

EXPOSITION OF JUDGES

Message #25

Judges 19:1-30

On May 21, 1960, one of America's worst serial killers was born in West Allis, Wisconsin. From 1978 to 1991 he murdered seventeen men and boys. His murders involved rape, dismemberment and cannibalism. His name was Jeffery Dahmer. He was sentenced to serve fifteen consecutive life terms at the Columbia Correctional Institution in Portage, Wisconsin. In February of 1994, Stone Phillips interviewed Dahmer for a program called "Dateline." During that interview Dahmer said that he didn't believe in God and that humanity was here by pure natural causes and death ended everything. Since there was no God he did not see a need to modify his behavior. But supposedly in the aftermath of that interview he said that he had become a born again Christian. On November 28, 1994, while doing some janitorial work in the prison gym, Christopher Scarver took a broomstick handle and beat Jeffery Dahmer to death. Would it be possible for someone who lived his life as if there were no God, who was totally given to corruption and evil to actually have some distorted relationship with God? Would it be possible for one given over to evil, demented depravity to have any connection at all with the God of the Bible?

What we are about to see in this chapter is depravity that will make you sick. I love what one writer said; when you get to this point in the book of Judges you figure it can't get any worse, and then you discover it does. This reaches a new level of depravity which comes from supposedly "God's people."

WHEN PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO KNOW GOD DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES RATHER THAN FOLLOW THE WORD OF GOD THEY WILL END UP DOING SOME VERY EVIL AND DEPRAVED THINGS.

When you take a trip through Judges 19 you are forced to admit it is possible for God's people to be totally dominated by depravity. Judges 19 gives us an honest look at people of God who have become totally and completely immoral and have lost all sense of what is right and what is wrong. They are living their lives in as one writer said, "a moral fog."

Judges 19 teaches that if you don't pursue a relationship with God through His Word, and if you do not confront sin you can spiral downward to the point that you reach a degrading level of depravity.

Now I want to bring out something here prophetically. Judges is a book that features the climate in Israel's history just before God raised up His kings. There are two prophetic applications I want to make from this chronology. This text shows Israel what the world will be like in the Tribulation just before the arrival of Jesus Christ her King. This text shows the church the kind of depravity that will exist prior to the Rapture. As we saw last time, there will be many man-made religions that will seem to flourish; there will be a rise in homosexuality and there will be a rise in immorality, and there will be a rise in murder and bizarre evil things.

There are sixteen facts we want to observe from Judges 19:

FACT #1 – This took place when there was no king in Israel. **19:1a**

This means that God's own people were not following God or His Word and there was no leader to even challenge them to do that. There were priests in existence. There were places where people could go to worship, but there wasn't anyone leading them in the true pure ways of the Word of God.

FACT #2 – A religious leader took a concubine for himself. **19:1b**

Now the first thing we learn about this Levite is that he is staying in a remote area of Ephraim and he is not living in one of the Levitical cities where he is supposed to live. The second thing we learn is that he had a concubine who was from Bethlehem. Now a concubine was a woman that a man kept around for pleasure purposes. He provided her with living expenses and she provided him with physical pleasure. A concubine was not a wife.

Now why doesn't the man just marry the girl? It is quite obvious that this Levitical priest is living life his own way and is doing what he wants to do, not what God wants him to do. Having some woman to have an affair with who is not your wife is not new to our time; this kind of immoral behavior was right here in Judges.

FACT #3 – The religious leader's concubine was immoral and went back home to live with her father. **19:2**

Let's face it, he is not selecting a girl based on biblical principles. This was a woman who liked immoral sex and she "played the harlot" on the priest. Apparently, the priest found out about it so she took off and went to Bethlehem to live with her father for four months.

FACT #4 – The religious leader decided to go get his concubine and take her back home. **19:3a**

The Levite decided he wanted his concubine back so he decided to go get her at her father's house. When he got there he wasn't mad or angry, in fact, the text said he spoke tenderly to her in order to win her back. She must have meant something to him because he certainly could have found another concubine.

FACT #5 – The concubine's father liked the priest and they partied together for nearly five days. **19:3b-9**

The father-in-law liked the Levite. He welcomed him into his home and they ate and drank together for five straight days. In fact, the father-in-law did not want this Levite to leave. Notice six times in this context he offers his hospitality and tries to persuade the Levite to stay longer (19:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). It is possible this dad felt that the Levite could be mean to his daughter because of her unfaithfulness, and so he was trying to smooth things over a bit. It would appear that there had been some sort of male bonding between this Levite and this girl's dad. He had someone to talk to and drink with and a type friendship had been formed. What we will see is that there is a major contrast between the hospitality shown here in Bethlehem to what will be seen in Gibeah.

