

Lessons From

# JEPHTHAH'S Vow

Judges 11:1-40





# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Who Was Jephthah?



**A JUDGE IN ISRAEL**  
 Tribe of Manasseh  
 A Gileadite  
 Father – Gilead  
 Mother a prostitute  
 Rejected & cast out  
 (Judges 11:1-3).

# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Who Was Jephthah?



- ◆ A mighty man of valor – vss. 1,6
- ◆ Called by the elders of Gilead to be their commander – vss. 5-11
- ◆ Acknowledged God's power to deliver & rule – vss. 9,11
- ◆ Offered treaty to Ammon according to the Law – vss. 12-14; cf. Deut 20:10-12
- ◆ Very familiar with God delivering Israel from Egypt and bringing them into the land of promise – vss. 15-28
- ◆ A man acknowledged by God to deliver Israel, zealous for God and Israel – vs. 29



# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Nature of His Vow?



### Judges 11:30-31 (NKJV)

<sup>30</sup> And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, <sup>31</sup> then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Nature of His Vow?



- ◆ **Was not as rash as many think** – expresses his dependence upon God for the victory as well as his earnest desire for the deliverance of his people – vss. 29-32
- ◆ **Man or animal?** - Jephthah expected a person to meet him, - “out of the doors of my house” – vs. 31
- ◆ **Possible interpretations** –
  - ❖ “or I have offered up for it--a burnt-offering” – [YLT]
  - ❖ “I will offer it up as a burnt offering” [NKJV] – i.e. “*like a burnt offering*”

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## Nature of His Vow?

“The word **עֹלָה** does not involve the idea of burning, like our word burnt-offering, but simply that of going up upon the altar, or of complete surrender to the Lord. **עֹלָה** is a whole offering, as distinguished from the other sacrifices, of which only a part was given up to the Lord.

When a virgin, therefore, was set apart as a spiritual **עֹלָה**, it followed, as a matter of course, that henceforth she belonged entirely to the Lord: that is to say, was to remain a virgin for the remainder of her days.”

**Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament -**  
*Johann (C.F.) Keil (1807-1888) & Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890)*



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## Nature of His Vow?



- ◆ **God granted His petition** – vs. 32,33
- ◆ **Jephthah's only child is the first to greet him** – (*emphasized in the text*) – vs. 34
- ◆ **Jephthah grieves** – (*He expresses great sorrow & faithfulness to his vow*) – vs. 35
  - ❖ Many suggest that he was grieving because he knew he had to kill her.
  - ❖ Others suggest that he grieved due to his posterity being cut off, and her hope of motherhood was dashed in that she was wholly given to the Lord which required perpetual virginity.

# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Nature of His Vow?



- ◆ **His daughter's reaction** – she too expresses faith and devotion to God – *(the victory was from God & encourages her father to keep his vow in view of what God had done in respect to it)* - vss. 36,37
- ◆ **His daughter's request** – *(to bewail her virginity in private)* – vs. 38
- ◆ **Jephthah keeps his vow** – He did what he promised - *(she knew no man)* – vs. 39
- ◆ **She was praised by the daughters of Israel** – *(expressing a perpetual honor by the nation upon her)* – vs. 40



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## Nature of His Vow?



- ◆ **He knew the law** – God forbade human sacrifice – (Lev 18:21; Deut. 12:31; 20:2-5)
- ◆ **Human sacrifice was an abomination in the sight of God** – (Jer. 7:31) -
  - ❖ *Jehoshaphat & Jehoram withdrew from war when the king of the Moabites sacrificed his son as a burnt-offering upon the wall (2Ki 3:26-27)*
- ◆ **He depended upon God's help** –
  - ❖ *Called upon the Lord as a witness - (10)*
  - ❖ *Spirit of the Lord was upon him – (29)*
  - ❖ *Continued as judge – (12:1-7)*

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## Nature of His Vow?



- ◆ **There is no condemnation or negative assertion made of Jephthah's vow –**
- ◆ **The nation remembered this act as noble – (11:40)**
- ◆ **Jephthah stands as a name of honor in the scriptures – (1 Sam. 12:11; Heb. 11:32)**
- ◆ **Jephthah fulfilled his vow by giving his daughter to perpetual service in the Temple – (11:36-40)**
  - ❖ *Bewail my virginity with friends - (37)*
  - ❖ *Bewailed her virginity on mtns – (38)*
  - ❖ *She knew no man – (39)*



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## Nature of His Vow?

(“Auberlen's remarks upon this subject are very good. “The history of Jephthah's daughter, . . . “would hardly have been thought worth preserving in the Scriptures if the maiden had been really offered in sacrifice; for, in that case, the event would have been reduced, at the best, into a mere family history, without any theocratic significance, though in truth it would rather have been an anti-theocratic abomination, according to Deu\_12:31 (cf. Jdg\_18:9; Lev\_18:21; Lev\_20:1-5). Jephthah's action would in that case have stood upon the same platform as the incest of Lot (Gen\_19:30.), and would owe its adoption into the canon simply to genealogical considerations, or others of a similar kind.

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## Nature of His Vow?

“But the very opposite is the case here; and if, from the conclusion of the whole narrative in Jdg\_11:39-40, the object of it is supposed to be simply to explain the origin of the feast that was held in honour of Jephthah's daughter, even this would tell against the ordinary view. In the eye of the law the whole thing would still remain an abomination, and the canonical Scriptures would not stoop to relate and beautify an institution so directly opposed to the law.”)

**From:** Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Johann (C.F.) Keil (1807-1888) & Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890)



# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Making Some Applications



- ◆ **God can use anyone who will trust in Him** – (11:1-11; Exo. 3:11; Judges; Acts 4:13; 1 Cor. 1:26)
- ◆ **We need to learn to trust and depend upon God** – (11:12-33; Mat. 6:19-34; Rom. 8:28-39)
- ◆ **We must take our commitments to the Lord seriously – We must count the cost** – (11:30-39; Luke 14:25-33; Eccl. 5:2-5; Mat. 5:33,37)
- ◆ **Our commitment to the Lord requires sacrifice and faithfulness** – (11:30-39; Rom. 12:1-3; Phil. 2:1-5)

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## Making Some Applications



- ◆ **Faithfulness to the Lord must come before family –** (11:35; Mark 12:28,29; Mat. 10:34-39)
- ◆ **Children - put the Lord first and submit to your parents, and encourage them to be faithful –** (11:36-39; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20)
- ◆ **We need to weep with those who weep –** (11:38; Rom. 12:15)
- ◆ **We need to remember those who have sacrificed so much for us –** (11:39,40; 1 Cor. 11:24,25; Heb 12:1)



# LESSONS FROM JEPHTHAH'S VOW

## Conclusion



- ◆ HOW GREAT IS YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE LORD?
- ◆ DISCIPLESHIP IN CHRIST BEGINS AND ENDS WITH SACRIFICE.
- ◆ VOW TODAY TO CONSECRATE YOUR LIFE TO GOD, COMMIT YOURSELF TO HIS COMMANDMENTS





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