

# BIBLE BRIEFING

## *“X-Rated Road Trip”*

JUDGES 19 – 20a

### Introduction

Chapter nineteen is like an X-rated movie that ends with a real murder. As we read it, we ought to be shocked. But before we ask ourselves, *How could these things happen?*, realize they are happening right now. Every two-and-one-half minutes, someone in America is sexually assaulted.

Judges 19:1 And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

Judges 19:2 But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.

The difference between wife and concubine was probably in the absence of the right of the bill of divorce. A concubine would generally be either

- (1) A Hebrew girl bought of her father.
- (2) A Gentile captive taken in war.
- (3) A foreign slave bought; or
- (4) A Canaanite woman, bond or free.

The rights of the first two were protected by the law, but the third was unrecognized and the fourth prohibited.

The Levite's concubine committed adultery, left her husband, and returned to her father's house. She had no rights to divorce; he was free to remarry. Instead, he made an attempt at reconciliation.

Judges 19:3 Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him.

Apparently, she agreed to reconcile. Things seemed to be going well... Until her father got overly-involved.

Judges 19:4 Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

Judges 19:5 Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way."

Judges 19:6 So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together.

Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry."

Judges 19:7 And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again.

Judges 19:8 Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.

Judges 19:9 And when the man stood to depart - he and his concubine and his servant - his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home."

I'm sure that her father meant well. He probably thought that the couple could benefit from his wisdom and insight. After all, they had just come through a very difficult time.

Based on the fact that this is going to turn out badly, I have to say that the dad was meddling. It's not untypical of parents to meddle with the marriage of their children. In-law problems are high on the list of reasons marriages break-up.

And couples: *Don't always go running to your parent(s).*

Judges 19:10 However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him.

Travel was perilous in those days. It wasn't a good idea to leave so late in the evening. Call me old fashioned, but I think we should be cautious about travel plans – especially those of our daughters.

Judges 19:11 They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it."

Judges 19:12 But his master said to him, “We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who *are* not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah.”

Judges 19:13 So he said to his servant, “Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah.”

Judges 19:14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.

Judges 19:15 They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into *his* house to spend the night.

This was shocking. It was a breach of social etiquette to not receive a traveler. It was even worse that the traveler was a Levite – because the Levites, as a whole, depended upon the hospitality of their fellow Jews. The society of the children of Israel was at an all-time low.

Judges 19:16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also *was* from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place *were* Benjamites.

Judges 19:17 And when he raised his eyes, he 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?”

Judges 19:18 So he said to him, “We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; *now* I am going to the house of the LORD. But there *is* no one who will take me into his house,

Judges 19:19 although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is* with your servant; *there is* no lack of anything.”

Finally someone who could relate! What a blessing.

Judges 19:20 And the old man said, “Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square.”

Judges 19:21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

It seemed as though they were safe. Their host was from the same area as they, and he seemed harmless and hospitable.

Judges 19:22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*”

Judges 19:23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage.

A gang of sexual predators was out roaming the streets. Is it really any different today? Every two-and-one-half minutes, someone is the victim of a sexual assault in America. Think, too, of all the sex-registrants that are living out among us. I did a search on the Megan's Law website. It lists 119 registrants in Hanford; 38 in Lemoore. There are 18 within 2 miles of my house and another location with multiple offenders.

We've coined the term "date-rape" or "acquaintance-rape" to describe what is essentially a forced sexual assault, except you already know the assailant. Drug-facilitated sexual assault is not uncommon, as there are any number of chemical agents that can be used to incapacitate a victim.

Here are some stats for rape on college campuses:

1. One in four college women surveyed are victims of rape or attempted rape.
2. 85% of rapes on campus are acquaintance rapes.
3. One in six female college students reported having been a victim of rape or attempted rape during the preceeding year.
4. The majority of reported victims and offenders are college age, with the rape victimization highest among 16-19 year olds.

As for the rapists of women on campus:

1. 84% of college men who committed rape said that what they did was definitely not rape.
2. One in fifteen male students reported committing a rape or attempting to commit rape during the preceding year.
3. Nearly one third of college men said they were likely to have sex with an unwilling partner if they thought they could get away with it.

