Judges

1 After the death of Joshua, the Israelites
inquired of the LORD, “Who will be the first to
go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?”
2 “Judah shall go up,” answered the LORD.
“Indeed, I have delivered the land into their
hands.”
3 Then the men of Judah said to their brothers
the Simeonites, “Come up with us to our allotted
territory, and let us fight against the Canaanites.
And we likewise will go with you to your
territory.” So the Simeonites went with them.
4 When Judah attacked, the LORD delivered
the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands,
and they struck down ten thousand men at
Bezek.
5 And there they found Adoni-bezek and
fought against him, striking down the
Canaanites and Perizzites.
6 As Adoni-bezek
fled, they pursued him, seized him, and cut off
his thumbs and big toes.
7 Then Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with
their thumbs and big toes cut off have gathered
the scraps under my table. As I have done to
them, so God has repaid me.” And they brought
him to Jerusalem, where he died.
8 Then the men of Judah fought against
Jerusalem and captured it. They put the city to
the sword and set it on fire.

9 Afterward, the men of Judah marched down
to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill
country, in the Negev, and in the foothills.*
10 Judah also marched against the Canaanites
who were living in Hebron (formerly known as
Kiriath-arba), and they struck down Sheshai,
Ahiman, and Talmai.
11 From there they marched against the
inhabitants of Debir (formerly known as
Kiriath-sepher).
12 And Caleb said, “To the man who strikes
down Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give
my daughter Acsah in marriage.”
13 So Othniel son of Caleb's younger brother
Kenaz captured the city, and Caleb gave his
daughter Acsah to him in marriage.
14 One day Acsah came to Othniel and urged
him† to ask her father for a field. When she got
off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What do you
desire?”
15 “Give me a blessing,” she answered. “Since
you have given me land in the Negev, give me
springs of water as well.”
So Caleb gave her both the upper and lower
springs.
16 Now the descendants of Moses'
father-in-law, the Kenite, went up with the men
of Judah from the City of Palms‡ to the
Wilderness of Judah in the Negev near Arad.
They went to live among the people.

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* **1:9 1:9** Hebrew *Shephelah* or *lowlands*; that is, the western foothills of Judea † **1:14 1:14** LXX and Vulgate *and he urged her*; see Joshua 15:18. ‡ **1:16 1:16** That is, Jericho

17 Then the men of Judah went with their
brothers the Simeonites, attacked the Canaanites
living in Zephath, and devoted the city to
destruction.§ So it was called Hormah.*
18 And Judah also captured† Gaza, Ashkelon,
and Ekron—each with its territory.
19 The LORD was with Judah, and they took
possession of the hill country; but they could not
drive out the inhabitants of the plains because
they had chariots of iron.
20 Just as Moses had promised, Judah gave
Hebron to Caleb, who drove out the descendants
of the three sons of Anak.
21 The Benjamites, however, failed to drive out
the Jebusites living in Jerusalem. So to this day
the Jebusites live there among the Benjamites.
22 The house of Joseph also attacked Bethel,
and the LORD was with them.
23 They sent spies to Bethel (formerly known
as Luz),
24 and when the spies saw a man coming out
of the city, they said to him, “Please show us how
to get into the city, and we will treat you kindly.”
25 So the man showed them the entrance to
the city, and they put the city to the sword but
released that man and all his family.
26 And the man went to the land of the Hittites,
built a city, and called it Luz, which is its name
to this day.

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§ **1:17 1:17** Forms of the Hebrew *cherem* refer to the giving over of things or persons to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering. * **1:17 1:17** *Hormah* means *destruction.* † **1:18 1:18** LXX *But Judah did not capture*

27 At that time Manasseh failed to drive out the
inhabitants of Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam,
Megiddo, and their villages; for the Canaanites
were determined to dwell in that land.
28 When Israel became stronger, they pressed
the Canaanites into forced labor, but they never
drove them out completely.

29 Ephraim also failed to drive out the
Canaanites living in Gezer; so the Canaanites
continued to dwell among them in Gezer.

30 Zebulun failed to drive out the inhabitants
of Kitron and Nahalol; so the Canaanites lived
among them and served as forced laborers.

31 Asher failed to drive out the inhabitants of
Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, and
Rehob.
32 So the Asherites lived among the Canaanite
inhabitants of the land, because they did not
drive them out.

33 Naphtali failed to drive out the inhabitants
of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath. So the
Naphtalites also lived among the Canaanite
inhabitants of the land, but the inhabitants of
Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath served them as
forced laborers.

34 The Amorites forced the Danites into the hill
country and did not allow them to come down
into the plain.
35 And the Amorites were determined to dwell
in Mount Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim. But
when the house of Joseph grew in strength, they
pressed the Amorites into forced labor.

36 And the border of the Amorites extended
from the Ascent of Akrabbim‡ to Sela and
beyond.

2

1 Now the angel of the LORD went up from
Gilgal to Bochim and said, “I brought you up out
of Egypt and led you into the land that I had
promised to your fathers, and I said, ‘I will
never break my covenant with you,
2 and you are not to make a covenant with the
people of this land, but you shall tear down their
altars.’
Yet you have not obeyed my voice. What is
this you have done?
3 So now I tell you that I will not drive out
these people before you; they will be in your
sides,* and their gods will be a snare to you.”
4 When the angel of the LORD had spoken
these words to all the Israelites, the people lifted
up their voices and wept.
5 So they called that place Bochim† and offered
sacrifices there to the LORD.
6 After Joshua had dismissed the people, the
Israelites went out to take possession of the
land, each to his own inheritance.
7 And the people served the LORD throughout
the days of Joshua and of the elders who

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‡ **1:36 1:36** Or *the Ascent of Scorpions* or *Scorpion Pass* * **2:3 2:3** Hebrew *they will be to you for sides*; the meaning is uncertain. Compare Numbers 33:55 and Joshua 23:13, *thorns in your sides*; Targum *adversaries* † **2:5 2:5** *Bochim* means *weepers*.

outlived him, who had seen all the great works
that the LORD had done for Israel.
8 And Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the
LORD, died at the age of 110.
9 They buried him in the land of his
inheritance, at Timnath-heres‡ in the hill
country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.
10 After that whole generation had also been
gathered to their fathers, another generation
rose up who did not know the LORD or the
works that he had done for Israel.
11 And the Israelites did evil in the sight of the
LORD and served the Baals.
12 Thus they forsook the LORD, the God of
their fathers, who had brought them out of the
land of Egypt, and they followed after various
gods of the peoples around them. They bowed
down to them and provoked the LORD to anger,
13 for they forsook him and served Baal and
the Ashtoreths.
14 Then the anger of the LORD burned against
Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of
those who plundered them.§ He sold them into
the hands of their enemies all around, whom
they were no longer able to resist.
15 Wherever Israel marched out, the hand of
the LORD was against them to bring calamity,
just as the LORD had said and just as he had
sworn to them. So they were greatly distressed.

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‡ **2:9 2:9** *Timnath-heres* is also known as *Timnath-serah*; see Joshua 19:50 and Joshua 24:30. § **2:14 2:14** Literally *of plunderers who plundered them*

16 Then the LORD raised up leaders,* who
saved them from the hands of those who
plundered them.
17 Israel, however, did not listen to their
leaders. Instead, they prostituted themselves
with other gods and bowed down to them. They
quickly turned from the way of their fathers,
who had walked in obedience to the LORD's
commandments; they did not do as their fathers
had done.
18 Whenever the LORD raised up a leader for
the Israelites, he was with that leader and saved
them from the hands of their enemies while the
leader was still alive; for the LORD was moved
to pity by their groaning under those who
oppressed them and afflicted them.
19 But when the leader died, the Israelites
became even more corrupt than their fathers,
going after other gods to serve them and bow
down to them. They would not give up their evil
practices and stubborn ways.
20 So the anger of the LORD burned against
Israel, and he said, "Because this nation has
transgressed the covenant I laid down for their
fathers and has not heeded my voice,
21 I will no longer drive out before them any of
the nations Joshua left when he died.
22 In this way I will test whether Israel will
keep the way of the LORD by walking in it as
their fathers did."
23 That is why the LORD had left those nations
in place and had not driven them out

* **2:16 2:16** Or *governors* or *judges*; here and throughout the book of Judges

immediately by delivering them into the hand of Joshua.

3

1 These are the nations that the LORD left to
test all the Israelites who had not known any of
the wars in Canaan,
2 if only to teach warfare to the subsequent
generations of Israel, especially to those who
had not known it formerly:
3 the five rulers of the Philistines, all the
Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who
lived in the mountains of Lebanon from Mount
Baal-hermon to Lebo-hamath.
4 These nations were left to test the Israelites,
to find out whether they would keep the
commandments of the LORD, which he had
given their fathers through Moses.
5 Thus the Israelites continued to live among
the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites,
Hivites, and Jebusites.
6 And they took the daughters of these people
in marriage, gave their own daughters to their
sons, and served their gods.
7 So the Israelites did evil in the sight of the
LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and
served the Baals and the Asherahs.
8 Then the anger of the LORD burned against
Israel, and he sold them into the hand of
Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram-naharaim,*
and the Israelites served him eight years.

* **3:8 3:8** That is, Mesopotamia; *Aram-naharaim* means *Aram of the two rivers*, likely the region between the Euphrates and Balih Rivers in northwestern Mesopotamia.

9 But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD,
he raised up Othniel son of Caleb's younger
brother Kenaz as a deliverer to save them.
10 The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and
he became Israel's leader and went out to war.
And the LORD delivered Cushan-rishathaim
king of Aram into the hand of Othniel, who
prevailed against him.
11 So the land had rest for forty years, until
Othniel son of Kenaz died.
12 Once again the Israelites did evil in the sight
of the LORD. So he gave Eglon king of Moab
power over Israel, because they had done evil in
the sight of the LORD.
13 After enlisting the Ammonites and
Amalekites to join forces with him, Eglon
attacked and defeated Israel, taking possession
of the City of Palms.†
14 The Israelites served Eglon king of Moab
eighteen years.
15 And again they cried out to the LORD, and
he raised up Ehud son of Gera, a left-handed
Benjamite, as their deliverer. So they sent him
with tribute to Eglon king of Moab.
16 Now Ehud had made for himself a
double-edged sword a cubit long.‡ He strapped it
to his right thigh under his cloak
17 and brought the tribute to Eglon king of
Moab, who was an obese man.
18 After Ehud had finished presenting the
tribute, he ushered out those who had carried it.

