

# Biblical Horror Story 4 – Concubine cut in 12 pieces

## BIBLICAL HORROR STORY BUMPER

Welcome back to Redemption Church. My name is Chris Fluitt. I am blessed to be preaching to you today. We are in the 4<sup>th</sup> week of our spooky sermon series – Biblical Horror Stories.

### Biblical Horror Story

There are dark stories in the bible that have so much to teach us. We have talked about Jephthah's vow, Herod's worms, and Jerusalem's cannibalism. If you missed any of these I urge you to go check them out on our website – redemption-church.com.

Have you heard about the Bible story of the man of God who cut up his wife into 12 pieces and mailed off the pieces to 12 of his friends?

Turn in your Bibles to Judges 19 and let's read this crazy, gross, and shocking story.

Judges 19:1 (NIV2011) In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

Judges 19:2 (NIV2011) But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her parents' home in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months,

### A Levite & his concubine

What is a Levite? A Levite is an Israelite from the tribe of Levi. It was a tribe of priests. Every priest was a Levite. Levites were designed by God to care for His tabernacle and minister God's presence.

This was a Levite – a minister of God's presence. And he owned a concubine... What is a concubine? It's complicated.

Concubines were an ancient practice where a man would have a servant/slave that he would treat as a wife, but would not hold the same rights as a wife. Concubines were used as surrogate mothers, yet their children would not be heirs. Sometimes the man could give full rights to the concubine and raise her status to wife. The ancient world was gross and women suffered greatly.

So there is a concubine who runs away and becomes unfaithful and the Levite went to retrieve his "property."

[By the way the Bible does not ever endorse this practice! Jesus clearly refutes it.]

The father of the concubine welcomes the Levite and for 8 verses tries to keep the Levite from leaving his house, but to stay another night. He stays 4 nights and finally decides to leave late on the 5<sup>th</sup> day.

Judges 19:10 (NIV2011) But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

Judges 19:11 (NIV2011) 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."

Judges 19:12 (NIV2011) His master replied, "No. We won't go into any city whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."

Judges 19:13 (NIV2011) He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places."

Judges 19:14 (NIV2011) So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin.

Judges 19:15 (NIV2011) There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them in for the night.

Judges 19:16 (NIV2011) 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.

Judges 19:17 (NIV2011) When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?"

Judges 19:20 (NIV2011) "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."

Judges 19:21 (NIV2011) So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

Judges 19:22 (NIV2011) 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.”

Judges 19:23 (NIV2011) 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.

Judges 19:24 (NIV2011) 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.”

Judges 19:25 (NIV2011) 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.

Why is this story in the Bible?

There would be something wrong with you if you are not asking this question! Seriously!! God what are we supposed to do with this story?

Let’s take one moment to emphatically tell you – God does not endorse rape. He does not endorse abuse toward men or women. God is against rape! God is against hatred and violent acts done out of evil lust filled hearts.

Unfortunately the story continues... And it does not get better.

Judges 19:26 (NIV2011) At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

Judges 19:27 (NIV2011) When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold.

Judges 19:28 (NIV2011) He said to her, “Get up; let’s go.” But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

So this Levite guy... The guy that is supposed to minister God's presence to his brothers & sisters... This Levite is not a good guy. I can't read verse 28 where he callously says "Get up; let's go" and not want to punch this guy in the face!

The woman lays motionless at the threshold of the door of the house. She was raped by evil men against her will. The reason this happened was the Levite! He threw her out into the dark to save his own self. He now looks down at her and says "Get up; let's go." The concubine is dead.

Judges 19:29 (NIV2011) When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.

So the story goes from rape to dismemberment. He cuts the dead concubine into 12 pieces.

Judges 19:30 (NIV2011) 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!"

This story just keeps getting worse...

Judges 20:1 (NIV2011) Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the Lord in Mizpah.

Judges 20:2 (NIV2011) The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of God's people, four hundred thousand men armed with swords.

Judges 20:3 (NIV2011) (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, "Tell us how this awful thing happened."

Judges 20:4 (NIV2011) So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night.

Judges 20:5 (NIV2011) During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.

Notice the indiscrepancies in his story? He left out the part where they wanted to rape him, instead saying they intended to kill him. Then also notice that he leaves out the part of the story where he pushes his concubine out the door to meet the horror meant for him.

Judges 20:6 (NIV2011) I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and outrageous act in Israel.

Judges 20:8 (NIV2011) All the men rose up together as one, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house.

Judges 20:9 (NIV2011) But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it in the order decided by casting lots.

Judges 20:12 (NIV2011) The tribes of Israel sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you?"

Judges 20:13 (NIV2011) Now turn those wicked men of Gibeah over to us so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites.

Judges 20:14 (NIV2011) From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites.

Judges 20:15 (NIV2011) At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred able young men from those living in Gibeah.

Judges 20:17 (NIV2011) Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fit for battle.

400,000 Israelites versus 26,000 Benjamites.

Judges 20:18 (NIV2011) The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?" The Lord replied, "Judah shall go first."

FINALLY! After all this reading we have done today, and all the horrific detail, someone finally mentions GOD!

But I remind you in Chapter 20 verse 9 they said they would decide who goes first into battle by casting lots... So when it says they would inquire of God, it didn't mean that they would pray and seek God's will in the situation. Also let's point out they never inquired God with this question... "What should we do? Should we attack Benjamin?" They just assumed that is what God wanted them to do.

There is no substitution for talking to God! There is not substitution for having a relationship with God.

Judges 20:20 (NIV2011) The Israelites went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah.

Judges 20:21 (NIV2011) The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day.

