

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Judges And Ruth: Personal Blessing Amid Group Apostasy

Part II: History Of The Era Of The Judges

B. The Record Of Specific Judges, Judges 3:7-16:31

10. Jephthah's Judgeship, Judges 10:6-12:7

b. Jephthah's Steps In Discerning God's Truth From Ammonite Error

(Judges 11:12-28)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We need God's practical guidelines for discerning the truth amid significant error that exists in today's world:

(1) Dorothy Rabinowitz's op-ed, "Denying the Obvious About Islamist Terror" (The Wall Street Journal, January 12, 2016, p. A13) told how a security video caught a man in a "flowing white dishdasha -- a robe favored by Muslim men -- running toward" a "patrol car, shooting, sticking his hand in the window, and racing speedily away," and that Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenny, later explaining the shooting at a news conference, said, "In no way, shape or form does anybody in this room believe that Islam or the teaching of Islam' had anything to do with the attack."

"(I)mmediately after the mayor's pronouncement, the commander of the police department's homicide unit calmly took the microphone. Capt. James Clark reported that the shooter . . . had said, repeatedly, that he followed Allah, that he pledged allegiance to Islamic State and "That is the reason I did what I did." (Ibid.)

Many officials today like Mayor Kenny tell us that Islam is a religion of peace, that Islamist terrorists do not represent true Islam. However, The Wall Street Journal "Notable & Quotable" section, December 9, 2015, p. A15 cited "a March 28, 1786 letter written by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson" to U. S. Secretary of Foreign Affairs, John Jay on their conversation with the ambassador from Tripoli about piracy by the Barbary States (as follows): "We took the liberty to make some enquiries concerning the ground of their pretensions to make war upon nations who had done them no injury . . . The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the laws of their Prophet; that it was written in their Koran; that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners; that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found and to make slaves of all they could take as prisoners; and that every Mussulman [Muslim] who was slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise."

So, we ask, "Whom should we believe regarding the true nature of Islam -- many of today's officials or police reports on Islamist terrorist attacks and the testimony of the founding fathers John Adams and Thomas Jefferson?"

(2) Even we conservative Christians face this dilemma on discerning the truth: Mike Matthews in Answers magazine ("Science In Sunday School," Jan.-Mar. 2016, p. 98) told how he "heard Ken Ham thunder from the lectern, 'Churches need to teach science, not just Bible 'stories!'" Mr. Matthews wrote he was influenced by this statement to get permission from his pastor to teach an elective in his Church focusing more on science than just Scripture. (Ibid.)

However, in view of their accountability to Christ at His coming and the future tendency in the Church to drift away from Scripture for other teachings, pastors were called by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:1-5 to preach God's Word! The question is, "Whom should we believe on this issue -- Ken Ham or the Apostle Paul?"

Need: *So we ask, "What guidelines does God offer for discerning His truth from the errors we face today?!"*

- I. Before Jephthah led Israel into battle against the Ammonites, he was presented the Ammonite view of the conflict that left Israel appearing to be in the wrong for opposing the Ammonites, Judges 11:12-13:**
 - A. Before fighting the Ammonites, Jephthah asked them if they had a just cause against Israel, Judges 11:12.
 - B. The Ammonites replied that Israel had unjustly seized part of their land when she had come out of Egypt, that Israel had seized the territory that belonged to them that lay just east of the Jordan and between the Arnon River to the south and the Jabbok River to the north, Judges 11:13; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, map 2.
- II. Nevertheless, in a series of steps, Jephthah discerned the Ammonite claim to be in error, so he prepared to make war against that nation with a clear conscience and God's full support (as follows):**
 - A. First, Jephthah heeded the Biblical way of handling war so God could give him discernment, Judges 11:12:
 1. Back in Deuteronomy 20:10-15 (with 20:16-18), Moses had told Israel that when she faced potential conflict with an army that was **not** of the Canaanite peoples whom she was to destroy in the Promised Land, before engaging in battle, Israel was to seek to make peace with the enemy nation.
 2. The Ammonites were not Canaanites, but were related to Israel as descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot, Genesis 12:4; 19:29-38. Thus, Jephthah rightly heeded Deuteronomy 20:10-15 to try to make peace with the Ammonites before engaging them in battle.

