lyons campus consists of Black and white members. All of whom dedicate themselves to helping all veterans regardless of race. Yes, Black veterans do matter.

VFW National Commander, William Schmitz, condemned the vandalism of the WW2 Memorial, "The VFW believes in peaceful, organized demonstrations. However, we are extremely saddened and angered to find our sacred WW2 Memorial was defaced. The veterans who fought for the very freedom to demonstrate deserve better."

Other sacred monuments in Washington were also vandalized. The statue of Thaddeus Kosciuzko was spray-painted with obscene phrases and covered in urine. Kosciuzko played a vital role, serving as a Colonel in the U.S. Continental Army, and was designer of the fortification that would eventually become West Point Academy.

The irony of this vicious act upon his statue was that Kosciuszko was a believer in the rights of ethnic and racial minorities. In his will Kosciuszko left instructions that part of his fortune was to be used to buy out and free slaves, and those freed slaves be given an education. Those who desecrated the statue showed disrespect to the very man who was ahead of his time in trying to get equality for African Americans.

It wasn't enough to vandalize the WW2 Memorial and the statue of Kosciuszko, but the steps at the base of the Lincoln Memorial also got spray-painted with the words, "Yall have enough yet?"

This showed a lack of respect to the memory of Lincoln, who led the country through the Civil War in his effort to end slavery.

This memorial was the very place in which Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I have a dream" speech. King was an advocate of non-violence in securing racial equality and said, "That If we as Negroes succumb to the temptation of using violence in our struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness. And our legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos."

How prophetic.

The defacements of our national monuments show an ignorance of history. Destruction of property and injuring of innocent people is not only a perversion of our Constitutional freedoms but is a perversion of the peaceable demonstrations by those attempting to get police reform and equality. The wise words of Martin Luther King Jr. should be heeded: "The strong man is the man who will not hit back, who can stand up for his rights and yet not hit back."

- <https://njersy.co/3fO10CH>

Jephthah knew the history of the Jewish people and we should know our history as well. We should understand what this nation was about when it was founded. Not a perfect nation with perfect people, because there are none. But a far better nation because of our roots in the Judeo-Christian faith.

We look down upon Russia and China and other countries who suppress the truth, cover their history and replace it with what they want. Be careful, we are doing the same. And if you don't learn from history, you will repeat it and it will not be pretty!

And as important as our history is, I think the next point that Jephthah brings out is even more important – ***THE LORD GAVE ISRAEL THE LAND!***

#### VERSES 23-24

After Jephthah gives them a history lesson of who they really took the land from, not the Ammonites who lost it to the Amorites, but from the Amorites, he then puts the nail in the coffin you might say regarding their false information by telling them, ***“God drove out the Amorites and gave this land to Israel, why in the world do you think it is yours now to possess? You lost it to the Amorites. And Israel, by God’s might, took it from them, and thus, the land is ours and not yours!”***

That is exactly right but, like back then, we see the same going on today with the so-called Palestinians, which are not even what they claim to be, and they claim that the land is theirs!

They tell us that they are the descendants of a Palestinian people who lived thousands of years ago in a land called Palestine.

You have to be kidding me?

Folk's, in all of history there has never been a Palestinian people, government, nation, culture, language, religion, nothing at all. It is all a lie. It is fake news!

At least the Ammonites were in the land at one time before the Amorites defeated them.

But not these people in Israel today who call themselves Palestinians!

God gave the land to the children of Israel and I really don't care what the United Nations or any government says because God trumps all of them!

Make no mistake about it, there is a tremendous amount of misinformation about Israel and the so-called Palestinians today.

We even have some churches coming against Israel for war crimes and they side with the Palestinians who are brutally killing their own people by using them as shields to protect themselves.

I hope I can clear up some misconceptions about this issue.

And it is so unbelievable, that I hear pastors I respect call the land of Israel, Palestine! Never was and never will be.

Also, in my Bible, and probably in yours, in the map section, when it shows the land of Israel, the heading goes like this, "*Palestine in Christ's Time.*" Are you kidding me?

We even had a map up on the wall that said this, and we had to change it to "*Israel*" because that is what it is, not Palestine!