Judges 20:23 (NIV2011) The Israelites went up and wept before the Lord until evening, and they inquired of the Lord. They said, "Shall we go up again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites?" The Lord answered, "Go up against them."

Again the cast lots... they flip the coin... Interesting.. wonder what happens..

Judges 20:25 (NIV2011) This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords.

Judges 20:26 (NIV2011) Then all the Israelites, the whole army, went up to Bethel, and there they sat weeping before the Lord. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the Lord.

Judges 20:28 (NIV2011) ... They asked, "Shall we go up again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites, or not?" The Lord responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

Judges 20:35 (NIV2011) The Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords.

Judges 20:47 (NIV2011) But six hundred of them turned and fled into the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months.

Judges 20:48 (NIV2011) The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

## **It keeps getting worse**

It's gone from a raped to death concubine to thousands of people killed in war and townspeople who had nothing to do with the original crime killed. All the towns were burnt and everything living in them killed! It just keeps getting worse.

In the tribe of Benjamin are only left 600 soldiers who had run and hide...

Judges 21:1 (NIV2011) The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: "Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite."

Judges 21:2 (NIV2011) The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly.

Judges 21:3 (NIV2011) "Lord, God of Israel," they cried, "why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?"

Judges 21:4 (NIV2011) Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

Judges 21:5 (NIV2011) Then the Israelites asked, "Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the Lord?" For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who failed to assemble before the Lord at Mizpah was to be put to death.

Judges 21:6 (NIV2011) Now the Israelites grieved for the tribe of Benjamin, their fellow Israelites. "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel," they said.

Judges 21:7 (NIV2011) "How can we provide wives for those who are left, since we have taken an oath by the Lord not to give them any of our daughters in marriage?"

Judges 21:8 (NIV2011) Then they asked, "Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the Lord at Mizpah?"

They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly.

Judges 21:10 (NIV2011) So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children.

Nooooo! This is terrible!

Judges 21:11 (NIV2011) “This is what you are to do,” they said. “Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin.”

Judges 21:12 (NIV2011) They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

Judges 21:14 (NIV2011) So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them.

Judges 21:16 (NIV2011) And the elders of the assembly said, “With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left?”

Judges 21:18 (NIV2011) We can’t give them our daughters as wives, since we Israelites have taken this oath: ‘Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to a Benjamite.’

Judges 21:20 (NIV2011) So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, “Go and hide in the vineyards

Judges 21:21 (NIV2011) and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, rush from the vineyards and each of you seize one of them to be your wife. Then return to the land of Benjamin.

Finally the chapter ends with these words...

Judges 21:25 (NIV2011) In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

Raise your hands if you knew this story was in your Bible. Raise your hands if you ever heard it preached?

It is a dark story filled with irresponsible horror.



## **Irresponsible Horror**

The concubine ran away, rejecting her responsibility.

The Levite irresponsibly left late in the day and put them in the bad position. When the evil men came, the Levite did not take responsibility but threw the concubine out to die.

The Levite then takes the concubine, cuts her up and mails her out to the 12 tribes. He basically asks, “who is going to hold these men responsible.”

Benjamin won't hold the evil men responsible.

The 11 tribes of Israel fight irresponsible battles without really talking to God.

Israel defeats Benjamin but then turns completely bloodthirsty and irresponsibly kills almost everyone in Benjamin. They burn down towns and kill innocent women & children & even animals.

Then Israel cries and blames God! They didn't take responsibility for their actions.

Then they seek to solve their problems without God in the most irresponsible ways possible... They steal virgin girls and kill anyone in their way.

These horrific acts are caused by irresponsible people.

## **100% of our problems are caused by irresponsibility.**

Chances are great that our problem was either caused by our lack of responsibility or by someone acting irresponsibly.

## **Why is this story in the Bible?**

Well let me ask you this question. **What is the worst part of this story?**

What does your mind gravitate towards? The terrible gang rape? The dismemberment? The terrible war? The bloodlust of Israel? The stealing of virgin women and killing all in their way?

All of them are terrible & disgusting, but I want to show you something about this long, drawn out & disturbing tale. I want to draw your attention to the 1<sup>st</sup> verse & the last verse.

Judges 19:1 (NIV2011) In those days Israel had no king...

Judges 21:25 (NIV2011) In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

These similar verses serve as a parenthesis to this Biblical Horror Story. Everything within these parenthetical verses is an example of people living as if there is no king and living as they see fit.

This is the worst part of the story... They lived like there was no King, but Israel did have a King. God was supposed to be their King. But when you live like you have no King, ultimately you start living like you are king.

## **Game of thrones horror story**

What we have here is a game of thrones horror story. Let me explain. There is only one throne of absolute authority, and if everyone lives like they belong on that throne, we will end up killing each other. The characters in this story are hurting & killing each other to sit on the throne as king. The characters will do anything to exert authority over someone else.

This is how the world operates and it is horrific. There is only one way to avoid this horror.

### **Musician**

## **Make Jesus King**

If we would all put Jesus on the throne and live under his authority...

- There would be no reason to steal, because our King provides all our needs.
- There would be no reason kill someone to show someone your authority... Because God's Kingdom is a peaceful kingdom.
- There would be no abuse, rape, or oppression, because the King who sits on the throne heals us.

## **Who is on the throne?**

Is your life a horror story? Who is on the throne?

You need to be free from fear? Who is on the throne?

You need liberty from an addiction? Who is on the throne?

Is anger and bitterness ruling your life? Who is on the throne?

Greed & lust in your heart? Who is on the throne?

If any of these characters would have lived like God was their King, wouldn't it have changed the story?

If you will make Jesus your King today, I believe it will change your story.

**Come make Jesus your king!**