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Judges

Chapter 1

¹Now it happened that after the death of Joshua, the sons of Israel asked Yahweh, saying, "Who will go up for us first against the Canaanite, to fight him?" ²Yahweh answered, "Judah will go up, Behold, I have given the land into his hand." ³Then Judah said to Simeon, his brother, "Go up with me into my allotted territory, and let us fight together against the Canaanite. I will fight likewise myself, with you in your allotted territory." So Simeon went with him. ⁴Judah went up, and Yahweh gave the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand. They smote ten thousand men at Bezek. ⁵They found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and they fought against him. They smote the Canaanite and the Perizzite. ⁶Then Adoni-Bezek fled, but they pursued after him. They seized him, and they chopped off the thumbs of his hands and the big toes of his feet. ⁷Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with the thumbs of their hands and the big toes of their feet chopped off were gathering scraps of food beneath my table. Just as I have done, so God has repaid to me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

⁸The sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and they took it. They smote it with the mouth of the sword and they sent the city into fire. ⁹Afterwards, the sons of Judah went down to fight them, against the Canaanites living in the hill country region, the southern wilderness, and the western lowland. ¹⁰Then Judah went down to the Canaanite that lived in Hebron (the name of Hebron before was Kiriath Arba), and they smote Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

¹¹He went from there to those living in Debir; the name of Debir before was Kiriath Sepher. ¹²Then Caleb said, "Whoever will smite Kiriath Sepher and capture it, I will give him Aksah, my daughter, for a wife." ¹³Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb younger than him, captured it, so he gave him Aksah his daughter for a wife. ¹⁴Now it happened that at her coming she incited him to ask for a field from her father. She descended from atop the donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What can I do for you?" ¹⁵Then she said to him, "Give me a blessing. Although you have given me the land of the Negev, you shall also me springs of waters." So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

¹⁶The sons of the Kenite, the father-in-law of Moses, went up from the city of palm trees with the sons of Judah, to the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south country of Arad. So he went and he dwelt with the people. ¹⁷Then Judah went with Simeon his brother and they smote the Canaanite dwelling in Zephath. So they devoted it to destruction and they called the name of the city Hormah. ¹⁸Judah also captured Gaza and the territory of it, Ashkelon and the territory of it, and Ekron and the territory of it. ¹⁹Now it happened that Yahweh was with Judah and he took possession of the hill country, but he did not dispossess those dwelling in the valley because of their chariotry of iron. ²⁰They gave Hebron to Caleb just as Moses had directed, and he dispossessed from there the three sons of the Anak. ²¹But the Jebusite dwelling in Jerusalem, the sons of Benjamin did not dispossess. So the Jebusite have dwelt with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem until this day.

²²Likewise, the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, even they, and Yahweh was with them. ²³The house of Joseph sent out spies to assess Bethel; the name of the city before was Luz. ²⁴The observers saw a man going out from the city, and they said to him, "Show us, please, the entrance of the city, and we will extend kindness to you." ²⁵So he showed them the entrance of the city, and then they smote the city with the mouth of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go free. ²⁶Then the man went to the land of the Hittites and he built a city. He called its name Luz, which is its name until this day.

²⁷But Manasseh did not take possession of Beth Shan and its daughters, or Taanach and its daughters, or the one dwelling in Dor and its daughters, or those dwelling in Ibleam and its daughters, or those dwelling in Megiddo and its daughters, because the Canaanite had resolved to dwell in that land. ²⁸Now it happened that when Israel became strong, he imposed tribute upon the Canaanite, but he did not take possession of him.

²⁹Neither did Ephraim dispossess the Canaanite who dwelled in Gezer, so the Canaanite dwelled in Gezer in the midst of him.

³⁰Zebulun did not dispossess those dwelling in Kitron, or those dwelling in Nahalol, so the Canaanite dwelled in his midst. But they were subject to tribute.

³¹Asher did not dispossess those dwelling in Akko, or those dwelling in Sidon, or Ahlab, or Akzib, or Helbah, or Aphek, or Rehob. ³²So the Asherite dwelled in the midst of the Canaanite who dwelled in the land, because he did not dispossess him.

³³Naphtali did not dispossess those dwelling in Beth Shemesh, or those dwelling in Beth Anath. So he dwelled in the midst of the Canaanite who dwelled in the land. However, those dwelling in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were subject to tribute to them.

³⁴The Amorite pressed the sons of Dan to the hill country, for he did not permit him to go down into the valley.

³⁵The Amorite resolved to dwell at Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim, but the hand of the house of Joseph became heavy and they were subject to tribute. ³⁶The border of the Amorite was from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the cliff and upward.

Chapter 2

¹The messenger of Yahweh went up from the region of Gilgal to the region of Bokim, and said, "I am leading you up from Egypt, and I have brought you to the land that I have sworn to your fathers. I have said, 'I will not break my covenant with you for eternity. ²You must not cut a covenant with those dwelling in this land. Their altars you must surely tear down.' But you have not heeded my voice. What is this you have done? ³Furthermore, I have said, 'I will not drive them out from before you, but they will be against you as adversaries, and their gods will be against you as a snare.'" ⁴Now it happened that when the messenger of Yahweh spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voice and wept. ⁵So they called the name of that place Bokim, and they offered a sacrifice there to Yahweh.

⁶Then Joshua dismissed the people, and the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. ⁷The people served Yahweh all the days of Joshua and all of the days of the elders who had prolonged their days after Joshua, who had seen all of the great deeds of Yahweh that he had done for Israel. ⁸Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died a son of one hundred ten years. ⁹Then they buried him within the border of his inheritance in Timnath Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, to the north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰When all of that generation had also been gathered to his fathers, another generation rose up after them who did not know Yahweh or even the deed that he had done for Israel.

¹¹The sons of Israel did the wickedness in the sight of Yahweh and they served the Baals. ¹²Thus they forsook Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the One Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods from the gods of the people groups who were around them, and they bowed down to them. They provoked Yahweh to anger. ¹³They forsook Yahweh and they served the Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴Then the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, so he gave them into the hand of plunderers, and they plundered them. He surrendered them into the hand of their enemies from all around, so that they were not able any longer to stand before their enemies. ¹⁵In every way, whenever they went out the hand of Yahweh was against them for calamity, just as Yahweh had spoken and just as Yahweh had sworn to them. Thus he pressed them exceedingly.

¹⁶Then Yahweh raised up judges, and they saved them from the hand of their plunderers. ¹⁷Even to their judges they would not listen. For they pursued adulterously after other gods and they bowed down to them. They turned away quickly from the way that their fathers had walked. They did not do likewise to heed the commands of Yahweh. ¹⁸When Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh would be with the judges and he would save them from the hand of their enemies all of the days of the judges. For Yahweh would become remorseful on account of their groaning from the presence of those tormenting them and oppressing them. ¹⁹Now it would happen that at

the death of the judge, they would turn back and behave corruptly more than their fathers, walking after other gods to serve them and to bow down to them. They did not drop any of their evil deeds or their shameless behavior. ²⁰As a result the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and he said, "In that this nation transgressed my covenant that I had commanded their fathers, but they have not heeded my voice, ²¹I also will not continue to drive out anyone out of their presence from the nations that Joshua left when he died. ²²in order to test Israel by them, whether they are observing the way of Yahweh, walking in them just as their fathers observed, or not." ²³So Yahweh allowed those nations to stay, not dispossessing them hastily and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

Chapter 3

¹Now those nations which Yahweh allowed to remain in order to test Israel by them, all who had not known any of the wars of Canaan, ²only for the sake of the generations of the sons of Israel knowing, to teach them warfare, only who formerly had not experienced them, ³the five governors of the Philistines, and all of the Canaanite, the Sidonian, and the Hivite dwelling in the mountain of Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon as far as Lebo Hamath. ⁴They were to test Israel by them, to know whether they would heed the commandments of Yahweh, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. ⁵So the sons of Israel settled in the midst of the Canaanite, the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. ⁶Then their daughters they took for themselves as wives, and their daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.

⁷So the sons of Israel did this evil in the eyes of Yahweh and they forgot Yahweh their God. They served the baals and the asherahs. ⁸Therefore, the anger of Yahweh blazed against Israel, so he sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram Naharaim. The sons of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. ⁹When the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel, and he delivered them: Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb younger than him. ¹⁰The spirit of Yahweh came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went forth to battle and Yahweh gave Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram, into his hand. Thus his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. ¹¹So the land had tranquility forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

¹²Then the sons of Israel started again to do this evil in the eyes of Yahweh. So Yahweh strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab against Israel, because they did this evil in the eyes of Yahweh. ¹³Then he mobilized to himself the sons of Ammon and Amalek and he went and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the city of the palm trees. ¹⁴So the sons of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

¹⁵When the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a man impeded in his right hand. The sons of Israel sent tribute by his hand to Eglon, the king of Moab. ¹⁶Then Ehud made for himself a sword and it had two edges, a span was its length. He bound it on from beneath his clothing on his right thigh. ¹⁷Then he bought the tribute near to Eglon, the king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. ¹⁸Now it happened that when he had completed bringing over the tribute, he sent away the people, the bearers of the tribute. ¹⁹But he himself turned back from the quarries which were near the Gilgal, and he said, "I have a private message for you, O king." He said, "Silence!" So all those who were standing around him went out from around him. ²⁰So Ehud came to him. Now he was sitting in the roof chamber in the coolness, which was for him alone. Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you," and he rose up from upon the seat. ²¹Then Ehud stretched out his left hand and took the sword from upon his right thigh, and he thrust it into his belly. ²²Also the handle went in following the blade, and the fat closed up over the handle because he did not pull the sword out of his belly. Then he proceeded to the vestibule, ²³and Ehud went out to the porch and he closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them.

²⁴After he had gone out, his servants came. They inspected and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked. So they said, "Surely he is covering his feet in the chamber in the coolness." ²⁵They waited until it was inappropriate, but behold, he was not opening the doors of the roof chamber. So they took the key and they opened them, and behold, their majestic lord had fallen to the floor, dead.

