

JUDGES DASV**DASV: Judges 1**

¹ After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, "Who will go up first for us to attack the Canaanites?"

² Then the LORD answered, "Judah will go up. I am handing over the land to him."

³ Judah urged Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into my territorial allotment, that we may fight against the Canaanites; then I will go with you into your assigned territory." So Simeon went with him.

⁴ Judah attacked and the LORD handed the Canaanites and Perizzites over to them, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek.

⁵ They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought against him. They defeated the Canaanites and Perizzites.

⁶ But Adoni-bezek escaped and they chased him down and caught him. They cut off his thumbs and his big toes.

⁷ Adoni-bezek said, "Seventy kings, who had their thumbs and big toes cut off, picked up scraps under my table; so God has paid me back for what I have done." They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

⁸ Then the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it. They put it to the sword and set the city on fire.

⁹ Afterward the people of Judah went to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, the Negev, and in the western foothills.

¹⁰ Judah attacked the Canaanites who lived in Hebron. Hebron was formerly called, Kiriath-arba. They defeated Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmi.

¹¹ From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. Debir was formerly called Kiriath-sepher.

¹² Caleb said, "To the one who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give Achsah my daughter as a wife."

¹³ Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it. So he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife.

¹⁴ After she married him she urged him to ask her father for a field. She dismounted her donkey; and Caleb said to her, "What would you like?"

¹⁵ She answered him, "Give me a special gift, since you have already given me land in the Negev, give me springs of water too." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

¹⁶ The descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the city of palm trees, that is Jericho, with the people of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, south near Arad. They went and settled there with the people.

¹⁷ Now Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they defeated the Canaanites who lived in Zephath, and totally destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah [Destruction].

¹⁸ Judah also took Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron with their surrounding territories.

¹⁹ The LORD was with Judah. They took possession of the hill country but were unable to drive out the inhabitants of the coastal plain, because they had iron chariots.

²⁰ They gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised, and he drove out of it the three sons of Anak.

²¹ The Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; but the Jebusites live with the Benjaminites in Jerusalem to this day.

²² The house of Joseph attacked Bethel; and the LORD was with them.

²³ The house of Joseph spied out Bethel. Now the name of the town formerly was Luz.

²⁴ The spies saw a man come out of the town, and they said to him, "Show us how to get into the town, and we will treat you well."

²⁵ He showed them the way into the town, and they put the town to the sword; but they let the man and all his family go.

²⁶ The man went to the land of the Hittites, and built a town, and called its name Luz, which is its name to this day.

²⁷ But Manasseh failed to drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shan, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo and their surrounding towns for the Canaanites remained in that region.

²⁸ When Israel grew strong, they compelled the Canaanites into forced labor, but did not totally drive them out.

²⁹ Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, but the Canaanites lived among them in Gezer.

³⁰ Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or Nahalol, but the Canaanites lived among them, but were compelled into forced labor.

³¹ Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob;

³² but the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they failed to drive them out.

³³ Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or Beth-anath; but they lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became subject to forced labor.

³⁴ The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the hill country. They would not allow them to come down to the coastal plain.

³⁵ But the Amorites were persistent in staying in Mount Heres, Aijalon and in Shaalbim. Yet when the house of Joseph prevailed, they became subject to forced labor.

³⁶ The territory of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Scorpions, from Sela and upward.

Judges 2

¹ Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. He said, "I brought you out of Egypt into the land I swore to give to your forefathers, and I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you.

² You are not to make any covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you are to break down their altars.' But you have not obeyed my voice. Why did you do this?

³ So now I declare, I will not drive them out before you. They will be thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a snare to you."

⁴ After the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the Israelites, the people lifted their voices and wept.

⁵ So they named that place Bochim [weeping], and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

⁶ After Joshua had sent the people away, the Israelites went each person to his inheritance to possess the land.

⁷ The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work the LORD had done for Israel.

⁸ Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died being 110 years old.

⁹ They buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

¹⁰ All that generation was gathered to their fathers. Then another generation arose after them, that did not know the LORD, or the mighty deeds he had done for Israel.

¹¹ The Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals.

¹² They abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the peoples around them. They bowed down to them and provoked the LORD to anger.

¹³ They abandoned the LORD, and served Baal and the Ashtareth.

¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he handed them over to the looters who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer resist their enemies.

¹⁵ Whenever they went out to battle, the hand of the LORD was against them for ill, as the LORD had warned and sworn to them. They were severely distressed.

¹⁶ The LORD raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

¹⁷ Yet they did not listen to their judges, but prostituted themselves after other gods, and bowed down to them. They quickly turned aside from the way in which their forefathers had walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD, but they did not do so.

¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and rescued them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of that judge. For the LORD had pity on them when they groaned because of those who oppressed and abused them.

¹⁹ But when the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, following other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. Yet they refused to abandon their evil practices and their stubborn ways.

²⁰ The anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; and he said, "Because this nation has violated my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not obeyed my voice;

²¹ I also will no longer drive out the nations before them that Joshua left when he died,

²² so that I may test Israel and see whether they will follow the way of the LORD as their fathers did or not.

²³ So the LORD left those nations there, without quickly driving them out or handing them over to Joshua.

Judges 3

¹ Now these are the nations that the LORD left to test Israel, especially all those who had not experienced the wars against the Canaanites.

² He did this so that he might teach subsequent generations of Israelites warfare, those who had no experience with war.

³ The nations he left were: the five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, the Hivites that dwelt in mountains of Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon to the Lebo-hamath.

⁴ They were left to test Israel to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers through Moses.

⁵ The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

⁶ They took their daughters for their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods.

⁷ So the Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram-naharaim, and the Israelites served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

⁹ But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the Israelites, who rescued them, one such was Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came on him, and he judged Israel and went to war. Then the LORD handed Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram over to him and he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

¹¹ The land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

¹² The Israelites again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

¹³ Eglon formed alliances with the Ammonites and Amalekites, and he went and defeated Israel, and possessed Jericho, the city of palm trees.

¹⁴ The Israelites served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

¹⁵ But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

¹⁶ Ehud made a double-edged dagger, 18 inches long, and he strapped it concealed under his clothing on his right thigh.

¹⁷ He brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man.

¹⁸ When Ehud finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who actually carried the tribute.

¹⁹ But he turned back once he had reached the stone idols by Gilgal, and told Eglon, "I have a secret message for you, O king." Eglon demanded, "Silence!" So all his attendants left him.

²⁰ Ehud approached him while he was sitting alone in the cool upper room. Ehud declared, "I have a message from God for you." When King Eglon rose from his seat,

²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, grabbed the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into King Eglon's belly.

²² The handle also went in after the blade; and the fat closed in around the blade. Ehud did not draw the sword out of his body and excrement came out.

²³ Then Ehud went out into the porch, and shut and locked the doors of the upper room after him.

²⁴ After Ehud had gone out, the king's servants came and saw the locked doors of the upper room and they concluded, "He must be relieving himself in the well-ventilated chamber."

²⁵ So they waited until they were embarrassed. When he still did not open the doors of the upper room, they took the key, and opened them. There they found their lord lying dead on the floor.

²⁶ But Ehud escaped while they were waiting, and passed by the stone idols and escaped to Seirah.

²⁷ When he arrived in the hill country of Ephraim he blew a trumpet and the Israelites went down with him from the hill country, with Ehud leading them.

²⁸ Now he ordered them, "Follow me, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, and captured the fords of the Jordan River across from Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over.

²⁹ That day they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all strong, valiant warriors; no one escaped.

³⁰ So that day Moab was subdued under the hand of Israel. Then the land had rest eighty years.

³¹ After Ehud, Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad, rescued Israel.

Judges 4

¹ The Israelites again did evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud's death.

² So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-haggoyim.

³ Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD because he had nine hundred iron chariots and cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years.

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

⁵ She would sit under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim and the Israelites would come to her for judgment.

⁶ She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go and proceed to Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun with you.

⁷ I will draw Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, to the Kishon River, with his chariots and his troops. There I will hand him over to you.'"

