

# **How a Nation Unravels: The Book of Judges**

Lesson 10

Judges 19-20

March 13, 2022

## **When a Nation Abandons Moral Absolutes**

### **Introduction**

When this passage took place, Israel was without God-honoring leadership, and Godless behavior and moral decay became inevitable and commonplace in the absence of God-centered worship.

The passage begins with a concubine being unfaithful to her Levite husband. Her husband retrieves her, but on the journey home, they are surrounded at night by a gang of lustful, evil men that make their heinous demands known. Shockingly, the Levite husband hands the concubine over to the gang of men to appease them, then happily goes back to bed. The passage continues with examples of butchery, retribution, and denials of justice.

Missing from this story are the worship, thankfulness, and love of the Lord that subsequently appeared during the Davidic age. Instead, we see a national culture of immorality and violence. In all, Judges 19-20 is a cautionary tale of what happens when a chosen nation abandons its love for the Lord and loses its soul.

Not unlike this time in Israel's history, our culture is far from being God-fearing. Instead, there is a significant amount of selfishness, impatience, and greed.

There is hope, though, because there is hope in the Lord. As Jesus-believing individuals, we can make God-honoring decisions that influence and shape our culture. As His hands and feet, it is incumbent upon us to help shape our culture rather than be shaped by our culture.

***Memory verse: “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!” --Judges 19:30***

Pray and read Judges 19-20. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

### **What does the passage say?**

1. Why did the master refuse to stop at the city of the Jebusites when they were journeying back to Ephraim? (Judges 19:11-12)
2. How did the older man from the hill country respond to the travelers when he found out they did not have any place to stay that night? (Judges 19:16-21)
3. Who did the older man and the Levite give to the evil men when they came to the older man’s house demanding he send out the Levite? (Judges 19:23-25)
4. What did the Levite do after that? (Judges 19:27-29)

5. What did the nation of Israel decide to do because of what happened to the Levite and his concubine? (Judges 20:8-11)

### **What does the passage mean?**

1. The old man called the wicked men who came to his door “friends.” Why would he have called them “friends” when they clearly had evil intent? (Judges 19:23)
  
2. What does it say about the sense of “decency” at the time of this passage that the old man and the Levite were willing to hand over the old man’s daughter and the Levite’s concubine? (Judges 19:23-26)
  
3. What does it say about the state of morality in Israel that a Levite—who ought to have a high moral standard—could do the things that he did, and that the nation of Israel was willing to go to war and slaughter thousands to support him? (Judges 19:25-20:11)

4. What eventually happened to the nation of Benjamin (in Chapter 20) because of the actions of the gang of evil men and the hideous reaction of the Levite (in Chapter 19)? (Judges 19:22-30, 20:40-48)
5. Think about the characters in this story (e.g., the concubine, the older man, the Levite, the gang of evil men, the men from Israel). Did anyone in this passage make a decision that honored the Lord? (Judges 19-20)

### **Applying the passage**

1. In this passage, heinous actions seem to be par for the course for almost everyone. How is this normalization of abhorrent behavior like what we see in our own culture? (Judges 19:22-20:14)

