Judges

CHAPTER 1

**Judah Takes Their Inheritance**

After the death of Joshua the children of Israel asked Yahweh, Who should go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them? 2Yahweh said, Judah shall go up. Behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. 3Judah said to Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my designated portion so that we can fight against the Canaanites, and I likewise will go with you into yours. So Simeon went with him. 4Judah went up and Yahweh delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hand. They killed ten thousand men in Bezek. 5They found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek and fought against him, and they killed the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6But Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him, caught him and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. 7Adoni-Bezek said, Seventy kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, scavenged under my table. As I have done, so God has requited me. They brought him to Jerusalem and he died there. 8The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it, putting it to the sword, and set the city on fire. 9Afterwards the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the South and in the lowland. 10Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (the name of Hebron before was Kiriath Arba), and they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai. 11From there he went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir before was Kiriath Sepher. 12Caleb said, He who strikes Kiriath Sepher and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife. 13Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. 14When she came, she got him to ask her father for a field, and she alighted from off her donkey and Caleb said to her, What would you like? 15She said to him, Give me a blessing, for that you have set me in the land of the South; give me also springs of water. Then Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. 16The descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the men of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south of Arad, and they went and lived with those people. 17Judah went with Simeon his brother and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed the town. The name of the town was Hormah. 18Also Judah took Gaza with its border and Ashkelon with its border and Ekron with its border. 19Yahweh was with Judah and drove out the inhabitants of the hill country, for he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron. 20They gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised, and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak. 21The children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem, but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

**Failure to Completely Destroy the Canaanites**

22The house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and Yahweh was with them. 23The house of Joseph sent to spy out Bethel. The name of the city before was Luz. 24The spies saw a man come out of the city and they said to him, Please show us the entrance into the city and we will deal kindly with you. 25He showed them the entrance into the city and they put the city to the sword, but they let the man go and all his family. 26The man went into the land of the Hittites and built a city and called it Luz, which is its name to this day. 27Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements; the Canaanites continued to dwell in that land. 28When Israel had grown strong they put the Canaanites to forced labour and did not utterly drive them out. 29Ephraim didn’t drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, but the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them. 30Zebulun didn’t drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or Nahalol, but the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labour. 31Asher didn’t drive out the inhabitants of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob, 32but the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out. 33Naphtali didn’t drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath, but he lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land who became subject to forced labour. 34The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the hill country, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley, 35but the Amorites continued to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon and in Shaalbim. Yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became subject to forced labour. 36The border of the Amorites was from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the rock and upward.

CHAPTER 2

**An Angel Warns the People**

The angel of Yahweh came up from Gilgal to Bochim. He said, I brought you up out of Egypt and have brought you to the land which I swore to your fathers, and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you, 2and you must make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; break down their altars.’ But you have not listened to My voice; why have you done this? 3Therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you. 4When the angel of Yahweh spoke these words to all the children of Israel, the people lifted up their voice and wept. 5They called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to Yahweh.

**The Death of Joshua**

6Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man to his inheritance to possess the land. 7The people served Yahweh all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Yahweh that He had worked for Israel. 8Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died, being one hundred and ten years old. 9They buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnah Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. 10Also all that generation were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who didn’t know Yahweh, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

**Israel Turns to Idols**

11The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals. 12They forsook Yahweh the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed themselves down to them; and they provoked Yahweh to anger. 13They forsook Yahweh and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. 14The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He delivered them into the hands of raiders who plundered them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15Wherever they went the hand of Yahweh was against them for evil, as Yahweh had spoken and as Yahweh had sworn to them; and they were very distressed. 16Yahweh raised up judges who saved them from those who plundered them. 17Yet they didn’t listen to their judges; for they played the prostitute after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly out of the way in which their fathers walked, who had obeyed the commandments of Yahweh. They didn’t do so. 18When Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh was with the judge and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge, for it grieved Yahweh because of their distress because of the oppression. 19But when the judge was dead they turned back and behaved more corruptly than their fathers in following other gods to serve them and to bow down to them. They didn’t cease from their evil practices or from their stubborn ways. 20The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He said, Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to Me, 21I also will no longer drive out from before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died. 22So by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Yahweh to walk therein as their fathers did, or not. 23So Yahweh left those nations without driving them out quickly and didn’t deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

CHAPTER 3

**The Nations Left in the Land**

Now these are the nations which Yahweh left to test Israel, those who had not known all the wars of Canaan, 2so that the later generations of the children of Israel might learn battle experience, those who before knew nothing of it: 3the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites, the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4They were left to test Israel, to know whether they would listen to the commandments of Yahweh which He commanded their fathers by Moses. 5The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, 6and they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. 7The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and forgot Yahweh their God, and served the Baals and the Asherahs. 8Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He sold them into the hand of Cushan Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. The Israelites served Cushan Rishathaim for eight years.

**Othniel Saves Israel**

9When the Israelites cried to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a saviour for them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. 10The Spirit of Yahweh came on him and he judged Israel. He went out to war and Yahweh delivered Cushan Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Cushan Rishathaim. 11The land had rest forty years. Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

**Ehud Saves Israel**

12The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh. Yahweh strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of Yahweh. 13He gathered to him the Ammonites and Amalek and he went and struck Israel; and they took possession of the city of palm trees. 14The Israelites served Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years. 15But when the Israelites cried to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a saviour for them, Ehud the son of Gera the Benjamite, a left-handed man. The children of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab. 16Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges, a cubit in length; and he wore it under his clothing on his right thigh. 17He offered the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. 18When he had finished offering the tribute he sent away the people who carried the tribute, 19but he himself turned back from the idols that were by Gilgal and said, I have a secret errand to you, king. The king said, Keep silence! All his attendants left him. 20Ehud came to him as he was sitting alone in the cool upper room. Ehud said, I have a message from God to you. He arose out of his seat. 21Ehud put forth his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh and thrust it into his body. 22The handle also went in after the blade and the fat closed on the blade, for he didn’t draw the sword out of his body, and it came out behind. 23Then Ehud went out into the porch and shut the doors of the upper room on him and locked them. 24Now when he had gone out, the servants came and saw that the doors of the upper room were locked, and they said, Surely he is covering his feet in the upper room. 25They waited until they were ashamed; but still he didn’t open the doors of the upper room, therefore they took the key and opened them and behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. 26Ehud escaped while they waited and passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah. 27When he had arrived, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hill country, and he went before them. 28He said to them Follow me, for Yahweh has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. They followed him and took the fords of the Jordan opposite the Moabites and didn’t allow any man to pass over. 29They struck down about ten thousand Moabite men at that time, every strong man and every man of valour, and none escaped. 30So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. The land had rest for eighty years. 31After him came Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred Philistine men with an ox goad, and he also saved Israel.