⁸ But Barak said to her, "If you go with me, then I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go."

⁹ Then she said, "I will certainly go with you. Nevertheless, the path you have taken will not result in your being honored; for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

¹⁰ Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh, and 10,000 men followed him. Deborah went with him as well.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaananim near Kedesh.

¹² When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor,

¹³ Sisera gathered together all his nine hundred iron chariots, and all the troops who were with him, from Harosheth-haggoyim, to the Kishon River.

¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Get up, for this is the day the LORD will hand Sisera over to you. Is not the LORD leading before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.

¹⁵ Then the LORD routed Sisera, all his chariots and all his army, by the edge of the sword before Barak. Sisera jumped off his chariot, and took off on foot.

¹⁶ But Barak chased after the chariots, and after the army to Harosheth-haggoyim. All of Sisera's army fell by the edge of the sword. No one survived.

¹⁷ Now Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.

¹⁸ Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, come in; don't be afraid." So he turned aside and entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

¹⁹ Then he said to her, "Please, give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

²⁰ He said to her, "Stand at the entrance of the tent. If anyone comes and asks you, 'Is there anyone here?' say, 'No.'"

²¹ Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and hammer in her hand, and crept quietly up to him for he was in a deep sleep exhausted. She drove the peg through his temples straight through to the ground. So he died.

²² Now when Barak was chasing Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he went with her; and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg through his temples.

²³ So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the Israelites.

²⁴ The hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they finally destroyed him.

Judges 5

- ¹ Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying,
² "When the leaders took the lead in Israel,
 when the people willingly volunteered,
 Praise the LORD!
³ Listen, O kings; give ear, O rulers!
 I will sing to the LORD,
 I will sing praise to the LORD, the God of Israel.
- ⁴ O LORD, when you went out from Seir,
 when you marched from the field of Edom,
 the earth trembled, the heavens rained hard,
 Yes, the clouds poured down water.
⁵ The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, the One of Sinai,
 before the LORD, the God of Israel.
⁶ In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
 in the days of Jael,
 the main highways were abandoned,
 and the travelers snuck around on side paths.
⁷ The villagers were scarce in Israel,
 they waned, until I, Deborah, arose,
 a mother in Israel.
⁸ When they chose new gods;
 then war erupted in the town gates,
 Yet was there not a shield or spear found
 among forty thousand in Israel?
⁹ My heart went out to the commanders of Israel,
 who offered themselves willingly for war.
 Praise the LORD.
¹⁰ Tell of it, you who ride on royal white donkeys,
 you who sit on flashy saddle blankets,
 and you who walk down the road.
¹¹ Listen to the sound of the musicians at places for drawing water,
 there they rehearse the righteous triumphs of the LORD,
 the righteous victories of his warriors in Israel.
 Then the people of the LORD went down to the town gates.
¹² Wake up, wake up, Deborah.
 Wake up, wake up and sing a song.
 Arise, Barak, and lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam.
¹³ Then the survivors came down to the nobles
 and the people of the LORD came down to me as warriors.

- ¹⁴ From Ephraim they came down whose root was in Amalek,
they followed you, Benjamin, with your soldiers;
from Makir leaders came down,
from Zebulun, they who carry the commander's staff.
- ¹⁵ The leaders of Issachar were with Deborah,
Issachar was with Barak.
Into the valley they rushed out on his heels.
Among the clans of Reuben there was deep heart searching.
- ¹⁶ Why do you stay among the sheepfolds,
to listen to the shepherds piping for the flocks?
Among the clans of Reuben there was deep heart searching.
- ¹⁷ Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,
and Dan, why did he remain with the ships?
Asher sat still at the coast of the sea,
staying by his harbors.
- ¹⁸ Zebulun is a people that risked their lives to death,
as did Naphtali, on the heights of the battle field.
- ¹⁹ Kings came and fought.
Then the kings of Canaan fought,
at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,
yet they carried off no silver plunder.
- ²⁰ From heaven the stars fought,
from their heavenly paths they fought against Sisera.
- ²¹ The river Kishon swept them away,
that ancient river, the river Kishon.
March on my soul, with strength.
- ²² Then the horses' hooves stomped,
galloping, galloping on Sisera's mighty war horses.
- ²³ 'Curse Meroz,' cried the angel of the LORD.
'Curse bitterly its inhabitants,
because they did not come to help the LORD,
to help the LORD against the mighty.'
- ²⁴ Blessed above women be Jael,
the wife of Heber the Kenite;
blessed may she be above women in the tent.
- ²⁵ He asked her for water, and she gave him milk,
she brought him curds in a bowl fit for a prince.
- ²⁶ She put her hand to the tent peg,
her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
and with the hammer she struck Sisera,
she smashed his head;
Yes, she pierced and drove it through his temples.
- ²⁷ At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay limp;

between her feet he sank, he fell;
where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

²⁸ Through the window she looked out, and cried,
the mother of Sisera cried out through the lattice,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming home?
Why are the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed?'

²⁹ Her wise women answer,

Yes, she answers herself,

³⁰ 'They must be splitting up the spoil,
A woman or two for every man.

Sisera is seizing spoil of colorful garments,
spoil of colorful embroidered garments,
of dyed garments embroidered on both sides,
spoil for the neck of those plundering.'

³¹ So may all your enemies perish, O LORD,
But let them who love him be like the sun
when it rises with all its might. "

The land had rest forty years.

Judges 6

¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD handed them over to Midian seven years.

² The hand of Midian subjugated Israel; and because of Midian the Israelites made dens to hide in the mountains, along with caves and strongholds.

³ Whenever Israel planted crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and the people of the east would come up and attack them.

⁴ They camped against them and destroyed their crops, all the way down to Gaza, and left nothing to eat in Israel, leaving no sheep, oxen or donkeys.

⁵ For they came up with their livestock and tents; they swarmed in as thick as locusts. They and their camels were innumerable. They came absolutely destroying the land.

⁶ Israel was totally impoverished because of Midian; so the Israelites cried to the LORD.

⁷ When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian,

⁸ the LORD sent a prophet to the Israelites. He said to them, "This is what the LORD says, the God of Israel, 'I brought you up out of Egypt, and brought you out of the house of bondage.

⁹ I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you, and gave you their land.

¹⁰ I said to you, "I am the LORD your God. Do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you did not obey my voice."

¹¹ The angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

¹² The angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, valiant warrior."

¹³ But Gideon replied, "Oh, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wondrous works that our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian."

¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the might you have, and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?"

¹⁵ But he replied, "O Lord, how can I rescue Israel? Look, my clan is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

¹⁶ The LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you will strike down the Midianites just as you would one man."

¹⁷ He said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, then show me a sign proving that it is really you who is talking with me.

¹⁸ Don't leave here, until I come back bringing my gift to set before you." He responded, "I'll wait here until you get back."

¹⁹ Then Gideon went into his house, prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from about half a bushel of meal. The meat he put in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought it out to him under the oak, and presented it.

²⁰ The angel of God said to him, "Put the meat and the unleavened cakes on this rock, and pour the broth over it." Gideon did what he was told.

²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. Fire came up out of the rock and consumed the meat and unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD vanished out of his sight.

²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he cried out, "Help, O sovereign LORD! For I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face."

²³ Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you; don't be afraid, you are not going to die."

²⁴ There Gideon built an altar to the LORD, and called it "The LORD is peace." To this day it still stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

²⁵ The same night the LORD ordered him, "Take your father's bull, the bull that is second and seven years old. Throw down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah pole that is by it.

²⁶ Then build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold, in the sanctioned way, then take the second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood from the Asherah pole you are going to cut down."

²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants, and did as the LORD told him. Because he feared his family and the men of the town, he did not want to do it in daylight, so he did it at night.

²⁸ When the men of the town got up early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal torn to pieces, and the Asherah pole by it was cut down, and the second bull was sacrificed on the altar that was built.