²⁶Meanwhile Ehud had escaped during their tarrying and he passed beyond the quarries, then he fled to Seirah. ²⁷Now it happened that at his coming in, he blew on the shofar in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the sons of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was before them. ²⁸Then he said to them, "Follow after me, for Yahweh has given your enemies, Moab, into your hand." So they went down after him and they captured the fords of the Jordan opposite Moab. Thus they did not allow anyone to cross over. ²⁹So they routed Moab at that time, about ten thousand men. All were robust and all were men of strength, but not anyone escaped. ³⁰Moab was subdued on that day under the hand of Israel, and the land was tranquil eighty years.

³¹After him was Shamgar, the son of Anath, and he smote Philistines, 600 men with a cattle prod. Thus he also delivered Israel.

Chapter 4

¹Then the sons of Israel resumed once again to do this evil in the eyes of Yahweh, after Ehud died. ²So Yahweh handed them over into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Now the commander of his army was Sisera, and he was residing in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³Then the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh, because he had nine hundred chariots of iron and he oppressed the sons of Israel with severe might twenty years.

⁴Now Deborah was a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth. She was judging Israel at that time. ⁵She would sit beneath the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the sons of Israel came up to her for justice. ⁶She sent and called for Barak, the son of Abinoam, from Kedesh Naphtali. She said to him, "Has Yahweh, the God of Israel, not commanded: 'Go and draft at Mount Tabor, and you shall take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun?' ⁷I will draw out Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin, to you along the Kishon River, and his chariot and his multitude, and I will give him into your hand'." ⁸Barak replied to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go." ⁹She declared, "I will indeed go with you, for naught, since it will not be your honor on the way which you are going, but with a hand of a woman Yahweh will give over Sisera." Then Deborah rose up and she went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰Then Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. He went up, ten thousand men were at his feet, and Deborah went up with him.

¹¹Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from Cain, from the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses. He pitched his tent as far as an oak tree in Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.

¹²When they reported to Sisera that Barak, the son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³Sisera summoned all of his chariotry, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all of the people who were with him, from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River. ¹⁴Then Deborah directed to Barak, "Arise! For this day when Yahweh has given Sisera into your hand, has not Yahweh gone forth before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor along with ten thousand men beside him. ¹⁵Yahweh dismayed Sisera and all of the chariotry and all of the army with an edge of a sword before Barak. So Sisera dismounted from atop the chariot and fled away on his feet. ¹⁶But Barak pursued after the chariotry and after the army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and the entire army of Sisera fell by an edge of a sword, not even one remained.

¹⁷However Sisera had fled on his feet 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 she said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me. Do not fear." So he turned to her, into the tent, and she concealed him with the coverlet. ¹⁹He requested of her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened the leather bag of milk and gave him drink, and then she covered him. ²⁰Then he directed her, "Stand at the entrance of the tent. It shall be if anyone should come and ask you and say, 'Is there anyone here?', then you shall say 'There is not'." ²¹Then Jael, the wife of Heber, took the peg of the tent and she put the hammer in her hand. She came to him in the silence, and she drove the peg into his temple and pounded down to the ground. For he had been soundly sleeping and weary, instead he died. ²²Then, behold, Barak was pursuing Sisera, and Jael went out to meet

him and she said to him, "Come, and let me show you the man whom you are seeking." So he came to her, and behold, Sisera had fallen dead, and the peg was in his temple.

²³So on that day God vanquished Jabin, the king of Canaan, before the sons of Israel. ²⁴Thus the hand of the sons of Israel had gone on becoming increasingly severe against Jabin, the king of Canaan, up to the point that they had destroyed Jabin, the king of Canaan.

Chapter 5

¹So Deborah sang with Barak, the son of Abinoam, on that day, saying:

²"When long hair flowed freely in Israel, as people enlisted themselves willingly, everyone bless Yahweh!

³Hear, O kings! Give ear, O rulers! I, unto Yahweh, even I, I will sing, I will make music unto Yahweh, the God of Israel.

⁴Yahweh, because of your going forth out of Seir,
because of your marching out of the open land of Edom,
the earth quaked, the heavens also dripped,
also the dark clouds dripped down water.

⁵Mountains flowed because of the presence of Yahweh,
this Sinai, because of the presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

⁶In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath,
in the days of Jael, main roads were abandoned,
and walkers of footpaths would walk crooked paths.

⁷Rural people ceased to be in Israel,
they ceased to be until when I arose, Deborah, when I arose, a mother in Israel!

⁸When he chose new gods,
then there was fighting at the city gates,
neither shield nor spear was seen
among forty thousand in Israel.

⁹My heart is alongside those pledging order in Israel,
those freely enlisting themselves among the people.
Everyone bless Yahweh!

¹⁰Riding on white donkeys,
sitting on carpets,
or walking along a road, sing of this,

¹¹louder than the sound of those distributing water from watering places.

There they continuously celebrate the righteous deeds of Yahweh,
the righteous actions of his rural people in Israel.

Then the people of Yahweh went down to the gates.

¹²Awake, awake, Deborah!

Awake, awake, utter a song!

Arise, Barak, and lead away captive your prisoner, the son of Abinoam.

¹³Then a survivor prevails over nobles,

the people of Yahweh prevail at my side against the warriors.

¹⁴From Ephraim, their root was against Amalek;

after you, Benjamin, among your peoples.

From Machir those with resolve came down,

and from Zebulun those who wield the scepter of a scribe.

¹⁵My princes in Issachar were with Deborah;

and Issachar was also with Barak

into a plain he was sent out on his feet.

Among the divisions of Reuben

there were great resolutions of heart.

¹⁶Why did you sit among the campfires,

in order to hear signaling for flocks?

As for the divisions of Reuben

there were great resolutions of heart.

¹⁷Gilead settled in the region beyond the Jordan;

but Dan, why does he sojourn on ships?

Asher dwelt at the coast of the seas

and he resides along his harbors.

¹⁸Zebulun was a people willfully scorning its soul even to death,

also Naphtali on the elevated places of the battlefield.

¹⁹Kings came, they did battle;

at that time the kings of Canaan did battle at Taanach

along the waters of Megiddo.

Plunder of silver they did not take.

²⁰From the heavens the stars did battle,
from their courses they did battle against Sisera.

²¹The Kishon River swept them away,
the ancient river, the Kishon River.
Tread on, O my soul, in strength!

²²Then hooves of a horse beat down,
from rushing, the rushing of his valiant ones.

²³'Curse Meroz!' said the messenger of Yahweh.
'You shall surely curse those dwelling in it,
because they did not come to the aid of Yahweh—
to the aid of Yahweh against the mighty men.'

²⁴Jael is most blessed of women,
the wife of Heber, the Kenite,
out of women in the tent she is blessed.

²⁵Water he requested, milk she gave, in a bowl suitable for nobles,
she brought curdled milk.

²⁶They reached out, her hand to the tent peg,
and her right hand to a hammer of workmen;
she struck Sisera, she shattered his head.
She struck through and she pierced his temple.

²⁷Between her feet, he bowed, he fell, he lay down.
Between her feet he bowed, he fell;
at the place where he bowed, there he fell violently destroyed.

²⁸Through the window she had looked down and lamented,
the mother of Sisera through the lattice window.
'Why has his chariot delayed in coming?
Why are the hoofbeats of his chariots late?'

²⁹The wisest of her princesses answered,
yet she continued her utterance to herself:

³⁰'Are they not finding, are they dividing up spoil,
a maiden, two maidens for every warrior,

spoil of dyed fabrics for Sisera,
 spoil of dyed fabrics, embroidered,
 dyed fabric embroidered on both sides for the necks as spoil?

³¹So may all of your enemies perish, Yahweh!

But may those who love him be as the coming forth of the sun in its strength."

Then the land was tranquil forty years.

Chapter 6

¹The sons of Israel did this evil in the eyes of Yahweh, so Yahweh gave them over into the hand of Midian seven years. ²Then the hand of Midian prevailed over Israel. On account of the presence of Midian, the sons of Israel made the dens for themselves which were in the mountains, the caves, and the strongholds. ³Now it would happen whenever Israel sowed, that Midian and Amalek would come up, even sons of the east would come up against him. ⁴They encamped around them and they ruined the produce of the land as far as your coming into Gaza. As a result means of sustaining life would not remain in Israel, neither sheep, nor cattle, nor donkey. ⁵When they and their livestock would come up, along with their tents, they would come up as an abundance of a locust swarm because of the multitude. Of them and of their camels there was no counting thus they came into the land in order to destroy it. ⁶Israel was severely impoverished because of the presence of Midian, so the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh.

⁷Now it happened that when the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh on account of Midian, ⁸that Yahweh sent a man, a prophet to the sons of Israel. He said to them, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: 'I myself, have brought you up out of Egypt, and I have brought you out of the house of slavery. ⁹I rescued you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of all of those oppressing you. I drove them out of your presence, and I have surely given to you their land. ¹⁰I said to you, "I am Yahweh your God; you shall not revere the gods of the Amorite, when you are dwelling in their land." But you have not heeded my voice.'"

¹¹Now the messenger of Yahweh came and sat beneath the oak which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite. Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress in order to hide from the presence of Midian. ¹²Then the messenger of Yahweh appeared to him and declared to him, "Yahweh is with you, O warrior of valor!" ¹³Gideon said to him, "With me, my lord? If Yahweh is with us, then why has all of this come to us? Where are all of his miraculous workings that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not Yahweh bring us up out of Egypt?' But now Yahweh has forsaken us and given us over into the grasp of Midian." ¹⁴Then Yahweh turned to him and said, "Go in this strength of yours and you shall deliver Israel from the grasp of Midian. Have I not sent you?" ¹⁵Then he replied to him, "Please, my lord! In what manner will I deliver Israel? See, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the most insignificant in the house of my father." ¹⁶Then Yahweh said to him, "Because I will be with you, indeed you shall destroy Midian as one man." ¹⁷He replied to him, "If indeed I have found favor in your eyes, then perform a sign for me that it is you speaking to me. ¹⁸Please, do not depart from this place, until my coming to you then I will bring out my offering and I will set it before you." So he said, "Myself, I will stay until your returning."

