

**Judges 21:1 ¶** Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.

**Judges 21:2** And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore;

**Judges 21:3** And said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel?

When the men of Israel had gathered together at Mizpeh to determine what to do in the matter of the men of Gibeah, they had vowed not to give their daughters as wives to any man of that tribe.

Realizing that they had almost decimated the tribe of Benjamin, they came to grieve at the house of God. They questioned God as to why this had happened and why they had to lose a complete tribe.

**Judges 21:4** And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

**Judges 21:5** And the children of Israel said, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

Early the next morning the people arose and built an altar and offered burnt and peace offerings to the LORD. They inquired among the people if they could think of any one had not joined their alliance against Benjamin. We are told that they had vowed to kill any one that did not support them.

**Judges 21:6** And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.

**Judges 21:7** How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?

**Judges 21:8** And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly.

**Judges 21:9** For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead there.

The Israelites grieved the loss of Benjamin. They wondered how they could provide wives for the men that remained at Rimmon. They could not break their vow before the LORD to give them their own daughters. They questioned the people once again if they could think of anyone that had not gathered with them at Mizpeh. They decided to number those present and found out that no one from Jabeshgilead was there.

**Judges 21:10** And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children.

**Judges 21:11** And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man.

**Judges 21:12** And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

The congregation at Mizpeh sent 12,000 of their best warriors to Jabeshgilead to kill everyone there except the virgin women. They found 400 young virgins and brought them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan. Once again we see the low esteem in which the women of that day were held; they were being considered as no better than brood mares.

They looked at this as fulfilling their vow, but it seems quite cruel to me. The women and children were not to blame.

It is very sad to note that they did not even think about seeking God's will concerning their plans. They determined to "do what was right in their own eyes." You just can't convince me that this was right in God's eyes.

So it ever is—the ones we love often suffer as a consequence of our sin.

**Judges 21:13** And the whole congregation sent *some* to speak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them.  
**Judges 21:14** And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabeshgilead: and yet so they sufficed them not.

The Israelites sent a delegation to the men of Benjamin at Rimmon to make peace. They gave the virgins to the men to take as wives, but there were still 200 men without wives.

**Judges 21:15** And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.  
**Judges 21:16** ¶ Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?  
**Judges 21:17** And they said, *There must be* an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel.  
**Judges 21:18** Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed *be* he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.

The people were really sorry for Benjamin because the LORD had judged them so harshly.

*Judges 20:35 "And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel...."*

The leaders of Israel asked for suggestions as to how to get wives for the rest of the men of Benjamin. They were determined not to lose the tribe of Benjamin, but they could not break their vow before the LORD not to give them their own daughters.

**Judges 21:19** Then they said, Behold, *there is a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.*

**Judges 21:20** Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards;

**Judges 21:21** And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.

**Judges 21:22** And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that ye should be guilty.*

Finally, someone remembered that a yearly feast of the LORD was soon to be celebrated in Shiloh on the north side of Bethel east of the highway from Bethel to Shechem and south of Lebonah. (Some commentators deduce that it is probably the Feast of Tabernacles.) They instructed the men of Benjamin to hide themselves in the vineyards. When the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, they were to catch a girl to take as wife and head back home to Benjamin.

They explained that when the fathers and brothers of the girls came to complain, they would plead for them to have mercy on Benjamin. They would explain that they had killed all their wives. The men of Shiloh would not be breaking a vow and the men of Benjamin would have wives.

Again, they did not even think about seeking God's will concerning their plans. They determined to "do what was right in their own eyes."

**Judges 21:23** And the children of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.

**Judges 21:24** And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

The men of Benjamin did as they were instructed. They took the girls they wanted to wife and returned home to repair their cities and establish new homes. The men of Israel finally determined that they could now go back home to their own families. In their mind, justice had been done.

**Judges 21:25** In those days *there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

This verse is the sad mantra of the book of Judges. If only they had recognized the LORD God of Israel as their king and shown the same diligence to obey him as they did to seek to do right in this one instance.

I'm not sure why the LORD decided that we needed to know this story. Maybe it was to prepare us for the atrocities of which men are capable against other human beings. It exemplifies the horrible things men do by reasoning, "The end justifies the means." Hitler was motivated in the same way by his own warped evil thinking, and the terrorists of today do the same. Radical Islamists justify murder and torture in the name of Allah. People justify abortion on the grounds of compassion for the woman who "made a mistake." America is legislating the right to practice sin under the guise of protecting the freedom of the sinner without respect to protecting those who are endangered by such practices. No, there is nothing new under the sun when it comes to the evil of which man is capable.

Thank God that the LORD has appointed a day when Jesus will return and King of kings and rule the world in righteousness and truth. Satan's reign will soon come to an end!