

ADAH - JEPHTHAH

What a contrast between Adah and Jephthah! Consider Jephthah for a moment, Jephthah wanted to accomplish something very much. He wanted to free his people from oppression. In some ways, it may be conceded Jephthah was a modest man. At least he had the good grace to realize that there were limits to his own capabilities. In other words, he knew that there were some things, which he, a mortal man could not accomplish without Divine Assistance.

However, this is the point at which Jephthah's humility and sense of the apropos disintegrate and disappear altogether. With no apparent regard for the supremacy of God's Will or His Plans for the individual man in fulfilling His purposes, Jephthah proceeds to bargain with God. There is something tremendously presumptuous in Jephthah's attitude. Jephthah fails to recognize the superiority of God's authority. By attempting to bargain with God, Jephthah assumes that he and God are on the same plane.

Jephthah fails to see that he is but a servant of his Heavenly Father. Jephthah is not saying to God, "God, help me to be a worthy instrument in Your Hands." Jephthah is saying, "If you do this thing so that I, Jephthah, may be gratified, then I shall do these things for you."

JEPHTHAH'S BARGAINING SHOWS IMMATURITY

Jephthah's approach to God is very immature. One might go so far as to say that Jephthah's approach paralleled the conniving tactics of an astute child bent on having his own way. Indeed Jephthah's pleas, and a child's, "Mother, if you let me do this or that, I'll be good all week," bear an unmistakable mark of similarity.

This is not meant to infer that Jephthah's desire to free this people was not a worthy purpose. On the contrary, it was a most commendable cause and one in which God, Himself, saw fit to intervene with the result that the oppressors were thoroughly vanquished. What we are discussing is Jephthah's irregular approach to solving a major problem which he encountered in his lifetime.

Now, in this consideration, we are endeavoring to establish the elements of contrast. Adah's approach to the major crisis in her life furnishes us with this contrast.

Adah, a simple unassuming young woman, doubtless shared the girlish dreams of other young women throughout the centuries. However, coupled with her adolescent day dreams, there was the deep underlying aspiration of the Hebrew women of her generation. She cherished the hope that someday she might have a part in the ancestral line of the anticipated Messiah.

Adah treasured her dreams in the same way that she treasured life itself. The magical quality which youth lends to the human spirit gave Adah an enthusiasm and interest which found expression in her joyous, jubilant personality. We see her whole attitude expressed when she came bounding out of the house to meet her father with "timbrels and with dances."

Adah's immediate reaction to her father's tragic commitments is simple and poignant. Adah clearly perceived her responsibility to subordinate her desires and aspirations to the will of her Father and her God. There is nothing presumptuous in her words or manner.

ADAH DID NOT BARGAIN

With simple obedience to the superior authority of her earthly Father and God, Adah says, "My Father, if thou has opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth." Adah realized also, that for her to be able to meet this crisis with the courage it demanded, she would have to have God's help.

Her request was simple. She wanted to go among the mountains to pray. She wanted every fibre of her mind, body, and spirit imbued with an appropriate, obedient aura. However, Adah did not try to accomplish her purpose by attempting to bargain with God. She only sought communion with God that she might carry out her life mission.

She did not question the wisdom of her father's vow. She did not suggest that he had exceeded his authority or the law. Doubtless, she could not comprehend the meaning of her role in this real life drama. But her obedient spirit did not permit her to question the Divine Plan of which she was a part. Adah met

the crisis of her life with prayerful obedience and courageous complacency. She did not feel compelled to involve another in the faithful fulfillment of her obligations.

As an individual, Adah displayed all the characteristics of a well adjusted, mature, and God-respecting personality that Jephthah was so miserably lacking. Adah met her life problems with a spirit obediently harmonious with the Will of God. Jephthah met his life problems with his own anxiety to gratify his self interest more dominant than his concern to be a harmonious part of God's Divine Plan.

One of the mightiest lessons of our Bible is dramatically emphasized by the contrast between Jephthah and Adah. That God provides the means to accomplish those things which are consistent with Almighty Design has been shown again and again.

Through faith and prayer Adah received the help she needed to be courageous and unfaltering in times of greatest duress. She assumed the position at the altar, gloriously unafraid, because as a reverent, God-loving obedient servant of Her Heavenly Father she was becoming an integral part of His Plan. But, nothing further was exacted of Adah in return for the courage and faith with which God fortified her. She was not required to make any sacrifices. She was not bidden to undertake a pilgrimage. Absolutely nothing was asked in return for the loving and much needed gifts which Adah received from God.

Jephthah on the other hand, while he was also provided with the means to accomplish his God-sanctioned purpose, was not as fortunate and unencumbered as was Adah. Jephthah offered God a sacrifice because the understanding of his less perceiving heart felt that a proposed sacrifice might enhance his worth in the eyes of God. To Jephthah's scheming, bargaining mind, it seemed that God would be more likely to reward him with what he wanted if God Himself were to get "a little something extra."

How dearly Jephthah paid for his blind unwillingness to understand that God only sought a willing and obedient spirit to serve Him. Jephthah sacrificed his daughter's life to fulfill the terms of a vow which was never exacted by God, and which was not a necessary requisite for his success against the enemy.