And this is something that people don't get, because they have been given fake news about it, that the concept of "*Palestinians*" is one that did not exist until about 1948 when the Arab inhabitants, of what until then was Palestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the Jews.

Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolph Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was The Palestine Post; a Jewish newspaper and so much more.

Listen to what Zola Levitt said about where this name came from. He wrote,

During the last few centuries, the world, Christians included, has fallen into a bad habit. We have bought into some early Roman propaganda. We have used the name Palestine, which Roman Emperor Hadrian placed on the country of Israel in 135 A.D., for so long that it has become common usage. This would be as incorrect as calling the Russia of today the “Soviet Union” or referring to Berlin as “East Germany.”

- <https://bit.ly/37TaF8p>

Then why do we hear so much about Palestinians today?

Keep in mind that the Arabs who now call themselves “*Palestinians*” do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that “*Palestine*” is their ancestral homeland.

But they are not a distinct nationality at all.

They are the same – in language, custom, and tribal and family ties – as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond.

What’s more, many of the “*Palestinians*” or their immediate ancestors came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

Dave Hunt gives us insight into this idea of a Palestinian. He wrote,

To the British Peel Commission in 1937, a local Arab leader testified, “There is no such country as Palestine. ‘Palestine’ is a term the Zionists invented . . .”

Professor Philip Hitti, Arab historian, testified to an Anglo-American Committee of inquiry in 1946, “There is no such thing as Palestine in history – absolutely not!”

To the UN Security Council on May 31, 1956, Ahmed Shukairy declared, “It is common knowledge that Palestine is nothing but southern Syria.”

Eight years later, in 1964, Shukairy became the founding chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and coined the infamous slogan, “[W]e’ll drive the Jews into the sea.”

And he wasn’t even a “Palestinian”! Like Arafat, he was born in Cairo. The Palestinian Liberation Organization was not founded by Palestinians but has been used to exploit these abused people in Islam’s war against Israel.

- Dave Hunt, Judgment Day!, pp. 82-83

And please understand that the Arabs control 99.9 percent of the Middle East lands. Israel represents one-tenth of 1 percent of the landmass and yet, the so-called Palestinians want it all!

But whose land is it. Listen to what God has told us in His Word.

The land belongs to the Jews, God has given it to them, and it was His in the first place and it is still His!

In Genesis 12:7 we are told, “**Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.**” That is pretty clear; the land of Israel belongs to the Jews!

In Genesis 13:15 we are told, **“for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.”** Think about this for a minute. This land that God gave to Israel is theirs forever! Has that ended? No, it is ***FOREVER!***

And think about this for a minute. The word ***“Israel”*** is mentioned 2,565 times in 2,293 verses in The King James Version of the Bible. The city of ***“Jerusalem”*** is found 811 times in 764 verses.

Now in contrast the word ***“Jerusalem”*** is not even found once, not even once in the Qur’an and yet Muslims claim that this city is their third holiest city!

The Jews have been in the land of Israel continuously for about 3,000 years, not so with the so-called Palestinians! There are so many myths out there that people believe are the truth and they are not the truth; they are myths like I have said.

And that is exactly what they are trying to do in our country as well. They are trying to remove what this nation was built upon and it was not the freedom to worship any god, but to freely worship Jesus Christ without the government being involved in how we practice our faith. But that has changed and will continue to change as the government is actively involved in telling the church what it can do and what it can’t do.

We live in a great nation with awesome blessings but understand why this nation is great. It is not because of our hard work, how smart we are, what we can do.

The truth of the matter is that this nation was discovered and built upon the Lord Jesus Christ!

Now, what made our nation so great? That is a good question and French writer Alexis de Tocqueville came to this conclusion after he visited America back in 1831. This is what he wrote,

I sought for the greatness of the United States in her commodious harbors, her ample rivers, her fertile fields, and boundless forests – and it was not there. I sought for it in her rich mines, her vast world commerce, her public-school system, and in her institutions of higher learning – and it was not there. I looked for it in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution – and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great!”

- Alexis de Tocqueville

But as we turn from God, then men do what is in their own hearts and it is evil. There is no peace without the Prince of Peace in a person’s life!

Listen to what Patrick Henry said,

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!”

