

## **Dr. David Howard, Joshua - Ruth, Session 30, Judges 19-21 – Second Appendix Benjaminite Outrage Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 30, Judges 19-21 – Second Appendix Benjaminite Outrage, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture excerpt from Dr. David Howard's series on Joshua through Ruth **explains Judges 19-21**, focusing on the **Benjaminite Outrage**. The narrative details a **Levite's concubine being gang-raped in Gibeah**, leading to a devastating civil war between the tribes of Israel and Benjamin. Dr. Howard **analyzes the moral decay** within Israelite society, highlighting the lack of godly leadership as a contributing factor to the tragedy. He also **discusses scholarly debates** surrounding the interpretation of the text, particularly regarding the nature of the sexual assault. Finally, he concludes by connecting the story to the larger theme of **spiritual apostasy** in the Book of Judges and its eventual resolution through future kingship.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 30 – Double click icon to  
play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Joshua-Ruth).**



**Howard\_Josh\_Ruth  
\_Session30.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 30, Judges 19-21 -- Second Appendix Benjaminite Outrage

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, which is Dr. David Howard's lecture on Judges 19-21:

#### Briefing Document: Judges 19-21 - The Benjaminite Outrage

**Overview:** This lecture focuses on the final, and arguably most disturbing, story in the Book of Judges (Chapters 19-21), often referred to as the "Benjaminite Outrage." Dr. Howard analyzes this passage as a culmination of the downward spiral of moral and spiritual corruption that has characterized the entire book, emphasizing the lack of godly leadership as the root cause. The story is a horrific account of escalating sin, culminating in a devastating civil war and near annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin.

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

1. **Downward Spiral of Corruption:** The lecture emphasizes that Judges 19-21 represent the apex of the moral and spiritual decline depicted throughout the Book of Judges.
  - **Quote:** "So we've talked about the downward cycle of corruption and apostasy throughout the book. We see it coming to a head in Jephthah and especially Samson among the judges...and now in chapters 19 and 21, we have further moral and spiritual corruption."
  - This is not just personal sin, but a systemic breakdown in the nation.
1. **Lack of Godly Leadership:** The phrase "in those days there was no king in Israel" (reiterated from earlier in Judges) is highlighted as a key factor. The absence of a strong, righteous leader is directly linked to the chaos and immorality.
  - **Quote:** "The first thing we'll just notice again, we're again told in those days there was no king in Israel. Things are getting to this bad point because of a lack of real godly leadership."
  - This absence creates a vacuum in which individuals and tribes do "what was right in their own eyes".
1. **The Levite's Actions:** The story begins with another Levite, but this one is far from exemplary. The Levite's callous and self-serving actions are a catalyst for the escalating violence:

- His concubine's unfaithfulness and his pursuit of her set off a chain of events.
  - His refusal to stay in Jebus (Jerusalem) highlights the complex political situation at the time, where neither Judah nor Benjamin had full control, a “neutral ground” still controlled by the Jebusites
  - His actions after the attack on the concubine are particularly damning – he shows a lack of care or compassion, and then uses her body to incite the nation, which while it may have achieved a goal of rallying support, demonstrated a lack of human empathy and respect.
  - **Quote:** "Basically, she's there lying dead. This Levite is not covering himself with glory in this passage, because he's rather callous."
  - This reinforces the idea that even those in religious positions are not immune to corruption.
1. **The Sin of Gibeah:** The events in Gibeah mirror the sin of Sodom, highlighting the depravity of the time.
    - The men of Gibeah's demand to "know" the Levite is likely a reference to homosexual rape, and/or a violent, inhospitable act, similar to the story of Lot in Sodom.
    - **Quote:** "Now, in the Old Testament, the word to know has a number of different ways in which it's used. It has to do with cognitive recognition. It has to do with relationship and knowing God. It also has to do with sexual union."
    - The host's offering of his daughter and the Levite's concubine to be abused shows the complete breakdown of moral values.
    - It is important to note that Dr Howard reviews the recent debate about whether the story is truly about homosexual rape, which has been argued. However, Dr. Howard leans into the traditional interpretation as he highlights the vileness of the acts as condemned by the host in the story, and the subsequent violent actions of the men.
    - **Quote:** "I would say certainly here, that the activity itself is seen as a vile thing, and the man recognizes this, and we can't get around that fact."
  1. **Escalation of Violence:** The initial outrage leads to a brutal civil war between the 11 tribes and the tribe of Benjamin.

