

Lectures on the Book of Judges

Judges 12 — Ephraim's Pride

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After this we find how the pride of the men of Ephraim takes fire at a person of such an origin as Jephthah, spite of the signal deliverance by his means for Israel, so that they come forth to fight. (Judges 12) Jephthah might little desire such a conflict; nevertheless, where do we see meekness, where patience? And be assured, brethren, that in an evil world patience is morally much beyond power. Thus we may find the most striking manifestations of power in men as disorderly as the Corinthian Christians; but the same persons are a plain proof that it is a far harder thing to do the will of the Lord, and harder still to suffer according to God, than to work any miracles whatever. The truth of all we find in our Lord Jesus. He was the power of God and the wisdom of God; but what shall we say of His obedience on the one hand, and on the other of His patience? Others may have shown as mighty works, as great displays of power; nay, even the blessed Lord Jesus Himself said, "Greater works than these shall ye do." But where was there such devotedness in doing His Father's will? and where such a sufferer? Indeed, for Him to obey in such a world must have been suffering. It could not be otherwise. As long as the world is under the usurped rule of the enemy of God, the path of obedience must always be one of suffering, and this, I may add, increasingly, as we see in Him. Jephthah knew little if anything of this; so the result was, that the Ephraimites, in their pride, meddled with this rude warrior, who dealt with them, we may be very sure, not more mildly than with his own daughter. He not only turned with the grossest insults on their speech, but fell on themselves, and slew at the passage of Jordan forty and two thousand men of one of the chief tribes of Israel. Such then was the bloody crisis at which a deliverer of Israel arrives in his unsparing resentment. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon follow.