

A READING FROM JUDGES

[11:32-40]

Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the Lord gave them into his hand. He inflicted a massive defeat on them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty towns, and as far as Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel. Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing. She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her. When he saw her, he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low; 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." She said to him, "My father, if 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 given you vengeance against your enemies, the Ammonites." And she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: Grant me two months, so that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, my companions and I." "Go," he said and sent her away for two months. So she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. At the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow he had made. She had never slept with a man. So there arose an Israelite custom that for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

The Word of the Lord.

PSALM 19 *Said in unison*

- ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, *
and the firmament shows his handiwork.
- ² One day tells its tale to another, *
and one night imparts knowledge to another.
- ³ Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,
- ⁴ Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
and their message to the ends of the world.
- ⁵ In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
- ⁶ It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.
- ⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- ⁸ The statutes of the LORD are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear
and gives light to the eyes.
- ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean
and endures for ever; *

the judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.

¹¹ By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² Who can tell how often he offends? *
cleanse me from my secret faults.

¹³ Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me; *
then shall I be whole and sound,
and innocent of a great offense.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight, *
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.