

Judges 20:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

Analysis

Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD—now comprehensive response: 'all Israel,' 'all the people,' corporate weeping, sitting before the LORD (posture of humility/mourning). **And fasted that day until even** (וַיִּצְוּם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עַד־הָעֶרֶב)—adding fasting to weeping. **And offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD** (וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלוֹת וְשָׁלָמִים)—burnt offerings (עֹלָה, total consecration) and peace offerings (שָׁלָם, fellowship/communion with God).

After 40,000 casualties, Israel finally seeks God properly. The contrast with verses 18 and 23 is striking: before = brief inquiry; now = comprehensive corporate humility with weeping, fasting, and sacrifice. This verse demonstrates that God sometimes must break us thoroughly before we seek Him rightly. Israel's initial confidence in their righteous cause and superior numbers prevented genuine humility. Two devastating defeats humbled their pride and drove them to proper worship. The burnt offering expresses total consecration to God; the peace offering acknowledges need for reconciliation with Him. When paired, these sacrifices represent complete surrender and restored fellowship. Sometimes our best plans must completely fail before we're ready to truly seek God's way.

Historical Context

Burnt offerings and peace offerings represented the most solemn form of covenant renewal and divine consultation. The burnt offering was completely consumed, symbolizing total dedication to God (Leviticus 1). Peace offerings were partially eaten by worshipers, symbolizing restored fellowship (Leviticus 3). The combination indicated Israel finally approached God with proper heart attitude rather than presumptuous demands for rubber-stamp approval.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What defeats has God used to drive you from shallow consultation to complete surrender?
2. How do you move from presumptuous demands for God's blessing to humble seeking of His will?
3. What does proper seeking look like—combining weeping, fasting, sacrifice, and genuine submission?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַל וְ	כָּל	בְּנֵי	וְכָל	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְכָל	הָעָם
and offered	H3605	Then all the children	of Israel	H3605	and all the people	
H5927		H1121	H3478		H5971	
וַיָּבֹאוּ	בֵּית	אֵל	וַיִּבְכוּ	וַיֵּשְׁבוּ	שָׁם	לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
and came	unto the house	H1008	and wept	and sat	H8033	before the LORD
H935	H1004		H1058	H3427	H6440	H3068
וַיִּצְוּ	בַּיּוֹם	הַהוּא	עַד	הָעָרֶב	וַיַּעַל וְ	עַל זֹת
and fasted	that day	H1931	H5704	until even	and offered	burnt offerings
H6684	H3117		H6153	H5927		H5930
וּשְׁלָמִים	לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה:				
and peace offerings	before	the LORD				
H8002	H6440	H3068				

Additional Cross-References

Judges 20:23 (References Lord): (And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.)

Judges 20:18 (References God): And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first.

Ezra 8:21 (References God): Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.