



Judges
20:34

וַלְבָאֵי
 מִנְגֵד לַגִּבְעָה
 עֲשֶׂת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ
 בְּחֹרֶר מִכָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַמִּלְחָמָה
 קָבְדָה: וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ, כִּי-נִגְעַת עֲלֵיהֶם הָרָעָה. [פ]

And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce.
 But the Benjamites did not know that disaster was upon them.

ד"ר אברהם קאלרסון
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Artwork by Douglas Kallerson

Judges 20:19-35 **(No King in Israel, Part VIII)**

A day before typing this sermon, an assassination attempt was made against President Trump. It was incredible to see how the media and those in the government portrayed this from the moment it occurred.

They, including Biden just days earlier, had been openly calling for a target to be placed on Trump. They had incited rage against him since before he was elected to office in 2016 and continued to do so right up until the day of the attempt, and they then blamed the right for inciting the hatred that caused it!

Many on the left, even after full evidence of the shooter and what he had done was seen by the public, said that the shooting was staged by President Trump.

There was no true call for harmony within the nation, even by Biden when he held an Oval Office address to call for harmony. Instead, he continued to blame Trump and those who support him, citing examples of recent political violence, all incited by the US government, as reasons why people need to reelect Biden and not the man who had just been shot in the ear.

Instead of an attitude of mourning and repentance towards God, the rabid left simply doubled down on their violent rhetoric and hatred towards the values of freedom and democracy.

Text Verse: *“Now, therefore,” says the Lord,
“Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” Joel 2:12*

Because of the abundance of information heaped upon the reader, as well as how the Bible is laid out, an interesting point concerning Moses and Aaron can easily be overlooked in Judges.

In Judges 18:30, the grandson of Moses was a key figure in the surrounding narrative. We saw that he had completely departed from any hint of sound theology under the Law of Moses.

In this passage, Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron is a key figure in the narrative, and it is in his time as high priest that Israel has a major problem with morality. Israel also has a problem with properly seeking the Lord.

Although the text doesn't explicitly say of Moses' grandson Jonathan that he had crossed the Jordan into the land of promise, both of these men certainly did. During their lives, things had devolved so much that there was already a major problem with Israel's interactions with the Lord.

In today's passage, it will take a great loss of life before the people actually humble themselves and properly petition the Lord before engaging in battle against Benjamin. Today, it's not sure how much loss, destruction, and disaster it will take for the violent and hate-filled left to turn from their ways, if they ever do, but they are the ones that will have to reap what they have sown.

Unfortunately, nations fall into judgment collectively. What happens to the left because of their lawlessness, murders, immorality, and violence will also happen to those who just want to live in peace, have prosperity, and hold to the sound Christian values that established our nation.

Unless the rapture happens, it seems that all in America are set to face troubled times as the days unfold. It just doesn't seem that we are willing to humble ourselves before the glorious God who established us.

We are not at all unlike Israel. Such somber truths are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Ark of the Covenant of God (verses 19-25)

¹⁹ So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah.

vayaqumu v'ne Yisrael baboqer vayakhanu al hagivah – “And rise, sons Israel, in the morning, and encamp upon the Gibeah.” Verse 17 said that besides Benjamin, the number of fighting men of Israel was four hundred thousand. This appears to include the ten percent who went to get supplies. Thus, the entire force has gathered against Gibeah.

The leaders inquired of the Lord which tribe should go up first to battle. There is no reason to assume that meant only one tribe would go up, but that in the ranks, this tribe, meaning Judah, would go first ahead of the others.

As such, the entire array of Israel came upon the single city of Gibeah which would have been filled with Benjamites from other cities...

²⁰ And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin,

vayetse ish Yisrael lamilkhamah im Binyamin – “And goes out, man Israel, to the war with Benjamin.” These words are not a repeat of verse 19. Rather, the men of Israel first sought the word of *elohim*. Upon receiving it, they then encamped around Gibeah. Now, they are actually deploying lines for the battle. After a day of battle, the men would need a camp to return to. Once encamped...

²⁰ (con’t) **and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah.**

vayaarkhu itam ish Yisrael milkhamah el hagivah – “And arrange them, man Israel, war unto the Gibeah.” Now the men depart from their camp and actually arrange themselves according to battle lines. The first of these lines would be Judah, according to the word of the Lord.

With the battle lines drawn, there would probably be a call out to Benjamin to surrender or face battle against this massive force arrayed against them. Whatever transpired in words or through messengers, Benjamin chose war...