† **3:13 3:13** That is, Jericho ‡ **3:16 3:16** *A cubit* is approximately 18 inches or 45.7 centimeters.

19 But upon reaching the idols near Gilgal, he
himself turned back and said, “I have a secret
message for you, O king.”
“Silence,” said the king, and all his attendants
left him.
20 Then Ehud approached him while he was
sitting alone in the coolness of his upper room.
“I have a word from God for you,” Ehud said,
and the king rose from his seat.
21 And Ehud reached with his left hand, pulled
the sword from his right thigh, and plunged it
into Eglon’s belly.
22 Even the handle sank in after the blade, and
Eglon’s fat closed in over it, so that Ehud did not
withdraw the sword from his belly. And Eglon’s
bowels emptied.
23 Then Ehud went out through the porch,
closing and locking the doors of the upper room
behind him.
24 After Ehud was gone, Eglon’s servants came
in and found the doors of the upper room
locked. “He must be relieving himself in the cool
room,” they said.
25 So they waited until they became worried
and saw that he had still not opened the doors of
the upper room. Then they took the key and
opened the doors—and there was their lord
lying dead on the floor.
26 Ehud, however, had escaped while the
servants waited. He passed by the idols and
escaped to Seirah.
27 On arriving in Seirah, he blew the ram’s
horn throughout the hill country of Ephraim.

The Israelites came down with him from the
hills, and he became their leader.
28 “Follow me,” he told them, “for the LORD has
delivered your enemies the Moabites into your
hand.”
So they followed him down and seized the
fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and they
did not allow anyone to cross over.
29 At that time they struck down about ten
thousand Moabites, all robust and valiant men.
Not one of them escaped.
30 So Moab was subdued under the hand of
Israel that day, and the land had rest for eighty
years.
31 After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath.
And he too saved Israel, striking down six
hundred Philistines with an oxgoad.

4

1 After Ehud died, the Israelites again did evil
in the sight of the LORD.
2 So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin
king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The
commander of his forces was Sisera, who lived
in Harosheth-hagoyim.
3 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD,
because Jabin had nine hundred chariots of
iron, and he had harshly oppressed the
Israelites for twenty years.
4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of
Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.
5 And she would sit under the Palm of
Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill

country of Ephraim, where the Israelites would
go up to her for judgment.
6 She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from
Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “Surely the
LORD, the God of Israel, is commanding you: ‘Go
and march to Mount Tabor, taking with you ten
thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun.
7 And I will draw out Sisera the commander of
Jabin’s army, his chariots, and his troops to the
River Kishon, and I will deliver him into your
hand.’ ”
8 Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, I
will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not
go.”
9 “I will certainly go with you,” Deborah
replied, “but the road you are taking will bring
you no honor, because the LORD will be selling
Sisera into the hand of a woman.” So Deborah
got up and went with Barak to Kedesh,
10 where he summoned Zebulun and Naphtali.
Ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah
also went with him.
11 Now Heber the Kenite had moved away
from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the
father-in-law* of Moses, and had pitched his tent
by the great tree of Zaanannim,† which was near
Kedesh.
12 When Sisera was told that Barak son of
Abinoam had gone up Mount Tabor,
13 he summoned all nine hundred of his iron
chariots and all the men with him, from
Harosheth-hagoyim to the River Kishon.

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* **4:11 4:11** Or *brother-in-law* † **4:11 4:11** Qere; Ketiv *Zaanaim*

14 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Arise, for this
is the day that the LORD has delivered Sisera
into your hand. Has not the LORD gone before
you?”
So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with
ten thousand men following him.
15 And in front of him the LORD routed with
the sword Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his
army. Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on
foot.
16 Then Barak pursued the chariots and army
as far as Harosheth-hagoyim, and the whole
army of Sisera fell by the sword; not a single
man was left.
17 Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the
tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite,
because there was peace between Jabin king of
Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.
18 Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to him,
“Come in, my lord. Come in with me. Do not be
afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered
him with a blanket.
19 Sisera said to her, “Please give me a little
water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a
container of milk, gave him a drink, and
covered him again.
20 “Stand at the entrance to the tent,” he said,
“and if anyone comes and asks you, ‘Is there a
man here?’ say, ‘No.’ ”
21 But as he lay sleeping from exhaustion,
Heber’s wife Jael took a tent peg, grabbed a
hammer, and went silently to Sisera. She drove
the peg through his temple and into the ground,
and he died.

22 When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera,
Jael went out to greet him and said to him,
“Come, and I will show you the man you are
seeking.” So he went in with her, and there lay
Sisera dead, with a tent peg through his temple.
23 On that day God subdued Jabin king of
Canaan before the Israelites.
24 And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger
and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan until
they destroyed him.

5

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

2 “When the princes take the lead in Israel,
when the people volunteer,
bless the LORD.
3 Listen, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD,
the God of Israel.
4 O LORD, when you went out from Seir,
when you marched from the land of Edom,
the earth trembled, the heavens poured out rain,
and the clouds poured down water.
5 The mountains flowed* before the LORD,
the One of Sinai,
before the LORD,
the God of Israel.

6 In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,

* **5:5 5:5** LXX, Syriac, and Targum *quaked*

in the days of Jael,
the highways were deserted
and the travelers took the byways.
7 Life in the villages ceased;
it ended in Israel,
until I, Deborah, arose,
a mother in Israel.
8 When they chose new gods,
then war came to their gates.
Not a shield or spear was found
among forty thousand in Israel.
9 My heart is with the princes of Israel,
with the volunteers among the people.
Bless the LORD!

10 You who ride white donkeys,
who sit on saddle blankets,
and you who travel the road,
ponder
11 the voices of the archers†
at the watering places.
There they shall recount the righteous acts of
the LORD,
the righteous deeds of his villagers‡ in Israel.

Then the people of the LORD
went down to the gates:
12 'Awake, awake, O Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, O Barak,
and take hold of your captives, O son of
Abinoam!'

† **5:11 5:11** Or *singers* or *those who divide the sheep* ‡ **5:11 5:11** Or *warriors*

13 Then the survivors came down to the nobles;
the people of the LORD came down to me
against the mighty.
14 Some came from Ephraim, with their roots in
Amalek;
Benjamin came with your people after you.
The commanders came down from Machir,
the bearers of the marshal's staff from
Zebulun.

15 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah,
and Issachar was with Barak,
rushing into the valley at his heels.
In the clans of Reuben
there were great resolutions of heart.§
16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds
to hear the whistling for the flocks?
In the clans of Reuben
there was much searching of heart.

17 Gilead remained beyond the Jordan.
Dan, why did you linger by the ships?
Asher stayed at the coast
and remained in his harbors.
18 Zebulun was a people who risked their lives;
Naphtali, too, on the heights of the
battlefield.
19 Kings came and fought;
then the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach
by the waters of Megiddo,
but they took no plunder of silver.

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§ **5:15 5:15** Or *great indecision*; some Hebrew manuscripts *much searching of heart*, as in verse 16

20 From the heavens the stars fought;
from their courses they fought against
Sisera.
21 The River Kishon swept them away,
the ancient river, the River Kishon.

March on, O my soul, in strength!

22 Then the hooves of horses thundered—
the mad galloping of his stallions.
23 'Curse Meroz,' says the angel of the LORD.
'Bitterly curse her inhabitants;
for they did not come to help the LORD,
to help the LORD against the mighty.'

24 Most blessed among women is Jael,
the wife of Heber the Kenite,
most blessed of tent-dwelling women.
25 He asked for water, and she gave him milk.
In a magnificent bowl she brought him
curds.
26 She reached for the tent peg,
her right hand for the workman's hammer.
She struck Sisera and crushed his skull;
she shattered and pierced his temple.
27 At her feet he collapsed, he fell,
there he lay still;
at her feet he collapsed, he fell;
where he collapsed, there he fell dead.

28 Sisera's mother looked through the window;
she peered through the lattice and
lamented:

‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?
What has delayed the clatter of his chariots?’
29 Her wisest ladies answer;
indeed she keeps telling herself,
30 ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoil—
a girl or two for each warrior,
a plunder of dyed garments for Sisera,
the spoil of embroidered garments
for the neck of the looter?’

31 So may all your enemies perish,
O LORD!
But may those who love him*
shine like the sun at its brightest.”
And the land had rest for forty years.

6

1 Again the Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD; so he delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,
2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds.
3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other people of the east would come up and invade them,
4 encamping against them as far as Gaza and destroying the produce of the land. They left Israel with no sustenance, neither sheep nor oxen nor donkeys.

