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The Chapters of Judges

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Judges

SECTION OUTLINE ONE (JUDGES 1-2)

The conquest of Canaan continues, although the Israelites are unable to completely drive out the inhabitants there. A preview of Israel's apostasy and judgments is given.

I. THE CAMPAIGNS OF ISRAEL (1:1-36)

A. Military campaign of Judah (1:1-20)

1. *The merger of Simeon* (1:1-3): The men of Simeon's tribe agree to join forces with the men of Judah's tribe so they can conquer the land given to them.
2. *The men of Judah* (1:4-9, 16-19): The men of Judah defeat the Canaanite king, Adoni-bezek, killing 10,000 of his troops. They capture Jerusalem, along with three important Philistine cities-Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron. They cannot defeat the enemies who have iron chariots.
3. *The man of Judah (Caleb)* (1:10-15, 20): Caleb leads Judah to capture the cities of Hebron and Debir.
 - a. The challenge (1:11-15): Caleb offers his daughter Acsah as a wife for the one who conquers the city. Othniel leads the attack and wins Acsah.
 - b. The conquest (1:10, 20): Caleb conquers Hebron, driving out the inhabitants (who are descendants of the giant Anak).

B. Military campaign of Benjamin (1:21): Even though Judah previously burned the city of Jerusalem, Benjamin is not able to drive out the Jebusites who live there.

C. Military campaign of Manasseh and Ephraim (1:22-29): They defeat some of their enemies but allow them to stay in the land as slaves.

D. Military campaign of Zebulun (1:30): They enslave their enemies, whom they are unable to drive out of the land.

E. Military campaign of Asher (1:31-32): They are also unable to drive out their enemies.

F. Military campaign of Naphtali (1:33): They are unable to drive out the enemies living in their land, but they enslave them.

G. Military campaign of Dan (1:34-36): The Amorites confine this tribe to the hill country, although the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim enslave the Amorites later.

II. THE CASTIGATION OF ISRAEL (2:1-5): At a place called Bokim, the angel of the Lord sternly rebukes Israel for making treaties with the people living in Canaan and for failing to drive them out.

III. THE CORRUPTION OF ISRAEL (2:6-23)

A. The root of the matter (2:6-10): Israel serves the Lord as long as Joshua lives, but when he dies, they fail to remember what the Lord has done for them.

B. The fruit of the matter (2:11-23): Because they fail to remember the Lord's deeds, Israel experiences a series of five-step cycles.

1. *Step one: sin* (Israel turns from the Lord.)
2. *Step two: servitude* (The Lord allows Israel's enemies to oppress them.)
3. *Step three: supplication* (Israel prays for forgiveness.)
4. *Step four: salvation* (The Lord raises up a judge, or deliverer, to rescue them.)
5. *Step five: sin* (The cycle begins again.)

SECTION OUTLINE TWO (JUDGES 3-5)

Israel intermarries with the Canaanites and worships their gods. The judgeships of Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, and Deborah are recorded. Deborah sings her song of deliverance.

