

How to Do Expository Bible Teaching (Part 9 of 9: Third Practical Example – Judges 19-20)

Historic Faith Series on Expository Teaching

XVIII. Example No. 3: *Perhaps the Most Disturbing Story in the Bible* (Judges 19-20)

- a. This may be the *most disturbing story* in all the Bible!
- b. The story takes place during the time when Israel was ruled by judges: leaders who rose up from among the people, were not kings. The period of the judges was from the death of Joshua until the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel.
- c. Note that the stories recorded in **Judges**, while all true, are not necessarily arranged in chronological order.
- d. Read **Judges 19:1-9**.
 - i. Background.
 1. Basic geography: Ephraim is in the north of Israel; Bethlehem is in the south, located somewhat south of Jerusalem.
 2. Jerusalem at this time (before the time of David) was known as 'Jebus'.
 3. A concubine was a wife who had fewer rights and lower social status than a 'regular' wife.
 4. Apparently, there was some conflict early in the marriage between the Levite and his concubine, who was from Bethlehem. She left her husband and went back to her father. Following that, her husband went down to the home of his father-in-law, to retrieve her.
 - ii. The husband wants to depart, but his father-in-law keeps insisting (for whatever reason) that he stay just a little longer, rest up, have another meal, etc. This odd pattern continues for several rounds, over a period of two days.
- e. Read **Judges 19:10-24**.
 - i. **Question:** Which other story of the Bible does this remind you of?
 1. **Answer:** There are striking similarities with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah from **Genesis 19**, which we just read in the prior lesson.

2. Similarities between the two stories include:
 - a. Two travelers (in the Judges story the two are accompanied by a servant) come into a town, with nowhere to lodge.
 - b. One older hospitable man offers them a place to stay, insisting that they not stay in the public square of the city.
 - c. The feet of the guests are washed, and they have an evening meal at the home of their host.
 - d. Wicked men gather around the house, looking to have homosexual sexual relations with the male guest(s).
 - e. The host offers his daughter(s) to the crowd, instead, seeking to protect his guest(s).
- ii. Other details of the story include:
 1. The Levite man and his concubine end up leaving on the evening of the fifth day (after trying unsuccessfully to leave on the morning and afternoon of the fourth day, and on the morning of the fifth day).
 2. They have two donkeys with them on their journey.
 3. They pass by Jebus (Jerusalem), which at that time was occupied by foreigners (non-Jews) and continue on to Gibeah, a city of men from the tribe of Benjamin.
- f. Read **Judges 19:25-30**.
 - i. Extremely disturbing events follow:
 1. The Levite offers his concubine to the violent crowd.
 2. They abuse her all night.
 3. In the morning, she is found dead with her hands on the threshold of the doorway.
 4. When her husband finds her dead body:
 - a. He puts her body on the donkey and takes it to his place.
 - b. Then he cuts up the body with his sword, into 12 pieces.
 - c. He sends the 12 pieces of her body throughout Israel, as a witness to the crime committed by the wicked men.

g. **Some Disturbing Questions to Ask:**

- i. Why is this gruesome story included in the Bible?
- ii. Why did God allow this to happen?
- iii. Is this a realistic indication of the low regard in which women were held in the Bible, in the Old Testament?
- iv. What are we to think of the husband of the woman, that he would turn his concubine over to the crowd like that? Also, what about how he treated her dead body, afterward?

h. Summary of the events that follow, from **Judges chapter 20**:

- i. After seeing the 12 pieces of the woman's body, the Israelites gather at Mizpah.
 - ii. There, the Levite man recounts the story of what happened.
 - iii. The Israelites decide to attack Gibeah, to avenge the horrible murder of the woman.
 - iv. The tribe of Benjamin rallies to support their fellow Benjamites, and joins with the men of Gibeah.
 - v. A major battle ensues, Benjamin against all the rest of Israel. The Benjamites win the first two battles; but are ambushed and utterly defeated on the third day.
 - vi. Only 600 Benjamite men are spared from death, those who flee to the Rock of Rimmon. All the rest are killed.
- i. Level 2 analysis – Are there any moral lessons from this disturbing story?
- i. There are evil people in the world. Some like to believe that deep down everyone is good; and if you treat people in the right way, they will do the same to you. However, that is not true! There have always been a number of truly evil, corrupt people in this world.
 - ii. While it may appear that the wicked get away with their evil, in the end they will be punished. Ultimately, justice will prevail.
 - iii. In the battle between good and evil, the forces of evil may prevail for a time; however, they will be defeated in the end.
- j. **Question:** Do you notice any details in the story that *seem superfluous*, in the sense that they do not appear to be necessary to the main story line? For example:

- i. Why do we have an account of *all the back-and-forth discussions* between the husband and his father-in-law about wanting to leave on the morning of the fourth day, being detained, then wanting to leave on the evening of the fourth day, being detained...etc.? Why was it necessary to include that seemingly insignificant detail?