* **5:31 5:31** Some ancient versions *you*

5 For the Midianites came with their livestock
and their tents like a great swarm of locusts.
They and their camels were innumerable, and
they entered the land to ravage it.
6 Israel was greatly impoverished by Midian,
and the Israelites cried out to the LORD.
7 Now when the Israelites cried out to the
LORD because of Midian,
8 he sent them a prophet, who told them, "This
is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I
brought you up out of Egypt, out of the house of
slavery.
9 I delivered you out of the hands of Egypt and
all your oppressors. I drove them out before you
and gave you their land.
10 And I said to you: 'I am the LORD your God.
You must not worship* the gods of the Amorites,
in whose land you dwell.' But you did not obey
me."
11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat
down under the terebinth† in Ophrah that
belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son
Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to
hide it from the Midianites.
12 And the angel of the LORD appeared to
Gideon and said, "The LORD is with you, O
mighty man of valor."
13 "Please, my lord," Gideon replied, "if the
LORD is with us, why has all this happened to
us? And where are all his wonders of which our
fathers told us, saying, 'Has not the LORD
brought us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD

* **6:10 6:10** Or *fear* † **6:11 6:11** Or *oak* or *great tree*; also in verse 19

has forsaken us and delivered us into the hand
of Midian."
14 The LORD‡ turned to him and said, "Go in
the strength you have and save Israel from the
hand of Midian. Am I not sending you?"
15 "Please, my Lord," Gideon replied, "how can
I save Israel? Indeed, my clan is the weakest in
Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's
house."
16 "Surely I will be with you," the LORD
replied, "and you will strike down all the
Midianites as one man."
17 Gideon answered, "If I have found favor in
your sight, give me a sign that it is you speaking
with me.
18 Please do not depart from this place until I
return to you. Let me bring my offering and set
it before you."
And the LORD said, "I will stay until you
return."
19 So Gideon went in and prepared a young
goat and unleavened bread and an ephah of
flour.§ He placed the meat in a basket and the
broth in a pot and brought them out to present
to him under the terebinth.
20 And the angel of God said to him, "Take the
meat and the unleavened bread, lay them on
this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon
did so.
21 Then the angel of the LORD extended the tip
of the staff that was in his hand and touched the

‡ **6:14 6:14** LXX *The angel of the LORD*; also in verse 16 § **6:19 6:19** *An ephah* is approximately 20 dry quarts or 22 liters (probably about 25.5 pounds or 11.6 kilograms of flour).

meat and the unleavened bread. And fire flared
from the rock and consumed the meat and the
unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD
vanished from his sight.
22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel
of the LORD, he said, “Oh no, Lord GOD! I have
seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”
23 But the LORD said to him, “Peace be with
you. Do not be afraid, for you will not die.”
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.
25 On that very night the LORD said to Gideon,
“Take your father’s young bull and a second bull
seven years old, tear down your father’s altar to
Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.
26 Then build a proper altar to the LORD your
God on the top of this stronghold. And with the
wood of the Asherah pole you cut down, take the
second bull and offer it as a burnt offering.”
27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did
as the LORD had told him. But because he was
too afraid of his father’s household and the men
of the city, he did it by night rather than in the
daytime.
28 When the men of the city got up in the
morning, there was Baal’s altar torn down, with
the Asherah pole cut down beside it and the
second bull offered up on the newly built altar.
29 “Who did this?” they said to one another.
And after they had investigated thoroughly,
they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did it.”

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* **6:24 6:24** Hebrew *YHWH Shalom*

30 Then the men of the city said to Joash,
“Bring out your son. He must die, because he has
torn down Baal’s altar and cut down the
Asherah pole beside it.”
31 But Joash said to all who stood against him,
“Are you contending for Baal? Are you trying to
save him? Whoever pleads his case will be put
to death by morning! If Baal is a god, let him
contend for himself with the one who has torn
down his altar.”
32 So on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal,†
that is to say, “Let Baal contend with him,”
because he had torn down Baal’s altar.
33 Then all the Midianites, Amalekites, and
other people of the east gathered together,
crossed over the Jordan, and camped in the
Valley of Jezreel.
34 So the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon,
who blew the ram’s horn and rallied the
Abiezrites behind him.
35 Calling them to arms, Gideon sent
messengers throughout Manasseh, as well as
Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, so that they came
up to meet him.
36 Then Gideon said to God, “If you are going to
save Israel by my hand, as you have said,
37 then behold, I will place a fleece of wool on
the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the
fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know
that you are going to save Israel by my hand, as
you have said.”

† **6:32 6:32** *Jerubbaal* probably means *let Baal contend.*

38 And that is what happened. When Gideon
arose the next morning, he squeezed the fleece
and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.
39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry
with me; let me speak one more time. Please
allow me one more test with the fleece. This
time let it be dry, and the ground covered with
dew.”
40 And that night God did so. Only the fleece
was dry, and dew covered the ground.

7

1 Early in the morning Jerubbaal* (that is,
Gideon) and all the men with him camped
beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of
Midian was north of them in the valley near the
hill of Moreh.
2 Then the LORD said to Gideon, “You have too
many men for me to deliver Midian into their
hands, lest Israel glorify themselves over me,
saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’
3 Now, therefore, proclaim in the hearing of
the men: ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling may
turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’ ”
So twenty-two thousand of them turned back,
but ten thousand remained.
4 Then the LORD said to Gideon, “There are
still too many men. Take them down to the
water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say
to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go.

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* **7:1** **7:1** *Jerubbaal* is another name for *Gideon* and probably means *let Baal contend*; see Judges 6:32.

But if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."
5 So Gideon brought the men down to the water, and the LORD said to him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel to drink."
6 And the number of those who lapped the water with their hands to their mouths was three hundred men; all the others knelt to drink.
7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men who lapped the water I will save you and deliver the Midianites into your hand. But all the others are to go home."
8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred men, who took charge of the provisions and rams' horns of the others. And the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.
9 That night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up and go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.
10 But if you are afraid to do so, then go down to the camp with your servant Purah
11 and listen to what they are saying. Then your hands will be strengthened to attack the camp." So he went with Purah his servant to the outposts where armed men were guarding the camp.
12 Now the Midianites, Amalekites, and all the other people of the east had settled in the valley like a swarm of locusts, and their camels were as countless as the sand on the seashore.
13 And as Gideon arrived, a man was telling his friend about a dream. "Behold, I had a

dream," he said, "and I saw a loaf of barley
bread come tumbling into the Midianite camp.
It struck the tent so hard that the tent
overturned and collapsed."
14 His friend replied: "This is nothing less than
the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite.
God has delivered Midian and the whole camp
into his hand."
15 When Gideon heard the dream and its
interpretation, he bowed in worship. He
returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Get up,
for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian
into your hand."
16 And he divided the three hundred men into
three companies and gave each man a ram's
horn in one hand and a large jar in the other,
containing a torch.†
17 "Watch me and do as I do," Gideon said.
"When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do
exactly as I do.
18 When I and all who are with me blow our
horns, then you are also to blow your horns
from all around the camp and shout, 'For the
LORD and for Gideon!' "
19 Gideon and the hundred men with him
reached the outskirts of the camp at the
beginning of the middle watch, just after the
changing of the guard. They blew their horns
and broke the jars that were in their hands.
20 The three companies blew their horns and
shattered their jars. Holding the torches in their

† **7:16 7:16** Literally *and put rams' horns and empty jars—large jars with torches inside—into the hand of all*

left hands and the horns in their right hands,
they shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for
Gideon!”
21 Each Israelite took his position around the
camp, and the entire Midianite army fled, crying
out as they ran.
22 And when the three hundred rams' horns
sounded, the LORD set all the men in the camp
against one another with their swords. The
army fled to Beth-shittah toward Zererah‡ as far
as the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.
23 Then the men of Israel were called out from
Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and they
pursued the Midianites.
24 Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill
country of Ephraim to say, “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 captured the waters of the Jordan as far as
Beth-barah.
25 They also captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two
princes of Midian; and they killed Oreb at the
rock of Oreb and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb.
So they pursued the Midianites and brought the
heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other
side of the Jordan.

8

1 Then the men of Ephraim said to Gideon,
“Why have you done this to us? Why did you fail
to call us when you went to fight against

‡ **7:22 7:22** Some Hebrew manuscripts *Zeredah*

Midian?" And they contended with him violently.

2 But Gideon answered them, "Now what have
I accomplished compared to you? Are not the
gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape
harvest of Abiezer?
3 God has delivered Oreb and Zeeb, the two
princes of Midian, into your hand. What was I
able to do compared to you?" When he had said
this, their anger* against him subsided.
4 Then Gideon and his three hundred men
came to the Jordan and crossed it, exhausted yet
still in pursuit.
5 So Gideon said to the men of Succoth, "Please
give my troops some bread, for they are
exhausted, and I am still pursuing Zebah and
Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."
6 But the leaders of Succoth asked, "Are the
hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your
possession, that we should give bread to your
army?"
7 "Very well," Gideon replied, "when the LORD
has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my
hand, I will tear your flesh with the thorns and
briers of the wilderness!"
8 From there he went up to Penuel† and asked
the same from them, but the men of Penuel gave
the same response as the men of Succoth.
9 So Gideon told the men of Penuel, "When I
return in triumph, I will tear down this tower!"

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* **8:3 8:3** Or *their spirit* † **8:8 8:8** *Penuel* is a variant of *Peniel*; also in verses 9 and 17; see Genesis 32:31.

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor
with their army of about fifteen thousand
men—all that were left of the armies of the
people of the east. A hundred and twenty
thousand swordsmen had already fallen.
11 And Gideon went up by way of the caravan
route east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and he
attacked their army, taking them by surprise.
12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, Gideon
pursued and captured these two kings of
Midian, routing their entire army.

13 After this, Gideon son of Joash returned
from the battle along the Ascent of Heres.
14 There he captured a young man of Succoth
and interrogated him. The young man wrote
down for him the names of the seventy-seven
leaders and elders of Succoth.
15 And Gideon went to the men of Succoth and
said, “Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about
whom you taunted me, saying, ‘Are the hands of
Zebah and Zalmunna already in your
possession, that we should give bread to your
weary men?’ ”
16 Then he took the elders of the city, and
using the thorns and briers of the wilderness, he
disciplined the men of Succoth.
17 He also pulled down the tower of Penuel
and killed the men of the city.

18 Next, Gideon asked Zebah and Zalmunna,
“What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?”

“Men like you,” they answered, “each one
resembling the son of a king.”

19 “They were my brothers,” Gideon replied,
“the sons of my mother! As surely as the LORD
lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill
you.”
20 So he said to Jether, his firstborn, “Get up
and kill them.” But the young man did not draw
his sword; he was fearful because he was still a
youth.
21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Get up and
kill us yourself, for as the man is, so is his
strength.” So Gideon got up and killed Zebah
and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent
ornaments from the necks of their camels.
22 Then the Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule
over us—you and your son and grandson—for
you have saved us from the hand of Midian.”
23 But Gideon replied, “I will not rule over you,
nor will my son. The LORD shall rule over you.”
24 Then he added, “Let me make a request of
you, that each of you give me an earring from
his plunder.” (For the enemies had gold earrings
because they were Ishmaelites.)
25 “We will give them gladly,” they replied.
So they spread out a garment, and each man
threw an earring from his plunder onto it.
26 The weight of the gold earrings he had
requested was 1,700 shekels,‡ in addition to the
crescent ornaments, the pendants, the purple
garments of the kings of Midian, and the chains
from the necks of their camels.