I. THE TEST (3:1-6)

- A. The facts (3:1-4): The Lord allows some of the pagan peoples to remain in Canaan so the faith and fighting skills of Israel's later generations can be exercised.
 - B. The failure (3:5-6): The Israelites flunk the Lord's test by intermarrying with the pagans and worshipping their gods.
- II. THE TROUBLES (3:7-31): The Israelites' sin brings punishment from the Lord, but in grace he repeatedly sends them leaders to rescue them.
- A. Othniel, the first deliverer (3:7-11)
 - 1. *Israel's sin* (3:7): The Israelites forget about the Lord and worship Baal and the Asherah poles.
 - 2. *Israel's servitude* (3:8): For eight years the Israelites are ruled by King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim.
 - 3. *Israel's supplication* (3:9): In response to the Israelites' cries for help, the Lord raises up Othniel, Caleb's nephew, to rescue them.
 - 4. *Israel's salvation* (3:10-11): Othniel defeats King Cushan-rishathaim, and the land has peace for 40 years.
 - B. Ehud, the second deliverer (3:12-30)
 - 1. *Israel's sin* (3:12): The Israelites do what is evil in the Lord's sight.
 - 2. *Israel's servitude* (3:13-14): The Israelites are subject to the rule of King Eglon of Moab for 18 years.
 - 3. *Israel's supplication* (3:15): The Israelites cry out to the Lord for help once again, and he raises up another deliverer for them.
 - 4. *Israel's salvation* (3:15-30): Ehud, a left-hander from the tribe of Benjamin, is sent to deliver Israel's tax money to King Eglon.
 - a. Ehud's trickery (3:16-25): After delivering the tax money to King Eglon, Ehud requests a private meeting with the king to tell him a secret message. The king sends his servants out of the room, and Ehud approaches the king as if to give him a message. Drawing his dagger with his left hand, he kills the monarch. Ehud locks the doors and escapes through the latrine.
 - b. Ehud's trumpet (3:26-27): After escaping, Ehud sounds a call to arms and rallies an army.
 - c. Ehud's triumph (3:28-30): Ehud and his men attack and conquer the Moabites, killing 10,000 warriors. The land is peaceful for 80 years.
 - C. Shamgar, the third deliverer (3:31): He kills 600 Philistines with an ox goad.
 - D. Deborah (and Barak), the fourth deliverer (4:1-5:31)
 - 1. *Barak's command* (4:1-7): Through Deborah, the Lord chooses Barak to rescue the oppressed Israelites.
 - a. The problem (4:1-3): Because of their sin, Israel is oppressed for 20 years by King Jabin of Hazor, a Canaanite.
 - b. The prophet (4:4-5): The Lord speaks to a woman named Deborah, who has become a judge in Israel.
 - c. The prophecy (4:6-7): Deborah informs Barak that he has been chosen to raise an army of 10,000 men to fight the enemy. She tells him that the Lord will give him victory over Sisera, the commander of King Jabin's army.
 - 2. *Barak's conditions* (4:8-9)
 - a. The help he required (4:8): Barak agrees to go, but only if Deborah goes with him.
 - b. The honor he relinquished (4:9): Deborah agrees to go with Barak, but she warns him that because he requested her help, the credit for the victory will go to a woman instead of to him.
 - 3. *Barak's coalition* (4:10-11): Warriors from the tribes of Zebulun, Naphtali, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Issachar quickly form Barak's army (see also 5:14-15).
 - 4. *Barak's charge* (4:12-24): Barak and his forces engage Sisera and his army in battle.
 - a. The defeat of Sisera (4:12-16)
 - (1) *The places* (4:12-13): The battle took place around Mount Tabor and the Kishon River.
 - (2) *The promise* (4:14): Deborah tells Barak, "Get ready! Today the LORD will give you victory over Sisera, for the LORD is marching ahead of you."
 - (3) *The panic* (4:15-16): When Barak attacks, the Lord causes Sisera and his forces to panic and flee; Sisera escapes.

- b. The death of Sisera (4:17-24)
 - (1) The woman (4:17-20): Jael, the wife of a man who is friendly with King Jabin, invites Sisera into her tent and helps him hide.
 - (2) The weapon (4:21-24): After Sisera falls asleep, Jael drives a tent peg through his temple and kills him.
- 5. *Barak's celebration* (5:1-31): Following the battle, both Deborah and Barak sing a song of victory.
 - a. Before the battle (5:1-18, 23)
 - (1) The coming of the Lord (5:1-5): Barak and Deborah speak of the greatness of the Lord when he comes to rescue Israel.
 - (2) The cry of Israel (5:6-8): Barak and Deborah describe how bad things were for Israel before the victory.
 - (3) The cooperation of Israel (5:9-18, 23): Barak and Deborah tell about those who joined them in their cause.
 - (a) The tribes who responded (5:9-15, 18): Barak's forces included people from Zebulun, Naphtali, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Issachar.
 - (b) The tribes who refused (5:16-17, 23): The people of Reuben, Dan, and Asher refused to join in the fight.
 - b. During the battle (5:19-22): Barak and Deborah recount how Sisera's forces fought against them, but the stars of heaven fought for Israel, and the Kishon River swept away the enemy.
 - c. After the battle (5:24-31)
 - (1) The blessed woman (5:24-27): Barak and Deborah sing the praises of Jael.
 - (2) The bewildered woman (5:28-31): Barak and Deborah describe Sisera's mother as she wonders why her son is so late in returning from battle.

