

## **Consequences for Benjamin's Sin Judges 20**

### **Introduction**

What can be done about evil? What if God had caused a great catastrophe to wipe out all of the Canaanites, and Israel had entered a fresh land without pagan people surrounding them? Would Israel have escaped evil then?

Sadly, the answer is no. Twice God started fresh with man, and twice man repeated his sin. First, God created man in the Garden of Eden. But, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and followed their own wills. Again, in the time of Noah, God was grieved seeing every thought of every man was to do evil (Genesis 6:5). He sent the worldwide flood, destroyed the corrupt world, and gave Noah and his family a fresh start. Again, man's sinful nature ruled him.

Today, we are the same. Even when we know that something is bad for us, we still do it. We eat too much sugar, knowing it will cause cavities. Some smoke cigarettes knowing it can cause cancer. We lie, steal, and cheat but make up excuses to explain that it's OK. In the same way, people often need to see the results of sin before they admit it is evil. For example, a child may be told not to play with fire. But, the child wants very badly to see what will happen when he lights a book on fire. At last, he gives up trying to obey and lights the fire. It is not until great damage is done, that he realizes the evil result of his disobedience. We must be willing to resist and fight against the evil. God is a holy God who demands a holy people for His Name. Israel needed to learn to **resist** evil and be able to survive in its presence, and so do we. Thankfully, we are not left without help. God

has given us the Holy Spirit, His word, and prayer to fight against evil.

### **Outline of Judges Chapter 20**

- I. Israel's Mizpah Meeting – Judges 20:1-11
- II. Israel's Declaration to Benjamin - Judges 20:12-20
- III. Israel's Battle at Gibeah - Judges 20:21-35
- IV. Israel's God-given Victory - Judges 20:36-48

### **I. Israel's Meeting At Mizpah – Judges 20:1-11**

The last few chapters of Judges most likely happened before the period of Judges because Aaron's grandson, Phinehas, is mentioned in verse 20:28, and possibly Moses' grandson is mentioned in 18:30.

In Judges 20:2, the phrase *From Dan to Beersheba* is used for the first time but became a popular way of referring to all of Israel in its entirety. Dan was the northernmost tribe and Beersheba was the southernmost city. It would be similar to saying from Main to Florida in the United States.

The nation gathered at Mizpah. All the tribes except Benjamin were represented by their leaders and soldiers. There were four hundred thousand swordsmen. The tribe of Benjamin knew they were assembling at Mizpah. It was a well-known central meeting place for the tribes.

The leaders began the assembly and asked the Levite to tell them just how the *wicked deed*

had happened. The Levite told the story. He and his wife had gone to Gibeah, in Benjamin, to spend the night. The men surrounded the house because he was there and intended to kill him. Instead they tortured his concubine so that she died. Then he explained how he had cut her in pieces and sent her to the tribes to demand a response for such outrageous and wicked actions. He finished his speech with a challenge to the nation, *Look, all of you are children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!*

However, the Levite didn't tell the story exactly as it had happened. He said that the men of the city had intended to kill him, when they had not said that. He also failed to mention that he was the one that gave his concubine to the men. Judges 19:25 reads *the man took his concubine and brought her out to them.*

The **irate** people, with one mind, agreed not to leave until they had acted against Gibeah. Meanwhile they would appoint a tenth of the men to provide for the nation's food supply while all the others **confronted** the people of Gibeah to make them pay for their evil ways. The assembly moved to the edge of Gibeah.

Are you like the people of Israel when you see evil things happening around you? Are you unable to rest until you take some action? Have you ever witnessed a student being bullied by another student? How did you respond?

## II. Israel's Declaration to Benjamin - Judges 20:12-20

Messengers went throughout Benjamin to declare the crime and demand an explanation. *What is this wickedness that has occurred among you?* They also demanded that the accused men be handed over for execution. The tribe of Benjamin not only refused to turn over the depraved men, they protected them by preparing for battle against their countrymen. Benjamin was twenty-six thousand strong, and Gibeah had another seven hundred select men, left-handed men who were experts with the sling and able to hurl a stone at a hair and not miss.