²⁹ So they asked each other, "Who did this?" After they thoroughly investigated, they discovered it was Gideon the son of Joash who had done it.

³⁰ Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die because he tore down the altar of Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole that was next to it."

³¹ But Joash said to all confronting him, "Will you defend Baal? Are you trying to rescue him? Whoever fights for Baal, let him be put to death by morning. If he is really a god, let him defend himself, because someone has broken down his altar."

³² So on that day Gideon was called "Jerubbaal," because his father had said, "Let Baal fight against him, because he has torn down his altar."

³³ Then all the Midianites, Amalekites and the people of the east assembled together and crossed over the Jordan River and camped in the valley of Jezreel.

³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and called Abiezerites to follow him.

³⁵ Then he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they too were called out to follow him. He sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun and to Naphtali and they came up to meet them.

³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have promised,
³⁷ look, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor, if there is dew only on the fleece and the ground is dry, then will I know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have promised."

³⁸ So that is exactly what happened. He got up early on the next morning, and squeezed the fleece and wrung a bowlful of dew out of it.

³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Please don't get angry with me, but I will make one more test with the fleece. Now let only the fleece be dry and let the dew cover the ground."

⁴⁰ That night God did it, only the fleece was dry, while the dew covered all the ground.

Judges 7

¹ Then Jerubbaal, (that is, Gideon), and all the people who were with him, rose up early, and camped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

² Then the LORD told Gideon, "There are too many men for me to hand the Midianites over to you. Israel would just brag to me, 'It was my own hand that saved me.'

³ Now then announce in the ears of the troops, 'Whoever is fearful and shaking, let him go home and leave Mount Gilead.' So 22,000 turned and went home, and 10,000 remained.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many. Bring them down to the water, and I will sift them out for you there. When I tell you, 'This one can go with you,' that one shall go, and when I tell you, 'This one cannot go with you,' that one shall not go."

⁵ So he brought down the troops to the water. The LORD said to Gideon, "Every one who laps water from his hand with his tongue, like a dog laps, you shall put to one side, and everyone who knelt down drinking directly from the stream on the other.

⁶ Only 300 men lapped, putting their hands to their mouths. All the rest of the troops knelt down to drink water.

⁷ Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the 300 who lapped I will save you, and hand the Midianites over to you. Let all the rest of the men return home."

⁸ So the chosen troops took provisions and their trumpets. He sent all the rest of the men of Israel back to their own tents but retained the 300. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

⁹ That same night, the LORD said to him, "Get up, go down into the Midianite camp for I am handing it over to you.

¹⁰ But if you are afraid to go down, then go down into the camp with just Purah your servant.

¹¹ You will hear what the Midianites are saying and afterward your hands will be strengthened enough to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the armed men guarding the camp.

¹² The Midianites and Amalekites and all the people of the east were positioned in the valley as thick as locusts. Their camels were as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³ As Gideon snuck up, there was a man telling of his dream to his friend and he said, "I had a dream, in it a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian. It rolled into the tent smashing it so hard that it was knocked down, flipped upside down and then flattened."

¹⁴ His friend answered, "This is nothing other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, the Israelite. God has handed over Midian and the whole army to him."

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped. Then he returned to the camp of Israel, and ordered, "Get up, for the LORD has handed over the army of Midian to you.

¹⁶ He divided the 300 men into three companies. He put trumpets and empty jars into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the jars.

¹⁷ Then he told them, "Look at me, and do what I do. When I come to the edge of the camp, do exactly what I do.

¹⁸ When I, and those with me, blow the trumpet, then blow your trumpets also on every side of the entire the camp, and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

¹⁹ So Gideon, and the hundred men with him, approached the outer edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle of the guard shift, just after they had posted a new guard. They blew the trumpets and smashed the clay jars that were in their hands.

²⁰ Then all three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands. Then they shouted, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon."

²¹ They stood their ground, every man in his position surrounding the camp. The whole army ran off, shouting as they fled.

²² They blew the 300 trumpets, and the LORD caused them to attack each other with their swords throughout the enemy army. The army fled all the way to Beth-shittah near Zererah, even as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

²³ Then the men of Israel rallied from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh, and chased after the Midianites.

²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against Midian, and cut them off from crossing the Jordan River, as far as Beth-barah." So all the men of Ephraim were assembled, and captured the Jordan River crossings as far as Beth-barah.

²⁵ They captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb as they pursued the Midianites. Then they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was now on the east side of the Jordan River.

Judges 8

¹ Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why did you treat us like that? You didn't call us when you went to fight against Midian." They castigated him sharply.

² He replied, "What have I accomplished in comparison to you? Aren't the leftover grapes of Ephraim better than the full harvest of Abiezer?"

³ God has handed over the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, into your hand. What was I able to do to match that?" When he said that, their anger subsided.

⁴ Gideon came to the Jordan River, and crossed over, he, and the 300 men who were with him, exhausted, yet still pursuing the Midianites.

⁵ So he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give some loaves of bread to the troops that are following me, for they are faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

⁶ But the princes of Succoth retorted, "You don't already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna do you? So why should we give bread to your army?"

⁷ Then Gideon threatened, "Alright, when the LORD has handed Zebah and Zalmunna over to my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the desert thorns and briars."

⁸ Then he went up from there to Penuel, and spoke to them the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him the same way as the men of Succoth had.

⁹ So he also threatened the men of Penuel, "When I come back after the victory, I will break down this tower."

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about 15,000 men, all who were left from all the troops of the people of the east, for 120,000 men who drew the sword had already fallen.

¹¹ Then Gideon went up by the way of the caravan route east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and attacked the unsuspecting enemy army.

¹² When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he chased them down and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and sent the entire army into a panic.

¹³ Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the Ascent of Heres.

¹⁴ He caught a young man from Succoth, and interrogated him. He wrote down for Gideon the names of the seventy-seven princes and elders of Succoth.

¹⁵ Then he came to the people of Succoth, and said, "Look, here are Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your exhausted troops?'"

¹⁶ So he took the elders of Succoth, and taught them a lesson by threshing them with the thorns and briars of the desert.

¹⁷ Then he tore down the tower of Penuel, and killed the men of the town.

¹⁸ Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What were the men you killed at Tabor like?" They answered, "They were like you, each one resembled the son of a king."

¹⁹ Gideon replied, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had kept them alive, I would not kill you now."

²⁰ Then he said to Jether his firstborn, "Get up, and kill them." But the youth did not draw his sword, for he was afraid because he was just a boy.

²¹ Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Get up, and kill us yourself. 'The proof of the man is his strength.'" So Gideon got up, and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

²² Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you, and your son, and your son's son also; for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian."

²³ But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, neither will my son rule over you, the LORD will rule over you."

²⁴ Then Gideon said to them, "I do have one request for you. Each of you give me the earrings you took as plunder. (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)

²⁵ They answered, "We are glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and each man threw in the earrings taken in the booty.

²⁶ The weight of the golden earrings he requested was a forty-three pounds of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and the chains that hung around their camels' necks.

²⁷ From it Gideon made a gold ephod, and put it in his town, in Ophrah. But all Israel prostituted themselves before it there. It became a snare to Gideon and his house.

²⁸ So Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they no longer lifted their arrogant heads. The land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.

²⁹ Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house.

³⁰ Gideon fathered seventy sons for he had many wives.

³¹ His concubine who was in Shechem, also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech.

³² Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

³³ As soon as Gideon was dead, the Israelites turned again, and prostituted themselves worshipping the Baals. They made Baal-berith their god.

³⁴ The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies on every side.

³⁵ They did not show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, (that is, Gideon), in return for all the good things he had done for Israel.

Judges 9

¹ Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them, and his mother's clan, saying,

² "Please, ask, all the leaders of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, to have all seventy sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or just one? Remember also that I am your flesh and bone.'"

³ So his mother's relatives spoke all these words on his behalf to all the leaders of Shechem. Their hearts were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

⁴ They gave him seventy silver coins from the temple of Baal-berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless hoodlums who followed him.

