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## Judges

The Book of Judges is a historical and theological book in the Christian Old Testament. It covers a period of Israel's history from the death of Joshua (around 1350 BC) to the beginning of the monarchy under Saul (around 1050 BC).

The book describes a cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance that characterizes the history of Israel during this period. The judges, who are military leaders appointed by God to rescue Israel from their enemies, play a prominent role in the book. The book begins with the death of Joshua and the failure of the Israelites to completely conquer the land of Canaan. The people begin to worship the gods of the Canaanites, and God allows them to be oppressed by their enemies as punishment for their disobedience. The judges, including Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, are raised up by God to deliver Israel from their enemies. However, even the judges are not immune to sin, and the cycle of sin and oppression continues.

The book concludes with a series of stories that illustrate the moral decay of Israel during this period. The Israelites turn away from God and do what is right in their own eyes, leading to chaos and destruction.

Overall, the Book of Judges portrays a complex and often troubled period in Israel's history, characterized by disobedience, sin, and repentance. The judges serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness to his people, despite their shortcomings, and the need for obedience and faithfulness in order to receive his blessings.

Here is a summary of each chapter in the Book of Judges:

Chapter 1: The Israelites fail to completely conquer the land of Canaan. They are able to defeat some of their enemies, but others remain. The chapter also highlights the faithfulness of Caleb and his descendants.

Chapter 2: The angel of the Lord appears to the Israelites and rebukes them for not completely driving out the inhabitants of the land. The people begin to worship other gods, and God allows them to be oppressed by their enemies.

Chapter 3: The Israelites are oppressed by several different nations, and God raises up Othniel, the first judge, to deliver them. The chapter also includes the stories of Ehud and Shamgar.

Chapter 4: Deborah, a prophetess, becomes the leader of Israel and helps defeat the Canaanites under the command of Sisera. Jael, a woman, kills Sisera.

Chapter 5: This is a song of victory sung by Deborah and Barak after their victory over the Canaanites.

Chapter 6: The Israelites are oppressed by the Midianites, and God raises up Gideon to deliver them. Gideon destroys the altar of Baal and leads Israel to victory over the Midianites.

Chapter 7: Gideon's army is reduced from 32,000 to 300 men, and they defeat the Midianites with trumpets and torches.

Chapter 8: Gideon continues to fight against the Midianites and the kings of Midian. He makes an ephod that becomes an object of worship.

Chapter 9: Abimelech, Gideon's son, becomes king and kills his brothers. He is eventually killed by a woman who drops a millstone on his head.

Chapter 10: The Israelites are oppressed by the Philistines and the Ammonites. God raises up Jephthah to deliver them, but Jephthah makes a foolish vow that results in the death of his daughter.

Chapter 11: Jephthah leads Israel to victory over the Ammonites. He also has a conflict with the tribe of Ephraim.

Chapter 12: The Ephraimites are angry that they were not included in the battle against the Ammonites. Jephthah defeats them in battle.

Chapter 13: Samson is born to a barren woman. An angel appears to his parents and tells them that Samson will be a Nazirite from birth and will deliver Israel from the Philistines.

Chapter 14: Samson falls in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. He kills a lion and later uses honey from the lion's carcass to create a riddle for the Philistines.

Chapter 15: Samson sets fire to the Philistines' fields with foxes tied together with torches. The Philistines retaliate by killing Samson's wife, and Samson kills many Philistines in revenge.

Chapter 16: Delilah learns the secret of Samson's strength and betrays him to the Philistines. They blind Samson and make him a slave, but he regains his strength and pulls down the pillars of the temple, killing himself and many Philistines.

Chapter 17: A man named Micah steals silver from his mother and uses it to make an idol. He hires a Levite to be his priest.

Chapter 18: The tribe of Dan is looking for a place to settle and sends spies to the house of Micah. The spies steal the idol and the Levite and establish a new place of worship.

Chapter 19: A Levite and his concubine visit a city and are offered hospitality, but the concubine is raped and dies as a result. The Levite sends her body throughout Israel to provoke outrage and a call to action.

Chapter 20: The tribes of Israel demand that the men of the city be punished, but the tribe of Benjamin refuses to comply. This leads to a war between the tribes, in which many people are killed.

Chapter 21: The Israelites come up with a plan to kidnap women from a festival and give them to the remaining Benjamites as wives to preserve the tribe's survival.

## JUDGES

### CHAPTER 1

Ju. 1:1 After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, “Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?”

Ju. 1:2 The LORD answered, “Judah is to go; I have given the land into their hands.”

Ju. 1:3 Then the men of Judah said to the Simeonites their brothers, “Come up with us into the territory allotted to us, to fight against the Canaanites. We in turn will go with you into yours.” So the Simeonites went with them.

Ju. 1:4 When Judah attacked, the LORD gave the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands and they struck down ten thousand men at Bezek.

Ju. 1:5 It was there that they found Adoni-Bezek and fought against him, putting to rout the Canaanites and Perizzites.

Ju. 1:6 Adoni-Bezek fled, but they chased him and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

Ju. 1:7 Then Adoni-Bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off have picked up scraps under my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did to them.” They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

Ju. 1:8 The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem also and took it. They put the city to the sword and set it on fire.

Ju. 1:9 After that, the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country, the Negev and the western foothills.

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Ju. 1:10 They advanced against the Canaanites living in Hebron (formerly called Kiriath Arba) and defeated Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai.

Ju. 1:11 From there they advanced against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher).

Ju. 1:12 And Caleb said, “I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher.”

Ju. 1:13 Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him in marriage.

Ju. 1:14 One day when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What can I do for you?”

Ju. 1:15 She replied, “Do me a special favour. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.” Then Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

Ju. 1:16 The descendants of Moses’ father-in-law, the Kenite, went up

from the City of Palms with the men of Judah to live among the people of the Desert of Judah in the Negev near Arad.

Ju. 1:17 Then the men of Judah went with the Simeonites their brothers and attacked the Canaanites living in Zephath, and they totally destroyed the city. Therefore it was called Hormah.

Ju. 1:18 The men of Judah also took Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron — each city with its territory.

Ju. 1:19 The LORD was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had iron chariots.

Ju. 1:20 As Moses had promised, Hebron was given to Caleb, who drove from it the three sons of Anak.

Ju. 1:21 The Benjamites, however, failed to dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the Benjamites.

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Ju. 1:22 Now the house of Joseph attacked Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

Ju. 1:23 When they sent men to spy out Bethel (formerly called Luz),

Ju. 1:24 the spies saw a man coming out of the city and they said to him, “Show us how to get into the city and we will see that you are treated well.”

Ju. 1:25 So he showed them, and they put the city to the sword but spared the man and his whole family.

Ju. 1:26 He then went to the land of the Hittites, where he built a city and called it Luz, which is its name to this day.

Ju. 1:27 But Manasseh did not drive out the people of Beth Shan or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that land.

Ju. 1:28 When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labour but never drove them out completely.

Ju. 1:29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them.

Ju. 1:30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron or Nahalol, who remained among them; but they did subject them to forced labour.

Ju. 1:31 Nor did Asher drive out those living in Acco or Sidon or Ahlab or Aczib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob,

Ju. 1:32 and because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land.

Ju. 1:33 Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath became forced labourers for them.

Ju. 1:34 The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, not allowing them to come down into the plain.

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Ju. 1:35 And the Amorites were determined also to hold out in Mount Heres, Aijalon and Shaalbim, but when the power of the house of Joseph increased, they too were pressed into forced labour.

Ju. 1:36 The boundary of the Amorites was from Scorpion Pass to Sela and beyond.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 1 in the Christian Bible talks about the Israelites' conquests and failures in their attempts to take over the land of Canaan after Joshua's death. The chapter begins with a description of Judah's victory over the Canaanites and their capture of Jerusalem. However, the other tribes of Israel did not completely drive out the inhabitants of their allotted territories, and the Canaanites remained among them as a thorn in their side.

The chapter also details the successes and failures of various tribes in their battles against the Canaanites. It mentions the capture of Bezek, the defeat of Adoni-Bezek, the conquest of Bethel, and the destruction of the city of Luz. However, the chapter also notes instances where the Israelites failed to drive out their enemies, and instead allowed them to live among them.

Overall, the chapter serves as an introduction to the theme of the Book of Judges, which is the Israelites' cycle of sin, oppression, and deliverance under the leadership of various judges. The chapter sets the stage for the struggles and triumphs of the Israelites as they seek to maintain control over the land of Canaan and remain faithful to God.

Here are some key verses from Chapter 1 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible:

1. "After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the Lord, 'Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Canaanites?'" (Judges 1:1)
2. "The Lord was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had chariots fitted with iron." (Judges 1:19)
3. "As for the Benjamites, they did not drive out the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the Benjamites." (Judges 1:21)
4. "The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, not allowing them to come down into the plain." (Judges 1:34)

These verses introduce the situation in Israel after Joshua's death, describe some of the battles and struggles between the Israelites and other tribes in the region, and hint at the ongoing difficulties that the Israelites would face in their efforts to settle the land.

The book of Judges in the Bible provides an account of the period in Israel's history after Joshua's death and before the establishment of the monarchy. It primarily focuses on the leaders, or judges, who arose to deliver the Israelites from oppression and lead them towards obedience to God's law.

In Judges chapter 1, the reflection revolves around the initial conquest of the Promised Land by the Israelites. The chapter begins by describing the tribe of Judah's military successes and their victories over various Canaanite cities. However, it also highlights their failure to completely drive out the inhabitants of certain regions.

One of the key lessons reflected in this chapter is the importance of complete obedience to God's commands. The Israelites were commanded to utterly destroy the Canaanites and their idolatrous practices. While Judah achieved some victories, they fell short of fully obeying God's instructions by allowing pockets of Canaanite influence to remain within their territory.

This failure to completely drive out the Canaanites had long-term consequences. The remaining Canaanite inhabitants and their idolatrous practices would become a constant source of temptation and spiritual downfall for the Israelites in the future. The incomplete conquest ultimately led to a cycle of idolatry, oppression, repentance, and deliverance that characterizes the book of Judges.

Overall, the reflection in Judges chapter 1 serves as a warning against compromise and half-hearted obedience. It highlights the need for the Israelites, and by extension, believers today, to wholeheartedly follow God's commands, not allowing any remnants of sin or idolatry to persist in their lives.

## CHAPTER 2

Ju. 2:1 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you,

Ju. 2:2 and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this?"

Ju. 2:3 Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."

Ju. 2:4 When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud,

Ju. 2:5 and they called that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.

Ju. 2:6 After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance.

Ju. 2:7 The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.

Ju. 2:8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten.

Ju. 2:9 And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

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Ju. 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.

Ju. 2:11 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals.

Ju. 2:12 They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshipped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger

Ju. 2:13 because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

Ju. 2:14 In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

Ju. 2:15 Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

Ju. 2:16 Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders.

Ju. 2:17 Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshipped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the LORD's commands.

Ju. 2:18 Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them.

Ju. 2:19 But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshipping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

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Ju. 2:20 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant that I laid down for their forefathers and has not listened to me,

Ju. 2:21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died.

Ju. 2:22 I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their forefathers did."

Ju. 2:23 The LORD had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 2 in the Christian Bible talks about the Israelites' failure to fully obey God's commands and their resulting consequences. The chapter begins with the Angel of the Lord rebuking the Israelites for not driving out the Canaanites, warning that they will become a snare to them and their gods will become a source of trouble. The chapter then details how the Israelites repeatedly turned away from God, worshiped other gods, and disobeyed His commandments, leading to His anger and their defeat at the hands of their enemies.

The chapter introduces the theme of the book, which is the cycle of sin, oppression, and deliverance. It explains that after Joshua's death, the Israelites did not follow God and instead worshiped Baals and Ashtoreths. As a result, God allowed their enemies to conquer them and oppress them, causing the Israelites to cry out to Him for deliverance. In response, God raised up judges, such as Othniel, Ehud, and Deborah, to deliver the Israelites from their oppressors.

Overall, the chapter emphasizes the importance of obeying God's commands and the consequences of disobedience. It sets the stage for the rest of the book, which recounts the stories of various judges and the Israelites' struggles to remain faithful to God.

Here are some key verses from Chapter 2 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible:

1. "The angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, 'I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to your ancestors. I said, "I will never break my covenant with you."' (Judges 2:1)
2. "After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel." (Judges 2:10)
3. "Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders." (Judges 2:16)
4. "Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them." (Judges 2:18)

These verses highlight the theme of the book of Judges, which is the cycle of sin, judgment, and redemption that characterized the history of Israel during this period. The passage speaks of God's faithfulness to his covenant with Israel, the failure of subsequent generations to honor that covenant, and the role of the judges in saving Israel from its enemies.

Judges chapter 2 provides a reflection on the faithfulness of God and the faithlessness of the Israelites during the time of the judges. It outlines the cycle of disobedience, punishment, repentance, and deliverance that characterized this period.

The chapter begins by describing how the Israelites failed to drive out the remaining Canaanite nations, despite God's command to do so. This failure to completely obey God's instructions led to the Canaanite influence persisting among the Israelites, which resulted in their turning away from the Lord to worship the Canaanite gods.



As a consequence of their disobedience and idolatry, God allowed their enemies to oppress them. The Israelites faced suffering and hardship due to their unfaithfulness. In their distress, they cried out to God for help, and in His mercy, He raised up judges to deliver them.

However, even in the face of God's deliverance, the Israelites continued to fall into a pattern of faithlessness. They would follow God during the lifetime of a judge, but as soon as the judge died, they would turn back to their sinful ways, abandoning the Lord and worshipping idols once again.

The reflection in Judges chapter 2 underscores the tendency of human beings to repeat their mistakes and fall into a cycle of sin and repentance. It reveals the faithfulness of God in responding to their cries for help, despite their repeated disobedience. It also emphasizes the importance of remaining steadfast in faith and obedience to God's commands, rather than being swayed by the surrounding culture and its false gods.

Ultimately, Judges chapter 2 serves as a reminder that God's faithfulness endures, even when His people are unfaithful. It highlights the need for repentance, steadfastness, and a reliance on God's grace and deliverance.

### CHAPTER 3

Ju. 3:1 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan

Ju. 3:2 (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience):

Ju. 3:3 the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

Ju. 3:4 They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

Ju. 3:5 The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

Ju. 3:6 They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Ju. 3:7 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.

Ju. 3:8 The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram

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Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years.

Ju. 3:9 But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them.

Ju. 3:10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him.

Ju. 3:11 So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Ju. 3:12 Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel.

Ju. 3:13 Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms.

Ju. 3:14 The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.

Ju. 3:15 Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer — Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab.

Ju. 3:16 Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a foot and a half long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing.

Ju. 3:17 He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man.

Ju. 3:18 After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way the men who had carried it.

Ju. 3:19 At the idols near Gilgal he himself turned back and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." The king said, "Quiet!" And all his attendants left him.

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Ju. 3:20 Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his summer palace and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his seat,

Ju. 3:21 Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly.

Ju. 3:22 Even the handle sank in after the blade, which came out of his back. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it.

Ju. 3:23 Then Ehud went out to the porch; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

Ju. 3:24 After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the house."