Benjamin's answer was not what Israel wanted. They had hoped to settle the matter with the execution of the evil men. The tribes had a much larger force than Benjamin, but they took time to pray to God first. The leaders gathered at the tabernacle and asked God which tribe should go against Benjamin. The answer was *Judah*, as before (Judges 1:2). In the morning, they camped by Gibeah and readied the troops for battle.

## III. Israel's Battle at Gibeah - Judges 20:21-35

The soldiers of Benjamin charged out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand men. Israel fell back to count their losses. They encouraged each other, probably by reminding one another that their cause was just and God had directed them. Then they went back into battle formation. But, before launching into another battle, they wept and prayed to God. They wanted fresh **assurance** that they were doing God's will before sending more troops into battle. God instructed them to continue fighting against Benjamin.

Israel advanced on the second day, and Benjamin cut down eighteen thousand more soldiers. This time all the people gathered at Bethel and wept before God. They fasted and sacrificed burnt offerings as well as peace offerings. Then, with the high priest Phinehas present, they asked the Lord, *Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin or shall I cease?* It must have been hard for the Israelites to fight against their own brothers. But God sent them back into battle with the promise that they would be victorious the next day.

Israel attacked Gibeah on the third day. Benjamin began to cut them down as before, killing about thirty men and boasting that they were going to defeat Israel again. Israel fled, but only to draw the people of Benjamin out of the city. Ten thousand soldiers stood waiting for the charging Benjamites. When the men of Benjamin rushed out of the city to attack them, other Israelites rose from **ambush** and

cut them off from returning. Then they went on to destroy Gibeah and set it on fire. The battle was fierce. The Benjamites did not realize that disaster was upon them. They thought they were winning until they saw a cloud of smoke arise from the city behind them. That was the signal to the Israelite army that they were in control of the city. The record says, *The Lord defeated Benjamin*. They lost twenty-five thousand one hundred swordsmen that day.

#### **IV. Israel's God-given Victory - Judges 20:36-48**

The strategy of using an ambush was risky, but it worked. The armies of Israel depended on Benjamin's confidence from two days of winning to leave the city unprotected and use all their force to chase them again. The Benjamites panicked when they saw the cloud from the city and fled. Israel pursued, destroying them.

Only six hundred men escaped to the rock of Rimmon where they stayed four months. The tribes ended the war by burning all the cities of Benjamin, and killing all the men and animals. The evil was eliminated at a great cost. †

#### **Prayer**

Thank God for His mercy! Even though we fail and sin over and over again, God forgives us. His mercy never runs out.

#### **Memory Verse**

Lamentations 3:22-23 *Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.*

#### **Vocabulary**

**resist** - to fight against or oppose

**irate** - very angry, furious

**confront** - to face a challenge

**assurance** - confidence, certainty

**ambush** - a surprise attack by people in hiding

**QUESTIONS FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 16**

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

**DAY ONE: Read all notes and references.**

1. Do you think the tribes of Israel had good reasons to go to war with Benjamin? Why or why not?  

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2. ♥ (Heart Question) What sin do you struggle with the most? What will you do about it?  

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**DAY TWO: Read Judges 21:1-7.**

3. What two vows had the people of Israel made? Check the correct statement below and give the verse where it is found.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ They would never again speak to the remaining 600 men of Benjamin.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ They would not give their daughters as wives to the men of Benjamin.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ They would proclaim a national holiday to celebrate their victory over Benjamin.
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ They would put to death anyone who had not gone to the meeting before the Lord at Mizpah.
4.
  - a. Why did the people weep?  

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  - b. What question did they ask the Lord God of Israel?  

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5. What did they do the next morning? Fill in the blanks.
  - a. Built an \_\_\_\_\_ and offered \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Asked who had attended the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Grieved for \_\_\_\_\_.
6. What was the problem which needed solving?  

