

Everyone Did What Was Right In Their Own Eyes: Part III Immorality & Internal War

These final chapters might disgust you, appall you, shock you, and grieve you. They should! That's the point! This book ends on a hopeless low point. Israel, the nation that was to set the example for spiritual living as a priestly nation to the world, had instead become morally depraved. Without submitting to God and His good Word, the only outcome is deceived living. May it break your heart to see others live this way.

Here we see the second conclusion (Judges 19-21) that correlates to the first introduction (Judges 1). In the introduction, Israel failed to devote to destruction the Canaanite towns in the Promised Land. Now, we see Israel devoting to destruction their own people. How incredibly far our sin will take us if it goes unchecked.

Stop and Pray - Help me to be heartbroken like You are, Lord, over all the immorality in my world and church. Show me how You want me to respond to my world.

1. How do you show hospitality?

Read Judges 19-21 to get the whole picture. Reread Judges 19 - The Levite and His Concubine. Mark your text as instructed. *Note:* A concubine was a slave woman in ancient societies who was the legal chattel of her master, and could enter in legitimate sexual relations with him. The concubine was not a mere servant yet she was not free and did not have the rights of a free wife. Her children were to share in the inheritance of their father.

2. Hospitality - In biblical times it was believed to be a sacred duty to receive, feed, lodge, and protect any traveler who might stop at one's door (Leviticus 19:34). The stranger was treated as a guest, and men who had thus eaten together were bound to each other by the strongest ties of friendship. Why might God instruct Israel to offer this type of hospitality?

3. With this idea of hospitality in mind, answer the following questions:

a. Why would the Levite not stay in Jebus?

b. What was ironic and horribly unsettling about where they did stay?

4. We began this study of Judges by asserting that this book could be broken into three sections labeled apathy, apostasy, and anarchy. We have reached the anarchy section. Define anarchy:
 - a. From a dictionary.

 - b. From Judges 19:1 and 21:25.

5. In this state of anarchy, how did the wicked men of the city treat this Levite? List all details.

6. In this state of anarchy, social protocol carried more weight than moral convictions. Trace the response of the old man and the Levite to the end of the chapter.

Response of the old man:

Response of the Levite:

7. Read Genesis 19:1-19 and note the parallels to Judges 19. With that comparison in mind, comment on the depth of depravity into which Israel's anarchy had led them.

Read Judges 20 - Israel Fights the Benjamites. Mark your text as instructed.

8. a. Contrast the Levite's description of his experience in Gibeah in Judges 20:4-7 with the actual event.

<u>Levite's Testimony in 20:4-7</u>	<u>Actual Account in Judges 19</u>
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- b. After considering the above comparison, what do you think motivated the Levite to alert Israel by sending out the body parts? Do you think his motive was different than he claimed?

9. How should Israel have responded to this man's testimony? See Deuteronomy 19:15-21.

10. However, they first responded by making several vows or oaths. List the vows. You will have to read through Chapter 21 to find them all.

11. Secondly, they appealed to the Tribe of Benjamin.
 - a. Why was Israel's appeal for Benjamin to address the crime ineffective?

 - b. The next time you feel called to confront another about their sin, what lessons will you remember from Israel's ineffective appeal to Benjamin?

12. When did Israel as a nation first consult the Lord in this situation? In answering this question, note all Israel had done prior to consulting the Lord.

13. What was the result of handling this situation with Gibeah the way they did, instead of the way God had instructed?

Read Judges 21 - Wives for Benjamin. Mark your text as instructed.

14. After all this death and destruction, what role did Israel feel God had played in this crisis of their own creation?

15. List all the actions in Judges 21 that were “right in their own eyes” that in reality were wrong.

16. How would you describe the motive behind the Israelites’ actions throughout Chapter 21? Explain your thinking.

17.
 - a. With whom do you think this whole disaster, that cost the lives of 65,100 men plus women, children and animals of Benjamin and Jabesh Gilead, began? Why?

 - b. Where should it have stopped? How?

 - c. Is there a warning in this scenario for us today?

18. After studying the last five chapters of Judges, what do you think is the antidote to anarchy?

19. What have you seen in these last three chapters in Judges that can be applied to us today?

A Fitting Conclusion: As we conclude our study of Judges, let’s read and reflect on a quote taken from Kay Arthur. (Judges: Precept upon Precept. p. 146-147) *“Can you see how all of this parallels our age? Our society? And sadly, many times, even the church? In our apathy, we have neglected the Word of God. We do not know what “saith the Lord.” We have secondhand or thirdhand knowledge, hearsay. And so we do what is right in our own eyes. Sin is compounded upon sin, tragedy upon tragedy; and precious lives are destroyed as a result. Our salty savor is gone; hence, we are worthless. We are no longer able to stop the spread of*

corruption, for we are corrupted ourselves. Our lights have been turned down to low because men prefer darkness rather than light. It is easier, and it does not cost as much. It brings less condemnation, and for awhile we seemingly have the best of both worlds - for awhile.