¹⁹Then Gideon went and he prepared a young goat and from an ephah of flour, unleavened bread. He placed the meat in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot and brought them out to him to beneath the oak tree, and he presented them. ²⁰Then the messenger of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and place them on this rock, and pour out the broth," and he did so. ²¹Then the messenger of Yahweh stretched out the edge of the staff that was in his hand. He touched the meat and the unleavened bread; the fire went up out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the messenger of Yahweh went away out of his sight. ²²When Gideon saw that he was the messenger of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "Alas, O my Lord Yahweh, for

because of this I have seen the messenger of Yahweh face to face!" ²³But Yahweh replied to him, "Peace be unto you! Do not be afraid, you will not die." ²⁴So Gideon built an altar there to Yahweh and he named it Yahweh is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah of the Abiezerite.

²⁵Now it happened on that night that Yahweh said to him, "Take the young bull that belongs to your father, and the second bull seven years old, break into pieces the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it. ²⁶You shall build an altar to Yahweh your God on the top of this place of refuge in the usual arrangement. Then you shall take the second bull and you shall offer a whole burnt offering, on the wood pieces from the Asherah that you shall cut down." ²⁷So Gideon took ten men out of his servants and did just as Yahweh had instructed to him. Now it happened that because he was afraid of the household of his father and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.

²⁸When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, the Asherah that was beside it had been cut down, and the second bull had been offered on the altar that had been built. ²⁹As a result each man said to his neighbor, "Who has done this thing?" When they inquired and searched, they said, "Gideon, the son of Joash has done this thing." ³⁰Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son so that he may die, because he tore down the altar of Baal, and because he cut down the Asherah that was beside it." ³¹Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you really contend on behalf of Baal? Will you really help him? Whoever contends for him, he will be put to death while it is still the morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself when someone tears down his altar." ³²Therefore on that day he called him "Jerub Baal," saying, "May the Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar.

³³Now all of Midian, Amalek, and the sons of the east assembled themselves together, and they crossed over and they camped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴But the Spirit of Yahweh clothed Gideon. As a result he blew the shofar, thus he summoned Abiezer after him. ³⁵Then he sent messengers in all of Manasseh, and he summoned him also after him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

³⁶Then Gideon said to the true God, "If it is you delivering Israel by my hand, just as you have spoken, ³⁷Look, I am putting this fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If dew shall be upon the fleece, only it, but on all of the ground it is dry, then I will know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, just as you have spoken." ³⁸Now it happened afterwards that he rose early on the next day, and he pressed the fleece together. He wrung out dew from the fleece, the amount that fills the basin with water. ³⁹Then Gideon said to the true God, "Do not let your anger burn against me, but may I speak only this time. May I please test only this time with the fleece? May it be, I pray, dry on the fleece, only it, but on all of the ground may there be dew." ⁴⁰So God did this during that night. It was dry on the fleece, only it, but on all of the ground there was dew.

Chapter 7

¹Then Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon, rose up early, and all of the people who were with him, and they encamped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was northward from him, toward the hill of Moreh in the valley.

²Yahweh said to Gideon, "Too many are the people who are with you for my giving Midian into their hand, lest Israel get glory themselves over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' ³Now therefore, announce in the ears of the people saying, 'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand of the people turned back, but ten thousand remained.

⁴Then Yahweh said to Gideon, "Still the people are too numerous. Bring them down to the water, and I will further refine them for you there. So it will be whoever I will say to you, 'This one will go with you,' he will go with you. But anyone of whom I will say to you, 'This one will not go with you,' he will not go." ⁵So he brought the people down to the water, and Yahweh said to Gideon, "Anyone who laps up with his tongue from the water, just as would lap the dog, you shall set him apart, likewise anyone who kneels down on his knees to drink." ⁶Now it happened that the number of those who lapped with their hand to their mouth was three hundred men, but all of the rest of the

people knelt down on their knees to drink water. ⁷Then Yahweh said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men those who lapped, I will deliver you and I will give Midian over into your hand. So let the other people go back each one to his own place." ⁸Then the people took provision into their hand and their shofars but the other men of Israel he sent away, each man to his tents, except for the three hundred of the men he retained. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

⁹Now it happened during that night Yahweh said to him, "Arise! Go down into the camp, for I have given him over into your hand. ¹⁰But if you are afraid to go down, go down, you and Purah your armor bearer to the camp, ¹¹and you shall hear what they are speaking, and afterwards your hands will be encouraged and you shall go down against the camp." So he went down, he and Purah his armor bearer, to the edge of the fifty who were in the camp. ¹²Now Midian, Amalek, and all of the sons of the east were lying down in the valley, as a locust swarm in abundance. As far as their camels they were innumerable, as the sand that is along the edge of the sea in abundance. ¹³Gideon came, and look, a man was telling a dream to his neighbor. He said, "Look! I have dreamed a dream, and look, a round loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian. It came as far as the tent, and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent collapsed." ¹⁴His neighbor answered and said, "There is nothing else this can be if not the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, the man of Israel. The true God has given Midian into his hand and all of the camp."

¹⁵Now it happened when Gideon heard the narration of the dream and its interpretation, that he bowed down in worship. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Rise up! For Yahweh has given the camp of Midian into your hand." ¹⁶Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put shofars into the hand of all of them as well as empty jars, with torches inside of the jars. ¹⁷He said to them, "You shall look to me and thus you shall do. Watch! When I am coming along the edge of the camp, it shall be just as I do, thus you must do. ¹⁸When I blow the shofar, I and everyone who is with me, then you shall blow the shofars, also you around all of the camp. Then you shall shout, 'For Yahweh and for Gideon!'"

¹⁹So Gideon and one hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp, at the beginning of the middle nightwatch. They had only just stationed the guards, when they blew the shofars and they shattered the jars that were in their hand. ²⁰Then the three companies blew the shofars and they broke the jars. They held the torches in their left hand and the shofars in their right hand to blow. They shouted out, "A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon." ²¹Each man stood in his place around the camp and all of the camp ran. They shouted and fled away. ²²When they blew the three hundred shofars, Yahweh set the sword of each man against his comrade and against all of the camp. As a result the army fled as far as Beth Shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel Meholah, towards Tabbath. ²³Then the men of Israel from Naphtali, and from Asher, and from all of Manasseh were summoned, and they pursued after Midian.

²⁴Also Gideon sent messengers throughout all of the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Go down opposite Midian and seize before them the waters, as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Thus all of the men of Ephraim were summoned and they captured the waters, as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. ²⁵They captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued after Midian, and they brought the head of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, from across the Jordan.

Chapter 8

¹The men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this thing you have done to us, not summoning us when you went to fight against Midian?" Then they complained forcefully against him. ²He said to them, "What have I done now according to you? Are not the grape gleanings from Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer? ³God has given over the princes of Midian into your hand, Oreb and Zeeb! So what was I able to do compared to you?" Then their spirit concerning him abated when he was speaking this word.

⁴Then Gideon came to the Jordan, crossing over, he and the three hundred men who were with him. They were weary, yet they continued pursuing. ⁵Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give round loaves of bread to the

people who are at my feet, for they are weary, yet I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

⁶The princes of Succoth replied, "Is the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand that we should give bread to your army?" ⁷So Gideon declared, "Assuredly when Yahweh has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will thresh your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and briers." ⁸Then he went up from there to Peniel and also spoke to them in this manner, but the men of Peniel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered. ⁹So he declared also to the men of Peniel saying, "When I return in peace, I will tear down this tower."

¹⁰Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor and their troops were with them, about fifteen thousand, all the remaining out of all of the camp of the sons of the east, for the fallen were one hundred twenty thousand men drawing a sword. ¹¹Then Gideon went up the road of those dwelling in the tents, from the east to Nobah and Jogbehah. He struck the camp, when the camp was feeling secure. ¹²Zebah and Zalmunna fled, but he pursued after them and he captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna. Thus he caused all of the camp to tremble in terror.

¹³Then Gideon, the son of Joash, returned from the battle, going through the ascent of Heres. ¹⁴He captured a young man out of the men of Succoth and he interrogated him. He wrote down for him the princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. ¹⁵Then he came to the men of Succoth and he said, "Look at Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me saying, 'Is the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand that we should give bread to your weary men.'" ¹⁶He took the elders of the city and the thorns of the wilderness and the briers, and he made the men of Succoth undergo them. ¹⁷Then he tore down the tower of Peniel and he killed the men of the city.

¹⁸Next he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What sort were the men who you killed at Tabor?" They replied, "As you are, so were they. Each one was as the form of the sons of the king." ¹⁹So he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Yahweh lives, if only you had let them live, I would not have killed you." ²⁰Then he said to Jether his firstborn, "Arise, kill them!" But the young man did not pull out his sword because he was afraid, for he was still a youth. ²¹Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Arise yourself and fall upon us! Truly like a man with his own power." So Gideon rose up and he killed Zebah and Zalmunna. He also took the crescent-shaped ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

²²Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and even the son of your son, because you have delivered us out of the hand of Midian." ²³But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you myself, neither will my son rule over you. Yahweh will rule over you." ²⁴Then Gideon said to them, "Let me ask a request of you, that each man give me the earring from his spoil." For they had earrings of gold because they were Ishmaelites. ²⁵They replied, "We will surely give them." So they spread out the garment and each man threw the earring from his spoil onto there. ²⁶Now the weight of the earrings of gold that he requested was one thousand seven hundred pieces of gold, besides that of the crescent-shaped ornaments, the pendants, the dyed purple garments that were upon the kings of Midian, and besides that of the collars that were around the necks of their camels. ²⁷Then Gideon made it into an ephod and placed it in his city, in Ophrah, and all of Israel pursued adulterously after it there. It became as a snare for Gideon and for his house. ²⁸So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel and they did not continue to raise up their heads. So the land was tranquil forty years during the days of Gideon.

²⁹Jerubbaal, the son of Joash, went and lived in his house. ³⁰Now Gideon had seventy sons coming forth from his loins, for he had many wives. ³¹His concubine, who was in Shechem, even she bore him a son, and he made his name Abimelech. ³²Gideon, the son of Joash, died at a good old age and he was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiezerite.