- This shift from external conflict (against Canaanites) to internal conflict demonstrates the complete disintegration of the nation.
  - **Quote:** "I mentioned earlier that chapters 2-16 are concerned with Israel's conflicts with the outside, enemies outside of themselves. Chapters 17-21 are about internal conflicts and self-destructive conflicts, and certainly, we see that here in chapter 20."
  - The scale of the slaughter is shocking, with tens of thousands of lives lost.
  - The slaughter of Gibeah by the other 11 tribes mirrors what should have been done to the Canaanites.
  - **Quote:** "So ironically, what Israel was to be doing against the Canaanites way back in the book of Joshua, they are now turning upon themselves within their own compatriots, their own brethren, and wiping them out and burning everybody with fire there."
1. **Partial Restoration and Continued Chaos:** After nearly wiping out Benjamin, the other tribes realize the consequences, and attempt to restore the tribe through the rape and kidnapping of women from Jabesh Gilead and Shiloh.
    - This highlights the inconsistency and moral confusion of the time. They feel obligated to replenish Benjamin, but unwilling to offer their own daughters.
    - The violent and disturbing process of this restoration highlights the level of brokenness, and lack of God's guidance in the nation.
    - **Quote:** "So for all the backs and forths here, it appears that because of this, God has opened up this breach between them, and so they decide they need a second step, a second stage of finding wives for Benjamin."
    - This "restoration" is far from peaceful or just, and is ultimately a product of the same lawlessness and lack of divine leadership that caused the initial conflict.
  1. **"Everyone Did What Was Right in Their Own Eyes":** The lecture reiterates that the ultimate cause of this tragedy was the lack of a king and the resulting moral relativism.
    - **Quote:** "There was no king at that time. Everybody is doing it right in their own eyes. All this is happening because they were doing what they wanted to do."
    - The text repeatedly highlights that a godly king who followed the law could have prevented much of this.

1. **Hope for the Future:** While Judges is one of the most tragic books of the Bible, it also serves as a warning about the consequences of straying from God. It creates a longing for a true king, which will be answered in the books of Samuel, with kings like David and Solomon.
- **Quote:** "As we continue reading the scripture through the Book of Ruth and then Samuel, we realize that there are better days ahead when you get under kings like David and Solomon and some of the godly kings down the road."

**Conclusion:**

The story of the Benjaminite Outrage is a brutal depiction of societal breakdown and a powerful warning about the importance of godly leadership and adherence to God's law. The lack of a king is shown not just as a political vacuum but as a moral vacuum, where the absence of divine direction leads to chaos, violence, and the near-destruction of a tribe. The story serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of moral relativism and the need for a righteous king who will be accountable to God. This chapter sets the stage for the books of Samuel and the rise of the monarchy.

## 4. Study Guide: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 30, Judges 19-21 – Second Appendix Benjaminite Outrage

### Judges 19-21 Study Guide: The Benjaminite Outrage

#### Short Answer Quiz

1. What is the significance of the phrase "In those days there was no king in Israel" in the context of Judges 19-21?
2. Describe the initial conflict that sets the stage for the events of Judges 19-21 and explain how this escalates.
3. What is the role of the old man's hospitality in Gibeah, and how does it become a catalyst for further violence?
4. How is the language of "knowing" used in the context of the men of Gibeah's demand to the old man, and how does that connect with events in Genesis 19?
5. Explain the Levite's reaction to his concubine's death and how it impacts the rest of Israel.
6. What are the main themes emphasized in the contrast between Judges 2-16 and Judges 17-21?
7. Describe the series of events that occur between the tribes of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin.
8. What is the significance of the references to Phinehas and Bethel in chapter 20, verse 28, and what do they suggest about the timing of the events?
9. How does the conflict end, and what actions do the remaining tribes take to prevent the total extinction of the tribe of Benjamin?
10. Explain the final assessment of the author about the state of Israel as they conclude the book of Judges.

