
Judges 19

Judges 19:1–30

The Levite and his Violated Mistress

Outline of Chapter 19:

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- vv. 3–9 **The Levite goes after her and has a marvelous visit with his father-in-law**
- vv. 10–15 **In their return to the Levite's home, they stop for the night in Gibeah, a city of Benjamin**
- vv. 16–21 **An old man, a temporary resident of the city, takes them in**
- vv. 22–26 **The men of Gibeah threaten homosexual rape; the man's mistress is given to them**
- vv. 27–30 **The Levite cuts up the dead body of his mistress and mails the pieces to the rest of Israel**

Introduction: What occurs throughout most of the book of Judges should cause you to wonder just what the hell is going on with these Israelites. At Judges 19, we begin a three-chapter story about an early civil war in Israel. This would have occurred right after the death of Joshua and the distribution of the land. Phinehas, who was likely the writer of the final two or three chapters of the book of Joshua, is alive and ministering from the Tent of Jehovah (Judges 20:28).

What happens in this story is a concubine (i.e., a mistress) of a man is unfaithful to him and then she goes and stays at her father's house. He pursues her to bring her back home. He and his father-in-law get along famously and get tanked for several nights in a row. Finally, he and his mistress and his servants leave and they keep riding past the cities of the heathen until they come to an Israelite settlement in the territory of Benjamin. They stop there. The idea is that they are all Jewish and that someone will put them up for the night. Surprisingly to them, they hang out in the town square as strangers and no one even offers. Finally, this old man takes them in. However, that night, they are accosted by some of the degenerate men of Israel who want to have sexual relations with the young man. Not certain what to do, they offer up his mistress instead. She is raped throughout the night until she dies. Then her man, horrified, cuts her up into twelve pieces and mails these pieces to the twelve tribes of Israel with a note of explanation. Israel is shocked and they rise up against the men of Benjamin, which takes us into the next chapter.

We often like to find clear villains and heroes. Pretty much, all we find in this chapter are villains. We have a woman who has left her man (she is not his wife, which makes their relationship wrong to begin with). He pursues her to her father's house, gets along fabulously with her father, who apparently is a good old boy who likes his wine, and then the Levite, his servant and his mistress head back toward Ephraim. They have to stop off in Gibeah for the night and are taken in by an old man, who, at first, appears to be kind and noble. However, the men of the town surround this old man's house, threatening homosexual rape against the Levite, and we get a better idea as to what this old man and Levite are really like. What the Levite will do is despicable and what the men of Gibeah do is despicable beyond words. Both the Levite and the degenerate men of Gibeah are deserving of death in this chapter.

The Mosaic Law offered a perfect moral and civil code for Israel, which was a unique nation as Jehovah God ruled over Israel. One of the demands of the Law was death to those who participated in homosexual acts (Lev. 18:22–20:13). However, it also listed idolatry as a capital offense (Ex. 20:4 Deut. 4:15–19), which was not followed either (Judges 18:23–25). Therefore, homosexuality was tolerated by the tribe of Benjamin. The result was that men burned in lust for other men, to the point where homosexual rape became a common occurrence. We know this because (1) the old man will understand exactly what the group of men want who pound on his door in the middle of the night (Judges 19:22–23); he will warn the strangers against staying out in the town square for the night (Judges 19:20); and, finally, (3) the tribe of Benjamin will not give these men up as criminals in the next chapter (Judges 20:12–14). What began as a simple act of illicit, but consensual sex, resulted in great degeneracy which led to the full scale civil war in Israel.

This leads to the obvious question—how do we deal with homosexuals as believers? That’s a tough question. At one time, there were laws throughout the United States against homosexual behavior. For the most part, these laws have either been repealed or are not enforced. Whereas, in 1960 or 1970, the fact that homosexual behavior was wrong was pretty much accepted in our society, by the 1990’s, a significant portion of our population has come to view homosexuality as an issue akin to race or religion—i.e., it has become, to many, either a trait someone was born with or an act which is a matter of protected free will. Our affect upon society being much less than we would like at times, leaves us with some difficult choices. First of all, we cannot go off the deep end and execute homosexuals. Many a vigilante has been portrayed in movies and television as one who spouts Old Testament Scripture to support his vigilantism. We are not allowed to break the laws of the land in this way (as should be obvious to most people). We have to recognize that Jesus Christ died on behalf of all mankind, homosexuals included, and His grace is extended to them just as it was to us. No matter how repulsive we find the sin, it has been paid for in full on the cross. Furthermore, just because a male exhibits Lothario-type behavior and is a skirt-chaser, this does not mean that he is any less repugnant to God than the person who engages in homosexual activity. We cannot simultaneously accept the former and reject the latter. In fact, we must realize that every unbeliever is a sinner in God’s eyes; every unbeliever commits sins which God finds appalling; and every unbeliever has had those sins paid for. Just because we find one unbeliever’s sins to be less repulsive than another’s does not give us a right to be self-righteous about it. Finally, every single believer sins. **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us....if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us** (I John 1:8a, 10). We must realize that it is not our job to follow other believers around and observe and record their transgressions. We do have the difficult decision, which is the decision of a church, of what to do when one continues in overtly immoral behavior. Recall the case of incest in the church of Corinth. This involved excommunicating the offenders and actually delivering them up to the sin unto death (I Cor. 5:1–8). We all sin after salvation—however, our sins should not be flaunted before the congregation as some symbol of liberty in Christ.

One important aspect of this chapter is its time frame. Believers may want to blame the prolonged association with the Canaanites on this kind of behavior, but, in fact, this is the first generation of believers in the land. In Judges 20:28, we will see that Phinehas will be called upon to make a decision, meaning that this took place after the death of Joshua and before the death of Phinehas—first generation Israelites. The degeneracy of the Benjamites will be shocking. In fact, this act is so shocking, Hosea, over half a millennium later, will mention it (Hosea 9:9 10:9). If we choose to question the authenticity of this event, Hosea’s mention of the city and its degeneracy bear witness that these things did occur. This is an internal witness of Scripture, of which we have hundreds. There are things which we may not want to believe—e.g., the story of Job, Jonah and the big fish—which are mentioned elsewhere in Scripture as factual. An internal witness means little to the skeptical or to the unbeliever, but it assures the believer that we are speaking of real incidents which really happened.

In this chapter, we have two areas where textual criticism will be an important topic. In v. 2, we have to decide whether this young woman really committed adultery or not. Some versions tell us that she did, others indicate that she left in anger, and still others tell us that she simply left. And then, in v. 18, we have another significant problem. We have the *House of Jehovah* mentioned in some texts, but not in others. This again will impact our interpretation of this immediate passage significantly.

The actual recording of this event is quite interesting. What most likely occurred is that the Levite in this story, when he cut up the body of this woman and sent it out to the tribes of Israel, he also wrote a note. What this chapter is, is the text of that note, up until v. 30a, which records the reaction of those who read this note. The end of the chapter is a slick literary device which goes back to the end of the note; which would be the same thing that a man, having read the note, would say to the next person that he passed this note to.

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Introduction: a Mistress Leaves Her Levite Man and Returns to Her Father's Home

Slavishly literal:

And so he was in the days the those and a king—none in Israel. And so was a man of Levi sojourning in sides of hill country of Ephraim. And so he took to himself a woman—a mistress—from Bethlehem-Judah.

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Moderately literal:

And it was in those days, there [was] no king in Israel. And a man of Levi, was [temporarily] residing in the remote regions of the hill country of Ephraim. And so he took to himself a woman—a mistress from Bethlehem-Judah.

And there was no king in those days in Israel. There was a certain Levite who was temporarily living in the remote regions of the hill country of Ephraim and he took a mistress out of Bethlehem-Judah.

I think that we had better start off with a couple of various renderings:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And it came to pass in those days, when king there was none in Israel that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehem-judah.
NASB	Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying [or, sojourning] in the remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine for himself from Bethlehem in Judah.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And it cometh to pass, in those days, when there is no king in Israel, that there is a man, a Levite, a sojourner in the sides of the hill country of Ephraim, and he taketh to him a wife, a concubine, out of Beth-Lehem-Judah;

The way this chapter begins, and the way this three-chapter story ends, indicates that this was pieced together by an editor from the historical documents of that time; or that an editor added a few lines here or there. There is no indicate throughout the book of Judges that there is some sort of a public clamoring for a king; therefore, the verses like these would indicate that this material was assembled in its final form probably under the reign of Saul. This does not mean that this information was not originally recorded by eyewitnesses nor does it mean that any of the story was changed. For reasons which I never quite got, there are many in the world of Biblical exegesis who think that everything was this oral tradition that got written down hundreds of years later. This simply is not indicated. Even the very earliest information found in the Bible (e.g., the story of Jacob and Rachel) indicate that it was recorded first-hand (in the example cited, by Jacob). Just because an editor a few hundred years later inserts the fact that this took place during the time when there was no king in Israel does not mean that he assembled everything else from oral tradition. On the other hand, this does help us with the placement of these three chapters of the book of Judges. I would have placed them after chapter 1, as that is where they would have occurred chronologically. The mention of no king in Israel at the beginning and the end tells someone else that this information should be kept with the scrolls that contain the history of the Judges. That is, what is more reasonable to hypothesize, is that the history of the Judges existed on several scrolls and this history also existed on a scroll. Because the time period was roughly similar, they were always placed together. If anything, this would indicate that there were different authors for the beginning of the book of Judges and these last three chapters, with a later editor adding the first and last lines to the book, so that it is placed into its proper historical context.

The general idea is easy to grasp. We just need to deal with a couple of details. We begin with the Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which means *to be*. Many translators will render the *wâw* consecutive and *hâyâh* and the *bêyth* which follows as *when* (*The Amplified Bible*, NAB, NASB, NRSV, REB, NJB and Young). However, we do not need to insert a *when*, as this phrase and the next can just as easily stand alone. This phrase acts to connect the previous chapter to this one, providing us a good ending for the previous incident, and a good beginning for this incident; and the next begins the final recorded incident from the book of the Judges. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. As you no doubt recall, this is our theme verse for the book of Judges (see Judges 17:6 18:1 21:25).

We repeat the wâw consecutive and the Qal imperfect of *to be*, but we now have a subject, which is masculine singular construct of ʿîysh (יִישׁ) [pronounced *eesh*], which means *man*. Some translators render this as *a certain* and affix it to the next noun. Strong's #376 BDB #35. This is followed by the proper noun lêvîy (לֵוִי) [pronounced *lay-VEE*], which, of course, is transliterated *Levi*. The wâw (or vâv) is both pronounced as a *v* and as a *w*. Strong's #3878 BDB #532. *A man of Levi* is the obvious subject of the verb *was*. We will not learn this man's name. This is followed by the Qal active participle of gûwr (גָּוַר) [pronounced *goor*], and it means *to sojourn*. However, that is so outdated, we will render this *to [temporarily] reside*. Strong's #1481 BDB #157.

Where this man was temporarily residing was in the masculine plural of yar^ekâh (יַרְקָה) [pronounced *yahr^e-KAW*], which means *flank, side, extreme parts, recesses*. It is used for *remote regions* of an area (Judges 19:1 Isa. 14:13 Jer. 6:22 25:32). Strong's #3411 BDB #438. It is interesting that these two concluding stories in the book of Judges deal with wandering Levites. The Levites were given specific cities in which to live. They did not actually own the land on which they lived, unlike the other Israelites, but theirs was a heavenly inheritance, much like believers in the Church Age. However, they were not given the order to wander about aimlessly throughout Israel. They were to help support the Aaronic priesthood and Israel supported the Levites. The fact that we have, almost immediately after the death of Joshua, Levites wandering about, indicates that they could not make a living doing what God had ordered them to do. In other words, they were not being paid as they should be. That is the fault of Israel as a whole.

