

Brides for Benjamin

Judges 20 – 21

By Tom Taylor

All the other nations of Israel prepared for civil war against the tribe of Benjamin
In retribution for horrendous, despicable actions they had taken
NO city was exempt from the war...Violators would be killed
They further swore an oath that no man would give his daughter to marry a Benjamite

Both sides amassed massive armies
Israel's commanders met in Bethel to seek the Lord's leadership
By the end of the first day of the war, many Israelites'd been killed
And, sadly, Benjamin had won Day One of the battle

Israeli commanders went to the Lord: "Should we continue to battle our brothers?"
The Lord said, "Yes, go fight." Day Two was a duplication of Day One
The entire army went before the Lord, offered sacrifices, and, in pain, asked again:
"Should we stop, or should we, once more, go up against Benjamin?"

The Lord said, "Go and fight them. I'll give you your victory tomorrow."

Day Three was Israel's Victory – just as the Lord had said it would be
The Lord fought against Benjamin – they were terrified and tried to run
But Israel had them surrounded, and Benjamin was undone
The only Benjamites to survive were 600 men hidden in a fortress

Once it was over, the people of Israel realized what they'd done:
They went before the Lord, sobbed and mourned:
"Oh, Lord God. We're missing one of our twelve tribes"
They stayed all day before the Lord – "What are we to do?"

"Only 600 men from Benjamin survive . . . and their women are all dead"
(It was critical that the tribe repopulate . . . but there had to be women to wed!)
They couldn't give them their daughters because of the oath, you know...

As one scratched his head, he suddenly said,
"Wait a minute – were we all here, or was there, in fact, a *no-show!*?"

"YES!"

One city had disobeyed the order to fight!
The Israeli army went to that city and killed everyone there
The only exception being virgin women . . . 400 of them
(...guess that's fair)

Israel made peace with the men of the fortress
Gave them the 400 women for their wives
It was surely a thoughtful and generous act
But they were still shy by some 200 lives

SUDDENLY ANOTHER IDEA!

They told the Benjamites of an annual festival in one of their cities
In which the young women all exit the city DANCING as they go!
Their advice: Hide there in the vineyard next to the road...
And when “she” comes along – my brother, you will know!

Grab a Wife for yourself, Make a Life for yourself
Take your Bride-to-Be back to your own land
Worry not, if her brother or Dad gets mad,
We’ll explain it all, and they’ll be glad!

We’ll say, “Be kind, generous - and let them have your girl”
They need more wives than we can provide
It’s not like you actually *gave* them your daughter
So you have no reason to hide!

The new couples left for Benjamin cities
Return... Rebuild ... Rejoice
They settled down, settled in, raised families . . . you understand?
Once again, all was peaceful in the land

© 2012 – Tom B. Taylor
All Rights Reserved 012412