How often do you hear that spoken of? Not at all because it is not politically correct, it does not promote their agenda of removing Jesus out of our nation.

Listen to this from John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, one of the three men most responsible for the Constitution. He said,

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest, of a Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.

- John Jay

And this is from Roger Sherman, signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He said,

I believe that there is one only living and true God, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a revelation from God and a complete rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

- Roger Sherman

This one is from 1892 and it comes from the Supreme Court of the United States after citing 87 precedents and decided that: "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise: and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian. . . This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation. . . We find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth. These and many other matters which might be noticed, add volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."

And yet we are told that we were not a Christian nation. Foolishness. And these are just a few samples.

When you look at this nation's history and the system of government our Founding Fathers gave to us, we have so much to be thankful for. We have the world's longest on-going Constitutional Republic!

Some two hundred and forty-four years under the same document and one form of government is unprecedented.

If you look at France, they have gone through seven completely different forms of government; Italy is on their 51<sup>st</sup>!

We are still on our first!

What insight did our Founding Fathers have when they were writing the Constitution, where did they get their ideas?

A group of political science professors from the University of Houston felt that if they could see whom the Founders were quoting, they could determine the source of their ideas. They looked at 15,000 writings of that era, taking them 10 years to complete their work and they found that 34 percent of the direct quotes in the political writings of the Founding era were from the Bible!

They formed this government by looking at God's Word and applying it!

Let me give you some examples of what some of the charters of America's first colonies were like and you will see it was not a secular document.

Keep in mind that today if any state had the nerve to make these statements the ACLU would be all over them telling them it is unconstitutional, but it was not unconstitutional in the past, when this nation got its start! But how many are truly aware of that fact? Very few!

***1606 Charter for a Colony in Virginia:***

[T]o make habitation . . . and to deduce a colony of sundry [various] of our people into that part of America commonly called Virginia . . . in propagating of Christian religion to such people as yet live in darkness.

***1680-1681 Charter for Pennsylvania:***

William Penn . . . out of a commendable desire to . . . [convert] the savage natives by gentle and just manners to the love of civil society and Christian religion, hath humbly besought leave of us to transport an ample colony unto a certain country . . . in the parts of America not yet cultivated and planted.

The Colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Plymouth, and New Haven, back in 1643, joined together to form the New England Confederation and this is what the document said:

[W]e all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How often do you hear that taught in the school system?

Today in our public-school system we have removed prayer, Bible studies, even the 10 Commandments from its walls. But Christianity and education were inseparable.

Listen to the 1636 rules of Harvard. They declared:

Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17.3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let everyone seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of Him (Prov. 2, 3). Everyone shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein.

In 1699, Yale was founded by ten ministers in order to:

[T]o plant, and under the Divine blessing, to propagate in this wilderness the blessed reformed Protestant religion.

What was America's educational philosophy?

Listen to what George Washington said as chiefs from the Delaware Indian tribe brought him three Indian youths to be trained in American schools. First Washington assured the chiefs that "Congress ... will look upon them as their own children." And then he commended the chiefs for their decision by telling them:

You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are. Congress will do everything they can to assist you in this wise intention.

*The New England Primer* was the first textbook ever printed in America. It was introduced in Boston in 1690 and for two centuries many in America learned to read from this book.

After learning the Alphabet and putting one, two, and three-letter syllables together and learning how to put them together to make words, after about a fourth of the way through this textbook it returns to the alphabet and attaches phrases to the letter for them to memorize.

Let me give you a few examples:

A – A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

B – Better is little with fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

C – Come unto Christ all ye that labor and are heavy laden and He will give you rest.

D – Do not the abominable thing which I hate saith the Lord.

E – Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Do you think that would be allowed even for a day in our schools today?

Not at all and yet it was used in our schools to teach children how to read and it is part of our history!

Let me show you just a few quotes from our Founding Fathers and you see if they are secular or not. We are told:

***Samuel Adams, Signer of the Declaration:***

Principally and first of all, I recommend my soul to that Almighty Being who gave it and my body I commit to the dust, relying upon the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins.

***Charles Carroll, Signer of the Declaration:***

On the mercy of my Redeemer I rely for salvation and on his merits; not on the works I have done in obedience to his precepts.

