

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 22- "Simply Indefensible"

Key text: Judges 19:1-30

Suppl. texts:

Introduction: Last time, we noted that Israel had no king, & they lived as if they had no law. Moral relativism ruled the day, not much different than our own time. We saw how the tribe of Dan failed to take the land which was allotted to them, so they spied on unsuspecting neighbors. Along the way, the spies paused to consider if they had God's blessing. While staying at Micah's home and enjoying his hospitality, they asked the priest for a blessing, and he gave it without a word from the Lord. The spies completed their mission & returned to their people with a plan to attack. Six hundred trained warriors went to take the land. Along the way, they came back to Micah's house and took his carved gods & his priest; there were no 'gods' left. We also noted that the thief was stolen from & he was helpless to stop them. Murder & genocide were a new low for Israel, & we learned the name of the previously unnamed priest, Jonathan, the grandson or great-grandson of Moses. Tonight, we'll cover the most disgusting story of the book of Judges, one that is simply indefensible.

Outline: *read Judges 18:1-20.*

1. Another traveling Levite

- We just completed the covetous story of Jonathan, the Levite relative of Moses, who was easily swayed to be a home priest before betraying Micah & becoming a tribe's priest.
- He was a Levite who was not in the right place & not leading others to worship God.
- Now there is another Levite who will remain unnamed.
- Again, this Levite is in the wrong place at the wrong time, but not by choice.
- **Vs. 1:** *"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."*
- **Concubine or wife?** The Hebrew word (*pilegish*) is clear: she is either a concubine or a 'second wife'.
- Second wives had less protection & rights than the first.
- They often came without a dowry being paid to the family, & were often non-virgins (previous sexual partners, widows, etc.).
- Concubines were never God's plan, no more than pluralistic marriage was.
- A concubine wasn't just a mistress, but a legal union that was often entered into if the first wife was barren or older & couldn't bear more children.
- Again, this is not a normative command of Scripture. It was often used for procreation purposes. Meant to show how far sexually God's people have fallen.

- Not even Israel's spiritual leaders are upholding the sanctity of marriage.
- **Vs. 2-3;** *"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, 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."* Unfaithful here could mean adultery or that she abandoned him.
- Nonetheless, four months is a long time to wait & go after your concubine/wife?
- The interfering father-in-law. Aren't we as in-laws always well-intentioned?
- **Vs. 4-10;** *"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. 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.' So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the girl's father said, 'Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself.' And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. 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. 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.' But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine."* Perhaps meddling, or perhaps separation anxiety?

2. A hospitable stranger

- Passing over Jebus. Jebus is known as Jerusalem today, though at that time, it was the city of the Jebusites, a Canaanite group who resided in this walled city.
- **Vs. 11-12;** *"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.' His master replied, 'No. We won't go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah.'"*
- Funny, this Levite who has gone to fetch his concubine, who doesn't uphold God's plan for marriage, is suddenly concerned about staying with non-Israelites?
- **Was he truly concerned for their safety?**
- Among his own people, he initially isn't offered any hospitality.
- **Vs. 15;** *"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."*
- There is an unlikely 'savior' in this story: an older, hard-working man.
- His practice of hospitality is initially protective & selfless in nature.

- **Vs. 19-21;** *"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." '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.'" So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink."*
- The man, who is himself a foreign worker, must know the reputation of the men of Gibeah & so he doesn't want them to stay in the city square.

3. A **shocking** evil

- Outside of the torturous murder of the Son of God on the cross, where the creation killed its Creator, there's no more grotesque, disgusting, evil act than what happens in the latter part of chapter 19.
- It rivals the story of Lot & his family in **Gen. 19**. They reside in Sodom & the angels visit to assess & bring judgment on the twin cities.
- Yet God struck those men blind, so their evil desires & threats fell empty.
- Here, the wicked men of Gibeah mimic the unnatural desires of the men of Sodom.
- **Vs. 22;** *"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.'"*
- These are sexually **deviant** men. Their desire is not only sex but the **fear**, **intimidation**, & the power of their lust-filled actions.
- Relativistic **morality**. In this chapter, we experience the threat of homosexual rape, sexual violence & trafficking, the lust of mankind, & the abuse & rape of a woman.
- The Word of God doesn't gloss over these real issues that happen **worldwide** every single day.
- The **mistreatment** & **abuse** of women. In no way is the Word of God 'okaying' the actions of the Levite or the men of the city.
- In no way is the bible stating that women are of less worth or nothing more than property.
- The intent is to show how far, how sinful, how disgusting even God's people can get when they are left to themselves.
- Mankind will do anything to **save** his own **hide**.
- **Vs. 23-25;** *"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. 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.' 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."

- How this 'heroic' older man can suddenly offer his virgin daughter is beyond disgusting.
- There's no angelic visit; no one is 'righteous' in this story. Everyone is a villain.
- How this older man & Levite could go to sleep & not show any concern for the life of the concubine/wife is beyond me.
- By his actions, he shows that he thinks his life is of more worth than that of the woman's. Both man & woman are made in the image of God.
- **Vs. 26**; *"At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight."*
- You might be tempted to think that if the woman never made it back to the doorstep, the Levite might have just moved on without a further thought of her.
- **Vs. 28**; *"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."*
- His callous statement, *"Get up; let's go."* is one of the harshest quotes in the bible.
- There's no hint of compassion or concern for her physical condition or her wounds.
- As if the story can't get any worse, it does!
- **Vs. 29-30**; *"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. 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!'"*
- This act is meant to shock all those who hear about it. It is a gruesome call to action. Since all of Israel is doing what is right in their own eyes, he calls for them to evaluate the circumstances & make a judgment of the consequences.
- In his dastardly, degrading, & dehumanizing offer & dismemberment of his deceased concubine/wife, the Levite is just as evil, though he acts as if he holds the moral high ground. His moral outrage is pathetic.
- The saddest part to me is that we've been decrying the lustful actions of these men, & this woman ends up not only being treated as such in life, but literally cut into pieces of meat in death.

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