²¹ **Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites.**

vayetsu v’ne vinyamin min hagivah vayashkhithu b’Yisrael bayom hahu shnayim v’esrim eleph ish artsah – “And go out, sons Benjamin, from the Gibeah. And ruin in Israel, in the day, the it, two and twenty thousand man earthward.” It is an amazing rout of the forces arrayed against them.

There are twenty-six thousand men of Benjamin against four hundred thousand of Israel. This means that there was almost one man lost in Israel for each man of Benjamin who participated in the war. The words say nothing of how many of Benjamin may have fallen, but the number would be extremely low based on the coming verses.

As for the word translated as “cut down” or “ruin,” it is *shakhath*. It means something like “to go to ruin.” This probably means killed, but it could be a casualty that is no longer capable of fighting, even if he lives.

However, based on the use of the same word later in the narrative, the likely meaning is that these soldiers died in battle. It is an enormous cost for having come against the city without a suitable plan of attack.

As for the number 22,000, it is a factor of 2, 10, and 11. Two is the number of division or difference. Ten is the number of perfection of divine order where there is “nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete”

(Bullinger), and eleven is the number of disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.

²² And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day.

vayithkhazeq ha'am ish Yisrael vayosiphu la'arokh milkhamah bamaqom asher arkhu sham bayom harishon – “And strengthens, the people, man Israel. And add to arrange war in the place where arranged there in the day, the first.” The words allow for a meaning that this is not necessarily the next day.

In other words, it doesn't say “on the morrow.” Rather, it says that they have arranged as they were on the first day. Thus, it may be there was time to regather, go over their failures, prepare for another battle, and then set up lines as they previously had.

However, the term “the second day” in verse 24 has to be clarified. Would this mean the second day in a row or the second day of engaging the battle? It is hard to be dogmatic, but it does not appear that the term “the second day” means the day following the first.

At least one full day must have occurred between the battles. Thus, it could be one or more days between engagements. Regardless, they have reformed their lines, and they are now prepared to once again engage Benjamin. Either way, the determination of the Lord is sought prior to the second engagement...

²³ Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until evening, and asked counsel of the Lord,

vayaalu v'ne Yisrael vayivku liphne Yehovah ad ha'erev vayishalu b'Yehovah – “And ascend, sons Israel, and weep to faces Yehovah until the evening. And ask in Yehovah.” The weeping appears to be more than just for their loss, but may also be because of a misunderstanding of the initial words of the Lord. That will be seen in the next clause.

Of the words, there are at least a couple of possibilities. One is that they arrayed in formation and then went up to Bethel to seek the Lord, or the words could be parenthetical and what is next said determined that they should then array in battle. There is a progression of thought in regard to the previous visit to Bethel –

Vs. 18 – And ask in elohim.

Vs. 23 – And ask in Yehovah.

Despite the use of the word *elohim* of verse 18, the response there was from Yehovah. In their state of confused distress, Israel again petitions for divine instruction..

²³ (con't) **saying, “Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?”**

l'mor haosiph lagesheth lamilkhamah im b'ne vinyamin akhi – “to say, ‘Add to approach to the war with sons Benjamin my brother?’” The inclusion of the word *akhi*, my brother, may be one of questioning the rightness of their first engagement.

Did they misunderstand the Lord’s intent? To be sure that no mistake is made this time, they acknowledge again that Benjamin is the target and, more, that he is a brother in Israel. They had ascended to the battle against him by the word of Yehovah. Is it right to do so a second time?

²³ (con't) **And the Lord said, “Go up against him.”**

vayomer Yehovah alu elav – “And says, Yehovah, ‘Ascend unto him.’” The divine response settles the matter. The rout of the first day was not in error, and the intention to reengage a second time is appropriate. Thus, without requesting any further instruction or explanation, it next says...

²⁴ **So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day.**

vayiqr'vu v'ne Yisrael el b'ne vinyamin ba'yom ha'sheni – “And approach, sons Israel, unto sons Benjamin in the day, the second.” As noted above, it seems that this means the second day of battle, but not necessarily the second day of all of the events being recorded.

Israel was encamped against Benjamin. They must again strap on their gear and array themselves for battle. Once so arrayed...

²⁵ **And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel;**

vayetse vinyamin liqratham min hagivah bayom ha'sheni vayashkhithu vivne Yisrael od shmonath asar eleph ish artsah – “And goes out, Benjamin, to encounter them from the Gibeah in the day, the second. And ruin, sons Israel, again eight ten thousand man earthward.”