‡ **8:26 8:26** *1,700 shekels* is approximately 42.7 pounds or 19.4 kilograms.

27 From all this Gideon made an ephod, which
he placed in Ophrah, his hometown. But soon all
Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it
there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his
household.
28 In this way Midian was subdued before the
Israelites and did not raise its head again. So the
land had rest for forty years in the days of
Gideon,
29 and he—Jerubbaal§ son of Joash—returned
home and settled down.
30 Gideon had seventy sons of his own,* since
he had many wives.
31 His concubine, who dwelt in Shechem, also
bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.
32 Later, Gideon son of Joash died at a ripe old
age and was buried in the tomb of his father
Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
33 And as soon as Gideon was dead, the
Israelites turned and prostituted themselves
with the Baals, and they set up Baal-berith as
their god.
34 The Israelites failed to remember the LORD
their God who had delivered them from the
hands of all their enemies on every side.
35 They did not show kindness to the house of
Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) for all the good things
he had done for Israel.

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§ **8:29 8:29** *Jerubbaal* is another name for *Gideon* and probably means *let Baal contend*; also in verse 35; see Judges 6:32. * **8:30 8:30** Hebrew *who came from his own loins*

9

1 Now Abimelech son of Jerubbaal* went to
his mother's brothers at Shechem and said to
them and to all the clan of his mother,
2 "Please ask all the leaders of Shechem, 'Is it
better for you that seventy men, all the sons of
Jerubbaal, rule over you, or just one man?'
Remember that I am your own flesh and blood."

3 And when his mother's brothers spoke all
these words about him in the presence of all the
leaders of Shechem, their hearts were inclined
to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our
brother."
4 So they gave him seventy shekels of silver†
from the temple of Baal-berith, with which
Abimelech hired some worthless and reckless
men to follow him.
5 He went to his father's house in Ophrah, and
on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the
sons of Jerubbaal. But Jotham, the youngest son
of Jerubbaal, survived, because he hid himself.

6 Then all the leaders of Shechem and
Beth-millo gathered beside the terebinth‡ at the
pillar in Shechem and proceeded to make
Abimelech their king.

7 When this was reported to Jotham, he
climbed to the top of Mount Gerizim, raised his
voice, and cried out:

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* **9:1 9:1** *Jerubbaal* is another name for *Gideon* and probably means *let Baal contend*; here and throughout this chapter; see Judges 6:32. † **9:4 9:4** *70 shekels* is approximately 1.76 pounds or 797.8 grams of silver. ‡ **9:6 9:6** Or *oak* or *great tree*

“Listen to me, O leaders of Shechem,
and may God listen to you.

8 One day the trees set out
to anoint a king for themselves.
They said to the olive tree,
‘Reign over us.’

9 But the olive tree replied,
‘Should I stop giving my oil
that honors both God and man,
to hold sway over the trees?’

10 Then the trees said to the fig tree,
‘Come and reign over us.’

11 But the fig tree replied,
‘Should I stop giving my sweetness
and my good fruit,
to hold sway over the trees?’

12 Then the trees said to the grapevine,
‘Come and reign over us.’

13 But the grapevine replied,
‘Should I stop giving my wine
that cheers both God and man,
to hold sway over the trees?’

14 Finally all the trees said to the thornbush,
‘Come and reign over us.’

15 But the thornbush replied,

‘If you really are anointing me as king over
you,
come and find refuge in my shade.
But if not, may fire come out of the thornbush
and consume the cedars of Lebanon.’
16 Now if you have acted faithfully and
honestly in making Abimelech king, if you have
done well by Jerubbaal and his family, and if
you have done to him as he deserves—
17 for my father fought for you and risked his
life to deliver you from the hand of Midian,
18 but you have risen up against my father’s
house this day and killed his seventy sons on a
single stone, and you have made Abimelech, the
son of his slave woman, king over the leaders of
Shechem because he is your brother—
19 if you have acted faithfully and honestly
toward Jerubbaal and his house this day, then
may you rejoice in Abimelech, and he in you.
20 But if not, may fire come from Abimelech
and consume the leaders of Shechem and
Beth-millo, and may fire come from the leaders
of Shechem and Beth-millo and consume
Abimelech.”
21 Then Jotham ran away, escaping to Beer, and
he lived there for fear of his brother Abimelech.
22 After Abimelech had reigned over Israel for
three years,
23 God sent a spirit of animosity§ between
Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem and
caused them to treat Abimelech deceitfully,

§ **9:23 9:23** Or *a harmful spirit*

24 in order that the crime against the seventy
sons of Jerubbaal might come to justice and
their blood be avenged on their brother
Abimelech and on the leaders of Shechem, who
had helped him murder his brothers.

25 The leaders of Shechem set up an ambush
against Abimelech on the hilltops, and they
robbed all who passed by them on the road. So
this was reported to Abimelech.

26 Meanwhile, Gaal son of Ebed came with his
brothers and crossed into Shechem, and the
leaders of Shechem put their confidence in him.
27 And after they had gone out into the fields,
gathered grapes from their vineyards, and
trodden them, they held a festival and went into
the house of their god; and as they ate and
drank, they cursed Abimelech.

28 Then Gaal son of Ebed said, “Who is
Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should
serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is
not Zebul his officer? You are to serve the men
of Hamor, the father of Shechem. Why should
we serve Abimelech?
29 If only this people were under my authority,
I would remove Abimelech.” And he said to
Abimelech, “Muster your army and come out!”*

30 When Zebul the governor of the city heard
the words of Gaal son of Ebed, he burned with
anger.

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* **9:29 9:29** LXX *I would remove Abimelech; I would say to him, ‘Muster your army and come out!’*

31 So he sent messengers to Abimelech in
Tormah† to say, “Look, Gaal son of Ebed and his
brothers have come to Shechem and are stirring
up‡ the city against you.
32 Now then, tonight you and the people with
you are to come and lie in wait in the fields.
33 And in the morning at sunrise, get up and
advance against the city. When Gaal and his
men come out against you, do to them whatever
you are able.”
34 So Abimelech and all his troops set out by
night and lay in wait against Shechem in four
companies.
35 Now Gaal son of Ebed went out and stood at
the entrance of the city gate just as Abimelech
and his men came out from their hiding places.
36 When Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul,
“Look, people are coming down from the
mountains!”
But Zebul replied, “The shadows of the
mountains look like men to you.”
37 Then Gaal spoke up again, “Look, people are
coming down from the center of the land,§ and
one company is coming by way of the Diviners'
Oak.*”
38 “Where is your gloating now?” Zebul
replied. “You said, ‘Who is Abimelech that we

† **9:31 9:31** Or *he covertly sent messengers to Abimelech*; probably the same place as *Arumah* in verse 41 ‡ **9:31 9:31** Or *besieging* or *closing up* § **9:37 9:37** Literally *the navel of the earth* * **9:37 9:37** Or *the Diviners' Terebinth* or *the diviners' tree*

should serve him?' Are these not the people you
ridiculed? Go out now and fight them!"
39 So Gaal went out before the leaders of
Shechem and fought against Abimelech,
40 but Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled
before him. And many Shechemites fell
wounded all the way to the entrance of the gate.
41 Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul
drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.
42 The next day the people of Shechem went
out into the fields, and this was reported to
Abimelech.
43 So he took his men, divided them into three
companies, and lay in wait in the fields. When
he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose
up against them and attacked them.
44 Then Abimelech and the companies with
him rushed forward and took their stand at the
entrance of the city gate. The other two
companies rushed against all who were in the
fields and struck them down.
45 And all that day Abimelech fought against
the city until he had captured it and killed its
people. Then he demolished the city and sowed
it with salt.
46 On hearing of this, all the leaders in the
tower of Shechem entered the inner chamber of
the temple of El-berith.†
47 And when Abimelech was told that all the
leaders in the tower of Shechem were gathered
there,

† **9:46 9:46** *El-berith* was another name for *Baal-berith*; see verse 4.

48 he and all his men went up to Mount
Zalmon. Abimelech took his axe in his hand and
cut a branch from the trees, which he lifted to
his shoulder, saying to his men, “Hurry and do
what you have seen me do.”

49 So each man also cut his own branch and
followed Abimelech. Then they piled the
branches against the inner chamber and set it
on fire above them, killing everyone in the tower
of Shechem, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez, encamped
against it, and captured it.
51 But there was a strong tower inside the city,
and all the men, women, and leaders of the city
fled there. They locked themselves in and went
up to the roof of the tower.

52 When Abimelech came to attack the tower,
he approached its entrance to set it on fire.
53 But a woman dropped an upper millstone
on Abimelech’s head, crushing his skull.
54 He quickly called his armor-bearer, saying,
“Draw your sword and kill me, lest they say of
me, ‘A woman killed him.’ ”

So Abimelech’s armor-bearer ran his sword
through him, and he died.
55 And when the Israelites saw that Abimelech
was dead, they all went home.

56 In this way God repaid the wickedness that
Abimelech had done to his father in murdering
his seventy brothers.
57 And God also brought all the wickedness of
the men of Shechem back upon their own heads.

So the curse of Jotham son of Jerubbaal came
upon them.

10

1 After the time of Abimelech, a man of
Issachar, Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose
up to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill
country of Ephraim.
2 Tola led* Israel twenty-three years, and
when he died, he was buried in Shamir.
3 Tola was followed by Jair the Gileadite, who
led Israel twenty-two years.
4 He had thirty sons who rode on thirty
donkeys. And they had thirty towns in the land
of Gilead, which to this day are called
Havvoth-jair.†
5 When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.
6 And again the Israelites did evil in the sight
of the LORD. They served the Baals, the
Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, Sidon, and Moab,
and the gods of the Ammonites and Philistines.
Thus they forsook the LORD and did not serve
him.
7 So the anger of the LORD burned against
Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the
Philistines and Ammonites,
8 who that very year harassed and oppressed
the Israelites, and they did so for eighteen years
to all the Israelites on the other side of the
Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites.

