

CORRUPTION IN BENJAMIN

Introduction:

1. The last section of the book of Judges (chapters 17 – 21) covers the period of time between or around the judges Othniel and Ehud.
2. The events recorded serve to illustrate the departures of Israel from the law of God. The theme of these chapters is – *Corruption in Israel*.
3. *Corruption of Priesthood* – Chapter 17 detailed the sins of Micah and his hiring of a Levite to be his personal priest.
4. *Corruption of Religion* – Chapter 18 showed how the tribe of Dan came in contact with Micah and his false priest and the sinful actions that resulted from their association.
5. *Corruption of Morality* – Chapter 19 deals with the rampant moral depravity of the tribe of Benjamin.
6. *Corruption of Unity* – Chapter 20 shows the futility of unity when God is excluded.
7. *Corruption of Compassion* – Finally, Chapter 21 details the folly of man doing what is right in his own eyes.

I. Corruption of Morality (Chapter 19)

A. Verses 1-10 – *The Background*

1. A Levite – of the priestly tribe – took for himself a concubine who was apparently a young woman (“damsel”).
2. In turn, she was unfaithful to him and ran away to her father’s house.
3. The terrible sins that follow have their roots in the sin that was found in the home (cf. 17:2; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1ff).
4. After four months, he journeyed to his father-in-law’s house in an attempt to bring his wife back home.
5. Five days were spent in eating, drinking, and making merry.
6. Finally, the Levite, his wife and his servant headed for home.

B. Versus 11-21 – *Benjamin’s Inhospitability*

1. When darkness fell, he refused to lodge in Jebus – Jerusalem – for it was possessed by the Canaanites (cf. 1:21).
2. Thus, they came to Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin.
3. However, they had to sit in the town square for no one offered them any hospitality.
4. Finally, a sojourner saw them and showed compassion by inviting them into his home.

C. Versus 22-30 – *Benjamin’s Corruption*

1. The influence and infiltration of the pagan philosophies of the Canaanites is complete – ***Israel has become like Sodom.***
 - a. The word Belial means, “worthless, base, unprofitable, good for nothing, wicked, ruined.”
 - b. Compare with the story of Sodom (Genesis 19).
2. As terrible as the actions of the men of Gibeah were, just as callous are the deeds of the Levite.
3. When he returned home, he began to incite the anger of the nation of Israel against Gibeah.
4. Sadly, their rashness will lead only to more sin and violence.

Judges 19 – 21

- II. Corruption of Unity (Chapter 20)
- A. A powerful picture of unity (vs. 1-2)
 - 1. It is good to be united against sin.
 - 2. However, they should have been united in serving and glorifying God.
 - 3. Sadly, they failed to include God in their planning for vengeance.
 - B. A sad state of injustice (vs. 3-11)
 - C. A corrupt compromise with sin (vs. 12-14)
 - D. The first battle (vs. 15-21)
 - 1. Benjamin had a force of 26,700 men, many of whom were very skilled in battle.
 - 2. Israel had a force of 400,000 men of war.
 - 3. Yet, Israel was defeated by Benjamin in the first battle.
 - 4. Notice that only now – after they have made their own plans (doing what was right in their eyes) – do they consult God.
 - 5. Notice that they only ask God which tribe should go first into battle (cf. Luke 12:16-21).
 - E. The second battle (vs. 22-25)
 - 1. Again, Israel was defeated by the tribe of Benjamin.
 - 2. Notice that the Israelites are still following their will and are encouraging themselves – still not looking to God.
 - 3. This time, when they go before the Lord, they do so with weeping – but it is sorrow over their previous defeat.
 - 4. They ask a better question this time, but still try to carry out God’s will in their own way.
 - F. The third battle (vs. 26-48)
 - 1. Finally, Israel won the battle against Benjamin.
 - 2. Notice that it was preceded by true repentance and restoration – weeping, fasting, and burnt offerings.
 - 3. Notice that they approached God in the right way.
 - 4. Notice that there is a sense of humility in their question to God.
 - 5. When they came before God in humble submission, acknowledging their dependence upon Him, He gave them victory.
 - G. For unity to be pleasing to God, it must be based upon His Truth, not the desire and will of man.
- III. Corruption of Compassion (Chapter 21)
- A. In their anger and willfulness over the sin of Gibeah, the children of Israel made a rash vow (vs. 1).
 - B. Thus, when Benjamin was defeated, the Israelites realized the seriousness of their mistake (vs. 2-4).
 - C. To make things worse, they had made another rash vow concerning their own brethren (vs. 5).
 - D. So, to find a loophole in their vows and to spare the tribe of Benjamin, the Israelites decided to attack and kill the people of Jabeshgilead (vs. 6-14).
 - E. When this did not sufficiently help Benjamin, they decided to allow them to abduct 200 young women from the city of Shiloh (vs. 15-23).
 - F. So, having solved the problem, everyone went home and “lived happily ever after!”

Conclusion: *When man ceases to follow God, terrible trouble will happen.*