The same terminology is used as before. The men were ruined earthward, the most likely meaning of which is that these were not merely wounded casualties, but slain in battle. As for the number 18000, it is derived from two, nine, and ten, or three, six, and ten.

Two and ten have been defined. Three “stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire” (Bullinger). It is, thus, the number of divine completeness or perfection. Six is the number of man, especially fallen man. Nine is the number of finality or judgment.

²⁵ (con’t) **all these drew the sword.**

kal eleh shol’phe kharev – “All these drawing sword.” These words hearken back to verse 17 where it noted that the four hundred thousand of Israel were those who drew the sword. As a reminder, the word *kharev*, sword, is identical in spelling to Horeb, the mountain where the law was given, and thus, it stands for the Law of Moses.

The total number slain equals forty thousand. Thus, ten percent of the men gathered from Israel have been wiped out. Forty speaks of probation, trial, and chastisement. It is grace (5) leading to revival and renewal (8), or enlarged domain/extended rule (4 x 10).

*Without the Lord Jesus in the war
There is no way the battle can be won
Without Him, man is rotten to the core
Because of all the things we’ve done*

*Adam brought us into a bad state
But we have heaped more upon ourselves
And yet, it is never too late
Glory awaits, like treasure rested upon heaven’s shelves*

*Our sin can be forever secreted away
If we just yield ourselves to Jesus
And then, on some glorious day
He will descend, and to Himself bring us*

II. I Will Deliver Them Into Your Hand (verses 26-35)

²⁶ **Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept.**

Rather: *vayaalu khal b’ne Yisrael v’khal ha’am vayavou beith el vayivku* – “And ascend, all sons Israel and all the people, and come Bethel, and weep.” Rather than “house of God,” it is the location, Bethel, even if Bethel means House of God. That will be made clear in the next verse.

The second rout of Israel was enough to alert the people that they were not right with the Lord. There seems to be no other explanation. Thus, not only the male soldiers, but all of the people went up to Bethel and wept before the Lord...

26 (con't) They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening;

vayeshvu sham liphne Yehovah vayatsumu bayom ha'hu ad ha'arev – “And sit there to faces Yehovah. And fast in the day, the it, until the evening.” Here is a new word, *tsum*. It signifies to not eat, and thus to fast. It comes from a primitive root signifying “to cover over.” As such, it is as if the people cover their mouths to purposefully not eat. For all we know, it could mean they actually covered their mouths as an open display of their fast.

Either way, the people sat and fasted throughout the day until the evening, which started the new day. During that time...

26 (con't) and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

vayaalu oloth ushlamim liphne Yehovah – “And ascend burnt offerings and peace offerings to faces Yehovah.” The burnt offerings are wholly burnt to Yehovah as a sign of complete submission or dedication to Him.

The peace offerings had a sacred portion removed for the Lord according to the written law and the rest was eaten by the people. Thus, these were probably eaten after ending the fast. As such, the burnt offerings are for restoration and the peace offerings were a sign of renewed fellowship based on that restoration.

27 So the children of Israel inquired of the Lord

vayishalu v'ne Yisrael b'Yehovah – “And ask, sons Israel, in Yehovah.” These words say basically the same thing as verse 23. The sons of Israel “ask in Yehovah.” Therefore, one would expect that the circumstances of the request are the same. However, the words continue with a new thought...

27 (con't) (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,

v'sham aron b'rith ha'elohim bayamim ha'hem – “And there, ark covenant the God in the days, the those.” The ark has not been mentioned since Joshua 8:33, and this is the only time it is mentioned in Judges. And more, the exact phrase used here, *aron b'rith ha'elohim*, ark covenant the God, is first seen here. It will only be seen four times in Scripture (1 Samuel 4:4, 2 Samuel 15:24, & 1 Chronicles 16:6).

Like the NKJV, many translations bracket these words, implying they are parenthetical. As such, it would cover the entire narrative we have been following. However, it appears this is not the intent at all. If it was, why wasn't this said in verse 18?

Rather, it seems to be explanatory of the current days. The people had been going to Bethel (House of God) to ask of God (or the Lord), but there was no ark there. Now, with the inclusion of all of the people of Israel, it appears that the ark, too, was carried from its tabernacle in Shiloh to Bethel. That seems more certain based on the next words...

