

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Judges 19

We are going to finish the book of Judges this evening –

There is a phrase that pops up multiple times in the last five chapters of Judges, “there was no king in Israel”. It is found twice in the story we covered last week - of the Levite (Jonathan) who led the tribe of Dan into idolatry (Judges 17:6; 18:1)

And it is found twice in the chapters we are going to cover today.

I want to remind us that the events that occur in our text this evening are not in chronological order – they occurred before the period of the Judges

They occur shortly after Joshua died.

So what we see in our text this evening is not only how wicked man can be as they turn their backs on God – but also how quick it can occur.

**Let's pray...**

**[Jdg 19:1-30 NKJV] 1 And it came to pass in those days, when [there was] no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.**

So here in chapter 19 – we are introduced to another Levite

The Levites were to be the spiritual leaders of the nation.

They were the helpers for the priests – we talked about this last week with Jonathan

This Levite here in ch 19 – he has a concubine – a legal (according to man – not God) mistress.

So right off the bat, he is not setting a good example.

**2 But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months. 3 Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her [and] bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him.**

I asked you to make a note of the phrase “played the harlot”

This can mean that she wasn't faithful to him but it could also mean that they were constantly arguing with each other and finally she got fed up and went back home.

Now, I am not going to read vs 4-9

So what happens between vs 4-9 is that he shows up and he and the concubine resolve their differences – he wants to return home but he was held back by his father-in-law who wanted to party.

This went on for five days

Finally, the Levite decides it's time to go.

**10 However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came to opposite Jebus (that [is], Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine [was] also with him. 11 They [were] near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it." 12 But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who [are] not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." 13 So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah."**

It was not safe to travel by night –

So as they are making their way back from Bethlehem, it is getting dark – the first city they came to was Jerusalem (remember, this was before David conquered Jerusalem in 2 Sam 5)

The Levite doesn't want to stay there – bunch of foreigners living there

He would rather walk and stay at one of the next two towns.

**14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.**

So Gibeah it is – they could no longer make it to Ramah – too dark.

**15 They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into [his] house to spend the night.**

During this period in time – there were no Holiday Inns or Motel 6

Everyone's home was a hotel.

If a stranger came, it was a big deal.

In that culture, hospitality was normally of supreme importance.

It was unheard of that no one would take them in.

**16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also [was] from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place [were] Benjamites. 17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?" 18 So he said to him, "We [are] passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I [am] from**

there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; [now] I am going to the house of the LORD. But there [is] no one who will take me into his house, 19 "although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man [who is] with your servant; [there is] no lack of anything." 20 And the old man said, "Peace [be] with you! However, [let] all your needs [be] my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

So they initially didn't have a place to spend the night

This old man sees that they are at the town square – he knows what goes on in his town and he takes the Levite in his concubine, servants and animals

Now, the first impression of this old man is that he is a nice guy – he is willingly taking them in and providing for their needs.

He is even providing the food for their animals.

Keep in mind again, that hospitality was the norm

The only reason he seems like a nice guy is because everyone else in the town showed no hospitality toward them.

**22 As they were enjoying themselves** (the Levite is spending another night partying – like he did with his father-in-law), **suddenly certain men of the city, perverted**

**men, surrounded the house [and] beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him [carnally]!"**

As the old man and the Levite are partying it up, these guys knock on the door –they want the old man to hand over his guest - the Levite so they can rape him.

If this all sounds familiar, that's because something very similar happened in Sodom during the time of Abraham. (Genesis 19)

However, there is a huge difference

Sodom was a city of nonbelievers

Gibeah was a city of Israelites.

So we see just how wicked Israel had become – they had become like nonbelievers.

It gets worse -

**23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act [so] wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. 24 "Look, [here is] my virgin daughter and [the man's] concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"**

The old man revealed the value he placed on lives.

He valued his own life above all.

He was not willing to risk it defending his guest; instead, he offered the lesser-lives of his own daughter, and the concubine.

**25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought [her] out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go. 26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master [was], till it was light.**

The Levite – wanting to save his own life, pushes his concubine out of the door and the perverted men rape her.

And in the morning, the concubine makes it to the steps of the house and falls.

It gets worse.

**27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen [at] the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.**

You know what this tells us?

It tells us that the Levite went to bed.

He slept while his concubine was being sexually assaulted.

He did nothing to come to her aid.

You get the impression he had his coffee, a little breakfast, and read the newspaper.

He had already abandoned her in his own mind.

It gets worse -

**28 And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place. 29 When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. 30 And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!"**

Remember, the Levite pushed her out the door – No mourning for her; no funeral; no burial. –

Her body was nothing more than an object to be used as the Levite saw fit.

Why send a piece of her to each of the twelve tribes?

Personal revenge

**[Jdg 20:1-48 NKJV] 1 So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered**



together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah. 2 And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword. 3 (Now the children of Benjamin **heard** that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the children of Israel said, "Tell [us], how did this wicked deed happen?"

The tribes of Israel were gathering for war because of what had happened in chapter nineteen.

They all got a body part of the concubine

However – one tribe didn't show up. The Benjamites

Why didn't they go? Because the wicked deed happened in their land.