FACT #6 – The religious leader decided to leave for home with his concubine in the late afternoon of the fifth day. **19:10**

Notice that they had already saddled the donkeys and they were ready to go. This will turn out to be a bad move. This will be the last time this father will ever see his daughter and this will be the last time this daughter will ever see her dad. Perhaps it is appropriate that she spent several additional days at her dad's home because she will end up dead. The Levite would have been better to have stayed the night and taken off early the next morning. But he decided to leave that fifth day even though it was late in the afternoon.

FACT #7 – They traveled five or six miles to Jerusalem, but the leader would not stay there because they were not Jewish. **19:11**

At the time this happened Jerusalem was an “alien city,” not an Israeli city and the Levite refused to stay there. It was a city controlled by Jebusites, not Israelites, and he wouldn't stay there because of some self-righteous legal code. The truth is he would have probably been better to stay in a non-Israeli city because there weren't too many cities that would do what will happen in Gibeah. It is a terrible thing when people who are not in a relationship with God have more scruples than those who supposedly are.

FACT #8 – They decided to press on another 3-4 miles from Jerusalem to Gibeah. **19:12-14**

The tragedy of all of this is that this seems to be the right, logical thing to do, but it is the wrong thing to do. When you are not interested in God's Word or will you can convince yourself that what you are doing is right when in fact it is not right at all.

In hunting the Rockies of Colorado, Idaho and Wyoming, I have literally traveled hundreds of miles on the back of a horse, and if a horse is in good shape you can do five miles in a little over an hour. If you are in good shape you can walk that distance in about the same time frame. A typical pace of a horse is a twenty minute mile, but horses that are in good shape can walk off a mile in 12-15 minutes, and so can humans. So we may assume it has taken them over an hour to get to Jerusalem and over an hour to get to Gibeah. **Verse 14** informs us that as they were getting to Gibeah the sun went down and it was getting dark.

FACT #9 – They sat in the city square and no one invited them into their home. **19:15**

Now hospitality was a critical part of biblical life and biblical law (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 16:14; 26:12). God's people were always to be hospitable people to others, especially other people of God. **But of course this is a nation not interested in obeying the Word of God, so no one invited them to stay.** In fact, it is doubtful that any priest even taught them the law of God, and so when a brother came to the city they didn't even think in terms of hospitality. They were sitting in the city square and it was getting dark and they were probably trying to figure out their next move.

FACT #10 – An old man questioned the three as to why they were there. **19:16-19**

It is interesting that it was an old man who came out of the field from work. When you are in a society where everyone does what is right in their own eyes, the younger people don't seem to realize the value of hard work. The old man spotted the group at the square and wanted to know what they were doing.

Notice the old man was from Ephraim and the men of the city were Benjamites. What this means is that these are all Jews. These are all God's people. What you are about to see is not coming from depraved people who live in jungles, these are God's people living in the Promised Land.

The Levite said I am traveling home from Bethlehem to a remote spot where I live in Ephraim. Notice he considered his home to be a home the LORD had given him. The Levite informed the old man that no one had taken them in and that he had his own supplies, and all he needed was a place to stay.

FACT #11 – The old man took them into his house to care for them. **19:20-21**

Apparently, the Levite was intending to spend the night at the city square. He could feed and water the donkeys and he had bread and wine for himself and his concubine. So he decided to camp in the middle of Gibeah. The old man would not hear of it and he took them to his house, and they took care of the animals and they washed their feet and ate and drank.

FACT #12 – Wicked men of the city surround the house and want to have sex with the Levite priest. **19:22**

The Hebrew "wicked men" literally reads "sons of Belial." Paul uses this word "Belial" in connection to Satan (11 Cor. 6:15). Don't be deceived by all of the political rhetoric; biblically speaking, **homosexuals are sons of Satan**. What is worse is that these are Jewish men who are supposed to have a relationship with God, and they are homosexual perverts who are after homosexual gratification.

There is no indication that they knew the man was a Levite, but there is also no indication that it would have mattered had they known that. This is, as one commentator said, a "shocking display of depravity." Don't kid yourself, there are men who come from Christian homes, there are men who stand in church pulpits who claim to have a relationship with God who are homosexual perverts and sons of Satan.

