

OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 23 — “God’s Grace to His Undeserving People”— November 2, 2025

Introduction: The Second Conclusion of Judges

Just as the first conclusion to Judges is set in parallel to the second introduction, the second conclusion is set in parallel to the first introduction. Here, the focus is on the moral condition of Israel as demonstrated on a tribal level with a distinct military focus. What this means is that the scribe who compiled these accounts has arranged and structured things thematically, and not necessarily chronologically, in order to demonstrate the spiritual and moral decline of the people during this period.

Main Point: Despite His people’s folly and worldliness, God remains faithful and shows His _____ and _____ to us in accordance with His Word.

Judges 20:1-21:25

In the second conclusion to Judges, the moral condition of the people is illustrated through the story of an abusive and uncaring Levite who gives over his concubine to abuse and murder. As the account continues, the consequences of this event extend to the tribal level and bring about a crisis for the nation which they sought to resolve in ways that seemed best to them.

Exposition:

I. **The moral chaos in Israel continues to be displayed as the people joined together to exact vengeance against the tribe of Benjamin for the murder of the Levite’s concubine. (20:1-48).**

Observations:

(1) The Levite provided the assembly with his _____ of the events and deflected the focus away from himself.

(2) The account emphasizes the _____ of the tribes in their judgment and determined course of action to confront Benjamin at the tribal level.

“that they may repay Gibeah of Benjamin for...the outrage they have committed”

⇒ This actions take at the tribal level could indicate their ignorance of, or refusal to, follow the Mosaic Law regarding murderers (Num. 35:19-27).

(3) The response of the tribe of Benjamin, however, was to _____ themselves with the “worthless fellows” and therefore to escalate the situation.

“give up the men...that we may put them to death”

“the Benjaminites would not listen”

Key Point: Identifying with and being loyal to a particular group or tribe ceases to be a good thing when it causes us to _____ or _____ overt sin.

(4) The account then centers on Israel’s _____ and military actions as they move against the tribe of Benjamin.
The 1st Encounter (20:18-22)

The 2nd Encounter (20:23-25)

The 3rd Encounter (20:26-36a)

“...Phinehas is a symbol of cultic purity and loyalty to YHWH, and his presence at only the third inquiry suggests that the previous two were inauthentic.” —Boda & Conway

⇒ That the Lord is having to lead His people _____ His people is indicative of the terrible spiritual and moral state that Israel was in during the time period of the Judges

(5) The actions of Israel in their defeat of the Benjaminites were _____ and recall the Lord’s instructions to them as to how to treat the Canaanites (Deut. 20:16-18).

“they struck the city [Gibeah] with the edge of the sword”

“Israel...struck them with the edge of the sword....and all...they found they set on fire.”

(6) The result was the almost complete _____ of the tribe of Benjamin.

Key Point: Worldly responses to evil will often be _____ and _____.

II. The final example of the moral chaos in Israel is shown in how the people sought to provide wives for the surviving men of the tribe of Benjamin. (20:1-25)

Observations:

(1) The tribes gathered together to _____ the situation that they themselves had created.

“O Lord, the God of Israel, why has this happened”

“they had taken a great oath”

(2) They then sought to make peace with the surviving Benjaminites and to acquire _____ for them.

The Attack on Jabesh-Gilead (21:8-12)

⇒ In their minds, the people of this town were guilty of covenant unfaithfulness (Num. 30:20-33).

⇒ They determined to carry out what they believed would be God’s judgment upon the town (Deut. 7:2-3).

“strike the inhabitants...devote to destruction”

“A violent civil war that began with the assault...of the Levite’s concubine now results in the forced marriage of four hundred young women and the slaughter of their families.” —Boda & Conway

The Women from Shiloh (21:16-24)

⇒ Still lacking wives for two hundred men, the people saw an opportunity with a yearly festival to the Lord.

⇒ They anticipated the response of the families and assured the men of Benjamin of their support.

