

Treshawna Cook

Professor David Emanuel

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### Remaining True to Your Promise

The story of Jephthah Jud 11:29-40 begins with some background information on Jephthah and his family. Jephthah's father Gilead had him with his mother who was a prostitute. As time went on this became problematic because Jephthah's brothers did not feel he was worthy of inheritance. The reason being, Jephthah was the son of another woman. His brothers drove him out and Jephthah later settled in Tob.

There was a war between Israel and the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead requested Jephthah to come back and assist them. Jephthah then returned to Israel and became commander to fight against the Ammonites. The Lord gave Sihon and the entire army to Israel and they defeated the Ammonites. Jephthah then made a very important vow to the Lord, "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." (Jud 11:30-31)

When Jephthah returned home, the first person to greet him was his daughter. He instantly wept because he remembered his vow to the Lord. "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the Lord. Do to me just as you promised, now that the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites." (Jud 11: 36) This ended in the result of his daughter having

the chance to roam the hills for two months and weep since she would never marry. It has since become a tradition that each year women of Israel go out for a few days to pay respect to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

I believe the moral problem of this story occurred when Jephthah made the vow to the Lord. Jephthah needed the Lord's help in assisting him with defeating the Ammonites. I think it registered when he got home, and his daughter was the first person to greet him. His daughter was his only child and to get married and bear children was almost everyone's dream/ purpose during this time. Jephthah realized he had to remain true to his promise with the Lord, even if it meant not fulfilling his wishes for his only child.

After reading a few commentaries, the explanations on how the story ended were quite surprising. Taking note of the text where it stated she knew no man; it was assumed Jephthah sacrificed his daughter. Some believe that his daughter might have died as an act of martyrdom. Another common theory was, Jephthah dedicated her to the service at the tabernacle where she ministered as a virgin. Whichever outcome was true, I think once your actions are pure and aligned with the Lord, it is the right decision. If Jephthah did sacrifice his daughter or just give her to the tabernacle that is the vow, he made to the Lord and he must follow through.

I think the role of the Holy Spirit was to show He is a man of His word, in addition to using Jephthah as an example. The Lord is honest, transparent, and takes faith very seriously. He will hold you accountable for the things you claim. Jephthah was not forced to make that vow to the Lord; he chose to therefore he had to hold up his end of the bargain. This story is a representation to show readers how much Israel needed help, the nation constantly changed

powers to regain structure. In order to get what you need sacrifices must be made and the story of Jephthah and his daughter significantly ties in with the moral condition of Israel.

I often have trouble determining if Japheth was a good or bad character. I think Japheth was a man that did what he thought needed to be done to serve his nation and to serve the Lord. There are times in life where individuals might view our actions as good or bad depending on who you ask. I say if the actions are aligned with God and adhere to the Bible, you should be in a good place.

The lesson I learned is that when you make a vow to the Lord, you should be prepared to follow through completely. I realized if you tell God you want something sometimes, he will give it to you. Other times He will test your faith to see how bad you want it. He does this to prepare His followers for the trial and tribulations we might face down the line. Our faith will be tested but by remaining true to the Lord, He will help us overcome.

## Works Cited

Publishing, HarperCollins Christian. *NKJV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*. HarperCollins Christian Publishing