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Adult Addiction Recovery 🌍 Christian Counseling

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JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER A Daughter is a Sacrifice

Scripture Reference

Judges 11:30-39

Introduction

Jephthah offered to fight against the Ammonites. If he was successful, he would become their leader. Hebrews 11:32 has his name enrolled among the "Hall of Fame" for his faith. There is no mention of his wife. Only one child, a daughter.

He makes a rash oath to God, that if God delivered Ammon into his hands, he would sacrifice whatever came out the door of his house to meet him on his victorious return. Leaving God to choose the victim. He was thinking it would be one of the numerous animals that lived on his property; or perhaps one of his slaves. He never dreamed it would be his daughter.

God answered his prayer and punished him through his answer.

Tennyson writes:

"When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
Strength came to me the equalled my desire,
How beautiful a thing it was to die,
For God and my sire."

Her Response

There are no tears, no screams, no resentment. She offered herself a willing sacrifice to honor her father's oath. She did not run away from her father but with true devotion accepted his will. She felt that her blood would be a good price to pay for divine vengeance over the enemies of Israel. But why? It wasn't her oath. Why should she pay for a rash oath her father made?

Her Request

She requests a two-month period to bewail her virginity. It was a bitter hurt to die unwedded and childless. Jephthah hoed that she would be killed in the mountains by wild animals or carried off by bandits while she was gone. Then he wouldn't have to see her sacrificed on an altar. Father is rather selfish, don't you think? What about his daughter's feelings? This is his only child!

Her Renunciation

She returns unharmed, ready to become the sacrifice. Her strength is in the Lord. God's grace is sufficient for any need.

What Did Jephthah Actually Do To His Daughter

View One

If an oath was given to sacrifice a person, then they were dedicated to serve in the Tabernacle. If it was an animal, it was offered as a burnt offering.

View Two

He actually made her a burnt offering. While Levitical Law forbade human sacrifices, the time of the judges was one of 'every man did right in his own eyes' and human sacrifice was common. The giving of her life transfigured the wicked vow of her father. Her sacrificial love turned the blackest deed in Israel's history into a theme for "the sons of the daughters of Israel." It was a two-fold love, love of country and father.

Her Remembrance

Each year a four-day festival is celebrated to remember her. Many poets have written about her. Lord Byron for example:

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
He the judge and the hero unbent,
I have won the battle for thee,
And my father and country are free.

Her Reminder

What a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus! Because of our sin, Jesus willingly became our sacrifice so that we could go free!