CHAPTER 4

**Deborah Saves Israel**

The children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, when Ehud was dead. 2Yahweh sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose army was Sisera who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles. 3The Israelites cried to Yahweh, for he had nine hundred iron chariots, and for twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. 4Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, judged Israel at that time. 5She lived under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. 6She sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh Naphtali and said to him, Hasn’t Yahweh, the God of Israel, commanded ‘Go to Mount Tabor and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun? 7I will draw to you, to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin’s army with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into your hand.’ 8Barak said to her, If you will go with me then I will go, but if you will not go with me I will not go. 9She said, I will surely go with you; nevertheless the journey that you take will not be for your honour, for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh and he went with ten thousand men following him; and Deborah went with him. 11Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, from the children of Hobab the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent by the oak in Zaanannim which is by Kedesh. 12They told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles to the river Kishon. 14Deborah said to Barak, Go, for this is the day in which Yahweh has delivered Sisera into your hand. Hasn’t Yahweh gone out before you? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor and ten thousand men after him. 15Yahweh routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the sword before Barak, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot. 16But Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth of the Gentiles, and all the army of Sisera fell by the sword; there was not a man left.

**The Death of Sisera**

17However Sisera fled away 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 house of Heber the Kenite. 18Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; don’t be afraid. He came in to her into the tent and she covered him with a rug. 19He said to her, Please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty. She opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. 20He said to her, Stand at the door of the tent and when any man comes and asks you ‘Is there any man here?’ say ‘No.’ 21Then Jael Heber’s wife took a tent peg and a hammer in her hand and went quietly to him and hammered the peg into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground, for he was in a deep sleep; so he died. 22As Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, Come and I will show you the man whom you seek. He came to her and there lay Sisera, dead; and the tent peg was in his temples. 23So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the Israelites. 24The hand of the Israelites prevailed more and more against Jabin the king of Canaan until they had destroyed him.

CHAPTER 5

**The Song of Deborah**

Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang this song: 2Because the leaders took the lead in Israel, because the people offered themselves willingly, blessed be Yahweh! 3Hear, you kings! Give ear, you princes! I, even I, will sing to Yahweh. I will sing praise to Yahweh the God of Israel. 4Yahweh, when You went forth out of Seir, when You marched out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens poured. Yes, the clouds poured down water. 5The mountains melted at the presence of Yahweh, even Sinai at the presence of Yahweh the God of Israel. 6In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were deserted, the travellers walked through byways. 7The rulers ceased to rule in Israel. They ceased until I, Deborah, arose; until I arose, a mother in Israel. 8They chose new gods, therefore war came to the gates. Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? 9My heart is with the governors of Israel, who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless Yahweh! 10Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. 11Far from the noise of archers, in the watering places, there they will recite the righteous acts of Yahweh, the righteous acts of His rule in Israel. Then the people of Yahweh went down to the gates. 12‘Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead away your captives, you son of Abinoam.’ 13Then a remnant of the nobles and the people came down. Yahweh came down to me against the mighty. 14Those whose root is in Amalek came out of Ephraim after you, Benjamin, among your peoples. Governors came down out of Machir. Those who handle the writer’s quill came out of Zebulun. 15The princes of Issachar were with Deborah. As was Issachar, so was Barak. They rushed into the valley at his feet. By the watercourses of Reuben there were great divisions of heart. 16Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the whistling for the flocks? At the watercourses of Reuben there was much searching of heart. 17Gilead remained beyond the Jordan. Why did Dan remain in ships? Asher remained still at the haven of the sea, and lived by his creeks. 18Zebulun was a people that jeopardized their lives to the death; Naphtali also, on the high places of the field. 19The kings came and fought, then the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. They took no plunder of silver. 20From Heaven the stars fought. From their courses they fought against Sisera. 21The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. My soul, march on with strength. 22Then the horse hoofs stamped because of the prancing, the prancing of their strong ones. 23‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of Yahweh. ‘Curse bitterly its inhabitants, because they didn’t come to help Yahweh, to help Yahweh against the mighty.’ 24Jael shall be blessed above women, the wife of Heber the Kenite; blessed shall she be above women in the tent. 25He asked for water and she gave him milk. She brought him butter in a lordly dish. 26She put her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen’s hammer. With the hammer she struck Sisera. She struck through his head. Yes, she pierced and struck through his temples. 27At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay. At her feet he bowed, he fell. Where he bowed, there he fell down dead. 28Through the window she looked out and cried; Sisera’s mother looked through the lattice. ‘Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why do the wheels of his chariots delay?’ 29Her wise ladies answered her, yes she answered herself: 30‘Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil? A girl, two girls for every man; to Sisera a spoil of dyed garments, a spoil of dyed garments embroidered, of dyed garments embroidered on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?’ 31So let all Your enemies perish, Yahweh, but let those who love Him be as the sun when it rises forth in its strength. Then the land had rest forty years.

CHAPTER 6

**Israel Oppressed by Midian**

The children of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and Yahweh delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years. 2The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of Midian the Israelites made themselves dens in the mountains, the caves and the strongholds. 3So when Israel had sown their seed, the Midianites, the Amalekites and the people of the east came up against them 4and they encamped against them, and destroyed the crops as far as Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. 5For they came with their livestock and their tents; they came up as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number, and they came into the land to destroy it. 6Israel was brought very low because of Midian and the children of Israel cried to Yahweh. 7When the Israelites cried to Yahweh because of Midian 8Yahweh sent a prophet to them, and he said to them, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of slavery, 9and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, drove them out from before you, and gave you their land. 10I said to you, I am Yahweh your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But you have not listened to My voice.’

**Gideon**

11The angel of Yahweh came and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite, and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12The angel of Yahweh appeared to him and said, Yahweh is with you, you mighty man of valour! 13Gideon said to him Oh, my lord, if Yahweh is with us why then has all this happened to us? Where are all His wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying ‘Didn’t Yahweh bring us up from Egypt?’ But now Yahweh has forsaken us and delivered us into the hand of Midian. 14Yahweh looked at him and said, Go in the strength of this One and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Haven’t I sent you? 15He said to him, O Lord, how can I save Israel? My family is the poorest in Manasseh and I am the least in my father’s house. 16Yahweh said to him Surely I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man. 17He said to Him, If now I have found grace in Your eyes, then show me a sign that it is really You Who talk with me. 18Please don’t go away until I come to you and bring out my present and lay it before you. He said, I will wait until you come back. 19Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal. He put the meat in a basket and he put the broth in a pot and brought it out to him under the oak and presented it. 20The angel of God said to him, Take the meat and the unleavened cakes and lay them on this rock and pour out the broth. He did so. 21Then the angel of Yahweh stretched out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes, and fire went up out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes, and the angel of Yahweh departed out of his sight. 22Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, and Gideon said, Alas, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! 23Yahweh said to him, Peace! Don’t be afraid. You will not die. 24Then Gideon built an altar there to Yahweh and called it Yahweh is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

**Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal**

25The same night Yahweh said to him, Take your father’s bull, the second bull seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has and cut down the Asherah that is by it, 26build an altar to Yahweh your God on the top of this stronghold in the proper way, and take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you cut down. 27Then Gideon took ten of his servants and did as Yahweh had spoken to him, and because he feared his father’s household and the men of the city, he could not do it by day, so he did it by night. 28When the men of the city arose early in the morning, the altar of Baal was broken down and the Asherah was cut down that was by it and the second bull had been offered on the altar that was built. 29They said one to another, Who has done this? When they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this. 30Then the men of the city said to Joash, Bring out your son that he may die, because he has broken down the altar of Baal and because he has cut down the Asherah that was by it. 31Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? He who will contend for him, let him be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has broken down his altar. 32Therefore on that day he named him Jerub-Baal, saying, Let Baal contend against him because he has broken down his altar.

**The Midianites and Amalekites Invade**

33Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east assembled themselves together and they crossed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. 34But the Spirit of Yahweh came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. 35He sent messengers throughout all Manasseh and they also were gathered together after him, and he sent messengers to Asher, to Zebulun and to Naphtali and they came up to meet them. 36Gideon said to God, If You will save Israel by my hand, as You have spoken, 37I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will save Israel by my hand as You have said. 38That is what happened, for he got up early the next day and squeezed the fleece together and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39Gideon said to God, Don’t let Your anger be kindled against me and I will speak but this once. Please let me make a trial just this once more with the fleece. Let it now be dry only on the fleece and on all the ground let there be dew. 40God did so that night, for it was dry on the fleece only and there was dew on all the ground.

CHAPTER 7

**Gideon Defeats the Midianites**

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people who were with him rose up early and encamped beside the spring of Harod, and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. 2Yahweh said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast against Me saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ 3Now therefore announce to the people, ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.’ Twenty-two thousand of the people returned and ten thousand remained. 4Yahweh said to Gideon, The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Those of whom I tell you, ‘This one shall go with you’ shall go, and those of whom I tell you, ‘This one shall not go with you’ shall remain. 5So he brought down the people to the water and Yahweh said to Gideon, Each one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, set him by himself; likewise each one who bows down on his knees to drink. 6The number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouth, was three hundred men, but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink. 7Yahweh said to Gideon, By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, each to his own place. 8So the three hundred men took food and their trumpets, and he sent all the rest of them to their tents; and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley. 9The same night Yahweh said to him, Arise, go down into the camp; for I have delivered it into your hand. 10But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp 11and you will hear what they say. After that your hands will be strengthened to go down into the camp. Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outskirts of the armed men who were in the camp. 12The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like locusts for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand which is on the seashore for multitude. 13When Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his fellow. He said, I had a dream: a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat. 14His fellow answered, This is none other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has delivered Midian into his hand with all the army. 15When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped, and he returned into the camp of Israel. He said, Arise, for Yahweh has delivered the army of Midian into your hand! 16He divided the three hundred men into three companies and he gave each of them a trumpet and an empty pitcher, with a torch inside the pitcher. 17He said to them, Watch me, and do as I do when I come to the outermost part of the camp. 18When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow your trumpets too, on every side of the camp, and shout ‘For Yahweh and for Gideon!’ 19So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch. They blew the trumpets and broke in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. 20The three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers and held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands with which to blow, and they shouted, The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon! 21They each stood in his place around the camp and all the army ran, and they shouted and put them to flight. 22They blew the three hundred trumpets, and Yahweh set every man’s sword against his fellow and against all the army, and the army fled as far as Beth Shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah by Tabbath. 23The men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh, and they pursued Midian. 24Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim saying, Come down against Midian and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah. So all the men of Ephraim were gathered together and took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. 25They took the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb and they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond the Jordan.

CHAPTER 8

**Zeba and Zalmunna**

The men of Ephraim said to him, Why have you treated us this way, that you didn’t call us when you went to fight with Midian? They rebuked him sharply. 2He said to them, What have I now done in comparison with you? Isn’t the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? 3God has delivered into your hand the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb! What was I able to do in comparison with you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that. 4Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over with the three hundred men, exhausted yet pursuing. 5He said to the men of Succoth, Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. 6The princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your possession, that we should give bread to your army? 7Gideon said Because of that, when Yahweh has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. 8He went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9He said to the men of Penuel, When I come again in peace I will break down this tower. 10Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the east; one hundred and twenty thousand fighting men having been killed. 11Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army, which was unsuspecting. 12Zebah and Zalmunna fled and he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed all the army. 13Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle from the ascent of Heres. 14He caught a young man of Succoth and asked of him, and he described for him the princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. 15He came to the men of Succoth and said, See Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom you taunted me saying, ‘Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your possession, that we should give bread to your men who are weary?’ 16He took the elders of the city and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth a lesson. 17He broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city. 18Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor? They answered, They were like you. Each one resembled the children of a king. 19He said, They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Yahweh lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you. 20He said to Jether his firstborn, Get up and kill them! But the youth didn’t draw his sword for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. 21Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Get up and do it yourself, for as the man is, so is his strength. Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna and took the crescents that were on their camels’ necks.

**Gideon Makes an Ephod**

22Then the men of Israel 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. 23Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. Yahweh shall rule over you. 24Gideon said to them, I would make a request of you, that every man would give me the earrings of his spoil. They had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites. 25They answered, We will willingly give them. They spread a garment and each man threw the earrings of his spoil into it. 26The weight of the golden earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescents, the pendants and the purple clothing that was on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were about their camels’ necks. 27Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah, and all Israel prostituted themselves by worshipping it there; and it became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

**The Death of Gideon**

28So Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they exalted their heads no more. The land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon. 29Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. 30Gideon had seventy sons conceived from his body, for he had many wives. 31His concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son and he named him Abimelech. 32Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. 33As soon as Gideon was dead, the people of Israel turned again and played the prostitute after the Baals, and made Baal Berith their god. 34The Israelites didn’t remember Yahweh their God Who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on every side, 35neither did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon, according to all the kindness which he had showed to Israel.

CHAPTER 9

**Abimelech is Made King**

Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother’s brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother’s father saying, 2Please speak to all the men of Shechem and say, ‘Is it better for you that all the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy persons, should rule over you, or that one rule over you?’ Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. 3His mother’s brothers told all the men of Shechem all these words, and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother. 4They gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal Berith, with which Abimelech hired reckless adventurers who followed him. 5He went to his father’s house at Ophrah and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy persons, on one stone; but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal escaped, for he hid himself. 6All the men of Shechem assembled themselves together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king by the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem.

