

Haftarah for Hukat

Judges 11:1-33

This translation was taken from the JPS Tanakh

Chapter 11

¹ Jephthah the Gileadite was an able warrior, who was the son of a prostitute. Jephthah's father was Gilead; ² but Gilead also had sons by his wife, and when the wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out. They said to him, "You shall have no share in our father's property, for you are the son of an outsider." ³ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the Tob country. Men of low character gathered about Jephthah and went out raiding with him.

⁴ Some time later, the Ammonites went to war against Israel. ⁵ And when the Ammonites attacked Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah back from the Tob country. ⁶ They said to Jephthah, "Come be our chief, so that we can fight the Ammonites." ⁷ Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "You are the very people who rejected me and drove me out of my father's house. How can you come to me now when you are in trouble?" ⁸ The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "Honestly, we have now turned back to you. If you come with us and fight the Ammonites, you shall be our commander over all the inhabitants of Gilead." ⁹ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "[Very well,] if you bring me back to fight the Ammonites and the Lord delivers them to me, I am to be your commander." ¹⁰ And the elders of Gilead answered Jephthah, "The Lord Himself shall be witness between us: we will do just as you have said."

¹¹ Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their commander and chief. And Jephthah repeated all these terms before the Lord at Mizpah.

¹² Jephthah then sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, "What have you against me that you have come to make war on my country?" ¹³ The king of the Ammonites replied to Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came from Egypt, they seized the land which is mine, from the Arnon to the Jabbok as far as the Jordan. Now, then, restore it peaceably."

¹⁴ Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites. ¹⁵ He said to him, "Thus said Jephthah: Israel did not seize the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. ¹⁶ When they left Egypt, Israel traveled through the wilderness to the Sea of Reeds and went on to Kadesh. ¹⁷ Israel then sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Allow us to cross your country.' But the king of Edom would not consent. They also sent a mission to the king of Moab, and he refused. So Israel, after staying at Kadesh, ¹⁸ traveled on through the wilderness, skirting the land of Edom and the land of Moab. They kept to the east of the land of Moab until they encamped on the other side of the Arnon; and, since Moab ends at the Arnon, they never entered Moabite territory.

¹⁹ "Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon. Israel said to him, 'Allow us to cross through your country to our homeland.' ²⁰ But Sihon would not trust Israel to pass through his territory. Sihon mustered all his troops, and they encamped at Jahaz; he engaged

Israel in battle. ²¹ But the Lord, the God of Israel, delivered Sihon and all his troops into Israel's hands, and they defeated them; and Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that land. ²² Thus they possessed all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

²³ "Now, then, the Lord, the God of Israel, dispossessed the Amorites before His people Israel; and should you possess their land? ²⁴ Do you not hold what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So we will hold on to everything that the Lord our God has given us to possess.

²⁵ "Besides, are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he start a quarrel with Israel or go to war with them?

²⁶ "While Israel has been inhabiting Heshbon and its dependencies, and Aroer and its dependencies, and all the towns along the Arnon for three hundred years, why have you not tried to recover them all this time? ²⁷ I have done you no wrong; yet you are doing me harm and making war on me. May the Lord, who judges, decide today between the Israelites and the Ammonites!"

²⁸ But the king of the Ammonites paid no heed to the message that Jephthah sent him.

²⁹ Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah. He marched through Gilead and Manasseh, passing Mizpeh of Gilead; and from Mizpeh of Gilead he crossed over [to] the Ammonites. ³⁰ And Jephthah made the following vow to the Lord: "If you deliver the Ammonites into my hands, ³¹ then whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me on my safe return from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's and shall be offered by me as a burnt offering."

³² Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites and attacked them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. ³³ He utterly routed them--from Aroer as far as Minnith, twenty towns--all the way to Abel-cheramim. So the Ammonites submitted to the Israelites.