³³Now it happened that when Gideon had died, the sons of Israel turned back again and pursued adulterously after the Baals. They made Baal-Berith for themselves as a god. ³⁴The sons of Israel did not remember Yahweh, their God, the one who had delivered them from the hand of all of their enemies all around. ³⁵They did not show lasting loyalty with the house of Jerubbaal, Gideon, in accordance with all of the good that he did within Israel.

Chapter 9

¹Now Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to the brothers of his mother and he spoke to them and to all of the family of the house of the father of his mother saying, ²"Please speak in the ears of all of the citizens of Shechem, 'What is better for you, seventy men ruling over you, all of the sons of Jerubbaal, or one man ruling over you? Remember that I am your bone and your flesh.'" ³The brothers of his mother spoke all of these things on his behalf in the ears of all of the citizens of Shechem, and their heart turned aside after Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." ⁴Then they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal Berith, and Abimelech hired with them unprincipled and undisciplined men, so they went after him. ⁵Then he went to the house of his father at Ophrah, and he killed his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men upon one stone. But Jotham was left, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, for he had hidden himself. ⁶Then all of the prominent citizens of Shechem and all of Beth Millo assembled themselves and they went and installed Abimelech as king beside an oak tree near the standing pillar that was in Shechem.

⁷When they told Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim. He lifted up his voice and cried out and said to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so God will listen to you. ⁸Once the trees went about in order to anoint a king over themselves. So they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' ⁹But the olive tree replied to them, 'Have I stopped producing my fatness, when by me they honor gods and men, that I should go to wave over the trees?' ¹⁰So the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come! Reign over us.' ¹¹But the fig tree said to them, 'Have I stopped producing my sweetness and my good fruit, that I should go to wave over the trees?' ¹²Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come! Reign over us.' ¹³Then the vine said to them, 'Have I stopped producing my new wine, which cheers gods and man, that I should go to wave over the trees?' ¹⁴Then all of the trees said to the thornbush, 'You come, reign over us.' ¹⁵The thornbush said to the trees, 'If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come, seek refuge in my shade. But if not, may fire go forth from the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon.' ¹⁶Therefore, now if in truth and in integrity you have acted when you installed Abimelech as king, and if you have done well concerning Jerubbaal and with his household, and if according to the deed of his hands you have done to him, ¹⁷that my father fought on your behalf, and threw aside his life even out front, when he delivered you out of the hand of Midian, ¹⁸but today you have risen up against the house of my father and have killed his sons, seventy men, upon one stone. Then you have installed Abimelech, the son of his female servant, as king over the citizens of Shechem, because he is your brother. ¹⁹Now if you have acted in truth and in integrity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, rejoice about Abimelech, and he himself will also rejoice about you. ²⁰But if not, fire shall come forth from Abimelech and it shall consume the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo. Fire shall also come forth from the citizens of Shechem and from Beth Millo and it shall consume Abimelech." ²¹Then Jotham fled away and escaped, and he went to Beer. He settled there away from the presence of Abimelech, his brother.

²²Now Abimelech ruled over Israel three years. ²³Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and between the citizens of Shechem so that the citizens of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, ²⁴by revisiting the violent treatment of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal and by putting their blood upon Abimelech their brother, who had killed them, and upon the citizens of Shechem who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers. ²⁵So the citizens of Shechem positioned men in ambush after him along the tops of the hills. They robbed everyone who would pass by them along the road, and it was reported to Abimelech.

²⁶Then Gaal, the son of Ebed came along with his brothers and they went over to Shechem. The citizens of Shechem trusted him. ²⁷They went out into the field and they picked grapes from their vineyards, and they pressed them. They celebrated harvest festivals and they went into the house of their gods, then they ate and they drank, and they cursed Abimelech. ²⁸Then Gaal, the son of Ebed, said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul his deputy? Serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. Why should we serve him, ourselves? ²⁹Who will give this people into my hand? Then I would depose Abimelech. He said to Abimelech, 'Enlarge your army and come forth.'"

³⁰When Zebul, the prince of the city, heard the words of Gaal, the son of Ebed, his anger burned. ³¹So he sent messengers to Abimelech in secret, saying, "Look, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers are coming to Shechem,

and look, they are inciting the city against you. ³²Therefore, now, rise up by night, you and the people who are with you, and lie in ambush in the field. ³³Then it shall happen, in the morning, at the rising of the sun, you shall set out early and you shall spread out in an attack against the city. Watch, when he and the people who are with him are coming out to you, then you do to him just as your hand finds occasion."

³⁴So Abimelech and all of the people who were with him rose up by night, and they set up an ambush against Shechem. They were four units. ³⁵Gaal, the son of Ebed, went out and he stood in the entrance of the gate of the city. Then Abimelech and the people who were with him rose up from the ambush. ³⁶When Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, a group of people is coming down from the tops of the hills!" Zebul said to him, "You are seeing the shadow of the hills as men." ³⁷Again, Gaal continued to speak and said, "Look, groups of people are coming down from beside the summit of the land, and one unit is coming from the way of the oak of the diviners." ³⁸Then Zebul said to him, "Where then is your mouth, with which you said, 'Who is Abimelech that we should serve him?' Is this not the people who you regard it with contempt? Indeed, go out now and fight against him." ³⁹So Gaal went out before the citizens of Shechem, and he fought against Abimelech. ⁴⁰Abimelech pursued him, and he fled from his presence. Many fell fatally wounded as far as the entrance of the city gate.

⁴¹Then Abimelech settled in Arumah. Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers away from dwelling in Shechem. ⁴²Now it happened that the next day the people went out into the field, and they reported it to Abimelech. ⁴³So he took the people, and he split up into three units. Then he waited in ambush in the field. When he saw and look, the people were going out of the city, then he rose up against them and he killed them. ⁴⁴Abimelech and the units that were with him spread out and they stood at the entrance of the gate of the city. But two units spread out against everyone who was in the field and they killed them. ⁴⁵Abimelech fought against the city all that day. He captured the city, and he killed the people who were in it. Then he tore down the city and scattered salt on it.

⁴⁶When all the lords of the tower of Shechem heard, they went into the citadel of the house of El-Berith. ⁴⁷Then it was reported to Abimelech that all the lords of the tower of Shechem had assembled themselves. ⁴⁸So Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. Abimelech took the proper ax in his hand and cut off a branch from the trees. He lifted it and set it upon his shoulder and said to the people who were with him, "Whatever you have seen that I have done, hurry, do the same as me." ⁴⁹So all the people also each cut off a branch and they went after Abimelech. Then they piled them on top of the underground chamber, thus on account of them they burned the underground chamber with fire. As a result all the distinguished people in the tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.

⁵⁰Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he set up camp around Thebez and he captured it. ⁵¹But there was a strong tower in the midst of the city, so all of the men and the women and all the prominent citizens of the city fled to there. They closed it up behind themselves and they went up on the roof of the tower. ⁵²Then Abimelech came towards the tower and he fought against it, and he approached as far as the entrance of the tower in order to burn it with fire. ⁵³But one woman threw down an upper millstone onto the head of Abimelech and it crushed his skull. ⁵⁴Then he cried out hurriedly to the young man bearing his armor, and he said to him, "Draw out your sword and put me to death, lest they will say about me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his young man stabbed him so that he died. ⁵⁵When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech had died, they went each to his own place. ⁵⁶Thus God avenged the evil of Abimelech that he did to his father by killing his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷All the evil of the men of Shechem God caused to return back upon their own heads and on them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal.

Chapter 10

¹Now after Abimelech, Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, arose in order to deliver Israel. He settled in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim. ²He judged Israel twenty-three years. He died and was buried in Shamir.

³Then arose after him Jair the Gileadite. He judged Israel twenty-two years. ⁴Now he had thirty sons, riding on thirty donkeys. There were thirty cities for them, they call them Havvoth Jair to this day, that are in the land of the Gilead. ⁵Then Jair died and he was buried in Kamon.

⁶The sons of Israel continued to do this evil in the eyes of Yahweh: they worshiped the Baals, the Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. They forsook Yahweh and did not serve him. ⁷The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, so he gave them over into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon. ⁸They shattered and oppressed the sons of Israel in that year, and for eighteen years all the sons of Israel who were on the opposite side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in the Gilead. ⁹Then the sons of Ammon also crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, and as a result there was for Israel exceedingly great distress.

¹⁰Then the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh, saying, "We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and we have served the Baals." ¹¹Then Yahweh said to the sons of Israel, "Was it not from the Egyptians, from the Amorite, from the sons of Ammon, from the Philistines, ¹²the Sidonians and Amalek and Maon, when they oppressed you that you cried out to me, and I delivered you from their hand? ¹³Yet you have abandoned me and you have served other gods. Therefore, I will not continue to deliver you. ¹⁴Go and cry out to the gods that you have chosen for yourselves. They should deliver you at the time of your distress." ¹⁵Then the sons of Israel said to Yahweh, "We have sinned. You do to us according to all that is good in your eyes. Only rescue us please this day." ¹⁶They removed the foreign gods from their midst and they worshiped Yahweh. Then His soul became dismayed with the suffering of Israel.

¹⁷Now the sons of Ammon were summoned and they encamped in Gilead. So the sons of Israel gathered together and they encamped at Mizpah. ¹⁸Then the people, the princes of Gilead each said to his fellow man, "Who is the man who will begin to fight against the sons of Ammon? He will become the leader over all who are residing in Gilead."

Chapter 11

¹Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a warrior of strength, but he was the son of a woman committing fornication. Gilead begat Jephthah. ²The wife of Gilead also gave birth to his sons. When the sons of the wife grew up, they drove out Jephthah and they said to him, "You will not inherit from the house of our father since a son of another woman are you." ³So Jephthah fled from the presence of his brothers and he settled in the land of Tob. Unprincipled men associated around Jephthah and they went about with him.