**Jotham’s Parable**

7When they told Jotham he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, Listen to me, you men of Shechem, so that God will listen to you. 8The trees went out one day to anoint a king to be over them; they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us.’ 9But the olive tree said to them ‘Should I give up my oil with which they honour God and man to go and hold sway over the trees?’ 10The trees said to the fig tree, ‘Come and reign over us.’ 11But the fig tree said to them, ‘Should I give up my good, sweet fruit to go to hold sway over the trees?’ 12The trees said to the vine ‘Come and reign over us.’ 13The vine said to them, ‘Should I give up my new wine, which cheers God and man, to go to hold sway over the trees?’ 14Then all the trees said to the thorn bush, ‘Come and reign over us.’ 15The thorn bush said to the trees, ‘If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; if not, let fire come out of the thorn bush and devour the cedars of Lebanon.’ 16Now therefore, consider whether you have done what is true and right in making Abimelech king, and whether you have done justly to Jerubbaal and his house as he deserves. 17(For my father fought for you and risked his life and delivered you out of the hand of Midian, 18yet you have risen up against my father’s house this day and have slain his sons, seventy persons, on one stone, and have made Abimelech the son of his female servant king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brothe.) 19If you have done what is true and right with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech and let him also rejoice in you. 20But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and the house of Millo, and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from the house of Millo and devour Abimelech. 21Jotham ran away and fled and went to Beer and lived there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

**Gaal Leads a Rebellion against Abimelech**

22Abimelech was prince over Israel for three years. 23God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, 24so that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be avenged, and that their blood might be laid on Abimelech their brother who killed them, and on the men of Shechem who helped him to kill his brothers. 25The men of Shechem set an ambush for him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who came along that way. This was reported to Abimelech. 26Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem, and the men of Shechem put their trust in him. 27They went out into the field and harvested their vineyards, trod the grapes and held a festival, and went into the house of their god, ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. 28Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Isn’t he the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem, but why should we serve Abimelech? 29If only this people were under my hand! Then I would remove Abimelech. He said to Abimelech, Increase your army and come out! 30When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. 31He sent messengers to Abimelech secretly saying, Look, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and they are inciting the city against you. 32Now therefore, go up by night, you and the people who are with you, and lie in wait in the field. 33In the morning, as soon as the sun is up, you can rise early and rush on the city, and when he and the people who are with him come out against you, then may you do to them as you see fit. 34Abimelech and all the people who were with him got up by night and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies. 35Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city, and Abimelech and the people who were with him got up from the ambush. 36When Gaal saw the people he said to Zebul, Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains. Zebul said to him, You are seeing the shadows of the mountains as if they were men. 37Gaal spoke again and said, Look, people are coming down by the middle of the land, and one company is coming by the way of the oak of Meonenim. 38Then Zebul said to him, Now where is your boast when you said ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’ Isn’t this the people that you have despised? Go out now and fight with them. 39Gaal went out before the men of Shechem and fought with Abimelech. 40Abimelech chased him and he fled from him, and many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate. 41Abimelech lived at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they should not dwell in Shechem. 42Next day the people went out into the field and told Abimelech. 43He took the people and divided them into three companies and laid wait in the field, and when he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose up against them and struck them. 44Abimelech and the companies that were with him rushed forward and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city, and the two companies rushed on all who were in the field and struck them. 45Abimelech fought against the city all that day, and he took the city and killed the people who were in it, and he beat down the city and sowed it with salt.

**The Death of Abimelech**

46When all the men of the tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of Elberith. 47It was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. 48Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him, and Abimelech took an axe in his hand and cut down a branch from the trees, took it up and laid it on his shoulder, and he said to the people who were with him, What you have seen me do, hurry and do the same! 49All the people likewise each cut down his branch and followed Abimelech, and they put them at the base of the stronghold and set the stronghold on fire on them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about one thousand men and women. 50Then Abimelech went to Thebez and encamped against Thebez and took it. 51But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the men and women of the city fled to it and shut themselves in, and went up to the roof of the tower. 52Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53A woman cast an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and broke his skull. 54Then he called hastily to the young man who carried his armour and said to him, Draw your sword and kill me, so that men will not say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’ His young man thrust him through and he died. 55When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead they departed each man to his place. 56Thus God rewarded the wickedness of Abimelech which he did to his father, in killing his seventy brothers, 57and all the wickedness of the men of Shechem God repaid on their heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

CHAPTER 10

**Tola and Jair**

After Abimelech, Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar arose to save Israel, and he lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. 2He judged Israel twenty-three years and died, and was buried in Shamir. 3After him arose Jair the Gileadite, and he judged Israel twenty-two years. 4He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkey colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havvoth Jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

**Israel Returns to Idolatry**

6The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and served the Baals and Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines; they forsook Yahweh and didn’t serve Him. 7The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the people of Ammon. 8They troubled and oppressed the Israelites that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites that were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. 9The Ammonites passed over the Jordan to fight also against Judah and Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was very distressed. 10The Israelites cried to Yahweh saying, We have sinned against You because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals. 11Yahweh said to the Israelites, Didn’t I save you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites, and from the Philistines? 12The Sidonians also and the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, and you cried to Me, and I saved you out of their hand. 13Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. 14Go and cry to the gods which you have chosen. Let them save you in the time of your distress! 15The Israelites said to Yahweh, We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to You, only deliver us, please, this day. 16They put away the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh; and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. 17Then the Ammonites were gathered together and encamped in Gilead. The Israelites assembled themselves and encamped in Mizpah. 18The people, the princes of Gilead, said one to another, Who will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

