

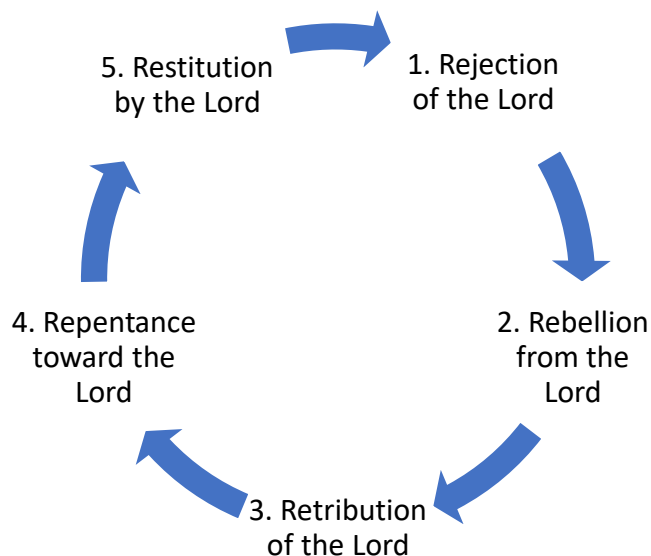
20220302 Judges 19-21

Tonight we're going to take a look at how bad it can get when the people of God "do what is right in their own eyes." We find in these chapters a nation filled with anarchy. We can all identify because in many ways we live in a nation that is filled with anarchy. Many are absolutely stressed out as a result of seeing Russia invade the Ukraine 4-5 days ago. So in uncertain times such as these, where do we find our hope? Our only real hope is in Jesus. The book of Judges covers some of Israel's gradual decline over a period of 350-400 years. This period was rampant with violence and anarchy. The downward slide started at the death of Joshua. Joshua was strong and God fearing, but the book of Judges little by little shows Israel slowly and quietly descending into being a people who no longer fear the Lord. The end of the book of Joshua tells us that Israel served the Lord in the days of Joshua and during the lives of the elders of Israel who outlived Joshua, but would not be the case after.

*²⁹ Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ³¹ **Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.** (Joshua 24:29-31, NKJV).*

Israel no longer knew "all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel." You know you're in big trouble when you no longer know the Lord or the works which He has done for you.

The move from Joshua to Judges is the movement from conquest to compromise. Let's remember for a minute the cycle of sin that we have witnessed.



In the book of Judges Israel has moved from compromise to total chaos. These last chapters 17-21 have been described as an appendix to let us know how low things had become morally and spiritually. They are little examples of what it was like when “there was no king in Israel and when everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

First, we read chapter 17 that was about the house of Micah. Micah stole from his mother. He gave the money back to her, and she had carved and graven images made with the money. Micah made an ephod and set up a phony priest in his house.

Second, as we covered last Sunday, chaos and rebellion were seen in the tribe of Dan. They broke into the house of Micah and stole his idols AND his priest, and they set up the idols in the new territory in the north that they captured from the people of Laish. This was a move from particular idol worship in the house of Micah to general idol worship in the Tribe of Dan.

In Chapters 19, 20, and 21 we are going to watch the bottom of the bottom. This is a display of full blown anarchy in the nation. We’re left to almost wonder why this in the Bible. I think it is to remind us of how awful things can become when we are in absolute rebellion of what God intends for us.

Chapter 19 in Judges is like Chapter 19 in Genesis when the two angels came like men to visit Abraham. They then went on to Sodom to visit Lot when the house was surrounded by the men of the city. The men of the city banged on the door demanding to have homosexual relations with the two angels/men. We quickly learned that you shouldn’t mess with God’s angels. The city of Sodom was utterly destroyed and turned into a pile of rubble.

In the story tonight, there is no hero so don’t look for one. It is all a mess along with everyone in it. The story begins with a Levite who is different from the one we saw in chapters 17 and 18. He is a Levite who is in disobedience. Levites were chosen for their faithfulness (Numbers 3:10-12). This one was obviously unfaithful because he is with a woman who is not his wife. The Hebrew says that she was his *pilegesh*, most often meaning his sexual partner. Jewish commentators call this whole story of what is to come as the “text of terror.”¹

*¹⁹ 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. 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 **his actions won’t measure up with his words in a few verses**], 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. 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*

¹ <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/concubine-of-levite-bible>

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. (Judges 19:1-8, NKJV).

So, we find the Levite coming back to get his concubine because she had left him to "play the harlot." The King James Version says she "played the whore against him." I suppose that means she was cheating on him. However, the Hebrew can also mean that she was angry with him. So, they might have just had a fight with one another. Anyway, he shows up there at the father-in-law's house and is well received by the father. The Levite was trying to win her back.

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." ¹⁰ However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came 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." (Judges 19:8-12, NKJV).

His thinking was that they would be better off among Israel in Gibeah. The writer is going to show how horrible Israel had become in that it ended up being far worse than what might have happened among the heathen in Jebus.

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." 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. (Judges 19:13-15, NKJV).

The fact that no one would take them in is shocking to the reader. In the Middle East hospitality was and still is the way of things. This was pretty much an outrage. Commentators also suggest that maybe the author (probably Samuel), was drawing a distinction among the Benjamites. Remember that Saul was a Benjamite from Gibeah. This might have been a denigration of Saul and his house.

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 [BETHEL]. 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.

²² As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men [belial], 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!" 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!" [as is right in your eyes!] (Judges 19:16-24, NKJV). This is a saying that is repeated over and over at this point in Israel's degenerated state.

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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. 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. 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 19:25-30, NKJV).

These men that are doing this are acting like the vile pagans acted in Sodom in Genesis 19. The writer is telling us that God's people have now become worse than "Sodom" as they know better. They have mixed so much with the world that they are indistinguishable from the world. **That is a warning to every believer.** After the men had had their way with the

concupine the text doesn't really tell us if she is dead at the door. I'm not sure he cut her up alive. I'm not sure if he found her alive and killed her and then dismembered her. I'm not sure if he found her dead. In any event, this tells us what can happen when God's people DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES. When we reject biblical objective truth, we can fall to anything.

This is indeed a horrific tale. And the sad thing is that it is true. This appendix is in here to just show us just how bad it can get when we get outside of the will of God. Praise God for His goodness and His mercy, because in spite of all of this, these people remained God's chosen people.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.