⁵ Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah, and killed all seventy of his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal on one stone. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, survived, because he hid himself.

⁶ All the leaders of Shechem and Beth-millo assembled, went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar in Shechem.

⁷ When they told Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim. He raised his voice and shouted to them, "Listen to me, leaders of Shechem, so that God may listen to you.

⁸ Once upon a time the trees went out to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

⁹ But the olive tree replied, 'Should I give up producing my olive oil, by which both God and man are honored, just to wave back and forth over the trees?'

¹⁰ Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come, you be king over us.'

¹¹ But the fig tree said to them, 'Should I leave my sweet and delicious fruit, just to sway back and forth over the trees?'

¹² Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come, you be our king.'

¹³ But the vine said to them, 'Should I stop producing my new wine that cheers both God and man, just to sway back and forth over the trees?'

¹⁴ So all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come, you be our king.'

¹⁵ The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade. If not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

¹⁶ Now therefore, if you have dealt in good faith and integrity when you made Abimelech king, and if you have treated Jerubbaal and his house fairly, and have repaid him according to what his actions deserve--

¹⁷ for my father fought for you, and risked his life, and rescued you from of the hand of Midian.

¹⁸ But you have revolted against my father's house this day, by killing his seventy sons on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his female slave, king over Shechem, because he is your relative.

¹⁹ If you then have dealt in good faith and integrity with Jerubbaal and his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech and let him be happy with you too.

²⁰ But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the leaders of Shechem and Beth-millo, and let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem and Beth-millo and devour Abimelech."

²¹ Then Jotham ran away escaping to Beer, and settled there, to evade Abimelech his brother.

²² Abimelech ruled over Israel three years.

²³ Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem. The leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech.

²⁴ This occurred so that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be avenged, and that the blood of their murders might be repaid on Abimelech, their brother, and the leaders of Shechem, who assisted in killing his brothers.

²⁵ Then the leaders of Shechem set an ambush for him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who came along that way and it was reported to Abimelech.

²⁶ Gaal, the son of Ebed, moved into Shechem with his brothers. The leaders of Shechem backed him.

²⁷ They went out into the field, gathered grapes from their vineyards, and squeezed the grapes and held a festival. They went into the house of their god, ate and drank and cursed Abimelech.

²⁸ Gaal the son of Ebed challenged, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem! But why should we serve Abimelech?"

²⁹ If only these people were under control! Then I would remove Abimelech. I would say to Abimelech, 'Muster the army, and come out.'"

³⁰ When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, he was infuriated.

³¹ So he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Look, Gaal, the son of Ebed, and his brothers have come to Shechem. They are stirring up the town to revolt against you.

³² Now therefore, go by night, you and your troops, and set an ambush in the field.

³³ In the morning, at sunrise, rise early and attack the city and when he and the people that are with him come out against you, then you may do with them as you wish."

³⁴ So Abimelech and all his troops got up at night and they set an ambush against Shechem in four companies.

³⁵ Gaal, the son of Ebed, went out and stood in the entrance of the town gate. Abimelech and his men came out from their ambush.

³⁶ When Gaal saw them, he observed to Zebul, "Look, there are people coming down from the tops of the mountains." Zebul said to him, "You are just seeing shadows of the mountains that look like men."

³⁷ Gaal spoke again, "See, there are people coming down from the center of the land, and another group is coming by the way of the Diviner's Oak."

³⁸ Then said Zebul to him, "Where is your big mouth now, you who bragged, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' Are not these the troops you mocked? Go ahead now and fight them."

³⁹ So Gaal went out before the leaders of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

⁴⁰ Abimelech chased him and he fled before him. Many fell wounded all the way to the entrance of the gate.

⁴¹ Abimelech lived at Arumah. Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers so they could not live in Shechem.

⁴² The next day the people went out into the field. When Abimelech was told,

⁴³ he divided up his men into three groups, and set an ambush in the field. When he looked, he saw the people coming out of the town. He attacked them and killed them.

⁴⁴ Abimelech and the group that were with him rushed forward, and stood in the entrance of the town gate. Then the other two groups attacked all who were in the field and killed them.

⁴⁵ Abimelech fought against the town all that day. He took the town and slew the people that were in it. He leveled the town, and scattered salt on it.

⁴⁶ When all the leaders of the tower of Shechem heard about it, they entered into the stronghold of the temple of El-berith.

⁴⁷ It was reported to Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

⁴⁸ So Abimelech and all his troops went up Mount Zalmon, and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, cut down a tree branch, picked it up and laid it on his shoulder. Then he ordered the people that were with him, "Quickly, do what you have seen me do."

⁴⁹ Each of his men likewise cut down his branch and followed Abimelech. They piled the branches up around the stronghold and set it on fire. So all the men of the tower of Shechem died too--about a thousand men and women.

⁵⁰ Then Abimelech went to Thebez, laid siege to Thebez, and captured it.

⁵¹ But there was a fortified tower within the town, so all the men and women of the town fled there and locked themselves in and got up to the roof of the tower.

⁵² Then Abimelech came to the tower and attacked it. When he approached the door of the tower to burn it with fire,

⁵³ a certain woman threw an upper millstone down on Abimelech's head, and crushed his skull.

⁵⁴ Then he quickly called his young armor bearer, and ordered him, "Draw your sword, and kill me, so that they will not say about me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his young attendant ran him threw and he died.

⁵⁵ When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home.

⁵⁶ So God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, for what he did to his father by slaying his seventy brothers.

⁵⁷ All the wickedness of the leaders of Shechem, God repaid on their heads. On them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Judges 10

¹ After Abimelech died, Tola the son of Puah the son of Dodo, arose to save Israel. He was from Issachar and he lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.

² He judged Israel twenty-three years, died and was buried in Shamir.

³ After him arose Jair, the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years.

⁴ He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys. They ruled thirty towns in the land of Gilead, that are called Havvoth-jair [towns of Jair] to this day.

⁵ Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

⁶ The Israelites again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals, and the Ashtareths, and the gods of Aram [Syria], Sidon, Moab, Ammonites and the Philistines. They abandoned the LORD, and no longer served him.

⁷ The anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and the Ammonites.

⁸ They crushed and oppressed the Israelites that year. For eighteen years they oppressed the Israelites who lived beyond the Jordan River in the land of the Amorites in Gilead.

⁹ The Ammonites crossed over the Jordan River to attack Judah, Benjamin and the house of Ephraim. So Israel was greatly distressed.

¹⁰ The Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you. We have abandoned our God and served the Baals."

¹¹ Then the LORD said to the Israelites, "Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites and the Philistines?"

¹² The Sidonians, Amalekites and the Maonites also oppressed you and you cried out to me, and I delivered you from their hand.

¹³ Yet you have abandoned me and served other gods. So I will no longer save you.

¹⁴ Go and cry to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you in your time of trouble."

¹⁵ But the Israelites confessed to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do to us whatever seems right to you; only please deliver us this day."

¹⁶ Then they put away the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. He was grieved and no longer able to stand the misery of Israel.

¹⁷ The Ammonites mustered their troops and camped in Gilead. So the Israelites assembled themselves and camped at Mizpah.

¹⁸ The commanders of Gilead said to each other, "Who is willing to lead the fight against the Ammonites? He will be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

Judges 11

¹ Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant warrior. Gilead was the father of Jephthah, but his mother was a prostitute.

² Gilead's wife also bore him sons. When his wife's sons grew up, they drove out Jephthah, and said to him, "You should not inherit anything in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."

³ So Jephthah fled from his brothers, and lived in the land of Tob. There a gang of rebels joined with Jephthah, and they hung out with him.

⁴ After some time the Ammonites made war against Israel.

⁵ When the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

⁶ They invited Jephthah, "Come and be our chief, so that we may fight against the Ammonites."

⁷ Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me and drive me out of my father's house? Why are you coming to me now that you are in trouble?"

⁸ Then the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "Nevertheless we have turned back to you now, so that you may go with us, and fight the Ammonites. Then you will be our leader over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

⁹ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Suppose you bring me home again to fight with the Ammonites, and the LORD delivers them before me, will I really be your leader?"

