

## Peace at What Price?

### Scripture Reading — Judges 20:12-36

*The Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel. . . . — Judges 20:35*

This story about God's people can make our heads spin. How could such things happen?

Though this account appears near the end of the book of Judges, we can tell it took place early in the time of Israel's judges: "In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, with Phinehas . . . the [grandson] of Aaron ministering before it." So this story occurs not long after the death of Joshua (see Joshua 24:29-Judges 1:2). Perhaps it is placed here to stand out as an appendix, reminding Israel that they can bring destruction on themselves just like any other nation—if not for God's intervention.

Horrible crimes had been committed. A measure of justice was needed, and some peace had to be restored. But at what price?

Though people had been doing what looked right in their eyes, they also finally remembered to "inquire of the Lord." So they wept and fasted and pleaded with God for direction.

But even with repentance, sin and defiance against God bring consequences. Thousands of lives were lost. A whole tribe was nearly destroyed. And if God had not intervened, it's safe to say that Israel would soon have destroyed itself.

But God preserved his people, keeping his promises. And one day many years later, God's one and only Son, Jesus, from the tribe of Judah, went "up first" for us all, to fight the enemy and to win for us peace with God and one another. Praise him!

### Prayer

*Lord, may your peace fill my soul daily so I can be at peace with all my neighbors. In Jesus, Amen.*

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Written by Arie Leder — <https://todaydevotional.com/authors/arie-c-leder>

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