I ask you, "How are we, as a society, dealing with the problem of immorality?" For a while we ignore it, refusing to see it for what it is. But finally, when the harvest of the flesh is reaped in abundance, we realize that we must do something. So what do we do? Weep? Cry out with godly sorrow? Turn to Him in genuine repentance? No! We seek our own solutions. We do what is right in our own eyes. We live together instead of taking that vow! We abort the unwanted babies...We slaughter innocents in an effort to get out of our marriage vows. We pat ourselves on the back and commend ourselves for our tolerance and understanding as we accept homosexuality as a viable lifestyle. We listen to daughters and to fathers as they share about their incestuous relationships; we seek to understand how incest might benefit the family. In our own wisdom we call evil good, and good evil; we congratulate ourselves for our progress in freeing man from the horrible guilt of Christian bigotry!

Many of our seminaries turn from the verbal, plenary inspiration of God's Word and ordain men who wield rubber swords; impotence stands in the pulpits and in the classrooms unable to bring forth the children by the Word of truth. And those in their pews are too apathetic to move; things might get better! Then, because there is no cleansing through the washing of the water of the Word, filth breeds cockroaches of apostasy which soon condemn the place. Everyone does his own thing. Anarchy reigns because His Word does not. Idols abound, and none are ashamed - only jealous because they cannot keep up with the world. They are worshipped nightly as man after man retreats to sit before his substitute god. He is spent, tired, needs a break; he has had it. He has given himself to that which is temporal. Like Samson, it was good in his eyes; and he wanted it. And man begets after his own kind as God permits his sin to be visited down to the third and the fourth generations.

And woman - grasping, needing a relationship with someone - either turns to God and worships Him or seeks out a Samson who she might shear, sapping his last vestige of commitment to God, leaving him blind and grinding at the wheel of remorse, destroyed.

Idolatry, immorality, internal war. Home is hell, and it is hell to be at home because every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. So, we seek to worm our way out of our vows, our commitments. We continue to do what is right in our own eyes. Or do we?

NOT ALL DO. There is a blessed remnant: faithful, precious souls; a generation who has learned war; those who when tested, will obey the commandments of the Lord, who will plunge their two-edged sword into the belly of the enemy, who will tear down the idolatrous altars of their fathers, who will storm the camps of infidels with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, who will drive their tent pegs through the philosophies, psychologies, and empty traditions of men that would seek to uproot truth, who will place their hands on the pillars of humanism and be willing to die if necessary.

And there is you, and there is me! "The peasantry ceased, they ceased in Israel, Until I...arose" (Judges 5:7) The leaders led and the people followed. Shall we arise...together? No need to worry about failure, for we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!"

20. After reading Kay's reflection on the book of Judges comment on the following:
- a. How were you disgusted or saddened? List the parallels to our own society.

 - b. How were you challenged? In what ways have you been moved by the Holy Spirit to "arise?"

Pray - Instruct and empower me, Lord, to arise for You!

Kyna Ritchie (original 2002; revised 2013)

Lesson 23 — Everyone Did What Was Right In Their Own Eyes — Judges 19-21

Observe your text.

Mark your text. Put a box around all time words (e.g. now, in those days, then, after, at end of day, while). Put a circle around all conditional words (e.g. but, so, thus). Put a brown jagged line under all locations (indicating if they are Israel or foreign). Underline all references, including pronouns (e.g. who, himself, her, they, your):

- the Levite in green
- the Ephraimite in Gibeah in orange
- Israel in blue (designating tribe or all above)
- the father in yellow
- wicked men of Gibeah in black
- the concubine in purple
- God in red
- numbers of dead in pink

