

Chapter 11

Iephte reiected by his brethrens, is intreated by the ancientes of Galaad to returne and fight for them againft the Ammonites: 12. with whom he firft pleadeth the caufe of Ifrael by iuft reaons, 26. and long prefcription. But they perfifting obftinate, he (30. inconfideratly vow-ing) 32. ouerthroweth them, 34. and facrificeth his onlie daughter.

There was at that time Iephte the Galaadite a moft valiant man and a warriour, the fonne of a woman that was ^a)an harlot, who was borne of Galaad. ² And Galaad had a wife of whom he had fonnes: who after they were growen, caft out Iephte, fay-ing: Thou canft not be heyre in the houfe of our father, becaufe thou art borne of an other mother. ³ Whom he fleeing and auoyding, dwelt in the Land of Tob: and there were gathered to him needie men, and theeuifh, and folowed him as their prince. ⁴ In thofe dayes the children of Ammon fought againft Ifrael. ⁵ Who preffing fore vpon them, the ancientes of Galaad went to take Iephte out of the Land of Tob to helpe them: ⁶ and they faied to him: Come and be our prince, and fight againft the children of Ammon. ⁷ To whom he answered: Are not you they that hated me, and caft me out of my fathers houfe, and now are come to me forced by neceffitie. ⁸ And the princes of Galaad faid to Iephte: For this caufe be we now ^b)come to thee, that thou goe forth with vs, and fight againft the children of Ammon, and be the captaine of al that dwell in Galaad. ⁹ Iephte alfo faid to them: If you be come to me fincerly, that I fhould fight for you againft the children of Ammon,

^a The hebrew word *Zonah* fignifieth alfo *an in keeper*.

^b If they had not concurred to his expulfion, it might haue fufficed to haue fent for him, but in this cafe the ancientes iudged it meete to goe in perfon, and to intreat him. So Chrift was reiected by the Iewes, and returneth not to them til in the end of the world they fhall feeke vnto him. *S. Aug. q. 49. in Iudic. poft mediū.*

and if our Lord deliuer them into my handes, fhall I be your prince? ¹⁰ Who answered him: Our Lord which heareth these thinges, him selfe is mediatour and witnes that we wil doe as we haue promised. ¹¹ Iephte therefore went with the princes of Galaad, and al the people made him their prince. And Iephte spake al his wordes before our Lord in Maspha. ¹² And he sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, which should say in his perfon: What is betwen me and thee, that thou art come against me, to waite my Land? ¹³ To whom he answered: Because Ifrael tooke my land, when he ascended out of Ægypt, from the coasts of Arnon vnto Iaboc and Iordan: now therefore with peace restore the same to me. ¹⁴ By whom Iephte againe sent word, and commanded them that they should say to the king of Ammon: ¹⁵ Thus sayth Iephte: Ifrael did not take the Land of Moab, nor the Land of the children of Ammon: ¹⁶ but when they ascended out of Ægypt, he walked through the desert vnto the Redsea, and came into Cades. ¹⁷ And he sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying: Suffer me that I may passe through thy land. Who would not condescend to his requestes. He sent also to the king of Moab, who also him selfe contemned to geue passage. He abode therefore in Cades, ¹⁸ and compassed the Land of Edom at the side, and the land of Moab: and came against the East quarter of the Land of Moab, and camped beyond Arnon: neither would he enter the boundes of Moab: for Arnon is the border of the Land of Moab. ¹⁹ Ifrael therefore sent messengers to Sehon the king of the Ammorrhaites, who dwelt in Hesebon, and they said to him: Suffer me to passe through thy land vnto the riuer. ²⁰ Who also him selfe despising the wordes of Ifrael, suffered him not to passe through his borders: but gathering an infinite multitude went forth against him into Iasa, and resisted strongly. ²¹ And our Lord deliuered him into the handes of Ifrael with al his armie, and he stroke him, and possessed al the Land of the Ammorrhaites the inhabiter of that countrie, ²² and al the coastes therof from Arnon vnto Iaboc, & from the wildernes vnto Iordan. ²³ Our Lord therefore

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the God of Ifrael fubuerted the Amorrhite, his people of Ifrael fighting againft him, and wilt thou now poffeffe his land? ²⁴ Are not thofe thinges which ^a)Chamos thy god poffeffed, dew to thee by right? But the thinges that our Lord God hath obeyned conquerour, shal come to our poffeffion: ²⁵ vnleffe perhaps thou be better then Balac the fonne of Sephor the king of Moab: or canft shew, that he wrangled againft Ifrael, and fought againft him, ²⁶ when he dwelt in Hefebon, and the litle townes therof, and in Aroer, and the townes therof, or in al the cities nere Iordan, for ^b)three hundred yeares. Wherefore haue you fo long attempted nothing for reclaime? ²⁷ Therefore I doe not finne againft thee, but thou doeft euil againft me, denouncing me vniuft warres. Our Lord be iudge the arbiter of this day betwen Ifrael, and betwen the children of Ammon. ²⁸ And the king of the children of Ammon would not harken to the wordes of Iephte, which he fent him by the meffengers. ²⁹ Therefore the fpirite of our Lord came vpon Iephte, and circuiting Galaad, and Manaffes, Mafpha alfo of Galaad, and thence paffing to the children of Ammon, ³⁰ he vowed a vow to our Lord, faying: If thou wilt deliuer the children of Ammon into my handes, ³¹ ^c)whofoeuer fhall firft come forth out of the doores of my houfe, and shal meete me returning with peace from the children of Ammon, him wil I offer an holocaupte to our Lord. ³² And Iephte paffed to the children of Ammon, to fight againft them: whom our Lord deliuered into his handes, ³³ and he ftroke from Aroer til thou come to Mennith, twentie cities, and as farre as Abel, which is fette with vineyardes, with a very great plague, and the children of Ammon were humbled

