



January 22, 2021

What Was Right in His Own Eyes

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

The last few months in this nation have caused us all to deeply reflect on our convictions and what our calling by God asks us to do. Events that have taken place, although not surprising, remind me of events recorded in the book of Judges.

Here is comment made about the events that took place as recorded in the book of Judges. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25)

A similar comment is also made in Judges 17:6; 18:1 and 19:1. Of course, the people were supposed to look to the Lord as their king and to His laws to guide them. The leaders of the community were supposed to make judgments concerning unlawful behavior. (Deuteronomy 17:1-7) If the matter was more complicated or difficult to determine, they were to go to the priests, Levites, and judges who had jurisdiction in that location. (v.8-11).

Some have said, "Well that was a different time, this is now".

What happens when the process God set up is not followed and individuals take matters into their own hands? The result is not good and a bad situation can escalate into a real disaster.

What lessons could be learned from the events of Judges 19-21?

Let's review the events recorded there. Judges 19 describes the story of a Levite taking a concubine for himself, but she was a loose woman and "played the harlot" and returned to her father's house. The Levite went after her to "sweet talk" her into returning to him. After spending a number of days at the father's house, the Levite, his servant and the concubine finally left late in the day and eventually arrived in the city of Gibeah shortly after sunset.

An old man returning from his field work invited them to lodge with him. During the evening as they were eating, "perverted men" (Judges 19:22) beat on the old man's door and demanded to have him surrender the Levite to them for engaging in sexual activity. The old man offered his

virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine instead. The perverted men disregarded the old man, but the Levite took it upon himself to bring his concubine out to them. She was raped, abused, and assaulted during the night. When the Levite arose the next morning and opened the door to go on his way, the concubine lay dead at the door. The Levite thought she was sleeping and callously and uncaringly told her to get up and be off on their journey. When he realized she was dead, he took a knife and cut her body into twelve pieces and had the pieces sent to all the territory of Israel. Kind of a nasty story, but it's recorded for us in God's Word.

The response was dramatic! 400,000 armed men showed up to inquire about what happened. The Levite related what the evil men had done with a spin that avoided disclosing his part in the events.

This is often the case when humans yield to doing what is their thinking on any given situation.

The assembled Israelites proposed assembling an armed force out of the tribes to confront the tribe of Benjamin and demand that the evil doers be handed over for capital punishment. The Benjamites refused to bring forth the guilty men and assembled an army to confront the Israelite army assembled at Gibeah. The Israelites inquired of the Lord to determine who should be at the head of the army to engage in battle. Judah was to be at the head of the army. They engaged the army of Benjamites in battle and the initial skirmish resulted in 22,000 Israelite casualties. The Israelites again inquired of the Lord at Shiloh as to whether they should continue to battle the army of Benjamites. The answer was yes, but in the battle the Israelites suffered 18,000 more casualties.

The Israelites returned to Shiloh and wept and fasted until evening and then offered sacrifices. They inquired of the Lord again through the high priest Phineas. The answer was to continue the battle and that the Israelites would be victorious the next day. The Israelites developed a plan to lure the men of Gibeah out of the city, and then the Israelites assaulted the city and were victorious and slaughtered many of the Benjamite soldiers. The Israelite soldiers proceeded to pursue the fleeing Benjamites and also attack a number of Benjamite cities and kill the inhabitants and burn the cities. "But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon" (Judges 20:47) More killing was yet to occur.

We'll continue this story of events next time and comment on the events, sins, wrong actions, and judgments that led to this disaster...

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

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