SECTION OUTLINE THREE (JUDGES 6)

Midian oppresses Israel, so the Lord raises up Gideon, the fifth deliverer. Gideon tears down the altar of Baal and calls together all those who will fight for Israel. Then he uses a fleece to check whether God has indeed called him to rescue Israel.

I. THE ANGUISH (6:1-10)

- A. Israel's rebellion (6:1): Once again the Israelites turn to idolatry and anger the Lord.
- B. The Lord's retribution (6:2-6): The Lord allows the cruel Midianites to oppress the Israelites for seven years.
- C. The prophet's rebuke (6:7-10): A prophet sternly reminds the people that sin has caused their suffering.

II. THE ANGEL (6:11-23): The angel of the Lord appears to a man named Gideon and tells him that he will rescue Israel from the Midianites.

- A. The place (6:11): The angel appears to Gideon under an oak tree at Ophrah, where Gideon is secretly threshing wheat in a winepress.
- B. The protest (6:12-13)
 - 1. *The greeting* (6:12): The angel greets Gideon: "Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!"
 - 2. *The grumbling* (6:13): Gideon replies, "Why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about?"
- C. The promise (6:14-16)
 - 1. *The command* (6:14): The angel tells Gideon, "Go with the strength you have and rescue Israel from the Midianites."
 - 2. *The cowering* (6:15): Gideon responds, "My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!"
 - 3. *The comfort* (6:16): But the angel of the Lord assures Gideon, "I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man."
- D. The proof (6:17-23): Gideon asks for a sign to be certain that he is to rescue Israel.
 - 1. *The meal* (6:17-19): Gideon goes home to prepare a meal for the angel.
 - 2. *The miracle* (6:20-23): When the angel touches the meal with his staff, fire flames up and

consumes the food, convincing Gideon that the angel was sent from the Lord.

III. THE ALTARS (6:24-32): Gideon builds two altars to the Lord.

- A. The first altar (6:24): Gideon builds the first altar after the angel of the Lord appears to him and causes the meal to burn up. He names this altar "The LORD Is Peace."
- B. The second altar (6:25-32)
 - 1. *The directive to Gideon* (6:25-27): The Lord tells Gideon to destroy his father's altar to Baal and construct an altar to the Lord in its place. Gideon does so under cover of darkness.
 - 2. *The disgust with Gideon* (6:28-30): The morning after Gideon pulls down the altar, the people of Ophrah threaten to kill him.
 - 3. *The defense of Gideon* (6:31-32): Gideon's father defends him, saying, "If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself."

IV. THE ANOINTING (6:33-35): Soon after these events, the spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon and empowers him to fight the Midianites.

- A. The threat (6:33): A vast army of Midianites and Amalekites unite to attack Israel.
- B. The trumpet (6:34-35): The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, and he blows a ram's horn to gather an army.

V. THE ASSURANCE (6:36-40): Gideon requests two signs from God to assure him of his calling to rescue Israel. God answers Gideon's request.

- A. First sign (6:36-38): Cause a certain fleece to be wet while the ground is dry.
- B. Second sign (6:39-40): Cause the fleece to be dry while the ground is wet.

SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (JUDGES 7-8)

The Lord reduces Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300 but causes them to defeat the Midianites through panic. The Israelites pursue the fleeing Midianites and punish two cities that refuse to help. Gideon refuses the offer of a crown but takes the Midianites' gold earrings.

I. THE ARMY (7:1-8)

- A. The reduction (7:1-6): The Lord tells Gideon that his army of 32,000 is too big and reduces it in two stages.
 - 1. *Due to panic* (7:1-3): Gideon sends 22,000 men home because they are fearful.
 - 2. *Due to posture* (7:4-6): Gideon sends 9,700 troops home because of the way they drink water.
- B. The right number (7:7-8): The army is now reduced to 300 soldiers-all that God needs to win!

