

BOOK OF JUDGES
RESCUING A TRIBE OF ISRAEL
JUDGES 21:1-25

Introduction

We saw last week in *Judges 20* how that almost an entire **TRIBE OF ISRAEL**, the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** (all the descendants of **ISRAEL'S** youngest son), was almost totally destroyed by the rest of the nation of **ISRAEL**.

That happened because the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** foolishly decided to **FIGHT AGAINST** the rest of the **TRIBES OF ISRAEL** to defend the wicked city of **GIBEAH** in their midst which was harboring the murderous **SODOMITES** who had **ATTACKED, ABUSED, and KILLED** the concubine of an unnamed **LEVITE** from **MT. EPHRAIM**.

i.e. The **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** aligned themselves with these wicked **SODOMITES** because they were part of their own **TRIBE**. They did this when they should have aligned themselves with the **LORD** and those who rightly stood against the great wickedness that had been done!

We saw last week that out of **26,700 men** of war from the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** there were only **600 men** who survived by escaping the rock **RIMMON** where they abode for four months.

Additionally we see that the rest of the **CHILDREN OF ISRAEL** took vengeance against **BENJAMIN** by being especially harsh in the *last verse* of *Judges 20*. They wiped out the women, children, and every living thing that **BENJAMIN** had. So **BENJAMIN** was left with only the **600 men** who were in hiding

Now we see in *Judges 21* a problem that **ISRAEL** caused and tries to solve. It all has to do with **ISRAEL** renewing the tribe of **BENJAMIN**.

I. WE SEE THE PROBLEM CAUSED BY ISRAEL'S ACTIONS.
(Vs 1-3)

This Problem Stemmed From Two Things:

A. ISRAEL Swore A FOOLISH OATH! (Vs 1)

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Considering their **ANGER** against **BENJAMIN**, this probably seemed like the right thing to do. But this **FOOLISH OATH** had some unforeseen consequences because...

B. ISRAEL Was Too Harsh In Their Judgment Of BENJAMIN!

TRUE JUSTICE should not only bring punishment to evildoers, but it should also guard against punishment that is too harsh. But **ISRAEL** went too far in their destruction of the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN**.

So, in the next verses, we see **ISRAEL** try to right a wrong by doing wrong themselves!

II. WE SEE ISRAEL REALIZES THAT A WHOLE TRIBE IS IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION! (Vs 2-3)

Note here how they cried out to the **LORD GOD**, almost as if it was **HIS** responsibility that the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** was on the edge of extinction.

The question, "*Why is this come to pass?*" was easily answered: Because of the **EXCESSIVE VENGEANCE** of the **TRIBES OF ISRAEL** against the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN**.

BENJAMIN was down to only 600 men – and those men were unable to marry **ISRAELITE** wives now because of the curse pronounced in *Judges 21:1*. So, the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** was on the verge of **EXTINCTION!**

III. WE SEE ISRAEL'S SOLUTION TO THEIR FOOLISH OATH! (Vs 4-15)

The next day after talking with the **LORD** they built and altar an offered to the **LORD**. *(Vs 4)*

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They then inquired about any among all the **TRIBES OF ISRAEL** who did not come up with the **ASSEMBLY** they had before the **LORD** in **MIZPEH!** (*Vs 5; Cp. 20:1*)

Verse 6-9

Here again we see that **ISRAEL** did something that **SEEMED RIGHT** at the time, but was actually horrifying. They decided to slaughter **JABESH-GILEAD**, a whole city of **ISRAEL** located within the **TRIBE OF GAD!** This was a city that refused to join with **ISRAEL** in the fight against **BENJAMIN!**

Now understand that when the call was made for the **TRIBES OF ISRAEL** to come together to judge the wicked men of **GIBEAH**, it **wasn't done with a threat of death.** But here they impose a death penalty on a whole city so they could provide wives for the **600 men** of **BENJAMIN** who survived the civil war.

This was doing one bad thing to make up for another. **ISRAEL** instead should have repented of their **FOOLISH OATH** made at **MIZPEH**, and they should have agreed to give their daughters as wives to the men of the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN**, renouncing the **FOOLISH VOW** of *JUDGES 21:1.*

Verses 10-14

In this ungodly massacre at **JABESH-GILEAD**, they killed all but 400 young virgins and brought them to the 600 remaining men of **BENJAMIN** for wives, yet they came up 200 short of what was needed.

IV. WE SEE ISRAEL'S SECOND SOLUTION TO MAKE UP FOR THE SHORTFALL OF BRIDES. (*Vs 15-24*)

They came up with a scheme to give the remaining men of **BENJAMIN** an opportunity to take wives.

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They answered the problem of wives for these remaining men of **BENJAMIN** by creating a little drama where the men of **BENJAMIN** were allowed to **“kidnap”** women (who were no doubt willing), so that the marriages could be arranged without **“official”** approval.

Rather than go through this charade, they should have simply **CONFESSED THEIR SIN** of making a **FOOLISH OATH** and done the right thing instead of trying to make two wrongs equal a right.

In this, the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** was sufficiently restored— Out of this tribe would come **ISRAEL'S** first king, **KING SAUL**, (*Cf. 1 Samuel 9*). Out of this tribe would also come **ESTHER** who would save **ISRAEL** from extermination at the hands of the wicked **HAMAN** by her brave actions, (*Cf. Esther 2:5-7*). And one more notable name from the **TRIBE OF BENJAMIN** is the **APOSTLE PAUL**, (*Philippians 3:5*).

V. WE SEE THIS BOOK CLOSSES WITH THE REPEATED SUMMARY OBSERVATION OF THE TIMES OF THE JUDGES! (*Vs 25*)

The kind of moral, political, social, and spiritual chaos that we have seen in this book could only happen where there was no recognized king over **ISRAEL**—And where people forgot about the **LORD GOD** being their **KING!**

Generally, the 400-year period of the Judges was marked by this **radical individualism.** They rejected the standard of **GOD'S LAW** for the individual standard of what was right in their own eyes.

Conclusion

The lawlessness of our times is sadly much like the times of the **JUDGES.**