

Judges 20:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men.

Analysis

The children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword—26,000 warriors from Benjamin's towns. **Beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men**—Gibeah itself fielded 700 elite troops. The total Benjamite force: 26,700. Israel's 400,000 (v. 2) outnumbered them 15-to-1, yet Benjamin chose war.

The numbers reveal Benjamin's confidence despite astronomical odds. Their 700 'chosen' (בָּחֹרִים, bachur, 'elite, select') warriors from Gibeah—the very city that committed the crime—suggests Gibeah's citizens united in defending the perpetrators. This communal solidarity with evil demonstrates corporate guilt. An entire city protects gang rapists and murderers rather than surrendering them for justice. The verse illustrates how evil metastasizes: individual sin → communal protection → tribal defense → civil war. Each level of defense compounds the original wickedness. Communities that protect predators become complicit. The mention of specific numbers underscores the reality: this is not metaphor but historical tragedy—tens of thousands will die because 700 men from one city refused to surrender criminals, and their tribe supported them.

Historical Context

Benjamin was the smallest tribe after Simeon, which had been largely absorbed into Judah (Joshua 19:1, 9). Their 26,000 warriors represented essentially their entire male fighting population. Cities typically could muster 10-20% of their total population for warfare, suggesting Benjamin's total population around 100,000-130,000. For the entire tribe to unite in defense of one city's criminals demonstrates how thoroughly tribal solidarity had overridden covenant loyalty.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do communities become complicit by protecting predators and defending the indefensible?
2. When does loyalty to your group lead you to unite in defense of wickedness?
3. What would it look like for your community to value justice over group protection?

Interlinear Text

הִתְּפָּ קָדוּ	בְּנֵי י	בְּנֵימָן	בֵּי אוֹם	הָהוּא		
were numbered	And the children	of Benjamin	at that time	H1931		
H6485	H1121	H1144	H3117			
מִהָעָרִים	עֶשְׂרִים	וְשֵׁשׁ ה	אָלֶף	אֲנָשִׁים	שֶׁלָּךְ	חָרֵב
out of the cities	twenty	and six	thousand	men	that drew	sword
H5892	H6242	H8337	H505	H376	H8025	H2719
לְבֵד	מִתְּשֵׁבִי	הַגִּבְעָה	הִתְּפָּ קָדוּ	שֶׁבַע	מֵאֹת	
H905	beside the inhabitants	of Gibeah	were numbered	seven	hundred	
	H3427	H1390	H6485	H7651	H3967	
בְּחֹרֶם: אֲנָשִׁים						
men H970						
H376						

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 26:41 (Parallel theme): These are the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred.