

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
May 7, 2016

- ✓ **Judges 11:1-12:15.** Jephthah and his daughter.
- ✓ **Philippians 3:1-11.** Repetition.
- ✓ **Psalm 68:15-35.** God daily loads us with benefits.

COMMENTS:

Judges 11:1-12:15. Critics, especially atheists, love to point out the incident in Judges 11:29-40 and ask “How could God allow Jephthah to offer his daughter up as a burnt offering?” Let us look at the text. Just before Jephthah went into battle against the people of Ammon, he made a vow to the Lord. The vow he made was that if God would grant him victory over his enemies then “*whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace shall surely be the Lord’s, I will offer it up as a burnt offering.*” When Jephthah returned, the first one to come out to meet him was his daughter. Jephthah refused to go back on the vow that he had made. But the Bible *clearly states* that human sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10). How could God allow Jephthah to offer up his own daughter, and then list Jephthah among the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11:32? The common defense is to say that Jephthah offered up his daughter’s life to the Lord, claiming the inviolable nature of an oath made to the Lord (Ecc. 5:2-6). In addition, they note that “burnt offering” involves a sacrifice of the life. They justify it on the grounds that a vow to God take precedence over all else, even human life. God is sovereign over life and take it if He wishes (Dt. 32:39), as He does eventually (Heb. 9:27). However, for several reasons, it is not necessary to assume that Jephthah ever offered a human sacrifice. First, Jephthah was well aware of God’s law against human sacrifice. As a matter of fact, human sacrifice was one of the reasons God drove out the Canaanites. Jephthah would have known that human sacrifice would have been a blatant rejection of God’s Word. Second, the text does not actually say he killed his daughter in a sacrificial offering. This is simply inferred by some from the fact that he promised that whatever came out of his house first “shall surely be the Lord’s and I will offer it up as a burnt offering” (11:31). As Paul indicated, human beings are to be offering to God “as a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1), not *dead ones*. Jephthah could have offered his daughter to the Lord as a *living* sacrifice. For the remainder of her life, she would serve the Lord in the temple and remain a virgin. Third, a living sacrifice of perpetual virginity was a tremendous sacrifice in the Jewish context of that day. As a perpetual virgin dedicated to the service of the Lord, she would not be able to bring up children to continue her father’s lineage. Fourth, this view is supported by the fact that when Jephthah’s daughter wept for two months, she did not go out to mourn her impending death. Rather, she went out and “bewailed her virginity” (38). There was no reason for her to do this unless she was facing a life of perpetual virginity.

Philippians 3:1-11. Note in the first verse that Paul speaks of repeating himself. Repetition is a vital part of learning. Without repetition, it is hard for the believer to really get it. It is one thing to hear and even recognize the same message on a superficial level. It is repetition with new ways of looking at the object that enables the believer to really get it. Without repetition the believer never really gets the gems in God's Word. It takes time thinking about something before it can become real. Without repetition the believer is never exposed to a truth long enough for it to become real to him. The challenge for the teacher in repetition is to find new ways of repeating the same truths. This way both he and the congregation can sink their teeth a little deeper into truth. Moreover, there are key truths that every believer should meditate on regularly if he ever hopes to obtain a developed view of important doctrines. Take death. Every believer should reflect on the fact that one day he will be leaving this earth and be face to face with the Lord. Every believer should have a developed view of his next life with the Lord. Think of how odd it is that many Christians do not even think about the fleeting nature of this life in spite of what the Bible clearly teaches. The whole mindset of just thinking about this life destroys any ability to live the Christian way of life. As I have *repeated many times*, one cannot truly live the Christian way of life apart from the eternal perspective. And one cannot have an eternal perspective apart from repeated thoughts of and anticipation of being face to face with the Lord. Or *to repeat* this principle with other words: without the eternal perspective all one is left with is a temporal, functional, and pseudo view of Christianity, one that has no resemblance to the teachings of Jesus or any of the writers of the New Testament. As far as the rest of this section in Philippians, after Paul indicates how vital repetition is, he warns them about false teachers and then provides a bit of an autobiography.

Psalms 68:15-35. The focus on this section of Scripture is on the goodness of God and the celebration of God's power and victory. Note the beautiful grace in verse 19: *Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah.* God is so good to us. He gives us life and millions of blessings besides. We are so incredibly blessed to be united with God for all of eternity.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don