¹⁰ The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is witness between us, we will do whatever you say."

¹¹ Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. Then Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.

¹² Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, "What is the problem between you and me, that you have come against me to attack my land?"

¹³ The king of the Ammonites answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon even to the Jabbok, and to the Jordan River. Now therefore give it back peaceably."

¹⁴ But Jephthah sent messengers back to the king of the Ammonites,

¹⁵ and replied, "This is what Jephthah says, 'Israel did not steal the land of Moab, or the land of the Ammonites,

¹⁶ but when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh.

¹⁷ Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let us, pass through your land,' but the king of Edom wouldn't listen. They sent the same request to the king of Moab but he refused as well. So Israel stayed at Kadesh.

¹⁸ Then they went through the wilderness, and went around the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and traveling to the east of the land of Moab. They camped on the other

side of the Arnon gorge. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon gorge was the border of Moab.

¹⁹ Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king in Heshbon. Israel said to him, 'Please let us pass through your land to get to our country.'

²⁰ But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. Instead Sihon gathered all his people together and camped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

²¹ The LORD, the God of Israel, handed Sihon and all his people over to Israel, and they defeated them. So Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country.

²² They possessed all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon gorge in the south to the Jabbok River in the north, and from the eastern desert over to the Jordan River.

²³ So now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven out the Amorites before his people Israel, what right do you have to take it?

²⁴ Do you not have the right to possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So we too will take whatever the LORD our God has conquered for us.

²⁵ Are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel, or did he ever dare fight against them?

²⁶ Israel has lived in Heshbon and its towns, and in Aroer and its towns, and in all the towns that are along the side of the Arnon, for three hundred years. Why did you not reclaim them within that time?

²⁷ Therefore I have not wronged you, but you have wronged me by going to war against me. The LORD, the Judge, be judge this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites."

²⁸ The king of the Ammonites, however, paid no attention to the words Jephthah sent him.

²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and then through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there to the Ammonites.

³⁰ Then Jephthah vowed a vow to the LORD, and swore, "If you will hand the Ammonites over to me,

³¹ then whatever comes out the door of my house to meet me, when I return in triumph from the Ammonites, will be the LORD's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

³² So Jephthah approached the Ammonites to fight against them and the LORD handed them over to him.

³³ He decimated them from Aroer to region of Minnith, twenty towns, as far as Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued before the Israelites.

³⁴ When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances. She was his only child, he had no other son or daughter besides her.

³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes, and bemoaned, "No, my daughter! You have devastated me! You have brought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the LORD, and I cannot take it back."

³⁶ She replied, "My father, you have vowed to the LORD, so do to me according to what you have promised, now that the LORD has taken vengeance on your enemies, the Ammonites."

³⁷ Then she requested from her father, "Please grant me one request: give me two months that I may go and travel through the mountains with my friends and grieve over my virginity."

³⁸ Then he said, "Go." So he sent her away for two months, and she and her friends left and mourned her childless virginity on the mountains.

³⁹ At the end of two months, she returned to her father, and he did with her according to the vow he had made. She never slept with a man. So it became a custom in Israel,

⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went yearly to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days each year.

Judges 12

¹ The men of Ephraim assembled, and crossed over to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, "Why didn't you call us when you went to fight against the Ammonites?"

² Then Jephthah answered, "I and my people were engaged in a great struggle with the Ammonites and when I called you, you didn't rescue me out of their hand.

³ So when I realized that you weren't coming to rescue me, I took my life in my own hands, and crossed over to attack the Ammonites, and the LORD handed them over to me. So why have you come up to fight with me today?"

⁴ Then Jephthah assembled all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim. The men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they ridiculed them saying, "You are refugees of Ephraim, you Gileadites living in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh."

⁵ The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan River leading to Ephraim. When any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, "Let me go across," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No,"

⁶ then they would say to him, "Say 'Shibboleth.'" If he said "Sibboleth," for Ephraimites could not pronounce it right, then they would grab him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan River. 42,000 Ephraimites were killed on that day.

⁷ Now Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in his town in Gilead.

⁸ After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.

⁹ He had thirty sons. He arranged for his thirty daughters to be married outside of his clan. He brought in thirty women outside of his clan for his sons. He judged Israel seven years.

¹⁰ Then Ibzan died, and was buried at Bethlehem.

¹¹ After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years.

¹² Then Elon the Zebulunite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

¹³ After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel.

¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy donkeys. He judged Israel eight years.

¹⁵ Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

Judges 13

¹ The Israelites again did evil in the sight of the LORD and the LORD handed them over to Philistines for forty years.

² Now there was a certain man of Zorah, from the tribe of the Dan, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren, and had no children.

³ The angel of the LORD appeared to the woman, and said to her, "Although you are barren, and have had no children, you will become pregnant and have a son.

⁴ Now please be careful, do not to drink wine or strong drink or eat anything unclean,

⁵ for you will become pregnant and have a son. No razor is to come on his head for the child will be dedicated as a Nazirite to God from birth. He is the one who will begin to rescue Israel from the hand of the Philistines."

⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he was from, and he didn't even tell me his name.

⁷ But he told me, 'You will become pregnant, and have a son. Drink no wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean, for the child will be dedicated as a Nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death.'"

⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, "O, Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come back to us, and teach us how we should raise the child who is to be born."

⁹ God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came back to the woman as she sat in the field, but her husband Manoah was not with her.

¹⁰ The woman quickly ran and told her husband, "Look, the man who appeared to me the other day has come back."

¹¹ So Manoah got up and followed his wife, and came to the man, and asked him, "Are you the man who spoke to my wife?" He replied, "I am."

¹² Then Manoah asked, "Now when your words come true, what is to be the child's rule of life, and what is his destiny?"

¹³ The angel of the LORD answered Manoah, "Let your wife be careful to do everything I told her.

¹⁴ She must not eat of anything that comes from the vine. She must not drink wine or strong drink, or eat anything unclean. She must do everything that I have commanded her."

¹⁵ Then Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "Please, stay with us awhile and we will prepare a young goat for you to eat."

¹⁶ But the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Even if I stay, I will not eat any of your food. But prepare and offer a burnt offering to the LORD." For Manoah did not realize that he was the angel of the LORD.

¹⁷ Then Manoah asked the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that when your words come true we may honor you?"

¹⁸ But the angel of the LORD answered him, "Why do you ask about my name, since it is too wonderful?"

¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the LORD. The angel performed wonders as Manoah and his wife watched.

²⁰ When the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. Manoah and his wife watched and fell with their faces to the ground.

²¹ But the angel of the LORD did not appear again to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah realized that he was the angel of the LORD.

²² Manoah said to his wife, "We will certainly die, because we have seen God."

²³ But his wife said to him, "If the LORD wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted the burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, or showed us all these things, or announced such wonderful things as these."

²⁴ Then the woman gave birth to a son, and called his name Samson. The child grew and the LORD blessed him.

²⁵ The Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 14

¹ Now Samson went down to Timnah, and a woman from there, one of the daughters of the Philistines, caught his attention.

² When he returned home he told his father and his mother, "A woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines, has caught my attention. Now get her for me as my wife."

³ Then his father and his mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you have to go and take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me."

⁴ But his father and his mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was looking for an opportunity to act against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

⁵ Then Samson went down to Timnah, along with his father and mother. As they came to the vineyards of Timnah a roaring young lion attacked him.

⁶ The Spirit of the LORD came mightily on him, and he tore it apart with his bare hands as easily as one would tear a young goat apart. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

⁷ Then he went down to Timnah and talked with the woman and liked her.

⁸ After a while he returned to marry her. He turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and some honey.

⁹ He scooped it out with his hands, and went on, eating as he went. He came to his father and mother, and gave some to them and they ate too. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the body of the lion.

¹⁰ Then his father went down to visit the woman. Samson threw a party there as was customary for young men to do.