Ju. 3:25 They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead.

Ju. 3:26 While they waited, Ehud got away. He passed by the idols and escaped to Seirah.

Ju. 3:27 When he arrived there, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills, with him leading them.

Ju. 3:28 "Follow me," he ordered, "for the LORD has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." So they followed him down and, taking possession of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab, they allowed no-one to cross over.

Ju. 3:29 At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong; not a man escaped.

Ju. 3:30 That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.

Ju. 3:31 After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad. He too saved Israel.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 3 in the Christian Bible talks about the continued cycle of sin, oppression, and deliverance in the time of the judges. The chapter begins by listing the nations that the Lord left in the land of Canaan, to test the Israelites and see if they would obey His commandments. The chapter then describes the Israelites' failure to drive out the Canaanites, and how they intermarried with them and began worshiping their gods.

As a result of their disobedience, God allowed the king of Mesopotamia to conquer them and rule over them for eight years. The Israelites then cried out to God for help, and He raised up Othniel, the first judge, to deliver them from their oppressor. After Othniel's death, the Israelites fell back into sin and were oppressed by the Moabites for eighteen years. Again, they cried out to God, and He raised up Ehud to deliver them.

The chapter also recounts the story of Ehud's assassination of Eglon, the king of Moab, which led to the defeat of the Moabites and a period of peace for the Israelites. However, the chapter ends by stating that the Israelites continued to sin and worship other gods, setting the stage for the next cycle of sin, oppression, and deliverance.

Overall, the chapter highlights the consequences of disobedience to God's commandments and the importance of relying on Him for deliverance. It also introduces the theme of the book, which is the cycle of sin and deliverance in the time of the judges.

Here are some key verses from Chapter 3 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible:

1. "These are the nations the Lord left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience)." (Judges 3:1-2)
2. "But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them." (Judges 3:9)
3. "Again the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite." (Judges 3:15)

4. "After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel." (Judges 3:31)

These verses continue to emphasize the cycle of sin, judgment, and deliverance that characterizes the book of Judges. In Chapter 3, we see the Israelites falling into sin, crying out to God for help, and then receiving deliverance through the judges whom God raises up. These verses also introduce some of the judges who will play significant roles in the book, such as Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. Finally, the first verse of Chapter 3 sets the stage for the following stories, indicating that God allowed certain nations to remain in the land in order to test the Israelites and teach them the ways of warfare.

chapter 3 provides a reflection on the continued cycle of disobedience and deliverance during the time of the judges. It focuses on the rise of specific judges and their role in delivering the Israelites from the oppression of their enemies.

The chapter begins by listing several nations that were left in the land to test the Israelites, as they had not driven them out completely. The Israelites intermarried with these nations and began to adopt their idolatrous practices, forsaking the Lord.

As a result of their disobedience, God allowed the king of Mesopotamia to oppress the Israelites for eight years. In response to their distress, the Israelites cried out to God for help. God raised up Othniel, a judge, who delivered them from the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia.

After a period of peace, the Israelites once again fell into disobedience. This time, they turned away from God and worshipped the false gods of Moab. As a consequence, God allowed Eglon, the king of Moab, to oppress them for eighteen years. Again, the Israelites cried out to God, and He raised up Ehud, a left-handed judge, who delivered them from the Moabite oppression.

The chapter goes on to recount the story of Shamgar, another judge who arose to defend the Israelites against the Philistines.

The reflection in Judges chapter 3 reveals the cycle of disobedience, oppression, repentance, and deliverance that continued throughout this period. It underscores the consequences of the Israelites' disobedience and their tendency to fall into idolatry when they turned away from the Lord.

Furthermore, it highlights God's faithfulness in raising up judges to deliver His people in times of distress. It shows that even in their faithlessness, God remained merciful and provided a way of deliverance when the Israelites cried out to Him.

Overall, Judges chapter 3 reflects the importance of remaining faithful to God and the consequences of turning away from Him. It emphasizes the need for repentance and reliance on God's deliverance in the face of oppression and adversity.

## CHAPTER 4

Ju. 4:1 After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

Ju. 4:2 So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim.

Ju. 4:3 Because he had nine hundred iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

Ju. 4:4 Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.

Ju. 4:5 She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided.

Ju. 4:6 She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor.

Ju. 4:7 I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

Ju. 4:8 Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.”

Ju. 4:9 “Very well,” Deborah said, “I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honour will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.” So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh,

Ju. 4:10 where he summoned Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah also went with him.

Ju. 4:11 Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses’ brother-in-law, and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaananim near Kedesh.

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Ju. 4:12 When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor,

Ju. 4:13 Sisera gathered together his nine hundred iron chariots and all the men with him, from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River.

Ju. 4:14 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?” So Barak went down Mount Tabor, followed by ten thousand men.

Ju. 4:15 At Barak’s advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot.

Ju. 4:16 But Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth

Haggoyim. All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left.

Ju. 4:17 Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there were friendly relations between Jabin king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite.

Ju. 4:18 Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she put a covering over him.

Ju. 4:19 "I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

Ju. 4:20 "Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say 'No.'"

Ju. 4:21 But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died.

Ju. 4:22 Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. "Come," she said, "I will show you the man you're  
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looking for." So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple — dead.

Ju. 4:23 On that day God subdued Jabin, the Canaanite king, before the Israelites.

Ju. 4:24 And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, the Canaanite king, until they destroyed him.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 4 in the Christian Bible talks about the story of Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel, and the victory of the Israelites over the Canaanite army led by Sisera. The chapter begins by describing how the Israelites once again fell into sin and were oppressed by Jabin, the king of Canaan, for twenty years. Jabin had a powerful army commanded by Sisera, and the Israelites were unable to overcome them.

Deborah, who was a judge and prophetess, sent for Barak and instructed him to lead an army of ten thousand men to Mount Tabor, where they would face Sisera's army. Barak was hesitant and asked Deborah to accompany him, to which she agreed. Deborah prophesied that Sisera would be defeated, but that the victory would go to a woman rather than to Barak.

The Israelites attacked the Canaanite army at Mount Tabor, and with the Lord's help, they were able to defeat Sisera's army. Sisera fled on foot and took refuge in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Jael welcomed Sisera and offered him milk, but while he slept, she drove a tent peg through his temple, killing him.

The chapter ends with a song of victory sung by Deborah and Barak, praising the Lord for delivering the Israelites from their oppressors. The story of Deborah and the victory over Sisera highlights the importance of trusting in the Lord and following the guidance

of His prophets and judges. It also emphasizes that God can use anyone, even a woman, to accomplish His purposes.

Here are some key verses from chapter 4 of the Book of Judges in the Christian Bible (NIV translation):

- "Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim." (Judges 4:1-2)
- "Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided." (Judges 4:4-5)
- "'Very well,' Deborah said, 'I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.' So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh." (Judges 4:9)
- "At Barak's advance, the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot." (Judges 4:15)
- "But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died." (Judges 4:21)

Judges chapter 4 provides a reflection on the story of Deborah and Barak, highlighting their roles in delivering the Israelites from the oppression of Jabin, the king of Canaan, and his commander, Sisera.

The chapter begins by describing the Israelites' cycle of disobedience. After Ehud's death, the Israelites once again turned away from God and fell into idolatry. As a result, God allowed them to be oppressed by Jabin for twenty years.

Deborah, a prophetess and judge, arises during this time of oppression. She holds court under a palm tree in the hill country of Ephraim, where the Israelites would come to seek her counsel. Deborah sends for Barak, a military leader, and delivers a message from God instructing him to gather an army and confront Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army.

Barak expresses hesitation and requests Deborah's presence in the battle. Deborah agrees to accompany him but informs him that the honor of defeating Sisera will go to a woman instead of him. Barak agrees to go, and with Deborah's guidance, they gather an army from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun.

In the ensuing battle, God gives the Israelites a decisive victory. Sisera's army is routed, and Sisera himself flees on foot and seeks refuge in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Jael ultimately kills Sisera by driving a tent peg through his temple.

The reflection in Judges chapter 4 highlights the importance of courage, obedience, and trust in God's guidance. Deborah's role as a prophetess and judge demonstrates the power

of God's wisdom and the significance of seeking His counsel. Barak's initial hesitation serves as a reminder of the consequences of wavering faith and the need for trust in God's promises.

Furthermore, the story emphasizes that God can use unexpected means and individuals to accomplish His purposes. Jael, a woman from a different tribe, plays a crucial role in the deliverance of the Israelites by defeating Sisera.

Overall, Judges chapter 4 reflects the themes of faith, courage, and divine intervention in the face of oppression. It encourages believers to seek God's guidance, trust in His promises, and remain obedient even when faced with challenges.

## CHAPTER 5

Ju. 5:1 On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:

Ju. 5:2 “When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves — praise the LORD!

Ju. 5:3 “Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I will sing to the LORD, I will sing; I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel.

Ju. 5:4 “O LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the land of Edom, the earth shook, the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water.

Ju. 5:5 The mountains quaked before the LORD, the One of Sinai, before the LORD, the God of Israel.

Ju. 5:6 “In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the roads were abandoned; travellers took to winding paths.

Ju. 5:7 Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.

Ju. 5:8 When they chose new gods, war came to the city gates, and not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

Ju. 5:9 My heart is with Israel’s princes, with the willing volunteers among the people. Praise the LORD!

Ju. 5:10 “You who ride on white donkeys, sitting on your saddle blankets, and you who walk along the road, consider  
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Ju. 5:11 the voice of the singers at the watering places. They recite the righteous acts of the LORD, the righteous acts of his warriors in Israel. “Then the people of the LORD went down to the city gates.

Ju. 5:12 ‘Wake up, wake up, Deborah! Wake up, wake up, break out in song! Arise, O Barak! Take captive your captives, O son of Abinoam.’

Ju. 5:13 “Then the men who were left came down to the nobles; the people of the LORD came to me with the mighty.



Ju. 5:14 Some came from Ephraim, whose roots were in Amalek; Benjamin was with the people who followed you. From Makir captains came down, from Zebulun those who bear a commander's staff.

Ju. 5:15 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah; yes, Issachar was with Barak, rushing after him into the valley. In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of heart.

Ju. 5:16 Why did you stay among the campfires to hear the whistling for the flocks? In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of heart.

Ju. 5:17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan. And Dan, why did he linger by the ships? Asher remained on the coast and stayed in his coves.

Ju. 5:18 The people of Zebulun risked their very lives; so did Naphtali on the heights of the field.

Ju. 5:19 "Kings came, they fought; the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo, but they carried off no silver, no plunder.

Ju. 5:20 From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera.

Ju. 5:21 The river Kishon swept them away, the age-old river, the river Kishon. March on, my soul; be strong!

Ju. 5:22 Then thundered the horses' hoofs — galloping, galloping go his mighty steeds.

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Ju. 5:23 "Curse Meroz," said the angel of the LORD. "Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the LORD, to help the LORD against the mighty."

Ju. 5:24 "Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, most blessed of tent-dwelling women.

Ju. 5:25 He asked for water, and she gave him milk; in a bowl fit for nobles she brought him curdled milk.

Ju. 5:26 Her hand reached for the tent peg, her right hand for the workman's hammer. She struck Sisera, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple.

Ju. 5:27 At her feet he sank, he fell; there he lay. At her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell — dead.

Ju. 5:28 "Through the window peered Sisera's mother; behind the lattice she cried out, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why is the clatter of his chariots delayed?'

Ju. 5:29 The wisest of her ladies answer her; indeed, she keeps saying to herself,

Ju. 5:30 "Are they not finding and dividing the spoils: a girl or two for each man, colourful garments as plunder for Sisera, colourful garments embroidered, highly embroidered garments for my neck — all this as plunder?"

Ju. 5:31 "So may all your enemies perish, O LORD! But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength."  
Then the land had peace for forty years.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 5 in the Christian Bible is a song of victory sung by Deborah and Barak after the defeat of the Canaanite army led by Sisera. The chapter begins with a call to praise the Lord for delivering the Israelites from their oppressors and for the courage and faith of those who fought in the battle. The song describes the various tribes of Israel who participated in the battle and the role they played in the victory. The chapter also praises Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for her bravery in killing Sisera. It describes how she welcomed Sisera into her tent and then killed him while he slept, which was a crucial turning point in the battle.

The song emphasizes the power of the Lord in delivering the Israelites from their enemies and the faithfulness of those who trusted in Him. It also includes a warning to those who did not participate in the battle and a curse on Meroz, a town that did not offer assistance to the Israelites.

Overall, the chapter serves as a celebration of the victory over the Canaanites and a testament to the faith and courage of those who fought in the battle. It emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord and following His guidance, and the power of God to overcome even the most formidable foes.

Here are some key verses from Chapter 5 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible (New International Version translation):

- "When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves—praise the Lord!" (Judges 5:2)
- "My heart is with Israel's princes, with the willing volunteers among the people. Praise the Lord!" (Judges 5:9)
- "The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel." (Judges 5:7)
- "So may all your enemies perish, Lord! But may all who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength." (Judges 5:31)

Chapter 5 is known as the Song of Deborah, and it is a poetic celebration of the victory of the Israelites over their Canaanite oppressors. These key verses praise the Lord for the victory and attribute it to the leadership of the princes of Israel and the willingness of the people to offer themselves. Deborah is also celebrated as a mother figure who played a key role in the victory. Finally, the chapter ends with a prayer for the destruction of

Israel's enemies and a blessing for those who love the Lord.

Judges chapter 5, often referred to as the Song of Deborah, provides a reflection on the victory and celebration following the deliverance of the Israelites from their oppressors. It is a poetic and triumphant hymn sung by Deborah and Barak, expressing gratitude to God for His intervention and highlighting the roles of various tribes and individuals in the battle.

The chapter begins with a proclamation of praise to God for His mighty acts and the liberation of Israel. It acknowledges God as the true source of victory and recounts the deliverance of the Israelites from their enemies.

The Song of Deborah celebrates the unity and participation of various tribes in the battle. It highlights the courageous acts of leaders and the willingness of ordinary people to rise up in defense of their nation. It mentions specific tribes and individuals who contributed to the victory, such as Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, and others.

The reflection in Judges chapter 5 emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation in achieving victory. It showcases the power of God's deliverance when His people come together and fight for a common cause. The Song of Deborah also highlights the faithfulness and strength of God in leading His people to triumph over their enemies.

Additionally, the chapter reflects on the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. It describes the faithfulness and courage of those who participated in the battle, while also condemning those who did not join or support the cause.

Overall, Judges chapter 5 serves as a reflection on the victorious outcome of God's intervention and the celebration of His faithfulness. It encourages believers to recognize and acknowledge God's role in their triumphs, to unite in the face of adversity, and to be courageous in defending what is right. The chapter also serves as a reminder that God fights for His people when they put their trust in Him.

## CHAPTER 6

Ju. 6:1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.

Ju. 6:2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.

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Ju. 6:3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country.

Ju. 6:4 They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys.

Ju. 6:5 They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.

Ju. 6:6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

Ju. 6:7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian,

Ju. 6:8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Ju. 6:9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land.

Ju. 6:10 I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."

