

Judges 19

Verses 1 - 3

Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine for himself from Bethlehem in Judah. ² But his concubine played the harlot against him, and she went away from him to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah, and was there for a period of four months. ³ Then her husband arose and went after her to speak tenderly to her in order to bring her back, taking with him his servant and a pair of donkeys. So she brought him into her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he was glad to meet him.

Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine for himself from Bethlehem in Judah.

In chapters 17&18 we have a Levite, a grandson of Moses that is a priest for hire to a man who has idols. He gives up that job to become the priest for the tribe of Dan. The tribe of Dan hired him after they stole the idols of Micah, Jonathan's previous employer.

In chapters 19 thru 21 we have a story concerning the tribe of Benjamin that makes the previous story look like a good bed time story for children in comparison.

² But his concubine played the harlot against him, and she went away from him to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah, and was there for a period of four months.

The KJV, the NIV and the NASB 1995 use the terms whore, unfaithful and Harlot.

The NASB says she found him repugnant.

The Septuagint does not give any reason for the breakup.

See verse two in the Septuagint.

2 And his concubine departed from him, and went away from him to the house of her father to Bethleem Juda, and she was there four months.

This kind of disparity is concerning.

³ Then her husband arose and went after her to speak tenderly to her in order to bring her back, taking with him his servant and a pair of donkeys. So she brought him into her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he was glad to meet him.

All we know for sure is that she left her husband and went to her parents' house and the Levite attempted to restore the marriage.

Verses 4 - 9

His father-in-law, the girl's father, detained him; and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there. ⁵ Now on the fourth day they got up early in the morning, and he prepared to go; and the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Sustain yourself with a piece of bread, and afterward you may go." ⁶ So both of them sat down and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, "Please be willing to spend the night, and let your heart be merry." ⁷ Then the man arose to go, but his father-in-law urged him so that he spent the night there again. ⁸ On the fifth day he arose to go early in the morning, and the girl's father said, "Please sustain yourself, and wait until afternoon"; so both of them ate. ⁹ When the man arose to go along with his concubine and servant, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Behold now, the day has drawn to a close; please spend the night. Lo, the day is coming to an end; spend the night here that your heart may be merry. Then tomorrow you may arise early for your journey so that you may go home."

His father-in-law, the girl's father, detained him; and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

⁵ Now on the fourth day

⁸ On the fifth day he arose to go early in the morning

One can only assume that both men enjoyed the time they spent together because there is no reason given to assume there was some important reason for the delay.

We don't know for sure when the woman made the choice to go back with him or if she even had a choice in the matter.

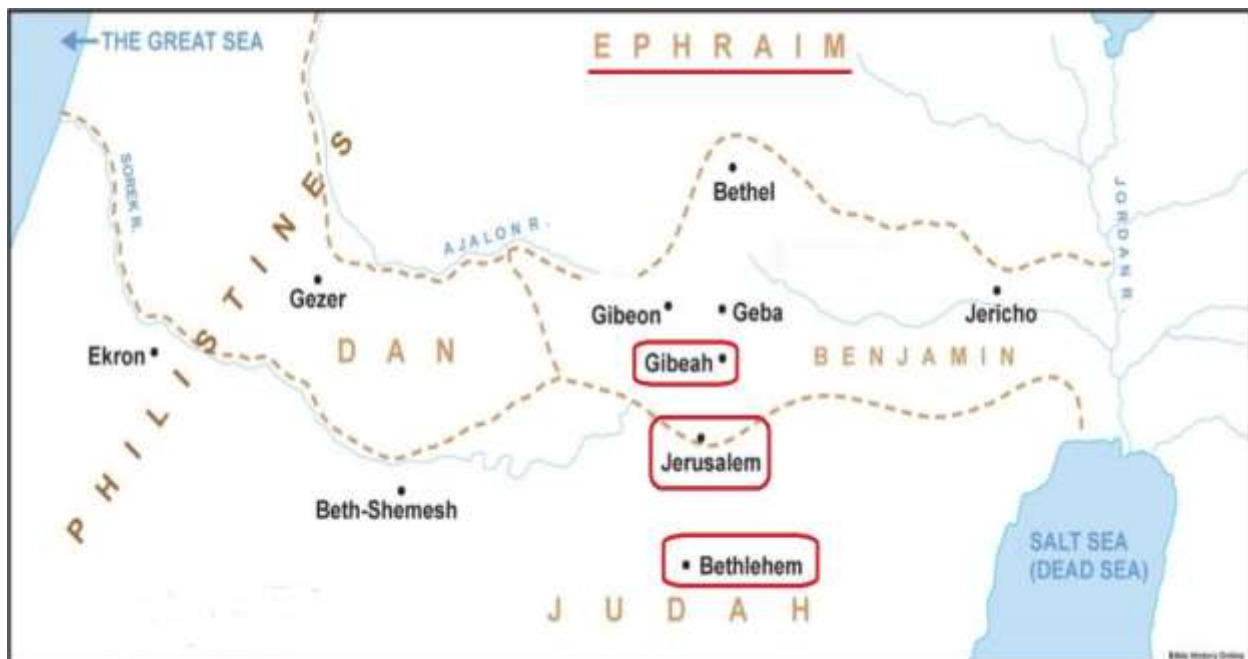
Nevertheless, this delay set a series of events into motion that will have a huge impact on the tribe of Dan and Israel as a nation.