¹¹ When the Philistines saw him, they gave him thirty groomsmen to be with him.

¹² Samson said to them, "Let me tell you a riddle, if you can solve it within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes;

¹³ but if you cannot figure it out, then you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes." They said to him, "Alright, tell us your riddle."

¹⁴ So he told them, "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet." After three days they could not solve the riddle.

¹⁵ On the seventh day, they threatened Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to explain the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's house. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?"

¹⁶ So Samson's wife wept in front of him, "You hate me and don't really love me. You have told a riddle to my people, but you haven't told me the answer." He rebuffed her, "Look, I haven't even told my father or my mother, so why should I tell you?"

¹⁷ So she wept in front of him the whole seven days of the feast. On the seventh day, he finally told her, because she nagged him so much. Then she explained the riddle to her people.

¹⁸ The men of the town said to him on the seventh day before the sun set, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Then he retorted, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle."

¹⁹ The Spirit of the LORD came mightily on him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave the changes of clothes to those who had solved the riddle. But his anger was kindled, so he went back up to his father's house.

²⁰ Samson's wife was given to his attendant who was his best man at the wedding.

Judges 15

¹ After a while, during the wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat. He said, "I want to go to sleep with my wife in her bedroom." But her father would not allow him to enter.

² Her father explained, "I really thought that you hated her, so I gave her to your best man. Isn't her younger sister more beautiful than she is? Please, take her instead."

³ But Samson said to them, "This time I will be blameless when I work havoc on the Philistines."

⁴ So Samson went and caught 300 foxes, tied their tails together in pairs and secured a torch between each pair of tails.

⁵ Then he set the torches on fire, and let them loose in the Philistine's grain fields. He burned up both the stacked grain and the standing grain, and even the olive groves.

⁶ Then the Philistines inquired, "Who did this?" They answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife, and gave her to his best man." So the Philistines came and burned up both her and her father.

⁷ Then Samson said to them, "Because you did this, surely I will get revenge on you, only after that will I stop."

⁸ He struck them down viciously with a great slaughter. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam.

⁹ Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah, and spread out for battle near Lehi.

¹⁰ The men of Judah asked, "Why have you come up to attack us?" They answered, "We have come up to bind Samson and do to him what he did to us."

¹¹ Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He said to them, "I just did to them what they did to me."

¹² Then they said to him, "We have come down to bind you, that we may hand you over to the Philistines." Samson said to them, "Promise me, that you will not kill me yourselves."

¹³ So they swore to him, "We promise, but we will tie you up and hand you over to them, but we will not kill you." So they tied him up with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they approached him. The Spirit of the LORD came mightily on him, and the ropes on his arms snapped as easily as charred flax and fell off his hands.

¹⁵ He found a fresh donkey jawbone, and reached out and grabbed it, and killed 1,000 men with it.

¹⁶ Then Samson said, "With a donkey's jawbone, I piled up heaps of them. With a donkey's jawbone I have killed 1,000 men."

¹⁷ When he finished talking, he threw the jawbone away and the place was named Ramath-lehi [Jawbone Hill].

¹⁸ He was very dehydrated, and cried out to the LORD, and said, "You have given this great victory by the hand of your servant. Now am I going to die from thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?"

¹⁹ So God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi and water came out. After he drank some, his spirit returned, and he revived. That's why its name was called En-hakkore [Spring of the One who Cried Out], which is in Lehi, to this day.

²⁰ Samson judged Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Judges 16

¹ Samson went to Gaza, there he saw a prostitute and visited her.

² The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here." So they surrounded him laying in wait for him all night at the city gate. They stayed quiet all the night, thinking, "At dawn we will kill him."

³ Samson laid there until midnight. Then he got up in the middle of the night, took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts, pulled them up, bar and all, putting them on his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the hill across from Hebron.

⁴ After this he fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

⁵ The rulers of the Philistines came to her and said, "Seduce him and find out what makes him so strong and how we can overpower him so that we may tie him up and subdue him. Each of us will give you 1,100 pieces of silver."

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what makes you so strong and how you might be tied up and subdued."

⁷ Then Samson answered her, "If they tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings that have never been dried, then I will become weak as any other man."

⁸ So the rulers of the Philistines brought to her seven fresh bowstrings that had never been dried, and she tied him up with them.

⁹ Now she had hidden some men in the inner room. Then she cried out to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you." He snapped the bowstrings, as easily as if it were threads when it touches a fire. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

¹⁰ Then Delilah complained to Samson, "You have mocked and lied to me. Now tell me, how you can be tied up?"

¹¹ He said to her, "If they tie me up with new ropes that have never been used, then I will become weak as any other man."

¹² So Delilah took new ropes, and tied him up with them, then cried out, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you." The men were hidden in the inner room. He snapped them off his arms like threads.

¹³ Then Delilah complained to Samson, "Until now you have mocked and told me lies. Tell me how you can be tied up." He told her, "If you weave the seven locks of my hair into fabric of a cloth on the loom and tighten it down with a shuttle pin, then I will become weak as any other man."

¹⁴ While he slept, Delilah wove seven locks of his hair into the fabric on the loom and tightened it down with the loom shuttle pin, and cried out to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you." He awoke out of his sleep, and tore away the shuttle pin and the fabric.

¹⁵ Then she complained, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me the secret of your great strength."

¹⁶ She nagged him day in and day out with her words, and pestered him, so that he was tired to death of it.

¹⁷ So he told her everything, "No razor has come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from birth. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I will become weak as any other man."

¹⁸ When Delilah realized that he had told her everything, she sent and called for the rulers of the Philistines, saying, "Come up one last time, for he has told me everything." Then the rulers of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hand.

¹⁹ So she made him sleep on her lap and she called in a man to shave off seven locks of his head. This is how she brought him down and his strength left him.

²⁰ Then she cried out, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you." He woke up, and thought, "I will go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not realize that the LORD had left him.

²¹ But the Philistines grabbed hold of him, and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with bronze chains. He ground grain in the prison house.

²² But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved off.

²³ The rulers of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to celebrate, for they said, "Our god has handed Samson, our enemy, over to us."

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, "Our god has handed our enemy over to us, he was the one who ruined our land, and killed so many of us."

²⁵ When their hearts were merry, they said, "Call for Samson, that he may amuse us." So they called Samson out of the prison house and he performed for them. They had him stand between the pillars.

²⁶ Samson said to the lad that led him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them."

²⁷ Now the temple was full of men and women. All the rulers of the Philistines were there; and there were on the roof about 3,000 men and women that watched while Samson amused them.

²⁸ Samson prayed to the LORD, and said, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I beg you, and strengthen me, this one last time. O God, with one last blow may I get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes."

²⁹ So Samson took hold of the two middle pillars on which the temple rested, and leaned on them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left.

³⁰ Then Samson prayed, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he pushed with all his might and the temple fell on the rulers, and on all the people that were in there. So he killed more at his death than he killed in his life.

³¹ Then his brothers and all his father's family came down and brought him home, burying him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He judged Israel twenty years.

Judges 17

¹ Now there was a man from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

² He said to his mother, "I heard you pronounce a curse on the one who stole from you eleven hundred pieces of silver. I'm the one who took it and I've got the silver." Then his mother said, "May the LORD bless you, my son."

³ When he returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother, his mother said, "I am dedicating this silver to the LORD from my hand in honor of my son, to make a carved and a cast metal idol. Now I will give it back to you."

⁴ When he returned the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave them to a silversmith, who made from it a carved and a cast metal idol. It was put in the house of Micah.

⁵ Now this man Micah owned a shrine, and he made a sacred ephod and household idols, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

⁷ Now there was a young man from of Bethlehem in Judah, from the tribe of Judah, a Levite who was staying there.

⁸ The man left the town of Bethlehem in Judah looking for another place where he could settle. Along the way, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah.

⁹ Micah asked him, "Where are you from?" He replied, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am trying to find a place to live."

