

## Judges 21 Mourning a Lost Tribe

Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin [a]in marriage." 2 So the people came to Bethel and sat there before God until evening, and raised their voices and wept profusely. 3 And they said, "Why, LORD, God of Israel, has this happened in Israel, that one tribe is missing today from Israel?" 4 And it came about the next day that the people got up early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

5 Then the sons of Israel said, "Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who did not go up to the LORD in the assembly?" For they had taken a solemn oath concerning anyone who did not go up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, "He shall certainly be put to death." 6 And the sons of Israel were sorry for their brother Benjamin, and said, "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel! 7 What are we to do for wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD not to give them any of our daughters as wives?"

### Provision for Their Survival

8 And they said, "What one is there of the tribes of Israel that did not go up to the LORD at Mizpah?" And behold, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. 9 For when the people were counted, behold, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead was there. 10 And the congregation sent twelve thousand of the valiant warriors there, and commanded them, saying,

Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, along with the women and the children. 11 And this is the thing that you shall do: you shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has slept with a male."

12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man by sleeping with him; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

13 Then the whole congregation sent word and spoke to the sons of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and proclaimed peace to them. 14 And the tribe of Benjamin returned at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had allowed to live from the women of Jabesh-gilead; but they were not enough for them. 15 And the people were sorry for Benjamin, because the LORD had created a gap in the tribes of Israel.

16 Then the elders of the congregation said, "What are we to do for wives for those who are left, since the women have been eliminated from Benjamin?" 17 And they said, "There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, so that a tribe will not be wiped out from Israel. 18 But we cannot give them wives from our daughters." For the sons of Israel had sworn, saying, "Cursed is he who gives a wife to Benjamin!"

19 So they said, “Behold, there is a feast of the LORD from year to year in Shiloh, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the road that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south side of Lebonah.”

20 And they commanded the sons of Benjamin, saying, “Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 and watch; and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to take part in the dances, then you shall come out of the vineyards, and each of you shall seize his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. 22 And when their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we shall say to them,

‘[j]Give them to us voluntarily, because we did not take for each man of Benjamin a wife in battle, [l]nor did you give them to them, otherwise you would now be guilty.’” 23 The sons of Benjamin did so, and took wives according to their number from those who danced, whom they seized. And they went and returned to their inheritance, and rebuilt the cities and lived in them.

24 And the sons of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family, and each one departed from there to his inheritance. 25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Pauls question and comments

1. They black balled Benjamin, for a season, from being part of the nation of Israel.
2. Why do kingdoms inter-marry with their enemies?
3. What is it to sit before God?
4. Contrast a ‘bitter weeping’ from a ‘sweet weeping’.
5. The eleven tribes gathered felt the emptiness of the loss of the tribe of Benjamin.
6. Why do people build altars?
7. What is a modern day altar?
8. To come up at Mizpah is to gather together before the Lord.
9. Being together was important to the nation of Israel.
10. To be cut off, is to not be part of something anymore. Is there ever a time to be cut off?
11. Israel’s contemplations at the defeat of the tribe of Benjamin, raised an issue

regarding their being enough virgin wives for the men of Benjamin.

12. Who will provide wives for Benjamin?

13. Jabesh Gilead failed to come up to gather, so, twelve thousand attack them for no other reason than that they never came up.

14. They even killed women and children, but they did not destroy the virgin women.

15. Four hundred virgin women survived, they become wives of the men of Benjamin who survived the battle.

16. The eleven tribes proclaimed peace to Benjamin and brought them back.

17. What is an amphictyony?

18. Unfortunately, the four hundred virgin women were not enough for the men of Benjamin.

19. See how they blame the Lord for the breach in the nation, when it actually was Benjamin who were responsible.

20. God had actually given them the chance to repent by bringing out the perpetrators of the crime.

21. So, their attempts to solve the problem had not been successful this time, more virgins were needed.

22. We see now what is driving the eleven tribes, they are afraid that the tribe of Benjamin will be lost to history.

23. Unfortunately, they had a conundrum, it was the problem of the curse, it said 'whoever gives a wife to Benjamin is cursed'.

24. We pay for what we say! Even if it is said in anger and reckless, our words curse or bless.

25. How do we break a curse?

26. The Jews are the great solvers of problems, for them they become opportunities.

27. There is a particular hat that they were made to wear, which is a detrimental curse from their enemy, but they changed its meaning for them, so that it became a blessing and an honour to wear it.

28. They turned to Shiloh to bring the solution to the problem of, their not being enough wives for the sons of

29. Benjamin.

30. They devise a plan of making a distinction between dancers and non-dancers, the plan was successful and the tribe of Benjamin go from strength to strength and are preserved within the amphictyony.

31. All the twelve tribes return to their inheritance, but still there is no King in their land, so everyone was doing what was right in their own lives, just like they are today, live and let live!