

Finally someone remembered Jephthah whose brave deeds had been told through all the land. They sent quickly for him to come to lead them to the battle against the Ammonites. But Jephthah was not willing to come. Not until his brothers had promised to treat him kindly would Jephthah return again with his family to his old home and help his people out of their trouble.

Jephthah knew that unless God would be with him he could not gain a victory over the Ammonites. So he asked God to help him, and he promised to give as a present to God the first thing that should meet him on his return home from the battle. This was not a wise promise; for Jephthah did not know what might come first to greet him on his return. Then the battle began; and the Israelites won the victory.

News of the victory reached Jephthah's home before he returned with the army of Mizpah. And everybody was glad because God had helped them again. Jephthah's daughter, his only child, came hurrying out to meet her father, singing for joy. But her song ended quickly when she saw her father's troubled face. He had remembered his promise to the Lord. Now he believed that he must give his only child as an offering to God. How sorry he felt because he had made such an unwise promise! He tore his clothes and cried out in distress. Then he told his daughter about the promise that he had made.

He believed that he would need to keep his promise, although it was not a wise one. And his daughter urged him to keep it. Because God had given him the victory over their enemies. But first she asked for two months' time to spend alone with her friends in the mountains, weeping because she must soon be taken away from them. Afterwards she returned again to her father that he might fulfill his promise to God.