***Noah Webster:***

In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed . . . No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.

***John Jay, the original Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and one of the three men most responsible for the Constitution:***

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty – as well as the privilege and interest – of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.

I can go on and show you quote after quote supporting that this nation was a Christian nation, that we were governed by Christian men, that this nation was born and grew with Christianity as its cornerstone.

How we have changed our history to fit our secular society. And we have reaped the results of that, of moving away from God.

For Jephthah, he not only knew his history, he knew His God and because of that, he took a stand for what God had given them, he did not compromise what he believed, and we need to stand strong in the days we are living in where people want to re-write our history and have us compromise what we believe! Don't let them!

Look again at what Jephthah does here. He is basically telling them, ***“Look, be satisfied in what your god has given you. If he short-changed you, complain to him about it and don’t complain to me. And don’t be jealous because of what our God, YAHWEH has given to us. Yes, He has blessed us abundantly but talk with your god about that one! And see if your god can come up against my God!”***

In a sense, he threw the gauntlet down or he was challenging them to this battle, but they better be sure that they want to get involved, they better be sure that their god will deliver them!

#### VERSES 25-26

Here is a good point that Jephthah makes, and our next point – ***THE LAND WAS ISRAEL’S FOR CENTURIES!***

Let that sink in for a minute. Israel has occupied this land for some 300 years at that point, and thus, if this was such a big deal to them, why did they wait so long to get it back?

I think the time has expired for them to take this land back, a land that they lost to the Amorites in the first place!

And after saying that, this last point that Jephthah makes is the most important – ***YOU ARE FIGHTING AGAINST GOD!***

#### VERSES 27-28

Jephthah warned them not to get involved in this war, the land was Israel’s and if they do fight against Israel, God will see the children of Israel through this battle, they will end up being the losers.

You see, Jephthah did not see this battle as primarily between two armies, but between the God of Israel and the false god of Ammon.

Jephthah showed true wisdom in seeing this as a spiritual battle first.

What about us? Do we see these battles against people, organizations or do we see them as spiritual battles?

Make no mistake about it, these are spiritual battles we are facing, and they seem to be getting more and more intense as we see the heart of man rebelling against God.

And yes, these spiritual battles are played out in the lives of people and nations but behind the scenes is the enemy who is pulling their strings.

That is what Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:10-13, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

Again, our battle is not against flesh and blood, but it is a spiritual battle.

Yes, it is played out through the flesh because Satan and his forces use man as he tools but it is truly a spiritual battle.

In fact, Paul lists the rankings of these demonic forces, Satan being in charge, followed by principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness.

The Scriptures don't elaborate much more on these and we really don't need to know more about them. What we need to know is our armor, how to protect ourselves, and Paul goes on listing the spiritual armor that we are to put on for this battle we face everyday!

Also, please notice that Paul does not tell us to go and look for this spiritual warfare, he just tells us it is a fact and if you are serving the Lord the enemy will come looking for you, not maybe, he will!

We need to be ready!

And we need to remember that primarily, on a day by day basis, spiritual warfare is all about rescuing people who have been taken captive by the devil through his lies and we have the truth that alone can set them free. What is that truth? It is ***THE GOSPEL!***

Don't get lost on a rabbit trail that may seem right, but in the end, there is no fruit from it. Our mission is to the lost!

You see, the spiritual warfare intersects with our lives as believers because the devil wants people to go to hell, he hates the truth and anyone who tries to share it with those he has deceived.

And so, as the god of this world system, the prince of the power of the air, uses his power over the air waves to influence and control the minds of people so that he can manipulate them to do his will, may we stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might!

Thus, Paul tells us that as Christians we are to "**withstand**" or ANTHISTEMI, (anth-is'-tay-mee) in the Greek and it speaks of taking a stand against a great opposition.

How many battles have been lost because soldiers did not take the battle seriously?

Custer thought, "It's only a few Indians, not a big deal!" and that was the last stand he took! We are under great opposition today; we need to be ready for the battles we face each day!

Now this "**evil day**" is not a specific day but a period of time when the enemies of God will grow stronger and eviler and the conflict will be intense, as we are seeing today!