⁴Now it happened after some days that the sons of Ammon fought with Israel. ⁵It was when the sons of Ammon fought with Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to summon Jephthah from the land of Tob. ⁶Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and you will be for us as commander so we may fight against the sons of Ammon." ⁷But Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "Do you yourselves not hate me since you drove me out of the house of my father? Why have you come to me now when you have trouble?" ⁸Then the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "Rightly, now we have turned back to you; so come with us and fight against the sons of Ammon, and you will become commander for us over all residing in Gilead." ⁹Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you bring me back to fight against the sons of Ammon, and Yahweh gives them over before me, I will actually be your leader?" ¹⁰Then the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "Yahweh will be a witness between us, surely according to your word, thus we will do!" ¹¹So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people set him as commander and leader over themselves. Jephthah spoke all his words before Yahweh in the Mizpah.

¹²Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon, saying, "What has happened with respect to me and to you, that you have come against me to fight over my land?" ¹³The king of the sons of Ammon responded to the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel seized my land at his going up out of Egypt, from Arnon up to the

Jabbok, and over to the Jordan. Now return them in peace.”¹⁴ Then Jephthah continued again and sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon,¹⁵ and he said to him, “Thus Jephthah said: Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the sons of Ammon.¹⁶ However in their coming up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness as far as the Sea of Reeds and he came to Kadesh.¹⁷ When Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, ‘Please may I pass through your land,’ the king of Edom would not listen. He likewise sent to the king of Moab, but he was not willing. So Israel stayed at Kadesh.¹⁸ Then he went through the wilderness and turned away from the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and he went to the place of the rising of the sun for the land of Moab. They camped on the other side of the Arnon, but they did not go within the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.¹⁹ Israel sent messengers to Sihon, the king of the Amorite, the king of Heshbon. Israel said to him, ‘Please, let us pass through your land as far as my place.’²⁰ But Sihon did not trust Israel passing through within his border. So Sihon assembled all of his people together and they camped at Jahaz, and he fought with Israel.²¹ Then Yahweh, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all of his people over into the hand of Israel and they defeated them. Thus Israel possessed all of the land of the Amorite inhabiting that region.²² They possessed everything within the territory of the Amorite, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, and from the wilderness as far as the Jordan.²³ Since therefore Yahweh, the God of Israel, has expelled the Amorite out of the presence of his people Israel, will you indeed possess it?²⁴ Will you not take possession if Chemosh, your god, allows you to possess it? So all that Yahweh our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess it.²⁵ Now are you really better than Balak, the son of Zippor, the king of Moab? Did he dare contend with Israel or did he ever wage war against them?²⁶ While Israel resided three hundred years in Heshbon and in its villages, and in Aroer and in its villages, and in all the cities that are along the banks of the Arnon—why then did you not repossess during that time?²⁷ I have not sinned against you, but you are doing wrong in dealing with me by fighting against me. Yahweh, the judge, will decide today between the sons of Israel and between the sons of Ammon.”²⁸ But the king of the sons of Ammon did not listen to the words of Jephthah that he had sent to him.

²⁹ Then the Spirit of Yahweh came on Jephthah, and he passed through the Gilead and Manasseh, and he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed through the sons of Ammon.³⁰ Jephthah vowed a vow to Yahweh and said, “If you truly give the sons of Ammon into my hand,³¹ then it shall be the one who comes out, whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, that he will belong to Yahweh, and I will offer him up as a whole burnt offering.”³² So Jephthah passed through to the sons of Ammon to fight against them, and Yahweh gave them into his hand.³³ Then he attacked them from Aroer and as far as your coming in to Minnith, twenty cities, and up to Abel Keramim, an exceedingly great slaughter. So the sons of Ammon were subdued by the presence of the sons of Israel.

³⁴ Jephthah came into the Mizpah area, to his house, and look, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. However, she was an only child; he did not have a son or daughter apart from her.³⁵ Now it happened when he saw her that he tore his garments and he said, “Alas, my daughter! Indeed, you have made me bow in grief, and you are among those who cause me pain! For I have opened my mouth to Yahweh and I am not able to turn back.”³⁶ Then she said to him, “My father, you have opened your mouth to Yahweh. Do to me according to what came forth from your mouth, after what Yahweh has done for you: complete vengeance against your enemies, against the sons of Ammon.”³⁷ She said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me. Release me for two months, so I may go away and I will fall prostrate on the hills and I will weep on account of my virginity, I and my companions.”³⁸ He replied, “Go.” Then he sent her away for two months. She went, she and her companions, and she wept on account of her virginity on the hills.³⁹ Now it happened at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with respect to her that he had vowed. She did not know a man, and it became a custom in Israel.⁴⁰ From time to time the daughters of Israel went to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for four days during the year.

Chapter 12

¹ Now the men of Ephraim were summoned and they passed northward and they said to Jephthah, “Why did you pass through in order to fight against the sons of Ammon but you did not call us to go with you? We will burn your

house down over you with fire.”²Jephthah said to them, “A man in exceedingly great dispute I have been, I and my people and the sons of Ammon. When I summoned you, you did not rescue me from their hand.³When I saw that you were not coming to assist, I put my life in my own hand. I passed through to the sons of Ammon, and Yahweh gave them over into my hand. Now why have you come up to me to fight against me this day?”⁴Then Jephthah assembled all of the men of Gilead and he fought Ephraim. The men of Gilead struck Ephraim because they had said, “Fugitives of Ephraim are you, O people of Gilead, in the midst of Ephraim, in the midst of Manasseh.”⁵Gilead captured the crossing places of the Jordan along Ephraim. It happened when any of the survivors of Ephraim would say, “May I cross over,” that the men of Gilead would say to him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” If he said, “No,”⁶then they would say to him, “Please say: Shibboleth.” But if he said “Sibboleth,” for he was not prepared to pronounce it correctly, they would seize him and they would slaughter him at the crossing places of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand from Ephraim fell at that time.

⁷Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and he was buried among the cities of Gilead.

⁸Then after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.⁹Now he had thirty sons. He sent away thirty daughters to the outside, and he brought in thirty daughters for his sons from the outside. He judged Israel seven years.¹⁰Then Ibzan died and he was buried in Bethlehem.¹¹After him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years.¹²Then Elon the Zebulunite died and he was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

¹³After him, Abdon, the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel.¹⁴Now he had forty sons and thirty sons of sons, who rode on seventy young male donkeys. He judged Israel eight years.¹⁵Then Abdon, the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and he was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekite.

Chapter 13

¹The sons of Israel continued to do this evil in the eyes of Yahweh, so Yahweh gave them over into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

²Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. His wife was barren and she had never given birth.³The messenger of Yahweh appeared to the wife and he said to her, “Look, please, you are barren and you have not given birth, but you will conceive and you will bear a son.⁴Now take care that you surely do not drink wine or strong drink, and you do not eat anything unclean.

⁵For surely you are pregnant and you will bear a son. A razor will not go up upon his head, for a Nazirite to God from the womb the boy will be. He will begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”⁶Then the woman came in and she explained to her husband saying, “The man of God came to me. His appearance was as the appearance of the messenger of God, exceedingly fearsome, so I did not ask him from where he had come. He did not reveal to me his name.⁷Then he said to me, ‘Surely, you are pregnant, and you will bear a son. So now, you must not drink wine or strong drink, and you must not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite to God from the womb until the day of his death.’”

⁸Then Manoah prayed to Yahweh and he said, “Oh please, my Lord, please let the man of God who you sent come again to us so that he may instruct us about what we must do for the boy who is to be born.”⁹The true God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the messenger of God came to the woman again when she was sitting in the field. But Manoah her husband was not with her.¹⁰So the woman hurried and she ran and she reported to her husband, and she said to him, “Look! The man has appeared to me who came to me that day!”¹¹So Manoah rose up and he went after his wife. When he came to the man, he said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to this woman?” He replied, “I am.”¹²Then Manoah said, “Now may your words come to pass. What will be the protocol for the boy, and his work?”¹³The messenger of Yahweh replied to Manoah, “Because of all that I have said to the woman, she must take heed herself.¹⁴From anything that comes forth from the vine of the wine, she must not consume. She must not drink wine or strong drink, and anything unclean she must not eat. Everything that I have commanded her, she must do.”

¹⁵Then Manoah said to the messenger of Yahweh, "Please let us detain you, so that we may prepare a young kid from the goats on account of your presence." ¹⁶The angel of Yahweh replied to Manoah, "Even if you would detain me, I will not eat your bread. But if you would prepare a burnt offering for Yahweh, you may offer it." For Manoah did not know that he was the messenger of Yahweh. ¹⁷Then Manoah said to the messenger of Yahweh, "What is your name, that when your words come to pass we may honor you?" ¹⁸The messenger of Yahweh replied to him, "Why is this, you are asking about my name, but it is incomprehensible!" ¹⁹Manoah took the young kid from the goats and the offering and he brought up a sacrifice upon the rock to Yahweh. Meanwhile he was about to perform an act causing wonder while Manoah and his wife were watching. ²⁰Now it happened when the flame went up from upon the altar towards the heavens, that the messenger of Yahweh went up in the flame of the altar while Manoah and his wife were watching. As a result they fell on their faces to the ground.

²¹But the messenger of Yahweh did not continue to appear any longer to Manoah or to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the messenger of Yahweh. ²²Manoah said to his wife, "Surely we will die, because we have seen God!" ²³But his wife replied to him, "If Yahweh had desired to kill us, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this." ²⁴The woman gave birth to a son, and she called his name Samson. The boy grew up and Yahweh blessed him. ²⁵Now the Spirit of Yahweh began to tap him in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and between Eshtaol.

Chapter 14

¹Samson went down to Timnah, and he saw a woman in Timnah, from the daughters of the Philistines. ²Then he went back up and he reported to his father and to his mother, and he said, "I saw a woman in Timnah, among the daughters of the Philistines. So now take her for me for a wife." ³His father and his mother replied to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all of my people, that you are going to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" Samson said to his father, "Take her for me, because she is right in my eyes." ⁴But his father and his mother did not know that this matter was from Yahweh, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

⁵Then Samson went down along with his father and his mother to Timnah. They came as far as the vineyards of Timnah, and look, a young lion among the lions was roaring when encountering him. ⁶The Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon him, and he tore it to pieces like butchering a young goat. There was not anything in his hand, but he did not disclose to his father or to his mother what he had done. ⁷Then he went down and he spoke to the woman, and she seemed right in the eyes of Samson. ⁸Then he returned after some days to take her. He turned aside to look for the carcass of the lion, and look, there was a swarm of bees in the dead body of the lion and honey. ⁹He scraped it into the palms of his hands and he went along, walking and eating as he went to his father and to his mother. He even gave some to them so that they ate, but he did not disclose to them that he had scooped the honey out of the dead body of the lion.

