

Judges 19:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse directly parallels Genesis 19:4-5, where Sodom's men surrounded Lot's house demanding to "know" (sexually abuse) his angelic guests. The phrase "sons of Belial" (benei beliyaal, בְּנֵי בְלִיַּעַל) means "worthless" or "wicked" men, emphasizing their moral depravity. That this occurs in Gibeah, a Benjamite city in covenant Israel, demonstrates how far God's people had fallen—they had become indistinguishable from Canaan's most wicked cities.

The demand to "know him" (veda'enu oto) uses the same Hebrew verb (yada, יָדָע) as Genesis 19:5, clearly indicating homosexual gang rape. This represents the nadir of Israel's moral collapse during Judges. From a Reformed perspective, this passage demonstrates total depravity and the inevitable consequences of rejecting God's moral law. When "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25), autonomous moral reasoning led not to enlightenment but to Sodom-like wickedness. This validates the necessity of objective, divinely-revealed moral

standards and warns that covenant community status doesn't prevent moral collapse apart from genuine heart transformation.

Historical Context

Gibeah was a Benjamite city approximately three miles north of Jerusalem, later becoming King Saul's hometown (1 Samuel 10:26). Archaeological excavations at Tell el-Ful (ancient Gibeah) have revealed destruction layers from this period, possibly connected to the civil war described in Judges 20. The parallel to Sodom is deliberate—the narrator intends readers to see Israel had become like the cities God destroyed. While Sodom's wickedness brought divine judgment through fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:24-25), Israel's wickedness brought internal civil war and near-extinction of an entire tribe. The subsequent events—gang rape and murder of the concubine, Israel's shocked response, war killing 25,000 Benjamites and destroying their cities (Judges 20:35-48)—demonstrate that covenant people can fall to depths rivaling pagan nations when they abandon God's law.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the parallel to Sodom demonstrate that covenant status doesn't prevent moral collapse apart from genuine faithfulness?
2. What does this narrative teach about the end result of moral relativism ("everyone did what was right in his own eyes")?
3. How should the church respond when such grievous sin occurs within the covenant community?

Interlinear Text

אֶת מְיֻטִּיבֵי יָם הַמָּה		לִבָּם		וְהִנֵּה	
H1992	merry	H853	Now as they were making their hearts		H2009
H3190		H3820			
אֲנִישׁ י		הָעִיר		אֲנִישׁ י	
behold the men		of the city		behold the men	
H582		H5892		H582	
		בְּנֵי		בְּלִי עַל	
		sons		of Belial	
		H1121		H1100	
				בָּס בּוֹ	
				beset	
				H5437	
				H853	
בֵּיתְךָ		מְתַדַּפֵּק יָם		הָאִישׁ אֶל	
into thine house		and beat		man	
H1004		H1849		H413	
		H5921		H376	
		עַל		הַדָּלֶת	
		at the door		and spake	
		H1817		H559	
				יֵאמֹר	
				and spake	
				H559	
				הוֹצֵא	
				Bring forth	
				H3318	
				אֶת	
				H853	
				man	
				H376	
בָּ עַל		בֵּיתְךָ		הַזֶּקֶן	
to the master		into thine house		the old	
H1167		H1004		H2205	
				יֵאמֹר	
				and spake	
				H559	
				הוֹצֵא	
				Bring forth	
				H3318	
				אֶת	
				H853	
				man	
				H376	
אֲשֶׁר		בָּ א		אֶל	
H834		that came		H413	
		H935		into thine house	
		H1004		that we may know	
				H3045	

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 6:9 (Kingdom): Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Judges 20:5 (Parallel theme): And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead.

Deuteronomy 13:13 (Parallel theme): Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

2 Corinthians 6:15 (Parallel theme): And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

1 Samuel 25:25 (Parallel theme): Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

1 Samuel 2:12 (Parallel theme): Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

Judges 16:25 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

Jude 1:7 (Parallel theme): Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.