

Blind Justice

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The actions of _____ determine the justice of a _____.

In Judges 19, a Levite from Ephraim goes to Bethlehem in Judah to bring back his concubine, who has returned to her father's house. Her father welcomes the Levite and urges him to stay. For several days, the father delays their departure with food, drink, and hospitality.

At last, the Levite leaves with the woman and his servant. As evening approaches, they come near Jebus, but the Levite does not want to stay in a foreign city. He decides they will continue on to Gibeah, a town belonging to Benjamin.

They arrive in Gibeah and sit in the town square, but no one takes them in. Eventually, an old man from the hill country of Ephraim comes in from his work in the field. He sees them in the square, asks where they are going, and invites them into his house.

While they are inside, men of the city surround the house and demand that the Levite be brought out to them. The old man pleads with them not to do this. The Levite's concubine is given to them, and they abuse her through the night. At daybreak, she returns and falls at the doorway of the old man's house.

In the morning, the Levite opens the door and finds her there. He tells her to get up so they can leave, but she does not answer. He places her on his donkey and returns home. When he arrives, he cuts her body into twelve pieces and sends the pieces throughout the territory of Israel.

When the Israelites receive the pieces, they are shocked. They gather together at Mizpah, from all parts of Israel. The Levite tells them what happened in Gibeah. The tribes of Israel decide to act against the city, and they demand that the tribe of Benjamin hand over the men responsible.

Benjamin refuses to hand them over. Instead, the Benjamites gather to fight against the other tribes of Israel.

The Israelites ask the Lord who should go first into battle against Benjamin, and Judah is named. Israel goes to battle, but Benjamin defeats them. The Israelites weep before the Lord, ask again whether they should fight, and then go up a second time. Benjamin defeats them again.

Then the Israelites go to Bethel. They weep, fast, offer sacrifices, and ask the Lord again whether they should continue the fight. The Lord tells them to go, and says that He will give Benjamin into their hand.

This time, Israel sets an ambush around Gibeah. The main army draws Benjamin away from the city, while the men in ambush enter Gibeah, strike it, and set it on fire. When the Benjamites see smoke rising from the city, they realize disaster has come upon them. Israel defeats Benjamin, and many Benjamites are killed. Only six hundred men escape and flee to the rock of Rimmon.

Afterward, the Israelites mourn because the tribe of Benjamin has been nearly destroyed. They had sworn at Mizpah that none of them would give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite, but now they are concerned that one of the tribes of Israel may disappear.

They ask whether any group in Israel failed to come to the assembly at Mizpah. They discover that no one from Jabesh-gilead came. So Israel sends men against Jabesh-gilead. They strike the city and bring back four hundred young women who have not been married. These women are given to the surviving Benjamites, but there are still not enough wives for all of them.

The elders then make another plan. A yearly festival is being held at Shiloh. They tell the remaining Benjamites to hide in the vineyards and watch for the young women of Shiloh to come out and dance. When the women come out, the Benjamites are to take wives for themselves and return to their land.

The Benjamites do this. They take wives from the women at Shiloh and go back to their inheritance. The other Israelites also return to their own tribes and homes.

The book ends by saying that in those days Israel has no king, and everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

Justice requires three things:

1. _____

1 John 2:3-6 (NIV) *We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*

The downward path is a _____, not a slide.

2. _____

Genesis 1:27 (NLT) *So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

1 Peter 2:9 (NLT) *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*

3. _____

Judges 21:25 (NLT) *In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.*

Judges 20:1 (NLT) *Then all the Israelites were united as one man, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, including those from across the Jordan in the land of Gilead. The entire community assembled in the presence of the Lord at Mizpah.*

Judges 20:26-27 (NLT) *Then all the Israelites went up to Bethel and wept in the presence of the Lord and fasted until evening. They also brought burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. 27 The Israelites went up seeking direction from the Lord.*

Judges 21:2-4 (NLT) *Now the people went to Bethel and sat in the presence of God until evening, weeping loudly and bitterly. 3 "O Lord, God of Israel," they cried out, "why has this happened in Israel?...4 Early the next morning the people built an altar and presented their burnt offerings and peace offerings on it.*

An inferior judge produces _____.

2 Peter 2:19 (NIV) *They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for "people are slaves to whatever has mastered them."*

We must not only know God's _____, we must internalize His _____.

John 14:6 (NIV) *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*