Ju. 6:11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.

Ju. 6:12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

Ju. 6:13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

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Ju. 6:14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

Ju. 6:15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

Ju. 6:16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

Ju. 6:17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me.

Ju. 6:18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return."

Ju. 6:19 Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

Ju. 6:20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so.

Ju. 6:21 With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared.

Ju. 6:22 When Gideon realised that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"

Ju. 6:23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

Ju. 6:24 So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Ju. 6:25 That same night the LORD said to him, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one seven years old. Tear  
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down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.

Ju. 6:26 Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.”

Ju. 6:27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

Ju. 6:28 In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal’s altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly-built altar!

Ju. 6:29 They asked each other, “Who did this?” When they carefully investigated, they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did it.”

Ju. 6:30 The men of the town demanded of Joash, “Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.”

Ju. 6:31 But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, “Are you going to plead Baal’s cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar.”

Ju. 6:32 So that day they called Gideon “Jerub-Baal,” saying, “Let Baal contend with him,” because he broke down Baal’s altar.

Ju. 6:33 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

Ju. 6:34 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.

Ju. 6:35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

Ju. 6:36 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised —  
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Ju. 6:37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing-floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”

Ju. 6:38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew — a bowlful of water.

Ju. 6:39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew."

Ju. 6:40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 6 in the Christian Bible talks about the story of Gideon, one of the judges of Israel, and the defeat of the Midianites who had been oppressing the Israelites. The chapter begins by describing how the Israelites once again fell into sin and were oppressed by the Midianites, who plundered their crops and livestock.

The Lord then appeared to Gideon and called him to be a deliverer of the Israelites. Gideon was hesitant and doubted his ability to lead the people, but the Lord reassured him and promised to be with him. Gideon asked for a sign to confirm that the Lord had indeed called him, and the Lord responded by causing fire to come out of a rock and consume a sacrifice that Gideon had offered.

Gideon then gathered an army of thirty-two thousand men to face the Midianites, but the Lord instructed him to reduce the number of men so that the victory would be attributed to Him and not to the strength of the Israelites. Gideon ultimately led an army of three hundred men and surprised the Midianites by attacking them at night with torches and trumpets.

The Midianites were thrown into confusion and began to fight among themselves, allowing the Israelites to defeat them and drive them out of the land. The chapter ends with the Israelites offering to make Gideon their king, but he refused, saying that the Lord was their ruler.

The story of Gideon and the defeat of the Midianites emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord and not relying on one's own strength. It also highlights the power of the Lord to deliver His people from their oppressors and the importance of being obedient to His commands.

Here are some key verses from chapter 6 in The Book of Judges:

- "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." (Judges 6:1)
- "And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." (Judges 6:15)
- "And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." (Judges 6:16)
- "And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." (Judges 6:13)
- "And Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites." (Judges 6:24)

- "And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." (Judges 7:2)
- "And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place." (Judges 7:7)
- "And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along." (Judges 7:13)
- "And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them." (Judges 8:4)
- "And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon." (Judges 8:28)

These are just a few key verses, but there are many more important passages in this chapter as well.

Judges chapter 6 provides a reflection on the story of Gideon, highlighting his calling as a judge and his journey from doubt to faith in fulfilling God's purpose for him and the Israelites.

The chapter begins by describing the state of the Israelites at that time. They had once again turned away from God and were facing oppression from the Midianites. The Midianites would invade the land, destroy crops, and leave the Israelites in a state of poverty and despair.

In the midst of this oppression, an angel of the Lord appears to Gideon while he is threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding from the Midianites. The angel greets Gideon as a "mighty man of valor" and delivers a message from God, informing him that he has been chosen to deliver the Israelites from the hand of the Midianites.

Gideon expresses doubt and uncertainty, questioning how it could be possible for him to accomplish such a task. He requests signs from God to confirm the message he has received. God patiently grants Gideon's requests for signs, demonstrating His patience and understanding of Gideon's need for reassurance.

As the story unfolds, Gideon's faith begins to grow. He tears down the altar of the false god Baal in his town, demonstrating his commitment to the worship of the Lord alone. Gideon gathers an army, but God reduces their numbers significantly, emphasizing that the victory will come from God's power, not human strength.

The reflection in Judges chapter 6 highlights the faithfulness of God in choosing and equipping unlikely individuals for His purposes. It reveals the transformative power of God's presence and guidance in the life of Gideon, who initially doubted his ability but grew in faith as he witnessed God's miraculous signs.

Moreover, the chapter reflects on the importance of obedience and worshiping God alone. Gideon's act of tearing down the altar of Baal signifies the removal of idolatry and the restoration of true worship. It emphasizes the need for wholehearted devotion to God and the rejection of false gods.

Overall, Judges chapter 6 serves as a reflection on God's faithfulness, His ability to work through individuals despite their doubts, and the transformative power of obedience and worship. It encourages believers to trust in God's calling, to seek His guidance, and to rely on His strength rather than their own in fulfilling His purposes.

## CHAPTER 7

Ju. 7:1 Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

Ju. 7:2 The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,

Ju. 7:3 announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

Ju. 7:4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them out for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

Ju. 7:5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink."

Ju. 7:6 Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

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Ju. 7:7 The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place."

Ju. 7:8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

Ju. 7:9 During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.

Ju. 7:10 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah

Ju. 7:11 and listen to what they are saying. Afterwards, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.



Ju. 7:12 The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

Ju. 7:13 Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."

Ju. 7:14 His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

Ju. 7:15 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

Ju. 7:16 Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

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Ju. 7:17 "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do.

Ju. 7:18 When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

Ju. 7:19 Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.

Ju. 7:20 The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"

Ju. 7:21 While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

Ju. 7:22 When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah towards Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

Ju. 7:23 Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites.

Ju. 7:24 Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah." So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah.

Ju. 7:25 They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and

Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 7 in the Christian Bible talks about the continued story of Gideon and the defeat of the Midianites. After reducing his army to only three hundred men, Gideon and his soldiers encamped near the Midianite army, which numbered in the tens of thousands.

The Lord then instructed Gideon to lead a nighttime attack on the Midianites, but first, he must reduce his army even further by having all those who were afraid leave. Gideon followed the Lord's instructions, and two-thirds of his already small army left, leaving only one hundred men.

That night, Gideon and his men surrounded the Midianite camp and at his signal, broke the jars covering the torches they were carrying, revealing their presence and causing the Midianites to panic and attack each other. Gideon and his men then pursued the fleeing Midianites and defeated them.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord and obeying His commands, even when they may seem counterintuitive or challenging. It also demonstrates the power of the Lord to accomplish great things through a small and faithful group of people.

Overall, the story of Gideon and the defeat of the Midianites in chapter 7 of The Book of Judges serves as a reminder that victory does not always depend on numerical superiority or human strength but on faith and obedience to God's will.

Here are some key verses from chapter 7 in The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible in English:

- "The Lord said to Gideon, 'You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, "My own strength has saved me."' - Judges 7:2
- "So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, 'Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.'" - Judges 7:5
- "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home." - Judges 7:7
- "The Midianites, Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore." - Judges 7:12
- "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do." - Judges 7:17
- "When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath." - Judges 7:22

These verses recount the story of how God used Gideon and a small group of 300 men to defeat a much larger army of Midianites through a strategic battle plan and the power of God.

! Judges chapter 7 provides a reflection on the story of Gideon and the defeat of the Midianites. It highlights the themes of faith, trust, and God's power to bring victory through unlikely means.

The chapter begins with Gideon preparing for battle against the Midianites. However, God instructs him to reduce the size of his army. Gideon initially gathers 32,000 men, but God tells him that the army is still too large. He instructs Gideon to offer a test to the soldiers, and only those who drink water from the stream in a specific manner are to be chosen for battle. As a result, the army is reduced to a mere 300 men.

This significant reduction in the size of the army is a reflection of God's desire to demonstrate His power and sovereignty. The purpose is to ensure that the Israelites understand that victory does not come through their own strength or numbers, but through God's intervention.

With the small but dedicated army of 300 men, Gideon and his soldiers approach the Midianite camp. God assures Gideon of victory and instructs him to divide the soldiers into three groups, providing them with trumpets, empty jars, and torches. At the appointed time, they blow their trumpets, break their jars, and shout, causing confusion and fear among the Midianites. The Midianite army turns on itself, resulting in their defeat.

The reflection in Judges chapter 7 emphasizes the importance of trust and faith in God's guidance and provision. Gideon's army was intentionally reduced to a size that seemed impossible to achieve victory. However, God wanted to demonstrate that He is the source of triumph and that His power transcends human limitations.

The story also reflects God's preference for using unconventional means to bring about victory. The use of trumpets, jars, and torches instead of traditional weapons showcases God's ability to accomplish His purposes in unexpected ways. It reminds believers that they should not rely solely on human strategies or resources, but on God's wisdom and power.

Furthermore, the chapter serves as a reminder that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. The small army of 300 men magnifies God's power and highlights His ability to accomplish great things through those who trust and obey Him.

Overall, Judges chapter 7 reflects the importance of faith, trust, and reliance on God's power. It encourages believers to recognize that victory comes from God and that they should depend on His guidance and strength in all circumstances, even when facing overwhelming odds.

## CHAPTER 8

Ju. 8:1 Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, “Why have you treated us like this? Why didn’t you call us when you went to fight Midian?” And they criticised him sharply.

Ju. 8:2 But he answered them, “What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren’t the gleanings of Ephraim’s grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer?”

Ju. 8:3 God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?” At this, their resentment against him subsided.

Ju. 8:4 Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it.

Ju. 8:5 He said to the men of Succoth, “Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.”

Ju. 8:6 But the officials of Succoth said, “Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?”

Ju. 8:7 Then Gideon replied, “Just for that, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briars.”

Ju. 8:8 From there he went up to Peniel and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Succoth had.

Ju. 8:9 So he said to the men of Peniel, “When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower.”

Ju. 8:10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen.

Ju. 8:11 Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and fell upon the unsuspecting army.

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Ju. 8:12 Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.

Ju. 8:13 Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres.

Ju. 8:14 He caught a young man of Succoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy seven officials of Succoth, the elders of the town.

Ju. 8:15 Then Gideon came and said to the men of Succoth, “Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, ‘Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?’”

Ju. 8:16 He took the elders of the town and taught the men of

Succoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers.

Ju. 8:17 He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town.

Ju. 8:18 Then he asked Zebah and Zalmunna, “What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?” “Men like you,” they answered, “each one with the bearing of a prince.”

Ju. 8:19 Gideon replied, “Those were my brothers, the sons of my own mother. As surely as the LORD lives, if you had spared their lives, I would not kill you.”

Ju. 8:20 Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said, “Kill them!” But Jether did not draw his sword, because he was only a boy and was afraid.

Ju. 8:21 Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Come, do it yourself. `As is the man, so is his strength.”“ So Gideon stepped forward and killed them, and took the ornaments off their camels’ necks.

Ju. 8:22 The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us — you, your son and your grandson — because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian.”

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Ju. 8:23 But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you.”

Ju. 8:24 And he said, “I do have one request, that each of you give me an ear-ring from your share of the plunder.” (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold ear-rings.)

Ju. 8:25 They answered, “We’ll be glad to give them.” So they spread out a garment, and each man threw a ring from his plunder onto it.

Ju. 8:26 The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels, not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels’ necks.

Ju. 8:27 Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshipping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

Ju. 8:28 Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon’s lifetime, the land enjoyed peace for forty years.

Ju. 8:29 Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live.

Ju. 8:30 He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives.

Ju. 8:31 His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech.

Ju. 8:32 Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Ju. 8:33 No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again

prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god and

Ju. 8:34 did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.

Ju. 8:35 They also failed to show kindness to the family of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) for all the good things he had done for them.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 8 in the Christian Bible talks about the aftermath of the victory of Gideon and his men over the Midianites. After the battle, Gideon pursued the remaining Midianite leaders, Zebah and Zalmunna, and captured them. However, Gideon faced opposition from the Ephraimites, who accused him of not including them in the battle and claimed that they should have received a share of the spoils.

Gideon appeased the Ephraimites by acknowledging their contribution and offering them a share of the spoil. Gideon then executed Zebah and Zalmunna and returned to his home in peace.

However, Gideon's success did not last long, as he later created an ephod, which was a vestment worn by the high priest, and placed it in his hometown. This act led the Israelites to worship the ephod, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family. The chapter concludes with Gideon's death, and the Israelites returning to their idolatrous ways, forgetting the Lord and His deliverance.

The story of Gideon in Chapter 8 of The Book of Judges shows the consequences of forgetting the Lord and His deliverance, and how even the greatest heroes of the faith can falter and fall into sin. It also serves as a warning against the dangers of idolatry and the temptation to trust in human strength or resources rather than relying on the Lord.

Here are some key verses from chapter 8 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible:

- "Then the men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they accused him fiercely." (Judges 8:1)
- "Then Gideon and the three hundred men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, weary yet pursuing." (Judges 8:4)
- "And Gideon said to them, "I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil." (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)" (Judges 8:24)
- "Then Gideon made it into an ephod and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household." (Judges 8:27)

These verses showcase Gideon's leadership and the challenges he faced as a military leader. They also reveal his flaws and mistakes, such as creating an idol that ultimately became a snare to his own household.

Judges chapter 8 provides a reflection on the aftermath of Gideon's victory over the Midianites and the challenges he faces as a leader. It reveals both positive and negative aspects of Gideon's character and offers insights into the consequences of his actions.

After defeating the Midianites, the Israelites approach Gideon and request that he become their ruler. Gideon accepts the role but refuses to establish a hereditary monarchy, stating that the Lord alone will rule over them. This decision reflects Gideon's humility and desire to maintain the sovereignty of God over Israel.

Gideon's leadership is tested when the Ephraimites confront him for not including them in the initial battle against the Midianites. Gideon responds with diplomacy and calmness, appeasing their anger and preventing a conflict within the nation. This demonstrates Gideon's ability to navigate internal tensions and maintain unity among the tribes.

However, Gideon's character also reveals flaws. After the victory, he requests gold earrings from the spoils of war, which he uses to create an ephod, a priestly garment. The ephod becomes an object of idolatrous worship for the Israelites, drawing their attention away from the true worship of God. Gideon's actions contribute to the temptation and spiritual downfall of the people.

Another reflection in Judges chapter 8 comes in the form of Gideon's request for kingship. Despite his initial refusal to establish a monarchy, Gideon eventually requests that the people give him gold, which he uses to create an ephod and establish a cultic center. This request reveals Gideon's desire for personal power and influence, contradicting his earlier commitment to God's sovereignty.

The chapter also highlights the consequences of Gideon's actions. The Israelites fall into idolatry, worshiping the ephod and forgetting their covenant with God. Gideon's family also becomes a source of conflict and strife, leading to further consequences for the nation.

The reflection in Judges chapter 8 reminds us of the complexities of human character and leadership. It showcases Gideon's strengths as a humble and diplomatic leader, as well as his weaknesses and failures. It serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of idolatry and the consequences of seeking personal power and influence.

