

Q. & A. File No. 31-B-29

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Question. Did Jephthah carry out his vow, and sacrifice his daughter?
Judges 11:39. W.S.E.

Answer. We do not think that Jephthah vowed to sacrifice his daughter.

The vow, as given in verse 31, includes two things, to wit., "It shall be the Lord's," and "I will offer it up as a burnt offering." In our version, these are connected by the conjunction, and, but the Hebrew letter thus translated is also used as a disjunctive, and translated, or, as in the margin. By reference to the law concerning sacrifices, it will be seen that certain "clean beasts" only were accepted for sacrifice; the first-born of mankind and the first-born of unclean beasts were to be redeemed because they could not be sacrificed. If a "singular vow" were made by a man, and it concerned one of his household, it was to be redeemed according to the estimation of the priest. Lev. 27. As Jephthah did not redeem his daughter according to this law, it appears that his vow did not devote her any further than that she should "be the Lord's," which doomed her to perpetual virginity. See verses 37, 38. And his vow was this: "It shall be the Lord's [devoted to His service], or I will offer it a burnt offering," that is, provided it is something which the law permits to be so offered. Further reasons may be given for this view, but this seems sufficient.

--Elder James White or Elder J. N. Andrews,
Editors, Review and Herald, June 17, 1873.