What this man takes to himself is the feminine singular noun ʿîshshâh (אִשְׁשָׁה) [pronounced *eesh-SHAWH*], which means *woman, wife*. It is the name that Adam gave to the woman. This word is used in direct contrast to the Levite, who is called ʿîysh. Strong's #802 BDB #61. This is followed by the feminine singular noun pîylegesh (פִּילְגֶשֶׁת) [pronounced *pee-LEH-gesh*], which means *mistress, paramour, illicit lover, concubine*. This is not a Semitic name in origin; however, we do not know its etymology.¹ Strong's #6370 BDB #811. Now, what we do know for certain is that a wife and a mistress were different (Judges 8:30–31 I Kings 11:3). It would be reasonable to call Zilpah and Bilhah the mistresses of Jacob, and Hagar the mistress of Abram, and they are so designated in Scripture (Gen. 25:6 35:22).

According to ZPEB, a concubine, or a mistress, was sort of a *slave-wife-mistress*; she belonged to her master, sexual relations between the master and her were accepted, yet she did not have the rights and privileges of a wife. Such a wife might remain living at her father's house, although the husband may still have sexual relations with her. Eventually, she might be moved to the status of a wife and given a place in her husband's home.² Concubines as belonging to common men, seem to be found only in the time of Patriarchs and the early kingdom of Israel. By the time of Solomon, they appear to be a royal prerogative (II Sam. 21:10–14 I Kings 11:3). Douglas concurs that a concubine is a secondary wife, gotten either by purchase or as a captive in war.³ However, the Mosaic Law also mentions the purchase of a woman; in fact, let me quote the passage: "And if a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do. If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he will let her be redeemed. He does not have the authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her. And if he designates her for his son, he will deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. And if he will not do these three things for her, then she will go out for nothing, without payment of money." (Ex. 21:7–11). Now, a woman taken in this way can be a wife. Jacob essentially purchased Rachel and her sister Leah from their father by working for him for 14 years, and they were his wives (Gen. 29:26–28). We also have mention in the Law of a woman being taken in war. "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and Jehovah your God delivers them into your hands, and you take them away captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife for yourself, then you will bring her home to your house, and she will shave her head and trim her nails. She will also remove the clothes of her captivity and she will remain in your house and she will mourn her father and mother a full month and after that, you may go in to her and be her husband and she will be your wife. And if will be, if you are not pleased with her, then you will let her go wherever she wishes; but you will not sell her for money, and you will not mistreat her, because you have

¹ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 935..

² I frankly don't know where ZPEB got this and I find it questionable.

³ *The New Bible Dictionary*; editor J. D. Douglas; ©Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962; ©by W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; p.246.

humbled her.” (Deut. 21:10–14). Now, it is obvious, if her father lives in Bethlehem and has, as we will see, such a rapport with the son, that this woman was not taken in war. It would be reasonable to suppose that she was purchased as a slave by this Levite, for himself from her father. We also know something about concubines via the codes of Hammurabi which gives us, obviously, the heathen version (not that Israel’s version would be any more noble).

Now, we could also do some theorizing: in the ancient world, you have these weddings which are great events put on by both families, and a woman is given by her family to the man. Then you have these other unions to which no formal ceremony is performed. It might be against the wishes of the woman’s family, it may without their consent or without their knowledge; it may follow a sexual union in which the couple then felt obligated to take up together, but they are embarrassed about the circumstances. What appears to be the case is that this is a wild woman⁴ who takes up with this Levite, without going through either set of parents; and the woman obviously has second thoughts on the matter of their union. Now, this is simply a matter of conjecture, as the two cases given in the Mosaic Law are not necessarily exhaustive of this nebulous status of the concubine.

So that we do not get off the track, the Mosaic Law deals with what *is* as well as what should be. The laws regarding concubines do not, by their existence, encourage the Israelites to take concubines; just as the plurality of wives mentioned with regards to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob mean that this is encouraged either. In Gen. 2 Malachi 2:14–17 and Prov. 31:10–31, the ideal situation is one man and one woman. The New Testament confirms that in Eph. 22–31 | Peter 3:5–7.⁵ It bears mentioning at this point that the relationship between man and woman began as a monogamous relationship (Gen. 2:2) and then degenerated into polygamy (Gen. 4:19–24).

Now, we all know Bethlehem; however, this was a very small town on the outskirts of Jerusalem and so few people knew of it that it was called Bethlehem-Judah so that other Israelites would at least know where in Israel this little town was located. The Levite of the previous narrative was from Bethlehem (Judges 17:7). Elimelech and his wife Naomi, of the book of Ruth, will move from Bethlehem to Moab for financial reasons (Ruth 1:1). In fact, for such a little city of so little eminence, it is mentioned quite a number of times in the Old Testament (over 30 times, as a matter of fact). We will probably wait until Bethlehem is given as the city from which the Messiah will come (Micah 5:2) before we cover it in any detail.

One more minor point: you will note that there is nothing wrong with the Levite taking a woman as his wife. This is never an issue in the Bible. The priests (the sons of Aaron) and the Levites (those chosen by God to assist the priests) came by their vocation by birth. There was no celibacy involved in the Israelite priesthood. The idea that a man should enter into some specialized priesthood (which is nowhere authorized by Scripture for the Church Age) and that such a man should, in addition, choose celibacy as a lifestyle, is outright cultic.

And so fornicated against [or not; see below] him his mistress and so she went from with him unto a house of her father unto Bethlehem-Judah. And so she was there days—four months.

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Then his mistress fornicated against him and then went away from [being] with him to the house of her father, to Bethlehem-Judah. And she was there [for] days—four months.

Then his mistress became angry with him and finally left him, going to her father’s house in Bethlehem, which is in Judah. She remained there for four months.

What his mistress did was the Qal imperfect of *zânâh* (זָנָה) [pronounced *zaw-NAW*], which means *to commit adultery, to fornicate, to [sexually] pursue*. Strong’s #2181 BDB #275. The Greek gives us a very different story here. In the Greek, it reads: *And his mistress departed from him and she went away from him to the house of her father in Bethleem-louda and she was there four months*. In several English translations (e.g., NRSV, REB, NJB,

⁴ Although, this may not be a fair assessment of her, as we will see in the next verse.

⁵ For those interested in the evolution to monogamous marriage (a misnomer) from the view of a heathen scholar, I recommend *The Story of Civilization*; Volume I *Our Oriental Heritage*; Will Durant; MJF Books; ©1963; pp. 36–51.

NEB, RSV, TEV), they simply tell us that she was angry with him and left, although the anger is a matter of interpretation and not found in the Greek or in the Hebrew. In fact, my Greek OT does not say that she was *angry* with her husband (in the Greek or in the English), but simply that she departed; perhaps the alpha translation is different?⁶ Now, it is very possible that later copyists inserted her act of fornication simply, perhaps, to make her end more *just* somehow. That this woman picked up an left her husband, regardless of whether she was in the wrong or not, regardless of whether she committed adultery or not, was not deserving of her tragic end in this chapter. I personally think that the *act of adultery* was inserted, as this alleged act really has no bearing on the story whatsoever.

in any event, she then goes away *from* him, which is the point of this introduction. That is actually two prepositions in the Hebrew: *mîn* (*from, off*) and *ʿêth* (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*] (which means *with, among*) together they mean *from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to*. Strong's #854 BDB #85. We aren't given any details here, as that is not the thrust of the next few chapters. This merely explains that she ended up at her father's house, and he lived in Bethlehem, which was a part of Judah.

The last sentence is, literally: **And so she was days—four months**. The final noun is *chôdesh* (חֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced *KHOH-desh*], which means *new moon, month*. Strong's #2320 BDB #294. Whether there was a fight, whether he threw her out of the house, whether she slept around and finally just left—we are not told. The implication, in any case, is that *she* is the one who left him—in fact, it is so stated in the Septuagint. However, the upshot is that she moved back home with her father (her mother is not a part of this picture, which is not significant).

Now, given that she left her husband (or so it appears) and that he went after her a mere four months later indicates that it is more likely that there was a fight, a disagreement, or that she was just unhappy with the arrangement and returned home. In other words, it really does not appear from the clues given throughout that there was any adultery involved on her part.

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The Levite Goes after Her and Has a Marvelous Visit with His Father-in-law

And so arose her man and so he went after her to speak unto her heart, to cause her⁷ to return and his young man with him, and a couple of asses. And so she brought him [to] a house of her father. And so saw him, a father of the girl, and he rejoiced to meet him.

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Then her man arose and went after her—with his servant and with two mules—to speak to her heart, and to cause her to return. She brought him to the house of her father and when the father of the girl saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.

Finally, he arose and went out after her, with his servant and two mules, in order to speak kindly to her, and to cause her to return to him. She brought him to her father's house and when her father saw him, he was happy to meet him.

The Levite ponders this situation for awhile, and decides that he is better off with her than without her so he pursues her. Again, we are not given the details—since she is called his mistress, he may have had no contact with the parent(s) prior to this. We can only speculate here. In any case, he did know where they lived, which was south of his home in the outskirts of Ephraim.

⁶ I am assuming this, as at least four different translations tell us that this woman left because she was angry with her husband. The RSV footnotes that this is according to the Greek and the Old Latin. Rotherham, who usually fills us in when it comes to these matters, is silent here.

⁷ Rotherham footnotes this, suggesting that the Levite would bring *it* (i.e., *her heart*) back. This is a fallacious interpretation simply because *heart* is a masculine singular noun, and the suffix *her* is feminine.

It is said that he plans to go *speak to her heart* in this verse. This is the kind of thing that a guy rarely does with another guy; and rarely with women as well. We find this mentioned in Gen. 34:3, but not in the greatest light. This is how a rapist spoke to his victim later after realizing that he was strongly attracted to her. We also find this phrase when Joseph's father, Isaac died, and his brothers were in sudden fear for their lives based upon what they had done to him. However, he reassured them and *spoke to their hearts* (Gen. 50:21).

Now, obviously, as a Levite, he was not without means. He apparently has a personal servant and at least two asses. The second ass is not for his servant—his young man—but for himself and his woman.

Then we have the 3rd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *bôw'* (בּוֹא) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go*. It means *to bring something, to carry* when found in the Hiphil. Strong's #935 BDB #97. It sounds as though she meets the man outside, and then brings him to her father's house. It could be slightly less literal and her presence in her father's house actually brought this Levite to her.

Her father sees the Levite and he then does the Qal imperfect of *sâmach* (שָׂמַח) [pronounced *saw-MAHKH*], and it means *to rejoice, to be glad*. Strong's #8055 BDB #970. What he is glad to do is the Qal infinitive construct of *qârâ'* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*], which means *to encounter, to befall, to meet*. Strong's #7122 & 7125 BDB #896. This does not mean that they are necessarily meeting for the first time, although that is not out of the question. The NIV Study Bible suggests: *The separation of the concubine from the Levite was probably a matter of family disgrace, and so his father-in-law was glad for the prospect of the two being reunited.*⁸

When referring to the woman, we have the feminine singular of *na'ârâh* (נַעֲרָה) [pronounced *nah-ar-AWH*] means *girl, damsel, miss, young woman, woman of marriageable age*; it can refer to a prostitute (Amos 2:7), an engaged girl (Deut. 22:25, 27), a little girl (II Kings 5:2) or a mistress (Judges 19:3–6). This generally refers to an unmarried woman. Strong's #5291 BDB #655. This is somewhat of an aside by the author, further indicating that she and the Levite had not properly married.

