

## Episode #546 Judges 19 Part 2 – The Wicked Tribe of Benjamin

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. Having completed our study of the religious decline of Israel in the idolatry of Micah and the tribe of Dan, we now starting in Judges 19 start to consider the moral decline of Israel back early after their arrival in the land. A Levite from the hill country of Ephraim has a concubine, a slave-wife, which is not according to God's plan for marriage. She cheats on him and runs away to her father's house. Later he goes to get her back. She seems to be viewed as property by both her father and her "husband." But the moral atrocities are sadly just getting started.

III. The wicked city of Gibeah. Judges 19:11-28.

- A. Last time we saw that the Levite wanted to stay at an Israelite city rather than a Canaanite one, so they decided to stay in Gibeah of Benjamin.
- B. Verse 15. When they arrive, they find no hospitality. They prepare to camp in the street therefore.
- C. Verse 16. An old man (from the previous generation?) comes from his work in the field. He was from his home in the hill country of Ephraim, but now was dwelling in Gibeah, which was mostly populated with Benjamites.
- D. Verse 17. He sees the traveler in the street. He asks him where he is coming from and where he is going?
- E. Verse 18. The Levite identifies his home in Ephraim, coming from Bethlehem in Judah. He says he is going to the house of the LORD. Bullinger thinks "house of the LORD" is Micah's house.
- F. Verse 19. He thinks they will be fine staying in the city square. They have feed for their donkeys and food for him, his female slave, and his young servant.
- G. Verse 20. The old man wishes him peace, but offers his hospitality, rather than lodging in the street.
- H. Verse 21. The old man takes him in. He feeds the donkeys, washes their feet (Middle Eastern hospitality), and feeds them.
- I. Verse 22. While they enjoy themselves, certain sons of Belial (worthlessness) surround the house, beat on the door, and demand that he bring forth the man lodging in his house so they can rape him! Note the similarity to Sodom in Genesis 19:4-5. That story was given to justify the LORD's destruction of Sodom. This story justifies the LORD's destruction of Benjamin.
- J. Verse 23. The old man acts like Lot in Genesis. He urges them against this wickedness. Middle eastern custom put great responsibility on a host for the protection and safety of his guest.
- K. Verse 24. He offers them his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine instead. The same kind of offer as Lot in Genesis 9:6-8, though there the angels stepped in and did not allow it. A terrible way to treat your own daughter! But how many people today are willing, in less dramatic ways, to sacrifice their children to satisfy the demands of their culture?
- L. Verse 25. They would not listen. Apparently the old man is more willing to offer his daughter than to actually sacrifice her. Our Levite "hero" is more than happy to

sacrifice his concubine to save himself, however. So much for his affectionate words to her! They rape her all night.

M. Verse 26. At dawn she crawls to the door and falls down there until full day.

N. Verse 27. He finds her in the morning when he gets up to travel again. She has fallen at the door with her hands gripping the frame.

O. Verse 28. He tells her to get up so they can leave. Note how “caring” he is. Note the Bible’s gentle euphemism for the death of this poor woman; God is more caring than her worthless husband. He loads her on his donkey and goes back home.

IV. The Levite’s message. Judges 19:29-30.

P. Verse 29. When he gets home he takes a knife and divides her body, bones and all. He sends out a grisly message to all places in Israel. Note: twelve pieces; did Benjamin get one too? Did every piece bear witness to her abuse?

Q. Verse 30. All the righteous in Israel are rightfully appalled that such a horrible crime has been done in Israel. They all think something should be done about it!

V. Judges 19 shows us the moral decline of Israel. We see concubinage (slave wives) openly practiced. We see the lack of morality of this slave wife and of her husband. Yet the decline in morals is most prominent among the wicked men of Benjamin. We must understand that this is what mixing with the terrible, pagan culture of the Canaanites did to Israel in just ONE generation! If this is the result of living among these wicked people for even such a short time, we can well see why God demanded their total, cultural execution. We had best not question His righteous judgment, but learn the terrible consequences of living among the morally decadent. How shall we keep the next generation from being totally corrupted?