

Studies in the book of Judges
A nation divided - Judges 19-21

Read Judges 19:1-30

1. What is ironic about the Levite's decision in verse 12?
2. Read Genesis 19:1-13. What parallels do you see with what happens at Gibeah? And what is different this time about the perpetrators?
3. What is your opinion of the Levite by the end of this story? Why?

Read Judges 20:1-48

4. What similarities and differences do you see between 20:18 and Judges 1:1-2? What might that tell us about what has changed between the beginning and end of this book?
5. What do you think of the tribe of Benjamin's behaviour?
6. Why do you think Israel was defeated the first two times they went into battle, if the Lord was with them?

Read Judges 21:1-25

7. What is the dilemma facing Israel?
8. What do you make of their first attempt to solve it (verses 8-15)?
9. And what do you think of their next plan (verses 16-23)?
10. What do you think is the significance of this happening at a festival of the Lord at Shiloh? What do you know of Shiloh (see Joshua 18:1; 1 Samuel 4:3-5; Jeremiah 7:12-15)?
11. What do you think of the narrator's summary of the book (v. 25)?
 - a. What does it tell us about the state of Israel at this time?
 - b. What does it suggest the solution will be?

Looking forward

12. Despite the strong suggestion throughout the book of Judges that a king is needed, what issues are raised when this is suggested, in 1 Samuel 8:4-18?
13. Israel's first king, Saul, seems almost to have been chosen to prove God's prediction in 1 Samuel 8. What kind of king does God choose next (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22)? From what you know of David, what score would you give him out of ten for living up to God's expectations?
14. Israel's history after David is mostly of decline, leaving one looking and hoping for another king – like David, but greater than him. Which brings us to Jesus. Read Romans 1:1-3 ...
 - a. Who is Jesus the king of?
 - b. How do "the nations" need a king? What similarities do you see between us in Australia today and Israel in the time of the Judges?