

Judges 12

King James Version (KJV)

12 And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire. (northward = Saphone – a town in Gad – this is a bad translation) see Joshua-13:27

(Ephraim is obviously on a power trip. They became the largest of the 10 northern tribes. They continually vied against Judah for the kingship of Israel. They also threatened Gideon when he judged Israel for God. Gideon was able to use psychology to pacify them)

²And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. (He did call them; but they didn't respond)

³And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? (passed over – passed over the Jordan)

⁴Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites. (men of Gilead – Reuben, Gad & ½ of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan)

(Fugitives = strays - men with no name, no heritage and no rights)

(God does not want civil war. HE gave Jephthah the victory because Ephraim was wrong in starting the conflict. Jephthah tried to reason with them, to no avail)

⁵And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; (the passages- the fords - the places where they could cross the Jordan)

⁶Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and

slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. (Translation error – 2,040, not 42,000; see Numbers-26:37; 300 years before, they only had 32,500 in the whole tribe)

(The Ephraimites had a speech accent, when pronouncing Shibboleth <the sh sound>, so the Gileadites could tell them apart by hearing them) (Shibboleth = a stream or flood <in the Hebrew>)

⁷And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. (Probably at his home in Mizpeh)

(Paul wrote of Jephthah in Hebrews-11 because he had a very strong faith in God)

⁸And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. (Bethlehem of Zebulun, not of Judah) see Joshua-19:15

(He was not elected of God, but more like a civil judge – the 9th judge) (Ibzan = illustrious; he was probably rich)

⁹And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. (from abroad = foreigners – this was against God's commands. HE did not want Israel marrying heathen peoples)

NOTE: (God knew that foreigners would bring in their own religions and their gods into these marriages, which would lead some people of Israel to fall into idolatry. A good example is Solomon and his hundreds of foreign wives and concubines) see Deuteronomy-7:1-5

¹⁰Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Bethlehem.

¹¹And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. (The 10th judge)

¹²And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

¹³And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. (The 11th judge)

(Nothing is written about these three. Possibly, they kept the idolatry down, and saw no conflicts to write about)

¹⁴ And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. (Nephews= son's sons <grandsons> in the manuscripts – this is a bad translation)

(That it said that they rode ass colts means that they were rich)

¹⁵ And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.