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The phrase "In those days there was no king in Israel" highlights the lack of centralized authority and godly leadership, which the author suggests contributed to the moral and spiritual decline of the nation. This vacuum of leadership allowed individuals to act according to their own desires, leading to chaos and violence.

2. The initial conflict arises when a Levite's concubine leaves him and returns to her father's house. This escalates as the Levite's stay with her father is prolonged, and then further escalates when the Levite seeks lodging in Gibeah, where he and his concubine are subjected to terrible mistreatment.
3. The old man offers hospitality, in a way that is reminiscent of Lot in Genesis 19, to the Levite and his concubine. This hospitality, however, is violated when the "worthless men" of Gibeah demand to "know" the Levite. The old man's actions trigger the brutal mistreatment of the concubine, initiating a larger cycle of violence.
4. The word "know" is used with the intention of sexual violence. The men of Gibeah's demand to "know" the Levite mirrors the story of Sodom in Genesis 19, where a mob makes a similar demand of Lot for his male houseguests. This demonstrates the extreme depravity and sexual immorality prevalent at this time.
5. The Levite callously dismembers his concubine's body and sends pieces to the twelve tribes of Israel, which is a graphic act used to garner support and outrage, thus turning the personal tragedy into a national conflict. This emphasizes the depravity of the time and the Levite's lack of love for the woman.
6. Judges 2-16 focuses on conflicts between Israel and external enemies, but Judges 17-21 focuses on the internal corruption of the nation, and self-destructive conflicts among the tribes.
7. The tribes of Israel initially demand the Benjaminites turn over the "worthless fellows" of Gibeah. When the Benjaminites refuse, this leads to civil war. The tribes of Israel engage the Benjaminites in a battle that nearly wipes out their tribe.
8. The references to Phinehas and Bethel suggest that the events in Judges 19-21 may have occurred earlier than the events in other parts of Judges. They serve to show that spiritual decline existed even during the time of more righteous leaders. The location of the Ark of the Covenant also serves to emphasize the wickedness that existed.
9. The conflict ends with the virtual annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin. The tribes have compassion on Benjamin and seek to replenish their population by first massacring the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead to acquire wives, and then abducting women from an annual festival in Shiloh.

10. The author concludes the book by stating that the reason that all of this happened was that there was no king, and every man did what he thought was right in his own eyes. Without godly leadership and adherence to God's law, Israel had descended into chaos and violence.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the role of the Levite in Judges 19-21. How does his character contribute to the escalating violence and the overall theme of moral decay?
2. Compare and contrast the narratives in Judges 19 and Genesis 19. How do these stories utilize similar themes of hospitality, sexual violence, and societal breakdown to portray their respective contexts?
3. Discuss the theme of internal conflict in Judges 17-21. How do the events in these chapters reflect a departure from the initial vision of a unified Israel, as portrayed in Joshua?
4. Explore the significance of the repeated phrase, "In those days there was no king in Israel" in the book of Judges. How does this lack of leadership contribute to the cycles of apostasy and violence?
5. Evaluate the actions of the eleven tribes of Israel in their pursuit of justice. To what extent do they uphold justice, and to what extent are their actions further examples of the moral decay described throughout the book?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apostasy:** The abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief. In the context of Judges, it refers to Israel turning away from God.
- **Concubine:** A woman who lives with a man and has a lower status than a wife. She typically has some legal status and some protections, but this status was not generally treated with respect.
- **Gibeah:** A city in the territory of Benjamin, and the location of the terrible crime that ignites the civil war among the tribes of Israel.
- **Jebus (Jerusalem):** A city located on the border between Judah and Benjamin, inhabited by Jebusites during this period, and not considered part of Israel.
- **Levite:** A member of the tribe of Levi, responsible for religious duties in the Israelite community.
- **Mizpah:** A central location in Israel where the tribes gather to address the outrage committed in Gibeah.
- **Phinehas:** A priest who is mentioned during the conflict in Judges 20, but who lived many years earlier. His presence in the narrative suggests the author may be recalling events from earlier in Israel's history.
- **Shiloh:** A place where an annual festival was held, and where the remaining Benjaminites acquire wives.
- **Worthless Fellows:** A term used to describe morally corrupt and lawless individuals.