Judges 19 – The Levite and His Concubine

1 Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine for himself from Bethlehem in Judah. 2 But his concubine played the harlot against him, and she went away from him to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah, and was there for a period of four months. 3 Then her husband arose and went after her to speak tenderly to her in order to bring her back, taking with him his servant and a pair of donkeys. So she brought him into her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he was glad to meet him. 4 His father-in-law, the girl's father, detained him; and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there. 5 Now on the fourth day they got up early in the morning, and he prepared to go; and the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Sustain yourself with a piece of bread, and afterward you may go." 6 So both of them sat down and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, "Please be willing to spend the night, and let your heart be merry." 7 Then the man arose to go, but his father-in-law urged him so that he spent the night there again. 8 On the fifth day he arose to go early in the morning, and the girl's father said, "Please sustain yourself, and wait until afternoon"; so both of them ate. 9 When the man arose to go along with his concubine and servant, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Behold now, the day has drawn to a close; please spend the night. Lo, the day is coming to an end; spend the night here that your heart may be merry. Then tomorrow you may arise early for your journey so that you may go home." 10 But the man was not willing to spend the night, so he arose and departed and came to a place opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). And there were with him a pair of saddled donkeys; his concubine also was with him. 11 When they were near Jebus, the day was almost gone; and the servant said to his master, "Please come, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it." 12 However, his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into the

city of foreigners who are not of the sons of Israel; but we will go on as far as Gibeah." 13 He said to his servant, "Come and let us approach one of these places; and we will spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah." 14 So they passed along and went their way, and the sun set on them near Gibeah which belongs to Benjamin. 15 They turned aside there in order to enter and lodge in Gibeah. When they entered, they sat down in the open square of the city, for no one took them into his house to spend the night. 16 Then behold, an old man was coming out of the field from his work at evening. Now the man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was staying in Gibeah, but the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And he lifted up his eyes and 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 He said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, for I am from there, and I went to Bethlehem in Judah. But I am now going to my house, and no man will take me into his house. 19 "Yet there is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also bread and wine for me, your maidservant, and the young man who is with your servants; there is no lack of anything." 20 The old man said, "Peace to you. Only let me take care of all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square." 21 So he took him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank. 22 While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him." 23 Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly. 24 "Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man." 25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. 26 As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man's house where her master was, until full daylight. 27 When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. 28 He said to her, "Get up and let us go," but there was no answer. Then he placed her on the donkey; and the man arose and went to his home. 29 When he entered his house, he

took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel. 30 All who saw it said, "Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!"

Judges 20 – Israel Fights the Benjamites

1 Then all the sons of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, came out, and the congregation assembled as one man to the LORD at Mizpah. 2 The chiefs of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, took their stand in the assembly of the people of God, 400,000 foot soldiers who drew the sword. 3 (Now the sons of Benjamin heard that the sons of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) And the sons of Israel said, "Tell us, how did this wickedness take place?" 4 So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "I came with my concubine to spend the night at Gibeah which belongs to Benjamin. 5 "But the men of Gibeah rose up against me and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me; instead, they ravished my concubine so that she died. 6 "And I took hold of my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout the land of Israel's inheritance; for they have committed a lewd and disgraceful act in Israel. 7 "Behold, all you sons of Israel, give your advice and counsel here." 8 Then all the people arose as one man, saying, "Not one of us will go to his tent, nor will any of us return to his house. 9 "But now this is the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up against it by lot. 10 "And we will take 10 men out of 100 throughout the tribes of Israel, and 100 out of 1,000, and 1,000 out of 10,000 to supply food for the people, that when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, they may punish them for all the disgraceful acts that they have committed in Israel." 11 Thus all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united as one man. 12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men through the entire tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is this wickedness that has taken place among you? 13 "Now then, deliver up the men, the worthless fellows in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove this wickedness from Israel." But the sons of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brothers, the sons of Israel. 14 The sons of Benjamin gathered from the cities to Gibeah, to go out to battle against the sons of Israel. 15 From the cities on that day the sons of Benjamin were numbered, 26,000 men who draw the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah who were numbered, 700 choice men. 16 Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss. 17 Then the men of Israel besides Benjamin were numbered, 400,000

