

Chapter 19: The Crime of Gibeah

Here we reach “Rock Bottom”, the lowest point imaginable!

This is the most horrific chapter in the Bible.... it shows that the men of Gibeah had fallen as low as those in Sodom & Gomorrah from a previous age!



Vs 1: **There was no King in Israel! This is the third statement!** It emphasises the rejection of the true faith of Israel, and explains the moral chaos in the land.

Again, we meet a **Levite** in negative territory. Was he different from the one in Chapter 17? He took a concubine.... A kind of legal second wife.

Famous men who took concubines in the Bible:

Abraham in Gen 25:6

Jacob in Gen 35:22

Caleb in 1 Chron 2:46

Saul in 2 Sam 3:7

David in 2 Sam 5:13

Solomon in 1 Kgs 11:3 (300!)

Rehoboam in 2 Chron 11:21

NB: The Bible does not BLESS these types of unions

Mt 19:4-6: Jesus insists that one man/one woman was God’s original plan Cf 1 Tim 3:2

2-4: **The concubine abandoned the Levite**

Different translations in English say different things about her!! Beware of translations!

KJV says she played the harlot.....

JB says she left him in a fit of anger... probably close to the truth!

Douay V, CCB (Christian Community Bible) **and the Septuagint** don't say why she left him!

The Levite went to Bethlehem in Judah looking for her

5-10: Generous Hospitality

The woman's father welcomed the Levite and detained him for several days... so they left on the evening of the 5th day.

Journeying at night was dangerous in a society with no law-and-order, and morals having descended into the gutter.

11-15: Gibeah

They decided to spend the night at Gibeah.... **A night that went down in history for its shame**

Red Flag: No one offered them hospitality – which was a sacred law among the Chosen People

Cf. Lev 19:33-34; 25:35 Mt 25:35 Heb 13:2.

This left them standing in the public square exposed to danger.

Only **a traveller** from his own area offered hospitality.... the Levite's reason for travelling was given as **now I am going to the House of the Lord**, but it was not Shiloh!

22-26: The Crime of Gibeah

Perverted men from Gibeah came to the house demanding the Levite to abuse him!

- This was the very thing that happened to Lot in Sodom on the night that the 2 Angels visited him! Gen 19:5
- The message is that now the Chosen People are just as corrupt as Sodom....and we know what happened to Sodom!
- The master of the house tried to reason with those men, but could not
- So, **he offered** his **virgin daughter** to be abused by them **AND the Levite's concubine!**

- **The Levite took his concubine** and **handed her over** to them **knowing** what would happen! This was total betrayal of his wife.
- **Each of these men** were guilty of the crime committed. In that society men were the protectors of their women – whom they considered inferior to themselves.
- The concubine was gang-raped all night until she died on the doorstep of the house!
- Therefore, it is not difficult to see why she might have left him **since he was so callous....** Prepared to sacrifice her to an horrific death just to save his own skin!

This hellish night was not forgotten by Israel. Centuries later Hosea 9:9 referred to them: **They are deeply corrupted, as in the days of Gibeah..... O Israel you have sinned from the days of Gibeah.** Hosea 10:9



27-30: Levite discovers his dead concubine



His reaction on seeing her lying at the doorstep shows his heartlessness towards her:

Get up, and let us be going (!!)

Arriving home, **he cut her dead body into 12 pieces** and sent them to the 12 Tribes of Israel
What a grotesque way to send a message!

The **righteous anger** that he showed now would have saved her life the night before!!

He is alive and well, while she paid a horrific price to save a man who had no respect for her!

Chapter 20: Civil War

1-2: Israel mobilised for war

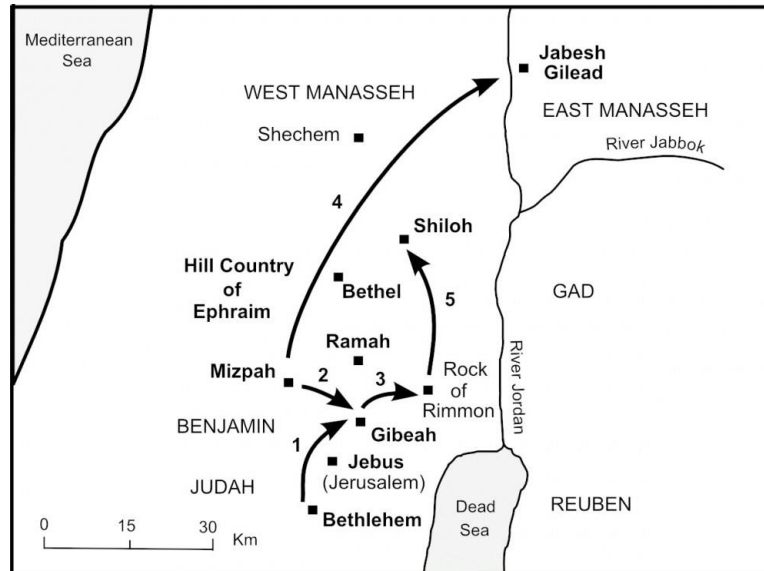
The Eleven tribes rose up against the Tribe of Benjamin because Gibeah belonged to Benjamin
It was moral outrage that gathered them at **MIZPAH** to do something to drive this evil from their midst....

