

Last week we looked at Judges 17&18 as we looked at two stories from everyday life in Israel during the time of the JUDGES. We saw FIVE **SIGNS of a SOCIETY without GOD**

1. **THE STANDARD FOR TRUTH IS MOVED FROM GOD TO MAN.**
2. **THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY, THE FAMILY, IS CORRUPTED.**
3. **VOWS ARE NOT KEPT.**
4. **RELIGIOUS SYNCETISM BECOMES THE ORDER OF THE DAY.**
5. **COMPROMISED SPIRITUAL LEADERS.**

Today I want to look at Judges 19-21 as we look at this one final story which is the ultimate example of the depravity of humans found in the Old Testament.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhYOZxYZpAo>

### **Introduction**

As I looked at different titles given to sermons on this passage, I discovered that in many ways, this story is the lowest point in the moral fibre of the nation of Israel.

The WORST STORY IN THE BIBLE

When Israel was worse than Sodom and Gomorrah  
The Shocking Depths of Moral Depravity

The events of this story which are spread over three chapter is almost beyond belief.

## **The DEPTHS of DEPRAVITY when there is NO KING ON THE THRONE**

The DEPTHS of DEPRAVITY is CHARACTERISED by:

### 1. **THE ABHORRENT treatment of WOMEN.**

WOMEN ARE ABUSED IN SIX DIFFERENT WAYS IN THIS STORY:

#### 1. **WOMEN WERE NOT EQUAL IN MARRIAGE.**

*v1 Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of **Ephraim** took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah*

Now a concubine in Jewish Culture was considered as a Secondary Wife. She was protected by laws contained in Exodus 21 and Deut 21.

What made life unequal for Concubines?

- i. She received no dowry – “labola”
- ii. The husband could divorce her, but she could not divorce the man
- iii. She had NO SAY in the family affairs. (Sarah & Hagar)

2. **THE LEVITE HUSBAND MOST LIKELY DID NOT TREAT HER VERY WELL.**

*v2 But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, v3 her husband went to her to persuade her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys.*

We learn from Verse 2 that the Concubine had left the Levite to return to the Father. The older translations say that she turned to prostitution.

It does not take a lot of common sense to understand that this Concubine was being abused and would rather turn to prostitution than live with this man.

Initially when you read this passage, you get the impression that the Levite is the loving hero, returning to win back the love of the Concubine.

HOWEVER, that would have been illegal for him to do according to Jewish Law in

*Deuteronomy 24:1-4 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, v2 and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, v3 and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, v4 **then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD.** Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.*

I think the man took two donkeys and his slave so they could force her onto the donkey and the slave could help him guard her so she would not run away again.

Evidence of this is found in Verse 19 where the Levite first disguises the Concubine as a "YOUNG MAN" - *v19 We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants--me, your maidservant, and the young man with us.*

3. **HER OWN FATHER WAS KINDER TO THE LEVITE HUSBAND THAN HIS OWN DAUGHTER.**

*v2 .... She took him into her father's house, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. v4 His father-in-law, the girl's father, prevailed upon him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there. v5 On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to leave, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh yourself with something to eat; then you can go." v6 So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the girl's father said, "Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself." v7 And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. v8 On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the girl's father said, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together*

The father seems very eager to please the Levite. Three time he begs him to stay and have a party with him. The mindset of the father is seen in what he had allowed his daughter to become. A true loving father would not have allowed his daughter to become a Concubine in the first place.

He would have insisted that his daughter be betrothed in a way more befitting her status as his daughter. MY FATHER WOULD ALWAYS SAY, "IF YOU HAVE A SON, YOU ARE A MAN, BUT IF YOU HAVE A DAUGHTER, YOU ARE A KING."

The sad truth is that many fathers SOLD THEIR DAUGHTER to be Concubines, so that they would not be a financial burden on them. This father appears to be one of those, for nowhere in the story do we find this father defending his daughter

4. **THE OLD MAN WHO OFFERED HOSPITALITY AND THE LEVITE SACRIFICED THE SANCTITY OF HIS VIRGIN DAUGHTER AND HIS CONCUBINE WIFE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES.**

*v22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him." v23 The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing.v24 Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing." v25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.*

There is something wrong with a society that ceases to protect the weak. There are two major issues here.