²⁸ and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days),

u-phinkhas ben Elazar ben aharon omed l'phanav bayamim ha'hem – “And Phinehas, son Eleazar, son Aaron, standing to His faces in the days, the those.” Phinehas has not been mentioned since the final chapter of Joshua. Naming him here definitively places the narrative earlier in the history of the judges. He is the priest ministering before the Lord at this time.

If the sons of Israel going into battle had been inquiring of the Lord through Phineas earlier in this narrative, we would have been told this previously. However, he is first mentioned now. As such, it appears the ark and Phinehas came up to Bethel with the people for the time of national mourning.

Phinehas means Mouth of Brass, and thus, Mouth of Judgment, because brass signifies judgment. Eleazer means Whom God Helps. Aaron means Very High. Now that the ark and the Lord's high priest are there to be inquired of, they ask...

^{28 (con't)} saying, “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?”

l'mor haosiph od latseth lamilkhamah im b'ne vinyamin akhi im ekhdal – “to say, ‘Add again to go out to the war with sons Benjamin, my brother, if cease?’” Now that the people are in a right standing with the Lord, the question is again asked. Israel collectively asks (Shall I) if he should go again to fight against his brother or if the matter should end...

^{28 (con't)} And the Lord said, “Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand.”

Rather, it is singular: *vayomer Yehovah alu ki makhar etnenu b'yadkha* – “And says, Yehovah, ‘Ascend, for tomorrow I will give him in your hand.’” This time, Israel is not only told to ascend against his brother but that he will prevail over him.

Saying “tomorrow” does not contradict the words “third day” of verse 30. The word means tomorrow, but it is a tomorrow that follows, not necessarily the following day.

The battle began on the second day and continued on the tomorrow of the second day. With this, one can see the progression of thought –

Vs. 18 – “And arise and ascend Bethel, and ask in elohim. And say, sons Israel, ‘Who ascends, to us, in the beginning to the war with sons Benjamin?’ And says, Yehovah, ‘Judah in the beginning.’” (Only the soldiers ask of God in general, even if the Lord responds. They also, ask who should go first, not whether they should go or if they will have victory).

Vs. 22 – “And strengthens, the people, man Israel. And add to arrange war in the place where arranged there in the day, the first.” (They strengthen themselves apart from the Lord).

Vs. 23 – “And ascend, sons Israel, and weep to faces Yehovah until the evening. And ask in Yehovah, to say, ‘Add to approach to the war with sons Benjamin my brother?’ And says, Yehovah, ‘Ascend unto him.’” (Having already strengthened themselves, the soldiers ask of Yehovah, but without sacrifices or offerings. Also, they only ask if they should fight, not if they will have victory).

Finally, in verse 28 the entire nation comes before the Lord with the “ark of the covenant of the God” along with the high priest, fasts until evening, and offers burnt offerings and sacrifices. Now, the Lord tells them to ascend, and that in doing so, they will prevail. Therefore...

²⁹ Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah.

vayasem Yisrael orvim el hagivah saviv – “And sets, Israel, ambushings unto the Gibeah around.” The strategy of the battle is similar to Joshua’s battle against Ai in Joshua 8. First, those who lie in wait around the city are placed. This was done in advance in order to ensure they were unseen and, thus, prepared for what comes next...

³⁰ And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times.

vayaalu v’ne Yisrael el b’ne vinyamin bayom hashlishi vayaarkhu el hagivah k’paam b’paam – “And ascend, sons Israel, unto sons Benjamin in the day, the third. And arrange unto the Gibeah according to beat, in beat.” Gibeah is a city on a hill. Thus, Israel must ascend against it. Once arrayed as before, they would have announced their intentions...

³¹ So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city.

vayetsu v'ne vinyamin liqrath ha'am hant'qu min ha'ir – “And went, sons Benjamin, to meet the people – drawn away from the city.” As with the battle of Ai, the inhabitants had prevailed previously. Therefore, they felt confident to go out and leave the city undefended. In this case, it had happened twice, certainly bolstering their confidence greatly. And more...

^{31 (con't)} **They began to strike down *and* kill some of the people, as at the other times,**

vayakhelu l'hakoth meha'am khalalim k'paam b'paam – “And begin to strike from the people, pierced according to beat, in beat.” The idiom is rightly translated as “at the other times.” The “in beat” is the current event. The “according to beat” is what has occurred in the past. Benjamin is striking the enemy, certainly intensifying their excitement to pursue...

^{31 (con't)} **in the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel.**

Rather: *bamshiloth asher akhath olah beith el v'akhath givathah ba'sadeh kishloshim ish b'Yisrael* – “in the highways which one ascending Bethel and one Gibeah-ward, in the field, according to thirty man in Israel.” It is debated what “Gibeah-ward in the field” means, but that is what it says.