What will it take in 2023 to gather moral outrage? Perhaps our children being destroyed in the schools?

The crime of Gibeah shook the national conscience: **what will shake ours?**

Deut 13: 12-18 instructed Israel on how to deal with the crisis

- 1) They must check the facts first
- 2) If the charges hold then that city must be wiped out.... i.e. pull up the weeds by the roots and they will not grow again



3-11: The Levite described the abuse and murder

He told the story to his own advantage: ‘they wanted to kill me.....but they ravished her’

He didn’t confess **that he had fed her** to the mob to be destroyed....

As one man the 11 tribes decided to be the avenger of blood, to restore justice to the land:
Deut 13: 12-18

12-17: Benjamin’s help sought and refused

They approached the leaders of Benjamin to hand over the criminals to be dealt with.... as this would prevent many men being killed in war.

Benjamin refused the authority of the 11 tribes.... there was no authority among them....no one who could take a decision on behalf of them all.

Instead, they assembled their own army to resist their brothers.... 700 picked men opposing 400,000 from the nation. **WAR IS INSANE!**

Teaching on Execution of the Guilty: Ex 21:28

The wages of sin is death: Rom 6:23

You must purge this evil from among you: Deut 17:7

The death sentence was used for murder: Lev 24:17

Idolatry: Deut 17:2-5

Practicing the occult: Lev 20:27

Blaspheming God's Name: Lev 24:16

And sexual crimes: Deut 22:24

The Trial must have two witnesses: Deut 17:6.....Cf Jn 8:1-11

In Jesus and Stephen's case they used false witnesses: Acts 7: 54-60, so the Sanhedrin broke God's sacred Law to **execute God Incarnate** and one of His greatest witnesses at that time.

In Judges the Community accepted the testimony of the Levite alone.....

18-23: **War against Benjamin**

DAY 1: Benjamin got the upper-hand killing 22,000

Israel sought the Lord more deeply now; grief makes them go deeper.....

They humbled themselves before God which they should have done the first time!! It shouldn't have taken the deaths of 22,000 men to get to this point!

But what stimulus will make the world repent today?

DAY 2: Benjamin gets the upper-hand again, killing 18,000 men!

26-28: **Israel repents before God** Now we are making progress. **All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God** Rom 3:23-24

Israel thought that only Benjamin needed to be brought low – but God sees differently!

The whole nation is in sin – having abandoned God and His Covenant.

Repentance was essential if the nation were to rise again as the People of God

At this point they fast and pray because **some demons can only be cast out this way** Mk 9:29. They must be reconciled with God's Holy Will before all else.

NB: The mention of Phineas as the high priest indicates that this event took place earlier than the narration in these chapters.... It's just that these stories fit the chaos that followed the time of Samson.

29-48: **DAY 3: Victory over Benjamin**

The nation **used the same strategy** as they did in the conquering of Ai at the time of Joshua 25,000 Benjamites were killed. Unfortunately, the loss of 40,000 of their own men made them ruthless with Benjamin.... **They almost wiped out the whole tribe!**

This slaughter was uncalled for – beyond all limits of justice. **Only the culprits should have died**
Only 600 men were left of Benjamin's tribe! Cf Joshua at Ai: ch 7: 10-, the sin of Achan

Chapter 21: Benjamin must survive

This fratricidal war almost wiped out one of the tribes of Israel! Those who met at **MIZPAH** made **a foolish oath** to not allow their daughters marry the Benjamites so this would ensure its destruction. Since the time of Abraham, they were only allowed to marry within the tribes, not outside of them.

Added to the war, this was very harsh punishment..... **which they realise too late**

They weep in the Presence of God over what they have done bringing Benjamin to the brink of extinction. They know that they should only have killed the guilty.

4-15: **The solutions are as horrific as the crime!** They **slaughter Jabesh Gilead** because they refused to help in the war against Benjamin..... they kidnap 400 young virgins from there to give them to the remaining Benjamites!

16-24: They also **created a drama at Shiloh** to let the remaining Benjamites “kidnap” young women for themselves... but it was all arranged as a way of getting around their foolish vow!

Then the Benjamites went home to begin again...and they eventually produced **the FIRST KING OF ISRAEL: KING SAUL**

CONCLUSION: the book of judges tells us that everyone did what was right in their own eyes.... But so much of what they did **was wrong!** We need leaders to speak **for** the nation, and a bad leader like Samson is better than none!