My first impression, which I now believe is wrong, is that we have this gal who, for her time, was on the wild side, and probably caused her father some grief. He appears to be the only one of her parents who is still around. My guess is that she left home abruptly and, at some point, took up with this Levite, without having any sort of a formal ceremony. It is probable that her husband and father have never met. When she returned home to her father, from leaving her man, in talking to her, her father perceived that this Levite was quite good to her and for her. As a teacher, I have had occasion to speak with many young ladies concerning their boyfriends, and, no matter how much they are infatuated with their young men, what they say about the young men would indicate that these guys are losers. Similarly, a woman might be furious with her man, but what she says reveals that he has great character and fondness for her. In other words, what she intends to say is one thing, but what she actually conveys is another. Whatever she has told her father, it has given him a very good impression of this Levite. For this reason, the father is quite happy to meet the Levite. In retrospect, I think that this man sold her to the Levite, but was happy with this choice, believing him to be a good man for her. He does what he can to convey this to the young Levite. Also, in retrospect, as I have indicated, I don't believe that this woman was guilty of adultery, and that was inserted by some ass years later.

And so held fast with him, his father-in-law, a father of the girl. And so he stayed with him three of days and so they ate and so they drank and so they lodged there. Judges 19:4

So his father-in-law, the father of the girl, held fast to him, so he stayed with him three days, and they ate, and they drank, and they stayed the night there.

So his father-in-law, the father of the girl, wouldn't let him go. So they hung together for three days, eating, drinking and spending the night.

⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 354.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *châzaq* (חַזַּק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*], which has four different meanings in the Qal: it means (1) *to tie up, to bind*; (2) *to hold fast, to adhere to, to be stuck to*; (3) *to be strong, firm, to strengthen, to increase in prosperity*; and, (4) when followed by *לע*, *to be urgent (with someone), to press, to coerce, to be persistent (with someone)*. Related to these four basic meanings, when *châzaq* is followed by *מן* or *לע*, it means *to prevail over, to be stronger than*; when followed by a *lâmed*, it means *to persist (in something), to be constant, to be earnest*. Strong's #2388 BDB #304. What we have here is that *châzaq* is followed by a *bêyth* preposition, which means *in, at, by, with*, the key concept being proximity.

Next we see some more tongue-in-cheek by the author of this portion of Judges. The father of the woman is first called *his chôthên* (חֹתֵן) [pronounced *khoh-THAIN*], which means *father-in-law*. Strong's #2859 BDB #368. Then he is called the *father of the unmarried woman*. What we have here is a matter of impression. Insofar as the Levite is concerned, she is his wife and this is his father-in-law. Insofar as the woman is concerned, she is still a woman of marriageable age and she is still free to do any damn thing that she pleases.

The last verb is the Qal imperfect of *lûn* (לָן) [pronounced *loon*], which means *to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night*. Strong's #3885 BDB #533. So far, this is quite similar to the relationship that Moses had with the father of his first wife. He married a Midianite woman, who later left him because he circumcised their children. However, when he was camped outside of the Land of Promise, his father-in-law brought this woman and her two children to Moses. Moses and his father-in-law were much more intent about administrative matters and appeared to get along famously. We have the same situation here.

And so he was in the day the fourth and so they arose early in a morning and so he stood up to go. And so said, a father of the girl, unto his son-in-law, "Prop up your heart—a morsel of bread and after, you will go."

Judges
19:5

And so it was on the fourth day when they arose early in the morning and he stood up to go, that the father of the girl said to his son-in-law, "Sustain your heart—a piece of bread, and you will go afterwards."

And on the fourth day, they rose up early in the morning, and, as he stood up to go, the father of the girl said to his son-in-law, "First have a little bread to sustain you on your journey; you will go afterwards."

Again, the father is referred to as the father of the woman of marriageable age, and then the Levite is called his *son-in-law*. Therefore, the father and the Levite pretty much considered this a done deal—the Levite was the husband of this woman. The reference to her as a woman of marriageable age, indicates that she may not have gone along completely with this program.

The second verb is the masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *shâkam* (שָׁכַם) [pronounced *shaw-KAHM*], which means *to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start*. Strong's #7925 BDB #1014. The next verb is the Qal imperfect of *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means, in the Qal stem, *to stand, to rise up*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

The father-in-law speaks to the Levite, and he uses the Qal imperative of *çâ'ad* (צָאֵד) [pronounced *saw-GAHD* or *saw-AHD*], and it means *to support, to prop up, to refresh, to sustain, to stay, to assist*. Strong's #5582 BDB #703. What he offers him is the feminine singular construct of *path* (פַּת) [pronounced *path*], which means *fragment, morsel, piece [of bread]*. Strong's #6595 BDB #837. This is followed by the word for *bread*. The father of the girl simply offers the young man some basic sustenance to get him on his journey.

And so they sat and so they ate, two [men] together and so they drank and so said the father of the girl, unto the man, "Be willing, please, and spend the night and made pleasing is your heart."

Judges
19:6

And so the two men together sat and they ate and they drank. Then the father of the girl said to the man, "Be willing, please, and spend the night, and your heart will be made glad."

So the two men sat and they ate and they drank. Finally, the father of the girl said to the man, “Hey, why not spend the night here, and have some more wine.”

The operation of eating then was not quite as simple as it is now. They didn't hop into the car and head to the local convenience store for a loaf of bread. Furthermore, the offering of a crust of bread did not mean that the father of the girl was offering a crust of bread. He was telling the Levite to stay, he would fix something simple, and then he had a full meal prepared for him. This, along with their spirited conversation, would take a couple hours, and then the father would ask the Levite if he wanted to have a little wine, and they had a little wine. They drank some wine with their meal, and they topped off their meal with some wine as well.

What the father then says to the Levite is the Hiphil imperative of *yâ`al* (לֹאֵל) [pronounced *yaw-AHL*], which means *ti willingly chose, to be willing to, to give ascent to*. Strong's #2974 BDB #383. The imperative is the imperative of entreaty, as the polite verbal entreaty is also included.

What he promised is that the Levite's heart would be the Qal imperfect of *yâṭaḇv* (בֹּטֵי) [pronounced *yaw-TA^BV*], which means *to be good, well, to be pleasing, to do good, to deal well, to make glad, to make a thing good*. Strong's #3190 BDB #405.

Understand that he does not propose this at 4 in the afternoon. They end up having a large morning breakfast, almost a brunch, with a little wine. It is noonish, and they're both a little tanked, and the father asks this guy to stay another day. The father is certainly enjoying having his daughter around; he likes that she exhibits some sort of personal control while her Levite husband is there; and the father and the Levite get along tremendously. Furthermore, neither man seems to have a problem with getting slightly tanked at brunch.

And so stood up the man to go and so pressed upon him his father-in-law. And so he returned and so he spent the night there.

Judges
19:7

And so the man stood up to go, but his father-in-law urged him [to remain]. So he returned and spent the night there.

When the man stood up to go, his father-in-law urged him to remain, so he spent the night there.

The third verb is the Qal imperfect of *pâtsar* (פָּצַר) [pronounced *paw-TSAHR*], which means *to push, to press, to urge*. When followed by the *bêyth* preposition, it means *to press upon, to urge*. Strong's #6484 BDB #823. What happened was the father-in-law, after a heart brunch with a few drinks, urged him to remain. He still got up as if to go, but the father-in-law is persistent, so he spent the next night there.

And so he arose early in the morning in the day the fifth to go. And so said a father of the girl, “Prop up your heart, please, and delay until a stretching out of the day.” And so ate,⁹ two of them.

Judges
19:8

So he arose early on the morning of the fifth day to go. Then the father of the girl said, “Sustain your heart, please, and linger until a spreading out of the day.” So the two of them ate.

Again, on the fifth day, he arose early in the morning. However, the father of the girl urged him, “Take some food, please, and remain for a short time.” So the two of them ate.

After the father-in-law asks the Levite to sustain his heart, he uses the Hithpael imperative of *mâhahh* (מַחַח) [pronounced *maw-HAH*], which means *to delay, to linger, to tarry*. It is found only in the Hithpael. He is asked to delay until the Qal infinitive construct of *nâṭâh* (נָטַח) [pronounced *naw-TAWH*], which means *to stretch out, to spread out, to bow, to extend*. It does not mean *declinings* as Rotherham footnotes, simply because it is not in the masculine plural. Strong's #5186 BDB #639. Just like before, the man gets up early to leave, and his father-in-law urges him to have a bite to eat, and to maybe enjoy the morning hours there.

⁹ The Greek adds that they were *drinking* as well.

And so rose up the man to go, he and his mistress and his young man and so said to him, his father-in-law, the father of the girl, “Behold, please, has fallen the day to grow dark. [Let us] spend the night, please. Behold, encamped the day; spend the night here and make glad your heart and we will arise early tomorrow for your journey and you will go to your tent.”

Judges
19:9

So the man rose up to depart, he and his mistress and his servant and so his father-in-law, the girl’s father, said to him, “Observe, the day has fallen toward evening. Let us spend the night, please. Observe, the day encamped; [so], spend the night here and make your heart glad and we will arise early tomorrow for your journey and [then] you will go to your tent.”

So the man got up to go, along with his mistress and his servant, but his father-in-law, the father of the girl, said to him, “Listen, please—the day is falling into night. Why don’t we all spend the night here and make your heart glad. Tomorrow, we will get up early for your journey and you will go to your tent.”

What the day does in this verse is the Qal perfect of rāphâh (רָפָה) [pronounced *raw-FAW*], a verb which means *to sink, to relax, to loosen and let drop, to let down, to cast down, to let fall*. It is rendered *waned* (Owen), *hath fallen* (Young), and *hath sunk down* (Rotherham). Strong’s #7503 BDB #951. What the day fell to is the Qal infinitive construct of ʿāraḇ (עָרַב) [pronounced *aw-RAH^BV*], which means *to become evening, to grow dark*. Strong’s #6150 BDB #788.

Then the father-in-law urges him with the 2nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative of lûn (לִּין) [pronounced *loon*], which means *to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night*. Strong’s #3885 BDB #533. Here the father-in-law uses the masculine plural in the verb, indicating that he is going to stay the night there himself. Then he uses the Qal infinitive construct of chānah (חָנָה) [pronounced *khaw-NAW*] properly means *to incline*; it is used primarily *to pitch a tent, to encamp*. Strong’s #2583 BDB #333. What this means is that the day itself has pitched a tent and has settled in for the night, which implies that they ought to do the same.

Where they are going to travel to is the masculine singular noun ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced *OH-he*] is translated *tent, tabernacle, house*; and it refers to the temporary dwellings. Strong’s #168 BDB #13. In some codices and one early printed edition, this is plural.

Barnes: *This is a perfect picture of the manners of the time. It is probably that the father showed more than usual hospitality, in order to ensure the kind treatment of his daughter by her husband. These particulars are given to account for their journey running so far into the evening, which was the immediate cause of the horrible catastrophe which followed.*¹⁰

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In Their Return to the Levite’s Home, They Stop for the Night in Gibeah, a City of Benjamin

And the man was not willing to spend the night. And so he stood up and so he went and so he went as far as opposite Jebus—she [is] Jerusalem—and with him a couple of asses saddled, and his mistress with him.

Judges
19:10

However, the man was not willing to spend the night. So he got up and left, and went as far as opposite Jebus (it [is] Jerusalem). And [he had] with him a couple of saddled asses and his mistress with him.