CHAPTER 11

**Jephthah**

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of a prostitute; and Gilead was the father of Jephthah. 2Gilead’s wife also bore him sons, and when his wife’s sons grew up they drove out Jephthah, and said to him, You shall not inherit in our father’s house because you are the son of another woman. 3Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and a group of adventurers gathered to Jephthah, and they went out with him. 4After a while the Ammonites made war against Israel. 5When the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah out of the land of Tob, 6and they said to Jephthah, Come and be our chief, so that we can fight the Ammonites. 7Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, Didn’t you hate me and drive me out of my father’s house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress? 8The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, Therefore we have turned again to you now, so that you may go with us and fight the Ammonites, and you shall be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. 9Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, If you bring me home again to fight the Ammonites and Yahweh delivers them to me, shall I be your head? 10The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, Yahweh shall be witness between us; certainly we will do as you say. 11Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and chief over them, and Jephthah spoke all his words before Yahweh in Mizpah. 12Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites saying, What have you against me, that you have come to me to fight against my land? 13The king of the Ammonites answered the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land when he came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan; now therefore restore that territory again peaceably. 14Jephthah sent messengers back to the king of the Ammonites 15and said to him, This is what Jephthah says: Israel didn’t take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the Ammonites, 16but when they came up from Egypt Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. 17Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom saying, ‘Please let me pass through your land;’ but the king of Edom didn’t listen. In the same way he sent to the king of Moab, but he would not, and Israel stayed in Kadesh. 18Then they went through the wilderness and skirted around the land of Edom and the land of Moab and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and they encamped on the other side of the Arnon, but they didn’t come within the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab. 19Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon, and Israel said to him, ‘Please let us pass through your land to our place.’ 20But Sihon didn’t trust Israel to pass through his border, but Sihon gathered all his people together and encamped in Jahaz and fought against Israel. 21Yahweh the God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they struck them; so Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. 22They captured all the border of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok, and from the wilderness to the Jordan. 23So now Yahweh, the God of Israel has driven out the Amorites from before His people Israel, and should you take it over? 24Won’t you inherit that which Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever Yahweh our God has given to us, that we will take. 25Now are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab? Did he ever strive successfully against Israel, or did he ever fight against them? 26While Israel lived in Heshbon and its towns, in Aroer and its towns and in all the cities that are along by the side of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why didn’t you recover them within that time? 27I therefore have not sinned against you, but you do me wrong to fight against me. Let Yahweh the Judge be judge this day between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon. 28However the king of the Ammonites didn’t listen to the words of Jephthah which he sent him. 29Then the Spirit of Yahweh came on Jephthah and he crossed over Gilead, Manasseh and Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he crossed over to the Ammonites.

**Jephthah’s Vow**

30Jephthah made a vow to Yahweh and said, If You will indeed deliver the Ammonites into my hand, 31then whatever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites, it shall be Yahweh’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. 32So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them and Yahweh delivered them into his hand. 33He struck them from Aroer to Minnith, twenty cities, and to Abelcheramim, with a very great slaughter. So the Ammonites were subdued before the children of Israel. 34Jephthah came to Mizpah to his house and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35When he saw her he tore his clothes and said, Alas my daughter! You have made me very sad and troubled, for I have made a vow to Yahweh and I can’t go back on it. 36She said to him, My father, you have made a vow to Yahweh; do to me what you have vowed, because Yahweh has taken vengeance for you on your enemies the people of Ammon. 37She said to her father, Let this one thing be done for me: let me alone two months to go around on the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my companions. 38He said, Go. He sent her away for two months, and she and her companions went and mourned her virginity on the mountains. 39At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed, and she was a virgin. It was a custom in Israel, 40that the daughters of Israel went each year to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

CHAPTER 12

**Jephthah fights Ephraim**

The men of Ephraim were gathered together and passed northward, and they said to Jephthah, Why did you go to fight against the Ammonites and didn’t call us to go with you? We will burn your house around you with fire! 2Jephthah said to them, I and my people were at great strife with the Ammonites and when I called you, you didn’t save me out of their hand. 3When I saw that you didn’t save me, I put my life in my hand and went against the Ammonites, and Yahweh delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day, to fight against me? 4Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim, and the men of Gilead struck Ephraim because they said, You Gileadites are renegades of Ephraim from Ephraim and Manasseh. 5The Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites. When the fugitives of Ephraim said, Let me cross over, the men of Gilead said to him, Are you an Ephraimite? If he said No; 6then they said to him, Now say ‘Shibboleth;’ and he said Sibboleth, for he couldn’t manage to pronounce it right, then they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time, forty-two thousand of Ephraim fell. 7Jephthah judged Israel for six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in a city of Gilead.

**Ibzan, Elon and Abdon**

8After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He sent his daughters away in marriage, and brought in thirty women for his sons. He judged Israel for seven years. 10Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. 11After him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel for ten years. 12Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun. 13After him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. 14He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkey colts, and he judged Israel for eight years. 15Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

CHAPTER 13

**The Birth of Samson**

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and Yahweh delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. 2There was a man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and childless. 3The angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, Look now, you are barren and childless but you will conceive and bear a son. 4Now therefore you must be careful and drink no wine nor strong drink, and don’t eat any unclean thing. 5You shall conceive and bear a son, and no razor must come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he will begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. 6Then the woman went and told her husband, A man of God came to me, and his face was like the face of the angel of God, very awesome. I didn’t ask him where he was from, neither did he tell me his name, 7but he said to me ‘You will conceive and bear a son; drink no wine or strong drink, and eat no unclean thing, for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb to the day of his death.’ 8Then Manoah entreated Yahweh and said, Oh Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we should do to the child who will be born. 9God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field, but Manoah her husband, wasn’t with her. 10The woman quickly ran and told her husband, and said to him, The man has appeared to me, who came to me that day. 11Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, Are you the man who spoke to the woman? He said, I am. 12Manoah said, Now may your words come true. What should the child’s way of life and mission be? 13The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, All that I said to the woman she must do. 14She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe. 15Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, Please, let us detain you so that we may make a young goat ready for you. 16The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, Though you detain me, I won’t eat your food, and if you prepare a burnt offering, you must offer it to Yahweh. Manoah didn’t know that he was the angel of Yahweh. 17Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, What is your name, that when your words come true, we may honour you? 18The angel of Yahweh said to him, Why do you ask about my name, since it is beyond understanding? 19So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to Yahweh. Then the angel did a wonderful thing as Manoah and his wife looked on. 20When the flame went up toward the sky from the altar, the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar, and Manoah and his wife looked on, and they fell on their faces to the ground. 21But the angel of Yahweh didn’t appear to Manoah or to his wife any more. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. 22Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. 23But his wife said to him, If Yahweh wanted to kill us He wouldn’t have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from us, neither would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these. 24The woman bore a son, and named him Samson, and the child grew and Yahweh blessed him. 25The Spirit of Yahweh began to trouble him in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

CHAPTER 14

**Samson Marries a Philistine woman**

Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2He came up and told his father and mother, I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me as my wife. 3Then his father and mother said to him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of your brothers, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? Samson said to his father, Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes. 4But his father and mother didn’t know that it was from Yahweh, for He sought an occasion against the Philistines, for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. 5Then Samson went down with his father and mother, to Timnah and came to the vineyards of Timnah, and suddenly a young lion roared against him. 6The Spirit of Yahweh came mightily on him and he tore it as he would have torn a young goat, having nothing in his hand, but he didn’t tell his father or his mother what he had done. 7He went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased Samson well. 8After a while he returned to take her and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. In it there was a swarm of bees, in the body of the lion, and honey, 9which he took it into his hands and went on, eating as he went. He came to his father and mother and gave some to them and they ate, but he didn’t tell them that he had taken the honey out of the body of the lion. 10His father went down to the woman, and Samson made a drinking feast as was the custom for the young men. 11When they saw him they brought thirty companions to be with him.

