



Sermon Notes

November 25, 2007

Tim Strickland

Journey Through Judges #19
National Decay
Judges 19-21

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Introduction

Today's Message: National Decay - Falling over the edge

- The final three chapters, Judges 19-21, contain what is one of the most horrific stories in the Bible

1. The Abuse and Murder of a Levite's Concubine (19:1-30)

- a. A Warm Welcome in Bethlehem (1-9)
 - A Levite goes to make amends with his concubine, who left him
 - The Levite and his father-in-law 'Eat, drink and be merry'
- b. A Cold Welcome in Gibeah (10-21)
 - Only one man offers hospitality
- c. Rape and Murder in Gibeah (22-26)
 - Sodom revisited – Genesis 19
 - homosexuality ▪ adultery
 - rape ▪ violence/murder
 - The despicable, cowardly character of the Levite
 - *So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them*
 - *"Get up, let us be going."*
- d. A Shocking Message is sent throughout Israel (27-30)

Sermon Notes
November 25, 2007
Page 2

Journey Through Judges #19
National Decay
Judges 19-21

2. Civil War with Benjamin (20:1-48)

- a. Israel gathers for war and hears the shocking report (1-17)
 - ...*the congregation assembled as one man to the Lord...*
 - The Levite leaves out incriminating details in his story...
 - Israel acts on his testimony alone
 - Benjamin refuses the request to hand over the wicked men
- b. The Three-Part Battle (18-48)
 - 400,000 Israelites vs 26,000 Benjaminites – looks like an easy win
 - Day 1: Israel loses badly (26K dead) (18-23)
 - Day 2: Israel loses almost as badly (18K dead) (24-28)
 - Israel weeps and seeks the Lord sincerely
 - The Lord promises them victory (28)
 - Day 3: Benjamin loses badly (29-48)
 - Israel employs the old withdraw & ambush trick
 - See Israel vs Ai - Joshua 8
 - Israel burns Gibeah to the ground
 - They wipe out every person and town in Benjamin
 - Only 600 Benjaminite men are left alive

c. **NOTE** that this is the only time in the book of Judges where all Israel unites "as one man" and defeats their enemies as commanded by the Lord, except...it is one of their own tribes who they decimate.

3. Finding Wives for the Remnant of Benjamin (21:1-24)

- a. Finding Wives for Benjamin: Plan A (1-14)
 - Israel feels very badly that they have almost totally wiped out Benjamin
 - BUT they have vowed not give their wives to Benjamin so they can't help them repopulate
 - BUT they also vowed to kill any tribe/clan that didn't show up to destroy Benjamin
 - Foolish Vows, like Jephthah – Judges 11:29-40
 - SO they wipe out Jabesh Gilead (who didn't show up) except for their 400 virgin women and give them to Benjamin

Sermon Notes
November 25, 2007
Page 3

Journey Through Judges #19
National Decay
Judges 19-21

- b. Finding Wives for Benjamin: Plan B (15-24)
- BUT they are still 200 wives short
 - SO they ask the Benjaminites to kidnap the virgin women who come to dance at the annual feast at Shiloh, and they will turn a blind eye
 - THAT WAY Israel will technically keep its vow, since the women will be kidnapped, not given away
 - SO that is what they do
 - AND THEN everyone goes home
- c. ***NOTE the Terrible Irony!!***
- *Israel goes to war and decimates Benjamin because of the rape and murder of the Levite's concubine*
 - *Israel solves the problems that have been created, by decimating Jabesh Gilead, stealing their women, and then authorizing the kidnapping of their own women at Shiloh.*

4. What do we Make of this Train Wreck? (21:25)

Key Verse: Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- a. It is a miracle that Israel even still exists at the end of Judges (Davis)
- Nothing but grace from God
- b. Left to ourselves, without a Righteous King to lead us, this story is a vivid picture of where sin takes us
- There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.* **Proverbs 14:12**
- c. The failure in the book of Judges points us to the need for a Righteous King who can free us from the bondage of sin
- Romans 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Sermon Notes
November 25, 2007
Page 4

Journey Through Judges #19
National Decay
Judges 19-21

Our Response

1. Don't confuse what is right in your own eyes with what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

Psalms 119:37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;
and give me life in your ways.

2. Recognize that doing what is right in your own eyes has grave consequences

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.

3. You do not need to be a slave to sin – you can be free in Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Questions for Application

1. What do you think God wants to teach us through this horrific story?
2. How is the Levite the opposite of a godly husband? See Ephesians 5:22-33.
3. Describe the consequences of various sins that you have observed.
4. Discuss Judges 21:25. How does this verse summarize so much of what is in the book of Judges, and how does it point us to Jesus?
5. Pray together for strength from the Lord to make Him the greatest treasure in your life. Praise Him for saving us from our sins and for being faithful to us even though we do not deserve it.

Questions, Comments? - inthebeginning@look.ca

If you have questions or comments about today's message, please drop me an email to the address above. Thanks,

Tim



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