

# The Book of Judges: Conclusion

When humans take life into their own hands, it leads to destruction, abuse, and despair. But with God in the picture, we're not without hope.

Judges 19-21

May 19, 2019/ May 29, 2019

## TODAY'S TEXT

Text: **Judges 19:11-25**

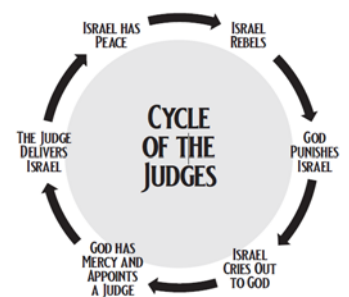
When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night."<sup>12</sup> His master replied, "No. We won't go into any city whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."<sup>13</sup> He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places."<sup>14</sup> So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin.<sup>15</sup> There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them in for the night.<sup>16</sup> That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the inhabitants of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields.<sup>17</sup> When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?"<sup>18</sup> He answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the Lord. No one has taken me in for the night."<sup>19</sup> We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, the woman and the young man with us. We don't need anything."<sup>20</sup> "You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square."<sup>21</sup> So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.<sup>22</sup> While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."<sup>23</sup> The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing."<sup>24</sup> Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing."<sup>25</sup> But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.

## FIRST THOUGHTS

- How have you seen God bring hope out of despair? Have you heard the amazing story recently of the two teenagers from Jacksonville rescued at sea after praying? God still hears and helps when our lives seem darkest.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

This final section in Judges contains some of the most graphic violence of the book. It is a tragic and pitiful picture of the downfall of God's people because they did not devote themselves to Him. The line "In those days, Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit" is repeated throughout the book. The implied truth behind it is that Israel did have a king, God, but they chose to follow their own selfishness instead of His holiness. God is preparing His people for the arrival of King David who will be the closest the Old Testament comes to a Christ-like deliverer. Ultimately Jesus will come as the "Son of David" to completely redeem not just Israel, but the whole world. He will not fall to selfishness, sin, or compromise as the all the Judges and even David himself did. The book of Judges, especially these last chapters, pictures the depths of human depravity, but also holds out hope that God has not abandoned us but sent Jesus to bring us back home.



## WATCH THE VIDEO

As you watch, pay attention for the answers to the following questions:

- When a nation abandons God, the weak are oppressed by the strong.
- When a nation abandons God, the people live in despair.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

> Read **Judges 19:11-25**

- What was the Levite expecting to find in a town of Israelites? What does he find instead? What does this tell us about the state of morality in Israel at this time?
- J.D. Greear mentions when people or a nation abandons God, the weak are brutalized by the strong. In what ways have you seen the following groups be oppressed that he mentions:
  - Minorities
  - Orphans
  - Immigrants
  - the Unborn

- What are some ways we as followers of Christ can care for the oppressed groups listed above? How can our LifeGroup be involved in caring for the weak?
- J.D. Greear also mentions the ultimate oppression is not having access to the gospel—not knowing about Jesus. How does sharing the gospel go hand-in-hand with defeating oppression? How effective is sharing the gospel without working for justice? How effective is working for justice without sharing the gospel?
- Why is it tempting to focus only on justice for the oppressed or sharing the gospel?

#### > Read Judges 20:1-15

- Is the Levite's account to the soldiers of Israel accurate? What does he leave out? What does this reveal about the state of the spiritual leaders of Israel at this point?
- How has Israel moved from fighting the Canaanites to civil war with themselves?
- What things have you seen the Devil use to divide God's people?

#### > Read Judges 21:6-25

- The video says you can tell how far Israel has run from God by the way they treat women. What does this passage tell us about the way they treat women? Think back to how the book of Judges began with the story of Deborah, a godly woman who led Israel. How have things changed?
- What would you say the way our society treats women says about its relationship with God?
- How does the book of Judges end in despair? Where is God still providing hope for His people?
- How have you been tempted to look at the world and despair? How do you remind yourself of the hope that only God offers?

### SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

**REFLECT:** Think about what you have learned from the Book of Judges during this series. What have you learned about God? What have you learned about humanity?

**STUDY:** The Book of Ruth was mentioned in the video as a counterpart to Judges showing how God brings hope to His people from an unlikely source. Spend some time this week reading Ruth (it's 4 chapters and located right after Judges in the Old Testament).

**PRAY:** Thank God for what you are learning about Him through this study of Judges. Ask Him to help you apply these truths to your everyday life.

### PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- We have no LifeGroups on Memorial Day Weekend. When we return, we will begin a summer study of Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount. You can begin reading them in Matthew 5-7.

### READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

**19th** – 1 Kings 4-5; 2 Chronicles 2; Psalm 101; 2 Thessalonians 3 | **20th** – 1 Kings 6; 2 Chronicles 3; Psalm 97; Romans 1 | **21st** – 1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 4; Psalm 98; Romans 2 | **22nd** – 1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 5; Psalm 99; Romans 3 | **23rd** – 2 Chronicles 6-7; Psalm 135; Romans 4 | **24th** – 1 Kings 9; 2 Chronicles 8; Psalm 136; Romans 5 | **25th** – 1 Kings 10-11; 2 Chronicles 9; Romans 6