They would not be fleeing toward Gibeah which is where they are drawing the inhabitants from, and so some think it is a daughter city known as Gibeah ‘In the Field.’ That sounds plausible. Whatever the meaning, Benjamin prevailed against Israel to the tune of thirty pierced in the highways...

³² **And the children of Benjamin said, “They *are* defeated before us, as at first.”**

vayomru b'ne vinyamin nigaphim hem l'panenu k'barishonah – “And say, sons Benjamin, ‘Struck, they, to our faces according to in the first.’” Benjamin, having initial success as before, proclaimed victory almost from the outset. However, the next words have the verb in the perfect tense with a couple of cohortatives to boot...

^{32 (con't)} **But the children of Israel said, “Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways.”**

uvne Yisrael amru nanusah unthaqnuhu min ha'ir el hamsiloth – “And sons Israel said, ‘We shall flee, and we shall draw him from the city unto the highways.’” This clause precedes the previous clause and even the previous verse chronologically, but in order to build the narrative up to the fevered pitch, it is logically placed here.

The verb is in the perfect aspect. It is what was said. That is followed by the details – “Here is the plan. This is what we are going to do.” It worked and Benjamin was drawn away from the city into the highways...

³³ So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar.

v'khol ish Yisrael qamu mimqomo vayaarkhu b'vaal tamar – “And all man Israel rose from his place and array in Baal Tamar.” The diversionary force accomplished its mission of pulling the troops away from the city. Having drawn them into the predetermined location, the rest of the men of Israel arrayed at that spot, Baal Tamar.

The name Baal Tamar means Lord (or Master) of Palm. However, the palm is a symbol of uprightness, meaning righteousness. Thus, without directly saying it, the name means Lord (Master) of Uprightness or Lord (Master) of Righteousness.

³³ (con't) Then Israel's men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba.

The words are debated: *v'orev Yisrael megiakh mimqomo mimareh gava* – “and ambushing Israel gushes from his place from nudity Geba.” The word, as pointed by the Masoretes, is *maareh*, a word found only here in Scripture. It means nudity or a naked place, coming from *arah*, to be naked or bare. As such, some call it a meadow.

Some say the pointing is rong and it should read *mearah* – a cave. It is spelled the same but pointed differently. As such, the Israelites sprang from the cave of Geba. Considering there are thousands of men all in spots of ambush, that doesn't seem likely. Others amend it to read “from the west.”

What seems best is to apply the word to the state of Gibeah because that is what applies to the situation. They were hiding in ambush. Once Benjamin was seduced into being drawn from the city, the city stood naked. It is the nudity of the city that calls out for them to act.

As in verse 10, the name is spelled differently –

Gibeah - גִּבְעָה

Geba - גִּבְעַ

The fifth letter, *hey*, is missing. However, the meaning of the name remains unchanged.

³⁴ And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah,

vayavou mineged lagivah asereth alaphim ish bakhur mikal Yisrael – “And come from front to the Gibeah ten thousands man, selected from all Israel.” Here we have the total number of those in ambush, ten thousand. It is a factor of ten which has already been described.

These men have come “from front to the Gibeah.” In other words, they are now facing Gibeah as a force, ready to go in and destroy it. These words seem to confirm the analysis of the previous verse, that “the nudity” of Geba is referring to it being exposed–

Vs. 33 – “...from nudity Geba.”

Vs. 34 – “...from front to the Gibeah.”

Both uses of from are being used in relation to the city.

³⁴ (con’t) **and the battle was fierce. But *the Benjamites* did not know that disaster was upon them.**

Rather: *v’hamilkhamah kabedah v’hem lo yedu ki nogath alehem haraah* – “And the war weighted, and they not knew that touching upon them the evil.” The meaning of weighted is heavy or burdensome. The battle was pressing upon them, crushing them. As such...

³⁵ **The Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel.**

vayigoph Yehovah eth Binyamin liphne Yisrael – “And strikes, Yehovah, Benjamin to faces Israel.” The words credit the battle to Yehovah. He assured the victory before the battle began, and thus He knew the outcome, directing it according to His plans and purposes.

³⁵ (con’t) **And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites;**

vayashkhitu v’ne Yisrael b’vinyamin bayom ha’hu esrim v’khamishah eleph u-meah ish – “And ruins, sons Israel, in Benjamin in the day, the it, twenty and five thousand and hundred man.” Up to this point, the narrative of this final day of battle has been given as an overall summary of what transpired.