However, this time the man was not willing to spend the night. He stood up and he left and he went as far as Jebus, which is also known as Jerusalem. He had with him his two saddled asses and his mistress.

¹⁰ Barnes’ Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 462.

The significance of mentioning what the man had with him was to indicate that he had things which heathen would want to steal. He had two good asses along with their saddles, and he had this woman. At this time, Jerusalem was not occupied by Israelites, but by Jebusites (Joshua 15:63 Judges 1:21¹¹) and the Israelites did not trust the heathen who lived in the land. Jerusalem will not be taken until the time of David, which event is recounted in II Sam. 5:6–9 I Chron. 11:4–5.

It is now late afternoon, somewhere between 2 and 4 pm, and Jerusalem, mentioned in the next verse, is 5–6 miles north of them. The problem, as we will see in the next verse, is that Jerusalem, at this time, is inhabited exclusively by Jebusites.

They [were] as far as Jebus and the day had descended extremely, and so said the young man unto his lord, “Let us go, please, and let us turn aside unto a city of the Jebusites the these and we will spend the night in her.”

Judges
19:11

They [were] as far Jebus and the day was extremely descended, so the servant said to his master, “Come, please, and let us turn aside into the city of these Jebusites and we will spend the night in it.

They got as far as Jebus and the sun had been down for a long time. Finally, the servant said to his master, “Let’s stop here, in the city of the Jebusites, and spend the night there.”

So they are all going down the freeway interchange, and they see the exit for Jebus, city of the Jebusites, and underneath are the familiar words *gas, food, lodging*. The servant and the woman are exhausted. What they had done was the Qal perfect of *yârad* (יָרַד) [pronounced *yaw-RAHD*], which means *to descend, to go down*. Strong’s #3381 BDB #432. With that is the adverb *m^oôd* (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^o-ODE*], which means *exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*. Strong’s #3966 BDB #547. The use of *day* throughout this chapter suggests that the word *sun* would have worked just as well.

Because the father of the woman delayed them, what should have been a trip done in a day would require an overnight stay before they can move on. What the servant says to the Levite is the Qal imperative of *hâlak*^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. With the voluntative *hê*, it means *let us go, let us come, let us walk*. Owen renders the verb, the voluntative *hê* and the particle of entreaty as the colloquialism *come now*. Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. The second verb that he uses is the 1st person plural, Qal imperfect of *çûwr* (סָוַר) [pronounced *soor*], which means *to turn aside, to depart, to go away*. It also has with it the voluntative *hê*, but no longer is the servant using the imperative. This means he is still making an earnest request. Strong’s #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693.

And so said unto him, his lord, “We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners who [are] not from sons of Israel they, and we will pass over unto Gibeah.”

Judges
19:12

And his master said to him, “We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners, who [are] not from the sons of Israel—they, but we will pass over to Gibeah.”

However, his master said to him, “We will not stop and spend the night in a city of foreigners who are not of Israel, but we will pass over to Gibeah.”

in the Hebrew, the first thing the Levite says is the negative. In the Hebrew, it is literally, “Not we will turn aside.” There is no great emphasis here—this is simply how the Hebrews use their negatives.

¹¹ Now, you might be concerned if you look up these passages and wonder why in one of them, it is said that the Jebusites live with the Judæans and that the Judæans are unable to drive them out; and then in the next passage, we have the Jebusites living with the sons of Benjamin, the latter being unable to drive them out. Jerusalem was a border town between Judah and Benjamin. To be more precise, this was one of the many cities originally given to the sons of Judah which was later redistributed to another tribe to make the distribution more even.

The last verb used here is the $\text{ʿā}^b\text{var}$ (עָבַר) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. At this time, the Israelites had been relatively new in the land, and had taken the land from the peoples who were living there—therefore, they did not expect to have kind treatment from any of the heathen who lived there. In fact, their lives might be in danger if they stayed there.

Now then, there is Gibeah. In the Hebrew, this is spelled $\text{gīb}^e\text{ʿāh}$ (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced *gi^bv-ĠAW*], which means *hill*. Strong's #1390 BDB #149. Because there are several different spellings and because Israel has so many hills, determining which city is Gibeah and where it is located is theoretically quite difficult. And there could be as many as four or more different *Gibeah*'s. To add to this confusion, once and awhile, in Scripture, Gibeon and Geba are confounded with Gibeah. Now, there are two Gibeah's of which we are certain: the one here and the one found in Joshua 15:57 which is located far south of Jerusalem. There appears to be another Gibeah in the hill country of Ephraim, mentioned in Joshua 24:33. However, this depends upon which translation you use. In most translations, this is simply a hill which belonged to Phinehas (*hill* and *Gibeah* are exactly the same words in the Hebrew). In our present passage, we are moving north from Bethlehem past Jerusalem, on up to Gibeah. Therefore, this is the Gibeah mentioned in Joshua 18:28,¹² and is equivalent to the Gibeah of Saul, the capital of his political kingdom, mentioned in I Sam. 11:4, when Saul was a hero to his people. This same city is mentioned in I Sam. 13:15 after Saul has sinned and offered up a sacrifice to God in Samuel's stead (after Samuel chews out Saul, he goes up to Gibeah).¹³ For other references to Gibeah of Saul, see also I Sam. 10:26 13:2 15:34 Isa. 10:29. It is approximately 4 miles north of Jerusalem, according to ZPEB.¹⁴ By the way, we will carefully sort out these cities in the **Doctrine of Gibeon, Geba and Gibeah**, which will be covered in I Sam. 13:16.

And so he said to his young man, “Come and we will draw near to one of the places and we will spend the night in the Gibeah or in the Ramah.”

Judges
19:13

So he said to his servant, “Come and we will draw near to one of the places and we will spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah.”

So he said to his servant, “Let's just go a little farther and spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah.”

What they would draw near to would be the numeral construct ʿechād (אֶחָד) [pronounced *eh-KHAWD*] and it means *one, first*. Strong's #259 BDB #25. The noun that this is attached to is the masculine plural of māqōwm (מָקוֹמַיִם) [pronounced *maw-KOHM*], which simply means *place*. Strong's #4725 BDB #879. He obviously knows the area relatively well, and a fundamental knowledge of geography could mean the difference between life and death.

Recall that the tribe of Benjamin was given some very famous cities, but, as of this point in time, they had not conquered Jerusalem. It was in control of these cities to the north. We touched on the city of Ramah back in Joshua 18:25.

One source places these cities an hour from one another; the CEV says that it is three miles from Jerusalem to Gibeah, and another three miles to Ramah.¹⁵ These are consistent with one another.

And so they passed on and so they went and so went out for them the sun near the Gibeah which [is] in Benjamin.

Judges
19:14

So they passed on and they went, and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which [is] in Benjamin.

¹² There is another *Gibeah* found in Joshua 18:25 (called *Gibeon* there) which is apparently different from those two.

¹³ Sources which are invaluable to me here include *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3rd Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. 105.

¹⁴ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 753.

¹⁵ *The Promise* (The Contemporary English Version); Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1995; p. 276.

So they continued on their journey until the sun went down on them while they were near Gibeah in Benjamin.

We have the Qal imperfect of ^ʿâ^bvar, again, (רַעַב) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. This is followed by the Qal imperfect of hâlak^o (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^o*], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. What is meant is that they passed by Jerusalem and then they continued walking.

Then, instead of *day*, we have the feminine singular noun shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced *SHEH-mehsh*], which means *sun*. Strong's #8121 BDB #1039. What the sun is doing is the Qal imperfect of bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go*. Strong's #935 BDB #97. What we have here is all of the very, very common words for *to go, to come, to meander*. The sun was said to *go in*, as it appeared to go into the earth, just as we say *the sun sets*. It obviously does not, but it is a common English phrase and that was a common Hebrew phrase. One thing that you must grasp in the ancient world—when you are wandering along small roads and trails and through forests and over hills, if there is no full moon, then you cannot see a thing after dark. There are no street lights, no bill boards, no house lights. The hikers may as well be blind under these circumstances.

And so they turned aside there to go to spend the night in the Gibeah. And so they went and so they sat down in a open square of the city and no man was gathering them [into] the house to spend the night.

Judges
19:15

So they turned aside there to go to spend the night in Gibeah. So they went and sat down in the plaza of the city and no man gathered them [up] [to] the house to spend the night.

So they stopped there to spend the night in Gibeah. Therefore, they went to the open plaza of the city and sat down in full view, but no man offered to take them in.

Where they go to sit is the feminine construct of r^echôw^bv (רַחֲבֹהַב) [pronounced *r^e-KHOB^v*], which means *broad open place, plaza, open square*. Strong's #7339 BDB #932. This was likely near the entrance to the city, so that everyone could see this group as they came in from the outside after a long day's work. This was the place where court was held, where the chief men of Israel stood, where trading would occur, where people met, where strangers went when they came into town; a town square or plaza appears to be a part of most every city. It never occurred to them that this would be a dangerous thing to do.

What *no man* did was the Piel participle of ^ʿâçaph (אָצַף) [pronounced *aw-SAHF*], which means *relocate, transfer, transport, gather, to gather and remove, to remove*. Strong's #622 BDB #62. No man gathered them up and took them to his house. In other words, no man came up to them and offered them a place to stay.

With *house*, we have the locative hê, which implies the preposition *to*.

Recall what our Lord said: **"I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me."** (Matt. 25:42–43). Now, what occurred here was quite unusual. You would think that with three people who have obviously been traveling that some one would offer them a place to stay for the night; particularly because they are fellow Israelites (see Gen. 18:2–4 19:2–3 24:23). We will see why later on in this chapter.

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An Old Man, a Temporary Resident of the City, Takes Them in

And, behold, a man old was coming from his work from the field in the evening and the man [was] from hill country of Ephraim and he was [temporarily] residing in the Gibeah. And the men of the place [were] Benjamites.

Judges
19:16

And, observe, an old man was coming from his work from the field in the evening and the man [was] from the hill country of Ephraim and he was [temporarily] residing in Gibeah. And the men of that place [were] Benjamites.

Then, suddenly, an old man came by in the evening from his work in the field. He was from the hill country of Ephraim and was temporarily residing at Gibeah among the sons of Benjamin.

You have to understand that the tribe of Benjamin in this town had reached intense levels of degeneracy. The only one of the town who offers these strangers a place to stay is not of that town. We will see that this man is quite successful, and lives in a very nice house inside the town. Furthermore, he has servants who work for him.

And so he lifted up his eyes and so he saw the man, the traveler in the open square of the city. And so said the man old, “Where are you going? And from where did you come?”

Judges
19:17

Then he lifted up his eyes and saw the man, the traveler, in the plaza of the city. So the old man said, “Where are you going and from where did you come?”.

When he lifted up his eyes and saw the man, the stranger, in the plaza of the city, the old man said, “Where are you going and from where did you come?”

The person lifting up his eyes is the old man. He is worn out and walking into the city, through the front gates and directly in front of him is the plaza. There sit the two men, the woman and the two mules. The man sitting there is called Qal active participle of *ʾârach* (אָרַח) [pronounced *aw-RAHKKH*], which means *to wander, to journey, to go*. In the participle, it means *the wanderer, the traveler, the wayfarer*. Strong’s #732 BDB #72. The old man knows enough about this city and the people in the city to be cautious. He approached this man cautiously, although it seem s pretty clear that he is not from this area.

And so he said unto him, “Passing over, we [are] from Bethlehem Judah as far as sides of [the] hill country of Ephraim—from there I [am] and so I went unto Bethlehem Judah and a house of Y^howah [or, my house] I am going and no man is gathering me [into] the house.

