### Judges

## Chapter 20

1Thereafter, the whole gathering of the sons of IsraEl (from Dan to Beer SheBah) assembled to meet before Jehovah at MasSepha in the land of GileAd. 2They all stood there before Jehovah as an assembly of the people of God… 400,000 sword-carrying men!  
  
3Meanwhile, the sons of BenJamin learned that they had gathered there.  
  
Well, after everyone had arrived, they asked:  
  
 ‘Where did this terrible thing happen?’  
  
4And the Levite (the owner of the woman who was killed) said:  
  
 ‘My concubine and I had gone into BabaAh of BenJamin to spend the night.  
  
 5‘Then men who lived there came and surrounded the house during the night, for they wanted to kill me. But they abused and raped my concubine instead, until she was dead.  
  
 6‘So I picked her up and cut her into pieces, and I sent them to all the inheritances of the sons of IsraEl… For these men have done a lewd and disgusting thing in IsraEl!  
  
 7‘Look, all you sons of IsraEl... Think about what happened and then discuss it among yourselves.’  
  
8Well, all the people agreed and said:  
  
 ‘None of us will return to our tents or houses 9until this thing that was done in BabaAh [is settled]. Let’s hold a lottery to choose who’ll go to fight against that city… 10We’ll choose 10 men from among every 100 of all the tribes of IsraEl, 100 out of every 1,000, and 1,000 out of every 10,000.  
  
 ‘Then we’ll gather enough provisions and send [these men] to BabaAh of BenJamin to pay them back for the disgusting things that they’ve done in IsraEl.’  
  
11Well, all the men of IsraEl agreed, and they prepared to march on the city. 12So thereafter, they sent messengers throughout the whole tribe of BenJamin to say:  
  
 ‘What’s this wicked thing that has been done among you?  
  
 13‘Now, surrender those sons of criminals that are in BabaAh, and we’ll execute them to purge their wickedness from IsraEl.’  
  
However, the sons of BenJamin refused to listen to the voices of their brothers, the sons of IsraEl, 14and [men from] all of their cities gathered at BabaAh to fight against the rest of IsraEl. 15The sons of BenJamin sent 23,000 soldiers, along with 700 of the best men from BabaAh, all of whom were capable of fighting with both hands… 16They could sling a stone at a hair and not miss!  
  
17Meanwhile, the army of IsraEl (those other than the tribe of of BenJamin) numbered 400,000 men of war. 18But [before they went to battle], they went to BethEl to ask God:  
  
 ‘Who must lead us in the fight against the sons of BenJamin?’  
  
And Jehovah replied:  
  
 ‘Judah must go first and serve as your leader.’  
  
19So the next morning, the sons of IsraEl went and camped around BabaAh, 20and the battle began!  
  
21Well, the sons of BenJamin came out of BabaAh and attacked, cutting down 22,000 men of IsraEl. 22So the men of IsraEl sent for reinforcements and got ready to fight in the same place where they’d fought on the previous day.  
  
23[But first] they went and spent the day crying before Jehovah; and in the evening, they asked Him:  
  
 ‘Should we go to fight against our brothers the sons of BenJamin again?’  
  
And Jehovah said:  
  
 ‘Go and fight them.’  
  
24So the sons of IsraEl advanced against the sons of BenJamin on the 2nd day. 25And again the sons of BenJamin came out of BabaAh to meet them, and they killed 18,000 more of [IsraEl’s] soldiers.  
  
26Then, all the sons of IsraEl (the people and their troops) went to BethEl and just sat there crying before Jehovah, fasting all day long until the evening, as they offered whole burnt offerings and perfect sacrifices to Jehovah. 27For back then, the [Sacred Chest] of Jehovah God was there [in BethEl]. 28And PhineAs (son of EliEzer and grandson of Aaron) would go and stand in front of the chest whenever the sons of IsraEl wanted to ask Jehovah for anything.  
  
So they again went to him and asked:  
  
 ‘Must we go once more to fight with our brothers, the sons of BenJamin?’  
  
And Jehovah’s reply was:  
  
 ‘If you go there in the morning, I’ll give them into your hands.’  
  
29Therefore, the sons of IsraEl [went back] and encircled BabaAh; [but this time], they set up an ambush. 30And when the sons of IsraEl went to fight the sons of BenJamin on the 3rd day, it looked like they were planning to attack BabaAh much as they had done before.  
  