Ultimately, the chapter encourages believers to remain steadfast in their devotion to God, to avoid idolatry and the pursuit of personal gain, and to recognize the importance of God's sovereignty in all aspects of life and leadership.

## CHAPTER 9

Ju. 9:1 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan,

Ju. 9:2 "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood."

Ju. 9:3 When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

Ju. 9:4 They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech used it to hire reckless adventurers, who became his followers.

Ju. 9:5 He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding.

Ju. 9:6 Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelech king.

Ju. 9:7 When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you.

Ju. 9:8 One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

Ju. 9:9 "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and men are honoured, to hold sway over the trees?'

Ju. 9:10 "Next, the trees said to the fig-tree, 'Come and be our king.'

Ju. 9:11 "But the fig-tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?'

Ju. 9:12 "Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.'  
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Ju. 9:13 "But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to hold sway over the trees?'

Ju. 9:14 "Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.'

Ju. 9:15 "The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!'

Ju. 9:16 "Now if you have acted honourably and in good faith when you made Abimelech king, and if you have been fair to Jerub Baal and his family, and if you have treated him as he deserves —

Ju. 9:17 and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midian

Ju. 9:18 (but today you have revolted against my father's family, murdered his seventy sons on a single stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave girl, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is your brother) —

Ju. 9:19 if then you have acted honourably and in good faith towards Jerub-Baal and his family today, may Abimelech be your joy, and may you be his, too!

Ju. 9:20 But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and let fire come out from you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo,



and consume Abimelech!”

Ju. 9:21 Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech.

Ju. 9:22 After Abimelech had governed Israel for three years,

Ju. 9:23 God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech.

Ju. 9:24 God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal’s seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged  
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on their brother Abimelech and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers.

Ju. 9:25 In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelech.

Ju. 9:26 Now Gaal son of Ebed moved with his brothers into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him.

Ju. 9:27 After they had gone out into the fields and gathered the grapes and trodden them, they held a festival in the temple of their god. While they were eating and drinking, they cursed Abimelech.

Ju. 9:28 Then Gaal son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should be subject to him? Isn’t he Jerub-Baal’s son, and isn’t Zebul his deputy? Serve the men of

Hamor, Shechem’s father! Why should we serve Abimelech?

Ju. 9:29 If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelech, ‘Call out your whole army!’“

Ju. 9:30 When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry.

Ju. 9:31 Under cover he sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, “Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and are stirring up the city against you.

Ju. 9:32 Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields.

Ju. 9:33 In the morning at sunrise, advance against the city. When Gaal and his men come out against you, do whatever your hand finds to do.”

Ju. 9:34 So Abimelech and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem in four companies.

Ju. 9:35 Now Gaal son of Ebed had gone out and was standing at the entrance to the city gate just as Abimelech and his soldiers came out from their hiding-place.  
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Ju. 9:36 When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul, “Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!” Zebul replied, “You mistake the shadows of the mountains for men.”

Ju. 9:37 But Gaal spoke up again: “Look, people are coming down from the centre of the land, and a company is coming from the direction of the soothsayers’ tree.”

Ju. 9:38 Then Zebul said to him, “Where is your big talk now, you who said, ‘Who is Abimelech that we should be subject to him?’ Aren’t these the men you ridiculed? Go out and fight them!”

Ju. 9:39 So Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech.

Ju. 9:40 Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight — all the way to the entrance to the gate.

Ju. 9:41 Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.

Ju. 9:42 The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelech.

Ju. 9:43 So he took his men, divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose to attack them.

Ju. 9:44 Abimelech and the companies with him rushed forward to a position at the entrance to the city gate. Then two companies rushed upon those in the fields and struck them down.

Ju. 9:45 All that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it.

Ju. 9:46 On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith.

Ju. 9:47 When Abimelech heard that they had assembled there,

Ju. 9:48 he and all his men went up Mount Zalmon. He took an axe and cut off some branches, which he lifted to his shoulders.

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He ordered the men with him, “Quick! Do what you have seen me do!”

Ju. 9:49 So all the men cut branches and followed Abimelech. They piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire over the people inside. So all the people in the tower of Shechem, about a thousand men and women, also died.

Ju. 9:50 Next Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it.

Ju. 9:51 Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women — all the people of the city — fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof.

Ju. 9:52 Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire,

Ju. 9:53 a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull.

Ju. 9:54 Hurriedly he called to his armour-bearer, “Draw your sword

and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.'" So his servant ran him through, and he died.

Ju. 9:55 When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they went home.

Ju. 9:56 Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers.

Ju. 9:57 God also made the men of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 9 in the Christian Bible talks about the rise and fall of Abimelech, one of Gideon's sons who sought to become a king over Israel. Abimelech first killed all of his seventy brothers, except for one who escaped, and then gained the support of the leaders of Shechem to make him their ruler.

However, Abimelech's reign was short-lived, as he soon faced opposition from a man named Gaal, who also sought to become the ruler of Shechem. Abimelech defeated Gaal and his followers, but his reign was plagued by conflict and opposition.

Eventually, Abimelech and his army attacked a tower in the city of Thebez, where a woman dropped a millstone on his head, mortally wounding him. Abimelech then commanded his armor-bearer to kill him, so that it would not be said that he was killed by a woman.

The chapter concludes with a brief mention of several other judges who followed Abimelech, but whose stories are not told in detail.

The story of Abimelech in Chapter 9 of The Book of Judges serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of seeking power and glory for oneself, and the destructive consequences of selfish ambition. It also highlights the importance of wise and just leadership, which seeks the good of the people rather than one's own interests.

Here are some key verses from Judges chapter 9:

- "Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, 'Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, "Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?"'" (Judges 9:1-2)
- "But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, and go hold sway over the trees?'" (Judges 9:9)
- "And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech." (Judges 9:23)
- "Thus God returned the evil of Abimelech, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers." (Judges 9:56)

These verses highlight the story of Abimelech, one of Gideon's sons, who attempted to become a ruler over Israel by killing all his brothers. He made a pact with the leaders of Shechem to support him in his quest for power, but ultimately they turned on him and he died. The parable of the trees, in which the olive tree, fig tree, and vine each decline to rule over the other trees, is used to illustrate the folly of Abimelech's ambition.

Judges chapter 9 provides a reflection on the story of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, and the consequences of his quest for power and his oppressive leadership.

The chapter begins with Abimelech's desire for power. After Gideon's death, Abimelech convinces the leaders of Shechem to support him in becoming their ruler. He manipulates their desire for power and convinces them that he is the rightful successor to his father.

Abimelech then proceeds to eliminate his brothers, all except Jotham who escapes, in order to secure his position as ruler. This act reflects his ruthless and power-hungry nature, willing to commit violence to maintain control.

Jotham, the only surviving brother, delivers a parable to the people of Shechem, criticizing their choice to support Abimelech and warning them of the consequences. The parable illustrates the folly of their decision and foreshadows the destruction and chaos that will come as a result of Abimelech's oppressive rule.

As Abimelech reigns as king, he leads the people astray and brings calamity upon them. He engages in violent battles and kills many people. However, his reign is ultimately cut short when a woman drops a millstone from a tower and fatally wounds him. Recognizing his impending death, Abimelech commands his armor-bearer to kill him to avoid being killed by a woman.

The reflection in Judges chapter 9 reveals the dangers of seeking power at all costs and the destructive consequences of oppressive leadership. Abimelech's quest for power leads to the loss of innocent lives, division within the community, and his own downfall.

Furthermore, the chapter highlights the role of Jotham as a voice of reason and warning. Jotham's parable serves as a reflection on the consequences of supporting an unjust ruler and the importance of making wise and moral choices in leadership.

Overall, Judges chapter 9 serves as a reflection on the dangers of unchecked ambition, the consequences of oppressive leadership, and the need for wisdom and discernment in choosing leaders. It warns against the pursuit of power at the expense of others and emphasizes the importance of justice, integrity, and the welfare of the community.

## CHAPTER 10

Ju. 10:1 After the time of Abimelech a man of Issachar, Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim.

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Ju. 10:2 He led Israel for twenty-three years; then he died, and was buried in Shamir.

Ju. 10:3 He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel for twenty two years.

Ju. 10:4 He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. They controlled thirty towns in Gilead, which to this day are called Havvoth

Jair.

Ju. 10:5 When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

Ju. 10:6 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him,

Ju. 10:7 he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites,

Ju. 10:8 who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites.

Ju. 10:9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin and the house of Ephraim; and Israel was in great distress.

Ju. 10:10 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals."

Ju. 10:11 The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines,

Ju. 10:12 the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands?

Ju. 10:13 But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you.

Ju. 10:14 Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!"

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Ju. 10:15 But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now."

Ju. 10:16 Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And he could bear Israel's misery no longer.

Ju. 10:17 When the Ammonites were called to arms and camped in Gilead, the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah.

Ju. 10:18 The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever will launch the attack against the Ammonites will be the head of all those living in Gilead."

The Book of Judges, Chapter 10 in the Christian Bible talks about the reign of two minor judges, Tola and Jair, who judged Israel for a total of forty-five years. However, the chapter primarily focuses on the continued cycle of sin and repentance among the Israelites.

The chapter begins by describing how the Israelites again turned away from God and began worshiping other gods. As a result, God allowed them to be oppressed by the Philistines and the Ammonites for eighteen years. The Israelites cried out to God for help,

and God rebuked them for their unfaithfulness, but also had compassion on them and raised up a new judge, Jephthah, to lead them.

Jephthah was a skilled warrior, but he had a tragic personal history. He had been banished from his home by his half-brothers and had become the leader of a group of outcasts and raiders. However, when the Israelites asked him to lead them against the Ammonites, he agreed on the condition that he would become their permanent leader if he were victorious.

Jephthah then made a vow to God that if He gave him victory over the Ammonites, he would offer as a burnt offering whatever or whoever came out of his house to meet him upon his return. Jephthah was successful in battle, but upon his return, his only child, a daughter, came out to meet him. Jephthah was grief-stricken, but he fulfilled his vow and offered his daughter as a burnt offering to God.

The chapter ends with a brief mention of three more judges who led Israel after Jephthah's death.

The story of Jephthah in Chapter 10 of The Book of Judges is a sobering reminder of the dangers of making rash vows and promises to God. It also highlights the ongoing struggle of the Israelites to remain faithful to God and avoid the consequences of their sin.

Here are some key verses from Judges chapter 10 in the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Christian Bible:

- "And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. And they forsook the Lord and did not serve him." (Judges 10:6)
- "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites" (Judges 10:7)
- "And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, 'We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals.'" (Judges 10:10)
- "And the Lord said to the people of Israel, 'Did I not save you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines?'" (Judges 10:11)
- "Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more." (Judges 10:13)
- "And he [God] was grieved by the misery of Israel." (Judges 10:16)

Judges chapter 10 provides a reflection on the cycle of disobedience and repentance that the Israelites find themselves trapped in. It highlights the consequences of their idolatry and the mercy of God in response to their repentance.

The chapter begins by introducing two judges, Tola and Jair, who ruled over Israel for a combined period of 45 years. Following their deaths, the Israelites once again turned away from God and began worshiping foreign gods, particularly the gods of the surrounding nations.

As a result of their disobedience, God allowed the Philistines and the Ammonites to oppress the Israelites. The Israelites were in great distress and cried out to God for help, confessing their sin and acknowledging their need for deliverance.

In response to their cries, God reminds the Israelites of their pattern of rebellion. He confronts them by stating that they have forsaken Him and served other gods, and as a consequence, He will no longer save them. The Israelites' suffering is seen as a direct consequence of their disobedience.

However, despite their disobedience, the Israelites sincerely repent and remove the foreign gods from among them. They turn back to God, and their repentance moves Him to compassion. God sees their genuine remorse and distress, and He is moved to deliver them once again.

The reflection in Judges chapter 10 emphasizes the cyclical nature of the Israelites' relationship with God. It reveals the pattern of their disobedience, oppression, repentance, and God's mercy. It serves as a reminder of the consequences of turning away from God and the necessity of sincere repentance to restore their relationship with Him.

The chapter also reflects God's willingness to show mercy and extend grace to those who genuinely repent. Despite the Israelites' repeated failures, God responds to their cries and delivers them from their oppressors. It demonstrates God's faithfulness and His desire for His people to return to Him.

Overall, Judges chapter 10 provides a reflection on the need for repentance, the consequences of disobedience, and the mercy and faithfulness of God. It encourages believers to examine their own hearts, turn away from idolatry and sin, and seek God's forgiveness and restoration. It also reminds us of God's willingness to hear our cries and respond with compassion when we genuinely repent and turn back to Him.

## CHAPTER 11

Ju. 11:1 Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute.

Ju. 11:2 Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman."

Ju. 11:3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a group of adventurers gathered around him and followed him.

Ju. 11:4 Some time later, when the Ammonites made war on Israel,  
Ju. 11:5 the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

Ju. 11:6 "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites."

Ju. 11:7 Jephthah said to them, “Didn’t you hate me and drive me from my father’s house? Why do you come to me now, when you’re in trouble?”

Ju. 11:8 The elders of Gilead said to him, “Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be our head over all who live in Gilead.”

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Ju. 11:9 Jephthah answered, “Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me — will I really be your head?”

Ju. 11:10 The elders of Gilead replied, “The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say.”

Ju. 11:11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.

Ju. 11:12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king with the question: “What do you have against us that you have attacked our country?”

Ju. 11:13 The king of the Ammonites answered Jephthah’s messengers, “When Israel came up out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peaceably.”

Ju. 11:14 Jephthah sent back messengers to the Ammonite king,

Ju. 11:15 saying: “This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites.

Ju. 11:16 But when they came up out of Egypt, Israel went through the desert to the Red Sea and on to Kadesh.

Ju. 11:17 Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, ‘Give us permission to go through your country,’ but the king of Edom would not listen. They sent also to the king of Moab, and he refused. So Israel stayed at Kadesh.

Ju. 11:18 “Next they travelled through the desert, skirted the lands of Edom and Moab, passed along the eastern side of the country of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was its border.

Ju. 11:19 “Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and said to him, ‘Let us pass through your country to our own place.’

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Ju. 11:20 Sihon, however, did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. He mustered all his men and encamped at Jahaz and fought with Israel.

Ju. 11:21 “Then the LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his men into Israel’s hands, and they defeated them. Israel took over all the land of the Amorites who lived in that country,



Ju. 11:22 capturing all of it from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the desert to the Jordan.

Ju. 11:23 “Now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before his people Israel, what right have you to take it over?”

Ju. 11:24 Will you not take what your god Chemosh gives you? Likewise, whatever the LORD our God has given us, we will possess.

Ju. 11:25 Are you better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel or fight with them?

Ju. 11:26 For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn’t you retake them during that time?

Ju. 11:27 I have not wronged you, but you are doing me wrong by waging war against me. Let the LORD, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites.”

Ju. 11:28 The king of Ammon, however, paid no attention to the message Jephthah sent him.

Ju. 11:29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites.

Ju. 11:30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: “If you give the Ammonites into my hands,

Ju. 11:31 whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

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Ju. 11:32 Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands.

Ju. 11:33 He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon.

Ju. 11:34 When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter.

