



## A Study of the Book of Judges

### Lesson 15: In the Shadow of Sodom... Judges 19:1-21:25

The two concluding stories at the end of the Book of Judges are dreadful. There is just no other way to say it. Together, they constitute just about the most dismal ending to any book of the Bible. Not even the Book of Lamentations, in all its bleakness, compares to the ending of the Book of Judges. At least the ending of Book of Lamentations ends with the possibility of hope. Not so in the Book of Judges. It ends with two terribly bleak stories that more or less sum up the whole reason for Israel's spiritual and physical suffering. You see Israel was in the mess it was in because everyone had followed their own path. We saw that, of course, in the central portion of the book. The people kept turning away from YHWH to prostitute themselves with foreign gods. And as a result, the Lord kept sending foreign invaders to pressure them back into His care. That's why He gave them judges...they were deliverers appointed by God to rescue His people from the very oppression that they had brought upon themselves. And the two stories at the end of the Book of Judges are built on pretty much the same theme. Still they are a bit different than the section containing the stories of the seven major judges.

In these last two stories there are no deliverers which makes sense because in these last two stories, there are no foreign invaders. In fact, in these last two stories...there are no outside enemies. **In these last two stories, the Israelites become their own enemies.**<sup>1</sup>

They do that when they cease to have any regard for each other...when they cease to have any regard for the covenant community.

One commentator makes the observation that in these last two stories almost none of the characters are named. That is, they are anonymous...and that seems to make them less than human. They are oblivious to the concept of community and because they are their names no longer matter. He makes the point that because they are nameless and faceless they are able to great and dreadful things to each other.<sup>2</sup>

Now I think we had a hint that that was coming last week when we looked at the life of Micah.<sup>3</sup>

Micah had his own gods.

He had his own shrine.

He had his own hired priest...bought and paid for with his own money.

He had no need of community at all.

He was an independent Israelite and because he was God punished him using men cut from the same bolt of cloth.

Now we will see much the same kind of thing today...only the story will be even darker...even more sinister. It is perhaps, the darkest story in all of the Old

Testament. It is a story in which the culture of ancient Israel simply came apart at the seams...it was unable to do what was right because it was no longer able to discern what was right and the reason for that was because it had become spiritually blind as a result of pursuing individual desire. The text puts it like this ...everyone did that which was right in his own eye.

Now that is true, no place in the Bible, like it is in our story this morning in Judges 19-21.

Now it is in keeping with the overall design of the book that the worst story in Judges should come at end. I have been making the point right along that the Book of Judges has been moving downward...from bad to worse. That means that the worst should be at the end. But that does not mean that the stories at the end of the book are chronological. In fact, there is almost every reason to believe that the two stories at the end of the book occurred very early on in the life of the nation before almost all of the other stories in the book.<sup>4</sup>

You can tell from the fact that Jerusalem is referred to as a city not yet occupied by the Israelites. It's not even called Jerusalem; it's called Jebus.<sup>5</sup> And our story this morning mentions the character Phinehas (the only character it mentions by name) and he is described elsewhere as a contemporary of Moses (20:28).<sup>6</sup>

That tells me that the author arranged the stories in Judges and included some things and left other things out simply to make his point clear. And this, I think, was his point, "When the Israelites cease to follow their true King YHWH and do what seems right in their own eyes they will find themselves living in a terrible place...in the shadow of Sodom."

Now all that having been said, let's see if that what the text says.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:1**...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. <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> 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.

Now there are a few manuscripts that say something different about this Levite's concubine.<sup>7</sup> They don't say she was unfaithful but rather that she grew very angry with him which makes, I think a bit more sense in light of what she did...she did not run off with someone else...she simply went home to her father.<sup>8</sup> Anyway, after she had been there four months, the Levite went down to get her. And when he does the father welcomes him. It sounds to me like the Levite may have treated her harshly and was trying to make up.

Verses 4-10 explain that it took awhile for the Levite, his concubine and servant to get away from his father in law.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:4**...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. <sup>5</sup> 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.**" <sup>6</sup> So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the girl's father said, "**Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself.**" <sup>7</sup> And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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."** <sup>10</sup> But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