From verses 36-45 the narrative will repeat the battle, giving a more detailed record of what transpired. This is a common way of conveying things in Scripture, as seen from early Genesis. Once an overall summary is given, the reexplanation informs the reader of further details.

The number given here does not match the total stated in verse 46. Nor do the numbers that have been provided match what has been presented concerning Benjamin and the

final tally of the size of Benjamin. An explanation of those things will be given next week. For now, the number is stated and it doesn't provide any typological hints. However, of the total, we next read...

^{35 (fin)} **all these drew the sword.**

kal eleh sholeph kharev – “All these drawing sword.” This leaves us with two possibilities based on verse 15. It said a total of twenty-six thousand who drew the sword along with seven hundred select men from Gibeah. From this total, verse 16 said seven hundred could also sling with stones.

Therefore, either none of the slingers were killed, or – more likely – the slingers also carried a sword for the battle. This appears to be the case based on how the numbers are recorded in verses 15 and 16. They are included in those who carried the sword.

This ends the verses for today. More minute details of this final day of battle will be seen next week. As for what we looked into today, it was refreshing to see Israel, as a nation, consider their state before the Lord and humble themselves before trying to weed out the wickedness of just one of their tribes.

The world needs fewer finger-pointers and more people willing to recognize that we all have faults and we all stand against God in our hearts and souls. There is no point in trying to excise evil from the land by those whose own inclinations are already evil.

Instead, only after we come to the Lord for cleansing can we identify what else needs to be cleaned up. Just imagine a nation without the Lord trying to do what is right. The day before I typed this sermon, I read an article where North Korea executed 30 teens for watching South Korean TV shows.

Imagine that! One of the most wicked nations on the planet trying to police its own affairs by executing children. People and nations may make right decisions to conduct their affairs, but without God, it is simply grading on a curve.

With God, there is no curve. There is right and wrong. Until we are right with Him, we cannot actually know what is truly right and wrong. We just live and judge in shades of gray. That which makes the difference is Jesus. He takes us from the proverbial black to white in the eyes of God.

However, even after that, unless we learn what God expects of us through His word, we are still dealing with our own personal views on what is right and wrong. We continue to judge based on shades of gray. Therefore, let us do the right thing by first coming to Jesus and being purified.

From there, we can purify our minds through a study and right application of His word. May we do this to the glory of God, who loves us enough to have sent Jesus to make this possible.

Closing Verse: *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2*

Next Week: Judges 20:36-48 *An amazing story to tell, line by line...* (No King in Israel, Part IX) (56th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(No King in Israel, Part VIII)

So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped
-----against Gibeah

And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin
And the men of Israel put themselves in battle array
To fight against them at Gibeah, hoping they would be done in

Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah
And on that day cut down to the ground
Twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites
Their brothers they did pound

And the people, that is, the men of Israel
Encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line
At the place where they had put themselves
In array on the first day, to fight a second time

Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD
-----until evening

And asked counsel of the LORD, saying
“Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of
-----my brother Benjamin?”

And the LORD said, “Go up against him, so He was relaying

So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on
-----the second day

And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah
-----on the second day
And cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of
-----the children of Israel
All these drew the sword who perished in the fray

Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people
Went up and came to the house of God and wept
They sat there before the LORD
And fasted that day until evening, a time of mourning was kept

And they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings
Before the LORD on that day, such were their ways
So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD
(The ark of the covenant of God was there in those days)

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron
Stood before it in those days, he did not surcease
Saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle
Against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?"

And the LORD said, "Go up, please understand
For tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand

Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah
And the children of Israel went up against (for their crimes)
The children of Benjamin on the third day
And put themselves in battle array against Gibeah
-----as at the other times

So the children of Benjamin went out against the people
And were drawn away from the city
They began to strike down and kill some of the people
As at the other times, showing no pity

In the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other
-----to Gibeah)
And in the field, about thirty men of Israel
And the children of Benjamin said
"They are defeated before us, as at first, things are going well!"

But the children of Israel said
“Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways
So all the men of Israel rose from their place
And put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar for this phase

Then Israel’s men in ambush burst forth
From their position in the plain of Geba, ready to pierce
And ten thousand select men from all Israel
Came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce

But the Benjamites did not know that disaster was upon them
Benjamin was defeated before Israel by the LORD
And the children of Israel destroyed that day
Twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these
-----drew the sword

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...