¹⁰ So Micah invited him, "Stay with me, and be a father and a priest for me, and I will give you ten pieces of silver per year, along with a set of clothes and your food." So the Levite stayed.

¹¹ The Levite agreed to stay with the man, and the young man became like one of his sons.

¹² Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and lived in Micah's house.

¹³ Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me seeing I have a Levite as my priest."

Judges 18

¹ In those days there was no king in Israel. It was a time when the Danite tribe was seeking for a land inheritance to settle in; for until that day they had not been allotted a land inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

² The Danites sent from all their clans five valiant men, from Zorah and Eshtaol, to scout out and explore the land. They told them, "Go, explore the land." They came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and stayed there.

³ When they approached Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. So they went over there, and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing here? What business do you have here?"

⁴ He answered, "This is the way Micah dealt with me: he hired me, and I am his priest."

⁵ They said to him, "Please inquire of God whether the journey we are making will succeed."

⁶ The priest said to them, "Go in peace. The LORD will be with you on your journey."

⁷ Then the five men departed, and came to Laish. There they saw the people were living in security, like the Sidonians, peaceful and secure. The people were wealthy because the land was fertile. They lived far from the Sidonians and had no alliances with anyone.

⁸ When they returned to their relatives in Zorah and Eshtaol, they asked them, "How did it go?"

⁹ They said, "Come on, let's attack them; for we have seen the land and it is very good. Why are you just sitting there? Don't be lazy but go, invade and conquer the land."

¹⁰ When you get there, you will come on an unsuspecting people. The land is spacious and does not lack anything on earth. God is handing it over to you!"

¹¹ So the Danite tribe sent from Zorah and Eshtaol, 600 men, armed with weapons of war.

¹² They went up and camped in Kiriath-jearim in Judah. That is why they call the place west of Kiriath-jearim, Mahaneh-dan [Camp of Dan] to this day.

¹³ From there they passed on to the hill country of Ephraim, and arrived at the house of Micah.

¹⁴ Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish, said to their comrades, "Do you know that there is in these houses an ephod, household gods, and carved and cast metal idols? Now think about what you should do."

¹⁵ So they stopped in there, and came to the house of the young Levite, to the house of Micah, and asked how he was doing.

¹⁶ The six hundred Danites armed with their weapons of war, stood by the entrance of the gate.

¹⁷ The five men who originally spied out the land went up, broke in and stole the carved idol, the ephod, the household gods and the cast metal idol while the priest and the 600 men armed with weapons of war stood by the entrance of the gate.

¹⁸ When these went into Micah's house, and stole the carved image, the ephod, the household gods and the cast metal idol, the priest protested to them, "What are you doing?"

¹⁹ They said to him, "Shut up! Put your hand over your mouth, and come with us and be a father and a priest for us. Is it not better for you to be priest for a whole tribe and a clan in Israel rather than for the house of just one man?"

²⁰ The priest's heart was pleased, so he took the ephod, the household gods, the carved image, and went along with the people.

²¹ So they turned and left, putting their children, cattle and possessions in front of them.

²² When they were a good way off from the house of Micah, Micah's neighbors gathered together and overtook the Danites.

²³ They cried to the Danites, who turned back and asked Micah, "What's your problem that you come after us with such a company?"

²⁴ He said, "You have taken my gods that I made, along with the priest, and have taken off, what do I have left? How can you say to me, 'What's your problem?'"

²⁵ The Danites rebuffed him, "You had better keep you mouth shut around us, or someone might get angry and attack you, and you and your family might just lose your lives."

²⁶ Then the Danites went on their way. When Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back home.

²⁷ They took what Micah had made and his priest and came to Laish, to a people peaceful and secure, and struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city.

²⁸ There was no one to rescue them because it was far from Sidon, and they had no alliances with anyone. It was in the valley that is near Beth-rehob. They rebuilt the town and settled there.

²⁹ They called the name of the town Dan, after the name of Dan their forefather, who was born to Israel although the name of the town was originally Laish.

³⁰ The Danites set up the carved idol for themselves. Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses and his sons were installed as priests for the Danite tribe until the day the land went into captivity.

³¹ So they set up Micah's carved idols that he made, all the time the house of God was at Shiloh.

Judges 19

¹ In those days there was no king in Israel. There was a certain Levite residing in the remote area of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

² His concubine got angry at him, and ran away from him to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah. After she had been there four months,

³ her husband came after her, to persuade her to return. He had his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. She brought him to her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he was happy to meet him.

⁴ His father-in-law, the girl's father, urged him to stay so he stayed with him three days. They ate, drink and slept there.

⁵ Now on the fourth day, they got up early in the morning to leave but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Here's some food to strengthen your heart, and afterward you can be on your way."

⁶ So they both sat down, ate and drank, and the girl's father said to the man, "Please stay another night and enjoy yourself."

⁷ The man got up to leave but his father-in-law urged him, so he again spent the night there.

⁸ Then he got up to leave early in the morning of the fifth day, and the girl's father said, "Strengthen your heart, and wait until later when the day cools down." So they ate together.

⁹ When the man got up to leave, he, his concubine and his servant, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Look, now the day is almost over, spend the night here again, and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early and be on your way home."

¹⁰ But the man would not spend the night there, he got up and left. He had a couple of saddled donkeys and his concubine and was passing by Jebus (that is, Jerusalem).

¹¹ When they were near Jebus, late in the day, the servant said to his master, "Come now, let's stop at this town of the Jebusites, and spent the night there."

¹² But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into the town of foreigners where there are no Israelites. Let's go on to Gibeah."

¹³ He said to his servant, "Come on, let's try to reach one of these other places, and we will spend the night at Gibeah or Ramah."

¹⁴ So they went on. The sun went down as they approached Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.

¹⁵ They stopped in there to spend the night in Gibeah. He entered the town and sat down in the town square, because no one offered them a place to stay.

¹⁶ That evening an old man was coming in from his work out in the field. Now the man happened to be from the hill country of Ephraim, who was residing in Gibeah, but the actual people of the place were Benjaminites.

¹⁷ He lifted up his eyes, and saw the traveler in the town square, so the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where do you come from?"

¹⁸ He replied, "We are traveling from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote area of the hill country of Ephraim. I'm from there, and I went to Bethlehem in Judah and I am now returning to the house of the LORD, and no one has invited me home to spend the night.

¹⁹ Even though we have both straw and provisions for our donkeys; and we also have food and wine for me, your female servant, and the young man who is with your servants. We don't need anything."

²⁰ The old man said, "Peace be to you. I'll take care of what you need, only don't spend the night in the town square."

²¹ So he brought him to his house, fed the donkeys, washed their feet, ate and drank.

²² As they were enjoying themselves, some hoodlums of the town surrounded the house, beating on the door. They shouted at the old man who was the owner of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, so that we can sex with him."

²³ The owner of the house, went out to them, and protested, "No, my brothers, please, do not do such a wicked thing, seeing this man has come into my house. Do not do anything that shameful.

²⁴ Look, here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. I will bring them out now. Violate them, and do whatever you want with them but do not do such a shameful thing to this man."

²⁵ But the men would not listen to him. So the man grabbed his concubine and pushed her out to them. They raped and abused her all the night until the morning. When the day began to break, they let her go.

²⁶ Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, until it became light.

²⁷ Her master got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way. There was his concubine collapsed at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold.

²⁸ He said to her, "Get up, and let's get going." But there was no response. So he put her on the donkey, got up and went home.

²⁹ When he got to his house, he took a knife, and grabbing a hold of his concubine, he cut her up, limb by limb, into twelve pieces. Then he sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

³⁰ When everyone saw it, they exclaimed, "There has never been anything done like this from the time the Israelites came up out of the land of Egypt to this day. Let's think about this, get advice and talk about what to do."

Judges 20

¹ Then all the Israelites rallied, from Dan to Beersheba along with Gilead, the congregation assembled as a single unit before the LORD at Mizpah.

² The leaders of all the people from all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the God's people, 400,000 foot-soldiers who drew swords.