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* **10:2 10:2** Or *governed* or *judged*; here and throughout the book of Judges † **10:4 10:4** Or *the villages of Jair*

9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to
fight against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of
Ephraim, and Israel was in deep distress.

10 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD,
saying, “We have sinned against you, for we
have indeed forsaken our God and served the
Baals.”

11 The LORD replied, “When the Egyptians,
Amorites, Ammonites, Philistines,
12 Sidonians, Amalekites, and Maonites‡
oppressed you and you cried out to me, did I not
save you from their hands?
13 But you have forsaken me and served other
gods, so I will no longer save you.
14 Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen.
Let them save you in your time of trouble.”

15 “We have sinned,” the Israelites said to the
LORD. “Deal with us as you see fit; but please
deliver us today!”
16 So they put away the foreign gods from
among them and served the LORD, and he could
no longer bear the misery of Israel.

17 Then the Ammonites were called to arms
and camped in Gilead, and the Israelites
assembled and camped at Mizpah.
18 And the people, the rulers of Gilead, said to
one another, “Whoever will launch the attack
against the Ammonites will be the head of all
who live in Gilead.”

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‡ **10:12 10:12** Some LXX manuscripts *Midianites*

11

1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty
man of valor; he was the son of a prostitute, and
Gilead was his father.
2 And Gilead's wife bore him sons who grew
up, drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You
shall have no inheritance in our father's house,
because you are the son of another woman."
3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and
settled in the land of Tob, where worthless men
gathered around him and traveled with him.
4 Some time later, when the Ammonites fought
against Israel
5 and made war with them, the elders of
Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of
Tob.
6 "Come," they said, "be our commander, so
that we can fight against the Ammonites."
7 Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "Did
you not hate me and expel me from my father's
house? Why then have you come to me now,
when you are in distress?"
8 They answered Jephthah, "This is why we
now turn to you, that you may go with us, fight
the Ammonites, and become leader over all of
us who live in Gilead."
9 But Jephthah asked them, "If you take me
back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives
them to me, will I really be your leader?"
10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah,
"The LORD is our witness if we do not do as you
say."

11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead,
and the people made him their leader and
commander. And Jephthah repeated all his
terms in the presence of the LORD at Mizpah.
12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king
of the Ammonites, saying, “What do you have
against me that you have come to fight against
my land?”
13 The king of the Ammonites answered
Jephthah’s messengers, “When Israel came up
out of Egypt, they seized my land, from the
Arnon to the Jabbok and all the way to the
Jordan. Now, therefore, restore it peaceably.”
14 Jephthah again sent messengers to the king
of the Ammonites
15 to tell him, “This is what Jephthah says:
Israel did not take away the land of Moab or of
the Ammonites.
16 But when Israel came up out of Egypt, they
traveled through the wilderness to the Sea of
Reeds* and came to Kadesh.
17 Then Israel sent messengers to the king of
Edom, saying, ‘Please let us pass through your
land,’ but the king of Edom would not listen.
They also sent messengers to the king of Moab,
but he would not consent. So Israel stayed in
Kadesh.
18 Then Israel traveled through the wilderness
and bypassed the lands of Edom and Moab.
They came to the east side of the land of Moab
and camped on the other side of the Arnon. But

* **11:16 11:16** Or *the Red Sea*

they did not enter the territory of Moab, since
the Arnon was its border.
19 And Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of
the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and said to
him, 'Please let us pass through your land into
our own place.'
20 But Sihon would not trust Israel to pass
through his territory. So he gathered all his
people, encamped in Jahaz, and fought with
Israel.
21 Then the LORD, the God of Israel, delivered
Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel,
who defeated them. So Israel took possession of
all the land of the Amorites who inhabited that
country,
22 seizing all the land from the Arnon to the
Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.
23 Now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has
driven out the Amorites from before his people
Israel, should you now possess it?
24 Do you not possess whatever your god
Chemosh grants you? So also, we possess
whatever the LORD our God has granted us.
25 Are you now so much better than Balak son
of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever contend
with Israel or fight against them?
26 For three hundred years Israel has lived in
Heshbon, Aroer, and their villages, as well as all
the cities along the banks of the Arnon. Why did
you not take them back during that time?
27 I have not sinned against you, but you have
done me wrong by waging war against me. May

the LORD, the Judge, decide today between the
Israelites and the Ammonites."
28 But the king of the Ammonites paid no heed
to the message Jephthah sent him.
29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon
Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and
Manasseh, then through Mizpah of Gilead. And
from there he advanced against the Ammonites.
30 Jephthah made this vow to the LORD: "If
indeed you will deliver the Ammonites into my
hand,
31 then whatever comes out the door of my
house to greet me on my triumphant return
from the Ammonites will belong to the LORD,
and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."
32 So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites
to fight against them, and the LORD delivered
them into his hand.
33 With a great blow he devastated twenty
cities from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as
far as Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were
subdued before the Israelites.
34 And when Jephthah returned home to
Mizpah, there was his daughter coming out to
meet him with tambourines and dancing! She
was his only child; he had no son or daughter
besides her.
35 As soon as Jephthah saw her, he tore his
clothes and said, "No! Not my daughter! You
have brought me to my knees! You have brought
great misery upon me, for I have given my word
to the LORD and cannot take it back."
36 "My father," she replied, "you have given
your word to the LORD. Do to me as you have

said, for the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites."
37 She also said to her father, "Let me do this one thing: Let me wander for two months through the mountains with my friends and mourn my virginity."
38 "Go," he said. And he sent her away for two months.
So she left with her friends and mourned her virginity upon the mountains.
39 After two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she had never had relations with a man.
So it has become a custom in Israel
40 that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

12

1 Then the men of Ephraim assembled and crossed the Jordan to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, "Why have you crossed over to fight the Ammonites without calling us to go with you? We will burn your house down with you inside!"
2 But Jephthah replied, "My people and I had a serious conflict with the Ammonites, and when I called, you did not save me out of their hands.
3 When I saw that you would not save me, I risked my life and crossed over to the Ammonites, and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come today to fight against me?"

4 Jephthah then gathered all the men of Gilead
and fought against Ephraim. And the men of
Gilead struck them down because the
Ephraimites had said, “You Gileadites are
fugitives in Ephraim, living in the territories of
Ephraim and Manasseh.”
5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the
Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a
fugitive from Ephraim would say, “Let me cross
over,” the Gileadites would ask him, “Are you an
Ephraimite?”
If he answered, “No,”
6 they told him, “Please say Shibboleth.”
If he said, “Sibboleth,” because he could not
pronounce it correctly, they seized him and
killed him at the fords of the Jordan. So at that
time 42,000 Ephraimites were killed.
7 Jephthah led Israel six years, and when he
died, he was buried in one of the cities of
Gilead.*
8 After Jephthah, Ibzan of Bethlehem led
Israel.
9 He had thirty sons, as well as thirty
daughters whom he gave in marriage to men
outside his clan; and for his sons he brought
back thirty wives from elsewhere. Ibzan led
Israel seven years.
10 Then Ibzan died, and he was buried in
Bethlehem.
11 After Ibzan, Elon the Zebulunite led Israel
ten years.

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* **12:7 12:7** LXX *in his city in Gilead*

12 Then Elon the Zebulunite died, and he was
buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.
13 After Elon, Abdon son of Hillel, from
Pirathon, led Israel.
14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons,
who rode on seventy donkeys. And he led Israel
eight years.
15 Then Abdon son of Hillel, from Pirathon,
died, and he was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim,
in the hill country of the Amalekites.

13

1 Again the Israelites did evil in the sight of the
LORD, so he delivered them into the hand of the
Philistines for forty years.
2 Now there was a man from Zorah named
Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, whose
wife was barren and had no children.
3 The angel of the LORD appeared to the
woman and said to her, “It is true that you are
barren and have no children; but you will
conceive and give birth to a son.
4 Now please be careful not to drink wine or
strong drink, and not to eat anything unclean.
5 For behold, you will conceive and give birth
to a son. And no razor shall touch his head,
because the boy will be a Nazirite* to God from
the womb, and he will begin the deliverance of
Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”
6 So the woman went and told her husband, “A
man of God came to me. His appearance was
like the angel of God, exceedingly awesome. I

* **13:5 13:5** Or *set apart*

did not ask him where he came from, and he did
not tell me his name.
7 But he said to me, ‘Behold, you will conceive
and give birth to a son. Now, therefore, do not
drink wine or strong drink, and do not eat
anything unclean, because the boy will be a
Nazirite to God from the womb until the day of
his death.’ ”
8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, “Please, O
Lord, let the man of God you sent us come to us
again to teach us how to raise the boy who is to
be born.”
9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah,
and the angel of God returned to the woman as
she was sitting in the field; but her husband
Manoah was not with her.
10 The woman ran quickly to tell her husband,
“Behold, the man who came to me the other day
has reappeared!”
11 So Manoah got up and followed his wife.
When he came to the man, he asked, “Are you
the man who spoke to my wife?”
“I am,” he said.
12 Then Manoah asked, “When your words
come to pass, what will be the boy’s rule of life
and mission?”
13 So the angel of the LORD answered Manoah,
“Your wife is to do everything I told her.
14 She must not eat anything that comes from
the vine, nor drink any wine or strong drink,
nor eat anything unclean. She must do
everything I have commanded her.”