Judges
19:18

So he said to him, “We [are] passing over from Bethlehem Judah as far as the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim—from there I [come]. So I had gone to Bethlehem Judah and I go into the house of Y^howah, yet no man is gathering me into [his] house.

So he answered him, “We are passing over from Bethlehem in Judah over to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, which is where I come from originally. I had gone to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am returning to my own home. No one has offered me a place to stay for the night.

In the ancient world, it was considered almost a duty to ask strangers into one’s household to spend the night when it was apparent that they had nowhere else to go. There were apparently no inns in most of the Israelite cities (such a custom of taking in strangers at night would preclude the need for an inn).

This is the first time the House of Jehovah is mentioned, and it is properly the Tent of Jehovah. However, in the Hebrew, it literally reads *House of Jehovah*. In the Greek,¹⁶ it is not *the house of the Lord* but simply *home*. The

¹⁶ The first known translation of a book from one language to another was the Greek Septuagint, which was the Bible translated from the Hebrew to the much more commonly used Greek language. This was done somewhere between 300 and 100 B.C., and the effort was rather spotty. There were times when it was accurately translated, and there were times when it was obviously paraphrased. However, the translation was made from older and perhaps better Hebrew manuscripts than we have available today. Therefore, we occasionally must determine whether a verse was paraphrased or whether it was simply based upon a more accurate manuscript. In some cases, the Greek was probably based on an older, and more accurate manuscript,

NASB, TEV and the NRSV render this *my house* and then footnote it as *the house of the LORD*.¹⁷ The NIV, Young and Rotherham simply go with the Hebrew. The REB, the NAB and the NJB go with the Greek in this instance. *The Amplified Bible* manages to give us the Greek and the Hebrew together (“*I am [now] going [home] to the house of the Lord [where I serve]...*”), as does the CEV. Because of the fact that we do not know how the original read, we do not know if his intention is to go to the House of Jehovah (which, again, was really the *Tent of Jehovah*); however, Scripture accurately records quotations. Now, all that aside, the Tent of Jehovah was located in Shiloh,¹⁸ which was in the hill country of Ephraim, and it would not be out of the ordinary for the Levite to plan a trip there on the way to his own home. Also, even if they were not planning such a detour, it sounds good to a stranger that he is heading to the house of God. The NIV Study Bible suggests that they were going to the Tent of God to offer a thanksgiving offering and perhaps a sin offering. Barnes suggests that he works at the tent of God. However, it would not be said of him that he lived in the remote regions of Ephraim if he served at the Tent of God. Again, we really don’t know what there are plans for, as we do not know for certain how the original read in this case.

Keil and Delitzsch give us the most interesting and possibly most accurate slant on this verse.¹⁹ The man is a Levite; he serves in the House of God. In the Hebrew, it does not say that he is going *to* the House of Jehovah, but what we have is: **A house of Jehovah, I [emphasized] go** [Qal active participle]. The Levite is expressing some indignity. In the next verse, we will see that he has everything necessary for his immediate sustenance, and God deems him worthy to serve in the House of Jehovah; yet no one deems him worthy to ask him to stay at his house.

This also helps to explain why this verse may have been altered later. A scribe reading this knows that the Levite is not going to the House of Jehovah, and, figuring that to be an error, subsequently eliminates *Jehovah* from the original text. There are a great many things that we may not understand in a particular verse; however, God designed His Word to be understood, and several times warns us not to add or subtract from His Word. Eventually, someone will be able to explain what everything means. And, bear in mind, the one thing that you will take with you into eternity is your knowledge of His Word.

“And both straw and fodder there [is] for our asses and both bread and wine there [is] to me and to your maidservant and to the young man with your servants²⁰—not a lack of all of a thing.”

Judges
19:19

“And there is both straw and donkey food for our asses, and there is both bread and wine to me and to your maidservant; and to the young man, with your servants—not a lack of anything.”

“We have both straw and donkey food for our asses, and bread and wine for myself and your female servant; and my servant can stay with your servants—we have no lack of anything.”

You will note that in this chapter we have spent very little time referring to the myriad of translation which are out there. The Hebrew, in general, has been fairly straightforward and the vocabulary has been fairly simple. This verse is one of the few exceptions, and the Hebrew does cause us some problems.

The Emphasized Bible Nevertheless straw and fodder too is there for our asses, you moreover bread and wine there are for me and for thy handmaid, and for the young man that is with thy servants,—there is a lack of nothing.

NASB “Yet there is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also bread and wine for me, your maidservant [i.e., my concubine], and the young man who is with your servants; there is no lack of anything.”

and is therefore the correct reading. However, some of the translators took great liberties with the original manuscript and it would not be out of the question for them to have eliminated the word *Jehovah* when translating the Hebrew into Greek.

¹⁷ This means that they believe that *House of Jehovah* is the incorrect reading.

¹⁸ I covered **The Doctrine of Shiloh** in Psalm 78:61.

¹⁹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 320.

²⁰ This is in the singular three early printed editions, in the Aramaic and in the Syriac.

Owen's Translation Straw and also provender we have for our asses and bread and wine there for me and your maidservant and the young man with your servants. There is no lack of anything.

Young's Lit. Translation '...And both straw and provender are for our asses, and also bread and wine there are for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man with thy servants; there is no lack of anything.'

The first word in this verse, after the conjunction, is the adverb gam (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*], which means *also, furthermore, in addition to, moreover*. Here, we have gam repeated, and they should therefore be rendered *both...and, furthermore...as well as, also...also, that...so*. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. The second noun is the masculine singular noun miç^ephôw' (מִסְפֹּה) [pronounced *mis^e-POH*], which means *fodder, provender, donkey food*. Strong's #4554 BDB #704. This is followed by the substantive yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaysh*], which means *being, substance, existence*. It often acts as a substantive plus the absolute status quo verb *to be*; and is therefore reasonably rendered *there is, there will be, there are*. Strong's #3426 BDB #441.

The word *maidservant* here is the feminine singular of 'âmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced *aw-MAW*], which means *maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant*. Often, it is used as a term of humility, rather than one of actual station. Strong's #519 BDB #51. What he has the very tricky thing to do is to identify how he and his mistress and his servant are to be treated by identifying who they are, and yet come across as humble. Throughout Biblical literature, a woman who is not a *maid* is called a *maid* (or calls herself a *maid*) in humility, just as a man may say, *"I am at your service."* or *"I am your servant."* We find this done with this particular word in Ruth 3:9 I Sam. 1:15 25:24. Note that the Levite also, in this verse, identifies himself as an owner (or, employee) of a servant, carefully, yet, not in such a way to sound as though he is bragging, putting himself on a level with this older man before him. The interaction of the people in some passages of the Bible makes me feel as though I am observing polite society in Great Britain.

This Levite is getting somewhat desperate. It is getting dark, cold and they apparently have no provisions by which to camp (nor is that altogether safe). The Levite assures this old man that he has a sufficient amount of food for his asses, as well as bread and wine for himself and his wife/mistress (whom he does not so identify, yet he does not place her with his servant). Whatever the old man does on behalf of his own servants, the Levite says that his servant is fine with that.

The last sentence begins with the negative and the masculine singular construct of mach^eçôwr (מַחְסוֹר) [pronounced *mahkh-SOHR*], which means *need, something needed, poverty, lack*. Strong's #4270 BDB #341. This is followed by the masculine singular construct of kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*], which means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. When used with a plural noun, we often translate it *all of* and with a singular noun, we translate it *every*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. This is followed by the masculine singular noun dâ^bvâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAWR*], which means *word, saying, doctrine, thing*. Strong's #1697 (or #1696) BDB #182. Literally, what we have is *no lack of anything*.

And so said the man the old, "Peace to you only all of your wants upon me; only in the open square, do not spend the night."

Judges
19:20

So the old man said, "Peace [and prosperity] to you; only [put] all of your wants upon me; only, in the plaza, do not spend the night."

So the old man advised, "Peace and prosperity to you; only, place all of your needs and wants upon me; and, whatever you do, do not spend the night in the open plaza."

The old man gives them a standard, yet very gracious greeting of shâlôwm (שְׁלוֹמ) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which means *completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Thieme often rendered this *prosperous* or *prosperity*. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022. We have seen this used on several occasions (Gen. 43:23 Judges 6:23 I Sam. 25:6).

The adverb found twice in this verse is raq (רַק) [pronounced *rahk*] means *only, provided, altogether, surely*—it carries with it restrictive force. Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956. The old man tells him that all of his wants

should be upon him. The word used is the masculine singular noun, which we looked at in the previous verse: *mach°çôwr* (מַחְסוֹר) [pronounced *mahkh-SOHR*], which means *need, something needed, poverty, lack*. Strong's #4270 BDB #341. Note the careful interchange between the two men. The Levite presents himself as one who does not require any trouble or extra care, but just a place to stay for the night. The prospective host, on the other hand, tells him to place all of his needs and wants upon him. He indicates that it does not matter what he and his wife and servant need, he will provide for them.

What was normal for the Jews was to take a stranger into their home. The fact that this small group is sitting in the plaza and no one has asked them of their business, nor has anyone asked them to come into their home, is quite unusual. The reason that no one does will become clear later in the chapter.

And so he brought them to his house and so he gave fodder to the asses and so they washed their feet and so they ate and so they drank.

Judges
19:21

Then he brought them to his house and he gave donkey food to their asses. Then they washed their feet and ate and drank.

Then the old man brought them to his house, giving his donkeys food. Then they washed their feet and ate and drank.

One of the early customs of the ancient world was to wash the feet of a traveler. The men walked in sandals throughout the ancient world, and their feet got sore and dirty. One of the great acts of hospitality was to wash the feet of a guest. It was soothing and cleansing and we find it as far back in Scripture as Gen. 18:4 19:2 24:32 43:24 Luke 7:44. Jesus used this as an object lesson for Peter in John 13. Jesus was washing the feet of His disciples, which Peter thought was beneath Him, and said so. When our Lord straightened him out, then Peter thought that Jesus should wash his entire body. However, Jesus declined. The object lesson, which Peter no doubt missed,²¹ was that Jesus had already washed Peter of his sins—Peter had already been cleansed completely. However, his feet were dirty from walking on this earth. That is, he was dirty in part from sin, and he needed to be cleansed from that. It was not Peter's entire being which needed cleansing, as all believers are cleansed completely from sin—it was his temporal fellowship with God that needed to be restored. John later gave the mechanics in I John 1:9: **If we name our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Allow me this tangent, if you would. The Bible is filled with the mechanics for our spiritual life. We are told to believe in Jesus Christ—we are not told to ask him into our life, our heart or our soul. When it comes to being temporally cleansed from sin, we are told to name or enumerate our recent, unconfessed sins. When it comes to prayer, we are to address the Father, not Jesus and certainly not the Holy Spirit. At best, it is arrogance on our part to suggest that we accomplish these things in other ways. At worst, it is spiritual subversion.

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²¹ Jesus told him that he would grasp the significance of what He did later (John 13:7).

The Men of Gibeah Threaten Homosexual Rape; the Man's Mistress Is Given to Them

They were making merry their hearts and, behold, men of the city, men, sons of Belial, surrounded the house beating [violently] upon the door and so they said unto the man, a lord of the house, the old [one], to say, “Bring out the man who came into your house and we will know him.”

Judges
19:22

They were making their hearts merry, and, suddenly [or, unexpectedly], men of the city, men [who were] sons of worthlessness, surrounded the house beating [violently] on the door, and so they said to the man, the master of the house, the old one, saying, “Bring out the man who came into your house and we will know him.”

