

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 בְּלִיעָל) means "worthless" or "wicked" men, emphasizing their moral depravity. That this occurs in Gibeah, a Benjaminite 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, יַדַּעַ) 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 Benjaminite 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

אֲתָּה	מִיטִּיב	יִם	הַמִּתְהָרָה	לְבָם	וְהַבָּה
H1992	merry	H853	Now as they were making their hearts	H3820	H2009
	H3190				
בְּלִי עַל	בָּנִי	אֲנָשִׁים	בָּעַרְבָּה	אֲתָּה נָסַבָּה	וְהַבָּה
behold the men	of the city	behold the men	sons	of Belial	beset
H582	H5892	H582	H1121	H1100	H5437
בְּיַתְּבָבָה	לְאָמָר	לְאָמָר	בְּתַחְתַּת עַל	בְּיַתְּבָבָה	מִתְּדַבֵּךְ יִם
into thine house	and beat	H5921	at the door	and spake	H413 man
H1004	H1849		H1817	H559	H376
בְּעַל	בְּיַתְּבָבָה	לְאָמָר	בְּזִקְנָה	לְאָמָר	בְּעַל
to the master	into thine house	the old	and spake	Bring forth	H853 man
H1167	H1004	H2205	H559	H3318	H376
אֲשֶׁר	בְּאָל	בְּיַתְּבָבָה	בְּזִקְנָה	וְיִדְעֶה:	
that came	H413	into thine house	H1004	H3045	
H834	H935				

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.