

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Judges And Ruth: Personal Blessing Amid Group Apostasy

#### Part III: Epilogue - Illustrations Of Life In The Era Of The Judges, Judges 17:1-21:25

#### B. Illustrating Moral Apostasy: A Lesson On Rightly Viewing And Relating To Women Amid Moral Apostasy (Judges 19:1-21:25)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In today's world, the welfare of women in particular is at risk due to man's apostasy in the realm of morals:

(1) Ms. Bari Weiss' review of Rebecca Traister's book, All The Single Ladies in The Wall Street Journal ("The Hubby State Welcomes You," Bookshelf, March 4, 2016, p. A11) reported that though Ms. Traister claimed many college girls are sexually active since they want to spend their time building their resumes to be career women and not homemakers, her "research assistant . . . Rhaina Cohen . . . points out that her friends have 'turned to hooking up' because 'they think that's what's expected and it's all men will permit.'" Ms. Weiss supported Ms. Cohen's view, *Ibid.*

(2) The entertainment industry is partly to blame for this, too: LightSource.com reports that "(n)ew research from the Parents Television Council found that underage female characters on primetime broadcast television are more likely to be presented in sexually exploitative scenes than adult women." (Progress, March 2016, p. 8)

(3) The business world is partly to blame as well: Suzanne Vranica and Nathalie Tadena's story, "Lack of Diversity Plagues Ad Firms" (*Ibid.*, The Wall Street Journal, March 14, 2016, p. B1) told of "a 2015 Bloomingdale's holiday catalogue" ad that "featured a woman laughing with her head turned as a young man gave her a sidelong glance," with the headline reading, "Spike Your Best Friend's Eggnog When They're Not Looking," what "critics interpreted as promoting date rape." Bloomingdale's, owned by Macy's, later apologized for the ad, *Ibid.*

The risk to the welfare of women due to moral apostasy is also widespread in business: "Last year, in a survey of 328 women in advertising, 23% of the respondents reported that they had personally experienced or witnessed sexual harassment" while "just 8% said the responsible party was punished." (*Ibid.*)

(4) The issue afflicts the church: the March-April 2016 issue of Bible Study, p. 28, ran an ad claiming that "64% of Christian men . . . say they watch porn at least once a month" and that "56% of divorce cases involve one party having an obsessive interest in pornography," what thus mostly hurts the women who are married to such men.

(5) Besides all this, if we consider the crimes being committed against women and girls by terrorists, the world sex trade plus what people in our Church have told me occurs at the local level, the problem is immense!

Need: *So we ask, "How can we at the grassroots level thrive with God's blessing amid such moral apostasy?!"*

#### I. Judges 19:1-21:25 illustrated the moral apostasy in Israel in the era of the Judges that most afflicted women in particular, which apostasy, as in our era, arose out of a vacuum of godly male rulers:

- A. The Judges 19:1-21:25 moral apostasy illustration involved a civil war caused by a Sodom-like atrocity committed against a woman, a war that only led to more appalling abuses against many more women:
1. A Levite "sojourning" (*gur*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 398; H. A. W., T. W. O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 155) in Ephraim away from his God-assigned Levitical city, acquired a woman as a concubine (*pilegish*, *Ibid.*, Kittel), a girl used by her master "husband" mainly for legal sexual relations (Z. P. E. B., v. One, p. 935), Jud. 19:1.
  2. The arrangement proved to be so vexing to the concubine that she left her master, the Levite, to return to her father's home in violation of the concubine agreement, what was then viewed as harlotry, Judges 19:2a.
  3. Four months later the Levite went to her father's home to try to win her back, which he did, Jud. 19:2b-4.
  4. However, as the Levite started home with his concubine, they were late in leaving her father so that the sun set as they entered Gibeah of Benjamin, and they had to rely on its people for housing, Jud. 19:5-15a.
  5. Only an old man in Gibeah invited them into his house, but vile men in the city, as in ancient Sodom, came to the man's door to demand that he send the Levite out for them to abuse him, Jud. 19:15b-22; Gen. 19:5.
  6. The old man, like Lot in Sodom, offered instead to send out his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine, but the vile men of Gibeah still called for him to send the Levite out to them, Jud. 19:23-25a; Gen. 19:6-8.
  7. The Levite then seized (*hazaq*, *Ibid.*, Kittel, p. 400; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 304-305) his concubine and thrust her out to the vile men, and they sexually abused her all night long, Jud. 19:25b.
  8. The next morning, the Levite found her dead at the door, so he put her body on a donkey, carried it home where he cut it into 12 parts and sent 1 part to each of Israel's 12 tribes, calling for justice, Jud. 19:26-30.
  9. Learning of this atrocity, 11 of the tribes were furious, and demanded that the tribe of Benjamin give them the men who had committed the evil, but the tribe of Benjamin refused, leading to civil war, Jud. 20:1-14.

