

There But For The Grace Of God...

It is worth noting that, unlike every other section in Judges, none of the characters are named (apart from the priest Phineas, in 20:28). This anonymity is meant to suggest that these men and women stand for all of their “type” in Israel. This is how Levites lived. This is how fathers thought. This is how women were treated. It is a dark picture, which is about to become far darker.

- Tim Keller



Judges 19:1-2

In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain **Levite** was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. And **his concubine** was **unfaithful** to him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there some four months.

Judges 19:3-4

Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple of donkeys. And she brought him into her father's house. And when the girl's father saw him, **he came with joy to meet him.** And his father-in-law, the girl's father, **made him stay**, and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and spent the night there.

Judges 19:16-21

And behold, an old man was coming from his work in the field at evening... The men of the place were Benjaminites...And the old man said, “Where are you going? And where do you come from?” And he said to him, “...I am going to the house of the LORD, but no one has taken me into his house. And the old man said, “Peace be to you; I will care for all your wants. Only, **do not spend the night in the square.**” So he brought him into his house and gave the donkeys feed. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

Judges 19:22-23

As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, “Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him.” And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, **do not do this vile thing.**”

Judges 19:24-25

Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine. Let me bring them out now. Violate them and do with them what seems good to you, but against this man do not do this outrageous thing.” But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.

If ever a human being endured a night of utter horror, it was she. That night must have been for her as dark as the pit itself.

- Leon Morris



Judges 19:27-28

And **her master** rose up in the morning, and when he opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, behold, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, **with her hands on the threshold**. He said to her, “Get up, let us be going.” But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey, and the man rose up and went away to his home.

Judges 19:29-30

And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and taking hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. And all who saw it said, “Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; **consider it, take counsel, and speak.**”

Hosea 9:9

They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah: he will remember their iniquity; he will punish their sins.

Hosea 10:9

From the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel; there they have continued. Shall not the war against the unjust overtake them in Gibeah?

Judges 20:1-2

Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled **as one man** to the LORD at Mizpah. And the chiefs of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, 400,000 men on foot that drew the sword.

Judges 20:4-5

And the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, “I came to Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. And the leaders of Gibeah rose against me and surrounded the house against me by night. **They meant to kill me, and they violated my concubine, and she is dead.**

There is no one we run to defend more than we do ourselves.

- Paul David Tripp



Judges 20:8-11

And all the people arose **as one man**, saying, “None of us will go to his tent, and none of us will return to his house. But now this is what we will do to Gibeah: we will go up against it by lot...that when they come they may repay Gibeah of Benjamin for all the outrage that they have committed in Israel.” So all the men of Israel gathered against the city, **united as one man.**

Judges 20:12-13

And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What evil is this that has taken place among you? Now therefore **give up the men, the worthless fellows** in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and purge evil from Israel.” But the Benjaminites **would not listen to the voice of their brothers**, the people of Israel.

Judges 20:15-16

And the people of Benjamin mustered out of their cities on that day 26,000 men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who mustered 700 chosen men. Among all these were 700 chosen men who were **left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.**

Judges 20:18

The people of Israel arose and went up to Bethel and inquired of God, “Who shall go up first for us to fight **against the people of Benjamin?**” And the LORD said, “Judah shall go up first.”

Judges 1:1-2

After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, “Who shall go up first for us **against the Canaanites**, to fight against them?” The LORD said, “Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand.”

Judges 20:21

The people of Benjamin came out of Gibeah and destroyed on that day 22,000 men of the Israelites.

Judges 20:25

Benjamin went against them out of Gibeah the second day, and **destroyed 18,000** men of the people of Israel.

Judges 20:29-30

So **Israel set men in ambush** around Gibeah. And the people of Israel went up against the people of Benjamin on the third day and set themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times.

Judges 20:35-36

And the LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and the people of Israel **destroyed 25,100 men of Benjamin** that day. All these were men who drew the sword. So the people of Benjamin saw that they were defeated.

Judges 20:47-48

But **600 men turned and fled** toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon and remained at the rock of Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned back against the people of Benjamin and struck them with the edge of the sword, the city, men and beasts and all that they found. **And all the towns that they found they set on fire.**

This is not justice; it is genocide. Justice would at the very most demand the execution of the hooligans of Gibeah, and just possibly the Benjamites who came out to fight for them. What justification was there for the slaughter of the whole Benjamite society? This is the work of bitterness—which demands not one eye, but two, in revenge for every one eye lost.

- Tim Keller



Judges 21:1-3

Now the men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah, **“No one of us shall give his daughter** in marriage to Benjamin.” And the people came to Bethel and sat there till evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. And they said, **“O LORD, the God of Israel, why has this happened** in Israel, that today there should be one tribe lacking in Israel?”

Judges 21:5

And the people of Israel said, “Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come up in the assembly to the LORD?” For they had taken a great oath concerning him who did not come up to the LORD to Mizpah, saying, “**He shall surely be put to death.**”

Judges 21:10-12

So the congregation sent 12,000...“Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword; also the women and the little ones...And they found...**400 young virgins**... and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

Judges 21:16-18

Then the elders of the congregation said, “What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?” And they said, “There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe not be blotted out from Israel. **Yet we cannot give them wives from our daughters.**” For the people of Israel had sworn, “**Cursed be he who gives a wife to Benjamin.**”

Judges 21:19-21

So they said, “Behold, there is the yearly feast of the LORD at Shiloh...And they commanded the people of Benjamin, saying, “Go and lie in ambush in the vineyards...If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and **snatch each man his wife** from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.

Judges 21:22

And when their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, ‘Grant them graciously to us, because we did not take for each man of them his wife in battle, **neither did you give them to them,** else you would now be guilty.’”

Judges 21:25

In those days there was no king in Israel.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.



I stood one day at the foot of Pilate's staircase, in Rome, and saw the poor creatures go up and down, on their knees, on what they are taught was the very staircase on which the Lord Jesus Christ stood before Pilate. I noticed sundry priests looking on, and I felt morally certain that they knew it to be an imposture

I thought that if the Lord would lend me his thunderbolts about five minutes, I would make a wonderful clearance thereabouts: but he did nothing of the kind. God is not in haste as we are. Sometimes it does suggest itself to a hot spirit to wish for speedy dealing with iniquity: but the Lord is patient and pitiful.

– Charles Spurgeon

