

Judges 20:18-48

The fighting of Judges 20 further demonstrates how bad things had gotten in the time of the Judges.

Fighting and Wrong Doing

- v18 “who shall go up first to fight....” – echoes Judges 1:1 where Judah leads the fight against the Canaanites
- Judges 19:30, 20:12-13 – war arises from the horror of the events of Judges 19
- decline in Judges – Israel had become like the Canaanites

Fighting and family

- “fight against our brothers” (vv23, 28)
- Bible - a history of brothers fighting – Cain/Abel, Jacob/Essau, Joseph/sons of Jacob
- twisted virtues – Benjamin stands with the people of Gibeah
- v48 - thorough destruction, nearly wiping out the entire tribe

Fighting and autonomy

- 19:1, 21:25 – no king: “everyone did what is right in his own eyes”
- God was the ruler of Israel, but His ways were not followed
- geography: Bethel, Bethlehem, Jebus (Jerusalem), Gibeah – connects Genesis to Samuel (Benjamin and Judah, Saul and David)
- Jesus’ ministry begins with the announcement: “repent, the kingdom of heaven/God is at hand”
- Colossians 3:15 “let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts”

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you ever been around fighting? In the home you grew up in? In schools you went to? In a country you lived in? Among friends or in the work place? If so, how did that experience affect you? Positively? Negatively?
2. Israel fought Benjamin because something terrible happened in Gibeah and Israel thought justice required their dealing with it. What principles direct you when needing to decide whether to overlook an offense or to take action in some way? How can you be better prepared to face conflict in a way that is fair, just and promotes peace?
3. The Bible proclaims Jesus as “lord”, which means his followers have a king and don’t simply do “what is right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). What do you see in Jesus’ teaching and actions that direct you in how to live like him, especially when facing conflict?
4. Judges 19-20 points to a time when God would raise up a king from Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, to go before his people to bring peace. Jesus brings us peace with God through his death on the cross, and calls us to live at peace with others. How should the “peace of Christ” rule in your heart (Colossians 3:15)? What can that look like in the course of an ordinary day?