- i. The men think they are more important than the women.
- ii. The women are treated as property rather than as people.

In so many ways this is still true in many parts of the world. This is most likely the reason I could never be a Moslem.

Even in Western Christian influenced society, where there is equality before the Law, there are many that treat women as inferior.

5. **THE ULTIMATE VIOLATION OF THE CONCUBINE IS THE HORRENDOUS DISMEMBERMENT OF HER BODY.**

*v27 When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold.v28 He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home. v29 When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.v30 Everyone who saw it said, "Such a thing has never been seen or done,*

*not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do!"*

Even in death the Concubine is not respected. The Levite again show blatant disregard for the value of this women.

- i. He does not bury her timeously. (Should have been immediately)
- ii. He mutilates her body, by making her body parts his political statement, rather than the symbol of her purity.

## 6. **THE STATE SANCTIONED VIOLENCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF MEN.**

### ***Judges 21 Wives for the Benjamites***

*... v7 "How can we provide wives for those who are left, since we have taken an oath by the LORD not to give them any of our daughters in marriage?" .... v10 **So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting** men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children.v11 "This is what you are to do," they said. "Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin."v12 They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan. v13 Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon.*

*v14 So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. **But there were not enough for all of them.** .... v20 So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyards v21 and watch. **When the girls of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, then rush from the vineyards and each of you seize a wife from the girls of Shiloh** and go to the land of Benjamin. .... v23 So that is what the Benjamites did. While the girls were dancing, each man caught one and carried her off to be his wife. Then they returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and settled in them.*

We see this as a reality in the world in which we live.

Travelling on the train in Egypt.

The wholesale of women and children in our own society.

**The DEPTHS of DEPRAVITY is CHARACTERISED by:**

## **2. THE IMMEDIATE USE OF VIOLENCE.**

The immediate response in Chapter 20 is to GATHER AN ARMY. Let me remind you, THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN WERE PART OF THE FAMILY.

Two PROBLEMS are highlighted:

### **i. THE BENJAMITES WERE PROTECTING THE GUILTY.**

Evil prospers when GOOD MEN DO NOTHING

### **ii. They were not looking for justice BUT FOR REVENGE.**

Evil prospers when GOOD MEN GO OVERBOARD

**Violence has become such an easy response. I often find myself calling for blood, when I know it is not always the answer.**

## CONCLUSION

### SO WHAT IS THE ANSWER

*19:1 In those days Israel had no king.*

*21:25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*

### ISRAEL NEEDED A KING

**They Got SAUL then DAVID, then SOLOMON, then a MIXTURE**

**THE WORLD NEEDS A KING.**

**HE IS ON HIS WAY**

Philippians 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

v6 Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

v7 but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

v8 And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death--  
even death on a cross!

**v9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,**

**v10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**

**v11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

## **Judges 19 A Levite and His Concubine**

*v1 In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.v2 But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months,v3 her husband went to her to persuade her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her father's house, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him.v4 His father-in-law, the girl's father, prevailed upon him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there. v5 On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to leave, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh yourself with something to eat; then you can go."v6 So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the girl's father said, "Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself."v7 And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night.v8 On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the girl's father said, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together. v9 Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home."v10 But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine. v11 When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night." v12 His master replied, "No. We won't go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."v13 He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places."v14 So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin.v15 There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them into his home for the night. v16 That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the men of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields.v17 When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?" v18 He answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD. No one has taken me into his house.v19 We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants--me, your maidservant, and the young man with us. We don't need anything." v20 "You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square."v21 So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink. v22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him." v23 The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing.v24 Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing." v25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.v26 At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight. v27 When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the*

house, with her hands on the threshold.v28 He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home. v29 When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.v30 Everyone who saw it said, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do!"