**Samson’s Riddle**

12Samson said to them, Let me tell you a riddle now. If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. 13But if you can’t give me the answer, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. They said to him, Tell us your riddle, that we may hear it. 14He said to them, Out of the eater came forth food. Out of the strong came forth sweetness. They couldn’t give the answer in three days. 15On the fourth day they said to Samson’s wife, Entice your husband to tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father’s house with fire. Have you called us here to mock us? 16Samson’s wife wept before him and said, You must hate me, and don’t love me. You have given a riddle to my people but you haven’t told it me. He said to her, I haven’t even told it to my father or my mother; why should I tell you? 17She wept before him for seven days, while their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him severely. Then she told the riddle to her people. On the seventh day before the sun went down, 18the men of the city said to him, What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion? He said to them, If you hadn’t ploughed with my heifer you wouldn’t have found out my riddle. 19The Spirit of Yahweh came mightily on him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck thirty men of them and took their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. His anger was burning, and he went up to his father’s house. 20But Samson’s wife was given to his companion, whom he had considered a friend.

CHAPTER 15

**Samson Takes Revenge**

But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat. He said, I will go in to my wife into the room. But her father wouldn’t allow him to go in. 2Her father said, I was certain that you utterly hated her, therefore I gave her to your companion. Isn’t her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead. 3Samson said to them, This time I will be blameless of harm to the Philistines. 4Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, tied them tail to tail in pairs and put a firebrand between each pair of tails. 5When he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing grain of the Philistines and burnt up both the shocks and the standing grain, and also the olive groves. 6Then the Philistines said, Who has done this? They said, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because his his wife was given her to his companion. The Philistines came up and burnt her and her father with fire. 7Samson said to them, If you behave like this, surely I will be avenged on you. 8He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them, then he went and lived in the cave in the rock of Etam. 9Then the Philistines went up, and encamped in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. 10The men of Judah said, Why have you come up against us? They said, We have come up to take Samson prisoner, to do to him as he has done to us. 11Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, Don’t you know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that you have done to us? He said to them, As they did to me, so have I done to them. 12They said to him, We have come down to tie you up so that we can deliver you into the hand of the Philistines. Samson said to them, Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves. 13They said, No, we will tie you up and deliver you into their hand, but we will not kill you. They bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. 14When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him, and the Spirit of Yahweh came mightily on him. The ropes that were on his arms became as charred flax, and his ropes dropped off his hands. 15He found a fresh jawbone of an ass and struck down a thousand men with it. 16Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps on heaps; with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men. 17When he had finished speaking he threw away the jawbone, and that place was called Ramath Lehi. 18He was very thirsty and called on Yahweh and said, You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; now shall I die for thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? 19But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi and water came out of it. When he had drunk, his spirit came again and he revived, therefore its name was called En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. 20He judged Israel in the days of the Philistines for twenty years.

CHAPTER 16

**Samson and Delilah**

Samson went to Gaza and saw there a prostitute, and went in to her. 2The Gazites were told, Samson is here! They surrounded him and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, staying quiet all night and saying, Wait until dawn, then we will kill him! 3Samson lay until midnight, then arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts, picked them up, along with the bar, put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain that faces Hebron. 4Afterward, he fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. 5The lords of the Philistines came to her and said, Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and how we might prevail against him to tie him up and subdue him. Then we will each one of us give you eleven hundred pieces of silver. 6Delilah said to Samson, Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be tied up and subdued. 7Samson said to her, If I am tied with seven fresh cords that were never dried, then shall I become weak like other men. 8Then the lords of the Philistines brought to her seven fresh cords which had not been dried, and she tied him with them. 9Now she had an ambush waiting in the inner room. She said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! He broke the cords, as a string of tow is broken when it touches the fire. So his strength was not known. 10Delilah said to Samson, You have made a fool of me and told me lies! Now please tell me how you can be tied. 11He said to her, If I am tied with new ropes with which no work has been done, then I shall become weak like other men. 12So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! The ambush was waiting in the inner room. He broke them off his arms like a thread. 13Delilah said to Samson, Until now you have fooled me and told me lies. Tell me how you can be tied. He said to her, If you weave the seven braids of my hair into the fabric on the loom, I will become as weak as other men. 14She wove his hair into the fabric and fastened it with the pin, and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! He awoke and pulled away the pin from the loom and the fabric. 15She said to him, How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have fooled me three times and have not told me where your great strength lies. 16When she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, he became tired to death. 17So he told her everything, and said to her, No razor has ever come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will go from me and I will become weak like any other man. 18When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent for the lords of the Philistines saying, Come up once more, for he has told me everything. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money with them. 19She made him sleep on her knees, and then she called for a man who shaved off the seven braids of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20She said, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! He awoke out of sleep and said, I will go out as before and shake myself to be free of them. But he didn’t know that Yahweh had departed from him. 21The Philistines seized him and put out his eyes, and they brought him down to Gaza, bound him with fetters of brass, and made him work at grinding in the mill in the prison.

**The Death of Samson**

22However the hair of his head began to grow again after he had been shaved. 23The lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, for they said, Our god has delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. 24When the people saw him, they praised their god. They said, Our god has delivered our enemy, the destroyer of our country who has slain many of us, into our hand! 25When their hearts were merry they said, Call for Samson so that he can entertain us. They called Samson out of the prison, and he performed before them. They set him between the pillars, 26and Samson said to the boy who held him by the hand, Allow me to feel the pillars on which the house rests so that I can lean on them. 27Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women watching while Samson performed. 28Samson called to Yahweh and said, Lord Yahweh, remember me please, and strengthen me please, just this once oh God, that I may with one blow be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes. 29Samson took hold of the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and leaned on them, one with his right hand and the other with his left. 30Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines! He pushed with all his might and the house fell on the lords and on all the people who were there. So he killed more in his death than he killed in his life. 31Then his brothers and all the household of his father came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burial site of Manoah his father. He had judged Israel for twenty years.

CHAPTER 17

**Micah Makes Idols**

There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah. 2He said to his mother, The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which I heard you utter a curse - I took them. His mother said, Yahweh bless you my son. 3He returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother and she said, I solemnly dedicate my silver to Yahweh for my son to make an engraved image and a molten image. Then I will give it back to you. 4So he returned the money to his mother and she took two hundred pieces of it and gave them to the silversmith, who made it into an engraved image and a molten image, and they were put into Micah’s house. 5This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods and consecrated one of his sons to be his priest. 6In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

**A Levite Comes to Micah**

7There was a young Levite who had been living in Bethlehem Judah, 8and he left the city to find a better place, and came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. 9Micah said to him, Where have you come from? He said to him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem Judah, and I am looking for a place to live. 10Micah said to him, Live with me and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver per year, a suit of clothing and your food. So the Levite agreed. 11The young Levite was content to dwell with the man and became unto him as one of his sons. 12Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, living in his house. 13Then Micah said, Now know I that Yahweh will do good to me, since I have a Levite as my priest.