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**DAY THREE: Read Judges 21:8-14.**

7.
  - a. What question was asked for the second time? (Hint: see verse 5.)  

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b. What was the answer?

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8. a. What action did the people of Israel take?

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b. From Judges 21:5, why did they do this?

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c. Do you think the people of this city would have been wise to send someone to the meeting? Give reasons for your answer.

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9. a. How many “unmarried,” (virgin) young women did they find?

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b. What happened to these women?

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**DAY FOUR: Read Judges 21:15-22.**

10. a. How many men of Benjamin still needed wives? Use Judges 20:47 and 21:12 to find the answer.

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b. What problem did the elders meet to consider?

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11. a. What idea did the elders come up with to solve the problem?

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b. What did the men of Benjamin have to do in order for the plan to succeed?

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c. How did this plan keep the tribes of Israel from breaking their vow in Judges 21:1 and 7?

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12. What would the elders say to the fathers and brothers who complained?

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**DAY FIVE: Read Judges 21:23-25.**

13. How did life return to normal?  
In Benjamin

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In the other tribes

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14. What is the last statement made in the Book of Judges?
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15. a. What did you learn from the Book of Judges?

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- b. Has the study of Judges resulted in any changes in your life? If so, what are those changes?

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**VOCABULARY FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 16**

***"The more words you know, the more clearly and powerfully you will think...  
and the more ideas you will invite into your mind."***

— Wilfred Funk

**DAY ONE: Write the definition of each vocabulary word.**

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**DAY TWO: Write three sentences using three different vocabulary words from this lesson.**

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3.

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**DAY THREE: Circle the word's synonym(s).** (Synonym is a word/phrase that means the same thing.)

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|----|------------------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|------------|
| 1. | <b>resist</b>    | ..... | oppose    | ..... | make peace | ..... | battle     |
| 2. | <b>irate</b>     | ..... | sleepy    | ..... | hungry     | ..... | angry      |
| 3. | <b>assurance</b> | ..... | certainty | ..... | scary      | ..... | confidence |

**DAY FOUR: Match the word to its meaning.****Word****Definition****assurance**

to face a challenge

**irate**

very angry, furious

**confront**

to fight against or oppose

**ambush**

a surprise attack by people in hiding

**resist**

confidence, certainty

**DAY FIVE: Review previous vocabulary words. Try to work from memory.**

X T I C B E G M Y Z N T Q Q H  
 A K X E W R L T N G V N Y E I  
 M A K E C Z I I B R Q R M I B  
 I I Z R T V Q Z X Z U E C V Z  
 L R V Y I N G I G E K A U V B  
 C Z E T C J O L H H U K S H J  
 D L P V K W X C Y Y R K Q J U  
 W A E C E W F J V F S D J G X  
 C G K G S L G B R F Z E K J B  
 T N Y V A G A S N V I V S Z I  
 M J U Q N C O T O W P A E J J  
 H U X D D Y Y G I Q K R L K T  
 O F F E N S I V E O V P D R D  
 B L U R Z E R I J A N E Y A B  
 E M Z V G F F E H E J D U L X

**WORD BANK**

REVELATION  
 LEGACY  
 OFFENSIVE  
 DEPRAVED

CAPTIVITY  
 CLIMAX  
 CONTEXT  
 EXILE

\_\_\_\_\_ - taken and held  
prisoner especially in war

\_\_\_\_\_ - rude, insulting

\_\_\_\_\_ - marked by  
corruption or evil, perverted

\_\_\_\_\_ - an act of being forced  
to leave one's home

\_\_\_\_\_ - the most interesting  
and exciting part, the high point

\_\_\_\_\_ - words spoken or  
written near another word or group  
of words to give clearer meaning

\_\_\_\_\_ - an act of making  
something known that was not known  
previously

\_\_\_\_\_ - something  
that happened in the past and is  
handed down to another; what  
is remembered about someone,  
someplace, or some event