15 “Please stay here,” Manoah said to the angel
of the LORD, “and we will prepare a young goat
for you.”
16 And the angel of the LORD replied, “Even if I
stay, I will not eat your food. But if you prepare a
burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” For Manoah
did not know that it was the angel of the LORD.
17 Then Manoah said to the angel of the LORD,
“What is your name, so that we may honor you
when your words† come to pass?”
18 “Why do you ask my name,” said the angel of
the LORD, “since it is beyond comprehension?”
19 Then Manoah took a young goat and a grain
offering and offered them on a rock to the LORD.
And as Manoah and his wife looked on, the
LORD did a marvelous thing.
20 When the flame went up from the altar to
the sky, the angel of the LORD ascended in the
flame.
When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell
facedown to the ground.
21 And when the angel of the LORD did not
appear again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah
realized that it had been the angel of the LORD.
22 “We are going to die,” he said to his wife, “for
we have seen God!”
23 But his wife replied, “If the LORD had
intended to kill us, he would not have accepted
the burnt offering and the grain offering from
our hands, nor would he have shown us all
these things or spoken to us this way.”

† **13:17 13:17** Ketiv; Qere *your word*

24 So the woman gave birth to a son and
named him Samson. The boy grew, and the
LORD blessed him.
25 And the spirit of the LORD began to stir him
at Mahaneh-dan,‡ between Zorah and Eshtaol.

14

1 One day Samson went down to Timnah,
where he saw a young Philistine woman.
2 So he returned and told his father and
mother, “I have seen a daughter of the Philistines
in Timnah. Now get her for me as a wife.”
3 But his father and mother replied, “Can’t you
find a young woman among your relatives or
among any of our people? Must you go to the
uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?”

But Samson told his father, “Get her for me, for
she is pleasing to my eyes.”
4 (Now his father and mother did not know
this was from the LORD, who was seeking an
occasion to move against the Philistines; for at
that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.)
5 Then Samson went down to Timnah with his
father and mother and came to the vineyards of
Timnah. Suddenly a young lion came roaring at
him,
6 and the spirit of the LORD came powerfully
upon him, and he tore the lion apart with his
bare hands as one would tear a young goat. But
he did not tell his father or mother what he had
done.

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‡ **13:25 13:25** *Mahaneh-dan* means *camp of Dan.*

7 Then Samson continued on his way down
and spoke to the woman, because she was
pleasing to his eyes.
8 When Samson returned later to take her, he
left the road to see the lion's carcass, and in it
was a swarm of bees, along with their honey.
9 So he scooped some honey into his hands and
ate it as he went along. And when he returned
to his father and mother, he gave some to them
and they ate it. But he did not tell them that he
had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.
10 Then his father went to visit the woman,
and Samson prepared a feast there, as was
customary for the bridegroom.
11 And when they saw him,* they selected
thirty men to accompany him.
12 "Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to
them. "If you can solve it for me within the
seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty
linen garments and thirty sets of clothes.
13 But if you cannot solve it, you must give me
thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes."
"Tell us your riddle," they replied. "Let us hear
it."
14 So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat,
and out of the strong came something
sweet."

For three days they were unable to explain the
riddle.

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* **14:11 14:11** Or *when the Philistines saw him* or *when the bride's parents saw him*

15 So on the seventh† day they said to Samson's
wife, "Entice your husband to explain the riddle
to us, or we will burn you and your father's
household to death. Did you invite us here to
rob us?"
16 Then Samson's wife came to him, weeping,
and said, "You hate me! You do not really love
me! You have posed to my people a riddle, but
have not explained it to me."
"Look," he said, "I have not even explained it to
my father or mother, so why should I explain it
to you?"
17 She wept the whole seven days of the feast,
and finally on the seventh day, because she had
pressed him so much, he told her the answer.
And in turn she explained the riddle to her
people.
18 Before sunset on the seventh day, the men
of the city said to Samson:

"What is sweeter than honey?
And what is stronger than a lion?"
So he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have solved my riddle!"
19 Then the spirit of the LORD came mightily
upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, killed
thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave
their clothes to those who had solved the riddle.
And burning with anger, Samson returned to his
father's house,

† **14:15 14:15** LXX and Syriac *fourth*

20 and his wife was given to one of the men
who had accompanied him.

15

1 Later on, at the time of the wheat harvest,
Samson took a young goat and went to visit his
wife. “I want to go to my wife in her room,” he
said. But her father would not let him enter.
2 “I was sure that you thoroughly hated her,”
said her father, “so I gave her to one of the men
who accompanied you. Is not her younger sister
more beautiful than she? Please take her
instead.”
3 Samson said to them, “This time I will be
blameless in doing harm to the Philistines.”
4 Then Samson went out and caught three
hundred foxes. And he took torches, turned the
foxes tail-to-tail, and fastened a torch between
each pair of tails.
5 Then he lit the torches and released the foxes
into the standing grain of the Philistines,
burning up the piles of grain and the standing
grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.
6 “Who did this?” the Philistines demanded.
“It was Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite,”
they were told. “For he took his wife and gave
her to his companion.”
So the Philistines went up and burned her and
her father to death.
7 And Samson told them, “Because you have
done this, I will not rest until I have taken
vengeance upon you.”
8 And he struck them ruthlessly* with a great

* **15:8 15:8** Literally *he struck them hip and thigh*

slaughter, and then went down and stayed in the
cave at the rock of Etam.
9 Then the Philistines went up, camped in
Judah, and spread out in Lehi.†
10 "Why have you attacked us?" said the men
of Judah.
The Philistines replied, "We have come to
arrest Samson and pay him back for what he
has done to us."
11 In response, three thousand men of Judah
went to the cave at the rock of Etam, and they
asked Samson, "Do you not realize that the
Philistines rule over us? What have you done to
us?"
"I have done to them what they did to me," he
replied.
12 But they said to him, "We have come down
to arrest you and hand you over to the
Philistines."
Samson replied, "Swear to me that you will not
kill me yourselves."
13 "No," they answered, "we will not kill you,
but we will tie you up securely and hand you
over to them." So they bound him with two new
ropes and led him up from the rock.
14 When Samson arrived in Lehi, the
Philistines came out shouting against him. And
the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him.
The ropes on his arms became like burnt flax,
and the bonds broke loose from his hands.

† **15:9 15:9** Or *and deployed themselves near the town of Lehi*

15 He found the fresh jawbone of a donkey,
reached out his hand and took it, and struck
down a thousand men.
16 Then Samson said:

“With the jawbone of a donkey
I have piled them into heaps.‡
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have slain a thousand men.”
17 And when Samson had finished speaking,
he cast the jawbone from his hand; and he
named that place Ramath-lehi.§
18 And being very thirsty, Samson cried out to
the LORD, “You have accomplished this great
deliverance through your servant. Must I now
die of thirst and fall into the hands of the
uncircumcised?”
19 So God opened up the hollow place in Lehi,
and water came out of it. When Samson drank,
his strength returned, and he was revived. That
is why he named it En-hakkore,* and it remains
in Lehi to this day.
20 And Samson led Israel for twenty years in
the days of the Philistines.

16

1 One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw
a prostitute and went in to spend the night with
her.
2 When the Gazites heard that Samson was
there, they surrounded that place and lay in

‡ **15:16** **15:16** Or *I have made them into donkeys* § **15:17** **15:17** *Ramath-lehi* means *the hill of the jawbone.* * **15:19** **15:19** *En-hakkore* means *the spring of him who calls.*

wait for him all night at the city gate. They were
quiet throughout the night, saying, “Let us wait
until dawn; then we will kill him.”

3 But Samson lay there only until midnight,
when he got up, took hold of the doors of the
city gate and both gateposts, and pulled them
out, bar and all. Then he put them on his
shoulders and took them to the top of the
mountain overlooking Hebron.

4 Some time later, Samson fell in love with a
woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was
Delilah.
5 The lords of the Philistines went to her and
said, “Entice him and find out the source of his
great strength and how we can overpower him
to tie him up and subdue him. Then each one of
us will give you eleven hundred shekels of
silver.*”

6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me the
source of your great strength and how you can
be tied up and subdued.”

7 Samson told her, “If they tie me up with
seven fresh bowstrings that have not been
dried, I will become as weak as any other man.”

8 So the lords of the Philistines brought her
seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried,
and she tied him up with them.
9 While the men were hidden in her room, she
called out, “Samson, the Philistines are here!”

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* **16:5 16:5** *1,100 shekels* is approximately 27.6 pounds or 12.5 kilograms of silver.

But he snapped the bowstrings like a strand of
yarn seared by a flame. So the source of his
strength remained unknown.
10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have
mocked me and lied to me! Now please tell me
how you can be tied up.”
11 He replied, “If they tie me up with new
ropes that have never been used, I will become
as weak as any other man.”
12 So Delilah took new ropes, tied him up with
them, and called out, “Samson, the Philistines
are here!”
But while the men were hidden in her room,
he snapped the ropes off his arms like they were
threads.
13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have
mocked me and lied to me all along! Tell me
how you can be tied up.”
He told her, “If you weave the seven braids of
my head into the web of a loom.”†
14 Then she tightened it with a pin‡ and called
to him, “Samson, the Philistines are here!”
But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out
the pin with the loom and the web.
15 “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ ” she asked,
“when your heart is not with me? This is the
third time you have mocked me and failed to
reveal to me the source of your great strength!”

† **16:13 16:13** LXX and Vulgate add *and tighten it with a pin, I will become as weak as any other man* ‡ **16:14 16:14** LXX and Vulgate first add *So while he slept, Delilah took the seven braids of his hair and wove them into the web*

16 Finally, after she had pressed him daily with
her words and pleaded until he was sick to
death,
17 Samson told her all that was in his heart:
"My hair has never been cut, because I have
been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb.
If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I
will become as weak as any other man."
18 When Delilah realized that he had revealed
to her all that was in his heart, she sent this
message to the lords of the Philistines: "Come up
once more, for he has revealed to me§ all that is
in his heart."
Then the lords of the Philistines came to her,
bringing the money in their hands.
19 And having lulled him to sleep on her lap,
she called a man to shave off the seven braids of
his head. In this way she began to subdue him,*
and his strength left him.
20 Then she called out, "Samson, the Philistines
are here!"
When Samson awoke from his sleep, he
thought, "I will escape as I did before and shake
myself free." But he did not know that the LORD
had departed from him.
21 Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out
his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, where
he was bound with bronze shackles and forced
to grind grain in the prison.
22 However, the hair of his head began to grow
back after it had been shaved.