While they were making their hearts merry, suddenly, men of the city, worthless asses, surrounded the house and they were beating violently on the door. They said to the older man, “Bring out the man who came into your house that we may know him.”

What the old man and the travelers were doing was the Hiphil participle of *yâṭaʿ* (יָטַע) [pronounced *yaw-TAʰV*], which means *to be good, well, to be pleasing, to do good, to deal well, to make glad, to make a thing good*. In the Hiphil, it means *to do well, to cause to do well, to do rightly, to do good, to make merry, to make fit, to adjust*. Strong’s #3190 BDB #405.

Then we have the *wâw* conjunction and the demonstrative particle *hinnêh* (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*], which means *lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out, holy crap, holy shit*. Here, given the circumstances, we could even get away with the rendering *suddenly, unexpectedly*. Strong’s #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243.

The men who came to the house were called sons of the masculine singular noun *bʿîyyaʿal* (בְּעֵי יָאֵל) [pronounced *bʰeey-YAH-ǵahl*], which is transliterated *Belial*, but it means *without value, worthless, ruin, good-for-nothing, ungodly, wicked*. Strong’s #1100 BDB #116. This is an expression often used to describe the morally depraved—the unbeliever whose degeneracy is pronounced. This designation is associated with idolatry (Deut. 13:13), homosexual rape (our passage), drunkenness (I Sam. 1:16), rebellion (I Sam. 2:12) and perjury (I Kings 21:10).²²

What they did was the Niphal perfect of *ṣâʿaʿ* (צָעַע) [pronounced *sawʰ-VAHʰV*], which means *to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass*; in the Niphal, it means *to turn oneself or to surround*. Hostility is implied. Strong’s #5437 BDB #685. The next verb is the Hithpael participle of *dâphaq* (פָּחַק) [pronounced *daw-FAHK*], which means *to beat, to knock*. In the Hithpael, it means *to beat violently, to pound*. This is a rare word, being found only here and in Gen. 33:13 and SOS 5:2. Strong’s #1849 BDB #200. It is the custom of our part of the world to knock in order to attain entry into a house. Here, the doors were locked securely and these men were pounding on the door, in such a way as to threaten to break the door down. Keil and Delitzsch tell us that form of the verb indicates a gradual increase of intensity.²³ This was not a polite request for entry into the old man’s house.

What they desire the old man to do is to bring out his guest so that they can do the Qal imperfect of *yâdaʿ* (יָדַע) [pronounced *yaw-DAHǵ*], which means *to know*. Here, it is used as a euphemism for sex. Strong’s #3045 BDB #393. These men are not speaking simply of consensual, homosexual relations—their intention is to commit homosexual rape on this man. Our prisons have men who have reached this point of degeneracy and a man who commits forcible homosexual rape, just like a man who commits forcible heterosexual rape, ought to be executed. Such a man has degenerated into an animal. One of the marks of the Sodomites, if you will recall, from Gen. 19, was that they behaved this way as well. God destroyed them for their degeneracy. Paul testifies to this great degeneracy in Rom 1:26–32: **For this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men, committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God**

²² Partially paraphrased from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 355.

²³ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 321.

any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful, and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also they give hearty approval to those who practice them. Even Ezekiel testifies to the degeneracy of Israel: “Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your young sister, who lives south of you, in Sodom with her daughters. Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations, but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they. As I live,” declares Lord Jehovah, “Sodom, your sister, and her daughters, have not done as you and your daughters have done.” (Ezek. 16:46–48).

Now what we have here is some slight amount of civility—the old man is comfortable enough to go outside and talk with the men.

And so went out unto them the man, lord of the house, and so he said unto them, “No, my brothers, do not cause evil [to be done], please; after which has come, the man the this, into my house. Do not do the senseless act the this.

Judges
19:23

And the old man, the master of the house, went out to them, and he said to them, “No, my brothers, do not cause evil [to be done], after this man has come into my house. Do not do this senseless [and vile] act.

And the old man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said, “My brothers, do not cause this evil to be done, especially after this man has come into my house. Do not do this vicious, vile act.

What the old man says to the men outside is:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Do not, my brethren, do not act vilely, I pray you, —after this man hath entered into my house do not commit this impiety.
NASB	“No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly...”
Owen	“No, my brethren, do not act so wickedly seeing that this man has come not [or, into] my house. Do not do this vile thing.”
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	'Nay, my brethren, do not evil, I pray you, after that this man hath come in unto my house, do not this folly;...'

The old man asks them not to do the Hiphil imperfect of $\text{r}^{\text{a}} \text{a}^{\text{c}} (\text{ע ע ר})$ [pronounced *raw-GAHG*], which means *to be evil, to be bad, displeasing, injurious*. In the Hiphil, it means *to make evil, to do evil, to do ill, to cause to do evil, to cause something injurious to be done*. Strong's #7489 BDB #949. The Hiphil is almost a polite way of saying this. They are not directly going to do evil; they are going to more indirectly cause evil to be done. The old man is being as diplomatic as he possibly can.

Then we have the conjunction $\text{a}^{\text{c}} \text{h}^{\text{a}} (\text{א ח א})$ [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*], which means *after, following*. Strong's #310 BDB #29. This is followed by the relative pronoun, which can be rendered *who* or *which*, and then we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to come*. Literally, we have: *after who has come, the man the this, into my house*. All that is meant is that they should not do such evil after this man has been taken in as a guest into the old man's house.

Some of the linguistic drama that you miss in your translation is that, in the Massoretic text, it does not read *into my house* but *not my house*. However, the difference is simply a vowel point, nothing else, and the vowel points were added centuries after the Old Testament canon was closed. Therefore, we can safely go with the word *into*, as all that occurred is a very tired scribe, wrote the negative down four times rather than three times. In a verse like this, it would be an easy mistake to make.

Then we have the negative for the third time with the verb *to do* and the feminine singular noun *n^{eb}vâlâh* (נִבְלָה) [pronounced *n^{eb}vaw-LAW*], which means *senseless deed, vile act, disgraceful thing*; the KJV often renders this *folly*, but that is too tame for its application to rape and incest (Gen. 34:7 || Sam. 13:12). This term is also used of a woman who tries to pass herself off as a virgin at the outset of a marriage, when she is not (Deut. 22:21). The NIV Study Bible describes it as *an expression of outrage at the willful perversion of what is right and natural*.²⁴ See also Joshua 7:15 Judges 20:6, 10 Job 42:8 Isa. 9:17 32:6 Jer. 29:23. Strong's #5039 BDB #615. This old man is obviously in a spot. He does not want his house destroyed nor does he want to be the victim of violence, yet he realizes that he is dealing with degenerate, lawless men who are mostly out of control and should be shot like hydrophobic dogs.

“Behold, my daughter, the virgin, and his mistress; let me bring out, please, them and you [sexually] afflict them and you do to them the good in your eyes and to the man the this, do not do a word the senseless act the this.”

Judges
19:24

“Observe, let me bring out, please, my virgin daughter as well as his mistress and then you may rape them and you may do to them the good in your eyes. But to this man, do not do a word of this vile act.”

“Look, here is my virgin daughter as well as his mistress—let me bring them both out to you so that you can rape them. But, to this man, do not even think of committing such a vile act.”

As I had mentioned in the introduction to these last few chapters, you look in vain to find a man with any sort of character—no one, not even those who appear to be reasonable men, are in the right. They are all in this incredible state of degeneracy. The old man offers up his own daughter and the mistress of the Levite. His daughter is described by the feminine singular noun *b^{eth}ûwâlâh* (בְּתוּלָה) [pronounced *beth-oo-LAWH*] means *virgin*. Strong's #1330 BDB #143.

According to the NEB, this should read: **“Here is my daughter, a virgin; let me bring her out to you. Rape her and do to her what you please; but you will not commit such an outrage against this man.”** Unfortunately, the NEB does not substantiate from whence they get this reading. They simply say *Prob. rdg.; Heb. adds ‘and his concubine.’*²⁵ No other translation of mine reads that way. From the standpoint of reason, it would seem that this man would not offer up the Levite's mistress; however, we must go with what our best manuscripts. I am guessing that perhaps this refers to the alpha Septuagint? If I could legitimately change this translation to what the NEB Bible has and be able to back it up, I would.

After the old man urges them to allow him to bring these two women out, he then uses the *wâw* conjunction and the 2nd person masculine plural, Piel imperative of *‘ânâh* (עָנָה) [pronounced *‘gaw-NAWH*], which means *to humble, to be grace oriented, to be humbled, to be afflicted*. In the Piel, this means *to oppress, to depress, to afflict*. It is used twelve times for men who have sexually forced themselves upon women (Gen. 34:2 Deut. 22:24, 29 Judges 19:24 20:5 || Sam. 13:12, 14, 22, 32 Lam. 5:11 Ezek. 22:10–11). Strong's #6031 BDB #776. He then tells them *to do to them the good in their eyes*.

In this verse, we also have the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *‘âsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *‘gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. Often, a prohibition is expressed as a Qal imperfect in the Hebrew (this is how all of the ten commandments are stated; i.e., it reads **You will not murder**, rather than *Do not murder*). Although Rotherham's note at this point is somewhat unclear, apparently some of the codices list this as an imperative. Given the Hebrew language and the position that the old man is in, I would think that the Qal imperfect is appropriate.

What they are not to do to the man is a *word of the...* and then we have again the feminine singular noun *n^{eb}vâlâh* (נִבְלָה) [pronounced *n^{eb}vaw-LAW*], which means *senseless deed, vile act, disgraceful thing*. Strong's #5039 BDB #615.

²⁴ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 355.

²⁵ *New English Bible*; Oxford University Press, © 1970, p. 351.

It is almost inconceivable that this man would offer up his own daughter and the mistress of this stranger rather than to allow this man to be a victim of homosexual rape. The very idea that this would even pop into this old man's head is disconcerting. I understand that there are few alternatives open to this old man, or to the Levite; however, offering up their women instead of themselves is absolutely repugnant. From the NIV Study Bible: *The tragedy of this story lies not only in the decadence of Gibeah, but also in the callous selfishness of men who would betray defenseless women to be brutally violated.*²⁶ The fact that the men never actually break into the house indicates that it is possible that no one had to be given up to their sexual lusts. However, the key here is the social position of the woman in the ancient world. Because the woman is physically weaker than the man²⁷, and because she would go through long periods of semi-helplessness (while pregnant and immediately after), men took advantage of the woman and her weakness. Barnes points out that this incident betrays *the low place in the social scale occupied by woman in the old world, from which it is one of the glories of Christianity to have raised her.*²⁸ There are innumerable females in the women's movement who have no clue as to the real part Christianity has played in their history. They vilify Christianity out of their ignorance and hard-heartedness as repressive; however, it was Christianity that restored the woman to her true place in the world.

One cannot but help compare this entire incident to the sodomites of Sodom who demanded to have sexual relations with the visitors to Lot's home. *Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, "How, observe, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." They said, however, "No but we will spend the night in the square." Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter, and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them." But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him and he said, Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. Now, observe, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and you do to them whatever you like—only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said, "Stand aside." Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien and already he is acting like a judge. Now we will treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to breaking the door. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and they shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wore [themselves] out trying to find the doorway (Gen. 19:1–11).* That the stories are familiar should not concern us. It is simply that *history repeats itself*. The great tragedy is that we have Israelites behaving like the Sodomites whom God destroyed for their uncontrolled evil.

And not willing not the men to listen to him and so took hold the man his mistress and so he brought unto them the outside [or, the street] and so they knew her and so they satisfied their thirst in her all the night until the morning. And so they sent her off in a rising up of the dawn.