Now how do you reach this level of moral depravity when you are supposedly the people of God? If we track this question through the book of Judges, the answer is simple; you do what is right in your own eyes. You live life your way. You indulge in what makes you feel good and you flaunt your sin and even publicly promote it. Don't care what God's Word says and just do what you want to do. Put yourself on this course of action and you'll end up depraved too.

FACT #13 – The old man begs them not to have sex with this man and offers them his own virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine. **19:23-24**

When you have a society that drifts away from God's Word you will end up with people who are cowards who don't dare stand against anything. They don't dare stand up for what is right and stand firm against what is evil and wrong. The men of this house were wimpy cowards and are too afraid to stand up against a bunch of effeminate losers. Talk about a society that lacks chivalry, this old Ephraimite comes up with his own depraved solution to a homosexual gang rape. What they should have said is if you girly men fag boys step one foot in this house we will do everything we can to kill you all. You abominable homosexual perverts step one foot in this house and either you will die or we will die, but you aren't going to have sex with anyone here.

But notice his solution is why don't you indulge yourself in heterosexual rape and not homosexual rape. He offers these evil men his own virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine. So not only does he offer his own daughter, which is one thing, he also offers the Levite's concubine, which is another. As far as we know he thinks this woman is this man's wife. This is some sick form of "hospitality." This shows you how sick and evil and sinful a society can become when everyone does what is right in their own eyes.

FACT #14 – The Levite gives them his concubine and they gang rape her all night. **19:25**

The Levite apparently thought that was a good idea so he gave these lust crazed men his concubine and they gang raped her all night. The Hebrew word "abuse" (alal) is one that seems to suggest that they tied her up and bound her fast and raped her all night long until all of their lusts had been quenched (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 633). Then, at daybreak, being the nice guys they were they let her go.

Now this is happening among Israelites. Gentiles who don't even know God don't do this kind of thing. But this is happening with Israelites who supposedly know God.

FACT #15 – The concubine fell down dead at the man's house. **19:26-28a**

The next morning the Levite went out to get his concubine and with no emotion said "Get up and let's go" (**verse 28**). He doesn't ask how she is doing, but he simply looks at her and says "get up and let's go." But apparently what he discovered is she was dead. Actually there is some debate as to whether she was actually dead or had just passed out from total exhaustion. The Hebrew text does not specifically say she is dead; however, most assume she was. The Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate say she was dead, but the Hebrew doesn't specifically say it. If she wasn't dead, what happens next is even more depraved, but in this evil context would not be totally shocking.

FACT #16 – The Levite packs her on a donkey, takes her home, cuts her into twelve pieces and sends one piece to each of the tribes of Israel. **19:28b-29**

Now here is how distorted this Levite was. Somehow he felt his honor had been robbed from him so he cuts her up in twelve pieces and sends a piece to each tribe. Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel before.

Now look carefully at the end of **verse 30**. God wants this matter considered and He wants it discussed. He wants this story taught. Why? Because it shows how depraved a nation, a state, a city, a church and even a human can become if you drift away from Him and His Word.

Let me make some observations.

1) Move away from God's Word and there will be an increase in false religion. Is there?

Some churches are exploding in numbers and they are not dedicated to carefully expounding God's Word. Why is this happening?

2) Move away from God's Word and there will be an increase in immorality. Is there?

3) Move away from God's Word and there will be an increase in homosexuality. Is there?

Not only is there a rise in homosexuality, it is now tolerated and promoted in churches by religious leaders.

4) Move away from God's Word and there will be an increase in violence. Is there?

40-50 years ago people would hitchhike to go anywhere. Thirty years ago I used to pick up hitchhikers and give them a ride. Would you do that today? Why not?

5) Move away from God's Word and there will be an increase in abuse of women and children. Is there?

6) Move away from God's Word and God will let that society become corrupt and perverse. Is this happening?

Now let us look at our present culture. Would you say there is an increase in these areas? J. Vernon McGee said in 1982 that the parallels to our own contemporary society are "striking" (*Thru The Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 85). Dr. Warren Wiersbe said read this chapter and scan your newspaper because nothing has changed and we are in the same boat (*Be Available*, p. 165). In fact, not only is there an increase in these things, but these things are flaunted on television.

We are living in the days of Judges. We are right there now and we need to get back to the Word of God, and we also need Jesus Christ to return because He is the only One who can put an end to any evil depravity.