§ **16:18** **16:18** Qere; Ketiv *to her* * **16:19** **16:19** Some LXX manuscripts *he began to grow weak*

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered
together to offer a great sacrifice to their god
Dagon. They rejoiced and said, “Our god has
delivered Samson our enemy into our hands.”
24 And when the people saw him, they praised
their god, saying:

“Our god has delivered into our hands
our enemy who destroyed our land
and multiplied our dead.”

25 And while their hearts were merry, they
said, “Call for Samson to entertain us.” So they
called Samson out of the prison to entertain
them. And they stationed him between the
pillars.
26 Samson said to the servant who held his
hand, “Lead me where I can feel the pillars
supporting the temple, so I can lean against
them.”
27 Now the temple was full of men and
women; all the lords of the Philistines were
there, and about three thousand men and
women were on the roof watching Samson
entertain them.
28 Then Samson called out to the LORD: “O
Lord GOD, please remember me. Strengthen me,
O God, just once more, so that with one vengeful
blow I may pay back the Philistines for my two
eyes.”
29 And Samson reached out for the two central
pillars supporting the temple. Bracing himself
against them with his right hand on one pillar
and his left hand on the other,

30 Samson said, “Let me die with the
Philistines.”
Then he pushed with all his might, and the
temple fell on the lords and all the people in it.
So in his death he killed more than he had killed
in his life.
31 Then Samson’s brothers and his father’s
family came down, carried him back, and
buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the
tomb of his father Manoah. And he had led
Israel twenty years.

17

1 Now a man named Micah from the hill
country of Ephraim
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
the silver here with me; I took it.”
Then his mother said, “Blessed be my son by
the LORD!”
3 And when he had returned the eleven
hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said,
“I wholly dedicate the silver to the LORD for my
son’s benefit, to make a graven image and a
molten idol. Therefore I will now return it to
you.”
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

* **17:2** **17:2** *1,100 shekels* is approximately 27.6 pounds or 12.5 kilograms of silver; also in verse 3. † **17:4** **17:4** *200 shekels* is approximately 5 pounds or 2.3 kilograms of silver.

a graven image and a molten idol. And they
were placed in the house of Micah.
5 Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he
made an ephod and some household idols, and
ordained‡ one of his sons as his priest.
6 In those days there was no king in Israel;
everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
7 And there was a young Levite from
Bethlehem in Judah who had been residing
within the clan of Judah.
8 This man left the city of Bethlehem in Judah
to settle where he could find a place. And as he
traveled, he came to Micah's house in the hill
country of Ephraim.
9 "Where are you from?" Micah asked him.
"I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he
replied, "and I am on my way to settle wherever
I can find a place."
10 "Stay with me," Micah said to him, "and be
my father and priest, and I will give you ten
shekels of silver§ per year, a suit of clothes, and
your provisions."
So the Levite went in
11 and agreed to stay with him, and the young
man became like a son to Micah.
12 Micah ordained the Levite, and the young
man became his priest and lived in his house.
13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the
LORD will be good to me, because a Levite has
become my priest."

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‡ **17:5 17:5** Hebrew *filled the hand of*; also in verse 12 § **17:10 17:10** *10 shekels* is approximately 4 ounces or 114 grams of silver.

18

1 In those days there was no king in Israel, and
the tribe of the Danites was looking for territory
to occupy. For up to that time they had not come
into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.
2 So the Danites sent out five men from their
clans, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to
spy out the land and explore it. “Go and explore
the land,” they told them.

The men entered the hill country of Ephraim
and came to the house of Micah, where they
spent the night.
3 And while they were near Micah’s house,
they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so
they went over and asked him, “Who brought
you here? What are you doing in this place?
Why are you here?”

4 “Micah has done this and that for me,” he
replied, “and he has hired me to be his priest.”

5 Then they said to him, “Please inquire of God
to determine whether we will have a successful
journey.”

6 And the priest told them, “Go in peace. The
LORD is watching over your journey.”

7 So the five men departed and came to Laish,
where they saw that the people were living
securely, like the Sidonians, quiet and
unsuspecting. There was nothing lacking in the
land and no oppressive ruler. And they were far
away from the Sidonians and had no alliance
with anyone.

8 When the men returned to Zorah and
Eshtaol, their brothers asked them, “What did
you find?”
9 They answered, “Come on, let us go up
against them, for we have seen the land, and it is
very good. Why would you fail to act? Do not
hesitate to go there and take possession of the
land!
10 When you enter, you will come to an
unsuspecting people and a spacious land, for
God has delivered it into your hand. It is a place
where nothing on earth is lacking.”
11 So six hundred Danites departed from
Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war.
12 They went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim
in Judah. That is why the place west of
Kiriath-jearim is called Mahaneh-dan* to this
day.
13 And from there they traveled to the hill
country of Ephraim and came to Micah’s house.
14 Then the five men who had gone to spy out
the land of Laish said to their brothers, “Did you
know that one of these houses has an ephod,
household gods, a graven image, and a molten
idol? Now think about what you should do.”
15 So they turned aside there and went to the
home of the young Levite, the house of Micah,
and greeted him.
16 The six hundred Danites stood at the
entrance of the gate, armed with their weapons
of war.

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* **18:12 18:12** *Mahaneh-dan* means *camp of Dan.*

17 And the five men who had gone to spy out
the land went inside and took the graven image,
the ephod, the household idols, and the molten
idol, while the priest stood at the entrance of the
gate with the six hundred armed men.

18 When they entered Micah's house and took
the graven image, the ephod, the household
idols, and the molten idol, the priest said to
them, "What are you doing?"

19 "Be quiet," they told him. "Put your hand
over your mouth and come with us and be a
father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be
a priest for the house of one person or a priest
for a tribe and family in Israel?"

20 So the priest was glad and took the ephod,
the household idols, and the graven image, and
went with the people.
21 Putting their small children, their livestock,
and their possessions in front of them, they
turned and departed.

22 After they were some distance from Micah's
house, the men in the houses near Micah's
house mobilized and overtook the Danites.
23 When they called out after them, the
Danites turned to face them and said to Micah,
"What is the matter with you that you have
called out such a company?"

24 He replied, "You took the gods I had made,
and my priest, and went away. What else do I
have? How can you say to me, 'What is the
matter with you?' "

25 The Danites said to him, “Do not raise your
voice against us, or angry men will attack you,
and you and your family will lose your lives.”
26 So the Danites went on their way, and Micah
turned to go back home, because he saw that
they were too strong for him.
27 After they had taken Micah’s idols† and his
priest, they went to Laish, to a quiet and
unsuspecting people, and they struck them with
their swords and burned down the city.
28 There was no one to deliver them, because
the city was far from Sidon and had no alliance
with anyone; it was in a valley near Beth-rehob.
And the Danites rebuilt the city and lived
there.
29 They named it Dan, after their forefather
Dan, who was born to Israel—though the city
was formerly named Laish.
30 The Danites set up the graven image for
themselves, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the
son of Manasseh,‡ and his sons were priests for
the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of
the land.
31 So they set up for themselves the graven
image Micah had made, and it was there the
whole time the house of God was in Shiloh.

19

1 Now in those days, when there was no king
in Israel, a Levite who lived in the remote hill

† **18:27 18:27** Hebrew *what Micah had made* ‡ **18:30 18:30** The Hebrew writes the letter *n* above the line; some Hebrew and LXX manuscripts and Vulgate *the son of Moses*

country of Ephraim took for himself a
concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.
2 But she was unfaithful to him* and left him
to return to her father's house in Bethlehem in
Judah.
After she had been there four months,
3 her husband got up and went after her to
speak kindly to her and bring her back,† taking
his servant and a pair of donkeys. So the girl
brought him into her father's house, and when
her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him.
4 His father-in-law, the girl's father, persuaded
him to stay, so he remained with him three days,
eating, drinking, and lodging there.
5 On the fourth day, they got up early in the
morning and prepared to depart, but the girl's
father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart
with a morsel of bread, and then you can go."
6 So they sat down and the two of them ate
and drank together. Then the girl's father said to
the man, "Please agree to stay overnight and let
your heart be merry."
7 The man got up to depart, but his
father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there
that night.
8 On the fifth day, he got up early in the
morning to depart, but the girl's father said,
"Please refresh your heart." So they waited until
late afternoon and the two of them ate.
9 When the man got up to depart with his
concubine and his servant, his father-in-law, the

* **19:2 19:2** LXX *became angry with him* † **19:3 19:3** Qere; Ketiv *bring it back*

girl's father, said to him, "Look, the day is drawing to a close. Please spend the night. See, the day is almost over. Spend the night here, that your heart may be merry. Then you can get up early tomorrow for your journey home."

10 But the man was unwilling to spend the night. He got up and departed, and arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

11 When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Please, let us stop at this Jebusite city and spend the night here."

12 But his master replied, "We will not turn aside to the city of foreigners, where there are no Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."

13 He said to his servant, "Come, let us try to reach one of these towns to spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah."

14 So they continued on their journey, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin.

15 They stopped to go in and lodge in Gibeah. The Levite went in and sat down in the city square, but no one would take them into his home for the night.

16 That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was residing in Gibeah (the men of that place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the field.