Verses 10 - 15

¹⁰ But the man was not willing to spend the night, so he arose and departed and came to *a place* opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). And there were with him a pair of saddled donkeys; his concubine also was with him. ¹¹ When they were near Jebus, the day was almost gone; and the servant said to his master, "Please come, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it." ¹² However, his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners who are not of the sons of Israel; but we will go on as far as Gibeah." ¹³ He said to his servant, "Come and let us approach one of these places; and we will spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah." ¹⁴ So they passed along and went their way, and the sun set on them near Gibeah which belongs to Benjamin. ¹⁵ They turned aside there in order to enter *and* lodge in Gibeah. When they entered, they sat down in the open square of the city, for no one took them into *his* house to spend the night.

¹⁰ But the man was not willing to spend the night, so he arose and departed and came to *a place* opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem).

See map 1905



The three of them, the Levite, his concubine and the servant left Bethlehem and headed north for their home in Ephraim. They came to the city of Jerusalem but the Levite did not want to lodge with foreigners so they continued on to the city of Gibeah.

In the conquest of Canaan, Joshua had captured the city of Jerusalem.

See Joshua 10:23 & 12:10

But the Jebusites retook the city and held it until David captured it.

See 2 Samuel 5:6

¹⁵ They turned aside there in order to enter *and* lodge in Gibeah. When they entered, they sat down in the open square of the city, for no one took them into his house to spend the night.

There were no hotels in 1350 BC so travelers had to rely on the presence of hospitable people that would offer them some shelter for the night. The fact that they got no offers tells us something about the people of Benjamin.

Verses 16 - 21

Then behold, an old man was coming out of the field from his work at evening. Now the man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was staying in Gibeah, but the men of the place were Benjamites. ¹⁷ And he lifted up his eyes and 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?” ¹⁸ He said to him, “We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, *for* I am from there, and I went to Bethlehem in Judah. But I am *now* going to my house, and no man will take me into his house. ¹⁹ Yet there is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also bread and wine for me, your maidservant, and the young man who is with your servants; there is no lack of anything.” ²⁰ The old man said, “Peace to you. Only let me *take care of* all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square.” ²¹ So he took him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank.

²⁰ The old man said, “Peace to you. Only let me *take care of* all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square.”

The only person willing to offer some hospitality was a person from another tribe that was working in Gibeah. His warning not to spend the night in the open square has an ominous tone much like that of Sodom & Gomorrah.

Verses 22 - 26

²² While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him.” ²³ Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly. ²⁴ Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man.” ²⁵ But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought *her* out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. ²⁶ As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man’s house where her master was, until *full* daylight.

²² While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him.”

This sounds a lot like the event that took place in the city of Sodom when the men of the city wanted to have relations with the two visitors (angels). Unfortunately, there were no angels here to blind the men of the city.

See Genesis 19

The prophet Hosea made an allusion to ‘the days of Gibeah’ as a time of notorious moral depravity in Israel.

See Hosea 9:9

²⁴ Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man.”

The man deserves some credit for wanting to protect a visitor he hardly knew but his willingness to offer up these two women to be raped and abused is disgusting.

Being raised in a patriarchal society does not excuse his actions.

So the man seized his concubine and brought *her* out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn.

Scripture is never shy about telling the truth.

The Levite who talked tenderly to his concubine in order to get her back grabbed her and gave her to the evil men that wanted him.

This may be an indication of why she had left him in the first place.

²⁶ As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man's house where her master was, until *full* daylight.

With her last breath, she turned to the house where her master was. He should have tried to protect her even if it meant his own death. Unfortunately, men of that time did not value the life of a concubine.

Even spiritual men like Abraham valued his own life over that of his wife.

See Genesis 12:10-20

Verse 27 - 30

²⁷ When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ He said to her, "Get up and let us go," but there was no answer. Then he placed her on the donkey; and the man arose and went to his home. ²⁹ When he entered his house, he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel. ³⁰ All who saw *it* said, "Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!"

²⁷ When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ He said to her, "Get up and let us go," but there was no answer.

Nice guy. ☹️ ☹️ He didn't care enough to even help her up or see what he could do to comfort her. God help us.

²⁹ When he entered his house, he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel.

It makes one wonder if he did this because he was distraught about her death or because he had lost some property.

³⁰ All who saw *it* said, “Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day.

It is amazing how far the Israelites had fallen and how fast it had happened.

This happened about 50 years after they had settled the land in Canaan and only 25 years since Joshua had died.