men who draw the sword; all these were men of war. 18 Now the sons of Israel arose, went up to Bethel, and inquired of God and said, "Who shall go up first for us to battle against the sons of Benjamin?" Then the LORD said, "Judah shall go up first." 19 So the sons of Israel arose in the morning and camped against Gibeah. 20 The men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel arrayed for battle against them at Gibeah. 21 Then the sons of Benjamin came out of Gibeah and felled to the ground on that day 22,000 men of Israel. 22 But the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and arrayed for battle again in the place where they had arrayed themselves the first day. 23 The sons of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall we again draw near for battle against the sons of my brother Benjamin?" And the LORD said, "Go up against him." 24 Then the sons of Israel came against the sons of Benjamin the second day. 25 Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah the second day and felled to the ground again 18,000 men of the sons of Israel; all these drew the sword. 26 Then all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel and wept; thus they remained there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening. And they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 The sons of Israel inquired of the LORD (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, Aaron's son, stood before it to minister in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the sons of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?" And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand. 29 So Israel set men in ambush around Gibeah. 30 The sons of Israel went up against the sons of Benjamin on the third day and arrayed themselves against Gibeah as at other times. 31 The sons of Benjamin went out against the people and were drawn away from the city, and they began to strike and kill some of the people as at other times, on the highways, one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah, and in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 The sons of Benjamin said, "They are struck down before us, as at the first." But the sons of Israel said, "Let us flee that we may draw them away from the city to the highways." 33 Then all the men of Israel arose from their place and arrayed themselves at Baal-tamar; and the men of Israel in ambush broke out of their place, even out of Maareh-geba. 34 When ten thousand choice men from all Israel came against Gibeah, the battle became fierce; but Benjamin did not know that disaster was close to them. 35 And the LORD struck Benjamin before Israel, so that the sons of Israel destroyed 25,100 men of Benjamin that day, all who draw the sword. 36 So the sons of Benjamin saw that they were

defeated. When the men of Israel gave ground to Benjamin because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah, 37 the men in ambush hurried and rushed against Gibeah; the men in ambush also deployed and struck all the city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now the appointed sign between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise from the city. 39 Then the men of Israel turned in the battle, and Benjamin began to strike and kill about thirty men of Israel, for they said, "Surely they are defeated before us, as in the first battle." 40 But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, Benjamin looked behind them; and behold, the whole city was going up in smoke to heaven. 41 Then the men of Israel turned, and the men of Benjamin were terrified; for they saw that disaster was close to them. 42 Therefore, they turned their backs before the men of Israel toward the direction of the wilderness, but the battle overtook them while those who came out of the cities destroyed them in the midst of them. 43 They surrounded Benjamin, pursued them without rest and trod them down opposite Gibeah toward the east. 44 Thus 18,000 men of Benjamin fell; all these were valiant warriors. 45 The rest turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, but they caught 5,000 of them on the highways and overtook them at Gidom and killed 2,000 of them. 46 So all of Benjamin who fell that day were 25,000 men who draw the sword; all these were valiant warriors. 47 But 600 men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they remained at the rock of Rimmon four months. 48 The men of Israel then turned back against the sons of Benjamin and struck them with the edge of the sword, both the entire city with the cattle and all that they found; they also set on fire all the cities which they found.

Judges 21 – Wives for Benjamin

1 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin in marriage." 2 So the people came to Bethel and sat there before God until evening, and lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. 3 They said, "Why, O LORD, God of Israel, has this come about in Israel, so that one tribe should be missing today in Israel?" 4 It came about the next day that the people arose early and built an altar there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5 Then the sons of Israel said, "Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who 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 at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death." 6 And the sons of Israel were sorry for their brother Benjamin and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today.

7 "What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD not to give them any of our daughters in marriage?" 8 And they said, "What one is there of the tribes of Israel who did not come up to the LORD at Mizpah?" And behold, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. 9 For when the people were numbered, behold, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead was there. 10 And the congregation sent 12,000 of the valiant warriors there, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the little ones. 11 "This is the thing that you shall do: you shall utterly destroy every man and every woman who has lain with a man." 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 400 young virgins who had not known a man by lying with him; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. 13 Then the whole congregation sent word and spoke to the sons of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and proclaimed peace to them. 14 Benjamin returned at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had kept alive from the women of Jabesh-gilead; yet they were not enough for them. 15 And the people were sorry for Benjamin because the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. 16 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?" 17 They said, "There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, so that a tribe will not be blotted out from Israel. 18 "But we cannot give them wives of our daughters." For the sons of Israel had sworn, saying, "Cursed is he who gives a wife to Benjamin." 19 So they said, "Behold, there is a feast of the LORD from year to year in Shiloh, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south side of Lebonah." 20 And they commanded the sons of Benjamin, saying, "Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 and watch; and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to take part in the dances, then you shall come out of the vineyards and each of you shall catch his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. 22 "It shall come about, when their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, that we shall say to them, 'Give them to us voluntarily, because we did not take for each man of Benjamin a wife in battle, nor did you give them to them, else you would now be guilty.'" 23 The sons of Benjamin did so, and took wives according to their number from those who danced, whom they carried away. And they went and returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the cities and lived in them. 24 The sons of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family, and each one of them

went out from there to his inheritance. 25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
(Judges 19:1-21:25, NASB95).