So from verse 4 – 9

The Levite pretty much tells them what happened

Except, he didn't tell them that he pushed her out the door or that he slept while the perverse men raped her.

**10 "We will take ten men out of [every] hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of [every] thousand, and a thousand out of [every] ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel." 11 So all**

**the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man. 12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What [is] this wickedness that has occurred among you? 13 "Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who [are] in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.**

So the tribes of Israel want the Benjamites to hand over the perpetrators – the ones who raped the concubine

However, the Benjamites refused.

**14 Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. 15 And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. 16 Among all this people [were] seven hundred select men [who were] left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's [breadth] and not miss. 17 Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these [were] men of war.**

The Benjamites get ready for civil war –

They have a bunch of guys that can fight –

They had a bunch of guys who were skilled with the sling – meaning that this was going to be a bloody war.

Keep in mind – you have 400,000 Israelites against 26,000 Benjamites

**18 Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!"**

So before the Israelites go into battle against the Benjamites – they seek the Lord.

Keep in mind that they have already made up their mind that that they are going to go to battle against the tribe of Benjamin –

Look at their question.

Which of us shall go up first –

They are telling the Lord – you need to pick between the 11 tribes.

“If that is what you want to do – Judah, you are up”

On the first day of battle, the Israelites lose 22,000 warriors while the Benjamites lose nothing.

On the second day of battle, the Israelites lose another 18,000, while the Benjamites lose nothing.

Now go to verse 26 -

**26 Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.**

**27 So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (the ark of the covenant of God [was] there in those days, 28 and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?" And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."**

You can read the rest of the chapter in your own time

On this third day of battle, Israel uses a different strategy

It is a strategy that is very familiar to the one that Joshua used against Ai in Joshua 7

This time, the Israeli army will pretend to be defeated and retreat in such a way that they will cause the Benjamites to follow them.

When the Benjamites follow them – 10,000 men who were hiding – go into the town and burn it.

When the smoke starts to rise up from the city, the main force will stop retreating and turn on the Benjamites, trapping them between the two armies.

And the Israelites killed 25,000 Benjamites and only lost 30 people.

All that remained of the Benjamites was 600 men – and they fled and hid in caves.

It gets worse -

**[Jdg 21:1-25 NKJV] 1 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife."**

The Israelites had “sworn an oath” not to allow their daughters to marry Benjamites.

Here is the thing

God did not command them to do this – it wasn't part of His law.

They made this vow to show that they were more spiritual than the Benjamites.

They became legalists

**2 Then the people came to the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly, 3 and said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe [missing] in Israel?"**

The people are very upset that the result of this punishment has ended with one tribe being almost completely wiped out.

But remember – they were the ones who pursued the Benjamites and killed all but 600 Benjamites

They were the ones that made the vow – to not give their daughters to the Benjamites

So they see the problem – and without asking the Lord for guidance, they come up with a solution for the 600 men to have wives without breaking their own vow.

**4 So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5 The children of Israel said, "Who [is there] among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?" For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death." 6 And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today. 7 "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?" 8 And they said, "What one [is there] from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. 9 For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead [was] there.**

So they find out that when they were at war with the Bejamites, there were was one town that didn't send men to war – Jabesh Gilead

No reason is given for the absence of men from Jabesh Gilead.

Maybe the letter got lost in the mail – it could have been an oversight.

But here they make another vow – (vs 5)

**10 So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. 11 "And this [is] the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately."**

Think about this – their legalism is making things worse.

They are going to kill every man and woman who is not a virgin

Not only did they commit further atrocities; they felt justified in doing them.

**12 So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. 13 Then the whole congregation sent [word] to the children of Benjamin who [were] at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them. 14 So Benjamin came back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and yet they had not found enough for them.**

So, here is one way that they decided to fix the problem.

The virgins that they found in Jabesh Gilead they would be the wives of the remaining Benjamites.

That way, they don't break their vow.

The problem, of course, is that there was only 400 of them

That means that they are 200 short.

It gets worse -

**15 And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel. 16 Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?" 17 And they said, "[There must be] an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel. 18 "However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, 'Cursed [be] the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.' " 19 Then they said, "In fact, [there is] a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which [is] north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah." 20 Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 "and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the**



vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin. 22 "Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for [it is] not [as though] you have given the [women] to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.' "

Here is how they decided to solve the problem -

They instructed the 200 Benjamites to kidnap their brides from a feast in Shiloh

That way they would get married and they also wouldn't be accused of breaking their vows.

It was a win-win for everyone.

**23 And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them.**

By the way – keep in mind that Saul – their first king was a Benjamite.

**24 So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance. 25 In those days [there was] no king in Israel; everyone did [what was] right in his own eyes.**

The old man thought that offering his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine was the right thing to do

The Levite, pushing his concubine and letting her get raped – he thought it was the right thing to do

The Levite seeking revenge, cutting up his concubine – he thought it was the right thing to do

The tribes of Israel – almost completely exterminating the tribe of Benjamin – they thought it was the right thing to do

Their vows – to demonstrate how spiritual they were – they thought it was the right thing to do

But we see the pain and destruction that followed.

We see how wicked we can be.

You see church, it doesn't matter what is right in our eyes – that is what the world keeps saying today right?

the only thing that matters is what is right in His Word.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