II. THE ATTACK (7:9-8:21)

- A. Before the battle (7:9-18)
 - 1. *The sign* (7:9-15)
 - a. The details (7:9-12): Because Gideon is still afraid to attack the Midianites, the Lord sends him to the enemy camp to give him assurance of victory.
 - b. The dream (7:13-15): At the enemy camp, Gideon overhears one soldier tell another of a dream he had. The dream shows that God will give Gideon victory over the Midianites.
 - 2. *The strategy* (7:16-18): At Gideon's command his men are to blow horns, hold up torches, and shout, "For the LORD and for Gideon!"
- B. During the battle (7:19-25)
 - 1. *The sound of victory* (7:19-22): The soldiers blow their trumpets; the enemy panics, and they fight each other.
 - 2. *The summons to victory* (7:23-25): Gideon invites other Israelite tribes to chase after the fleeing Midianites.
- C. After the battle (8:1-21)
 - 1. *The criticism against Gideon* (8:1-4): The jealous men of Ephraim complain that they had not been asked to fight sooner.
 - 2. *The contempt for Gideon* (8:5-9): The cities of Succoth and Peniel refuse to provide food for Gideon's hungry troops.
 - 3. *The capture by Gideon* (8:10-12, 18-21): Gideon captures the two enemy leaders Zebah and

Zalmunna.

- a. Their defeat (8:10-12)
 - b. Their deaths (8:18-21)
4. *The chastisement from Gideon* (8:13-17): The cities of Succoth and Peniel are severely punished for refusing to help Gideon's troops.

III. THE APOSTASY (8:22-33): Again Israel turns away from following the Lord.

- A. The refusal of kingship (8:22-23): The grateful Israelites ask Gideon to be their king, but he refuses.
- B. The return to idolatry (8:24-27, 33-35): Gideon takes some of the gold earrings of the Midianites and makes a sacred ephod, which then becomes an idol for Gideon and the rest of the Israelites.
- C. The rest of Gideon's life (8:28-32): The land is at peace for the rest of Gideon's life (about 40 years). Gideon has many wives and one concubine. He fathers many children before he dies and is buried at Ophrah.

SECTION OUTLINE FIVE (JUDGES 9-12)

This outline covers the murderous reign and demise of Abimelech, Gideon's son. Tola and Jair rule over Israel as judges. Israel sins again, and the Lord refuses to raise up a new judge. The events of Jephthah's life and judgeship are recorded, as well as the judgeships of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

I. THE APOSTATE SUCCESSOR OF GIDEON (9:1-57): Soon after Gideon's death, his son Abimelech attempts to become Shechem's king.

- A. Abimelech's destruction (9:1-6): In order to secure his reign, Abimelech murders all but one of his 70 half brothers.
- B. Abimelech's denouncement (9:7-21)
 1. *The ridicule* (9:7-15): Jotham, the only surviving half brother, ridicules Abimelech by telling a parable of trees that want a king. In the story Abimelech is portrayed as a worthless thornbush.
 2. *The rebuke* (9:16-21): Jotham denounces the Israelites who have chosen Abimelech to rule over them.
- C. Abimelech's difficulties (9:22-41)
 1. *Caused by God* (9:22-25): After three years, God stirs up trouble between Abimelech and the people of Shechem, who unsuccessfully attempt to ambush him.
 2. *Caused by Gaal* (9:26-41): Gaal, a leading citizen of Shechem, organizes a revolt against Abimelech.
- D. Abimelech's depravity (9:42-49): Abimelech and his men ruthlessly slaughter the people of Shechem for rebelling against him.
- E. Abimelech's death (9:50-57): Abimelech and his men then attack Thebez and trap some of the people in a tower. But a woman drops a millstone upon Abimelech's head and crushes his skull, so he begs his armor bearer to kill him so he does not die at the hands of a woman.

