

JUDGES CHAPTER 12

JUDGES FEATURED IN THIS CHAPTER

OTHNIEL

EHUD

SHAMGAR

DEBORAH

GIDEON

ABIMELECH

TOLA

JAIR

JEPHTHAH

IBZAN

ELON

ABDON

SAMSON

ELI

SAMUEL

WHEN

- Most scholars place the period of the Judges between 1450 B.C. and 1000 B.C.
- The precise dates are still debated.
- Judges 11:26 informs us it had been approximately 300 years since the Israelites ended their wandering in the wilderness.

WHERE

- Most of Judges 12 centers around the land of Gilead. Gilead was on the east side of the Jordan River (see map). Gad's land and the southern part of Manasseh's territory were in Gilead.
- The men of Ephraim made their complaint against Jephthah in Zaphon.



CHARACTERS

- **The Ammonites** – They “crushed and oppressed the people of Israel” and wanted to take Israel’s land as their own (10:8). Jephthah defeated them in battle in Judges 11.
- **Jephthah** – The 9th Judge of Israel. A mighty warrior from Gilead. He was the son of a prostitute.
- **Ephraimites** – The Ephraimites lived across the Jordan River from Jephthah’s land in Gilead. They quarreled with Jephthah and started a short civil war.
- **Ibzan** – The 10th Judge of Israel. He judged Israel for 7 years.
- **Elon** – The 11th Judge of Israel. He judged Israel for 10 years.
- **Abdon** – The 12th Judge of Israel. He judged Israel for 8 years.

OUTLINE

- THE EPHRAIMITES PICK A FIGHT WITH JEPHTHAH (12:1-7):
 - + After Jephthah defeated the Ammonites (Judges 11), the Ephraimites armed themselves and complained that Jephthah hadn't invited them to participate in the battle (perhaps they were jealous they didn't receive the prestige or the spoils from the battle).
 - + The reason Jephthah went to battle without them was because he had previously asked them for help with the Ammonites and they didn't show any sign of wanting to help.
 - + The Ephraimites were so mad, they started a war with Jephthah and the men of Gilead.
 - + Jephthah defeated them and took control of the Jordan River crossing.
 - + Every time a person wanted to cross the river, the guards would ask them if they were an Ephraimite, if they responded "no," the guards would ask them to pronounce the word "Shibboleth."
 - + The Ephraimites, due to their dialect, pronounced the word "Sibboleth" which gave away their identity.
 - + The men of Gilead killed 42,000 Ephraimites in total.
 - + Jephthah judged Israel for 6 years.
- IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON (12:8-15):
 - + After Jephthah, Ibzan of Bethlehem became Israel's 10th Judge and judged for 7 years.
 - + Ibzan had 30 sons and 30 daughters.
 - + Elon was the 11th Judge and he judged Israel for 10 years.
 - + After Elon, Abdon judged Israel for 8 years.
 - + Abdon had 40 sons and 30 grandsons.

APPLICATION

- There are some people that will not be swayed by logic or rational arguments.
- In Judges 11, Jephthah provided the king of the Ammonites with several good reasons why Ammon didn't have a claim on Israel's land, but the king started a war anyway.
- In Judges 12, Jephthah gave the Ephraimites a good reason why he didn't wait for them before going to battle with the Ammonites, but they started a war anyway.
- Some people want to argue and disagree no matter what the facts.
- They are driven by emotion (and often sin) which causes them to act irrationally.
- Some people will reject the gospel purely on emotion.
- They don't care about rational arguments; they refuse to accept God and the Gospel because something about them is emotionally objectionable to them.
- Personally, we need to make sure our worldview is formed by rational thinking. A worldview formed by our personal emotions may not be grounded in eternal realities.

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