XIX. Third Level (Possible Foreshadowings) in the Story of Judges 19

a. Question: Are there *any* things in this story that remind you of anything in the story of the life, death and/or resurrection of Jesus?

- i. The story *begins in Bethlehem*. A Levite man from Mount Ephraim “takes a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah”. (**Judges 19:2**)
- ii. On the journey to the place where the murder will take place, it says they take *two donkeys*. Recall from when Jesus entered Jerusalem the final time, before He was crucified:
 - 1. “Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find *a donkey tied, and a colt with her*. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, “The Lord has need of them,” and immediately he will send them.’ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”’” (**Matthew 21:1-5, NKJV**; quoting the prophecy of **Zechariah 9:9**)
- iii. An evening meal takes place on the evening of the fifth day. This is the last meal of the concubine’s life. It is in someone else’s home. The meal involves eating bread, drinking wine and foot washing.
 - 1. Jesus’ Last Supper took place on the evening of *the fifth day of the week*, Thursday night. (Sunday was the first day of the week, and Saturday, the Sabbath, was the seventh.)
 - 2. This meal was in the guest accommodations in the house of another man. (**Mark 14:12-16**)
 - 3. The Last Supper of Jesus involved:
 - a. Bread and wine (**Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**)
 - b. Foot washing (**John 13:1-17**)
- iv. Two are offered to the wicked crowd (the concubine and the virgin daughter of the homeowner).

1. Likewise, two people (Jesus and Barabbas) were offered to the wicked crowd in Jerusalem, by Pilate. (**Matthew 27:15-21**)
- v. The crowd selects one of the two, bringing about the death of that person. The blood of that innocent person, who is abused and then murdered, is on the hands of the people in that crowd.
 1. The crowd wants Barabbas released, but calls for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate refers to Him as a just person, but the crowd says, "His blood be on us and our children." (**Matthew 27:22-26**)
 2. Pilate, "wanting to gratify the crowd" (**Mark 15:15**, NKJV), "delivered Jesus to their will". (**Luke 23:25**, NKJV)
 3. Jesus was abused and violated: mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crowned with thorns before being crucified. (**Mark 15:15-20**)
- vi. The concubine dies *on the sixth day* (Friday), in a city outside of Jerusalem, at the transition between light and darkness.
 1. Jesus was crucified and died on Friday, the Day of Preparation, which is the Day before the Sabbath. (**John 19:30-33**)
 2. He died at the ninth hour (equivalent to 3pm), at the end of a three-hour period of darkness. (**Matthew 27:45-50**)
 3. Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem.
 - a. "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered *outside the gate*." (**Hebrews 13:12**, NKJV)
- vii. She was found dead *with her hands on the threshold*.
 1. Jesus was found dead with his hands nailed to the cross.
 - a. After the resurrection, Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." (**John 20:25**, NKJV)
- viii. *Twelve pieces of the body* of the deceased were sent throughout the land, as a testimony to the great crime that had been committed.
 1. Likewise, the twelve apostles were sent out to all the nations, as a witness to the whole world. (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

2. After Judas died, they had to appoint another apostle to get their number back up to twelve (**Acts 1:15-26**) Peter quotes from the psalms, “let another take his office” (**Psalm 109:8**, NKJV; designated **Psalm 108:8** in the LXX).
3. The apostles proclaimed the crime that the Jews had committed in murdering Jesus.
 - a. Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (**Acts 2:36**, NKJV)
 - b. In the sermon at Solomon’s portico Peter said, “But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.” (**Acts 3:14–15**, NKJV)
 - c. Peter said to the Gentiles in Cornelius’ household: “And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.” (**Acts 10:39**, NKJV)
- ix. The city where the evil people lived was destroyed, as a punishment for the great crime its people had committed, in brutally murdering the innocent person.
 1. Jesus warned that Jerusalem would be surrounded, then destroyed by a powerful army. He said that destruction would be unlike anything they had ever seen.
 - a. “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (**Luke 21:20–24**, NKJV)