Ju. 11:35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, “Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break.”

Ju. 11:36 “My father,” she replied, “you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites.

Ju. 11:37 But grant me this one request,” she said. “Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry.”

Ju. 11:38 "You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and the girls went into the hills and wept because she would never marry.

Ju. 11:39 After the two months, she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite custom

Ju. 11:40 that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 11 in the Christian Bible talks about Jephthah, the ninth judge of Israel, who was a Gileadite and a mighty warrior. Jephthah was initially rejected by his half-brothers and forced to flee his home, but was later called upon by the elders of Gilead to lead them in battle against the Ammonites.

Jephthah agreed to lead the Israelites on the condition that if he was victorious, he would become the permanent leader of Gilead. After defeating the Ammonites, Jephthah returned to his home, but his daughter came out to greet him, and he realized that he had made a vow to God to sacrifice whoever or whatever first came out of his house upon his return.

Despite his grief, Jephthah fulfilled his vow and sacrificed his daughter to God. The chapter also describes how the tribe of Ephraim challenged Jephthah's leadership, leading to a battle in which many Ephraimites were killed. The chapter ends with a brief account of three more minor judges who judged Israel after Jephthah.

The story of Jephthah in Chapter 11 of The Book of Judges is a tragic tale of a leader who made a hasty vow and was forced to pay a terrible price. It also highlights the ongoing conflict and divisions among the tribes of Israel and the need for strong and just leadership to maintain unity and peace.

Here are some key verses in chapter 11 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible:

- "Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute." (Judges 11:1)
- "And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, 'If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.'" (Judges 11:30-31)
- "And Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter." (Judges 11:34-35)
- "And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had made." (Judges 11:39)

These verses highlight the story of Jephthah, a mighty warrior who made a vow to God that he would sacrifice whatever came out of his house to meet him if he won the battle against the Ammonites. Tragically, his only daughter was the first to greet him, and he was forced to keep his vow by sacrificing her as a burnt offering to the Lord.

! Judges chapter 11 provides a reflection on the story of Jephthah, highlighting his role as a judge and the challenges he faces in fulfilling his vow to God.

The chapter begins by introducing Jephthah, a valiant warrior who had been rejected by his family and driven away from his homeland. However, when the Ammonites wage war against the Israelites, the elders of Gilead turn to Jephthah for help, recognizing his military prowess.

Jephthah agrees to lead the Israelites in battle against the Ammonites, but before embarking on the campaign, he makes a rash vow to God. He promises that if God gives him victory over the Ammonites, he will offer as a burnt offering the first thing that comes out of his house to greet him upon his return.

God grants Jephthah a resounding victory, and upon his return, the first to greet him is his own daughter, his only child. Jephthah is devastated by the consequences of his vow, but he fulfills it, causing a great lamentation in Israel.

The reflection in Judges chapter 11 raises several themes and questions for consideration. One aspect to reflect upon is the nature of rash vows and the consequences that can arise from making them. Jephthah's vow was made in a moment of zeal and desperation, without fully considering the potential implications. It serves as a reminder to exercise caution and wisdom in making commitments to God.

Additionally, the story highlights the complexity of human character. Jephthah is portrayed as a courageous and capable leader, yet his vow and subsequent actions reveal a flawed understanding of God's will and a lack of discernment. This reflection prompts us to consider the importance of seeking God's guidance and aligning our actions with His wisdom.

Furthermore, the story of Jephthah's daughter raises ethical questions regarding the fulfillment of vows and the value of human life. While Jephthah honored his vow, the tragic outcome underscores the need for discernment and the potential consequences of rash commitments.

Overall, Judges chapter 11 provides a reflection on the themes of rash vows, the complexities of human character, and the ethical implications of fulfilling commitments. It prompts us to consider the importance of wisdom, discernment, and seeking God's guidance in our decision-making. It also encourages us to reflect on the value of human life and the need for a balanced understanding of faith and ethics.

## CHAPTER 12

Ju. 12:1 The men of Ephraim called out their forces, crossed over to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, “Why did you go to fight the  
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Ammonites without calling us to go with you? We’re going to burn down your house over your head.”

Ju. 12:2 Jephthah answered, “I and my people were engaged in a great struggle with the Ammonites, and although I called, you didn’t save me out of their hands.

Ju. 12:3 When I saw that you wouldn’t help, I took my life in my hands and crossed over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave me the victory over them. Now why have you come up today to fight me?”

Ju. 12:4 Jephthah then called together the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. The Gileadites struck them down because the Ephraimites had said, “You Gileadites are renegades from Ephraim and Manasseh.”

Ju. 12:5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, “Let me cross over,” the men of Gilead asked him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” If he replied, “No,”

Ju. 12:6 they said, “All right, say ‘Shibboleth’.” If he said, “Sibboleth”, because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time.

Ju. 12:7 Jephthah led Israel for six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in a town in Gilead.

Ju. 12:8 After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem led Israel.

Ju. 12:9 He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He gave his daughters away in marriage to those outside his clan, and for his sons he brought in thirty young women as wives from outside his clan. Ibzan led Israel for seven years.

Ju. 12:10 Then Ibzan died, and was buried in Bethlehem.

Ju. 12:11 After him, Elon the Zebulunite led Israel for ten years.

Ju. 12:12 Then Elon died, and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

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Ju. 12:13 After him, Abdon son of Hillel, from Pirathon, led Israel.

Ju. 12:14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. He led Israel for eight years.

Ju. 12:15 Then Abdon son of Hillel died, and was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 12 in the Christian Bible talks about the conflict between the tribe of Ephraim and the other tribes of Israel. After Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites, the Ephraimites felt slighted that they were not invited to participate in the battle and accused Jephthah of not respecting their tribal pride. This led to a confrontation in which the men of Gilead, Jephthah's tribe, defeated the Ephraimites and took control of the fords of the Jordan River, preventing the Ephraimites

from escaping across the river. In the ensuing conflict, many Ephraimites were killed, and the chapter gives a detailed account of the names and numbers of the casualties.

The chapter also briefly mentions two minor judges who judged Israel after Jephthah's death, Ibzan of Bethlehem and Elon of Zebulun, who judged Israel for a total of twenty-three years.

The story of the conflict between the tribe of Ephraim and the other tribes of Israel in Chapter 12 of The Book of Judges highlights the ongoing struggles and divisions among the tribes of Israel, even in times of victory and peace. It also emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation among the tribes to avoid destructive conflicts and promote the welfare of all Israelites.

Here are some key verses in chapter 12 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible in English:

1. "Then the men of Ephraim were summoned, and they crossed to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, 'Why did you cross over to fight against the Ammonites and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house over you with fire.'" (Judges 12:1)
2. "Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim. And the men of Gilead struck Ephraim, because they said, 'You are fugitives of Ephraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh.'" (Judges 12:4)
3. "And Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. After him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel, and he judged Israel ten years. Then Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun." (Judges 12:10-12)

These verses describe the conflict between Jephthah and the men of Ephraim, as well as the succession of judges after Jephthah.

Judges chapter 12 provides a reflection on the conflict that arises between the tribes of Ephraim and Gilead following the victory over the Ammonites. It reveals the dangers of pride, the importance of unity, and the consequences of division among God's people.

The chapter begins with the men of Ephraim criticizing Jephthah, the judge who led the Israelites to victory over the Ammonites. They accuse him of not including them in the battle and express their anger and frustration. Jephthah defends himself by explaining that he did call upon the men of Ephraim for assistance but received no response.

The conflict escalates, and the men of Ephraim threaten to attack Jephthah and the people of Gilead. Jephthah and his army of Gilead respond by defeating the men of Ephraim, resulting in a great loss of life.

The reflection in Judges chapter 12 brings attention to the destructive power of pride and the consequences of division among God's people. The men of Ephraim were driven by their pride and their desire for recognition, leading them to confront Jephthah and the people of Gilead. Their actions resulted in unnecessary bloodshed and loss of life.

The story also highlights the importance of unity and cooperation among the tribes of Israel. Instead of working together and supporting one another, the men of Ephraim

allowed pride and resentment to drive a wedge between them and the rest of the nation. This division weakened their collective strength and hindered their ability to fulfill God's purposes.

Additionally, the reflection prompts us to consider the significance of communication and understanding in resolving conflicts. The misunderstanding between Jephthah and the men of Ephraim could have been avoided if there had been clear communication and a willingness to listen and understand one another's perspectives.

Overall, Judges chapter 12 serves as a reflection on the dangers of pride, the importance of unity, and the consequences of division among God's people. It encourages believers to cultivate humility, seek understanding, and work together in harmony to fulfill God's purposes. It reminds us that division and conflict within the community of faith hinder our collective impact and can lead to destructive consequences.

## CHAPTER 13

Ju. 13:1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

Ju. 13:2 A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless.

Ju. 13:3 The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son.

Ju. 13:4 Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean,

Ju. 13:5 because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

Ju. 13:6 Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name.

Ju. 13:7 But he said to me, 'You will conceive and give birth to a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death.'"

Ju. 13:8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."

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Ju. 13:9 God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her.

Ju. 13:10 The woman hurried to tell her husband, “He’s here! The man who appeared to me the other day!”

Ju. 13:11 Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, “Are you the one who talked to my wife?” “I am,” he said.

Ju. 13:12 So Manoah asked him, “When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy’s life and work?”

Ju. 13:13 The angel of the LORD answered, “Your wife must do all that I have told her.

Ju. 13:14 She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.”

Ju. 13:15 Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you.”

Ju. 13:16 The angel of the LORD replied, “Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” (Manoah did not realise that it was the angel of the LORD.)

Ju. 13:17 Then Manoah enquired of the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that we may honour you when your word comes true?”

Ju. 13:18 He replied, “Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding.”

Ju. 13:19 Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched:

Ju. 13:20 As the flame blazed up from the altar towards heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground.

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Ju. 13:21 When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realised that it was the angel of the LORD.

Ju. 13:22 “We are doomed to die!” he said to his wife. “We have seen God!”

Ju. 13:23 But his wife answered, “If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this.”

Ju. 13:24 The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him,

Ju. 13:25 and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 13 in the Christian Bible talks about the birth of Samson, who would become one of the most famous judges of Israel. The chapter begins by describing how the Israelites again did evil in the sight of the Lord and were oppressed by the Philistines for forty years.

In response to their cries for deliverance, an angel of the Lord appeared to a barren woman from the tribe of Dan and promised her that she would conceive and bear a son who would be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. The angel also instructed her to abstain from wine and strong drink during her pregnancy, and to raise her son according to the laws of the Nazirites.

The woman's husband, Manoah, prayed for further guidance from God, and the angel appeared again to repeat the instructions and reassure them that their son would begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.

The chapter ends with the birth of Samson and his growth as a young man in the tribe of Dan. The story of Samson's birth in Chapter 13 of The Book of Judges emphasizes God's faithfulness to Israel even in times of disobedience and the importance of obedience to God's commandments, as seen in the Nazirite vow that Samson would undertake.

Here are some key verses from chapter 13 of The Book of Judges in the English Standard Version (ESV) translation:

- "And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years." (Judges 13:1)
- "And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.'" (Judges 13:3)
- "And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him." (Judges 13:24)
- "And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol." (Judges 13:25)

Judges chapter 13 provides a reflection on the story of the birth of Samson, highlighting the miraculous nature of his conception and the special calling placed upon him by God.

The chapter begins by describing how the Israelites once again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and as a result, they were handed over to the Philistines for forty years. In the midst of their oppression, God raises up a deliverer, Samson, to bring about the deliverance of Israel.

The angel of the Lord appears to Samson's mother, who was barren, and announces that she will conceive and bear a son. The angel gives specific instructions regarding the child, including the command that he is to be set apart as a Nazirite from birth, abstaining from certain practices and dedicating himself to God's service.

Samson's birth is indeed miraculous, and he grows up under the special guidance and empowerment of the Spirit of the Lord. The chapter sets the stage for Samson's future exploits and his role as a judge and deliverer of Israel.



The reflection in Judges chapter 13 highlights the sovereignty and providence of God in choosing and preparing His instruments for His purposes. Samson's birth to a barren woman emphasizes God's ability to bring forth life and fulfill His plans, even in seemingly impossible circumstances.

The chapter also reflects on the concept of the Nazirite vow and its significance in Samson's life. As a Nazirite, Samson is set apart for God's purposes and is called to live a life of dedication and obedience. This reflection prompts us to consider the importance of consecration and living in accordance with God's commands as we seek to fulfill our own calling.

Furthermore, the story of Samson's birth reminds us of the role of deliverers and judges in the history of Israel. It highlights God's faithfulness in raising up leaders to rescue His people from oppression and to guide them back to a place of faithfulness and obedience.

Overall, Judges chapter 13 serves as a reflection on the miraculous nature of Samson's birth, the significance of his Nazirite vow, and God's faithfulness in raising up deliverers for His people. It invites us to consider the ways in which God works in our lives, calling and equipping us for His purposes, and reminds us of the importance of consecration and obedience in fulfilling our own calling.

#### CHAPTER 14

Ju. 14:1 Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman.

Ju. 14:2 When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."

Ju. 14:3 His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me."

Ju. 14:4 (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

Ju. 14:5 Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring towards him.

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Ju. 14:6 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.

Ju. 14:7 Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.

Ju. 14:8 Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass. In it was a swarm of bees and some honey,

Ju. 14:9 which he scooped out with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.

Ju. 14:10 Now his father went down to see the woman. And Samson made a feast there, as was customary for bridegrooms.

Ju. 14:11 When he appeared, he was given thirty companions.

Ju. 14:12 "Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes.

Ju. 14:13 If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes." "Tell us your riddle," they said. "Let's hear it."

Ju. 14:14 He replied, "Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet." For three days they could not give the answer.

Ju. 14:15 On the fourth day, they said to Samson's wife, "Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?"

Ju. 14:16 Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You've given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer." "I haven't even

601 explained it to my father or mother," he replied, "so why should I explain it to you?"

Ju. 14:17 She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

Ju. 14:18 Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Samson said to them, "If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle."

Ju. 14:19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father's house.

Ju. 14:20 And Samson's wife was given to the friend who had attended him at his wedding.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 14 in the Christian Bible talks about Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman and the events that followed. Samson, now a young man, went down to Timnah, a Philistine town, and saw a woman there whom he desired to marry.

Against his parents' advice, Samson insisted on marrying her, and they held a wedding feast. During the feast, Samson posed a riddle to thirty Philistine companions, promising them thirty changes of clothing if they could solve it. The riddle was a challenge to their wit, and the Philistines became determined to solve it.

To do so, they threatened Samson's wife, who eventually coaxed the answer from him. When Samson discovered the Philistines' treachery, he became angry and killed thirty Philistines in Ashkelon, taking their clothing to fulfill his wager.

As a result of his actions, Samson's wife was given to one of the companions who had solved the riddle, and Samson left her. The chapter ends with Samson's burning anger and his return to his father's house.

The story in Chapter 14 of The Book of Judges highlights Samson's impulsive nature and his strength as a deliverer of Israel. It also reveals the ongoing tension and conflict between Israel and the Philistines, which would continue throughout Samson's life and the time of the judges.

