



(Judges 11:39). Service in the tabernacle (and later in the temple itself) was reserved for male Levites, but the example of Anna in the New Testament shows a woman **“who did not depart from the temple”** [i.e. the portion of the sacred area open to women] **“but served God with fastings and prayers night and day”** (Luke 2:36,37). Jephthah’s daughter in much the same way may have been devoted to the Lord to serve those who ministered in the Tabernacle.

Jephthah’s daughter mourned her **“virginity”** rather than the end of her life (Judges 11:37-39). Immediately after the text tells us that Jephthah **“carried out his vow”** we are told **“she knew no man”**



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## Welcome Visitors

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Please come again.

- Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

15.12

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

March 24,  
2013



### Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Steve Dixon  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

### Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## Did Jephthah Kill His Daughter?

By Kyle Pope

The book of Judges describes what has been called the “Wild West” period of the Old Testament. It was a time when the rape and murder of a Levite’s concubine would start a national war (Judges 19) and even the heroes of the time were tainted by immorality (Judges 16:1). The period is well summarized by the final words of the book—**“everyone did what was right in his own eyes”** (Judges 21:25).

In the midst of this time of uneasiness and relative morality, Scripture tell us about a judge named Jephthah. This Gileadite, himself the son of a harlot (Judges 11:1),



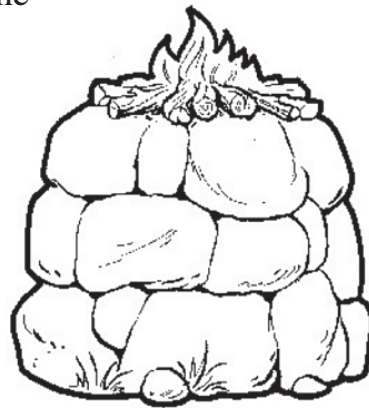
is used by the Lord to deliver Israel from the Ammonites. As he began his engagement with the Ammonites, he vowed to the Lord, **“...If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the peo-**



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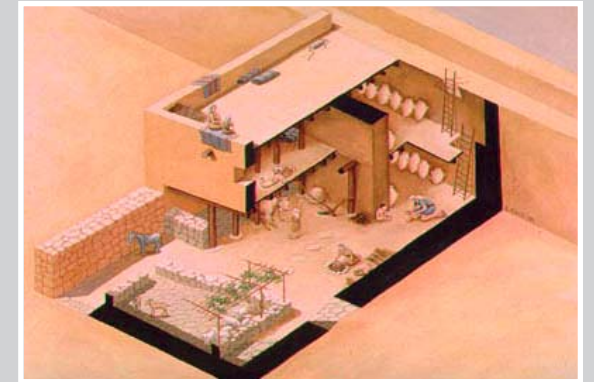
**ple of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.”** (Judges 11:30-31, NKJV). To his horror, upon his return home his only child and daughter came out of the door of his house celebrating his victory, not knowing what he had vowed (Judges 11:34). Scripture tells us that after allowing his daughter two months with her friends while she **“bewailed her virginity on the mountains”** (Judges 11:38) he then **“carried out his vow with her which he had vowed”** (Judges 11:39).

Did Jephthah kill his daughter as a human sacrifice in fulfillment of his vow to the Lord? Under the Law of Moses human sacrifice was clearly condemned (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10). Anyone who practiced it was to receive the death penalty (Leviticus 20:2). It is clear that Jephthah judged Israel after this event (Judges 12:1-7). If he literally sacrificed her, he either went unpunished for his sin or



he did what was allowed within the Law that fulfilled the vow.

Jephthah vowed to offer an *‘olah*—“whole burnt offering” to the Lord. Although this generally involved the slaying and burning of the sacrificial victim, Unger and White comment that the main significance of the “whole burnt offering” was “the total surrender of the heart and life of the offerer to God” (*Nelson’s Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 276). There are other times in the Old Testament human beings were considered an offering. The Levites who were offered to God **“like a wave offering before the Lord”** (Numbers 8:11). Near the close of the period of the Judges, Hannah gave Samuel, an Ephraimite,



### The Israelite “Four-Room” House

Jephthah’s vow strikes our modern ears as quite odd. What did he expect would “come out of the house” to “meet him”? There may be an architectural explanation involved here. Archaeologists have identified a particular architectural style that was quite common in the early history of Israelite houses. These so-called “four-room” houses often had a stable area under a raised portion of the house. When a person entered a courtyard to go into the house, the first thing that might meet them would likely be the animals that were kept there. If Jephthah’s house was like this he would have expected an animal to “meet him,” not his daughter.