- b. “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (**Matthew 24:21**, NKJV)
2. Destruction of Jerusalem after the death of the Christ was prophesied by Daniel, about 550 years before the time of Jesus, in the famous prophecy of the “70 weeks” or “70 sevens”.
 - a. (After Jerusalem is rebuilt and Christ, the Prince comes) “the Anointed One (= *the Christ*) shall be put to death, yet there shall be no upright judgment for Him; and he shall destroy the city and the sanctuary with the prince who is coming...” (from **Daniel 9:26**, LXX, OSB)
 - b. This prophecy (as well as **Daniel 11:31** and **Daniel 12:11**) also discusses “the abomination of desolation” appearing in the temple, which Jesus refers to in **Matthew 24:15**, and the temple sacrifices being taken away.
3. In the parable of the wicked vineyard tenants (**Mark 12:1-12**, **Luke 20:9-19** and **Matthew 21:33-46**), Jesus explained the reason why God would destroy Jerusalem: *because they killed the one beloved son of the owner of the vineyard!*
4. Many ancient writers (like Josephus and Eusebius) wrote about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in AD 70. According to Jewish historian Josephus, who saw it happen personally:
 - a. Titus waited to start the siege until the time of Passover, when the city was full of Jews who had come from other places for the religious feast. He refused to let the Jews leave the city, to magnify the impact of the starvation.
 - b. The starvation was so severe that people were driven to gruesome acts. For example, one mother cooked and ate her own infant.
 - c. Over 1 million Jews died, between the starvation and multiple battles with the Romans who repeatedly assaulted the city over several months. The Romans obliterated Jerusalem and destroyed the temple for the last time.
 - d. (Source: Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, or *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, books 5-7)

5. Tertullian (c. 160-230 AD), an early Christian writer from Carthage in North Africa, quoted from the **Daniel 9** prophecy to explain to them why their city and nation had been destroyed by the Romans.
 - a. (After quoting from the **Daniel 9** prophecy) “In such wise, therefore, did Daniel predict concerning Him, as to show both when and in what time He was to set the nations free; and how, after the passion of the Christ, that city had to be exterminated.” (Source: Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, chapter 8; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, p. 158.)
- b. If the disturbing **Judges 19** story is a true allegory of the life and death of Christ:
 - i. The *lowly concubine* from Bethlehem represented Jesus.
 1. While it may seem strange to have *a woman* representing Jesus, let us recall that He was also foreshadowed by:
 - a. A *lamb* that is slain (Passover Lamb of **Exodus 12**; also alluded to in **John 1**, **Isaiah 53** and **Revelation 5**)
 - b. A *lion* (**Genesis 49:9** “lion of the tribe of Judah”, also referenced in **Numbers 24:9** and **Revelation 5:5**)
 - c. A *bronze snake* being lifted up on a pole (**Numbers 21:4-9**, **John 3:14-15**)
 - d. A *disobedient Jewish prophet* who ran away from God and got swallowed up by a whale. (**Jonah 1-2**, **Matthew 12:39-41**)
 - e. A *pagan (Gentile) priest/king*, Melchizedek. (**Genesis 14:18-20**, **Hebrews 5-7**, **Psalms 110:4** [designated **Psalms 109:4** in the LXX])
 - f. A *rock* (several places in the Old Testament, as noted by Peter in **1 Peter 2** and by Paul in **1 Corinthians 10:4**).
 - ii. The *last meal of that woman* foreshadowed the Last Supper of Christ (bread, wine, foot-washing).
 - iii. The *wicked men of Gibeah* represented the mob in Jerusalem, who cried out demanding that of Jesus be crucified.
 - iv. The *threshold* on which the hands of the dead woman are found represented the cross, on which Christ’s hands were nailed.

- v. The *twelve parts of the woman's body* which were sent throughout the land to testify against the crime represent the apostles, parts of "the body of Christ" which went throughout the land to testify to the death and resurrection of Christ.
 - 1. The church is referred to as "the body of Christ" (**Colossians 1:24, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11-12, etc.**)
- vi. The *destruction of Gibeah* by the armies of Israel represented the destruction Jerusalem by the Romans, accomplished under Titus in AD 70.
- c. Either these apparent parallels were *woven into the story by the Holy Spirit on purpose*, to foreshadow what would be accomplished in the future; or else these parallels are *just a coincidence*.
 - i. We can apply the 'Mount Rushmore Test' that we discussed earlier.
 - ii. Look back on the *details* of the story we just looked at, which otherwise would not be essential to the main story line:
 - 1. The story starts in *Bethlehem*.
 - 2. *Two donkeys* are with them on the final trip.
 - 3. Final meal on the evening of *the fifth day*.
 - 4. Hands of the dead person are found *on the threshold*.
 - 5. *Twelve parts* of the body sent out as testimony to the crime.
 - iii. Consider the evidence, study this out for yourself, and consider. Is this just a coincidence, or a true story with amazing allegorical significance, designed by the Holy Spirit, based on events that occurred over 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem?
- d. Whenever we encounter a story where apparently extraneous details included, or where the outcome seems unjust to us, let us always consider that there may be a 'third level' running in the story, an allegorical style prophecy within the true story, woven in by the Holy Spirit, to point the way to Jesus Christ.