(3) The concluding refrain reminds us that Israel’s actions are a reflection of their own _____ and _____ and not necessarily those of the Lord.

Key Point: When we seek worldly solutions to our own foolishness, we will often create further _____.

Assessing the Second Conclusion

1. The account demonstrates the wide-ranging _____ that egregious sin can have.
2. The account demonstrates the ramifications of Israel’s failure to _____ and _____ the Lord.
3. The account demonstrates God’s great mercy in _____ the nation in order that His Word concerning them might ultimately be fulfilled.

Applying the Text

- As we seek to respond to evil, we must do so in accordance with God’s _____ and under the controlling power of His _____.

Eph. 4:26-27,30-32—²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil...³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

- God _____ shows His mercy and grace to us even in our folly and worldliness.

Psa. 103:8,10—⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

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Main Point: Despite His people’s folly and worldliness, God remains faithful and shows His mercy and grace to us in accordance with His Word.

Judges 20:1-21:25

In the second conclusion to Judges, the moral condition of the people is illustrated through the story of an manipulative and uncaring Levite who gives over his concubine to abuse and murder. As the account continues, the consequences of this event extend to the tribal level and bring about a crisis for the nation which they sought to resolve in ways that seemed best to them.

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⇒ This action taken at the tribal level could indicate their ignorance of, or refusal to, follow the Mosaic Law regarding murderers (Num. 35:19-27).

(3) The response of the tribe of Benjamin, however, was to identify themselves with the “worthless fellows” and therefore to escalate the situation.

“give up the men...that we may put them to death”

“the Benjaminites would not listen”

Key Point: Identifying with and being loyal to a particular group or tribe ceases to be a good thing when it causes us to minimize or excuse overt sin.

(4) The account then centers on Israel’s religious and military actions as they move against the tribe of Benjamin.

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⇒ That the Lord is having to lead His people against His people is indicative of the terrible spiritual and moral state that Israel was in during the time period of the Judges

(5) The actions of Israel in their defeat of the Benjaminites were overzealous and recall the Lord’s instructions to them as to how to treat the Canaanites (Deut. 20:16-18).

“they struck the city [Gibeah] with the edge of the sword”

“Israel...struck them with the edge of the sword....and all...they found they set on fire.”

(6) The result was the almost complete **destruction** of the tribe of Benjamin.

Key Point: Worldly responses to evil will often be **vengeful** and **excessive**.

II. The final example of the moral chaos in Israel is shown in how the people sought to provide wives for the surviving men of the tribe of Benjamin. (20:1-25)

Observations:

(1) The tribes gathered together to **discuss** the situation that they themselves had created.

“O Lord, the God of Israel, why has this happened”

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(2) They then sought to make peace with the surviving Benjaminites and to acquire **wives** for them.

The Attack on Jabesh-Gilead (21:8-12)

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⇒ Still lacking wives for two hundred men, the people saw an opportunity with a yearly festival to the Lord.

⇒ They anticipated the response of the families and assured the men of Benjamin of their support.

(3) The concluding refrain reminds us that Israel’s actions are a reflection of their own **plans** and **purposes** and not necessarily those of the Lord.

Key Point: When we seek worldly solutions to our own foolishness, we will often do further **damage**.

Assessing the Second Conclusion

1. The account demonstrates the wide-ranging **consequences** that egregious sin can have.
2. The account demonstrates the ramifications of Israel’s failure to **worship** and **obey** the Lord.
3. The account demonstrates God’s great mercy in **preserving** the nation in order that His Word concerning them might ultimately be fulfilled.

Applying the Text

- As we seek to respond to evil, we must do so in accordance with God’s **Word** and under the controlling power of His **Spirit**.

Eph. 4:26-27,30-32—²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil...³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

- God **continually** shows His mercy and grace to us even in our folly and worldliness.

Psa. 103:8,10—⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.