Judges
19:25

And the men were not willing to listen to him and so the man seized his mistress and he brought [her] to them outside [in the street]. They knew her [sexually] and they satisfied their [sexual] thirst in her all night until morning. Then they sent her off in the ascending of the dawn.

However, the men were not willing to listen to him, so the Levite suddenly seized his mistress and he brought her out to them in the street. They raped her repeatedly, satisfying their insatiable lusts throughout the entire night. They dismissed her at the coming of the dawn.

Young and Owen are somewhat at odds in their rendering of this verse:

²⁶ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 355.

²⁷ A fact proven by Andy Kauffman.

²⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 463.

Owen's Translation And would not the men listen to him so the man seized his concubine and put (her) to them out and they knew her and abused her all night until the morning and they let her go as the dawn began to break.

Young's Lit. Translation And the men have not been willing to hearken to him, and the man taketh hold on his concubine, and bringeth *her* out unto them without, and they know her, and rolled themselves upon her all the night, till the morning, and send her away in the ascending of the dawn...

The first verb is the Qal perfect of $\text{ʾā}^b\text{vāh}$ (אָבַח) [pronounced *aw^B-VAWH*] is a verb always found with a negative (except in Job 1:19 39:9). In the Qal perfect, it generally means *would*; in the Qal imperfect it means *consent, yield, willing*. Strong's #14 BDB #2.

Then we are at a loss. Suddenly *the man* does the Hiphil imperfect of chāzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*], which means *to be strong, firm, to strengthen*. The Hiphil means *to take, to strengthen, to repair, to hold fast*. Strong's #2388 BDB #304. We have two interesting things that you might miss in the English: first, it is not clear just which man does this. It says that he *holds fast* to *his* concubine, which indicates that the Levite, in hearing all of this, grabs up his own mistress and throws her out. And even more tragic, this is in the imperfect tense, which indicates a continuance of the action. This is, this didn't take place in just a moment—he didn't just grab her and throw her out; the imperfect tense means this was a process. In other words, he had to chase her down and grab her, and grab her again when she got away, and perhaps again, and then take her kicking and fighting to the door.

Where he brought her is described by the masculine singular noun chûts (חוּט) [pronounced *khoots*], which means *outside, street*. Strong's #2351 BDB #299.

What the men did is first given as the Qal imperfect of yâda^{\prime} (יָדָע) [pronounced *yaw-DAHĠ*], which means *to know*. Strong's #3045 BDB #393. This is a polite word for saying that they had sex with her. Then we have the Hithpael imperfect of ʿālal (עָלַל) [pronounced *gaw-LAHL*], which means *to satisfy [sexual] thirst* in the Hithpael when followed by the *bêyth* preposition (as it is here). Strong's #5953 BDB #759.

They did this all the night and then we have the preposition ʿad (אֲד) [pronounced *ḡad*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. Then we have the masculine singular of bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced *BOH-ker*], which means *morning*. Strong's #1242 BDB #133.

The final verb is the 3rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect of shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHKH*], which means *to send, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss, to deploy*. In the Piel it means *to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free*. Strong's #7971 BDB #1018. When they sent her off is described by the *bêyth* preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of ʿālâh (עָלָה) [pronounced *ḡaw-LAWH*], which means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. Here, in the Qal infinitive construct, it would mean *a rising of, an ascending of, a climbing of, a springing up, a shooting forth of*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. What ascends is the masculine singular noun shachar (שַׁחַר) [pronounced *SHAH-khahr*], which means *dawn*. Strong's #7837 BDB #1007. There were enough men in the city who raped her that they continued to do so for the entire night. This was abusive enough to kill her.

And so came the woman to a turning toward of the morning and so she fell [at] a door of a house of the man where her lord [was] there until the light.

Judges
19:26

So the woman came in the facing of the morning and collapsed at the opening of the house of the man, there where her master [was] until the light.

So the woman collapsed that morning at the opening of the house of the man, where her master was, and she remained there until it was fully light.

In the previous verse, morning is described in two different ways. In this verse, we first have the Qal infinitive construct of pânâh (פָּנָה) [pronounced *paw-NAWH*], which means *to turn, to turn away from, to turn toward, to turn*

one's face away from, to turn one's face to. Strong's #6437 BDB #815. What turns to face her is the morning. There are two connotations: first, the morning brings to her grief and sadness as to what has happened to her; but it brings her some solace, as well, as in the light of day, the men left her, and are no longer forcing themselves upon her.

What the woman did was the Qal imperfect of nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*], which means *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply, to prostrate oneself*. Strong's #5307 BDB #656. Where she falls is the masculine singular construct of pethach (פֶּתַח) [pronounced *PEH-thahkh*], which means *opening, doorway, entrance*. Strong's #6607 BDB #835.

The woman remains there until the masculine singular ʿôwr (אֹר) [pronounced *ohr*], which means *light*. This is used for moonlight, sunlight and morning light. Strong's #216 BDB #21. The implication is that she lies there for a time—if anything, as an embarrassment and a disgrace to the city and to the men inside the house. They do not go outside immediately to bring her in. In fact, it does not appear that he even goes out to look for her. He apparently just gets his gear ready to go and stumbles across her, as we will see in the next verse.

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The Levite Cuts up the Dead Body of His Mistress and Mails the Pieces to the Rest of Israel

And so arose her lord in the morning and so he opened doors of a house of the man and so he goes out to go to his way and, behold, his woman, his mistress, laying [at the] entrance of the house and her hands upon the threshold.

Judges
19:27

And so her master arose in the morning and he opened the doors of the man's house and he went out to depart to the road, and, observe, his woman, his mistress, was laying [at] the entrance of the house with her hands upon the threshold.

Soon thereafter, her master got up that morning and opened the doors of the man's house and he got up to go on his way, and then came upon his woman, his mistress, laying at the entryway to the courtyard with her hands on the threshold.

What the Levite doesn't do is the most telling. He does not go outside at the break of dawn to look for his mistress. He apparently does not even expect to find her outside. He is about to quietly leave town. After he arises, he first does the Qal imperfect of yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct of hâlak^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. What he does is open the feminine plural of deleth (דַּלְתוֹת) [pronounced *DEH-leth*], which means *doors, gates of a city*. If you will recall Samson taking off the front gates to the city, this was the word that was used. Strong's #1817 BDB #195. Apparently, this is not the opening or the door where the woman is. She is further out at the entrance of the structures which belong to the old man.

In describing the woman, we have the Qal active participle of nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*], which means *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply*. This time it means *laying*. Strong's #5307 BDB #656. Where she is laying is the masculine singular construct of pethach again, which is פֶּתַח [pronounced *PEH-thahkh*], which means *opening, doorway, entrance*. Strong's #6607 BDB #835. I believe that the house was built around a courtyard and that there are several doors and openings to the courtyard and then a gate or door which leads outside of the courtyard into the town and that is where she was. So he exits one of the doors of the house into the courtyard, goes through the courtyard to the gate to exit the courtyard, and there is his mistress, laying in front of the property entrance at the threshold, her hands on the threshold. This is a very sad

scene indeed. The man himself does not appear to be looking for her—this does not appear to be his concern anymore. The only reason that he finds her is that he has to pretty much step over her to get out the front door.

And so he said unto her, “Get up and let us go” and no [one] answering [him]. And so he placed her upon the ass and so rose up the man and so he went to his place.

Judges
19:28

Then he said to her, “Get up and we will go.” However, no one answered. So he placed her on his ass and then the man rose up and he went to his place.

Then he said to her, “Get up and let’s go.” However, no one answered him. So he placed her on his donkey and then he departed, going to his own home.

Let’s first look at a few translations:

The Emphasized Bible And he said to her, Up! And let us be going. But there was no answer [or, no one was answering]. So he took her up on the ass, and the man rose up, and went his way to his own place.

NASB And he said to her, “Get up and let us go,” but there was no answer. Then he placed her on the donkey; and the man arose and went to his home [lit., place].

Young’s Lit. Translation ...and he saith unto her, ‘Rise and we go;’ and there is none answering, and he taketh her on the ass, and the man riseth and goeth to his place.

Do you recall how he spoke to her when he wanted her back? He spoke to her heart in v. 3 of this chapter. Now, all he says is the Qal imperative of *qûwm* (קום) [pronounced *koom*], which means *stand, rise up, get up*. Strong’s #6965 BDB #877. She has crawled to the entryway of the courtyard and is lying on her front, her hands at the threshold; she is probably half-naked and bruised and beaten. Without even knowing whether she is dead or alive, the Levite tells her *get up*. There is no particle of entreaty, even. He slightly softens this with the 1st person plural, Qal imperfect of *to go*; using the voluntative *hê*. That means *let us go*; or, *we will go*.

There is the *wâw* conjunction, then the negative *ʾayin* (אין) [pronounced *AH-yin*], which means *naught, nothing*; or it can be used as a particle of negation; *no, not*. Strong’s #369 BDB #34. This is followed by the Qal active participle of *ʿânâh* (ענה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], which means *to answer, to respond*. Strong’s #6030 BDB #772. This could be rendered *and none answering* or *and no one was answering*.

There is a quiet resignation in all of this. Perhaps the man justified to himself what he did by what she had done; perhaps he thought he had no other choice. It’s hard to tell; however, despite the fact that she committed a wrong against him was not a justification for him sending her out to her death as he did. The man is to protect and honor the woman, and if he is unwilling to do so, then he ought not to get married. In fact, he ought not to have a relationship with any woman.

And so he went in his house and so he took the knife and so he took a hold to his mistress and so he cut her to her bones to twelve pieces. And so he sent her to all of [the] territory of Israel.

Judges
19:29

So he entered into his house and took a knife and then he cut her to her bones into twelve pieces. Then he sent her to all of the borders of Israel.

When the man had entered into his own house, he cut up his mistress into twelve pieces and sent these pieces throughout all of Israel.

We have some similar verbs here, so let’s see how others worked with the verse:

The Emphasized Bible And when he was come into his house he took a knife and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces,—and sent her throughout all the bounds of Israel.

NASB When he entered his house he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel.

Young's Lit. Translation ...and cometh into his house, and taketh the knife, and layeth hold on his concubine, and cutteth her in pieces to her bones—into twelve pieces and sendeth her into all the border of Israel.

As always, Young provides us with the most literal of the translations, although the other two are quite close. We have two verbs for *to take* here. The first is the Qal imperfect of *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] which means *to take, to take from, to take in marriage, to seize*. Strong's #3947 BDB #542. What he seizes with his hand is the feminine singular noun *ma`âkeleth* (מַאֲכֵלֶת) [pronounced *mah-uh-KEH-leth*], which means *knife*. This word is only found in four places in Scripture: Gen. 22:6, 10 (where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac; it was the knife the Abraham took to cut Isaac's throat), this passage, and Prov. 30:14. Strong's #3979 BDB #38.

Then we have the Hiphil imperfect of *châzaq* again; (חָזַק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*], which means *to be strong, firm, to strengthen*. The root means *to fasten upon, to seize, to grow firm*; and this word came to mean *to be strong, firm, to strengthen*. The Hiphil means *to take, to strengthen, to repair, to hold fast*. Strong's #2388 BDB #304. Here, *châzaq* is followed by *lâmed*, as it occasionally does, which does not appear to do much other than indicate what follows is a direct object and perhaps indicate purpose..

