

## Judges 12 – Shibboleth

**And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passed 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.**

Verse 1 – Ephraim gathered against him mad because they got passed over. Get this, mad because he didn't call on them to go into battle and share in the victory. After the victory, after the fruit, they saw it and got mad at the leader....crazy. So they want to punish him and burn down what he had established. Is that crazy? Is it evil? Church folks. Pride was involved in this....at the very root.

- Should have come to congratulate him or help him mourn over his daughter. Clowns.
- Certainly there can't be people who act like this or have this attitude today. Do you think this attitude is still present today?
  - Are there people who may be so jealous of your success that they would attack you?
  - Dangerous attitude because God delivered the victory to Jephthah to benefit the Kingdom, now these actions are not only contrary to the Kingdom, but they are now fighting against God and His plan.
  - We should be careful how we deal with God's servants when the motivation for our actions are selfish.

**<sup>2</sup> And 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. <sup>3</sup> And 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?**

Verse 2 – Jephthah reply was, when we were in trouble from this same enemy, I called you for help and you didn't come.

Verse 3 – So since you didn't help me then when you had the chance, I decided to pass over you. I didn't need you, I just needed God and that was enough. Don't trip because people you expected to help you won't help. Don't get mad, just pass over them and ask God for the help you need.

- Again, asks them a profound question. Since you didn't help before, tell me why you are tripping now to fight with me? If they had answered him, they would have seen how crazy and evil they sounded.

**<sup>4</sup> Then 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.**

Verse 4 – the butt waxing began. Because they called them fugitives or scum.

- Called them rejects and that they were the true Israelites.
- Family pride.... you know he wasn't going to be very happy about that.
- Application for today: Be careful, there are "triggers" that will set some people off.
- Class member said: He fought all his life to have victory over his past and one comment brought it right back up again.

**<sup>5</sup> And 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; <sup>6</sup> Then 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.**

Verse 5 – Took over territory they had. Questioned those who had escaped.

Verse 6 – Can you say Shibboleth? Shibboleth = river, stream. They instead said sibboleth = grain or burden, because they couldn't get their mouth to act right so they could say the word right. 42,000 killed. Sad.

- Their speech betrayed them. How they said it revealed who they really were. It was a test.
- They were proud of their tribe before this...bragged about it, but now not so proud or safe to be from there.
- Your heritage and things in the world cannot save you from judgement.

You can tell if someone is really for the Kingdom based upon their speech.

Be careful, some folks are still carrying the hurt and anger.

**<sup>7</sup> And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.**

Verse 7 – judged Israel 6 years. Buried in one of the cities of his home land.

**<sup>8</sup> And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.**

**<sup>9</sup> And 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.**

**<sup>10</sup> Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Bethlehem.**

**<sup>11</sup> And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years.**

**<sup>12</sup> And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.**

**<sup>13</sup> And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.**

**<sup>14</sup> And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years.**

**<sup>15</sup> 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.**

Another observation:

It would seem that while Jephthah is the hero of this story, the killing of 42,000 seems a bit over the top. I don't think many today would say that God was glorified by the killings near the Jordan even though we could argue that Ephraim brought this on themselves. It is possible that Jephthah was still carrying the hurt and rejection from his past. Perhaps, he responded this way because he never wanted to be rejected or go through a season like that ever again. If so, I can certainly relate to this type of thinking and response. I lived my life like this for many years. However, I was reminded one day that I could be completely delivered. In fact, someone asked me if I wanted to be completely free of my past hurts. I initially said no. I was quite comfortable like I was and was still enjoying victories just as Jephthah. But I finally figured it out while preparing a sermon on the resurrection.

I noticed as part of the resurrection of Christ when he was buried in the tomb, he didn't bring anything out of the tomb with him. He left all of the burial wrappings and items in that tomb. It struck me then....one cannot truly be or fully a brand-new person unless everything is left behind in that spiritual process of the tomb. When I realized that God wanted me to be brand new and not just changed, it was much easier to go back and leave my "shibboleth" attitude back in the tomb.



Is there something that you still carry from the past that causes you to respond outside of the person God really wants you to be? Perhaps you and I need to visit the tomb once more and leave it there. We are new creatures in Christ and his complete resurrection.