

GOD REMEMBERS THE OUTCAST, JEPHTHAH:

Judges 11:1-12:7

God looks on the affairs of men and rewards those who are faithful to Him. In studying the book of Hebrews chapter 11, I was surprised to see some of the names listed among the giants of faith in the hall of fame. The one that stood out most for me is “JEPHTAH”, one of the judges of Israel.

I can't recall hearing his name mentioned, except for the foolish vow that he made. When I heard it, it has been a warning that one must be careful of the vows one makes with God. One should not be like JEPHTAH. I will get back to his vow later, but first let us look at this great man who is remembered for his faith.

1. He was the son of a harlot who was born in Gilead. Judges 11:1
2. His father's wife had sons who, when they grew up, threw him out of their father's home because they did not want to share their father's inheritance with him. Judges 11:2
3. He became a fugitive and lived in the land of Tob, there he had an army of brave faithful men who were warriors. Judges 11:3
4. After many years while he was in exile, the children of Ammon made war with Israel. Israel did not have a leader that could defeat the AMMONITES. They sent and ask JEPHTAH to come and be their leader, and go and fight their enemy the Ammonites. Judges 11:4-6
5. He asked them if they were not the ones who hated him and expelled him from his father's house, why were they coming to him for help while they were in distress. Judges 11:7
6. They told him that if he would go with them in battle with the Ammonites, they would make him their leader. Judges 11:8
7. He asked them if he went with them and the Lord helped him to be victorious over their

enemies, would they accept him as head of all the inhabitants of Gilead; they agreed that they would. Judges 11:9-11

8. JEPHTHAH went as their leader in battle against their enemy the Ammonites, after he reasoned with them to make peace. He pointed out to them all that took place 300 years prior to that date and showed them that Israel did no harm to them, therefore; they should not seek to war against Israel. They refused to listen Judges 11:12-28

9. JEPHTHAH vowed to the Lord that if He delivered the Ammonites into his hands, when he returns home, the first thing that came out of his house to greet him, he would offer it as a burnt offering to the Lord. Judges 11:29-31

10. He went to war and was successful. Judges 11:32-33

11. On returning from battle his daughter, his only child was the first to run out to greet him. He was grieved when he saw her. However, he was a man to his word and although it grieved him he kept his vow to the Lord. His daughter's life was a sacrifice, because she remained a virgin. Verse 39a says he did to her as he had vowed. It is hard to believe that the burnt offering was killing her by taking her life because they were under the law which forbids killing, the sixth commandment says "thou shall not kill.(Exo. 20:13) God had forbidden human sacrifices. (Judges 11 :34-40) These passages support that God does not accept human sacrifices.De.12:31, 18:10; Lev.18:21, 20:2-5; 2 kings 21:6; Jer. 7:31. Remember we are studying the faithful individuals who endured to the end as listed in Hebrews chapter 11. JEPHTHAH is named among them.

12. He ruled Israel successfully for six years. He won the wars against all their enemies, then he died. Judges 12:1-7

LESSONS I LEARNED FROM JEPHTHAH'S LIFE:

- A. FAMILY WILL ABANDON ME BUT GOD WILL NOT.
- B. REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS IN LIFE, REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOD.
- C. GOD KNOWS OUR HEARTS, AND HE REWARDS THE FAITHFUL. HE WILL CAUSE OUR LIGHT TO SHINE BRIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.
- D. OUR SETBACKS COULD BE OUR LAUNCHING, IF WE MAINTAIN THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.
- E. BE A PEACEMAKER, JEPHTHAH REASONED WITH THE AMMONITES AND PROVED TO THEM THAT THE ISRAELITES DID NO HARM TO THEM IN THE PAST 300 YEARS. HE DID NOT DELIGHT IN WAR, AND WAS WILLING TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT BY PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS.
- F. HE GAVE CREDIT TO GOD FOR WHATEVER VICTORY HE WOULD HAVE OVER THE ENEMY OF ISRAEL, BEFORE HE WENT TO WAR.
- G. WHEN HE WAS ASKED TO HELP, BY THOSE WHO HAD REJECTED HIM, HE REMINDED THEM OF WHAT THEY DID TO HIM, THEN HE ASKED IF THEY WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT HIM AS THEIR LEADER IF WITH GOD'S HELP HE DEFEATED THEIR ENEMY.
- H. I AM WARNED NOT TO MAKE FOOLISH OF THOUGHTLESS VOWS.
- I. HONOR MY VOW, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES.
- J. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR MY LIFE, AND NO MAN OR CIRCUMSTANCES CAN STOP ME FROM FULFILLING MY PURPOSE.
- K. I SHOULD NEVER LOOK DOWN ON ANYONE, THE ONE WHO IS OUT OF FAVOR TODAY, MAY BE THE ONE GOD USES TO RESCUE ME LATER.

- L. NEVER DISCREDIT SOMEONE BECAUSE OF THEIR PARENTS.
- M. HOW I FINISH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY FAMILY BACKGROUND.
- N. I SHOULD REMAIN HUMBLE.
- O. I SHOULD FORGIVE.
- P. USING MY GIFTS WILL BRING GLORY TO GOD AND BENEFIT OTHERS.
- Q. WHEN TREATED UNFAIRLY, I SHOULD NOT ALLOW THAT TO INFLUENCE ME IN A NEGATIVE WAY, BUT I SHOULD DO JOYFULLY WHAT GOD HAS PLACED IN ME.
- R. I SHOULD NOT REACT TO INJUSTICE.
- S. MY CHARACTER WILL OPEN DOORS FOR ME.
- T. STRONG PEOPLE ATTRACT OTHER STRONG PEOPLE.
- U. I SHOULD ACCEPT AN INDIVIDUAL FOR WHO HE OR SHE IS AS A PERSON, WITHOUT ALLOWING ANYTHING TO PREJUDICE MY ACCEPTANCE OF THEM.
- V. PEOPLE WILL DISLIKE YOU BECAUSE OF NO FAULT OF YOUR OWN
- W. I SHOULD NOT WASTE TIME WORRYING ABOUT WHAT OTHERS DID TO ME, INSTEAD I SHOULD REMAIN FOCUSED ON WHO GOD SAYS I AM, AND WHAT HE HAS CALLED ME TO DO.
- X. GOD ALWAYS HUMBLER THOSE HE INTENDS TO PROMOTE, MEN SUCH AS MOSES, JOSEPH, DAVID AND JEPHTHAH.
- Y. MANY REJECT GOD AND HIS PEOPLE UNTIL THEY ARE IN DISTRESS, THEN THEY TURN TO HIM AND THEM TO RESCUE THEM WITHOUT REPENTING AND ASK FOR FORGIVENESS.
- Z. I SHOULD MAKE NO MAN MY ENEMY BECAUSE SOME DAY I MAY NEED HIM TO RESCUE ME.

1. JEPHTHAH ASKED, IF HE DELIVERED THEM UNDER GOD'S GUIDANCE, IF THEY WOULD MAKE HIM THEIR LEADER, THE SAME QUESTION IS ASKED OF US, IF CHRIST SAVES US WILL WE MAKE HIM OUR LORD?