

# When Everyone Does What is Right in His Own Eyes: Immorality Happens

When self is the judge, immorality happens  
Judges 19

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • April 27, In the year of our Lord, 2014

## Prelude:

### I. The contents of Judges 19 is in the Bible that we might understand

- A. what happens when people decide for themselves what is right.
- B. I shudder every time I hear people say:
  - 1. "You just have to decide for yourself what right."
  - 2. "What is right for you may not be what is right for me."
  - 3. "The majority rules."

### II. Abandoning God's word leads to the most serious of consequences,

"The great and illustrious nation of Israel had reached a low ebb. The race and nation that Jehovah had selected to bring Christ into the world had sunk into the mire of worldliness. As we study this portion of Scripture, we will see the reason for such: a lack of respect for God and His Word. When an individual or nation ceases to respect God and His Word, disaster will surely follow" (Ken Butterworth in *Denton Lectureship Book*).

## Persuasion:

### I. Judges 19.1 – What happens when there is no king

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.

- A. When men do not recognize God as their King,

"In those lawless times when in theory God was king, but in practice men did what was right in their own eyes..." (Charles Pfeiffer in *Wycliffe*).

- B. If there is no government,

1. people will do what they think is right
2. in their own eyes.

C. Having said those things, we are introduced to a Levite.

## II. Judges 19.2 – His concubine committed adultery

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.

- A. By the Law of Moses what she did was worthy of death.
- B. However, her husband did not pursue that action.

## III. Judges 19.3 – The man sought to win her back

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.

- A. He uses kindness to win his concubine/wife back.
  1. Forcing a spouse to love you and
  2. to return to you never works.
- B. Kindness worked, leading to a good in-law relationship.

## IV. Judges 19.4–9 – A look at hospitality

4 Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there. 5 Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way." 6 So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." 7 And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again. 8 Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate. 9 And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young

woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home."

- A. The concubine's father knew the art of hospitality.
- B. If you do not practice hospitality,
  - 1. you miss enriching relationships.
  - 2. Now we will discover that lack of hospitality is on the road to hostility.

**V. Judges 19.10–13 – Preferring to stay with brethren**

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."

- A. What happened in verses 11 and 12
  - 1. is crucial to the rest of the story
  - 2. that is found in chapters 19 and 20.
    - a) The Levite has the right convictions.
    - b) The last Levite we saw had little to no convictions.
- B. This Levite knew that Israelites should *not* be fellowshiping idolaters.
  - 1. Surely, it will be safer physically and spiritually
  - 2. to spend the night in a city of the Israelites.
- C. Thus, they turned from what later became Jerusalem,
  - 1. deciding to stay in Gibeah or Ramah.
  - 2. Gibeah is the future city of the first king of Israel.

D. What we are about to see,

“The irony here, as subsequent events will show, is that Israel has become more wicked than even the native pagans of Canaan” (Dorsey).

## VI. Judges 19.14–21 – Urgent hospitality

A. The Benjamites failed to show hospitality,

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

1. Something was already wrong.
2. The Levite went to Gibeah,
  - a) believing good treatment awaited him.
  - b) Initially, they did not receive bad treatment,
    - (1) just lack of proper treatment.

B. Finally, someone wants to help the traveler,

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?”

1. Now someone was going to show hospitality.
  - a) The old man was not even from Gibeah, but
  - b) he was from the same place as the Levite.
2. The men of Gibeah were from the tribe of Benjamin.

C. The traveler would provide for his own needs,

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.”

1. The Levite did not want to be a burden:
  - a) He was traveling through,
  - b) not asking for a permanent home.
  - c) He was a spiritual man on his way to the house of the Lord,
    - (1) which was not yet located in Jerusalem, but
      - (a) in Shiloh.
      - (b) It would not be in Jerusalem until the time of David.
    - (2) Being a spiritual man he was not a threat to anyone.
  - d) The man had all his own supplies.
2. There was no reason to turn this man down.

D. This old man knew something,

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.

1. Perhaps feeling a kinship to someone from his home area,
2. he wanted peace on the Levite.
  - a) He willingly put out financially and otherwise
  - b) for the safety of the Levite.
    - (1) The old man’s urgency indicated
    - (2) that it would not be a good thing to spend the night in the square.
3. Everyone felt better with the Levite, his wife, and his servant inside.

## **VII. Judges 19.22–28 – His concubine is abused**

A. Sodom revisited,

22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, {Literally sons of Belial, worthless 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!"

1. When the Levite sat in the open square,
  - a) seeking a place to stay for the night,
  - b) the people turned him down, but
    - (1) certain men looked him over,
    - (2) thinking of other ways to spend time with the man.
2. They did not ask for the woman, but
  - a) wanting to homosexual gang-rape the visitor.
3. What would Abraham have thought
  - a) if he knew that someday his own descendants
  - b) would commit the ungodly sins of Sodom?

B. The old man's Lot-like solution,

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!"

1. The situation got worse,
2. just as it did in Sodom.

C. The Benjamites did horrible things,

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.

1. Remember why this episode in Israel's history happened.
  - a) They had no king, but
  - b) they did whatever was right in *their own* eyes.
2. Genesis 19 and Judges 19 are good examples of
  - a) the unwillingness of homosexuals to reason.
  - b) They are bent on their vile "alternate lifestyle,"
  - c) even the threat of AIDS will not deter them.

D. The woman died,

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. 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. 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.

1. This man spoke kindly to his wife!
  - a) This man was headed for the house of the Lord.
  - b) This man did not want to go to Jebus.
2. Everything about him seemed right.
  - a) How do we explain the offering of his wife?
  - b) How do we explain his callousness?
    - (1) Why did they offer the women and not the young male servant?
    - (2) Perhaps they were bluffing, but the Benjamites called them on their bluff.
3. His wife had just been raped to death!

**VIII. Judges 19.29-30 – Action needed to be taken**

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!" (Judges 19).

- A. Why did the man employ this method?
  - 1. If he wanted shock value,
  - 2. it worked.
- B. Israel agreed that nothing like this had ever been seen.
  - 1. They needed to think about
  - 2. what to do and
  - 3. act.

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. How did these things happen in Israel?**

- A. First, and
  - 1. this is extremely crucial,
  - 2. Benjamin failed to obey the Lord fully.
    - a) Let us go back to the beginning of Judges,

21 But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day (Jdg 1.21).

- (1) Their failure to drive out the inhabitants
- (2) meant that Benjamin would learn the works of the Jebusites.
- (3) Psalm 106 comments centuries later,

34 They did not destroy the peoples,  
Concerning whom the LORD had commanded them,  
35 But they mingled with the Gentiles  
And learned their works;

36 They served their idols,  
Which became a snare to them.  
(Psa 106.34–36)

B. Second,

1. the tribe of Benjamin,
  - a) the concubine,
  - b) the Levite and
  - c) the old man
2. all did what was right in their own eyes.

## II. Doing what is right in their own eyes led to adultery and homosexuality.

A. It also led to the sin of not honoring women.

1. Nehemiah 4 shows a much different attitude,

14 And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (Neh 4.14).

2. Consider First Peter 3,

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered (1Pe 3.7).

- a) It does not mean the woman is the weaker vessel, but
- b) treat her as you would a weaker vessel.

B. The Benjamites also committed the sin of defending evil.