

## DO WE NEED TO DEFEND GOD'S HONOR?

(Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 12:29-32; Judges 11:28-40)

It has been noted by scholars that in the seventeenth century, a passionate Christian philosopher by the name of Soren Kierkegaard wrestled with an issue, in the book of Judges, concerning human sacrifice. As he wrestled with this issue he tried to defend God's honor by saying, that God for this brief time period temporarily suspended the ethical practice of human sacrifice. What Kierkegaard and many others have wrestled with from the book of Judges is how could God accept a practice that He reveals elsewhere as being utterly repugnant to Him?

Let me begin by saying, that God needs no one to defend His honor; because He did not authorize what Jephthah did in the book of Judges. The New Testament and particularly the Old Testament, records for us not only the virtues of the people of God, but also their vices. And what we have recorded in the book of Judges concerning Jephthah shows one of his vices. Jephthah's vow was a sinful vow, if it meant human sacrifice. If it was human sacrifice he had a mistaken concept of vow keeping; he actually promised to kill his own daughter. But he had no knowledge at that time that his vow would mean a human sacrifice, and this sacrifice being his own daughter.

I know that some scholars replace the word *and* with the word *or* in Judges 11:31. Therefore, they say that Jephthah did not sacrifice his daughter, but that his daughter would live a life of celibacy. Who has the correct meaning of the text? Those who change the wording, or those who feel that Jephthah did sacrifice his daughter? I am not sure! But this one thing I am sure of, and that is, once a person makes a vow and then realizes this vow obligates him to sin, he is not obligated to keep that vow. If he does he has a mistaken concept of vow keeping.

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