10. God was not happy with the 11 tribes for their own sins of apostasy, so he let them initially badly lose to Benjamin (Jud. 20:15-25) before finally giving them victory over the tribe of Benjamin, Judges 20:26-36.
  11. Yet, the 11 tribes then excessively killed off all of even Benjamin's women and children, Jud. 20:37-48.
  12. Since the 11 tribes had sworn never to give their daughters in marriage to the men of Benjamin, and there were only 600 men of that tribe who survived the civil war (Jud. 20:47; 21:1-4), the 11 tribes decided to get wives for them by destroying the town of Jabesh-gilead since it had failed to send any men to the war, killing off all its people except 400 virgins to give to the men of Benjamin as wives, Judges 21:5-14a.
  13. This still left 200 men of Benjamin without wives, so the 11 tribes let 200 of their *own* virgins be kidnapped by the men of Benjamin to avoid violating their pledge not to *give* their daughters to them, Jud. 21:14b-24! Thus, the war led to 600 hundred virgins from all over Israel being afflicted by men!
- B. Judges 19:1 opens this section on Israel's moral apostasy and Judges 21:25 closes it, with both verses showing that this apostasy arose over Israel's *lack* of a *king, so that everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.*
- II. Thus, the ANSWER to this moral apostasy is met by heeding Deuteronomy 17:14-20, a passage that reveals STEPS toward producing GODLY KINGS, MEN who PROTECT and NURTURE WOMEN:**
- A. The highlight of the Deuteronomy 17:14-20 duties of Israel's king was his task to read Scripture daily.
  - B. Had there been a king in Israel who did this in the era of the Judges, he would have *soon* read Genesis 2:18-24 that taught the value of and the right treatment of women, leading him to check the Judges 19-21 abuses:
    1. In Genesis 2:18-20, God let Adam initially realize he was incomplete without a woman as his helpmeet.
    2. When God then created a woman from Adam's rib and brought her to him (Gen. 2:21-22), Adam saw her as a permanent companion who made him complete, so he loved her, he valued her, he protected her and he nurtured her **before** becoming physically intimate with her as her husband (Genesis 2:23-24).
    3. If a king read that passage and thought on it, he would have viewed concubinage as an evil that treats a woman as a sex object and not a man's beloved companion (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 411), leading the king to oppose concubinage and thus removing the cause for the concubine to flee to her father's home.
    4. Then, the old man's offer to thrust out his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine to Gibeah's vile men, the wicked intents of those men in violation of the Genesis 2:18-20 order on sexuality, the Levite's thrusting out of his concubine to them and their abuse of her, the 11 tribes' slaying of the innocent women of Benjamin that created the tribe's shortage of wives coupled with the giving of virgins to these men by killing all the rest of Jabesh-gilead and letting Benjamin's men kidnap 200 of the 11 tribes' own virgins as spouses would all not have been tolerated by the king who would conscientiously heed Genesis 2:18-24.
  - C. God also assigned each Levite to a specific city so every Hebrew was only 10 miles from a city of men who were to be occupied studying and teaching Scripture, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jos. 21:1; Mal. 2:4-7. The Levite's failure as a sojourner to stay in his God-assigned city to study Scripture and its application on how men were to view and treat women and thus example and teach it helped fuel the Judges 19-21 abuses.

***Lesson:*** *The lack of reading and applying Scripture as required of the Levites and Israel's kings led her men to adopt varying degrees of unedifying views on women that led to civil war and the further mistreatment of women.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) To offset the influence of a world in moral apostasy, (a) may especially we pastors, like the O. T. Levite Scripture specialists, keep focused on our callings to dwell on Scripture and to keep exemplifying and teaching it. (b) May all of us men daily read Scripture to define and promote the proper treatment of women -- that we view ALL women as divinely-intended companions of men who are to be highly valued, protected and nurtured by ALL men. Then, (c) may we women stay in Scripture to influence the men around us to be men of God's Word who rightly view and relate well to ALL women!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

Just before my vacation, the Lord applied this message in a meaningful way.

A young man who has grown up in our Church and who has adopted its teachings for his views brought a young woman to meet me so as to have her questions answered by my formal training in the Greek New Testament. Her questions had risen from needs in her life due to complications rising in part from the failure of men in her background to know and to apply Scripture. It was thus the ministry of the young man who knew some Bible answers plus my own input from the Greek New Testament that helped this young woman formulate a plan of action so that she would not have to flounder. She was grateful for our help, and the young man and I were glad to be of help.

**Upon trusting in Christ for salvation, may we *fill* our minds with *Scripture* for the *welfare* of women.**