II. THE ANOINTED SUCCESSORS OF GIDEON (10-12): After Abimelech's death, the Lord raises up several more judges to lead Israel.

- A. Tola, the sixth deliverer (10:1-2): For 23 years Tola, a man from the tribe of Issachar, reigns as Israel's judge.
- B. Jair, the seventh deliverer (10:3-5): Tola dies, and a man named Jair from Gilead becomes Israel's judge for 22 years. His 30 sons ride 30 donkeys and own 30 towns throughout Gilead.
- C. Jephthah, the eighth deliverer (10:6-12:7)
 1. *The setting for Jephthah's deeds* (10:6-18)
 - a. Israel's sin (10:6): Again the nation turns from the Lord and practices idolatry.
 - b. Israel's servitude (10:7-9): Because of Israel's sin, the Lord allows the Philistines and the Ammonites to oppress them for 18 years.
 - c. Israel's supplication (10:10-18)
 - (1) *The rebuke* (10:10-14): The Lord tells the people, "You have abandoned me and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore. Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your hour of distress!"

- (2) The revival (10:15-16): The Israelites repent of their sin and promise to serve only the Lord.
- (3) The resolution (10:17-18): The people determine to crown as king anyone who saves them from the Ammonite army that is preparing to attack.
- 2. *The story of Jephthah's deeds* (11:1-12:7)
 - a. His vindication (11:1-29)
 - (1) Jephthah, the scorned (11:1-3): Born out of wedlock to a prostitute, Jephthah is despised and driven out of his home in Gilead by his half brothers. He forms a large band of rebels.
 - (2) Jephthah, the sought after (11:4-11): When Gilead is threatened by the Ammonites, the people ask Jephthah to be their commander and ruler, and he accepts.
 - (3) Jephthah, the statesman (11:12-28)
 - (a) The problem (11:12-13): Jephthah learns that the Ammonites are angry because they believe Israel stole land from them.
 - (b) The peace attempts (11:14-28): To avoid a battle, Jephthah attempts to explain how the Israelites got the land. The Ammonites, however, are not satisfied.
 - (4) Jephthah, the soldier (11:29): The Lord's Spirit comes upon Jephthah, and he leads an army against the Ammonites.
 - b. His vow (11:30-31): Jephthah vows that if the Lord gives him victory over the Ammonites, upon returning, he will sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that comes out of his house to greet him.
 - c. His victory (11:32-33): Jephthah and his men completely defeat the Ammonites.
 - d. His vexation (11:34-40)
 - (1) The father's anguish (11:34-35): Jephthah's only daughter is the first one to come out of the house to greet him. Jephthah tears his clothes in anguish.
 - (2) The daughter's agreement (11:36-38): Jephthah's daughter tells him that he must keep his vow, but she asks for two months to lament the fact that she will never be married.
 - (3) Israel's annual event (11:39-40): Jephthah keeps his vow. This tragedy becomes a yearly remembrance among the young women of Israel.
 - e. His vengeance (12:1-7)
 - (1) The rebuke against Jephthah (12:1-4): The people of Ephraim threaten Jephthah for not allowing them to share in his victory against the Ammonites. Though Jephthah explains that he did indeed invite them, they begin to insult the people of Gilead.
 - (2) The retaliation by Jephthah (12:4-7): Jephthah is angered by the insults of the people of Ephraim, so he attacks them.
 - (a) His triumph (12:4): Jephthah defeats the people of Ephraim.
 - (b) His testing (12:5-7): To identify the fugitives from Ephraim, Jephthah places a checkpoint at the Jordan River and forces all passersby to say, "Shibboleth." If the person cannot pronounce the word correctly, Jephthah's men know that he is an Ephraimite, and they kill him.
- D. Ibzan, the ninth deliverer (12:8-10): Jephthah dies, and Ibzan becomes Israel's judge for seven years. He has 30 sons and 30 daughters.
- E. Elon, the tenth deliverer (12:11-12): After Ibzan dies, Elon, a man from Zebulun, becomes Israel's judge for 10 years.
- F. Abdon, the eleventh deliverer (12:13-15): Elon dies, and Abdon becomes Israel's judge for eight years. He has 40 sons and 30 grandsons.