Now the point is to develop tension in the story and to explain why they got such a late start on their journey. In fact, they don't get very far away from Bethlehem before they have to start thinking about stopping. In verses 11-21, they approach Jerusalem, which is just five miles or so from Jerusalem, and the Levite's servant appeals to him to stop at Jerusalem to spend the night but the Levite does not want to spend the night in a town occupied by Canaanites. He wants instead to spend the night in the safety of a town occupied by Israelites. His logic is sound...but terribly wrong. It is one of the great ironies of the story that he would have been much safer among the heathen than among the Israelites at Gibeah. Look at verse 11.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:11**...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."** <sup>12</sup> His master replied, **"No. We won't go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."** <sup>13</sup> He added, **"Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places."** <sup>14</sup> So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, **"Where are you going? Where did you come from?"** <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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."** <sup>20</sup> **"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."** <sup>21</sup> So he took him into his house and

fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

Now when the Levite and his concubine turned into Gibeah no one was willing to take them in. That may have been because he was a Levite. It may have been because he was a stranger. Regardless of the reason, it was a sign of wickedness. Finally just before dark, an old man from Ephraim coming in from the fields offered to take them in. Actually, he insisted that they not spend the night in the square. The man was not a Benjamite.

I should remind you of just on other thing. This part of the story is almost certainly included as a polemic against King Saul, David's enemy and persecutor. Just as the city of Bethlehem will later come to be associated with David so the city of Gibeah will later come to be associated with Saul. I think the author is arguing in a not too subtle way that men from Gibeah always tend to act like the men from Gibeah. In verse 22, explains what that means.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:22...**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.**"

Now let me ask you, "**What Story does that remind you of?**" The answer, of course, is that it reminds you of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. The words are almost exactly the same.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Genesis 19:1...**The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. <sup>2</sup> "**My lords,**" he said, "**please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and**

**then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."** <sup>3</sup> But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. <sup>4</sup> Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom-- both young and old-- surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> They called to Lot, **"Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."**

Now the author's point is that the men of Gibeah are indistinguishable from the men of Sodom. He is making the point that when people do what is right in their own eyes...they are living in the shadow of Sodom. Now to drive the point home he goes on show the similarity between the response of the Levite's host and the response of Lot in Genesis 19

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:23...**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 (נבלה...nabalah) thing."** <sup>24</sup> **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 (נבלה...nabalah) thing."**

If you read Genesis 19, you will see that Lot's actions were almost exactly the same. Fortunately for Lot, the angels visiting him prevented him from doing what he offered to do. But there were no angels in Gibeah.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:25...**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. <sup>26</sup> At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

Now I have to tell you, you cannot tell who sent the concubine out to the men of Gibeah. You cannot tell from the text whether it was the old man or whether it was the Levite.<sup>10</sup> It may have been the old man...and if it was, it was despicable thing to do. It may have been the Levite, in which case it was even worse. That would mean that he gave the woman that he supposedly loved...over to abuse and torture and rape. Now look at verse 27. Notice what it says...

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:27**...When her master got up in the morning...

Do you see what that means? It means that he pushed out and went to bed. Now let me ask you, **"How on earth could any normal person sleep through that sort of thing?"**

I envision him hearing his concubine screaming and pleading for help and being irritated. Arthur Cundall writes this...

The narrator does not dwell on the harrowing details, but if ever a human being endured a night of utter horror it was the Levite's concubine that night, which must have seemed as interminable as eternity and as dark as the pit itself. It is not only the action of the men of Gibeah which reveals the abysmally low moral standards of the age *but* the indifference of the Levite *himself*...<sup>11</sup>

Anyway the text continues...

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 19:27**...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. <sup>28</sup> 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.

I think that is about the saddest thing I have ever read. He tells her to get up so they can go. He doesn't show any anxiety of compassion...there is no comfort...there is no consolation. His words do not exactly display contempt...no, they display the most heinous of all passions...indifference. His concubine died pleading to be rescued with her hands on the threshold but there was no one to hear her. His concern, his only concern was himself. As a result, the Levite rolled her up like so much extraneous baggage...loaded her on his donkey and started off for home. Judges 19:29 picks up the story.<sup>12</sup>

**NIV Judges 19:29...**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. <sup>30</sup> 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!**"

Now when the Levite gets home, he begins to feel he has been wronged and he had. But he had also done wrong himself. Still, he wants justice against those that wronged him. He takes a knife and cuts up his concubine and sends the parts of her body out to the twelve tribes. It is a gruesome thing to do and it is unlike anything anyone had ever done before and it gets a response.

In chapter 20, the Israelites gather to hear the Levites story. Now I want you to notice how he tells the story when he gets to verse 4.

**NIV Judges 20:1...**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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, "**Tell us how this awful thing happened.**" <sup>4</sup> So the Levite, the husband of

the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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 (נבלה...nabalah) act in Israel. <sup>7</sup> Now, all you Israelites, speak up and give your verdict." <sup>8</sup> All the people rose as one man, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house. <sup>9</sup> But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it as the lot directs. <sup>10</sup> 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 (נבלה...nabalah) done in Israel."

