

# Judges

*Trent C. Butler*

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    - (a) Daily harassment brings true information about Nazirite vow (16:16–17)
    - (b) Philistines summoned, ready to pay (16:18)
    - (c) A close shave destroys a vow (16:19)
    - (d) Away from Yahweh and away to prison (16:20–21)
  - (7) The hair returns (16:22)
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  - (1) Philistine religious celebration and sacrifice (16:23–24)
  - (2) Intoxicated with joy and juice, but demanding amusement (16:25)
  - (3) Entertainer entertains execution plans (16:26)
  - (4) Editorial note enumerating potential victims (16:27)
  - (5) Entertainer implores God for one last revenge effort (16:28)
  - (6) Suicidal success Samson’s greatest (16:29–30)
- h. Epilogue: Samson’s family burial and judgeship (16:31)



### III. Epilogue: "Who is king when all is right in my eyes?" (17:1–21:25)

#### A. Saving Dan, the cult thief (17:1–18:31)

1. Expecting blessing from a Levite (17:1–13)
  - a. A thief builds a personal worship center (17:1–5)
    - (1) Micah's confession brings mother's blessing (17:1–2)
    - (2) Making an idol (17:3–4)
    - (3) Micah's house of God (17:5)
  - b. Editorial refrain: No king, right in his own eyes (17:6)
  - c. A Levite accepts employment in Micah's center (17:7–13)
    - (1) Judean Levite seeks a home (17:7–8)
    - (2) Micah hires the Levite as his priest (17:9–12)
    - (3) Micah expects blessing because of his Levite (17:13)
2. Expecting blessing in a worship center with stolen priest and idol (18:1–31)
  - a. Editorial refrain: no national king, no tribal home (18:1)
  - b. Spies find a new land (18:2–10)
    - (1) Five spies commissioned (18:2a)
    - (2) Spies receive blessing of Micah's priest (18:2b–6)
    - (3) Spies discover isolated Laish (18:7)
    - (4) Spies report back to tribe of Dan (18:8–10)
  - c. On way to new home, Dan steals cultic apparatus and priest (18:11–20)
    - (1) Dan's army sets out to conquer new territory (18:11–12a)
    - (2) Editorial etiological note (18:12b)
    - (3) Dan steals Micah's idol, the ephod, the image, and the metal image (18:13–17a)
    - (4) Dan coerces priest to accept role as tribal priest (18:17b–20)
  - d. Dan forces Micah's retreat (18:21–26)
    - (1) Journey to new home resumed (18:21)
    - (2) Micah summons neighbors to war (18:22)
    - (3) Dan negotiates with Micah (18:23–24)
    - (4) Dan forces Micah to retreat (18:25)
    - (5) Parties part company (18:26)
  - e. Dan builds a new home (18:27–31)
    - (1) With Micah's priest and cult apparatus, Dan defeats Laish (18:27–28a)
    - (2) Dan settles into Laish and renames it Dan (18:28b–29)
    - (3) Dan establishes Mosaic priesthood (18:30)
    - (4) Dan retains Micah's idol (18:31)

#### B. Saving Benjaminites, the guest rapers (19:1–21:25)



1. Uniquely evil Benjamin violates law of hospitality by violating concubine (19:1–30)
  - a. Irate concubine leads to lingering Levite (19:1–9)
    - (1) Editorial refrain: no king in Israel (19:1a)
    - (2) Ephraimite Levite takes Judean as concubine (19:1b)
    - (3) Irate concubine returns to father for four months (19:2)
    - (4) Levite received joyously by concubine's father (19:3)
    - (5) Father's hospitality forces Levite to stay four days (19:4–7)
    - (6) Levite refuses to stay on fifth day (19:8–9)
  - b. Traveling Levite finds no hospitality in Benjamin (19:10–15)
    - (1) Levite refuses to stay in foreign Jerusalem (19:10–12)
    - (2) Levite finds no hospitality in Benjaminite Gibeah (19:13–15)
  - c. Ephraimite resident in Gibeah offers hospitality (19:16–21)
  - d. Perverse Benjaminites serially rape concubine (19:22–26)
    - (1) Benjaminites demand access to visiting Levite (19:22)
    - (2) Host refuses demand but offers virgin daughter and concubine (19:23–24)
    - (3) Benjamin refuses offer (19:25a)
    - (4) Levite forces concubine to go to them (19:25b)
    - (5) Benjaminites rape concubine until dawn (19:25c)
    - (6) Woman falls down at host's door (19:26)
  - e. Perverse Levite cuts concubine in twelve pieces for tribes (19:27–30)
    - (1) Insensitive Levite ignores concubine's needs and rides on (19:27–28)
    - (2) Butcherous Levite dissects concubine into twelve pieces (19:29a)
    - (3) Vengeful Levite gives each tribe a piece as a summons to Israel to battle (19:29b–30)
2. All Israel gains revenge on inhospitable Benjamin (20:1–48)
  - a. Israel decides to fight Benjamin (20:1–11)
    - (1) Israelites assemble at Mizpah to hear testimony (20:1–3)
    - (2) Levite testifies and asks for counsel (20:4–7)
    - (3) Israel decides to repay Benjamin for the stupid sin (20:8–11)
  - b. Benjamin refuses to hand over guilty Gibeonites, so sides assemble for war (20:12–17)
  - c. Assembly at Bethel finds Judah to lead (20:18)
  - d. First battle lost, but new battle finds divine affirmation (20:19–23)
  - e. Second battle lost, but new battle finds divine promise (20:24–28)
  - f. Third battle uses ambush (20:29–35)
  - g. Benjamin's retreat (20:36–41)
  - h. Israel's mop-up action completes holy war requirements (20:42–48)

3. Israelites work around vow and provide wives for surviving Benjaminites (21:1–25)
  - a. Israel recalls vow not to give wives to Benjaminites (21:1)
  - b. Israel laments and offers sacrifices (21:2–4)
  - c. Israel seeks way around oath so Benjaminites will have wives (21:5–8a)
  - d. Israel slaughters nonparticipating Gileadites to secure wives (21:8b–11)
  - e. Israel finds four hundred virgins of Jabesh-gilead and gives them to Benjamin (21:12–14)
  - f. Israel seeks wives for rest of Benjamin (21:15–18)
  - g. Israel authorizes Benjamin to kidnap wives from Shiloh festival (21:19–22)
  - h. Benjamin gets wives at Shiloh, and Israel returns to homes (21:23–24)
  - i. Editorial refrain: no king, right in his own eyes (21:25)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, T. C. (2009). *Word Biblical Commentary: Judges* (Vol. 8, pp. lxxxiv–xcii). Nashville; Dallas; Mexico City; Rio De Janeiro; Beijing: Thomas Nelson.