

# Judges & Ruth

God's *Faithfulness* Remains

women's | BIBLE STUDY

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LESSON *Fourteen*

The War's Aftermath

**T**he tribe of Benjamin was defeated. Israel began questioning their decision. Due to the effects of the civil war between Benjamin and Israel, the tribe's survival was at risk. Israel devised a plan without God's help: to steal wives for the surviving men of Benjamin. Had Israel solved their problems? Absolutely not. To prove it, the author ends with a dooming phrase: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." This was the end of Judges, but not the end of the story. God's faithfulness remains.

**Pause for a moment and reflect:** Where is God currently working in your life? What is He teaching you about His character? What is He revealing to you through His Word? Where are you struggling to believe His promises? Do you feel God hears you when you cry out to Him? Write your reflections below.

## 600 MEN

Based on Judges 20:47, only six hundred men of Benjamin survived. Without wives to marry and reproduce, the tribe would effectively die out.

## MARRIAGE

During this time in Israel's history, marriages were arranged. In this case, arranged marriages were not a matter of romance, but one of procreation to maintain the tribe of Benjamin.

**Read Judges 21 before answering the following questions.**

1. Remind yourself of last week's lesson. Why was there a war between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of Israel? What could have been done to prevent this war?

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

2. Verse 1 sets up the context for this lesson. Prior to the battle in chapter 20, what did Israel swear and what were the implications of this vow?
3. From verses 2-7, briefly list the emotions Israel experienced in the war's aftermath.

4. Israel was distraught over the possible loss of one of its 12 tribes. Who did Israel blame and why do you think God was silent?

**Read Judges 21:8-24.**

5. From verses 8-15, outline Israel's initial plan to save the tribe of Benjamin.
6. When Israel did not acquire enough virgin women for all 600 men, where did they turn?
7. Notice that in this passage Israel never inquired of God for instruction on what to do next. They participated in a seemingly religious activity by making an offering to God, but they never actually considered what He would want for them in this situation. What decisions, big or small, are you thinking about right now? What would it look like for you to seek God before taking steps forward? (See Appendix: Sanctification—Walking by the Spirit.)
8. What about this passage disturbs you? Do Israel's actions surprise you? Why or why not?

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## JUST LIKE CANAAN

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Look for how Israel had become just like Canaan in this passage. God had been patient, but now His judgment was upon them.

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## JABESH-GILEAD

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The men of Jabesh-gilead did not participate in Israel's oath to withhold their women from the tribe of Benjamin.

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## SILENCE

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While other places in the Old Testament show God's command to Israel to totally wipe out populations as a divine act of His justice, in this case God is silent. Israel takes matters into their own hands and acts against Jabesh-gilead.

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## JUSTICE?

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"An assembly which had gathered to do justice for a single raped and murdered woman ends up planning and promoting the murder of a whole town, and the abduction and rape of the girls of two Israelite towns."<sup>78</sup>

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## TRIBE OF BENJAMIN

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Although the tribe of Benjamin is seen in a negative light in these chapters, some great characters of the Bible are descended from the tribe of Benjamin: Esther, Mordecai, Paul.

**Read Judges 21:25.**

9. Consider the way Judges ends: no resolution, happy ending, or desire to live differently despite the great cost of sin. How do you feel about this conclusion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. As the last sentence of the book of Judges, verse 25 functions as a summary of sorts. Write the verse in the space below.

Regardless of this reality, where do you see God's faithfulness?

"Every day you attach the hopes and dreams of your heart, your satisfaction, and your joy to something. Every day you look to something to give you life... Every day you attach your identity to something, and there are only two places to look. You are either looking for a life in the creation and are on your way to crushing disappointment, or you are looking to the Creator and are on your way to lasting peace of heart."

– Paul David Tripp<sup>79</sup>

## YEARNING FOR A KING

"Israel's apostasy had reached the depths, and the stage was set for the coming of a godly king, David, a man after God's own heart with whom God would make an everlasting covenant (Ruth 4:17, 1 Samuel 16, 2 Samuel 7). The sympathetic reader who has followed the whole narrative is left yearning for such a king."<sup>80</sup>

11. If you had one piece of advice to give the people of Israel at this point in the story, what would it be? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Despite the difficult stories in Judges, do you see God's purpose in preserving these accounts for you? What is God warning you about through the Israelites?

**After reading these last few, hard chapters, spend some time in silence, reflecting on 2 Timothy 2:13.**

**Write down any thoughts you have below.**

*"If we are faithless, He remains faithful - for He cannot deny Himself."*



BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Notes