Now did he tell the whole story? I don't think he did. I think he told the story to make himself appear blameless. Still, he got the result he sought. The Israelites were outraged by what had happened. Thomas Constable writes, "**The Israelites perceived this incident as the greatest act of moral corruption in their nation's history.**"<sup>13</sup>

And you can see that he is right simply by looking at Hosea 9:9.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Hosea 9:9**...They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Hosea 10:9**..."Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel, and there you have remained. Did not war overtake the evildoers in Gibeah?"

Anyway the men of Israel get together in the rest of chapter 20 and try to get the Benjamites to turn over the guilty men. But they refuse and when they do it leads to a civil war. Follow along as I read down to verse 19.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 20:11**...So all the men of Israel got together and united as one man against the city. <sup>12</sup> The tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, **"What about this awful crime that was committed among you?"** <sup>13</sup> **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. <sup>14</sup> From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites. <sup>15</sup> At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred chosen men from those living in Gibeah. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fighting men. <sup>18</sup> 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."**

Now you ought to have the sense that everything has been turned on its head. Early on in the Book of Judges Judah was chosen to go up against the Canaanites first. Here they are chosen to go up against their own brothers. It is a terrible day in Israel. Now what follows is a lengthy replay of the battle and I am going to read it but I am going to read it without much comment.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 20:11**...The next morning the Israelites got up and pitched camp near Gibeah. <sup>20</sup> The men of Israel went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. <sup>21</sup> The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day. <sup>22</sup> But the men of Israel encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day. <sup>23</sup> 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."** <sup>24</sup> Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, <sup>28</sup>

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.**" <sup>29</sup> Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah. <sup>30</sup> They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> 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.**" <sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> The men who had been in ambush made a sudden dash into Gibeah, spread out and put the whole city to the sword. <sup>38</sup> The men of Israel had arranged with the ambush that they should send up a great cloud of smoke from the city, <sup>39</sup> 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.**" <sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> Then the men of Israel turned on them, and the men of Benjamin were terrified, because they realized that disaster had come upon them. <sup>42</sup> 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. <sup>43</sup> They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and easily overran them in the vicinity of Gibeah on the east. <sup>44</sup> Eighteen thousand Benjamites fell, all of them valiant fighters. <sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>46</sup> On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters. <sup>47</sup> But six hundred men turned and fled into the desert to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months. <sup>48</sup> 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.

Now the Israelites are put in a terrible dilemma by the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin. They killed all of the Benjamites except for six hundred warriors that escape to the desert and then they swore an oath that will prevent them from ever giving any of their daughters to the Benjamites which will mean that the tribe will disappear altogether unless they can scheme some way around their oath.

Chapter 21 contains their plan and here it is it. They intend to kill the inhabitants of the one city in Israel that failed to participate in their overreaction against the Benjamites.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Judges 21:1**...The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: "**Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.**" <sup>2</sup> The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. <sup>3</sup> "**O LORD, the God of Israel,**" they cried, "**why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?**" <sup>4</sup> Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> Now the Israelites grieved for their brothers, the Benjamites. "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel," they said. <sup>7</sup> "**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?**" <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For when they counted the people, they found that none of the people of Jabesh Gilead were there. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> "**This is what you are to do, they said. Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin.**" <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at

the rock of Rimmon. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel.

Now in the final section of chapter 21, starting in verse 16, they turn to the 200 or so remaining Benjamites to help them skirt their vow to the Lord. And this is what they do. They talk the remaining unmarried Benjamites into kidnapping the unmarried maidens of the town of Shiloh.

**<sup>NIV</sup> Judges 21:16...And the elders of the assembly said, "With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left? <sup>17</sup> The Benjamite survivors must have heirs," they said, "so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. <sup>18</sup> 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.' <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyards <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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.'" <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> At that time the Israelites left that place and went home to their tribes and clans, each to his own inheritance. <sup>25</sup> In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.**

Now I want you to think about this story for a moment. It started off with the seizing and rape of a Levite's concubine by the men of Benjamin. It ends with the seizing of two hundred young virgins by the men of Benjamin. The first act was viewed as an act of intolerable cruelty. The second act was viewed as act of

extraordinary kindness. Along the way thousands and thousands of innocent men, women, boys and girls died and why? They died because Israel could not see the nature of its on actions...actions that were driven by self-gratification...actions driven by self-love. What they needed was a righteous King to guide them and keep them on the path of righteousness... and it's the same for us today. May we follow the Lord Jesus and in doing cease to lean on our own understanding.

Let's pray.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Kelly, *Pogo: We Have Met The Enemy And He Is Us*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972). No better quote can describe the time than Walter Kelly's immortal line spoken by Pogo, "We have me the enemy and he is us."