So: Outside was a gang wanting to perform a homosexual rape. What would they do?

Judges 19:24 Look, *here is* my virgin daughter and *the man's* concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"

Judges 19:25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

The host valued hospitality over his own daughters life. The Levite valued his own life over that of his wife. The right values are necessary to guide you and guard those you love.

Judges 19:26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was*, till it was light.

Judges 19:27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.

Judges 19:28 And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

What's the big deal? After all, his concubine had previously committed adultery. Sound callous? It was; but it's not unusual – even today. There's still an underlying attitude in our society that if you dress or act a certain way, you deserve it if you're sexually assaulted; or you secretly wanted to be raped.

Here's another example: How many times do kids get blamed when they are the victims of sexual assault by adults?

It gets worse:

Judges 19:29 When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

Judges 19:30 And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!"

Her dismembered body is sent to each of the tribes. It's a gruesome representation of the fact that the nation of Israel was dis-membered – not functioning as a united people under God.

Judges 20:1 So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.

Judges 20:2 And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword.

Judges 20:3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.)

Then the children of Israel said, "Tell *us*, how did this wicked deed happen?"

Judges 20:4 So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night.

Judges 20:5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died.

Judges 20:6 So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel.

Judges 20:7 Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!"

Notice how he told the story:

1. First, he omitted any reference to the fact that he and his concubine were having marital problems, which precipitated his being in the wrong place at the wrong time.
2. Second, he made it sound as though Gibeah had been his intended destination, omitting any mention of his ignoring advice to stay in Jerusalem.
3. Third, he inflated his personal danger by claiming that the men intended to kill him.
4. Fourth, he omitted the detail that he how with cowardice thrust out his concubine.

Judges 20:8 So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None *of us* will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house;

Judges 20:9 but now this *is* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: *We will go up* against it by lot.

Judges 20:10 We will take ten men out of *every* hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of *every* thousand, and a thousand out of *every* ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel."

Judges 20:11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

We are sometimes too quick to believe the lame excuses of others.

Bent only on revenge, they failed to seek the Lord.

Judges 20:12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What *is* this wickedness that has occurred among you?  
Judges 20:13 Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!” But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.

Judges 20:14 Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel.

Judges 20:15 And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men.

Judges 20:16 Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair’s *breadth* and not miss.

For their part, the Benjamites refused to get the straight story. They were willing to die defending these perverted men.

Judges 20:17 Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these *were* men of war.

Judges 20:18 Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, “Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?”

The LORD said, “Judah first!”

Judges 20:19 So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah.

Sounds good... But notice that they approached God with the wrong question. They asked, *Which shall go first?*, when they should have asked, *What should we do?* They had already made-up their minds.

God told them to send Judah first because the woman who had been assaulted and killed was from Judah. It was wisdom from the Lord, but still no indication that God was blessing their plan.

Judges 20:20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah.

Judges 20:21 Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites.

Judges 20:22 And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day.

Battle Number One didn't go so well! Superior numbers do not automatically insure victory.

Judges 20:23 Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?"

And the LORD said, "Go up against him."

Judges 20:24 So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day.

Judges 20:25 And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel; all these drew the sword.

Sounds good. But they still lost a great deal of men and were defeated. Why?

The Benjamites needed to be corrected. But the other Israelites were too eager to be God's instrument of correction; and their motive was revenge. So the Lord was teaching them a lesson as well.

All these things are an example to us. You need to be led by the Lord, with the motive of reconciliation, not revenge, when you go to correct someone. If not, **you'll get bloodied.**

Conclusion

The story will resolve itself as the book closes. The Benjamites will be defeated in a third battle. Only 600 of their soldiers will survive.

Our world is filled with stories much like, or even worse, than these. The latest *Calvary Chapel Magazine* has a feature story on Uganda. It describes the kidnapping, torture, rape, mutilation, and murder that is being carried on by the followers of Joseph Kony, leader of the satanic genocidal cult called (sadly) the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Only revival can save us.