¹⁰Then his father went down to the woman, and there Samson prepared a drinking feast, because so would do the young men. ¹¹Now it happened when they saw him, that they brought thirty close friends and they were with him. ¹²Samson said to them, "Let me propose to you a riddle. If indeed you explain it to me during the seven days of the drinking feast, and truly you have found out, then I will give to you thirty linen outer garments and thirty changes of clothes. ¹³But if you are not able to provide an explanation to me, then you must yourselves give to me thirty linen outer garments and thirty changes of clothes." They said to him, "Set forth your riddle, so we may hear it." ¹⁴He said to them,

"From the eater came forth food;

and from a strong one came forth sweetness."

But they were not able to explain the riddle in three days.

¹⁵Now it happened on the seventh day that they said to the wife of Samson, "Entice your husband so he may reveal to us the riddle, lest we burn you and the house of your father with fire. Have you invited us in order to dispossess us or not?" ¹⁶Then the wife of Samson wept beside him and she said, "Surely you hate me! You do not love me! You have put forth a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not informed me." He said to her, "Look, I have not informed my father or my mother, should I inform you?" ¹⁷She continued to weep beside him during the seven days that they had the drinking feast. Now it happened on the seventh day that he informed her because she pressed him, with the result that she revealed the riddle to the sons of her people. ¹⁸Then the men of the city said to him before the sun went down on the seventh day,

"What is sweeter than honey?

and what is stronger than a lion?"

So he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,

you would not have found out my riddle."

¹⁹Then the Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon him. He went down to Ashkelon and he struck down thirty of their men. He took their spoil, and he gave the changes of clothes from the riddle. His anger blazed, and he went up to the house of his father. ²⁰Then the wife of Samson came to be the wife of his close friend, who associated with him.

Chapter 15

¹Now it happened after some days, during the days of the harvest of wheat, that Samson visited his wife with a kid from the goats. for he said, "I will go in to my wife, to the inner room." But her father did not allow him to go in.

²Her father said, "Truly I said that surely you hated her, so I gave her to your close friend. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please may she be yours in her place." ³Samson said to them, "This time I am blameless concerning the Philistines when I am inflicting calamity against them." ⁴Then Samson went and captured three hundred foxes and he made them turn tail to tail. He took torches, and he set one torch between two of the tails in the middle. ⁵He kindled fire in the torches, he let them loose into the standing grain of the Philistines. As a result he burned both the stack of sheaves and also the standing grain, even a vineyard, and olive orchard. ⁶So the Philistines said, "Who has done this?", and they replied "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and he gave her to his close friend." As a result the Philistines went up and they burned her and her father with fire. ⁷Samson said to them, "Since you have actually acted like this, surely I have avenged myself against you, and afterwards, I will stop." ⁸He struck them on the lower leg as well as the thigh, a great slaughter. Then he went down and he remained in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

⁹But the Philistines went up and they encamped in Judah and they had spread themselves out in Lehi. ¹⁰Now the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" They replied, "We have come up in order to bind Samson, to do to him just as he has done to us." ¹¹Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and they said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are ruling over us? What is this you have done to us?" He replied to them, "Just as they have done to me, so I have done to them." ¹²They replied to him, "We have come down to bind you in order to give you over into the hand of the Philistines." But Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not instead attack me yourselves." ¹³They replied to him saying, "No, however surely we will bind you and we will give you over into their hand. But truly we will not kill you." Then they bound him with two new ropes and they brought him up from the rock.

¹⁴He had come as far as Lehi, and then the Philistines shouted as they encountered him. Then the Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon him. The ropes which were on his arms became as flax stalks which they had burned in fire, so his bands were loosed from upon his hands. ¹⁵He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and he stretched forth his hand and he took it and he slaughtered a thousand men with it. ¹⁶Then Samson said,

"With the jawbone of the donkey, one heap, two heaps,
with the jawbone of the donkey I have slaughtered a thousand men."

¹⁷Now it happened when he finished speaking that he hurled the jawbone out of his hand, and he named that place Ramath Lehi. ¹⁸Then he was very thirsty and cried out to Yahweh and he said, "You Yourself have given this great victory into the hand of Your servant. But now must I die with this thirst so that I will fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" ¹⁹So God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi and water came out of it. When he drank, his spirit returned so that he revived. Therefore he called the name of it En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. ²⁰Thus he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

Chapter 16

¹Now Samson went to Gaza and he saw a woman there, a harlot, and he went in to her. ²Thus the Gazites were saying, "Samson has come here." So they encircled and they laid in wait for him all the night at the gate of the city. They kept themselves quiet all the night, saying, "At the light of the morning, then we will kill him." ³Samson lay down until the middle of the night. Then he arose in the middle of the night and he seized the doors of the gate of the city and the two doorposts. He pulled them up along with the bolt, he hoisted them upon his shoulders, and he brought them up to the top of the hill which is in front of Hebron.

⁴Now it happened after this that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah. ⁵The governors of the Philistines came up to her, and they said to her, "Make him open up. See by what means is his great strength, and how we can prevail over him, so that we may bind him in order to weaken him. Then we will each give you one thousand one hundred silver pieces." ⁶So Delilah said to Samson, "Please, tell me by what means is your great strength, and how can you be bound in order to weaken you?" ⁷Samson replied to her, "If they would bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I would become weak and I would be just as one of the other men." ⁸Then the governors of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she tied him up with them. ⁹Now she had the ambush group staying in the room when she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he tore the cords to shreds just as a wick of flax fiber is torn to shreds when it draws in fire. So his strength did not become known.

¹⁰As a result Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have deceived me and you have spoken lies to me. Now tell me, please, by what means you can be bound." ¹¹He replied to her, "If in fact they would bind me with new cords with which work has not been done with them, I would become weak and I would be just as one of the other men." ¹²So Delilah took new cords and she bound him with them. She said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" with the ambush group staying in the room. But he flicked them off from upon his arms like they were thread.

¹³Then Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. Reveal to me in what manner you may be bound." So he said to her, "If you would only weave seven of the locks of hair from my head with the loom." ¹⁴She fastened them together with a pin, and she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" However he woke from his sleep and he pulled out the pin from the weaving and the warp of the loom.

¹⁵Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' yet your heart is not with me? You have dealt deceitfully with me these three times and you have not revealed to me by what means is your great strength." ¹⁶Now it happened that she pressured him with her speech throughout the day. She also continually pressed him so that his soul was vexed to death. ¹⁷So he told her everything in his heart and he said to her, "A razor has never gone up upon my head, because I have been a Nazirite to God from the womb of my mother. If I would be completely shaved, then my strength would leave me, and I would become weak. I would be just as any of the other men."

¹⁸When Delilah perceived that he had told her everything in his heart, she sent and she called to the governors of the Philistines, saying, "Come up one more time, for he has told me everything in his heart." Then the rulers of the Philistines came up to her, and they brought the silver in their hand. ¹⁹Then she made him fall asleep on her knees

and she called to the man while she shaved off the seven locks from his head. Thus she had begun to weaken him, and his strength departed from upon him. ²⁰Then she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" He woke up from his sleep and he said, "I will escape like time after time and I will shake myself loose." But he did not know that Yahweh had departed from upon him. ²¹The Philistines seized him and they gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and they bound him with a pair of bronze fetters. Now it happened that he was grinding at the house of the prisoners. ²²However, the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

²³The governors of the Philistines assembled themselves together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and for a celebration. They said, "Our god has given Samson into our hand, our great enemy." ²⁴When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the devastator of our land, who heaped up our slain ones." ²⁵Now it happened when their heart was merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may make us laugh." So they called for Samson from the house of the prisoners and he caused laughter in front of them. They had made him stand between the columns. ²⁶Samson said to the young man who was holding onto his hand, "Let me rest! Let me touch the columns, those which the building is situated upon them, so that I may support myself on them." ²⁷Now the building was full of the men and the women, and situated there were all of the governors of the Philistines. On the roof there were about three thousand men and women, who were watching while Samson was entertaining.

²⁸Then Samson called out to Yahweh and he said, "My Lord Yahweh, remember me, please! Strengthen me please, just this time, O God, so that I may avenge myself by one act of vengeance on the Philistines because of my two eyes." ²⁹Samson took hold of the two center columns on which the building was situated on them. He leaned himself against them, one in his right hand, and one in his left. ³⁰Then Samson said, "My soul will die with the Philistines!" He stretched out with his strength and the building fell on the governors and on all of the people who were in it. So the ones who died that he killed at his death were more than those he killed during his life. ³¹Then his brothers and all the house of his father went down. They carried him, as they went back up. They buried him between Zorah and between Eshtaol in the burial place of Manoah, his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.

Chapter 17

¹Now there was a man from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Micah. ²He said to his mother, "The one thousand one hundred silver pieces that were taken from you, about which you swore a curse, and moreover you uttered it in my ears—look! The silver is with me. I took it myself." His mother said, "Blessed is my son by Yahweh!" ³Then he brought back the one thousand one hundred silver pieces to his mother and his mother said, "I had entirely consecrated the silver to Yahweh, from my hand to my son in order to make an idol and a cast image. So now, I will return it back to you." ⁴Even so he restored the silver to his mother, his mother took two hundred silver pieces and she gave them to the refiner. He made it into an idol and a cast image, and so it was in the house of Micah. ⁵Now the man Micah he had a house of gods. He made an ephod and family idols, and he even filled the hand of one of his sons so he was as a priest for him. ⁶In those days there was not a king in Israel. Each man would do whatever was right in his eyes.