³ Now the Benjaminites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah. The Israelites asked, "Tell us, how did this atrocity ever happen?"

⁴ The Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered, "My concubine and I came to Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin to find lodging.

⁵ Then the men of Gibeah came after me, and surrounded the house at night planning to kill me. They raped my concubine and she is dead.

⁶ So I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout the whole territory of Israel; because they committed such an unconscionable and barbarous act in Israel.

⁷ Now, all you Israelites give your advice and counsel here."

⁸ All the people rose as one, saying, "None of us will go to his tent, nor will any of us return home.

⁹ But now this is what we will do to Gibeah: we will attack the town by lot.

¹⁰ We will take ten men out of a hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to bring provision to the troops. Then when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin they will repay them for this atrocity that they have done in Israel."

¹¹ So all the men of Israel were gathered against the town, united as one person.

¹² The tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, asking, "What terrible crime is this that has happened among you?"

¹³ Now hand over those hoodlums from Gibeah, so that we may put them to death, and so purge evil from Israel." But the people of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their fellow Israelites.

¹⁴ The children of Benjamin gathered together from their towns to Gibeah, to fight against the Israelites.

¹⁵ The Benjaminites numbered on that day from the towns 26,000 soldiers who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who joined adding 700 special forces there.

¹⁶ Among all these troops there were 700 select left handed men who could sling stones and hit a hair and not miss.

¹⁷ 400,000 soldiers of Israel who drew the sword mustered, besides the Benjaminites. All these were warriors.

¹⁸ The Israelites went up to Bethel, and inquired of God. They asked, "Who should go up first for us to fight against the Benjaminites?" The LORD answered, "Judah shall go up first."

¹⁹ So the Israelites got up in the morning, and camped against Gibeah.

²⁰ The men of Israel went out to fight against Benjamin, and the soldiers of Israel took up their fighting positions against Gibeah.

²¹ The Benjaminites came out of Gibeah, and struck down 22,000 Israelites that day.

²² The Israelite troops took courage, and again took up battle positions in the place where they set themselves up as on the first day.

²³ The Israelites went up and wept before the LORD until evening. They asked the LORD, "Shall we again draw near to attack the Benjaminites our relatives?" Then the LORD answered, "Go up against them."

²⁴ The Israelites drew near to fight against the Benjaminites the second day.

²⁵ Benjamin came out of Gibeah against them the second day, and struck down from the Israelites another 18,000 men, all of whom drew the sword.

²⁶ Then all the Israelites, and all the people, went up, and came to Bethel, and wept and sat there before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

²⁷ The Israelites asked the LORD, for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,

²⁸ and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days, saying, "Should we go out to battle again against the Benjaminites our relatives, or should we stop?" The LORD answered, "Go up for tomorrow; I will hand them over to you."

²⁹ Israel set an ambush against Gibeah.

³⁰ The Israelites went up to attack the Benjaminites on the third day. They took their battle positions against Gibeah, as before.

³¹ The Benjaminites went out against the people, and were drawn away from the town; and they began to strike down the people as before. Thirty men of Israel died in the field and on the roads, one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah.

³² The Benjaminites assumed, "They are defeated before us just as before." But the Israelites said, "Let's flee, and draw them away from the town into the roadways."

³³ So all the men of Israel rose up from their places, and took their battle positions at Baal-tamar. The Israelites laying in ambush broke out of their place, even from their positions west of Gibeah.

³⁴ Then 10,000 chosen men from all Israel attacked Gibeah, and the battle was fierce; but the Benjaminites did not realize how close they were to disaster.

³⁵ The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel. The Israelites destroyed 25,100 Benjaminites that day all of whom drew the sword.

³⁶ The Benjaminites saw that they were defeated; for the men of Israel retreated before Benjamin, because they were trusting in those who were hiding in ambush whom they had set up against Gibeah.

³⁷ Those in the ambush quickly rushed into Gibeah. They moved in and struck all who were in the town with the edge of the sword.

³⁸ Now the appointed sign between the men of Israel and those in the ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise from the town.

³⁹ The men of Israel turned in the battle, and the men of Benjamin began to smite and kill thirty of the men of Israel; for they thought, "Surely they are defeated before us, just as in the first battle."

⁴⁰ But when the cloud began to rise out of the town in a pillar of smoke, the Benjaminites looked behind them. The whole town was going up in smoke to the sky.

⁴¹ The men of Israel turned around and the men of Benjamin were terrified for they saw that disaster had overtaken them.

⁴² Therefore they turned and fled before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness. But the battle pressed hard after them as the Israelite troops came out of the towns cutting them down as they were caught in between.

⁴³ They surrounded the Benjaminites, chased them down relentlessly and overtook them east of Gibeah.

⁴⁴ 18,000 men of Benjamin fell; all were valiant warriors.

⁴⁵ The rest turned and fled toward the desert to the rock of Rimmon. The Israelites struck down 5,000 more on the roads, and pressing hard on their heels to Gidom, where they killed another 2000 Benjaminites.

⁴⁶ So on that day a total of 25,000 valiant warriors from the tribe of Benjamin each of whom drew the sword, died.

⁴⁷ But six hundred men turned and fled toward the desert to the rock of Rimmon, and stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months.

⁴⁸ The men of Israel went back again to the Benjaminite towns and struck them down with the edge of the sword--the town, the animals, and everything they found there. They also burned down all the towns they came to.

Judges 21

¹ Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying, "None of us will allow his daughter to marry a Benjaminite."

² The people came to Bethel, and sat there until evening before God and wept, grieving bitterly.

³ They said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, why has this happened in Israel, that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel?"

⁴ On the next day the people got up early, built an altar there, and offered burnt and peace offerings.

⁵ The Israelites said, "Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who did not assemble before the LORD?" For they had taken a solemn oath concerning anyone who did not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, vowing, "He must surely be put to death."

⁶ The Israelites had compassion on Benjamin their brother, and lamented, "Today there is one tribe cut off from Israel."

⁷ How can we find wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD that we will not allow them to marry our daughters?"

⁸ They asked, "Who among the tribes of Israel did not come up to the LORD at Mizpah?" They found that no one from Jabesh-gilead had come to the camp that had assembled.

⁹ When the people were counted, no one from Jabesh-gilead was present.

¹⁰ The congregation sent there 12,000 valiant warriors, and told them, "Go and strike down with the sword the residents of Jabesh-gilead, including the women and children.

¹¹ This is what you are to do: totally destroy every male, and every woman who has is not a virgin."

¹² They found among the residents of Jabesh-gilead 400 young virgins, who had never had sexual relations with a man. They brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

¹³ The whole congregation sent and spoke to the Benjaminites that were at the rock of Rimmon, and offered them peace.

¹⁴ Benjamin returned at that time. They gave them the women they had saved alive from the women of Jabesh-gilead but there were not enough women for them.

¹⁵ So the people had compassion for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a hole in the tribes of Israel.

¹⁶ Then the elders of the congregation asked, "How should we find wives for those who remain, since the women were destroyed from Benjamin?"

¹⁷ Then they said, "There must be heirs for those from Benjamin who escaped, that a tribe not be blotted out from Israel.

¹⁸ But we cannot give them wives from our daughters." For the Israelites had sworn, "Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to Benjamin."

¹⁹ They said, "Look, there is a feast of the LORD from year to year in Shiloh, which is the north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.

²⁰ So they commanded the Benjaminites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyards,

²¹ and watch. When the daughters of Shiloh come out for their dances, then come out of the vineyards, and let every man catch his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and then return home to the land of Benjamin.

²² When their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will tell them, 'Do us a favor and let us have them, because each man did not capture a wife in battle. You did not incur guilt by giving up your daughters to them.'"

²³ So the Benjaminites did as they were told, and caught wives according to their number from those who danced. They carried them off and returned to their own territory, and rebuilt the cities, and settled in them.

²⁴ Then the Israelites left there, every one returning to his tribe and family, they went home each to his own land inheritance.

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel. Each man did what was right in his own eyes.