31So the sons of BenJamin once again came out to meet them and they started cutting them down in the middle of the road that leads from BabaAh to BethEl, and they killed about 30 men… But this drew them all outside of the city, 32as the sons of BenJamin were shouting:  
  
 ‘They’re falling before us the same as they did before!’  
  
However, the sons of IsraEl had planned their retreat to draw everyone out of the city and into the roads… And that’s what they did. 33For all the men who came to fight had assembled at For all the men who came to fight had assembled at <span class="placename">BaAl ThamarFor all the men who came to fight had assembled at <span class="placename">BaAl Thamar</span>, while the rest of IsraEl hid in For all the men who came to fight had assembled at <span class="placename">BaAl Thamar</span>, while the rest of IsraEl hid in <span class="placename">MaraAgabeFor all the men who came to fight had assembled at <span class="placename">BaAl Thamar</span>, while the rest of IsraEl hid in <span class="placename">MaraAgabe</span>.  
  
34So, as 10,000 of IsraEl’s best men were attacking BabaAh, and [BenJamin’s] troops were fighting them fiercely, they didn’t realize that they were doomed.  
35For Jehovah allowed the sons of IsraEl to cut down BenJamin that day.  
  
All together, the sons of IsraEl destroyed 25,000 of BenJamin’s soldiers.  
  
36For when the sons of BenJamin thought that they were winning, the men of IsraEl turned around and attacked them, because they trusted in the ambush that they’d prepared against BabaAh. 37[The plan was that] when they pulled back, those who were hiding were to get up and attack BabaAh and cut down [everyone who was left in] the city with swords.  
  
38The sons of IsraEl had also arranged for a battle signal from those who’d been hiding… When they captured the city, they were to send up a smoke signal. 39And when the sons of IsraEl saw that they’d taken BabaAh, that’s when they turned and attacked.  
  
For by then, the sons of BenJamin had started killing the wounded among the men of IsraEl (about 30 of them), and they were saying:  
  
 ‘Surely they’re going to fall again as they did in the first [two] battles.’  
  
40But then the [smoke] signal started to arise, and it kept growing into a huge column of smoke rising into the sky.  
  
Well, when the men of BenJamin looked behind them, they saw that their city was being destroyed. 41So when the men of IsraEl turned back and attacked, the men of BenJamin started running, because they saw that something bad had happened.  
  
42Then they retreated all the way into the desert before the sons of IsraEl, who soon overtook them, and even people from the [surrounding] cities came to fight them… 43They chased the men of BenJamin from They chased the men of BenJamin from <span class="placename">NuaThey chased the men of BenJamin from <span class="placename">Nua</span> to They chased the men of BenJamin from <span class="placename">Nua</span> to <span class="placename">GibeAhThey chased the men of BenJamin from <span class="placename">Nua</span> to <span class="placename">GibeAh</span> in the east, 44and some 18,000 mighty men of BenJamin fell that day.  
  
45Well, the rest [of BenJamin’s army] then turned and ran through the desert to the Well, the rest [of BenJamin’s army] then turned and ran through the desert to the <span class="placename">Rock of RemMonWell, the rest [of BenJamin’s army] then turned and ran through the desert to the <span class="placename">Rock of RemMon</span>, where the sons of IsraEl picked off 5,000 of them; and then they chased the remaining ones as far as Well, the rest [of BenJamin’s army] then turned and ran through the desert to the <span class="placename">Rock of RemMon</span>, where the sons of IsraEl picked off 5,000 of them; and then they chased the remaining ones as far as <span class="placename">GeDanWell, the rest [of BenJamin’s army] then turned and ran through the desert to the <span class="placename">Rock of RemMon</span>, where the sons of IsraEl picked off 5,000 of them; and then they chased the remaining ones as far as <span class="placename">GeDan</span>, where they cut down 2,000 more men.  
  
46So, BenJamin lost 25,000 of their finest soldiers, 47and the rest (about 600 of them) turned and ran through the desert to the and the rest (about 600 of them) turned and ran through the desert to the <span class="placename">Rock of RemMonand the rest (about 600 of them) turned and ran through the desert to the <span class="placename">Rock of RemMon</span>, where they hid out for 4 months.  
  
48Meanwhile, the sons of IsraEl returned to the territory of BenJamin and cut down [everyone] in the cities around Meanwhile, the sons of IsraEl returned to the territory of BenJamin and cut down [everyone] in the cities around <span class="placename">MethLaMeanwhile, the sons of IsraEl returned to the territory of BenJamin and cut down [everyone] in the cities around <span class="placename">MethLa</span>, including their cattle, burning all the cities and everything that they found there in a fire.