

Judges 19

January 26, 2012

In chapters 17-18 we saw the decay of the family and the decay of the ministry; leading to the decay of society; in chapter 19 we see that dark scene, followed by scenes that are even darker.

Such is the future of a people with no king, a people who will not allow God to govern them, with His Word as the final authority in their lives!

V. 1

We've seen this phrase, this description, repeatedly in the book of Judges; not simply as a prelude to the coming kingdom of Israel, but more as description of the depravity of the people.

"...there was no king in Israel..."

We've seen it in 17:6; 18:1; we will even see, that this is how the book ends, over in 21:25

This was true for the lay-man, this was true of the leader; the Levite.

Why is this Levite living in a place he didn't belong, in a remote mountain in Benjamin? Why did he acquire a concubine? Why not a wife? Although God may have permitted concubines, God never approved of them.

You would expect more from a leader, you would expect more from a Levite.

Be so careful to make the distinction between the permissive and perfect will of God!

But we kinda see the explanation there in v. 1, He wasn't living for the Lord, He was living for Himself, "He took for himself a concubine..."

V. 2

Tragically, the society is severely thrashed, it's trashed even by the Leaders of God, even by they people of God.

Throughout the account, we'll see the Levite never really loves his concubine; and although it doesn't make it right, by any means, she responds by going out on him, she plays the harlot, and she goes home to her father's house.

And how we need to search our hearts, as husbands and wives, to treat each other right, drawing your spouse closer to you, not driving her away.

And how we need to be so careful not to run away from our problems, but to run to the Lord...and bring Him our problems, ask Him for wisdom.

Make sure the in-laws, don't become out-laws; that's not good for any marriage; they say the 3rd most common reason for divorce is the over-involvement of the in-laws.

V. 3-4

We read there in v. 3 that her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her...and it may have been good, but it's interesting to me that the same phrase is used in Genesis 34:3 about Shechem, where we read that "His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman."

Sounds good, huh? But Shechem went on to rape the young woman.

So...it's just a bunch of words...but she lets him in, and the Levite stayed with them at her father's house. And you don't read anything about the Lord.

V. 5-7

Now, we're not sure if the dad is trying to delay his daughter from leaving because he's going to miss her, or if these guys were just having a good time getting drunk together; but the father persuades them to stay another day.

V. 8-10a

The 5th day comes, at first the Levite stays, he delays, but when the father tries to keep him another day, he doesn't give-in this time...but, he should've been more responsible, and left earlier. Cause look what happens.

V. 10b-13

They head finally out, they come to Jebus, the home of the Jebusites, the future city of Jerusalem, but it had not yet been conquered (1 Chronicles 11:4-5; Joshua 15:8, 63). These were non-believers, pagans; so the Levite refuses to stay there, he says, "let's press on to Gibeah, maybe even Rama, assuming it would be safer to stay in a city of the children of Israel.

V. 14-15

They arrived late - the sun was already set; and no one seemed to be willing to take them in, which would have been very odd, given the emphasis placed on hospitality in the Middle East.

Even today, the rule of thumb in the Middle East is you should open your home for people to stay in, minimum of 3 days, and even to your enemies if necessary.

Hospitality was huge to these people...but for some strange reason, no one seemed to be willing to take them in.

V. 16-22a

The Levite, his servant and his concubine were probably getting ready to stay in the open square, but then this old man comes in after working in the field; he also happens to be from the mountains of Ephraim, and he invites the travelers to stay with him.

He tells the Levite, be at peace, let all your needs be my responsibility. So he brought him in, gave grain to the donkey, he washed their feet, and there they are...drinking again.

In v. 18, the Levite says he was “going to the house of the LORD.”

Now we’re not sure exactly what that means, for the closest thing to the house of the Lord would have been the Tabernacle in Shiloh, but that doesn’t seem to add up; there are some who suggest that it might even be in reference to the shrine that they set up in the mountains of Ephraim, something we read about in chapter 18; something that was totally unbiblical.

