

The Marriage of the Levite to the Concubine in the Book of Judges

“1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. 2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months. 3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. 4 And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. 5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way. 6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry. 7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. 8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart; and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them. 9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home. 10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. 11 And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah. 13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. 14 And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. 15 And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging. 16 And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? 18 And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehemjudah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Bethlehemjudah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house. 19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing. 20 And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink. 22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the

man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. 25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. 28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. 29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. 30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.” (Judges 19:1-30 KJV)

The marriage of this Levite took place at the time that there was no king in Israel, *“1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah.” (Judges 19:1 KJV)* The effect of no king and no leadership present is bad as we had seen what had happened here in the story of this marriage and the outcome of it; the wife played the harlot and no power was there to restrain her, and later because there was no leadership and no clear define power, a group of the sons of Belial raped her. **When there is no clear define leadership for the church, and a lack of disciplinary power to restrain sin, we can see sin and abuse will be widespread and injustice will be prevalent and families will be affected.**

That Levite married a concubine not because he was married another woman before her, but because to marry a concubine was less costly, for he did not need to pay her dowry and he did not need to have a big wedding preparation. Possibly that man was not well to do with wealth and of limited resources; either he was not well prepared, but he did his best to secure a wife for him, but he got a partner not ordained to him from God.

It is mentioned, *“that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim,” (Judges 19:1 KJV)* Possibly that was not the allocated place for him to live, but he just moved there for a certain reason, or to find a better living. What we can say more about this marriage that it took place when the man, the Levite was not yet properly settled, and that marriage was at the wrong timing.

Because of all these weaknesses in preparation for this marriage the wife took advantage of him and did the following: *“2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months.” (Judges 19:2 KJV)* This woman either really became a prostitute and went with another man, or she just became unfaithful to her marriage vow and run away from him back to her father's house. But the most likely explanation is that she was unfaithful to him and went with another man, and then went back to her father's house.

The man it seemed waited for her for four months. And when there was no hope for her to come back by herself, he traveled from his place in mount Ephraim to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah trying to bring her back: ***“And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.” (Judges 19:3 KJV)***

This man can be a good example of forgiveness and reconciliation when the relationship between husband and wife goes in a somewhat wrong direction as in this marriage. Although she played the harlot with him, he still decided to go and forgive her, and to restore his marriage life with her. His going there was successful and he was able to win her back to him and they came back together.

On the way coming back a painful incident had taken place in the city of Gibeah, ***“22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. 25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light.” (Judges 19:22-26 KJV)*** There are things we learn from the above Scriptures.

Marrying in unsettled circumstances can bring havoc to the family. The lack of leadership and king in Israel and power to restrain crime had allowed wicked people to come and destroyed that family of the Levite. The crime that they did indicate that there was no system responsible to restrain such crimes. The man who invited him into his house gave a clue that the place was unsafe even they were Israelites. ***“20 And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.” (Judges 19:20 KJV)***

The Levite was so cautious not to spend the night in that part of Jerusalem that was under the Jebusites because they were non-Israelites, but his choice to lodge in Gibeah proved to be fatal. **The people of God without discipline and restrain are worse than the non-believers.** They abused the woman, his wife, the whole night that finally she died, ***“27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. 28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place.” (Judges 19:27-28 KJV)*** Her death can be due to multiple factors, being exhausted from travel, hungry, naked and exposed to cold weather the whole night, and even she might even receive beatings from them. In addition to the overwhelming shame and fears that would

make her see her life unworthy and how she will live with her husband and among the people with such a story.

The man was forced to take his wife out by himself to them, and with her agreement, ***“so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them.” (Judges 19:25 KJV)*** She could not refuse it, because she herself had done it recently, and played the harlot against her own husband.

I am not telling here that this man does not love his wife, but he was forced to do that. Just see the terror of those sons of Belial who were without restraining due to lack of leadership and head spear leader, up to the point that the Levite was forced to bring his wife to them with her consent just to save their lives from death.

Although that woman was forgiven by her husband, the justice of God reached her; she was supposed to be stoned for playing the harlot, but since no king or leadership was there she escaped that punishment. Even her husband forgiven her, but finally, she was put to death by the same kind of sin that she did against her husband.