⁷Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, from the family of Judah, and he was a Levite. He was sojourning there. ⁸The man went out of the city, from Bethlehem in Judah to sojourn in whatever place he might find. He came to the hill country of Ephraim as far as the house of Micah as he made his way. ⁹Micah said to him, "Where have you come from?" He replied to him, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn in whatever place I might find." ¹⁰Micah said to him, "Stay with me, and be as a father and as a priest to me. I myself will give to you ten silver pieces for the days, and provision of garments and your sustenance." So the Levite went in. ¹¹So the Levite was willing to stay with the man, and the young man became to him as one of his sons. ¹²Micah filled the hand of the Levite, and the young man became as a priest for him. So it was in the house of Micah. ¹³Then Micah said, "Now I know that Yahweh will cause success for me, because I have this Levite as a priest."

Chapter 18

¹In those days there was not a king in Israel. Now in those days the tribe of the Danite was looking for a territory for itself to settle, because up to that day one had not fallen to it among the tribes of Israel for an inheritance. ²The sons of Dan sent five men from their family, from their members men, sons of valor from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to scout out the land on foot, and to examine it thoroughly. They said to them, "Go! Search out the land thoroughly." They came to the hill country of Ephraim, as far as the house of Micah, and they spent the night there. ³They were among the house of Micah and they recognized the voice of the young Levite man. So they turned aside there and they said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?" ⁴He replied to them, "Like this and like this Micah has done for me; he has hired me and I am to him as a priest." ⁵They said to him, "Inquire, please, of God, that we may know whether our journey will have success, which we are going on it." ⁶The priest said to them, "Go in peace, before Yahweh is your journey which you are going on it."

⁷Then the five men left and they came to Laish. They saw the people who were in the midst of it were living in safety as the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. There was no one causing them shame in any way in the land. Possessing restraint, they were far away from the Sidonians and there was no interaction for them with anyone. ⁸Then they went to their brothers in Zorah and Eshtaol. Their brothers said to them, "How are you?" ⁹They responded, "Get up at once that we may go up against them! For we have seen the land and look, it is exceedingly good. Yet you are keeping still. You must not be sluggish to go to enter in to possess the land. ¹⁰When you go, you will come to a people living securely, and the land is spacious on both hands! For God has given it into your hands, a place where there is not a lack of any thing that is on the earth."

¹¹So they journeyed away from there, six hundred men from the family of the Danite, out from Zorah and Eshtaol, girded with weapons of war. ¹²They went up and they camped at Kiriath Jearim, in Judah. On account of this they call that place Mahaneh Dan to this day. It is back behind Kiriath Jearim. ¹³They crossed over from there to the hill country of Ephraim, and they came up to the house of Micah.

¹⁴Then the five men who had gone to scout out the land of Laish on foot responded to their brothers and they said, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, family idols, a carved image, and a cast image? So now, consider what you will do." ¹⁵So they turned in there and they came to the house of the young man, the Levite, at the house of Micah, and they asked about his welfare. ¹⁶Now six hundred men who were from the sons of Dan, the ones who were girded in their weapons of war, were stationed at the entrance of the gate. ¹⁷The five men who had gone to scout out the land by foot went up, they came there. They took the carved image, the ephod, the family idols, and the cast image, while the priest was standing at the entrance of the gate along with the six hundred men who were girded with the weapons of war. ¹⁸When these came into the house of Micah, and they took the carved image, the ephod, the family idols, and the cast image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" ¹⁹They said to him, "Be quiet! Put your hand over your mouth and come with us, and be for us as a father and as a priest. Is it better your being a priest for the house of one man, or your being a priest for a tribe and for a family in Israel?" ²⁰The heart of the priest was agreeable, so he took the ephod, the family idols, and the carved image, and he went in the midst of the people.

²¹Then they turned and they went away. They put the little children, the catle, and the property of value in front of themselves. ²²They had gone a great distance from the house of Micah, when the men who were in the houses which were near the house of Micah were called together, and they overtook the sons of Dan. ²³They called to the sons of Dan. They turned their faces around and they said to Micah, "What has happened to you that you have assembled together?" ²⁴He replied, "You took my gods that I made, and the priest, and you left. What do I have any longer? So how is it you can say to me, 'What has happened to you?'" ²⁵The sons of Dan responded to him, "You should not make your voice heard among us, lest some men fierce in temperment will come with hostility against you, with the result that you would reap the destruction of your soul and the soul of your household." ²⁶So the sons of Dan went their way since Micah perceived that they were stronger than him. He turned back and he returned to his house.

²⁷Now they had taken what Micah had made, and the priest who was his, and they came to Laish, to a people living undisturbed and feeling secure. They slaughtered them with the mouth of the sword and they burned the city with fire. ²⁸There was not a deliverer because it was far from Sidon, and there was no involvement for them with any man. It was in the valley that is near Beth Rehob. They rebuilt the city and they lived in it. ²⁹They called the name of the city Dan, in honor of the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However Laish was the name of the city at the first. ³⁰The sons of Dan raised up the carved image for themselves. Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manesseh, he along with his sons were priests for the tribe of the Danite until the day of the exile of the land. ³¹So they set up for themselves the carved image belonging to Micah that he had made, all the days of the house of the true God being at Shiloh.

Chapter 19

¹Now it happened in those days, when there was no king over Israel, that there was a man, a Levite, sojourning in the remotest parts of the hill country of Ephraim. He took for himself a woman, a concubine, from Bethlehem in Judah. ²However, his concubine played the harlot against him and she went away from being with him to the house of her father, to Bethlehem in Judah. She was there for a period of days, four months. ³Then her husband rose up and he went after her, to speak to her heart, in order to persuade to return to him. His young man was with him, and a team of donkeys. She brought him into the house of her father, and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. ⁴His father-in-law, the father of the young woman, prevailed against him so he stayed with him three days. They ate and they drank, and they spent the night there. ⁵Now it happened on the fourth day that they got up early in the morning and he rose up to go, however the father of the young woman said to his son-in-law, "Strengthen your heart with a piece of bread, then afterwards you shall go." ⁶So the two of them sat down and they ate together, and they drank. Then the father of the young woman said to the man, "Please be willing and spend the night and your heart will be glad." ⁷Then the man rose up in order to leave, however his father-in-law urged him. So he stayed and he spent the night there. ⁸He got up early in the morning on the fifth day in order to leave, but the father of the young woman said, "Please strengthen your heart." So they lingered until the turning aside of the day, and the two of them ate. ⁹When the man rose up to go, he and his concubine and his young man, his father-in-law, the father of the young woman said to him, "Look, please, the day has drawn toward evening. Please stay the night. See, the day is declining. Spend the night here and your heart will be glad. Then make an early start tomorrow for your journey and go to your tent."

¹⁰But the man was not willing to spend the night. So he got up and he left. He came as far as the region opposite Jebus, that is Jerusalem. Now with him was a team of donkeys equipped for riding, and also his concubine was with him. ¹¹They were near Jebus, and the daylight had greatly diminished. So the young man said to his master, "Come, please, we should turn aside into this city of the Jebusite so we can spend the night in it." ¹²However his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into a city of a foreigner, where there are none here from the sons of Israel. Instead we will pass by until reaching Gibeah." ¹³Then he said to his young man, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and we will spend the night in either Gibeah or in Ramah." ¹⁴So they passed by and they went on. But the sun went down with regard to them in proximity to the region of Gibeah, which belonged to Benjamin. ¹⁵As a result they turned aside there to come in to spend the night in the Gibeah area. They came in and they sat down in the open plaza of the city, but no one was receiving them into the house to spend the night.

¹⁶Now, look, an old man was coming from his work, from the field at the evening. The man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was sojourning in the Gibeah area. But the men of the place were Benjamite. ¹⁷He raised his eyes and he saw the traveling man in the open plaza of the city. Then the old man said, "Where are you going and from where are you coming?" ¹⁸He said to him, "We are passing through from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim. I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to the house of Yahweh. However there is no one receiving me into the house. ¹⁹Moreover, there is straw, also fodder for our donkeys. There is even bread and wine for me and for your maidservant, and for the young man with your servants. There is no lack of anything." ²⁰The old man said, "Peace to you! Surely all of your need is upon me. Only

you must not spend the night in the open plaza.”²¹So he brought him into his house and he poured out feed for the donkeys. They washed their feet and they ate and they drank.

²²They were making their heart glad, but look, the men of the city, men of sons of wickedness, had encircled themselves around the house, pounding repeatedly on the door. They said to the old man, the master of the house, saying, “Bring out the man who came to your house, so we will know him.”²³The man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brothers, please you must not act wickedly! Seeing that this man has come into my house, you must not do this disgraceful thing!²⁴Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out so you can violate them and do to them what is good in your eyes. But to this man do not do this wicked thing!”²⁵But the men were not willing to listen to him, so the man seized his concubine and made her go forth to them who were outside. They knew her and they abused her the whole night until the morning. Then they sent her away at the rising of the dawn.²⁶The woman came at the changing of the morning and she fell down at the entrance of the house of the man where her master was there, until the daylight.

²⁷Her master rose up in the morning and he opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way. But look, the woman, his concubine had fallen at the entrance of the house, and her hands were on the threshold.²⁸He said to her, “Get up and let us go!” But there was no answering, so he took her on the donkey. Thus the man rose up and he went to his place.²⁹When he came to his house, he took the knife, and he seized his concubine, and he cut her in pieces to her bones, into twelve pieces, and he sent her into all of the territory of Israel.³⁰Now it would happen, everyone who saw it said, “Nothing has happened and never has been seen anything like this from the day of the coming up of the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider about it for yourselves! Make a plan and speak up!”