SECTION OUTLINE SIX (JUDGES 13-16)

God raises up Samson to rescue Israel from the Philistines. Samson's exploits include killing 30 Philistines to pay off a wager he made regarding a riddle, slaying 1,000 Philistines with a donkey's jawbone, carrying away the city gates of Gaza, being tricked into capture by a woman named Delilah, and killing thousands of Philistines by pulling down their temple of Dagon.

- I. SAMSON'S MISSION (13:1-25): After the Israelites sin once again and are oppressed by the Philistines, the angel of the Lord promises a son to Manoah and his wife. This son will rescue Israel from the Philistines.

A. First visit by the angel of the Lord (13:1-8)

1. *The revelation* (13:1-5): The angel of the Lord appears to Manoah's wife, who is unable to become pregnant, with this message.
 - a. Her firstborn (13:1-3): Manoah's wife is told she will give birth to a son.
 - b. His future (13:4-5): The child will be raised as a Nazirite; he is to be dedicated to the Lord and must abstain from alcohol and any forbidden food. He will rescue Israel from the Philistines, who have been oppressing Israel for 40 years.
2. *The conversation* (13:6-7): Manoah's wife tells him of the angel's visit.
3. *The supplication* (13:8): Manoah prays that the angel will return and give them more instructions about the child.

B. Second visit by the angel of the Lord (13:9-25)

1. *The repetition* (13:9-14): The angel appears again to Manoah's wife, who runs and tells her husband to come. The angel repeats his instructions to raise the child as a Nazirite.
2. *The realization* (13:15-25): Manoah and his wife desire to honor the angel after his second appearance.
 - a. The sacrifice to the Lord (13:15-16): Manoah offers a young goat to the angel, who instructs him to offer it as a sacrifice to the Lord.
 - b. The secret of the Lord (13:17-18): The angel refuses to tell Manoah his name.
 - c. The sign by the Lord (13:19-23): While Manoah makes the sacrifice, the angel ascends in the fire blazing from the altar. Manoah realizes it was the angel of the Lord.
 - d. The son from the Lord (13:24-25): Samson is born. Soon he experiences the blessing and anointing of the Spirit of the Lord.

II. SAMSON'S MARRIAGE (14:1-4)

- A. Samson's order (14:1-2): Samson notices a Philistine girl in Timnah and tells his parents to make arrangements for him to marry her.
- B. The parents' objection (14:3): Samson's parents try to convince Samson to marry an Israelite girl. Samson says no.
- C. The Lord's ordination (14:4): This marriage is part of the Lord's plan to free Israel from Philistine oppression.

III. SAMSON'S MIGHTY DEEDS (14:5-16:3)

- A. The ripping apart of the lion (14:5-19): As Samson travels to Timnah, a lion attacks him, but he kills it with his bare hands. Later, Samson passes by the lion's carcass and notices that bees have made honey in it.
- B. The riddle of the honey (14:10-20)
 1. *The proposal* (14:10-14): Samson uses his experience with the lion to tell a riddle before his wedding day.
 - a. The companions (14:10-11): Before the wedding, Samson throws a party for 30 young men from Timnah.
 - b. The challenge (14:14): During the party, Samson gives the men a riddle: "From the one who eats came something to eat; out of the strong came something sweet."
 - c. The consequences (14:12-13): Samson says that he will give each of the men a plain robe and a fancy robe if they answer his riddle in seven days. If they cannot, they must each give him the same.
 2. *The pressure* (14:15-18)
 - a. Upon Samson's wife (14:15): The men from Timnah threaten to kill both her and her father unless she tells them the answer to the riddle.
 - b. Upon Samson (14:16-18): Samson's wife pleads with him to give her the answer. At last Samson does, and she reveals the answer to the men of Timnah.
 3. *The payment* (14:19): In order to pay off his wager, Samson kills 30 men from Ashkelon, takes their clothing, and gives it to the men of Timnah.
 4. *The parting* (14:20): Samson becomes infuriated with his wife because she has caused him to lose the wager, and he goes home to live with his parents. So the bride's father gives her to the man who had been Samson's best man.
- C. The ruin of the grain (15:1-8)