The fourth verb is the Piel imperfect of *nâthach* (נָתַח) [pronounced *naw-THAHKH*], which means *to cut up, to cut in pieces, to divide by joints*. It is only found in the Piel. Strong's #5408 BDB #677. This is followed by the *lâmed* preposition and the feminine plural of *etsem* (עֲצָמִים) [pronounced *geh-TSEM*], which means *bone, substance, self*. Strong's #6106 BDB #782. This is followed by *to twelve* and then the masculine plural noun *nêthach* (נֶתַח) [pronounced *NAY-thahkh*], which means *piece, pieces* and it is primarily used of the divided carcass of a sacrificial animal. This is obviously the noun cognate of *nâthach*. Strong's #5409 BDB #677.

Where he sends her is into all of the masculine singular of *g^{eb}vûl* (גְּבוּל) [pronounced *g^{eb}-VOOL*], which means *border, boundary, territory*. Strong's #1366 BDB #147. This is followed by *Israel*.

Obviously, we have entered into weird. This guy is making a point, and since his Kodak instamatic was on the fritz, he sent pieces of his mistress instead to each tribe in Israel (except for the Benjamites). Recall that there were twelve territories for the twelve tribes (the tribe of Joseph being divided into Ephraim and Manasseh, and Manasseh being divided into east and west Manasseh. The Levites were scattered throughout. So, he sent a piece to each of the tribes, to Manasseh twice and to the Levites. Obviously, he sent a note along with the body to indicate what had taken place. For all intents and purposes, you are holding that note in your hand. The note that he sent to the twelve tribes is this chapter of Judges. Obviously, such a thing is shocking, but what was done as shocking. What the Benjamites did was behavior rarely observed even among the Gentiles.

Barnes: *There is something truly terrible in the stern ferocity of grief and indignation which dictated this desperate effort to arouse his countrymen to avenge his wrong.*²⁹ NIV Study Bible: *Dismembering the concubine's body and sending parts to each of the 12 tribes was intended to awaken Israel from its moral lethargy and to marshal the tribes to face up to their responsibility. It is ironic that the one who issued such a call was himself so selfish and insensitive.*³⁰

You may be asking yourself, *why the melodrama? Why does he cut her up and send her throughout Israel?* Let me offer two possible answers. What occurred was shocking—the idea that, so soon in the land, Israel could commit such a crime is almost unthinkable. We would expect this to occur a couple centuries after Joshua and this took place relatively near to the time of his death. These Israelites, many of them, have just conquered and slaughtered the gentiles of the Land of Promise as per God's command due to the incredible degeneracy of the gentiles—and now the men of Benjamin reveal themselves to be equally degenerate. When this Levite sends a piece of this woman's body, it is a complete shock to the recipients, which is the reaction that he had hoped for.

²⁹ Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 464.

³⁰ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 355.

Now let me give you the real reason that he sent her cut up body through the mail: this Levite showed no personal integrity. He grabbed his own mistress and threw her out to the degenerate men of Benjamin to save his own skin. This makes him culpable in this crime. In order to accuse the men of Benjamin, this Levite needs two or three witnesses. He will be the one witness and the cut up body of his mistress the other witness. He does not want the old man or his servant to make a statement concerning this act. When we read what he says to the rest of Israel in chapter 20, we will note how carefully he gives an account of the incident. All personal culpability will be omitted from his testimony and there will be no additional witnesses which would implicate this Levite.

In preface to v. 30, I want to make a couple of comments. In your eagerness to read through the Bible in one year or in three years, or in whatever, you scoured v. 30 for all of about two or three seconds—you probably don't even recall it. In your Bible discussion group, for the very few of you who ever even thought to study this book of the Judges, probably devoted all of one or perhaps five minutes of discussion to this verse (and whoever put in five minutes of discussion, you were wanting him to shut up). Just to wade through the Hebrew of this one verse required nearly four hours of my time; this is apart from any other sort of commentary. I will make two suggestions in this verse based upon the Hebrew and the interpretation thereof that you have not read anywhere else.

And he was every [one] of the seeing and he said, "She has not occurred and she has never been seen as this for from a day a coming up of sons of Israel out from a land of Egypt until the day the this." Place for yourselves upon her [this], take counsel and speak out.

Judges
19:30

And it was every one seeing [this] said, "Never has [such a thing] occurred and never has [such a thing] been seen from the day the sons of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt even to this day." Set your heart on it [this], discuss [this] and speak out.

And every person who saw the body part of the woman and read this note exclaimed, "Never has this sort of thing occurred before in Israel. Never has such a thing been observed from the day that the sons of Israel came up from Egypt until today." Consider what occurred, discuss it and speak out.

Throughout this chapter, we have had some very easy Hebrew. We have seen the same words over and over again; the sentence structure has been simple. We did look at a couple of other translations, but these translations were pretty much in agreement. In fact, we have seen nothing which was all that difficult until this verse. What we just read in vv. 1–29 was the note written by this Levite to the other tribes of Israel. He stated the incident in fairly simple language. The result of this note and the body being distributed throughout Israel is recorded in this verse, which was done by someone who was a bit more erudite. Therefore, we need to see what others have done here:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And so it was that every one who beheld said— There hath not happened nor been seen the like of this, from the day when the sons of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, until this day: Put it to yourselves concerning it, take counsel and speak!
NASB	And it came about that all who saw it said, "Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!"
Owen's Translation	And all who saw it said, Nas never happened or has never been seen as this from the day that came up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt until this date [here]; consider it, take counsel and speak.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And it hath come to pass every one who seeth hath said, 'There hath not been—yea there hath not been seen like this, from the day of the coming up of the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt till this day; set your <i>heart</i> upon it, take counsel, and speak.'

this verse begins with the wâw conjunction and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, it often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive). Without a specific subject and object, it is rendered by the KJV and Rotherham as *It came to pass*, by the NASB as *it came about*, by Young as *It cometh to pass*. Literally, we should render this *and it was*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. This is

immediately followed by the masculine singular construct of *all* (or, *every*), the definite article and the Qal active participle of *to see*. Literally, this gives us *every [one] of the seeing*; it means *every one seeing [this]*. This is followed by *and said* or *and he said*; which is going to sound rather stilted in the English. This would give us: **And he was every [one] of the seeing and he said...** Less literally, but more accurately: **And it was everyone seeing [this] said...** Obviously, not every single person in Israel saw the cut up body and read the note. However, of the hundreds (or, perhaps thousands) of men who did, they all said essentially the same thing. Now, that was the easy part of this verse.

The text of what they said is the negative particle *lô`* (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced *low*], which means *not, no*. This generally negates the word immediately following it. This word represents the absolute negation. Whereas, *ʿal* (עַל) might be dehortative,³¹ *lô`* is prohibitive. *ʿAl* denies subjectively as one would wish and *lô`* denies objectively as a fact. Strong's #3808 BDB #518. This is followed by the 3rd person feminine singular, Niphal participle of *hâyâh*, again; (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], means *to be*. In the Niphal, it means *to become, to be made, to come to pass, to occur, to happen*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. Since this is the 3rd person feminine singular, which really matches nothing in the verse, this refers in general to the event which had occurred. Israel, even in degeneracy, could not imagine such a thing as having occurred among their own brothers.

Then we have the *wâw* conjunction and the negative *lô`* again and the 3rd person feminine singular, Niphal perfect of *to see*. Literally, it is: **...and she has never been seen...** However, more in keeping with the nuances of the language, this should be rendered: **...and never has [such a thing] been seen...** This is followed by *as this* (the demonstrative pronoun is in the feminine singular).

Then we have the *lâmed* and the *mîn* prepositions together, which would be, literally, *for from*; the *lâmed* prefixed preposition and *mîn* together almost always form what BDB calls a *terminus a quo*, which means a *starting point, the earliest possible date, or end from which*.³² We can render the two together as *for from, even from, from*. *Lâmed* = Strong's #none BDB #510; *mîn* = Strong's #4480 BDB #577. This is followed by *day* and the Qal infinitive construct of *ʿâlâh* (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which we had just a few verses ago, and it means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. As a Qal infinitive construct, it means *a rising up of, a coming up of*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. This is followed by *the sons of Israel from a land of Egypt*; then we have the terminating point given by the preposition *ʿad* (עַד) [pronounced *gad*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. This gives us: **...and never has [such a thing] been seen as this even from a coming up of sons of Israel from a land of Egypt until the day the this...**

There is something that you will miss completely in the English. In the previous verse, when the man is cutting up his mistress, all five verbs are in the imperfect tense. What occurred, insofar as this Levite was concerned, was a long, painful process. Each action seemed drawn out and continuous. However, by contrast, four of the first five verbs in v. 20 are in the perfect tense. To the man who wrote this, the cutting up of the woman was a process; however, what followed he viewed as a completed process. The person who did this—who cut the woman up and mailed out her body in pieces—would view that as a process; and he would likewise see the receiving of these pieces, as well as what they would say, as a single action, although these actions would be repeated over and over again. Another, even better explanation, is that the perfect tenses would be employed by a later historian, whereas the imperfects would be used by the person who experienced the events himself.

Then we have the oddest ending to this chapter. We have two Qal imperatives and then a Piel imperative, all of them 2nd person masculine plural. The first is the Qal imperative of *sîym* (סִיַּם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. Strong's #7760 BDB #962. This is followed by the *lâmed* preposition affixed to the 2nd person masculine plural suffix. That means *to you [all], for you, with respect to you*; and then we have the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ahl*], which means *upon, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. This is affixed to the 3rd person feminine singular suffix, so it would be literally rendered *upon her, on her, against her*. So, therefore, most literally, we have *set for yourselves on her* or *place with respect to yourselves upon her*. *Her* could reasonably be expected to refer to the dead mistress and *you* (plural) to the

³¹ *Dehort* means *to dissuade, to persuade against*.

³² *Dictionary of Foreign Words in English*; John Ayto; Woodsworth Editions Ltd., Hertfordshire; ©1991, p. 302.

recipients of this letter. However, it is more likely that *her* refers to the incident in general (*this* is in the feminine singular, and *this* refers to the incident). What the hell this all means is obviously no piece of cake to translate. Owen went with simply *consider*; Young with *set your [heart] upon it*; Rotherham went with *put it to yourselves concerning it*; and the NASB went with *consider it*. The Septuagint has *take counsel [you] concerning it*. My own thinking is the original Hebrew read *Set your heart on her [this]*. In the Hebrew, without the vowel points, *your [plural] heart [singular]* would be לבכם and what we have here is לכם, meaning that a scribe could have left out the bêyth.

I should point out, however, that BDB does give several instances where we have sîym used without *heart*, yet appears to imply that it should be there (Job 34:23 37:15 Judges 19:30 Isa. 41:20).

Without even an intervening conjunction, we jump to the 2nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative of ׳ûwts (יִוְצוּ) [pronounced *oots* or *goots*], and it means *take counsel, plan, discuss*. This verb is found only in the Qal imperative in Judges 19:30 and Isa. 8:10.* Strong's #5779 BDB #734.

Then we throw in the wâw conjunction and the 2nd person masculine plural, Piel imperative of *to speak*; the Piel is the intensifier, so this can mean *talk, backed with action; give your opinion; speak out; talk it around*. Strong's #1696 BDB #180.

Now, here's what I think has happened. I think we have a clever literary device employed right here. We have the story of what occurred being passed around with the body parts of this young woman; its last line is *Set this on your heart, discuss [this] and speak out*. However, when someone would read this scroll, they would hand it to someone else (or, to a group), and they would repeat this phrase in handing it to that person or group.

In other words, what we read in this chapter was the original note passed around with the body parts of the woman. The first part of v. 30 was the reaction that this note got. The last sentence in v. 30 was both the final sentence of the letter as well as the words of those who read the letter.

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