Here are some key verses from Judges chapter 14:

1. "Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman." (Judges 14:1) - This verse sets the scene for the story of Samson and his marriage to a Philistine woman, which becomes a major conflict in the following chapters.
2. "Then Samson went down to the woman, and he made a feast there, for so the young men used to do." (Judges 14:10) - This verse shows Samson's reckless behavior and disregard for his Nazirite vow, as he participates in a feast that likely included alcohol and other prohibited activities.
3. "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet." (Judges 14:14) - This enigmatic riddle is posed by Samson to the Philistines, and its answer becomes a source of conflict and violence in the story.
4. "So the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle." (Judges 14:19) - This verse shows Samson's strength and power, which is attributed to the Spirit of the Lord, as he carries out a violent act of revenge against the Philistines who solved his riddle.
5. "And his father went down to the woman. And Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do." (Judges 14:10) - This verse is a repetition of verse 10, but with Samson's father taking part in the feast, highlighting the complicity of those around Samson in his disobedience and rebellion.

Judges chapter 14 provides a reflection on the events surrounding Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman and the challenges he faces as a result.

The chapter begins with Samson traveling to Timnah, where he sees a Philistine woman and desires to marry her. Despite his parents' objections and their reminder of the Israelites' prohibition against intermarriage with foreign nations, Samson insists on pursuing the relationship.

As Samson and his parents travel to Timnah for the wedding, he encounters a lion along the way. Empowered by the Spirit of the Lord, Samson tears the lion apart with his bare hands. Later, as they pass by the same area on their return journey, Samson finds that bees have created honey in the carcass of the lion, which he consumes and shares with his parents.

Samson arranges a seven-day feast with the Philistines in Timnah as part of the wedding celebrations. During the feast, he poses a riddle to the Philistine guests, promising a reward if they can solve it. The Philistines are unable to decipher the riddle, and they pressure Samson's bride to extract the answer from him. She succeeds and informs the Philistines, who then provide the correct answer to Samson.

Feeling betrayed, Samson becomes furious and goes on a killing spree, taking revenge on thirty Philistines to fulfill his obligation for the riddle. He then returns to his parents' house, leaving his wife behind.

The reflection in Judges chapter 14 raises several themes and questions for consideration. One key aspect to reflect upon is the danger of pursuing personal desires without regard for God's commands. Despite being a judge and set apart for God's purposes, Samson is driven by his own passions and disregards the warnings against intermarriage with the Philistines. This serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of compromising one's faith for personal desires.

Furthermore, the story highlights Samson's use of his God-given strength for both righteous and vengeful purposes. While his victory over the lion demonstrates his empowerment by the Spirit of the Lord, his retaliation against the Philistines reveals his hot-tempered and impulsive nature. This reflection prompts us to consider the responsible and righteous use of the gifts and abilities that God has given us.

Additionally, the chapter underscores the consequences of betrayal and the importance of trust in relationships. Samson's bride betrays him by revealing the answer to the riddle, leading to a breakdown in their marriage and Samson's violent response. This reflection invites us to reflect on the significance of trust, communication, and commitment in our own relationships.

Overall, Judges chapter 14 provides a reflection on the dangers of pursuing personal desires without regard for God's commands, the responsible use of God-given gifts and abilities, and the consequences of betrayal and lack of trust. It encourages believers to prioritize obedience to God's Word, exercise self-control and discernment, and cultivate healthy relationships built on trust and mutual commitment.

## CHAPTER 15

Ju. 15:1 Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, "I'm going to my

wife's room." But her father would not let him go in.

Ju. 15:2 "I was so sure you thoroughly hated her," he said, "that I gave her to your friend. Isn't her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead."

Ju. 15:3 Samson said to them, "This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them."

Ju. 15:4 So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails,

Ju. 15:5 lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing corn of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing corn, together with the vineyards and olive groves.

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Ju. 15:6 When the Philistines asked, "Who did this?" they were told, "Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because his wife was given to his friend." So the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death.

Ju. 15:7 Samson said to them, "Since you've acted like this, I won't stop until I get my revenge on you."

Ju. 15:8 He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam.

Ju. 15:9 The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi.

Ju. 15:10 The men of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?" "We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "to do to him as he did to us."

Ju. 15:11 Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realise that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me."

Ju. 15:12 They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves."

Ju. 15:13 "Agreed," they answered. "We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock.

Ju. 15:14 As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came towards him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands.

Ju. 15:15 Finding a fresh jaw-bone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.

Ju. 15:16 Then Samson said, "With a donkey's jaw-bone I have made donkeys of them. With a donkey's jaw-bone I have killed a thousand men."

Ju. 15:17 When he finished speaking, he threw away the jaw-bone; and the place was called Ramath Lehi.

Ju. 15:18 Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the LORD, "You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?"

Ju. 15:19 Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore, and it is still there in Lehi.

Ju. 15:20 Samson led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 15 in the Christian Bible talks about Samson's revenge against the Philistines, who had taken his wife and given her to another man.

Samson went to visit his wife with a young goat as a gift, but her father told him that she had been given to another man. In his anger, Samson caught three hundred foxes, tied them tail to tail in pairs, and attached a torch to each pair. He then let the foxes loose in the Philistines' fields, causing widespread destruction.

The Philistines retaliated by burning Samson's wife and her father. In response, Samson attacked the Philistines with great fury, killing many of them. He then went to live in a cave in the rock of Etam.

The chapter ends with the Philistines coming up to attack Judah, and the men of Judah asking Samson why he had caused trouble with the Philistines. Samson replied that he had only done to them what they had done to him, and the men of Judah went to the Philistines to make peace.

The story in Chapter 15 of The Book of Judges continues to show the ongoing conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines, as well as Samson's strength and determination in seeking revenge for his wife's mistreatment. It also shows the political dynamics within Israel, with the men of Judah seeking to maintain peace with the Philistines.

Here are some key verses from Judges chapter 15:

1. "Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, 'I'm going to my wife's room.' But her father would not let him go in." (Judges 15:1)
2. "Samson said to them, 'This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them.' So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves." (Judges 15:3-5)
3. "They said to him, 'We have come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines.' Samson said, 'Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves.' 'Agreed,' they answered. 'We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We

- will not kill you.' So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock." (Judges 15:12-13)
4. "As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands." (Judges 15:14)
  5. "Then Samson said, 'With a donkey's jawbone I have made donkeys of them. With a donkey's jawbone I have killed a thousand men.'" (Judges 15:16)

Judges chapter 15 provides a reflection on Samson's retaliation against the Philistines after his wife is given to another man, showcasing both his strength and the cycle of violence that ensues.

The chapter begins with Samson visiting his wife, intending to reconcile with her, only to find out that she has been given to another man. In response, Samson captures 300 foxes, ties their tails together, and sets them on fire, releasing them into the Philistine's fields. This act of destruction infuriates the Philistines, and they retaliate by burning Samson's wife and her father.

Enraged by the death of his wife, Samson launches an attack on the Philistines, killing many of them with the jawbone of a donkey. He then proclaims a victory song, acknowledging God's strength and deliverance.

The reflection in Judges chapter 15 prompts us to consider the consequences of unchecked anger and the cycle of violence that can result from it. Samson's initial act of revenge with the foxes leads to a series of escalating retaliations from both sides, resulting in more violence and bloodshed. It serves as a cautionary reminder of the destructive nature of anger and the need for self-control and discernment in our actions.

Additionally, the story highlights Samson's reliance on God's strength for his victories. Despite his flawed character and impulsive actions, Samson acknowledges God's role in his triumphs and attributes his success to the empowerment of the Spirit of the Lord. This reflection reminds us of the importance of recognizing and acknowledging God's presence and assistance in our own lives.

Furthermore, the chapter raises questions about the cycle of violence and the need for reconciliation. Samson's retaliatory actions perpetuate a cycle of violence between the Israelites and the Philistines, without offering a path towards resolution or reconciliation. This reflection prompts us to consider the importance of seeking peaceful solutions and pursuing reconciliation instead of perpetuating violence and vengeance.

Overall, Judges chapter 15 provides a reflection on the consequences of unchecked anger, the reliance on God's strength, and the need for reconciliation. It calls us to examine our own responses to provocation, to seek peaceful resolutions, and to acknowledge God's role in our victories. It also reminds us of the destructive nature of cycles of violence and the importance of pursuing paths of reconciliation and peace.

## CHAPTER 16

Ju. 16:1 One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her.

Ju. 16:2 The people of Gaza were told, "Samson is here!" So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, "At dawn we'll kill him."

Ju. 16:3 But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

Ju. 16:4 Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah.

Ju. 16:5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so that we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver."

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Ju. 16:6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."

Ju. 16:7 Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh thongs that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man."

Ju. 16:8 Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh thongs that had not been dried, and she tied him with them.

Ju. 16:9 With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the thongs as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

Ju. 16:10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied."

Ju. 16:11 He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man."

Ju. 16:12 So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

Ju. 16:13 Delilah then said to Samson, "Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied." He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove



them into the fabric

Ju. 16:14 and tightened it with the pin. Again she called to him, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric.

Ju. 16:15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you won’t confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven’t told me the secret of your great strength.”

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Ju. 16:16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death.

Ju. 16:17 So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.”

Ju. 16:18 When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Come back once more; he has told me everything.” So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands.

Ju. 16:19 Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him.

Ju. 16:20 Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the LORD had left him.

Ju. 16:21 Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison.

Ju. 16:22 But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

Ju. 16:23 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, “Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands.”

Ju. 16:24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, “Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain.”

Ju. 16:25 While they were in high spirits, they shouted, “Bring out Samson to entertain us.” So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. When they stood him among the pillars,

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Ju. 16:26 Samson said to the servant who held his hand, “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.”

Ju. 16:27 Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform.

Ju. 16:28 Then Samson prayed to the LORD, “O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.”

Ju. 16:29 Then Samson reached towards the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other,

Ju. 16:30 Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

Ju. 16:31 Then his brothers and his father’s whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel for twenty years.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 16 in the Christian Bible talks about the downfall of Samson due to his relationship with a Philistine woman named Delilah.

The chapter begins with Samson visiting a prostitute in Gaza, where the Philistines had captured him. He then fell in love with Delilah, who was hired by the Philistine rulers to discover the secret of Samson's strength. Delilah repeatedly asked Samson to tell her the secret, and he gave her several false answers, but finally he revealed that his strength came from his uncut hair, which was a symbol of his Nazirite vow.

While Samson slept, Delilah cut his hair, and he lost his strength. The Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, and took him to Gaza, where they put him to work grinding grain in prison.

The story ends with Samson's death. While he was imprisoned, his hair grew back, and one day the Philistine rulers brought him to the temple of their god Dagon to entertain them. Samson asked God to restore his strength one last time, and he pushed apart the temple's pillars, bringing down the roof and killing himself along with thousands of Philistines.

The story in Chapter 16 of The Book of Judges portrays Samson as a tragic figure who is undone by his own desires and flaws. His relationship with Delilah ultimately leads to his downfall, and his death symbolizes his final act of strength and his ultimate triumph over the Philistines. The chapter also highlights the ongoing conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines and the power of God to work through even flawed human beings to accomplish his purposes.

Here are some key verses from chapter 16 of The Book of Judges in the Christian Bible (NIV translation):

1. "One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her." (Judges 16:1)
2. "Then the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, 'Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands.'" (Judges 16:23)
3. "But Samson said to the servant who held his hand, 'Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.'" (Judges 16:26)
4. "Then Samson prayed to the Lord, 'Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.'" (Judges 16:28)
5. "Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived." (Judges 16:30)

Judges chapter 16 provides a reflection on the downfall of Samson due to his interactions with Delilah, highlighting the consequences of succumbing to temptation and the importance of guarding one's strengths.

The chapter begins with Samson's encounter with Delilah, a woman from the Valley of Sorek, whom the Philistines pay to discover the secret of Samson's strength. Delilah persistently seeks to uncover the source of his power, and Samson initially provides her with misleading answers. However, due to her persistence and manipulation, Samson eventually reveals that his strength lies in his uncut hair, which symbolizes his Nazirite vow.

As Samson sleeps, Delilah cuts his hair, thereby compromising his strength. The Philistines capture him, gouge out his eyes, and imprison him. Samson, now weakened and blinded, is forced to work as a grinder in the prison.

In a surprising twist, Samson's hair begins to grow back while in captivity, symbolizing a potential restoration of his strength and relationship with God. On the day of a Philistine festival, Samson is brought to the temple, where he prays to God for strength one last time. He pushes apart the temple's pillars, causing the entire structure to collapse, killing himself and a large number of Philistines.

The reflection in Judges chapter 16 serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of succumbing to temptation and the importance of guarding one's strengths and commitments. Samson, a powerful and gifted judge, is ultimately undone by his relationship with Delilah, who exploits his vulnerability and betrays him. It highlights the danger of compromising one's convictions and giving in to worldly desires.

The story also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and repenting from one's mistakes. Despite Samson's initial deception and misjudgment in sharing the secret of his strength, there is a glimmer of hope for his redemption as his hair begins to grow back. It raises the question of whether Samson's prayer for strength is also a plea for forgiveness and restoration in his relationship with God.

Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the theme of divine irony, as Samson's final act of sacrifice brings about the destruction of his enemies. In his weakened state, Samson calls upon God for strength one last time, fulfilling his role as a deliverer of Israel by toppling the temple and causing the demise of the Philistines.

Overall, Judges chapter 16 provides a reflection on the consequences of succumbing to temptation, the importance of guarding one's strengths and commitments, and the potential for redemption and restoration even in the midst of downfall. It reminds us to remain steadfast in our faith, to resist the allure of worldly temptations, and to seek God's forgiveness and restoration when we falter.

## CHAPTER 17

Ju. 17:1 Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim

Ju. 17:2 said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse — I have that silver with me; I took it.” Then his mother said, “The LORD bless you, my son!”

Ju. 17:3 When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, “I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you.”

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Ju. 17:4 So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah's house.

Ju. 17:5 Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and installed one of his sons as his priest.

Ju. 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Ju. 17:7 A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah,

Ju. 17:8 left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim.

Ju. 17:9 Micah asked him, “Where are you from?” “I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah,” he said, “and I'm looking for a place to stay.”

Ju. 17:10 Then Micah said to him, “Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food.”

Ju. 17:11 So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man was to him like one of his sons.

Ju. 17:12 Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house.

Ju. 17:13 And Micah said, “Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest.”

The Book of Judges, Chapter 17 in the Christian Bible is a story about a man named Micah who creates his own idolatrous shrine and hires a Levite to be his personal priest. The chapter begins with Micah admitting to his mother that he stole 1,100 pieces of silver from her. She curses the thief, but Micah confesses and returns the money. Micah's mother dedicates some of the silver to the Lord and has an idol made, which Micah places in his own shrine. He makes some household gods and hires a Levite from Bethlehem to be his personal priest.

