

Judges 19:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse marks a fateful decision. The Levite, having finally left his father-in-law's house after multiple delays, passes by "Jebus, which is Jerusalem." At this time, Jerusalem remained a Canaanite (Jebusite) city, not fully conquered by Israel (Judges 1:21). The Levite's decision to bypass Jerusalem seeking lodging in an Israelite city (Gibeah, verse 12) is ironic—he assumed covenant Israel would be safer than pagan Canaan, yet Gibeah would prove more dangerous than Jebus could have been.

From a Reformed perspective, this demonstrates how outward covenant status doesn't guarantee spiritual safety or moral superiority. The Levite reasoned that fellow Israelites would show hospitality and moral behavior, yet the Benjamites of Gibeah behaved worse than Sodomites. This teaches that religious identity and covenant membership, apart from genuine regeneration and Spirit-wrought transformation, provide no protection against moral collapse. Jesus warned that many would claim covenant status ("Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?") yet be rejected (Matthew 7:21-23).

Historical Context

Jerusalem (called Jebus after its Canaanite inhabitants, the Jebusites) remained unconquered until David captured it and made it his capital (2 Samuel 5:6-9). During the Judges period, it was a border city between Benjaminite and Judahite territory, with Israelites dwelling near but not controlling it (Judges 1:21). The Levite's decision to avoid lodging in this "foreign" city reflects both national pride and the assumption that covenant people would be more righteous than pagans—an assumption tragically disproven by the Gibeath Atrocity.

The journey from Bethlehem through Jerusalem to Gibeath Atrocity covered approximately 8-10 miles. Had the Levite left his father-in-law's house earlier in the day (rather than being delayed repeatedly, verses 4-9), he would have reached his Ephraim destination in daylight and avoided Gibeath Atrocity entirely. The repeated delays, the late departure, the decision to bypass Jerusalem, and the eventual arrival at Gibeath Atrocity as evening fell—all seem like tragic coincidences, yet Scripture presents them as the outworking of human sin and divine sovereignty, leading to events that would shake the entire nation.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do we sometimes assume covenant status or religious identity guarantees moral behavior, yet fail to examine actual heart transformation?
2. What does the Levite's tragic miscalculation teach about the danger of outward religious forms divorced from genuine spiritual life?
3. How should we respond when we discover that covenant communities have become as corrupt as the surrounding world?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|-------|----------|------|
| וְיָבָא | וְיָלֹא | אֶבֶן | בְּאִישׁ | לֹא | לֹל | וְיָקַם | וְיָלֹךְ | | | | |
| H3808 | would | H14 | But the man | H376 | not tarry that night | H3885 | but he rose up | H6965 | H1980 | and came | H935 |
| עַד | עַד | נִכְחָה | נִכְחָה | וְיָרֹשֶׁלְמָן | וְיָרֹשֶׁלְמָן | וְעַמְקָה | וְעַמְקָה | | | | |
| H5704 | over against | H5227 | Jebus | H2982 | H1931 | which is Jerusalem | H3389 | H5973 | | | |
| אַחֲרֵיךְ | אַחֲרֵיךְ | סְמֹרְדִים | סְמֹרְדִים | סְבֹּשֶׁת | סְבֹּשֶׁת | וְסִילְגֶּשׁ | וְסִילְגֶּשׁ | | | | |
| and there were with him two | H6776 | asses | H2543 | saddled | H2280 | his concubine | H6370 | H5973 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 15:63 (References Jerusalem): As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

Joshua 15:8 (References Jerusalem): And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward: