

Judges 20:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge.

Analysis

The Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said—the text identifies the speaker by his relationship to the victim and his tribe (Levite). His testimony begins the formal presentation of evidence. **I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge** (לָלַךְ...לְלִלָּה, ba'ti...lalun)—his purpose was innocent: seeking overnight hospitality (לָלַךְ, lun, 'to lodge, spend the night').

The Levite's self-presentation omits crucial details revealed in chapter 19: his concubine had left him due to unfaithfulness (19:2), he retrieved her from her father's house after four months, he made poor travel decisions refusing hospitality in Jebusite Jerusalem, and his own actions contributed to the tragedy. His selective testimony—technically true but incomplete—illustrates how victims can become manipulative accusers. The text forces readers to hold two truths in tension: Gibeah's crime was genuinely horrific and demanded justice, yet the Levite's account serves his interests by omitting his failures. Truth-telling requires full disclosure, not merely factually accurate fragments designed to maximize sympathy.

Historical Context

Levites held special status as Israel's priestly tribe but owned no tribal territory (Numbers 18:20-24), living in designated cities throughout Israel. This Levite's

origin from 'the remote hill country of Ephraim' (19:1) placed him far from proper religious centers. His seeking lodging in Gibeah rather than among fellow Levites suggests the general breakdown of proper social structures during this anarchic period.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you present your side of conflicts—with full honesty or selective truth designed to maximize sympathy?
2. What responsibility do victims bear for their own contributions to tragic situations?
3. How can you pursue justice for genuine wrongs while acknowledging your own failures?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	אִישׁ	הַלֵּוִי	אִישׁ	הָאִשָּׁה	הַנִּרְצָחָה
answered	the husband	And the Levite	the husband	of the woman	that was slain
H6030	H376	H3881	H376	H802	H7523
וַיֹּאמֶר	הַגִּבְעָה	אִשׁ	לְבִנְיָמִן	בָּאתִי	אֲנִי
and said	into Gibeah	H834	that belongeth to Benjamin	I came	H589
H559	H1390		H1144	H935	
וּפִילִגְשִׁי	לָלוֹן:				
I and my concubine	to lodge				
H6370	H3885				