### **Judges 20 Israelites Fight the Benjamites**

v1 Then all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came out as one man and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah.v2 The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand soldiers armed with swords.v3 (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, "Tell us how this awful thing happened." v4 So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night.v5 During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.v6 I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and disgraceful act in Israel.v7 Now, all you Israelites, speak up and give your verdict." v8 All the people rose as one man, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house.v9 But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it as the lot directs.v10 We'll take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to get provisions for the army. Then, when the army arrives at Gibeah in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for all this vileness done in Israel."v11 So all the men of Israel got together and united as one man against the city. v12 The tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you?v13 Now surrender those wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites.v14 From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites.v15 At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred chosen men from those living in Gibeah.v16 Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss. v17 Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fighting men. v18 The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, "Who of us shall go first to fight against the Benjamites?" The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first." v19 The next morning the Israelites got up and pitched camp near Gibeah.v20 The men of Israel went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah.v21 The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day.v22 But the men of Israel encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day.v23 The Israelites went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and they inquired of the LORD. They said, "Shall we go up again to battle against the Benjamites, our brothers?" The LORD answered, "Go up against them." v24 Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day.v25 This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords. v26 Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and there they sat weeping before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD.v27 And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those

days the ark of the covenant of God was there,v28 with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?" The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands." v29 Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah.v30 They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before.v31 The Benjamites came out to meet them and were drawn away from the city. They began to inflict casualties on the Israelites as before, so that about thirty men fell in the open field and on the roads--the one leading to Bethel and the other to Gibeah. v32 While the Benjamites were saying, "We are defeating them as before," the Israelites were saying, "Let's retreat and draw them away from the city to the roads." v33 All the men of Israel moved from their places and took up positions at Baal Tamar, and the Israelite ambush charged out of its place on the west of Gibeah. v34 Then ten thousand of Israel's finest men made a frontal attack on Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that the Benjamites did not realize how near disaster was.v35 The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords.v36 Then the Benjamites saw that they were beaten. Now the men of Israel had given way before Benjamin, because they relied on the ambush they had set near Gibeah.v37 The men who had been in ambush made a sudden dash into Gibeah, spread out and put the whole city to the sword.v38 The men of Israel had arranged with the ambush that they should send up a great cloud of smoke from the city,v39 and then the men of Israel would turn in the battle. The Benjamites had begun to inflict casualties on the men of Israel (about thirty), and they said, "We are defeating them as in the first battle."v40 But when the column of smoke began to rise from the city, the Benjamites turned and saw the smoke of the whole city going up into the sky.v41 Then the men of Israel turned on them, and the men of Benjamin were terrified, because they realized that disaster had come upon them.v42 So they fled before the Israelites in the direction of the desert, but they could not escape the battle. And the men of Israel who came out of the towns cut them down there.v43 They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and easily overran them in the vicinity of Gibeah on the east.v44 Eighteen thousand Benjamites fell, all of them valiant fighters.v45 As they turned and fled toward the desert to the rock of Rimmon, the Israelites cut down five thousand men along the roads. They kept pressing after the Benjamites as far as Gidom and struck down two thousand more. v46 On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters.v47 But six hundred men turned and fled into the desert to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months.v48 The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

### **Judges 21 Wives for the Benjamites**

v1 The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: "Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite." v2 The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly.v3 "O LORD, the God of Israel," they cried, "why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?" v4 Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. v5 Then the Israelites asked, "Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the LORD ?" For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah should certainly be put to death. v6 Now the Israelites grieved for their brothers, the Benjamites. "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel," they said.v7 "How can we provide wives for those who are left, since we have taken an oath by the LORD not to give them any of our



daughters in marriage?"v8 Then they asked, "Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah?" They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly.v9 For when they counted the people, they found that none of the people of Jabesh Gilead were there. v10 So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children.v11 "This is what you are to do," they said. "Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin."v12 They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan. v13 Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon.v14 So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them. v15 The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel.v16 And the elders of the assembly said, "With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left?v17 The Benjamite survivors must have heirs," they said, "so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out.v18 We can't give them our daughters as wives, since we Israelites have taken this oath: 'Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to a Benjamite.'v19 But look, there is the annual festival of the LORD in Shiloh, to the north of Bethel, and east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem, and to the south of Lebonah." v20 So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyardsv21 and watch. When the girls of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, then rush from the vineyards and each of you seize a wife from the girls of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin.v22 When their fathers or brothers complain to us, we will say to them, 'Do us a kindness by helping them, because we did not get wives for them during the war, and you are innocent, since you did not give your daughters to them.' " v23 So that is what the Benjamites did. While the girls were dancing, each man caught one and carried her off to be his wife. Then they returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and settled in them. v24 At that time the Israelites left that place and went home to their tribes and clans, each to his own inheritance. v25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.