## 5. FAQs on Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 30, Second Appendix Benjaminite Outrage, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ: Judges 19-21 and the Benjaminite Outrage

1. **What is the main focus of Judges 19-21, and how does it fit within the larger context of the Book of Judges?**
2. Judges 19-21 focus on a horrific incident involving a Levite and his concubine, which escalates into a brutal civil war between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of Israel. This narrative represents the climax of the moral and spiritual decline that the Book of Judges portrays, moving from external conflicts in the earlier chapters to self-destructive internal conflicts in the later ones. It illustrates the consequences of the lack of godly leadership and the rampant "doing what is right in their own eyes" mentality that characterized this period.
3. **What are the initial events that set the stage for the conflict in these chapters?**
4. The story begins with a Levite's concubine leaving him and returning to her father's house. After a protracted visit, the Levite and his concubine attempt to travel back home. When they reach the Benjaminite city of Gibeah, they are initially denied hospitality until an old man offers them shelter. The men of Gibeah then demand that the Levite be handed over for abuse, and when refused, they violently rape the concubine, leading to her death.
5. **How did the Levite's actions contribute to the conflict's escalation?**
6. The Levite's callous treatment of his concubine, first in not showing concern for her distress and then in cutting up her body into twelve pieces and sending them to the tribes, served as a rallying cry for the rest of Israel. This gruesome act transformed the incident into a national outrage, turning a personal tragedy into a widespread conflict. It reveals a loss of moral compass and a focus on personal vengeance over justice or reconciliation.

7. **What was the nature of the conflict between the tribes of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin?**
8. The conflict was a civil war precipitated by the outrage at Gibeah. The eleven tribes initially demanded that the men of Gibeah be handed over for justice, but the Benjaminites refused, choosing instead to defend the men of Gibeah against the rest of Israel. This led to repeated and devastating attacks. The Benjaminites were eventually all but annihilated, a self-destructive act by Israel, mirroring the actions they were meant to have carried out against the Canaanites in Joshua.
9. **What is the significance of the repeated phrase "In those days there was no king in Israel"?**
10. This phrase appears throughout Judges, but it's particularly emphasized in the conclusion of the book. It highlights the absence of a centralized, godly leadership structure that could have prevented the widespread moral decay and the senseless violence seen in Judges 19-21. The lack of a king, and by extension, divinely-appointed leadership, allowed individuals and tribes to act on their own desires rather than according to God's will, leading to chaos and suffering. It also sets the stage for a longing for the period of the monarchy described in Samuel and Kings.
11. **How does this story relate to other biblical narratives, specifically the incident in Sodom (Genesis 19)?**
12. The incident in Gibeah strongly echoes the events in Sodom (Genesis 19), where the men of the city sought to abuse Lot's male guests, leading to divine judgment. In both instances, the inhabitants demand to "know" (have sexual relations with) the visiting men, and both hosts offer the women in their care as a substitute, highlighting the depths of depravity and violation of hospitality. This pattern is used to illustrate how far Israel had fallen into wickedness and is a critique of the actions of the men of Gibeah as well as the lack of righteous leadership in the society.

**13. How does the narrative's ending resolve the issue of the nearly extinct tribe of Benjamin?**

14. After almost wiping out the tribe of Benjamin, the Israelites were faced with the problem of their dwindling numbers. They first wiped out the town of Jabesh Gilead to provide 400 wives for the remaining Benjamites and then they set up an ambush at a harvest festival at Shiloh in order to find another 200 wives from the dancing girls. This was a violent and tragic attempt at restoring the tribe. The book highlights the senselessness of their decisions. While seemingly providing a resolution, it emphasizes the lasting consequences of their choices and the absence of genuine justice or mercy.

**15. What is the overall message or lesson of Judges 19-21 and the Book of Judges as a whole?**

16. The overall message is a tragic one. The final chapters demonstrate the destructive consequences of moral decay, the absence of godly leadership, and the dangers of acting without a basis in God's law. It reveals the devastating impact of internal conflict and the cycle of sin. The narrative illustrates a society spiraling into chaos due to self-interest and a lack of divine direction. It serves as a warning about the importance of obedience to God's law and the necessity of godly leadership to maintain societal stability and spiritual health. Ultimately, the Book of Judges points to the need for a king who will lead the people in righteousness, a need later met in figures like David and Solomon.