But, here he is, eating, and drinking, his feet are washed; they’re enjoying themselves:

V. 22b-23

They’re having a good time, eating and drinking, at a time when they probably should have been praying.

And suddenly his house is surrounded, certain men, perverted men, began to beat on the door. There was someone they saw, who caught their eye, there was a new man in town, and these men wanted to be him, it’s the sex part, in the word homosexual.

Now when we go through the story, it sounds very similar to the story of Sodom and Gomorah; but the main difference between that story in Genesis 19, and this story in Judges 19, is that Sodom and Gomorah were full-on non-believers, here we see that the guilty men in the story were those who were supposed to be the people of God, it was the children of Israel, it was the Gibeonites, from the tribe of Benjamin!

The decay of the family; the decay of the ministry; the decay of society;

The lay-men, the leaders going deeper and deeper in their depravity, and one of the signs of a people hitting rock-bottom, is when that family, that ministry, that society engages in homosexuality.

We see it so clearly in the Bible.

But so many don't see. So many call it a civil right, and yet it's not right in God's sight.

It doesn't mean that we should be mean to them, no, love em, pray for them, but whatever you do, don't give in to them;

This type of conduct is called "perverted" (v. 22); wicked (v. 23); vile (v. 24); the old man calls it an "outrage" (v. 23).

God calls it an "abomination" (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13).

And that's what we, as a society, will engage in, the more we live our lives without the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; the more we just do what's right in our own lives.

Imagine if we all went out and got in our cars, and there were no laws, no law officers, no rights, no wrongs, no green lights, no red lights, no speed limits – some say that would be fun!

Yeah, maybe, for a while, that is, until people begin to die;

You see, the mob rules, the society of anarchy; the atheism, relativism; without limitation is the death of the nation.

Things were bad in Israel...things are crumbling in this country, and we need to fight for what's right, but we need to do things God's way, not just any way.

Notice what we read next, in this man's attempt to prevent homosexual activity

V. 24-26

What type of father would offer his virgin daughter to a mob of perverted men, to be gang raped?

What type of husband, who was called to be a leader in the community, would offer his wife, to men like this, men who would use and abuse her, all night long; the men murdered her.

What type of people are we reading about?

They're people without societal standards, they're people without God.

Neglect of the family, multiple wives, adulterous affairs, gluttony, drinking, parties, laziness, lack of responsibility, no prayer life, no biblical interest, no time to go and gather with God's people in Shiloh, as a matter of fact, let's make our own religious rules, let's build our own shrine; and the Lord's leaders are gone, they lay-men are lost, cause everyone's doing what's right in their own sight.

Homosexuality, no respect for women, rape, gang rape, murder and it just continues to sink.

V. 27-30

I don't know how the man slept that night, but he does, and he gets up to go. I don't think he knew his concubine was there, he was just gonna leave without her. But when he sees her, he tells her to get up, let's go.

When he discovers she's dead, we don't read of him crying, or weeping, or mourning, he just puts her on his donkey, takes her home, takes a knife and dismembers her into 12 pieces. He sends different parts of her body to the 12 tribes of Israel; that's his way of dealing with it.

And yes, he does get the attention of the nation, we'll see that Lord willing, next week, but in all reality he was the one to blame. He didn't treat her right when she was alive, and he didn't honor her when she died.

He simply saw the sin of others, but he didn't see his own.

And rather than humbling himself and seeking the Lord, he fought fire with fire, he fought their sin, with his own sin, and if we do it that way, we will never win.

*2 Corinthians 10:1-6 (We must fight with Spiritual weapons, not carnal)

*John 12:15; Revelation 19:16 (We must crown Him as King)

Without God as King and in control of our lives, it will only get worse and worse.

You may think you've hit rock-bottom, and then the bottom gives way.

Turn to God, re-turn to God; Let Jesus be King, let Him reveal what's right and wrong!