17 When he looked up and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going, and where have you come from?"

18 The Levite replied, “We are traveling from
Bethlehem in Judah to the remote hill country of
Ephraim, where I am from. I went to Bethlehem
in Judah, and now I am going to the house of the
LORD;‡ but no one has taken me into his home,
19 even though there is both straw and feed
for our donkeys, and bread and wine for me and
the maidservant and young man with me. There
is nothing that we, your servants, lack.”
20 “Peace to you,” said the old man. “Let me
supply everything you need. Only do not spend
the night in the square.”
21 So he brought him to his house and fed his
donkeys. And they washed their feet and ate
and drank.
22 While they were enjoying themselves,
suddenly the wicked men of the city surrounded
the house. Pounding on the door, they said to the
old man who owned the house, “Bring out the
man who came to your house, so we can have
relations with him!”
23 The owner of the house went out and said to
them, “No, my brothers, do not do this wicked
thing! After all, this man is a guest in my house.
Do not commit this outrage.
24 Look, let me bring out my virgin daughter
and the man’s concubine, and you can use them
and do with them as you wish. But do not do
such a vile thing to this man.”
25 But the men would not listen to him. So the
Levite took his concubine and sent her outside
to them, and they raped her and abused her

‡ **19:18 19:18** LXX *I am going to my home*; see verse 29.

throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.
26 Early that morning, the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, collapsed at the doorway, and lay there until it was light.

27 In the morning, when her master got up and opened the doors of the house to go out on his journey, there was his concubine, collapsed in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold.
28 “Get up,” he told her. “Let us go.” But there was no response. So the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

29 When he reached his house, he picked up a knife, took hold of his concubine, cut her limb by limb into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel.
30 And everyone who saw it said, “Nothing like this has been seen or done from the day the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt until this day. Think it over, take counsel, and speak up!”

20

1 Then all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came out, and the congregation assembled as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.
2 The leaders of all the people and all the tribes of Israel presented themselves in the assembly of God’s people: 400,000 men on foot, armed with swords.

3 (Meanwhile the Benjamites heard that the
Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) And the
Israelites asked, “Tell us, how did this wicked
thing happen?”
4 So the Levite, the husband of the murdered
woman, answered: “I and my concubine came to
Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night.
5 And during the night, the men of Gibeah rose
up against me and surrounded the house. They
intended to kill me, but they abused my
concubine, and she died.
6 Then I took my concubine, cut her into
pieces, and sent her throughout the land of
Israel’s inheritance, because they had
committed a lewd and disgraceful act in Israel.
7 Behold, all you Israelites, give your advice
and verdict here and now.”
8 Then all the people stood as one man and
said, “Not one of us will return to his tent or to
his house.
9 Now this is what we will do to Gibeah: We
will go against it as the lot dictates.
10 We will take ten men out of every hundred
from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out
of every thousand, and a thousand out of every
ten thousand, to supply provisions for the army
when they go to Geba* in Benjamin to punish
them for the atrocity they have committed in
Israel.”
11 So all the men of Israel gathered as one
man, united against the city.

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* **20:10 20:10** One Hebrew manuscript *Gibeah*

12 And the tribes of Israel sent men throughout
the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What is this
wickedness that has occurred among you?
13 Hand over the wicked men of Gibeah so we
can put them to death and purge Israel of this
evil.”
But the Benjamites refused to heed the voice
of their fellow Israelites.
14 And from their cities they came together at
Gibeah to go out and fight against the Israelites.
15 On that day the Benjamites mobilized 26,000
swordsmen from their cities, in addition to the
700 select men of Gibeah.
16 Among all these soldiers there were 700
select left-handers, each of whom could sling a
stone at a hair without missing.
17 The Israelites, apart from Benjamin,
mobilized 400,000 swordsmen, each one an
experienced warrior.
18 The Israelites set out, went up to Bethel, and
inquired of God, “Who of us shall go up first to
fight against the Benjamites?”
“Judah will be first,” the LORD replied.
19 The next morning the Israelites set out and
camped near Gibeah.
20 And the men of Israel went out to fight
against Benjamin and took up their battle
positions at Gibeah.
21 And the Benjamites came out of Gibeah and
cut down 22,000 Israelites on the battlefield that
day.
22 But the Israelite army took courage and
again took their battle positions in the same

place where they had arrayed themselves on the
first day.
23 They went up and wept before the LORD
until evening, inquiring of him, “Should we
again draw near for battle against our brothers
the Benjamites?”
And the LORD answered, “Go up against them.”
24 On the second day the Israelites advanced
against the Benjamites.
25 That same day the Benjamites came out
against them from Gibeah and cut down another
18,000 Israelites, all of them armed with swords.
26 Then the Israelites, all the people, went up
to Bethel, where they sat weeping before the
LORD. That day they fasted until evening and
presented burnt offerings and peace offerings to
the LORD.
27 And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In
those days the ark of the covenant of God was
there,
28 and Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of
Aaron, served before it.) The Israelites asked,
“Should we again go out to battle against our
brothers the Benjamites, or should we stop?”
The LORD answered, “Fight, for tomorrow I
will deliver them into your hand.”
29 So Israel set up an ambush around Gibeah.
30 On the third day the Israelites went up
against the Benjamites and arrayed themselves
against Gibeah as they had done before.
31 The Benjamites came out against them and
were drawn away from the city. They began to
attack the people as before, killing about thirty

men of Israel in the fields and on the roads, one
of which led up to Bethel and the other to
Gibeah.
32 "We are defeating them as before," said the
Benjamites.
But the Israelites said, "Let us retreat and
draw them away from the city onto the roads."
33 So all the men of Israel got up from their
places and arrayed themselves at Baal-tamar,
and the Israelites in ambush charged from their
positions in Maareh-geba.†
34 Then 10,000 select men from all Israel made
a frontal assault against Gibeah, and the battle
was fierce. But the Benjamites did not realize
that disaster was upon them.
35 The LORD defeated Benjamin in the
presence of Israel, and on that day the Israelites
slaughtered 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with
swords.
36 Then the Benjamites realized they had been
defeated.
Now the men of Israel had retreated before
Benjamin because they were relying on the
ambush they had set against Gibeah.
37 The men in ambush rushed suddenly
against Gibeah; they advanced and put the
whole city to the sword.
38 The men of Israel had arranged a signal
with the men in ambush: When they sent up a
great cloud of smoke from the city,
39 the men of Israel would turn in the battle.

† **20:33 20:33** Some LXX manuscripts and Vulgate *charged from their positions west of Gibeah*

When the Benjamites had begun to strike
them down, killing about thirty men of Israel,
they said, “They are defeated before us as in the
first battle.”
40 But when the signal, a column of smoke,
began to go up from the city, the Benjamites
looked behind them and saw the whole city
going up in smoke.
41 Then the men of Israel turned back on them,
and the men of Benjamin were terrified when
they realized that disaster had come upon them.
42 So they fled before the men of Israel toward
the wilderness, but the battle overtook them,
and the men coming out of the cities struck
them down there.
43 They surrounded the Benjamites, pursued
them, and easily overtook them in the vicinity of
Gibeah on the east.
44 And 18,000 Benjamites fell, all men of valor.
45 Then the Benjamites turned and fled toward
the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and Israel
cut down 5,000 men on the roads. And they
overtook them at Gidom and struck down 2,000
more.
46 That day 25,000 Benjamite swordsmen fell,
all men of valor.
47 But 600 men turned and fled into the
wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, where they
stayed four months.
48 And the men of Israel turned back against
the other Benjamites and put to the sword all
the cities, including the animals and everything
else they found. And they burned down all the
cities in their path.

21

1 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at
Mizpah, saying, “Not one of us will give his
daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.”
2 So the people came to Bethel and sat there
before God until evening, lifting up their voices
and weeping bitterly.
3 “Why, O LORD God of Israel,” they cried out,
“has this happened in Israel? Today in Israel one
tribe is missing!”
4 The next day the people got up early, built an
altar there, and presented burnt offerings and
peace offerings.
5 The Israelites asked, “Who among all the
tribes of Israel did not come to the assembly
before the LORD?” For they had taken a solemn
oath that anyone who failed to come up before
the LORD at Mizpah would surely be put to
death.
6 And the Israelites grieved for their brothers,
the Benjamites, and said, “Today a tribe is cut off
from Israel.
7 What should we do about wives for the
survivors, since we have sworn by the LORD not
to give them our daughters in marriage?”
8 So they asked, “Which one of the tribes of
Israel failed to come up before the LORD at
Mizpah?” And, in fact, no one from Jabesh-gilead
had come to the camp for the assembly.
9 For when the people were counted, none of
the residents of Jabesh-gilead were there.
10 So the congregation sent 12,000 of their
most valiant men and commanded them: “Go

and put to the sword those living in
Jabesh-gilead, including women and children.
11 This is what you are to do: Devote to
destruction* every male, as well as every female
who has had relations with a man."
12 So they found among the inhabitants of
Jabesh-gilead four hundred young women who
had not had relations with a man, and they
brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land
of Canaan.
13 Then the whole congregation sent a
message of peace to the Benjamites who were at
the rock of Rimmon.
14 And at that time the Benjamites returned
and were given the women who were spared
from Jabesh-gilead. But there were not enough
women for all of them.
15 The people grieved for Benjamin, because
the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.
16 Then the elders of the congregation said,
"What should we do about wives for those who
remain, since the women of Benjamin have
been destroyed?"
17 They added, "There must be heirs for the
survivors of Benjamin, so that a tribe of Israel
will not be wiped out.
18 But we cannot give them our daughters as
wives."
For the Israelites had sworn, "Cursed is he
who gives a wife to a Benjamite."

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* **21:11 21:11** Forms of the Hebrew *cherem* refer to the giving over of things or persons to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

19 “But look,” they said, “there is a yearly feast
to the LORD in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel
east of the road that goes up from Bethel to
Shechem, and south of Lebonah.”
20 So they commanded the Benjamites: “Go,
hide in the vineyards
21 and watch. When you see the daughters of
Shiloh come out to perform their dances, each of
you is to come out of the vineyards, catch for
himself a wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and
go to the land of Benjamin.
22 When their fathers or brothers come to us
to complain, we will tell them, ‘Do us a favor by
helping them, since we did not get wives for
each of them in the war. Since you did not
actually give them your daughters, you have no
guilt.’ ”
23 The Benjamites did as instructed and
carried away the number of women they
needed from the dancers they caught. They
went back to their own inheritance, rebuilt their
cities, and settled in them.
24 And at that time, each of the Israelites
returned from there to his own tribe and clan,
each to his own inheritance.
25 In those days there was no king in Israel;
everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Masoretic English Tanakh

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