The Levite her husband was called ***“her lord”*** in the Scripture, ***“26 and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house” (Judges 19:26-27 KJV)*** A married woman is a property of a man, and belonging of a man; the husband is her lord and she needs to obey her husband, ***“6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.” (1 Peter 3:6 KJV)***

The Hebrew Word here for ***‘lord’***, in ***Judges 19:26-27*** is ***‘adown’***, and it means, *‘firm’*, *‘strong’*, *‘lord’*, *‘master’*, *‘superintendent of household’*, *‘superintendent of affairs’*, *‘king’*, *‘husband’*, *‘prophet’*, *‘governor’*, *‘prince’*, *‘my lord’*, *‘my master’*, *‘captain’*, or *‘general recognition of superiority’*.

The Greek Word here for ***‘lord’***, in ***1 Peter 3:6*** is ***“Kurios”***, and it means, *‘he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding’*, *‘master’*, *‘lord’*, *‘the possessor and disposer of a thing’*, *the owner; one who has control of the person’*, *‘the master’*, *‘in the state: the sovereign’*, *‘prince’*, *‘chief’*, *‘the Roman emperor’*, or *‘is a title of honour expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants greet their master’*.

The woman after she was raped came back to her husband, fell on the threshold with her hands stretched toward the place that her husband was laying: ***“26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold.” (Judges 19:26-27 KJV)*** It could be that was the time that she really repented of the immorality that she had done against her husband and now had seen how bad her punishment for such a sin.

My Dear and Beloved: This is a very painful story that cannot be forgotten or even cannot be imagined that such a thing may happen or can take place or God would allow it. It did not happen out of God's hand control. God allowed it because there were factors that contributed

to it taking place. Therefore, here we are called to learn precious and unforgettable lessons from all these events.

A. Political instability will contribute vastly to the instability and the destruction of the families.

B. Never get married or approve marriage in non settled circumstances.

C. Faithfulness toward our spouses is the only way to be spared God's wrath: The unfaithfulness of that woman toward her lord, and her lack of repentance brought that calamity upon her.

D. Forgiveness toward our spouses who sins against us: We are called to forgive our spouses who sin against us and clean our hearts and minds from any grudges against them.

E. Loving again our spouses and bring them back to us inspite of their unfaithfulness: * We are called to love once again our spouses, do our best to reconcile them to us, even if they are the ones who sinned against us. * Sometimes is hard for them to apologize or to acknowledge their sins and their shortcomings. That does not mean that we should stop loving them and extend the love of God toward them.

F. Put this in your mind: * If your partner had been unfaithful to you before, but now he is with no other partner, then you need to do as this Levite did; to go and make a way to reconcile and reunite the family. * But if your spouse is still living with another partner, then there is no way for this to take place until he or she got separated.

G. Vengeance and justice belong to God: God will deal with the unfaithfulness of your spouse in His due time, but you need to forgive and show your love again.

Let us pray ...

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your Word that you send to me on time to teach me your ways and how you want me to live for you. Lord thank you for all the admonishments, corrections and the rebukes that I received in this message.

Come now to God and confess and renounce all your sins especially the sin of immorality, your lust and your marital unfaithfulness. Confess and renounce your lack of preparedness for marriage and for your marriage in a wrong timing and in wrong circumstances. Confess and renounce your worldliness, and your love for material things. Confess your anger and your non forgiveness toward your spouse. Confess and renounce your bad example and your bad stewardship in wasting the resources that God gave you in a sinful life and your idol. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers and the sinful culture of your tradition. Confess and renounce your moving away from serving God and your non willingness to suffer for Him. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins _____.

Lord I commit my life to apply your Word and the principles that I learned in this message. Lord I commit myself to live for you and be willing to suffer for you and start to serve you according to your will and plan for me.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of their sins and are willing to abide with your will and plan for their lives. Lord continue to lead them to live Godly life for you. Lord restore them back to serve you and let their repentance and the testimonies of their lives be good example to others to follow you.

Lord, bless us as your church. and help us to continue to implement the sound teaching and to clean the families, the members, the workers and the congregations of the church from the sin of immorality. Lord help us to continue to implement the teaching of preparation for Godly marriage. Lord we ask you to refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in order to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord we pray for more people to get water baptized and receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God.' Lord take the message and spread it to reach all the members, workers, congregations, the families of the church, and others who need your Word. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

The Marriage of the Levite to the Concubine in the Book of Judges. Judges 19:1-30. 1 Peter 3:6.

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