<sup>2</sup> Don Michael Hudson, "Living in the Land of Epithets: Anonymity in Judges 19-21" in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* No. 62 (1994), 54. "The conclusion of Judges displays in a graphic manner the disintegration of a society in which the individuals 'do what is right in their own eyes'...it is about a loss of identity, a loss of names and naming. It is about chaos, disorder, obscurity and dismemberment. It is also about the obliteration of memory...When the reader reaches *Judges* 19-21 he...observes nameless characters who have totally lost sight of what is right and what is wrong...he reflects this disintegration of society by making *everyone nameless and faceless*."

On page 61 of his article Hudson writes, "For example, we should all be too familiar with the Nazis' gruesome practice of replacing the names of victims with numbers in the concentration camps-numbers are more easily disposed of than the named."

On page 60 he writes, "Moreover, by viewing the anonymity of the concubine the reader gets the impression that every concubine from Dan to Beersheba could be raped, murdered and dismembered."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lesson 14.

<sup>4</sup> Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1975), 150. "This story also must be placed early in the judges' period, because Phinehas, son of Eleazar, active during and even before the time of conquest (see Num. 25:7, II; Josh 22:13, 3 lf.), was still high priest (Judges 20:28).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Boling, *Judges* in the Anchor Bible Commentary Series, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975), 275.

<sup>6</sup> NIV **Numbers 25:10**...The LORD said to Moses, <sup>11</sup> Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. <sup>12</sup> Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. <sup>13</sup> He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."

<sup>7</sup> George F. Moore, *Judges* in the ICC Series (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895...reprinted in 1976), 409-10.

<sup>8</sup> Boling, 274. Boling makes the point that any woman leaving their husband in that day, regardless of justness of her action would have been considered an adulteress and that the verse ought to perhaps be interpreted in that light.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur E. Cundall, and Leon. Morris, *Judges & Ruth*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 197. He writes, "...but at Gibeah there were no angels to thwart the evil intentions of the men of the city."

<sup>10</sup> Boling, 276. Boling writes: "Which man did this is not clear. It is probably the Levite whose story is being told." However on the other hand, the last person referred to in the story is the host, the old man. He is the one who brought up his virgin daughter and the concubine in the first place. It is ironic, that his concern was that they not spend the night in the square...yet he was willing to give up the girls to save his own bacon.

<sup>11</sup> Cundall, 197-8.

<sup>12</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 5.2.8 Josephus thoroughly misses the point of the story. He writes..."Now certain young men of the inhabitants of Gibeah, having seen the woman in the market-place, and admiring her beauty, when they understood that she lodged with the old man, came to the doors, as contemning the weakness and fewness of the old man's family; and when the old man desired them to go away, and not to offer any violence or abuse there, they desired him to yield them up the strange woman, and then he should have no harm done to him: and when the old man alleged that the Levite was of his kindred, and that they would be guilty of horrid wickedness if they suffered themselves to be overcome by their pleasures, and so offend against their laws, they despised his righteous admonition, and laughed him to scorn. They also threatened to kill him if he became an obstacle to their inclinations; whereupon, when he found himself in great distress, and yet was not willing to overlook his guests, and see them abused, he produced his own daughter to them; and told them that it was a smaller breach of the law to satisfy their lust upon her, than to abuse his guests, supposing that he himself should by this means prevent any injury to be done to those guests. When they no way abated of their earnestness for the strange woman, but insisted absolutely on their desires to have her, he entreated them not to perpetrate any such act of injustice; but they proceeded to take her away by force, and indulging still more the violence of their inclinations, they took the woman away to their house, and when they had satisfied their lust upon her the whole night, they let her go about daybreak. So she came to the place where she had been entertained, under great affliction

at what had happened; and was very sorrowful upon occasion of what she had suffered, and durst not look her husband in the face for shame, for she concluded that he would never forgive her for what she had done; so she fell down, and gave up the ghost: but her husband supposed that his wife was only fast asleep, and, thinking nothing of a more melancholy nature had happened, endeavored to raise her up, resolving to speak comfortably to her, since she did not voluntarily expose herself to these men's lust, but was forced away to their house; but as soon as he perceived she was dead, he acted as prudently as the greatness of his misfortunes would admit, and laid his dead wife upon the beast, and carried her home; and cutting her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, he sent them to every tribe, and gave it in charge to those that carried them, to inform the tribes of those that were the causes of his wife's death, and of the violence they had offered to her."

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Constable, *Commentary on Judges*. Dr. Thomas Constable's online notes on Judges chapter 19 and following at <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/judges.pdf>.