

Judges 19:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse presents one of Scripture's most difficult moments. The old man offers his virgin daughter (bat habetulah, בָתּ הַבְּטַולָה) and the Levite's concubine as substitutes. The verb "humble" (anu, עֲנוּ) is the same term used for rape in Deuteronomy 22:24, 29—this is not consensual intimacy but violent sexual assault. "Do with them what seemeth good unto you" (ve'asu lahem hatov be'eineichem, וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם חֶטֶב בְּעִינֵיכֶם) horrifyingly echoes Judges' refrain "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (17:6, 21:25).

Scripture records this offer without approving it. The parallel to Lot's similar offer in Sodom (Genesis 19:8) suggests both men valued male guests' safety over female family members—reflecting ancient patriarchy's failures. However, we must not miss the narrator's condemnation: this is nevalah (folly, moral outrage). The old man's description of homosexual rape as "so vile a thing" (davar hanevalah hazot, דָבָר חֲנוּבָה הַזֹּאת) while offering heterosexual rape as acceptable reveals catastrophic moral confusion.

Reformed theology affirms Scripture's inerrancy while recognizing it records human sin without endorsing it. This passage demonstrates total depravity—even

relatively righteous characters (the old man showed hospitality) harbor profound moral blindness. The narrative exposes rather than excuses patriarchal culture's evil. Christ's treatment of women (John 4:7-27, Luke 8:1-3, John 8:1-11) and Paul's declaration that in Christ "there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28) show the gospel's transformative power to overturn fallen cultural patterns. This text warns against selective moral outrage—condemning some sins while tolerating others.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern patriarchy systematically devalued women. Daughters were property to be transferred through marriage; concubines (secondary wives) had even fewer protections. The Code of Hammurabi and other ancient law codes prescribed severe punishments for male honor violations while permitting violence against women. However, biblical law—though accommodating cultural contexts—provided greater protections: laws against rape (Deuteronomy 22:25-27), inheritance rights for daughters without brothers (Numbers 27:1-11), and equality in image-bearing (Genesis 1:27). The old man's offer, while culturally explicable, violated Torah principles. Israel's descent to Canaanite-level degradation of women demonstrates covenant apostasy's effects. The subsequent gang rape and murder (vv. 25-30) triggered civil war, killing tens of thousands—God's judgment on sin.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Scripture's recording of this evil without approving it demonstrate the Bible's honesty about human depravity, including within covenant communities?

2. What does the old man's selective moral outrage (condemning homosexual rape while offering heterosexual rape) teach about the danger of prioritizing some biblical commands while ignoring others?
3. How does Christ's radical elevation of women's dignity challenge cultures (ancient and modern) that devalue female image-bearers?

Interlinear Text

הַנָּה	בְּתִי	הַבְּתוּלָה	וְפִילָגְשׁ	הָוּ
H2009	Behold here is my daughter	a maiden	and his concubine	
	H1323	H1330		H6370
אֹצִיאָה	אַזְמָנָה	אָזְתָּם	יָעֵד	מְעַשׁ
them I will bring out	H4994	H853	now and humble	H853
	H3318		H6031	
וְלֹא יְשַׁבֵּן	בְּשִׁנְיָךְ מָ	בְּעִינֵיכְם	וְלֹא יְשַׁבֵּן	בְּזַהָּה
good	with them	what seemeth	unto you but unto this man	
H0	H2896	H5869	H376	H2088
וְלֹא יְשַׁבֵּן	בְּשִׁנְיָךְ מָ	בְּעִינֵיכְם	וְלֹא יְשַׁבֵּן	בְּזַהָּה
הַזֹּאת	הַבְּבִלָּה	הַדְבָּר	מְעַשׁ	
do	a thing	vile	not so	
H3808	H6213	H1697	H5039	H2063

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 19:8 (Good): Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

Deuteronomy 21:14 (Parallel theme): And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

Genesis 34:2 (Parallel theme): And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

