

Judges

“Israel’s ‘Dark Ages’”

“War with Benjamin, Part II”

Text: Judges 20:29 – 21:25

THE TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS OF ISRAEL

JOSH. 13:8-19:49

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak



What can we learn from the tribe of Benjamin?

Gen 49:27 Jacob blesses him last.

“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.” 2 actions: *Devouring/Dividing*

2 outcomes: Prey and Spoil

- Warlike – Judges 20:15-16, I Chron 8:40, 12:2, 2 Chron 14:8, 17:17
- Ungodly defense of Gibeah – Judges 19-20

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2 outcomes: Prey and Spoil

- Produced four great characters
 - Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)
 - King Saul (I Sam 9:15-27)
 - Mordecai and Esther (Esther 2:5-7)
 - The apostle Paul (Rom 11:1, Phil 3:4-5)

#10

Israel was confronted with sin in its midst. What mistakes can you find in how they dealt with it?

They were over-eager to mete out punishment to the evil-doers

They did not consult God as they should have before proceeding

They were over-confident in their position on the matter (lack of humility)

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#10

Israel was confronted with sin in its midst. What mistakes can you find in how they dealt with it?

They were self-righteous and did not take into account their own lack of responsibility for not stepping in sooner.

They did not seem all that eager to persuade the Benjaminites that the Gibeonites had committed vile offenses

They did not appear all that eager to contemplate how they should proceed

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#10

Israel was confronted with sin in its midst. What mistakes can you find in how they dealt with it?

There was no sorrow expressed that these events should have happened in Israel

They were over-confident in their capabilities

Because of all of these, their judgment was skewed resulting in senseless vows and over-zealous killing of Benjamites.

They almost did to their own people that which they refused to do to the wicked Canaanites!

#11

What was the strategy employed against Gibeah by Israel? Where have we seen this same stratagem before?

The Israelites approached the town as if they were intending to engage the Benjaminites in battle as they had in the first 2 battles.

However, when the Benjaminites came out to attack them, the Israelites ran as if they had been defeated and this drew the Benjaminites away from Gibeah, leaving it defenseless. This allowed 10,000 Israelite soldiers to enter the town and begin burning it.

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#11

What was the strategy employed against Gibeah by Israel? Where have we seen this same stratagem before?

This is exactly how Joshua and his army captured Ai (Joshua 8:3-23).

#12

After Benjamin's army was defeated, what did Israel do to their possessions?

Besides killing every man, woman, and child of the tribe of Benjamin (except for the 600 men that escaped to the rock of Rimmon), the Israelites burned their cities (which would almost certainly include their possessions) (20:48).

From this day forward, the tribe of Benjamin was both the youngest, and the smallest of all the tribes (1 Sam 9:21).

#3

What authority did Israel have to do this? In view of [Deuteronomy 7:1-2](#), what ways can you think of that the tribe of Benjamin had become like the Canaanites?

At the least, [Deuteronomy 13:12-18](#) provides significant authority for Israel to take action against the Gibeonites. While some may contend that we don't have an explicit charge of idol worship against the Gibeonites, it would be difficult to contend that a town of homosexuals would also be faithful followers of Jehovah and not idol worshipers. It gets a bit more difficult, though, when the action against the entire tribe of Benjamin is considered. But the argument could easily be made that...

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#3

What authority did Israel have to do this? In view of [Deuteronomy 7:1-2](#), what ways can you think of that the tribe of Benjamin had become like the Canaanites?

in falling in with the ranks of the Gibeonites, the rest of the tribe then was deserving of whatever punishment was meted out to the Gibeonites.

Given, the sins committed against the Levite ([19:14-28](#)); and their response when the rest of Israel came together to deal with the Gibeonites ([20:13](#)), it could be argued that they were essentially no different morally.

#4

What new oath do we learn of Israel making at Mizpah? Does making this oath pass the 'sanity test'? Why or why not?

They all vowed not to give any of their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites (21:1).

This does not make any sense. (It is probably a good example of how man can sometimes get carried away by his emotions and say something extreme to demonstrate his zeal.) Whatever the outcome of the conflict, it tied their hands for any future intermarriage.

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#4

What new oath do we learn of Israel making at Mizpah? Does making this oath pass the ‘sanity test’? Why or why not?

Even if one takes the position that the vow was made only after Benjamin refused to hand over the “worthless men”, what do the Israelites do after Benjamin has been ‘taught a lesson’ / (assuming that the tribe was not wiped out)? Their hands would still have been tied. When one assumes that wiping out the entire tribe was the intent from the beginning, the vow makes even less sense.

#5

Given that the only people remaining from the tribe of Benjamin are 600 men, and the oaths that were made, what are the long-term prospects for the Benjaminites?

The tribe was essentially wiped out. The 600 could not get wives from the Canaanites and the Israelites had vowed not to give them any wives. And the nation was not strong enough to conquer any of the surrounding nations just to obtain wives for the 600. Hence, when the last of the 600 died, so would the entire tribe.

#6

What actions did the people carry out at Bethel? What was the response of the LORD? Why do you think this may have been the case?

They first asked the question of the LORD as to how all of this could have happened. They then built an altar and offered sacrifices.

There was no response from the LORD.

It could have been that the LORD was not pleased with their building an altar where He had not commanded. It is also possible that they seemed to be blaming Him for what happened (see 21:15).

#7

Who did they ask about solving this problem (21:7) From where did the answer come?

They asked themselves.

The answer came from themselves.

#8

What was the 2-step solution to the mess?

First, they slaughtered the entire town of Jabesh-gilead (fellow Israelites), except for the virgin females. But this only provided about 400 wives for the 600.

Second, they told the remaining Benjaminites to essentially kidnap the wives they wanted from the unmarried women of Bethel.

#9

How did the remaining Benjaminites react?

While we are not told explicitly of their reaction, they obviously were glad to have not been killed. They accepted Israel's offer of peace (21:13-14), consented to receive the 400 women of Jabesh-gilead, and did as they were instructed to obtain the remaining 200 wives. At the conclusion of the episode, they went home to rebuild their towns and farms (21:23).

TRUE/FALSE

11. T F *The men of Shiloh were told not to complain about their daughters/sisters being taken. (21:22)*
12. T F *The town of Jabesh-gilead was selected by lot to provide wives for the Benjaminites. (21:8-9)*
13. T F *The 600 Benjaminites escaped to the rock of Rimmon. (20:45)*
14. T F *The men of Israel knew that the ambush was complete because of the smoke from Gibeah. (20:38)*
15. T F *In the 3rd battle, the men of Benjamin lost about 30 men. (20:31)*

