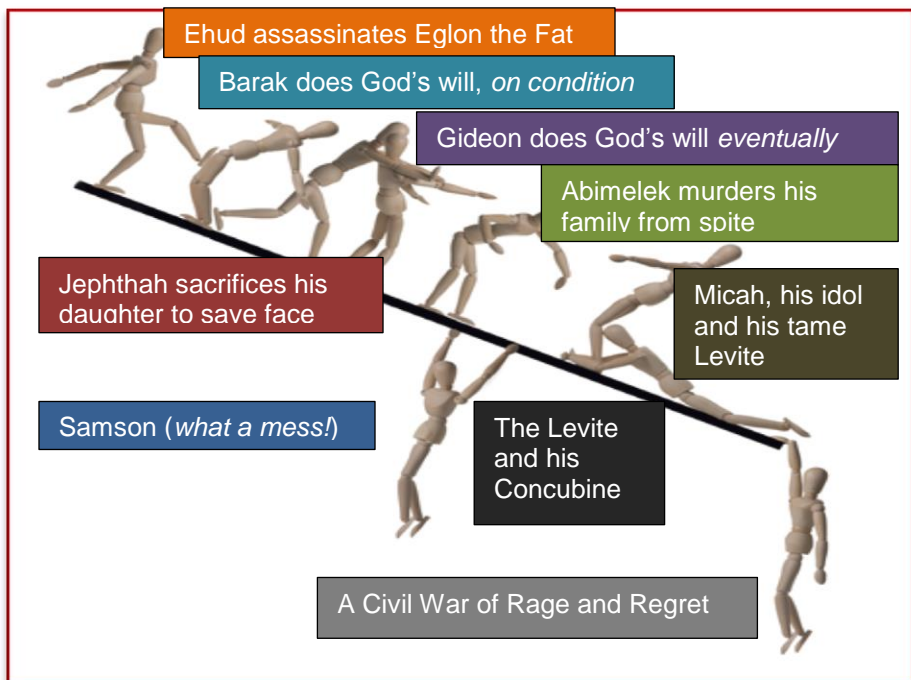




# The Book of Judges – Riding the Handbasket to Hell

## Judges Part 8 The Levite and his Concubine This is One You've NEVER Heard!

Down the Slippery Slope in the Book of Judges




**19** In those days Israel had no king.

Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a **concubine** from Bethlehem in Judah.<sup>2</sup> But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her parents' home in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months,<sup>3</sup> her husband went to her to persuade her

Chapter 19 begins with this, in case we forgot!

**Concubine** – in v. 3 the Levite is called “her husband”, but in v. 27 he’s called “her master.” Her father is the Levite’s “father-in-law” (verse 4). Her legal status is more like a slave than a wife, although her sons might be heirs of the Levite (like Ishmael).

<p>to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her parents' home, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. <sup>4</sup> His father-in-law, the woman's father, prevailed on him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there.</p>	<p><i>She was unfaithful to him</i> might simply mean here that she ran home to her parents rather than standing by her man.</p> <p>Who knows why it took him so long to go looking for her <i>after she had been there four months?</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5-9 The father-in-law persuades them to stay a couple more days, then they're on their way</b></p>	
<p><b>10-21 They head for Jerusalem, which is still under the control of the Jebusites (and still called Jebus), so they keep going until the sunset finds them in Gibeah of Benjamin. They decide to stay in the town square that night, but one of the townsmen invites them to his house – for a very good reason!</b></p>	<p>The Levite doesn't want to stay in a place where there are no Israelites, so he nixes Jebus. They shouldn't be travelling by night because of robbers and wild beasts, so they have to quit at sundown no matter where they are.</p>
<p><sup>22</sup> While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."  <sup>23</sup> The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing. <sup>24</sup> Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing."</p>	<p>Does anything about this story sound familiar?  Read Genesis 19:1-8.</p> <p>Why do we remember these towns and not Gibeah of Benjamin?  <i>Since this man is my guest . . . here is my virgin daughter and his concubine.</i></p> <p>What kind of a society is this, where the women are handed over for twisted entertainment in the name of hospitality?</p> 
<p><sup>25</sup> But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused</p>	<p>The angels blinded the Sodomites so they could not carry out their vile intent. Not so in Gibeah of Benjamin!</p>

<p>her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.<sup>26</sup> At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.</p>	<p><b>Fell down at the door</b> presumably dead</p>
<p><sup>27</sup> When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold.<sup>28</sup> He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.</p>	<p>What can explain his cold response to finding her dead on the doorstep? That she was "just his concubine"? Or has the moral life of Israel fallen so far that he has no notion of pity or grief for her, just outrage?</p> <p>But you may be shocked to hear what he does with his outrage!</p>
<p><sup>29</sup> When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel. <sup>30</sup> Everyone who saw it was saying to one another, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Just imagine! We must do something! So speak up!"</p>	<p><b>Everyone who saw it</b> was not so much outraged by the pieces of the concubine, but by the fact that it had been Israelites who had gang-raped her.</p>
<p><b>20</b> Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the Lord in Mizpah.</p> <p>The Levite tells them what happened. They all swear to punish Benjamin (especially Gibeah) for this outrage and send a huge army to attack the city. The tribe of Benjamin rushes to its defense, and slaughters tens of thousands of fellow Israelites before the tide of battle turns. In the end, all the towns of Benjamin are destroyed along with 25,000 Benjamite soldiers (only 600 escape).</p>	<p>... in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, . . .</p> <p>Was all Gibeah accountable for the actions of this mob? Was the Tribe of Benjamin accountable for the actions of Gibeah? Was Israel accountable for the actions of Benjamin?</p>

<p><b>21</b> The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: “Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.”  <sup>2</sup> The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. <sup>3</sup> “Lord, God of Israel,” they cried, “why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?”</p>	<p>Now the Israelites realize they’ve gone too far in their rampage! There are only 600 Benjamite men left, and no one in Israel will <i>give</i> their daughters to be married to them. But they are suddenly contrite as it dawns on them that if Benjamin dies off as a tribe the nation won’t be complete. What’s to do?</p>
<p>4-12 They gather to consult the Lord (and ignore Him). They attack Jabesh Gilead because none of those folks showed up for the repentance meeting, and kill everyone there except the 400 virgins living there.</p>	<p>Now they’ve got some wives to offer the surviving Benjamites to sweeten a peace deal, without going back on their oaths (remember Jephthah?).</p>
<p><sup>13</sup> Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon.<sup>14</sup> So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them.</p>	<p>200 Benjamite swordsmen without wives. Hmmm. What are the people to do? Now they feel bad about everything, but they still don’t want to break their oaths.</p>
<p>15-24 They encourage the 200 Benjamites to crash a women’s festival near Shiloh and abduct the virgins who are participating. Each man gets a wife, no oaths are broken, and if the families aren’t happy well, at least the promises are kept.</p>	<p>Are you kidding me?</p>

**Conclusion: Epitaph**

**<sup>25</sup> In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (KJV)**