The Levite is pleased to accept the position, and Micah considers himself blessed to have a Levite serving in his own house. The chapter concludes with a brief statement that there was no king in Israel at the time, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

Chapter 17 of The Book of Judges highlights the spiritual decay and moral confusion that existed during the time of the judges. Micah's actions demonstrate how far the Israelites had strayed from their faith in God and the worship of the true God. The fact that Micah creates his own shrine and hires a Levite to be his personal priest shows how the Israelites had deviated from the centralized worship system that God had established through Moses.

The chapter also underscores the absence of leadership and authority in Israel during this period, as there was no king to rule over the people and enforce God's law. This led to a moral vacuum and widespread moral relativism, where people did what was right in their own eyes rather than following God's commands.

Here are some key verses from Judges 17:

- "Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim said to his mother, 'The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it.'" (Judges 17:1)
- "Then Micah said, 'Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest.'" (Judges 17:13)
- "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit." (Judges 17:6)

These verses introduce us to Micah, a man who stole money from his mother and then returned it after she had cursed whoever had taken it. Micah's mother then used the silver to make an idol, and Micah hired a Levite to be his priest. This chapter also highlights the fact that there was no king in Israel during this time, and that people were doing whatever they wanted without any centralized authority.

Judges chapter 17 provides a reflection on the idolatrous practices and moral decline that existed among the Israelites during the time of the judges, showcasing the dangers of spiritual compromise and the need for true worship of God.

The chapter begins by introducing a man named Micah who confesses to his mother that he had stolen a significant amount of silver from her. In an unexpected response, his mother blesses him and dedicates the silver for the purpose of making a carved image and a molten image, which she gives back to Micah.

Micah then sets up a shrine in his house, complete with an ephod and household gods. He appoints one of his sons as a priest and establishes a religious system for himself and his family. Later, a Levite from Bethlehem arrives, and Micah offers him a position as his personal priest, which the Levite accepts.

The reflection in Judges chapter 17 brings attention to the moral and spiritual corruption that had infiltrated Israel during this time. The actions of Micah and his mother illustrate a distorted understanding of worship, as they engage in idolatry and create their own religious system outside of the established practices of Israel. This highlights the danger of syncretism and compromising one's faith by mixing it with elements of other religions or personal preferences.

The story also reveals the lack of true leadership and guidance among the Israelites. The fact that Micah appoints his own son as a priest and later recruits a Levite to serve as his personal priest reflects the absence of centralized worship and the breakdown of the priestly system. It demonstrates the spiritual confusion and moral decline that permeated the nation during this period.

Additionally, the chapter raises questions about the nature of true worship and the importance of obedience to God's commands. The worship practices in Micah's shrine were centered on personal desires and convenience, rather than seeking to honor and obey God. This reflection prompts us to examine our own worship practices and ensure that they align with God's revealed will and not our own preferences or cultural influences.

Overall, Judges chapter 17 provides a reflection on the idolatrous practices and moral decline that plagued the Israelites during the time of the judges. It serves as a warning against spiritual compromise, syncretism, and the dangers of deviating from true worship. It encourages believers to seek true obedience to God's commands and to remain vigilant in preserving the purity and integrity of their worship practices.

## CHAPTER 18

Ju. 18:1 In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

Ju. 18:2 So the Danites sent five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it. These men represented all  
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their clans. They told them, "Go, explore the land." The men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night.

Ju. 18:3 When they were near Micah's house, they recognised the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this

place? Why are you here?"

Ju. 18:4 He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "He has hired me and I am his priest."

Ju. 18:5 Then they said to him, "Please enquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful."

Ju. 18:6 The priest answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval."

Ju. 18:7 So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, unsuspecting and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else.

Ju. 18:8 When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers asked them, "How did you find things?"

Ju. 18:9 They answered, "Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over."

Ju. 18:10 When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever."

Ju. 18:11 Then six hundred men from the clan of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol.

Ju. 18:12 On their way they set up camp near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is called Mahaneh Dan to this day.

Ju. 18:13 From there they went on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah's house.

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Ju. 18:14 Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their brothers, "Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, other household gods, a carved image and a cast idol? Now you know what to do."

Ju. 18:15 So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him.

Ju. 18:16 The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance to the gate.

Ju. 18:17 The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance to the gate.

Ju. 18:18 When these men went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

Ju. 18:19 They answered him, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's

household?”

Ju. 18:20 Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people.

Ju. 18:21 Putting their little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left.

Ju. 18:22 When they had gone some distance from Micah’s house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites.

Ju. 18:23 As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, “What’s the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?”

Ju. 18:24 He replied, “You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, ‘What’s the matter with you?’”

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Ju. 18:25 The Danites answered, “Don’t argue with us, or some hot tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.”

Ju. 18:26 So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned round and went back home.

Ju. 18:27 Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city.

Ju. 18:28 There was no-one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there.

Ju. 18:29 They named it Dan after their forefather Dan, who was born to Israel — though the city used to be called Laish.

Ju. 18:30 There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land.

Ju. 18:31 They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 18 in the Christian Bible tells the story of the tribe of Dan's search for land to settle in, and their encounter with a man named Micah and his idolatrous shrine.

The chapter begins with the tribe of Dan seeking new territory to settle in, as they had not yet received their allotted inheritance. Five of their scouts come across Micah's house in the territory of Ephraim and recognize the Levite who serves as Micah's personal priest.



They ask the Levite to inquire of God about their journey, and he tells them that God has blessed their journey and they will find success.

The scouts then continue on their journey and come to the city of Laish, which they find to be rich and peaceful. They return to their tribe and encourage them to attack Laish and take the city as their own. Six hundred men from the tribe of Dan set out to conquer Laish, and along the way, they stop at Micah's house and steal his idols, ephod, and personal priest.

When Micah realizes that his idols have been taken, he gathers some of his men and goes after the tribe of Dan. However, the Danites overpower Micah and his men, and they continue on to Laish, where they conquer the city and settle there. They rename the city Dan, after their tribe.

Chapter 18 of The Book of Judges highlights the chaos and lawlessness that existed during the time of the judges. The story shows how the Israelites had deviated from God's law and had adopted the practices of the surrounding nations, including idol worship. The Levite who serves as Micah's personal priest is a reminder of how far the Israelites had strayed from the centralized worship system that God had established through Moses. The story also shows the aggressive and opportunistic nature of the tribe of Dan, who were willing to conquer and take over a peaceful city in order to secure their own land. It highlights the lack of unity and cooperation among the tribes of Israel, who were still seeking to establish their own territories and were not working together as a unified nation under God's leadership.

Here are some key verses from Judges 18:

- "In those days Israel had no king; and in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel." (Judges 18:1)
- "So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, at peace and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else." (Judges 18:7-10)
- "So the Danites went their way, and Micah saw that they were too strong for him. So he turned and went back to his home." (Judges 18:26)
- "Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a people at peace and secure. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city." (Judges 18:27)

These verses describe how the tribe of Dan, which had not yet received a portion of land in Israel, sent out five men to scout for a new territory to settle in. The scouts visited the city of Laish and reported back to the tribe that it was a good place to live. The tribe then sent 600 armed men to conquer the city and make it their own. They also took Micah's idols and priest, which had been used for worship in a nearby town.

Judges chapter 18 provides a reflection on the idolatry and moral corruption that persisted among the Israelites, showcasing the consequences of spiritual compromise and the need for genuine repentance.

The chapter begins with the tribe of Dan seeking an inheritance for themselves since they had not yet taken possession of their allotted land. They send five men to spy out the land, who come across the house of Micah and the Levite who served as his priest. These men recognize the Levite and inquire about seeking divine guidance for their journey.

The Levite assures them of success, and the men from Dan proceed to Laish, where they encounter a peaceful and prosperous people. On their return, they convince the tribe of Dan to launch an attack on Laish, claiming the land for themselves. The Danites seize the idolatrous images, the ephod, and the household gods from Micah's shrine, and install the Levite as their priest.

The reflection in Judges chapter 18 highlights the prevailing idolatry and moral decay among the Israelites during this time. The Danites' disregard for God's commands and their willingness to incorporate idolatrous practices into their worship demonstrate the extent of spiritual compromise and the erosion of faith within the nation. It serves as a warning against the dangers of assimilating the practices of other religions and compromising one's commitment to God.

The chapter also raises questions about the nature of true worship and the importance of genuine repentance. Despite the Danites' military success and acquisition of the land, their actions were characterized by disobedience and the violation of God's commands. Their pursuit of their own desires overshadowed their need for genuine repentance and a return to God's ways.

Furthermore, the story reveals the absence of strong leadership and a lack of centralized worship. The Levite's willingness to abandon his role as Micah's personal priest and serve the tribe of Dan reflects the fragmented and corrupted state of the priestly system at that time.

Overall, Judges chapter 18 provides a reflection on the idolatrous practices, moral decline, and spiritual compromise that plagued the Israelites during the time of the judges. It serves as a cautionary tale against assimilation of foreign practices, the erosion of faith, and the need for genuine repentance and obedience to God's commands. It reminds believers of the importance of remaining steadfast in their commitment to God and avoiding the pitfalls of compromise and syncretism.

## CHAPTER 19

Ju. 19:1 In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

Ju. 19:2 But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there for four months,

Ju. 19:3 her husband went to her to persuade her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her

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father's house, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him.

Ju. 19:4 His father-in-law, the girl's father, prevailed upon him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there.

Ju. 19:5 On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to leave, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh yourself with something to eat; then you can go."

Ju. 19:6 So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterwards the girl's father said, "Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself."

Ju. 19:7 And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night.

Ju. 19:8 On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the girl's father said, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together.

Ju. 19:9 Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home."

Ju. 19:10 But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went towards Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

Ju. 19:11 When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night."

Ju. 19:12 His master replied, "No. We won't go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."

Ju. 19:13 He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places."

Ju. 19:14 So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin.

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Ju. 19:15 There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no-one took them into his home for the night.

Ju. 19:16 That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the men of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields.

Ju. 19:17 When he looked and saw the traveller in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?"

Ju. 19:18 He answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I

have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD. No-one has taken me into his house.

Ju. 19:19 We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants — me, your maidservant, and the young man with us. We don't need anything."

Ju. 19:20 "You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square."

Ju. 19:21 So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

Ju. 19:22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."

Ju. 19:23 The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing.

Ju. 19:24 Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing."

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Ju. 19:25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.

Ju. 19:26 At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

Ju. 19:27 When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold.

Ju. 19:28 He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

Ju. 19:29 When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.

Ju. 19:30 Everyone who saw it said, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do!"

The Book of Judges, Chapter 19 in the Christian Bible tells the gruesome story of a Levite and his concubine, who are traveling through the territory of the tribe of Benjamin and seek refuge in the town of Gibeah.

The chapter begins with the Levite and his concubine leaving Bethlehem to return to their home in the hill country of Ephraim. Along the way, they stop in the town of Gibeah to spend the night. However, the men of the town, who are described as "worthless fellows," surround the house where the Levite and his concubine are staying and demand that the Levite be turned over to them so they can have sex with him.

The owner of the house refuses to turn the Levite over to the mob, but instead offers his own virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine to the men of the town. The mob refuses the offer of the daughter but takes the concubine and repeatedly rape her throughout the night. She eventually dies at the doorstep of the house where they were staying.

The Levite discovers his concubine's body in the morning, and he cuts her body into twelve pieces and sends them to the twelve tribes of Israel as a sign of the heinous crime that was committed in Gibeah. The other tribes are outraged and gather to punish the men of Gibeah for their wickedness.

The chapter ends with a war between the tribe of Benjamin and the other tribes of Israel, resulting in the near-total annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin. The horrific events of the chapter illustrate the moral decay and chaos that existed during the time of the judges, and the consequences of turning away from God's laws and living according to one's own desires.

Chapter 19 of The Book of Judges is a stark reminder of the importance of justice and righteousness in society. The actions of the men of Gibeah and the Levite's extreme response highlight the depravity of humanity when left to its own devices, as well as the need for a just and fair system of governance. The violent and tragic events of the chapter also serve as a warning against moral decay and the consequences that can follow when people turn away from God's laws.

Here are some key verses from Judges 19 in the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible:

- Judges 19:1 - "In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah."
- Judges 19:22 - "As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, 'Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him.'"
- Judges 19:25 - "But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go."
- Judges 19:29 - "And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and taking hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel."

These verses depict a disturbing and violent story of a Levite and his concubine, who are attacked and abused by a group of men in a city. The Levite eventually cuts up his

concupine's body and sends the pieces to the other tribes of Israel, sparking a gruesome and tragic conflict. The story serves as a warning against lawlessness and violence, as well as the dangers of ignoring God's laws and commands.

what is The Book of Judges in chapter 20 in Christian bible talk about in English

The Book of Judges, Chapter 20 in the Christian Bible continues the story of the events that occurred in the aftermath of the rape and murder of the Levite's concubine in the town of Gibeah.

The chapter begins with the tribes of Israel gathering together to discuss how they should respond to the heinous crime committed in Gibeah. The tribe of Benjamin, to which the men of Gibeah belonged, refused to turn over the perpetrators for punishment. Instead, they prepared for war against the other tribes of Israel.

The tribes of Israel decided to take up arms against Benjamin, and they sought God's guidance and blessing before doing so. They approached the tabernacle of the Lord, where they wept and fasted, asking for God's help and direction.

In response, God gave them a strategy for battle, and the tribes of Israel attacked the tribe of Benjamin. The first two battles resulted in heavy losses for the tribes of Israel, but they eventually gained the upper hand in the third battle, with the help of a surprise attack that involved a planned retreat followed by an ambush.

The chapter concludes with the tribes of Israel successfully defeating the tribe of Benjamin and executing justice against the men of Gibeah who had committed the crime. Only 600 men of Benjamin survived the battle, and the other tribes of Israel mourned the loss of so many lives.

Judges chapter 19 provides a reflection on the moral degradation and social breakdown that existed during the time of the judges, highlighting the consequences of wickedness and the need for justice and compassion.

The chapter begins with a Levite who has a concubine from Bethlehem. The concubine becomes unfaithful and leaves her husband, returning to her father's house in Bethlehem. After a period of four months, the Levite travels to Bethlehem to bring her back.

On their journey back home, they stop for the night in Gibeah, a city belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. An old man from the city offers them hospitality, but later a group of wicked men from the city surround the house, demanding to have sexual relations with the Levite. In an attempt to protect his guest, the old man offers his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine to the mob, resulting in the brutal rape and abuse of the concubine throughout the night.

The following morning, the Levite finds his concubine lying dead at the doorstep. In anger and grief, he dismembers her body and sends parts of it to each of the twelve tribes of Israel, calling for justice and retribution for the heinous crime committed against her.

The reflection in Judges chapter 19 serves as a powerful indictment of the moral decay and social breakdown that plagued Israel during the time of the judges. The horrific acts of violence and abuse committed against the concubine highlight the depths of wickedness and the disregard for human life that existed among certain individuals and

communities. It reveals the consequences of a society that has turned away from God's commands and succumbed to its own sinful desires.

The chapter also raises questions about the importance of justice, compassion, and the protection of the vulnerable. The Levite's actions in sending pieces of the concubine's body to the tribes of Israel were a desperate call for justice and an outcry against the lack of protection and accountability. It prompts us to reflect on the responsibility to stand against injustice, to advocate for the marginalized, and to work towards a society that upholds the dignity and rights of all individuals.