CHAPTER 18

**The Danites Invade Laish**

In those days there was no king in Israel, and at that time the tribe of the Danites looked for a place to live in, because up until then they had not come into their inheritance among the tribes of Israel. 2The children of Dan sent five men of their family, men of valour, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to search it, and they said to them, Go, explore the land! They came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. 3When they were near the house of Micah they recognised the voice of the young Levite, so they went in there and said to him, Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here? 4He said to them, This is what Micah has done with me, and he has hired me to be his priest. 5They said to him, Please enquire of God to find out whether our journey will be successful. 6The priest said to them, Go in peace. Your way has the approval of Yahweh. 7Then the five men departed and came to Laish. They saw that the people there lived in security like the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, and they were prosperous, lacking nothing. Also they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone else. 8The men returned to their brothers to Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brothers asked them, What did you find? 9They said, Come on, let us go up against them, because we have seen the land, and it is very good. Do you doubt? Don’t hesitate; go in to take possession of the land. 10When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people, and the land is large. God has given it to you, a place where there is no lack of anything that is in the earth. 11Six hundred armed men of the family of the Danites set out from there, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol. 12They went up and encamped in Kiriath Jearim in Judah. That is why they called that place The Camp of Dan, to this day; it is behind Kiriath Jearim. 13They went from there to the hill country of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

**The Levite Joins the Danites**

14Then the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish said to their brothers, Do you know that there is in these houses an ephod and household gods, an engraved image and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you have to do. 15They turned in there and came to the house of the young Levite, to the house of Micah, and asked him how he was. 16The six hundred armed men of Dan stood by the entrance of the gate. 17The five men who had gone to spy out the land went in there and took the engraved image, the ephod, the household gods and the molten image; and the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the six hundred armed men. 18When these men went into Micah’s house and fetched the engraved image, the ephod, the household gods and the molten image, the priest said to them, What are you doing? 19They said to him, Keep quiet, put your hand on your mouth and go with us, and be unto us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel? 20The priest’s heart was glad, and he took the ephod, the household gods and the engraved image, and went with the people. 21So they turned and departed, putting the little ones, the livestock and the goods in front of them. 22When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near to Micah’s house were gathered together and overtook the Danites. 23They shouted after the Danites, who turned round and said to Micah, What is the matter with you that you come with such a company? 24He said, You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and have gone away, and what else do I have? How then can you say to me, ‘What is the matter with you?’ 25The Danites said to him, Don’t argue with us, or angry fellows might attack you, and you will lose your life, with the lives of your household. 26The Danites went on their way, and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house. 27They took what Micah had made and his priest and came to Laish, to a people unsuspecting and secure, and attacked them with the sword, and they burnt the city with fire. 28There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon and they had no dealings with anyone else; it was in the valley that lies by Beth Rehob. They built the city and lived there. 29They called the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel, but the name of the city before was Laish. 30The Danites set up for themselves the engraved image, and Jonathan the son of Gershom the son of Moses and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the time of the captivity of the land. 31So they set up for themselves Micah’s engraved image which he had made, using it all the time that God’s house was in Shiloh.

CHAPTER 19

**A Levite and his Concubine**

In those days, when there was no king in Israel, there was a Levite living on the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine out of Bethlehem Judah. 2His concubine was unfaithful to him, and went away from him to her father’s house to Bethlehem Judah, and was there for four months. 3Her husband went after her to persuade her to return. He had his servant with him and a couple of donkeys, and she brought him into her father’s house. When her father saw him, he was pleased to meet him. 4His father-in-law, the girl’s father, persuaded him to stay, and he stayed with him three days, eating and drinking and sleeping there. 5On the fourth day they arose early in the morning, and he got ready to depart, and the girl’s father said to his son-in-law, Strengthen yourself with something to eat and then go on your way. 6So they sat down, ate and drank together, and then the girl’s father said to the man, Please stay another night and enjoy yourself. 7When the man got up to go, his father-in-law urged him to stay, so he stayed there again. 8On the fifth day he got up early to leave, and the girl’s father said, Please refresh yourself and stay until the afternoon; and they ate together. 9When the man, his concubine and his servant got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl’s father, said to him, Look now, it’s nearly evening; please stay all night. Stay here and enjoy yourself, and tomorrow set off early and go home. 10But the man wouldn’t stay that night; he got up and departed, and went towards Jebus (that is Jerusalem) with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine. 11When they were near Jebus, the light was almost gone, and the servant said to his master, Please come and let us go into this city of the Jebusites, and stay the night there. 12His master said to him, We won’t go into the city of a foreigner whose people are not Israelites; we will go on to Gibeah. 13He said to his servant, Come and let us get to one of these places; we will spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah. 14So they went on and towards evening they were near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. 15They stopped there to spend the night in Gibeah. They went in and sat down in the street, because no-one took them into his house for the night. 16In the evening there came an old man from his work in the field. He was from the hill country of Ephraim and he lived in Gibeah, but the men of the place were Benjamites. 17When he saw the traveller in the street the old man said, Where are you going? Where have you come from? 18He said to him, We are on our way from Bethlehem Judah to the far side of the hill country of Ephraim. I am from there and I have been in Bethlehem Judah. I am going to the house of Yahweh, and no-one has taken me into his house. 19Yet we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine also for me and for the maidservant and for the young man who is with us. We don’t need anything. 20The old man said, Peace to you! But I will provide for you; don’t stay all night in the street. 21So he brought him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank. 22As they were enjoying themselves the wicked men of the city surrounded the house, beating on the door; they said to the owner of the house, the old man, Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may have sex with him! 23The owner of the house went out to them and said to them, No my brothers, please don’t act so wickedly; since this man is my guest don’t do this disgraceful thing. 24Look, here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. I will bring them out now and you can use them and do with them what seems good unto you, but don’t do any such disgusting thing to this man. 25But the men wouldn’t listen to him, so the man took his concubine and brought her out to them and they raped her and abused her all night until the morning, and when the day began to dawn they let her go. 26Then the woman went back and fell down at the door of the man’s house where her master was, and lay there until it was light. 27Her master got up in the morning and opened the door and went out to continue on his way, and there was his concubine fallen down at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. 28He said to her, Get up, and let us be going! but there was no answer. Then he put her up on the donkey and set off for home. 29When he had come into his house, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, and divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent them throughout all the regions of Israel. 30All who saw it said, Such a deed has never been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of Egypt until this day! Consider it! Decide what should be done.