Chapter 20

¹Then all of the sons of Israel came forth, and the company was assembled as one man, from Dan and as far as Beersheba and the land of Gilead, before Yahweh at Mizpah.²The leaders of all of the people, of all of the tribes of Israel, stationed themselves among the company of the people of the true God, four hundred thousand, each a footsoldier wielding a sword.³Now the sons of Benjamin heard that the sons of Israel had gone up to Mizpah. Then the sons of Israel said, “Explain how this wicked thing has been brought about.”⁴So the Levite man, the husband of the woman who had been murdered, answered. He said, “I came, myself and my concubine, to the Gibeah region that belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night.⁵The citizens of the Gibeah region rose up against me. They surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me. Instead they assaulted my concubine so that she died.⁶I took back my concubine and cut her in pieces, and I sent her out into every territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they have committed a heinous crime and a disgrace in Israel.⁷Look, all of you sons of Israel, decide for yourselves advice and a plan here.”

⁸All of the people rose up as one man, saying, “We will not go back, each one to his tent, and we will not return, each one to his house!⁹Instead now this is the thing that we should do to the Gibeah region, against it by lot.¹⁰We will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and one hundred of a thousand, and one thousand of ten thousand, to get provision for the people, in order to do at their coming to Gibeah in Benjamin, according to all the disgrace that it committed in Israel.”¹¹So every man of Israel was assembled against the city, as one man, united companions.

¹²The tribes of Israel sent men into all the tribes of Benjamin, saying, “What is this wickedness that has been done among you?¹³Therefore, now, give over the men, the sons of worthlessness, who are in the region of Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and thus we may incinerate evil out of Israel.” But they were not willing, Benjamin, to heed the voice of their brothers, the sons of Israel.¹⁴Then the sons of Benjamin assembled themselves out of the cities to the region of Gibeah, coming out to the battle against the sons of Israel.¹⁵The sons of Benjamin mobilized together from the cities on that day twenty-six thousand men wielding a sword. In addition, out of the inhabitants of the Gibeah region seven hundred chosen men had been mobilized.¹⁶Among all of these people were seven

hundred chosen men, impeded in his right hand, each of whom could sling with a stone at a specific hair and he would not miss.

¹⁷The men of Israel, besides Benjamin, mustered up for themselves four hundred thousand men wielding a sword, all of whom were men of war. ¹⁸Then they arose and they went up to Bethel. The sons of Israel asked God and they said, "Who should go up for us at the beginning to the battle with the sons of Benjamin?" Yahweh directed, "It shall be Judah at the beginning."

¹⁹So the sons of Israel arose in the morning and they encamped near the region of Gibeah. ²⁰The men of Israel went forth to the battle against Benjamin. The men of Israel set themselves up for a battle against those in Gibeah. ²¹But the sons of Benjamin came forth out of the Gibeah region, and they struck down among Israel twenty-two thousand men to the ground on that day. ²²However the people, the men of Israel, strengthened themselves and they continued to set up for battle at the place where they had set up there on the first day. ²³Then the sons of Israel went up and they wept before Yahweh until evening. They asked Yahweh, saying, "Should I continue to attack, to the battle against the sons of Benjamin, my brother?" Yahweh replied, "Go up against him!"

²⁴So the sons of Israel drew near to the sons of Benjamin on the second day. ²⁵Benjamin came forth to confront them from the Gibeah region on the second day, and against the sons of Israel they struck down to the ground another eighteen thousand men. All of these were wielders of a sword. ²⁶Then the sons of Israel and all the people went up and they came to Bethel. They wept, and they sat there before Yahweh. They fasted on that day until the evening, then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before Yahweh. ²⁷The sons of Israel asked Yahweh, for the ark of the covenant of the true God was there in those days, ²⁸when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was serving before it in those days, saying, "Should I continue to go forth to the battle once more against the sons of Benjamin, my brother, or should I stop?" Yahweh said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will give him into your hand."

²⁹So Israel set groups in ambush around the Gibeah region on all sides. ³⁰The sons of Israel went up against the sons of Benjamin on the third day, and they set up for battle against the Gibeah region as was time after time. ³¹The sons of Benjamin went forth to confront the people. They were lured away from the city, and they began to strike down some of the people. About thirty men of Israel were slain as was the other time on the roads, of which one went up to Bethel, and one went to the Gibeah region through the field. ³²Then the sons of Benjamin said, "They have been defeated before us, just as at the first." But the sons of Israel said, "Let us flee so that we will draw him away from the city to the roads." ³³Then every man of Israel rose up out of his place and they set up battle lines at Baal Tamar. The one hiding in ambush of Israel burst forth out of his place from Maareh Gibeah. ³⁴Ten thousand men, chosen out of all Israel came out in the sight of the Gibeah region, and the battle was heavy. But they did not know that this calamity was coming near to them. ³⁵Thus Yahweh defeated Benjamin before Israel. The sons of Israel destroyed Benjamin on that day, twenty five thousand one hundred men, everyone of those were wielding a sword.

³⁶So the sons of Benjamin saw that they were defeated. The men of Israel had given a place to Benjamin, because they were confident in the group hiding in ambush that they had placed around the Gibeah region. ³⁷Then the group hiding in ambush hurried and they spread out around the Gibeah region. The group hiding in ambush marched out and it struck all of the city with the edge of the sword. ³⁸Now there was the prearranged plan for the men of Israel on behalf of the group hiding in ambush: load up so that they would send the rising column of the smoke up out of the city, ³⁹when the men of Israel retreated from the battle. Then Benjamin began to attack, among the men of Israel about thirty men were slain. For they said, "Surely he is absolutely defeated before us, as in the first battle." ⁴⁰But when the signal began to rise up out of the city, a pillar of smoke, then Benjamin retreated away from it. Indeed, look, the entirety of the city had gone up to the heavens. ⁴¹Then the men of Israel turned back. Each man of Benjamin was horrified, for he saw that the calamity had come upon them. ⁴²So they retreated before the men of Israel to the way of the wilderness, but the fighting overtook him. Meanwhile those coming out from the cities were destroying him in the very midst of him. ⁴³They surrounded Benjamin, they put him to flight. With ease they trampled him down as far as opposite the Gibeah region, in the direction of the rising sun. ⁴⁴They fell from Benjamin, eighteen thousand men, all of these were men of valor. ⁴⁵Then they turned and they fled to the

wilderness to the rock of Rimmon. They gleaned along the pathways five thousand men. They pursued closely after him as far as Gidom, and they struck down from him two thousand more men. ⁴⁶So it happened that all of the fallen ones of Benjamin were twenty-five thousand men wielding a sword, on that day. All of these were men of valor. ⁴⁷But six hundred men turned back and they fled to the wilderness, toward the rock of Rimmon. They stayed at the rock of Rimmon four months. ⁴⁸Then the men of Israel returned to the sons of Benjamin. They struck them down with the edge of the sword, even a city in entirety, including cattle as well as everything that was found. Also all of the cities that were found, they set on fire.

Chapter 21

¹Now each man of Israel bound himself by an oath at Mizpah, saying, "Everyone of us shall not give his daughter to Benjamin for a wife." ²Then the people came to Bethel and they sat there until the evening before the true God. They lifted up their voices and they wept, a loud weeping. ³They said, "Why, O Yahweh, God of Israel, has this happened to Israel, to be missing today one tribe from Israel?" ⁴Now it happened the next day that the people rose up early and they built an altar there and they offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings. ⁵The sons of Israel said, "Who is it that did not go up with the assembly out of all the tribes of Israel to Yahweh?" For the great oath was against whoever did not go up to Yahweh at Mizpah, saying, "Surely he must be put to death." ⁶The sons of Israel were moved to pity towards Benjamin, his brother. They said, "Today one tribe has been hewn down from Israel. ⁷What can we do for them, for the ones remaining, for a wife, since we have put ourselves under an oath to Yahweh to not give to them from our daughters for a wife?"

⁸They said, "Who is anyone from the tribes of Israel who did not go up to Yahweh at Mizpah?" Now look, not anyone had gone to the camp, to the assembly, from Jabesh Gilead. ⁹When the people inspected themselves, look, not anyone was there from the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead. ¹⁰So the assembly sent twelve thousand men there, from the sons of the army, and they instructed them, saying, "Go, and you must strike down the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, even the women and the children. ¹¹"This is the thing that you must do: every male, and every woman who has known the bed of a male, you must ban for destruction." ¹²They found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women, virgins, who had not known a man by lying with a male, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh which was in the land of Canaan.

¹³The entire assembly reached out and they spoke to the sons of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and they proclaimed peace to them. ¹⁴Benjamin returned at that time and they gave to them the women who were alive from the women of Jabesh Gilead. But they had not found sufficient for them. ¹⁵Now the people were sorry for Benjamin, because Yahweh had made a breach between the tribes of Israel.

¹⁶Then the elders of the assembly said, "How can we provide wives for the remaining ones, since women from Benjamin have been exterminated?" ¹⁷They said, "There must be an inheritance for the escaped remnant of Benjamin, so that a tribe is not blotted out from Israel. ¹⁸But we are not able to give them wives from our daughters, because the sons of Israel are bound to an oath, saying, 'Cursed is anyone who gives a wife to Benjamin.'" ¹⁹So they said, "Look, there is a feast for Yahweh from time to time at Shiloh, which is on the north of Bethel, to the direction of the rising of the sun on the road that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." ²⁰They instructed the sons of Benjamin, saying, "Go and wait in hiding in the vineyards. ²¹You must watch, and look when the daughters of Shiloh are coming forth to dance in the dances, then you come forth out of the vineyards. You will catch for yourselves, each one his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and then you can go back to the land of Benjamin. ²²It will happen, when their fathers or their brothers come out to argue with us, that we will say to them, 'Give them freely to us, because we did not take for each man his wife in the battle. Since you did not give them at that time, you would be guilty.'" ²³The sons of Benjamin did so. They carried off wives sufficient for their number from the ones who were dancing, who they snatched away. Then they went and they returned to their inheritance. They rebuilt the cities and they lived in them. ²⁴Then the sons of Israel disbursed themselves from there at that time, each one to his tribe and to his family. Thus they went away from there each one to his inheritance.

²⁵In those days there was not a king in Israel. Each one would do what was right in his own eyes.

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Scott Bayer
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Dan Dennison
Jamie Duguid
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
Jesse Harris
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Leonard Smith
Suzanna Smith
Tim Span
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
Maria Tijerina
David Trombold, M. Div.
Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary
James Vigen
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.