1. *The foxes* (15:1-4): Discovering that his wife has been given to another, Samson catches 300 foxes, ties their tails together in pairs, and lights a torch fastened to each pair.
 2. *The fiery fields* (15:5): The foxes run through the fields of the Philistines, burning the grain to the ground!
 3. *The fury* (15:6): The Philistines strike back by killing the woman given away in marriage and her father.
- D. The rage of Samson (15:7-8): In retaliation for the death of his wife and her father, Samson kills many Philistines.
- E. The raid of the Philistines (15:9-20): Continuing the cycle of retribution, the Philistines raid the town of Lehi in Judah.
1. *The binding of Samson* (15:9-13): Three thousand men from Judah come to bind Samson with ropes and hand him over to the Philistines, and he allows them to do so.
 2. *The bloodletting by Samson* (15:14-20)
 - a. His power from God (15:14-17): When the Philistines come to take Samson away, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him, causing him to easily snap the ropes around him. Using a donkey's jawbone, he kills 1,000 Philistines.
 - b. His prayer to God (15:18-20): In terrible thirst, Samson cries out for water, which God causes to gush up from the ground!
- F. The removal of the gates (16:1-3)
1. *The prostitute* (16:1): Samson visits a prostitute in the Philistine city of Gaza.
 2. *The plot* (16:2): When word of Samson's presence there spreads, the men of Gaza plan to kill him when he leaves through the city gates in the morning.
 3. *The posts* (16:3): Samson leaves at midnight, however, lifting the city gates and its posts right out of the ground and carrying them to the top of a hill many miles away.
- IV. SAMSON'S MISTRESS (16:4-19): Later Samson loves a woman named Delilah.
- A. The bribe (16:4-5): The Philistines offer Delilah a great deal of silver to find out the secret of Samson's strength.
- B. The betrayal (16:6-19)
1. *The fiction concerning his great strength* (16:6-15): On three occasions Samson lies to Delilah about the source of his power.
 2. *The facts concerning his great strength* (16:16-19): Finally, after much nagging by Delilah, Samson confesses that he is a Nazirite and that if his hair is ever cut, he will lose his strength. So Delilah lulls him to sleep in her lap and calls for someone to shave his hair off.
- V. SAMSON'S MISERY (16:20-22): The Philistines capture Samson, gouge out his eyes, bind him in chains, and force him to grind grain in prison. But soon his hair begins to grow back.
- VI. SAMSON'S MARTYRDOM (SELF-INFLICTED) (16:23-31)
- A. The derision by the Philistines (16:23-28)
1. *The ridicule of Samson* (16:23-25): Samson is brought forth during a public celebration of the Philistine god Dagon.
 2. *The request by Samson* (16:26-28): Samson asks the Lord for strength that he might punish the Philistines one final time for blinding him.
- B. The destruction of the Philistines (16:29-31): Samson pushes on the two central pillars of the temple, bringing it crashing down. Samson kills more Philistines in this one act than in all his other deeds combined, but he dies also.

SECTION OUTLINE SEVEN (JUDGES 17-21)

Idolatry is initiated in Dan by a Levite who becomes a priest for a man named Micah. Another Levite starts a war between Benjamin and the other tribes to avenge the rape of his concubine. The outcome and aftermath of the war are recorded.

I. IDOLATRY IN DAN (17:1-18:31)

- A. The family practice of idolatry (17:1-13): Micah's family helps initiate idolatry in Dan.
1. *Micah's dishonesty* (17:1-4): Micah confesses to stealing a large amount of silver from his

mother and returns it. She uses the silver to make an idol.