- B. Second, Jephthah heeded the Biblical record over the Ammonite claim to discern the truth, Judges 11:13-23:
1. Numbers 21:25-30 in Scripture claimed that the land the Ammonites asserted had originally belonged to them had actually never been in Ammonite hands, but in the hands of their relative nation of Moab.
 2. However, pagan king Sihon of Heshbon had taken the land from Moab (Num. 21:26), so when Israel was later attacked by Sihon and she had defeated him, she rightly acquired that land, Numbers 21:23-24, 31.
 3. Whatever motive the Ammonites had in making their claim to this particular territory, they had no just claim to it based on any historical event that had been recorded in the Bible!
 4. Thus, Jephthah told the Ammonites of the Biblical record of Israel's Exodus, explaining that Israel had gone around its relative nations of Edom and Moab (Judges 11:14-18) only to be attacked in battle by pagan king Sihon of Heshbon who possessed the land his people had taken from Moab, Judges 11:19-22.
 5. Thus, Jephthah concluded from Scripture that the Ammonite claim to the land was erroneous, Jud. 11:23.
- C. Third, Jephthah relied on divine precedent for the truth: God gave Israel victory over Sihon when he had wrongly attacked her (Jud. 11:19-20), so Jephthah held to that precedent that Israel keep the land, Jud. 11:23.
- D. Fourth, Jephthah relied on the principle of consistency to discern the truth, Judges 11:25-26a; Num. 21:25-30:
1. In replying to the Ammonites, Jephthah asked if they were better than Balak the son of Zippor of Moab who had consented to Israel's possessing the land of Sihon right after Israel had defeated Sihon even if that land had initially belonged to Moab, Judges 11:25-26a; Numbers 21:25-30; B. K. C., O. T., p. 401.
 2. Moab's enduring consent to Israel's keeping Sihon's land left Israel as the only true owner of the land!
- E. Fifth, Jephthah relied on logic to discern the truth, Judges 11:26b-27: For three hundred years, Israel had lived in the land the nation had seized in war from Sihon king of Heshbon, and the Ammonites had not complained about any wrong in all that time. Jephthah thus held the Ammonite claim to be unreasonable and hence false.
- F. Sixth, Jephthah relied on the cessation of argument from the Ammonites to discern that they erred: when he had replied to the Ammonites with his Biblical facts, and the Ammonites did not respond, he concluded that they had no real argument, that their stance was false, so he prepared to fight them, Judges 11:28, 29b.
- G. Seventh, in support of Jephthah's verdict that the Ammonite argument was false, the Holy Spirit came upon him, motivating Jephthah to mobilize Israel's men for war against the unjust nation of Ammon, Judges 11:29a.

Lesson: *When facing the Ammonite charge that Israel was wrong for going to war against them, Jephthah relied on (1) being occupied with God's Biblical will and heeding (2) Scripture, (3) God's precedents, (4) the principle of consistency, (5) logic and (6) the principle of the cessation of argument from the critic to discern the truth. God validated Jephthah's verdict about the truth by (7) sending the Holy Spirit on Jephthah to equip him to lead Israel.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit Who leads us to discern the truth, Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:9b; Jn. 16:13. (2) Then, by relying on the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), may we discern the truth by heeding (a) God's Biblical will, (b) His precedents, (c) the principle of consistency, (d) logic (e) the principle of the ending of the critic's argument, (f) the validating fruit of the Spirit in our hearts (Gal. 5:22-23) (g) and Scripture.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Several Church members have lately asked me to explain Romans 9:6-29, a passage Calvinists use to teach that God chooses to save some, giving only them the faith to believe. Romans 9:17 claims God raised up Pharaoh as a vessel of wrath to harden him for judgment, so some Calvinists teach God kept Pharaoh from ever trusting in Him.

However, Scripture itself provides us discernment to correct such errant claims: (1) Romans 9:30-33 explains that Romans 9:6-29 teaches that those God saves are those who believe where those who rely on heeding the law for salvation are the lost. The Calvinist tries to make Paul here teach that God selects **which** people even **can believe**, but Paul does not tell us that: all he does do is claim that God is sovereign in saving only those who believe versus those who rely on works to be saved! Indeed, all who do not believe do so of their own will, for Jesus marveled at unbelief in Mark 6:6, what He would do only if man and not God's predestination was responsible for man's unbelief!

(2) As for Pharaoh, in Exodus 3:18-19 **before** God **began** to **harden** him and before Moses first went to him to ask that he let Israel leave Egypt, God had told Moses, "I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go." Then, after Pharaoh's first refusal to release Israel, in Exodus 5:22-6:1, God said He would start to harden Pharaoh. Even then, this hardening came **not** by God's directly programming Pharaoh's will, but in letting Pharaoh's magicians copy some of Moses' miracles that Pharaoh not think highly of God and so firm up his own initial decision, Ex. 6:1-8:19!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, equipped with the indwelling Holy Spirit, may we follow the Biblical guidelines Jephthah used to discern God's truth from the errors that exist in our world.