^a In the opinion of infidels, it femed that they poffeffed countries by the helpe of falfe goddes, and fo they thought them felues to haue iuft title. Much more iuft is the title when God almighty geueth victorie of conqueft. *S. Aug. q. 48. in Iudic.*

^b He argueth vpon prefcription of 300. yeares being nere fo much, for there wanted fcarce thirtie: being from the conqueft made by Moyfes (*Num. 21.*) til the time of Iephte about 270. yeares.

^c This vow was vnlawful, for the law forbiddeth to offer man or woman in facrifice. *Exo. 34. v. 20. Deut. 12. v. 31.*

by the children of Ifrael. ³⁴ But Iephte returning into Mafpha to his houfe, his onlie begotten daughter mette him with tymbrels and daunces. For he had not other children. ³⁵ Whom when he faw, he rent his garmentes, and faid: Wo is me my daughter thou haft deceiued me, and thy felf art deceiued: for I haue opened my mouth to our Lord, and I can doe no other thing. ³⁶ To whom fhe answered: My father, if thou haft opened thy mouth to our Lord, do vnto me whatfoeuer thou haft promifed, the reuenge and victorie of thyne enemies being granted to thee. ³⁷ And fhe faid to her father: This only graunt me which I defire: Suffer me that two monethes I may goe about the mountaines, and ^a)bewayle my virginitie with my felowes. ³⁸ To whom he answered: Goe. And he difmiffed her two monethes. And when she was gone with her felowes and companions, fhe mourned her virginitie in the mountaines. ³⁹ And the two monethes being expired, fhe returned to her father, and he [♠]did to her as he had vowed, who knew not man. Thence forth a fafhion in Ifrael, and a cuftome was kept: ⁴⁰ that after the compaffe of a yeare the daughters of Ifrael affemble together, and mourne the daughter of Iephte the Galaa-dite foure dayes.

ANNOTATIONS

³⁹ Did to her as he had vowed.) VVhether Iephte did wel or no in facrificing his daughter, hauing vowed to offer in facrifice whofoeuer (or whatfoeuer) fhould firft mete him returning with victorie, as it hapened fhe did, is a great and hard queftion, faieth S. Auguftin (*q. 49. in lib. Iudic.*) and not eafily decided, the holie fcripture neither approuing nor reprouing his fact. Neuertheles by conference of other fcriptures and difcourfe of reafon, he iudgeth it moft probable that Iephte offended in vowing without fpecial warrant from God, to facrifice, that which by the law was not facrificable; yet finned not in performing his vow, but rather pacified God therby, whose wil it femed to be, that for punifhment of his finne he fhould facrifice his daughter, becaufe by his diuine prouidence fhe firft mette him: and the omiffion might rather haue

Iephte offended in vowing vndifcretly. But not in performing his vow as ancient fathers thinke more probable.
S. Auguftin.

^a In the old teftament mariage was ordinarily preferred before fingle life but in the new, it is better to kepe virginity. *1. Cor. 7. v. 38.*

benne for his natural loue towards his onlie childe, then for the vnlawfulnes of the sacrifice: feing it once pleased God to command Abraham to immolate his sonne Isaac, though when it came to execution, he forbade the same, appointing an other hofte in place of the childe, which here he did not. Neither was it iniurious to the daughter, feing she, as al mankinde, muft once die when God appointeth. Yea further she offered her self freely (which seemed to be by Gods instinct) willing her father to do to her whatfoeuer he had promised to God. This is the summe of S. Auguftins large discourse. Likewise S. Ambrose (*li. 3. de Officiis c. 12.*) supposeth assuredly that this prince Iephte offended in vowing vnaduisedly, for it also repented him, when his daughter first mette him: yet that with *godlie feare and dreade* he performed to his owne bitter paine that which he had promised: instituting an anniuersarie lamentation of his daughter, for a warning to posteritie of more circumspection in making vowes. S. Hierom also (*li. 1. aduers. Iovinian.*) approueth their opinion that say: It was Gods ordinance Iephte should feele the error of his vnaduised vow, by the death of his daughter, for a document to others. The very same teacheth S. Chrysofom, (*ho. 14. ad pop. Antioch.*) that God would haue this error to be thus punished, that others might be warned from vowing the like. S. Gregorie Nazianzen (*orat. de Machabæis*) preferring the martyrdom of the feuen brothers and their mother, before this sacrifice of Iephte as *more aduised, and more honorable*, yet condemneth not this, but recounteth it amongst other commendable actes. Theodoret (*q. 19. in Iudic.*) and al the aforesaid fathers do highly commend the daughters promptnes in offering her self to be sacrificed, which either much extenuated her fathers fault, or wholly iustified his fact. Thus the ancient fathers moderate their censures. Yet a new gloffe of the English Bible without scruple sayeth, that by his rash vow, *and vicked performance his victorie vvas defaced*; and againe, that he was overcome *vvith blinde zeale, not confidering* whether the vow was lawful or no.

S. Ambrose.

S. Hierom.

S. Chrysofom.

S. Gregorie
Nazianzen.

Theodoret.

Protestants
censure.*Bible 1603.*