

Journey INTO THE Bible

Supplemental Material

Genesis, Part Two: Lesson Three

Genesis 27—35

Document 1 of 1

Page 1 of 1

Vows Before God

A good example of a conditional vow that has dire consequences is the story of Jephthah in Judges 11. Although, Jephthah, as a judge, acts through the power of the spirit (11:29), he does not demonstrate that assurance that this spirit provides. He is really unsure of divine assistance. Consequently he makes this vow to the Lord: “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord’s, to be offered up by me as a burnt offering” (11:31). Unfortunately, the one who comes out to greet Jephthah and celebrate his victory is his unnamed daughter, who is his only child (11:34). Instead of acknowledging his own rashness and lack of faith, the father chooses to blame the daughter for his irrational vow. With incredible courage, the daughter accepts the consequences of her father’s folly, asks for a period of time to mourn her virginity, and then suffers her fate. Here the daughter exhibits unimaginable nobility, while her father refuses to acknowledge his own foolishness.