Furthermore, the story underscores the need for righteous leadership and the consequences of moral ambiguity. The lack of strong leadership and the absence of righteous judges during this period contributed to the moral degradation and lawlessness that permeated the land.

Overall, Judges chapter 19 provides a reflection on the moral degradation, social breakdown, and the consequences of wickedness during the time of the judges. It serves as a stark reminder of the importance of justice, compassion, and the protection of the vulnerable in society. It calls believers to uphold the values of righteousness, to advocate for the marginalized, and to work towards a just and compassionate society.

## CHAPTER 20

Ju. 20:1 Then all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came out as one man and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah.

Ju. 20:2 The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand soldiers armed with swords.

Ju. 20:3 (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, "Tell us how this awful thing happened."

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Ju. 20:4 So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night.

Ju. 20:5 During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.

Ju. 20:6 I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and disgraceful act in Israel.

Ju. 20:7 Now, all you Israelites, speak up and give your verdict."

Ju. 20:8 All the people rose as one man, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house.

Ju. 20:9 But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against

it as the lot directs.

Ju. 20:10 We'll take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to get provisions for the army. Then, when the army arrives at Gibeah in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for all this vileness done in Israel."

Ju. 20:11 So all the men of Israel got together and united as one man against the city.

Ju. 20:12 The tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you?

Ju. 20:13 Now surrender those wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites.

Ju. 20:14 From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites.

Ju. 20:15 At once the Benjamites mobilised twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred chosen men from those living in Gibeah.

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Ju. 20:16 Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

Ju. 20:17 Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fighting men.

Ju. 20:18 The Israelites went up to Bethel and enquired of God. They said, "Who of us shall go first to fight against the Benjamites?" The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first."

Ju. 20:19 The next morning the Israelites got up and pitched camp near Gibeah.

Ju. 20:20 The men of Israel went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah.

Ju. 20:21 The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day.

Ju. 20:22 But the men of Israel encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day.

Ju. 20:23 The Israelites went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and they enquired of the LORD. They said, "Shall we go up again to battle against the Benjamites, our brothers?" The LORD answered, "Go up against them."

Ju. 20:24 Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day.

Ju. 20:25 This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords.

Ju. 20:26 Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and



there they sat weeping before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD.

Ju. 20:27 And the Israelites enquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there,

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Ju. 20:28 with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, “Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?” The LORD responded, “Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands.”

Ju. 20:29 Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah.

Ju. 20:30 They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before.

Ju. 20:31 The Benjamites came out to meet them and were drawn away from the city. They began to inflict casualties on the Israelites as before, so that about thirty men fell in the open field and on the roads — the one leading to Bethel and the other to Gibeah.

Ju. 20:32 While the Benjamites were saying, “We are defeating them as before,” the Israelites were saying, “Let’s retreat and draw them away from the city to the roads.”

Ju. 20:33 All the men of Israel moved from their places and took up positions at Baal Tamar, and the Israelite ambush charged out of its place on the west of Gibeah.

Ju. 20:34 Then ten thousand of Israel’s finest men made a frontal attack on Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that the Benjamites did not realise how near disaster was.

Ju. 20:35 The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords.

Ju. 20:36 Then the Benjamites saw that they were beaten. Now the men of Israel had given way before Benjamin, because they relied on the ambush they had set near Gibeah.

Ju. 20:37 The men who had been in ambush made a sudden dash into Gibeah, spread out and put the whole city to the sword.

Ju. 20:38 The men of Israel had arranged with the ambush that they should send up a great cloud of smoke from the city,

Ju. 20:39 and then the men of Israel would turn in the battle. The Benjamites had begun to inflict casualties on the men of Israel

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(about thirty), and they said, “We are defeating them as in the first battle.”

Ju. 20:40 But when the column of smoke began to rise from the city, the Benjamites turned and saw the smoke of the whole city going up into the sky.

Ju. 20:41 Then the men of Israel turned on them, and the men of

Benjamin were terrified, because they realised that disaster had come upon them.

Ju. 20:42 So they fled before the Israelites in the direction of the desert, but they could not escape the battle. And the men of Israel who came out of the towns cut them down there.

Ju. 20:43 They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and easily overran them in the vicinity of Gibeah on the east.

Ju. 20:44 Eighteen thousand Benjamites fell, all of them valiant fighters.

Ju. 20:45 As they turned and fled towards the desert to the rock of Rimmon, the Israelites cut down five thousand men along the roads. They kept pressing after the Benjamites as far as Gidom and struck down two thousand more.

Ju. 20:46 On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters.

Ju. 20:47 But six hundred men turned and fled into the desert to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed for four months.

Ju. 20:48 The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

Chapter 20 of The Book of Judges serves as a reminder of the importance of seeking God's guidance and direction, particularly in times of conflict and crisis. It also highlights the consequences of failing to uphold justice and righteousness, as the tribe of Benjamin suffered heavy losses due to their refusal to turn over the perpetrators of the crime in Gibeah. The chapter also emphasizes the unity and cooperation that is necessary for a society to function properly, as the tribes of Israel worked together to bring justice and peace to their land.

Here are some key verses from Judges 20 in the English Standard Version (ESV):

- "Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled as one man to the Lord at Mizpah." (Judges 20:1)
- "And the people of Israel said, 'Tell us, how did this evil happen?'" (Judges 20:3)
- "And the people of Benjamin did not listen to the voice of their brothers, the people of Israel." (Judges 20:13)
- "And the people of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until the evening. And they inquired of the Lord, 'Shall we again draw near to fight against our brothers, the people of Benjamin?' And the Lord said, 'Go up against them.'" (Judges 20:23-24)
- "So all the men of Israel gathered against the city, united as one man." (Judges 20:11)
- "And the Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel, and the people of Israel destroyed 25,100 men of Benjamin that day. All these were men who drew the sword." (Judges 20:35)

Judges chapter 20 provides a reflection on the consequences of collective sin, the importance of seeking justice, and the need for unity and accountability within the community of Israel.

The chapter begins with the aftermath of the heinous crime committed against the Levite's concubine in the previous chapter. The Levite cuts up the concubine's body and sends the pieces to each tribe, calling for justice and retribution. In response, the Israelites gather together as one man, from Dan to Beersheba, to address the issue.

They seek counsel from God and inquire who should lead the battle against the tribe of Benjamin, to whom the wicked men from Gibeah belonged. God instructs the Israelites to go into battle, but in their first two attempts, they suffer heavy losses against the tribe of Benjamin. After seeking God's guidance once again, they receive a strategy that leads to victory in the third battle. The tribe of Benjamin is defeated, their cities are burned, and the tribe is nearly wiped out.

The reflection in Judges chapter 20 underscores the consequences of collective sin and the importance of seeking justice. The horrific crime committed against the Levite's concubine not only highlights the moral decay of certain individuals but also reveals the need for the entire community to address and confront such sins. The unity and collective action of the Israelites demonstrate the significance of holding each other accountable and seeking justice for the sake of righteousness and the well-being of the community.

The chapter also emphasizes the role of seeking God's guidance and following His instructions. The Israelites' initial defeats in battle serve as a reminder of the need for reliance on God and the importance of aligning their actions with His will. It demonstrates that victory comes not through their own strength but through seeking and obeying God's guidance.

Furthermore, the story reflects on the consequences of division within the community of Israel. The conflict between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of Israel highlights the destructive nature of internal strife and the need for unity and reconciliation. The severe punishment dealt to the tribe of Benjamin serves as a sobering reminder of the consequences that can arise from disunity and the erosion of shared values.

Overall, Judges chapter 20 provides a reflection on the consequences of collective sin, the importance of seeking justice, and the need for unity and accountability within the community of Israel. It reminds believers of the importance of confronting and addressing sin collectively, seeking God's guidance in all endeavors, and fostering unity and reconciliation among God's people.

## CHAPTER 21

Ju. 21:1 The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: "Not one of

us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.”

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Ju. 21:2 The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly.

Ju. 21:3 “O LORD, the God of Israel,” they cried, “why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?”

Ju. 21:4 Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

Ju. 21:5 Then the Israelites asked, “Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the LORD?” For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah should certainly be put to death.

Ju. 21:6 Now the Israelites grieved for their brothers, the Benjamites. “Today one tribe is cut off from Israel,” they said.

Ju. 21:7 “How can we provide wives for those who are left, since we have taken an oath by the LORD not to give them any of our daughters in marriage?”

Ju. 21:8 Then they asked, “Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah?” They discovered that no-one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly.

Ju. 21:9 For when they counted the people, they found that none of the people of Jabesh Gilead were there.

Ju. 21:10 So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children.

Ju. 21:11 “This is what you are to do,” they said. “Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin.”

Ju. 21:12 They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

Ju. 21:13 Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon.

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Ju. 21:14 So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them.

Ju. 21:15 The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel.

Ju. 21:16 And the elders of the assembly said, “With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left?”

Ju. 21:17 The Benjamite survivors must have heirs,” they said, “so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out.

Ju. 21:18 We can’t give them our daughters as wives, since we

Israelites have taken this oath: 'Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to a Benjamite.'

Ju. 21:19 But look, there is the annual festival of the LORD in Shiloh, to the north of Bethel, and east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem, and to the south of Lebonah.”

Ju. 21:20 So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, “Go and hide in the vineyards

Ju. 21:21 and watch. When the girls of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, then rush from the vineyards and each of you seize a wife from the girls of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin.

Ju. 21:22 When their fathers or brothers complain to us, we will say to them, 'Do us a kindness by helping them, because we did not get wives for them during the war, and you are innocent, since you did not give your daughters to them.'“

Ju. 21:23 So that is what the Benjamites did. While the girls were dancing, each man caught one and carried her off to be his wife. Then they returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and settled in them.

Ju. 21:24 At that time the Israelites left that place and went home to their tribes and clans, each to his own inheritance.

Ju. 21:25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit

The Book of Judges, Chapter 21 in the Christian Bible concludes the story of the events that occurred in the aftermath of the rape and murder of the Levite's concubine in the town of Gibeah, as recounted in Chapter 19.

The chapter begins with the tribes of Israel lamenting the heavy losses suffered during the war with the tribe of Benjamin. The other tribes of Israel had made an oath not to allow their daughters to marry the men of Benjamin, but they were concerned about the future of the tribe and the risk of it dying out.

To resolve the issue, the elders of Israel gathered together to devise a plan. They decided to attack the town of Jabesh-gilead, which had not participated in the war, and to kill all of its inhabitants except for the virgin women, whom they would take as wives for the men of Benjamin.

After carrying out the plan, the tribes of Israel returned to their land and gave the surviving women to the men of Benjamin. However, there were not enough women to go around, and some men remained without wives.

The chapter concludes with the elders of Israel suggesting that the men of Benjamin kidnap women who were dancing at the annual festival in Shiloh and take them as their wives. The chapter ends with the statement that there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

Chapter 21 of The Book of Judges presents a somber reflection on the consequences of sin and the failure of leadership. The oath made by the tribes of Israel not to allow their daughters to marry the men of Benjamin was a result of their anger and desire for revenge, rather than a commitment to justice and righteousness. The elders of Israel, who were responsible for leading the people, failed to uphold God's laws and instead resorted

to violence and abduction to resolve the issue. The chapter concludes with a sobering reminder of the absence of a king in Israel and the consequences of everyone doing what is right in their own eyes, highlighting the need for strong and just leadership.

Here are some key verses from chapter 21 of the Book of Judges in the Christian Bible in English:

- "The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: 'Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.'" (Judges 21:1)
- "Then they asked, 'Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the Lord at Mizpah?' They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly." (Judges 21:8)
- "So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children." (Judges 21:10)
- "Then the elders and leaders of the assembly said, 'With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left?'" (Judges 21:16)
- "So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, 'Go and hide in the vineyards and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, rush from the vineyards and each of you seize a wife from the young women of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin.'" (Judges 21:20-21)

These verses describe the aftermath of the civil war between the tribes of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin. The Israelites had taken an oath not to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjamites, but then they realized that this meant the tribe of Benjamin would not have any women to marry. They decided to find a way to provide wives for the Benjamites and ultimately resorted to a violent and controversial solution.

Judges chapter 21 provides a reflection on the tragic aftermath of the events in the previous chapters, highlighting the consequences of unchecked violence, the importance of preserving the tribe of Benjamin, and the need for justice tempered with mercy.

The chapter begins with the remaining tribes of Israel realizing that one tribe, Benjamin, has been nearly wiped out as a result of their collective punishment for the crime committed in Gibeah. They express deep remorse and grief over the potential loss of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. In their determination to ensure the survival of Benjamin, they seek a solution to provide wives for the surviving Benjamite men.

The Israelites discover that the city of Jabesh-gilead did not participate in the gathering against Benjamin, and they decide to punish Jabesh-gilead for their neutrality by killing all its inhabitants, except for four hundred virgins who are given to the Benjamites as wives. Even with this provision, they realize that not all Benjamite men will have wives, so they devise a plan for the remaining men to capture additional wives during a yearly feast at Shiloh.

The reflection in Judges chapter 21 brings attention to the devastating consequences of unchecked violence and the lengths to which the Israelites are willing to go to preserve the tribe of Benjamin. It demonstrates the deep concern for tribal identity and the desire

to ensure the continuation of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. However, the methods chosen to secure wives for the Benjamite men, including the destruction of Jabesh-gilead and the kidnapping of women, raise ethical and moral questions.

The chapter also highlights the complexity of justice and the tension between justice and mercy. While the Israelites initially acted with great zeal in punishing Benjamin for their wickedness, they later find themselves grappling with the consequences of their actions and seeking a way to rectify the situation without completely eradicating the tribe. This reflects the importance of balancing justice with compassion and considering the long-term implications of punitive measures.

Furthermore, the story raises questions about the treatment of women and the need for their voices to be heard and their dignity respected. The actions taken to secure wives for the Benjamite men through force and coercion reflect a disregard for the rights and autonomy of the women involved. It serves as a reminder of the importance of valuing and respecting the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals, regardless of gender.

Overall, Judges chapter 21 provides a reflection on the tragic aftermath of the events, highlighting the consequences of unchecked violence, the complex nature of justice, and the need to uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals. It prompts believers to consider the ethical implications of their actions, to pursue justice tempered with mercy, and to value and respect the worth of every person.

Notes:

There are several difficult questions in the Book of Judges that have no clear answer:

1. What was the nature of the "spirit of the Lord" that came upon the judges? (Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 14:6, etc.) Was it a divine force or a psychological state of mind?
2. Why did God allow Jephthah to sacrifice his daughter? (Judges 11:29-40) Was it a test of Jephthah's faith or a tragic misunderstanding?
3. Why did Samson reveal the secret of his strength to Delilah, leading to his downfall? (Judges 16:4-21) Was he truly in love with her or was he trying to test her loyalty?
4. Why did the tribe of Benjamin almost get destroyed by the other Israelite tribes? (Judges 19-21) Was it due to the sins of the Benjamites or was it a result of a breakdown of the social order?

These are some of the most difficult questions in the Book of Judges, and scholars continue to debate their meaning and significance.