And make no mistake about it, if Satan can, he will destroy our witness by getting us to do things, say things that will push people away from Jesus because, as they look at our faith, they see the hypocrisy of it. Be careful!

And listen to what Paul shares with us next in Ephesians, the armor we are to put on and always be ready for the battle, the attacks of the enemy. And never forget that our victory is in Christ.

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 6:14-18, **“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”**

And if you are not familiar with this, go to our Ephesians study and look at this armor that God has given to us so that we can stand strong in the Lord as we do battle with the enemy. And thus, we need to put on the whole armor of God!

As I have said, Jephthah understood that this battle was the Lord’s, it was a spiritual battle that was going to be played out in the lives of these enemies and Jephthah stood strong in the Lord.

Now, upon hearing these words from Jephthah –

***THE NEGOTIATIONS*** that did not go well.

***THE HISTORY LESSON*** that they did not heed.

The fact that ***THE LORD GAVE ISRAEL THE LAND*** didn’t matter to them.

It didn't matter that *THE LAND WAS ISRAEL'S FOR CENTURIES*, don't confuse me with the truth.

And, in the end, it didn't matter to them that Jephthah told them that *YOU ARE FIGHTING AGAINST GOD!*

Jephthah's logical, reasoned response was of no effect upon the King of Ammon. War was therefore inevitable. And we will see that next time.

May we, as Christians, try to resolve conflict and live at peace with people, as much as they will receive it.

May we, as Christians know our history, not only in this country but of our faith.

May we, as Christians understand that this nation that we are living in is a gift from God to us.

May we, as Christians understand that we have been in this land for over four hundred years.

And may we, as Christians understand that if the people of this world are going to come against us, the church, they are fighting against God and they will not be victorious because the Lord has said that the gates of Hell will not be victorious against it! (Matthew 16:18)

Let me leave you with this because I know it can be discouraging, it can be disheartening when we see the wickedness, the false information that is being put forth, the sin that is growing in this nation. But never forget, nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Listen carefully to this story. We are told,

Colin Chapman, in *The Case for Christianity*, quotes Ugandan bishop Festo Kivengere's account of the 1973 execution by firing squad of three men from his diocese: February 10 began as a sad day for us in Kabale. People were commanded to come to the stadium and witness the execution. Death permeated the atmosphere. A silent crowd of about three thousand was there to watch. I had permission from the authorities to speak to the men before they died, and two of my fellow ministers were with me. They brought the men in a truck and unloaded them. They were handcuffed and their feet were chained. The firing squad stood at attention.

As we walked into the center of the stadium, I was wondering what to say. How do you give the gospel to doomed men who are probably seething with rage? We approached them from behind, and as they turned to look at us, what a sight! Their faces were all alight with an unmistakable glow and radiance.

Before we could say anything, one of them burst out: "Bishop, thank you for coming! I wanted to tell you. The day I was arrested, in my prison cell, I asked the Lord Jesus to come into my heart. He came in and forgave me all my sins! Heaven is now open, and there is nothing between me and my God! Please tell my wife and children that I am going to be with Jesus. Ask them to accept him into their lives as I did."

The other two men told similar stories, excitedly raising their hands, which rattled their handcuffs. I felt that what I needed to do was to talk to the soldiers, not to the condemned. So I translated what the men had said into a language the soldiers understood. The military men were standing there with guns cocked and bewilderment on their faces. They were so dumbfounded that they forgot to put the hoods over the men's faces!

The three faced the firing squad standing close together. They looked toward the people and began to wave, handcuffs and all. The people waved back. Then shots were fired, and the three were with Jesus. We stood in front of them, our own hearts throbbing with joy, mingled with tears. It was a day never to be forgotten. Though dead, the men spoke loudly to all of Kigezi District and beyond, so that there was an upsurge of life in Christ, which challenges death and defeats it.

The next Sunday, I was preaching to a huge crowd in the hometown of one of the executed men. Again, the feel of death was over the congregation. But when I gave them the testimony of their man, and how he died, there erupted a great song of praise to Jesus! Many turned to the Lord there.

- Ray Stamps

**“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”** Ephesians 6:13.