

Day 250 - THURSDAY: September 7th

Judges 12

Judges 12:1-15 NKJV

Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!" And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. So when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites." The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites arrived. And when any Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," then they would say to him, "Then say, 'Shibboleth!'" And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce it right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites. And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead. After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. He had thirty sons. And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy young donkeys. He judged Israel eight

years. Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program: “The Gileadites were a clan within Manasseh, dwelling east of the Jordan and north of the Dead Sea. They appear to have been very independent of their tribe, and this independence irked the men of Ephraim, who generally headed the House of Joseph. Hence their accusation that the Gileadites were fugitives among Ephraim and Manasseh (verse 4).

Now that the war with Ammon was over, the men of Ephraim suddenly showed courage. They accused Jephthah of deliberately failing to summon them to the battle as a means of humiliating the leading tribe in Joseph, and they intended to wage war against him. Led by Jephthah, the Gileadites steadfastly held their ground, taking the strategic byways and heights. They recognized Ephraimite infiltrators by their distinctive accent (showing that even in a small geographical region like Israel there were sharp delineations between—and sometimes bitter divisions among—the Israelite tribes and clans). However, the battle went entirely in favor of Jephthah and the Gileadites, and Gilead remained independent of their larger tribal units.

Jephthah judged only six years. After him a long series of judges followed: Ibzan of Bethlehem, seven years; Elon the Zebulonite, ten years; Abdon the Pirathonite (Ephraimite), eight years. Thus Israel enjoyed a total of 31 years of peace.” [END]

Verse 6 – The Hebrew word for “Shibboleth” means “a stream” or a course of water. Here they were wanting to pass over this section of water and it served to find out which group they were in by how they said this word.