CHAPTER 20

**The Israelites Attack the Benjamites**

Then all the Israelites went out, and the congregation assembled as one man, from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead, to Yahweh at Mizpah. 2The leaders of the people from all the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand armed soldiers. 3Now the Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah. The Israelites said, Tell us how this wicked thing happened. 4The Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered, I came to Gibeah in Benjamin, I and my concubine, to stay the night. 5The men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house at night. They intended to kill me, and they raped my concubine and she is dead. 6I took my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel because they have committed this disgraceful and abominable act in Israel. 7Now you Israelites, all of you, give your advice and counsel. 8All the people arose as one man saying, None of us will go to his tent, neither will any of us go home. 9This is what we will do to Gibeah: we will go up against it by lot, 10and we will take ten men of every hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out of every thousand and a thousand out of ten thousand, to get food for the army so that when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin they can punish them for the disgusting thing they have done in Israel. 11So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united as one man. 12The tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin saying, What is this disgusting crime that has been committed among you? 13Now surrender the wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and put away evil from Israel. But Benjamin would not listen to their brothers the Israelites. 14The Benjamites gathered together out of their cities to Gibeah to go out to fight against the Israelites. 15The Benjamites numbered twenty six thousand swordsmen out of the cities, besides the seven hundred chosen men of Gibeah. 16Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling stones at a hair’s breadth and not miss. 17The men of Israel apart from Benjamin were four hundred thousand swordsmen, all warriors. 18The Israelites went up to Bethel and asked counsel of God. They said, Who shall go up for us first to battle against the children of Benjamin? Yahweh said, Judah first. 19The next morning the Israelites got up and encamped against Gibeah. 20The men of Israel went out to fight against Benjamin and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. 21The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and destroyed twenty-two thousand Israelites on that day. 22The men of Israel encouraged one another and took up their positions again in the place where they had stationed themselves on the first day. 23They went up and wept before Yahweh until evening, and they asked Yahweh, Shall we go up to fight again against the Benjamites, our brothers? Yahweh said, Go up against them. 24The Israelites went against the Benjamites the second day. 25Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah the second day, and destroyed another eighteen thousand Israelite men, all armed with swords. 26Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel and wept and sat there before Yahweh and fasted that day until evening. They offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh. 27The Israelites asked Yahweh (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron ministered before it), Shall we yet again go out to fight against Benjamin our brother, or not? Yahweh said, Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver him into your hand. 29Israel set ambushes all around Gibeah. 30They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and set themselves in position against Gibeah as before. 31The Benjamites went out against them and were drawn away from the city. They began to fight the Israelites as before, on the highways on the way to Bethel and Gibeah, and in the field, killing about thirty men of Israel. 32The Benjamites said, We are defeating them as before. But the Israelites said, Let’s retreat and draw them away from the city to the highways.

**The Benjamites Defeated**

33All the men of Israel arose up from their camp and set themselves in position at Baal Tamar, and the ambush charged from Maareh Geba. 34Ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel attacked Gibeah and the battle was severe, but the Benjamites didn’t know that disaster was upon them. 35Yahweh defeated Benjamin before Israel, and the Israelites destroyed twenty five thousand one hundred armed Benjamites that day. 36Then the Benjamites saw that they were defeated, for the men of Israel had given way to Benjamin, trusting in the ambush which they had set against Gibeah. 37The men in the ambush rushed into Gibeah, spread out and put all the city to the sword. 38Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the ambush was that they should send up a great cloud of smoke out of the city. 39Then the men of Israel would turn in the battle. Benjamin began to attack and killed about thirty of the men of Israel, for they said, Surely they are being defeated as before. 40But when the smoke began to go up out of the city, the Benjamites looked behind them and saw the whole city going up in smoke. 41Then the men of Israel turned on them and the men of Benjamin were terrified, seeing that disaster had come on them. 42So they fled before the men of Israel towards the wilderness, but they could not escape the battle, and the Israelites who came out of the cities destroyed them there. 43They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and ran them down as far as Gibeah toward the east. 44Eighteen thousand valiant men of Benjamin fell. 45They turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and the Israelites killed five thousand of them along the way and chased them to Gidom, killing two thousand more. 46So that day twenty-five thousand valiant fighters of Benjamin were killed. 47But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and stayed there four months. 48The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put to the sword everything in the towns, including the livestock, and anything they found. All the towns which they found they set on fire.

CHAPTER 21

**Finding Wives for the Benjamites**

Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah: Not one of us will give his daughter to a Benjamite as wife. 2The people came to Bethel where they sat until evening before God, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. 3They said, Yahweh, the God of Israel, why has this happened to Israel, that there should be today one tribe missing from Israel? 4Next day the people rose early and built an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5They asked, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who didn’t come up to the assembly before Yahweh? For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who didn’t come up to Yahweh to Mizpah should surely be put to death. 6The Israelites grieved for Benjamin their brother. There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. 7How shall we provide wives for those who remain, since we have sworn by Yahweh that we will not give them our daughters as wives? 8They asked, Which of the tribes of Israel didn’t come up to Yahweh to Mizpah? They found that none from the camp from Jabesh Gilead came to the assembly. 9For when the people were counted, none of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead were there. 10The congregation sent twelve thousand valiant fighting men and commanded them: Go and put the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead to the sword, including the women and children. 11This is what you are to do: kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin. 12They found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known man by lying with him, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan. 13The whole congregation sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites who were in the rock of Rimmon. 14So then Benjamin returned and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive from Jabesh Gilead, but they weren’t enough for them. 15The people grieved for Benjamin because Yahweh had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. 16Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we provide wives for those who remain, since the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? 17They said, There must be an inheritance for the surviving Benjamites so that a tribe will not be blotted out from Israel. 18We can’t give them wives from our daughters since the Israelites have taken this oath saying, ‘Cursed be he who gives a wife to Benjamin.’ 19They said, Look, there is an annual feast of Yahweh in Shiloh, which is on the north of Bethel, east of the highway from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah. 20They instructed the Benjamites: Go and lie in wait in the vineyards 21and watch. When the daughters of Shiloh come out to join in the dances, then rush out of the vineyards and each of you catch a wife from the girls of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin. 22When their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, ‘Allow them to do this because we didn’t get wives for them in the war. You didn’t give them to them, so you are not guilty.’ 23So that is what the Benjamites did. They took wives for each of them from the girls who danced, and carried them off. They returned to their inheritance, rebuilt the cities and lived in them. 24Then the Israelites departed each to his tribe and family. 25In those days there was no king in Israel; each man did that which was right in his own eyes.