

# Judges 19:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house.

## Analysis

**And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house.** The Levite's response provides crucial information. His journey from Bethlehem-Judah (Beit Lechem Yehudah, בֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה, "House of Bread") to Ephraim's hill country traces the same route Ruth would later travel in reverse (Ruth 1:1-2), connecting these narratives thematically. The Levite identifies himself as Ephraimite, establishing kinship with the old man.

Most significantly, he states "I am now going to the house of the LORD" (et-beit Yahweh ani holek, אֶת-בֵּית יְהוָה אָנִי הֹלֵךְ). This phrase traditionally refers to the tabernacle, likely at Shiloh during this period (Joshua 18:1, Judges 18:31, 1 Samuel 1:3). That a Levite traveling to serve at Yahweh's house finds no hospitality in Israel indicts the nation's spiritual state. The irony is devastating: religious professionals travel to worship centers while covenant people fail basic moral obligations.

"There is no man that receiveth me to house" (ve'ein ish me'asef oti habbaitah, וְעַיִן אִישׁ מֵאַסֵּף אוֹתִי הַבַּיִתָּה) uses the verb asaf (אַסַּף, "gather in, receive"), suggesting the Levite had been waiting publicly, hoping for hospitality. The universal negative "no man" (ein ish, אֵין אִישׁ) emphasizes comprehensive failure. Reformed theology sees

this as depicting total depravity—sin so pervasive that entire communities abandon basic righteousness. Christ later experienced similar rejection: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

## Historical Context

---

"The house of the LORD" during Judges refers to the tabernacle, most likely located at Shiloh in Ephraimite territory (about 20 miles north of Gibeah). Archaeological excavations at Shiloh (modern Khirbet Seilun) have revealed a major religious center from this period, destroyed around 1050 BCE (possibly by Philistines, referenced in Psalm 78:60, Jeremiah 7:12). Levites served in rotation at the tabernacle, explaining this journey. The Levite's secondary wife status (concubine) connects to Judges' theme of declining moral standards—even religious leaders compromised biblical marriage ideals. Bethlehem, meaning "house of bread," would later gain significance as David's birthplace and ultimately the Messiah's (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1).

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

---

1. How does the Levite's journey to worship while Israel abandons covenant hospitality illustrate the disconnect between external religion and heart transformation?
2. What does the universal failure to receive the Levite teach about corporate sin and the danger of communal moral drift?

3. How does Christ's experience of rejection by His own people (John 1:11) provide hope for those rejected by religious communities despite genuine faith?

## Interlinear Text

---

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵלָיו	עָבְרָה יָמָיו	אֲנִי חֲנוּ	מִבֵּית
And he said	H413	unto him We are passing	H587	H0
H559		H5674		
לְחָם	עַד יְהוּדָה	יִרְכָּתִי	הָרֹ	אֶפְרַיִם
from Bethlehemjudah	H3063	H5704	toward the side	of mount Ephraim
H1035		H3411	H2022	H669
אֲנִי כִּי מָשָׁה	הֵלֵךְ	עַד	בֵּית	לְחָם
H8033	H595	but I am now going	H5704	H0
		H1980		from Bethlehemjudah
				H1035
וְאֵין	הֵלֵךְ	אֲנִי	יְהוָה	הַבְּיָתָה:
H369	H1980	H589	of the LORD	H1004
			H3068	
אֵין	יֵשׁ	מֵאִסְרִי	אֲנִי	הַבְּיָתָה:
and there is no man	H376	that receiveth	H853	me to house
		H622		H1004

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Judges 18:31** (Parallel theme): And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.