2. *Micah's desecration* (17:5-13): Micah makes a shrine for the idol and hires a Levite traveling from Bethlehem to become his personal priest.
- B. The formal practice of idolatry (18:1-31)
1. *Dan's move* (18:1-26): Unable to drive out the Philistines in the southwest part of the Promised Land, the tribe of Dan looks for a new home in the north.
 - a. The first visit (18:1-10): Dan sends five warriors to scout out new land, and for a night they stay in Micah's home. They ask the Levite priest there if they will have a successful journey.
 - b. The second visit (18:11-26): After experiencing victory over their enemies-as the Levite priest predicted-the tribe decides to take Micah's idols. They also persuade the priest to become the priest for their tribe, despite Micah's objections.
 2. *Dan's mistake* (18:27-31): The tribe of Dan destroys and rebuilds the city of Laish, renaming it Dan. They worship idols in the city and appoint Jonathan, a descendant of Moses, as their priest.

II. IMMORALITY IN BENJAMIN (19:1-30): The concubine of a Levite living in Ephraim becomes the victim of sexual pervers.

- A. The Levite and his concubine (19:1-2): The Levite's concubine becomes unfaithful and returns to live with her father in Bethlehem.
- B. The Levite and the concubine's father (19:3-10): The Levite travels to Bethlehem and persuades his concubine to return after a pleasant four-day visit with her father.
- C. The Levite and an old man (19:11-21): After arriving at dusk at the Benjamite city of Gibeah, the couple accepts an invitation by an old man to spend the night at his home.
- D. The Levite and some sexual pervers (19:22-28): During their stay, many wicked men of the town surround the home of the old man and his guests.
 1. *Their demand* (19:22-24): The pervers demand that the Levite be sent out so they can have sex with him. The old man refuses, offering them his own virgin daughter and the concubine. They refuse his offer.
 2. *Their depravity* (19:25-28): The Levite sends out his concubine anyway, and the men rape her throughout the night. Finally they let her go, and she crawls back to the house and dies on the doorstep.
- E. The Levite and the tribes of Israel (19:29-30): The Levite carries his concubine's body back to Ephraim and cuts it into 12 pieces. He sends one piece to each of Israel's tribes, arousing the nation to punish such sexual pervers living in the land of Benjamin.

III. INDIGNATION FROM ISRAEL (20:1-21:25): The tribes of Israel respond with great anger over the terrible treatment of the Levite's concubine.

- A. The origin of the war (20:1-17): The leaders of the 10 tribes meet together in Mizpah to decide what must be done about the matter.
 1. *The report of the Levite* (20:1-7): The Levite reviews how sexual pervers murdered his concubine in the Benjamite city of Gibeah.
 2. *The resolve of the 10 tribes* (20:8-11): The leaders of the tribes resolve to attack Gibeah and execute the criminals as soon as possible.
 3. *The refusal of Benjamin* (20:12-17): The people of Benjamin refuse to allow the tribes to attack Gibeah. Instead they come out to fight against the other tribes.
- B. The overview of the war (20:18-48)
 1. *The slaughter* (20:18-46)
 - a. First battle (20:18-21): The Lord instructs the tribe of Judah to lead the fight, but the Benjamites kill 22,000 men from the other tribes.
 - b. Second battle (20:22-25): The Lord directs the other tribes to continue fighting, but the Benjamites kill 18,000 experienced warriors from the other tribes.
 - c. Third battle (20:26-45): After seeking direction from the Lord once again, the other tribes set up an ambush and defeat the warriors from Benjamin.
 2. *The survivors* (20:46-48): The tribe of Benjamin loses 25,000 men, leaving only 600 alive after the third battle!

C. The outcome of the war (21:1-25)

1. *The sorrow* (21:1-7): The other tribes of Israel experience regret and grief over the apparent loss of an entire tribe. The problem is compounded because they have sworn not to allow their daughters to marry a Benjamite.
2. *The solution* (21:8-25)
 - a. *Sparing wives for the men* (21:8-15): In order to find wives for the severely diminished tribe, Israel's leaders agree to give them all the virgins taken from Jabesh-gilead. This town had refused to appear at Mizpah when the issue of war with Benjamin was discussed. After raiding the town, they find only 400 virgins.
 - b. *Snatching wives for the men* (21:16-25): The other 200 men of Benjamin are given permission to kidnap all the young virgins who participate in a festival at Shiloh.