

Anarchy

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 Christmas Eve Services: 3,7,9pm
- B. Next two Wed Nights:
 1. 12/23 (day before xmas eve) is in **the gym**. Tables, communion. Acoustic set.
 2. 12/30 (day before New Years eve). *Will be?* I'm thinking a prayer night to usher in the new year.

II. Slide3 **Intro: Anarchy** [an=w/o - arkhos=chief/ruller; w/o a ruler]

- A. **Imagine a football game** with no rules. Sounds like fun but in in anarchy. **Imagine a busy intersection** w/no stop lights. It can function, but with a lot of frustration and people ultimately doing what they please.
 1. **Here we have a nation w/no rules.** Not wanting to follow **God**. **No leadership over them.** And *every man doing what is right in his own eyes.*
- B. We have this **last story** in Judges, bringing us to a **culmination** of the *horrible conditions* that prevailed in Israel, right before the rise of the **monarchy**. Chaos, lawlessness, & anarchy prevailed.
- C. Slide4 Map of cities to know: Ephraim Benjamin, Judah. **Jebus**(ites)*Jer* Jabesh Gilead Bethlehem

III. Slide5 **GIBEANITES GONE WILD (Ch.19)**

- A. (1) **A concubine** was a friend with benefits in that day. A sexual partner, but who did not possess the legal and cultural status of a wife.
 1. Lev.21:14,15 says who he can/can't marry. **A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot - these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife.** *Didn't say anything about concubine! Levitical Loophole he thought?*
- B. Slide6 (15) **Hospitality** a prime virtue in their culture...normally. **But here a serious breach** of Near Eastern etiquette.
- C. (23,24) **In the name of hospitality** - this man was willing to **protect** this male visitor...**and forsake the defense of the weak & helpless.**

1. He knew his neighbors were wrong **by** wanting to have sex with this man [see **wickedly, outrage, vile**] But decides heterosexual rape *is better than* homosexual rape?
- D. (25) Gang raped her all night.
- E. (27) I guess **he** got a good nights sleep.
- F. **Slide7,8** (28,29) **He was surprised she was dead, or almost?**
1. So he takes her home & dismembers her body (**like a bad episode of Criminal Minds**) & sends the pieces to each of the 12 tribes.
 2. **It was symbolic act.** If Israel failed to help him *take revenge* they would suffer the same fate as his concubine.
 - a) I wonder if this is where **Saul** gets the idea to unite Israel later, where he did this w/ one of his dad's yoke of oxen?
 3. Well, He got the desired outcome...**see** vs.30.
- G. **Slide9,10** With the rape of the Levite's concubine, the moral depravity of Israel reached a new low.
- H. **Judges 19 is the updated equivalent of Genesis 19.** Sodom & Gomorrah & lot.
1. **Not only do the two share much of the same vocabulary, the # of Hebrew words in Gen 19:4–8 and Judg 19:22–24 are identical.**
- I. **How far Israel had fallen!** Adultery, lack of common hospitality, sodomy, rape, and murder had become a way of life!
1. When people become **their own law**, **social order and basic morality** do not exist. Humankind, left to its own devices, *falls into unimaginable sin.*

IV. **Slide11 CIVIL WAR (Ch.20)**

- A. Israel's first Civil War.
- B. (2) Their intent...to take official action against the men of Gibeah.
1. **One of the few encouraging things in the whole story...**that the country comes together united in heart & mind (**as one man**), to deliver **Justice**.
- C. (5) **The Levite condemned the men, but exonerated himself.** He said *nothing* of **his own complicity** in the tragedy.

- D. **Slide12** (8) **As one man - really?** an unexpected phrase here, given the *disunity* amongst the tribes.
1. **It's ironic**, that in the *last episode* of the book, **they all finally come together, but** to fight against **one of their own tribes, not a foreign oppressor.**
- E. (14-17) The Benjamites refused to turn the men who had committed the gang rape over to the Israelite force for punishment.
1. By their refusal, **the entire tribe** became **implicated** in the crime.
 2. **Worse**, they decided to fight against Israel in order to **protect the criminals.**
 - a) **Where do you draw loyalty's lines?** Loyalty to family, friends, business associates, etc?
I believe loyalty **leaves off**, where w/our loyalty to God & His commandments begins.
- F. **Slide13** (16) **700 left-handed skilled fighting men** - Benjamin evidently gained a reputation for having skilled left-handed warriors. [**Ehud**/an earlier Judge 3:15,21 was left-handed. **As** a special contingent from **David's soldiers** later 1 Chron.12]
1. Biblical notes like this sure give the Bible a **real-life flavor.**
- G. **Slide14a The Sling** - was a common weapon in ancient warfare.
1. This obviously increased the **range** of hitting your enemy.
 2. Ancient **Egyptian** and **Assyrian** reliefs show **slingers** and **archers** standing together as long-range attackers. *Shepherd's Notes, Joshua/Judges pg.96*
- H. **Slide14b** (18,23) **Twice Israel attacked, and twice they would be beaten** by the smaller yet superior Benjamite force.
1. **Ask: How would you account for the fact that the 11 tribes were twice defeated by the Benjamites, even though they had asked counsel of the Lord?**
 - a) The 3rd time it was added...**they would win.** vs.28
 - b) **Also note: 1st time** they asked God. **2nd time** wept till night, then asked. **3rd time** wept, sat before God, fasted till dinner, offered burnt sacrifices, & peace offerings, then asked Him.
- I. **Slide15** (27) **Ark of the covenant** - interesting note. The Ark is mentioned once in judges.
1. **The absence of the ark** in the narratives of judges reflects the **moral decline** of Israel during that period. [**compare to 30 x's in Joshua**]

- J. (29-48) **Despite how far** Israel had *fallen away* from their faith, Yahweh still orchestrated **their battle & brought justice**. *Dr. David Jeremiah*
- K. (36-48) The account of the battle at Gibeah ends with a detailed retelling of certain elements of the fight.
- L. **The entire tribe** of the Benjamites paid dearly **for supporting the criminal actions of a few**.
- M. (43) **Gibeah** will be the home town of Saul (1st king) so maybe why all weren't wiped out.

V. Slide16 **CATCH ME A WIFE (Ch.21)**

- A. The tribe of Benjamin was decimated by the Civil War.
1. Israel had won, **but** the victory was **hollow**.
 2. What was **worse**, before the battle had begun Israel had taken a vow that anyone who gave his daughter as wife to a Benjamite, would be killed. (1,5)
- B. Slide17 (3) The war had **begun** with a dismembered concubine; **with** Benjamin defeated, Israel itself has become dismembered.
- C. (3,4) **Note**: God doesn't answer here, **but** the Israelites decided to **take action anyway**.
1. What an ill-conceived plan to preserve the tribe, **apparently w/o divine counsel**.
 - a) When God's people make a habit of *failing to consult Him*, they end up confused about **right & wrong, wisdom & foolishness**.
 2. **Jabesh-Gilead** was a city of Manasseh in Transjordan.
 3. **The men would be killed for not joining in the battle against Benjamin**.
 4. So Israel could fulfill its vow under the guise of punishing a noncooperative city
 - a) Clearly, this vow was as **rash** as that of Jephthah (*next 1 to walk thru my door I'll sacrifice to you Lord*) **and the consequences just as shocking**.
- D. (13-15) **A little problem...**the need for wives was not fully met, so **a 2nd solution** was proposed.
1. Slide18 The Benjamites were allowed to **kidnap** young women who were celebrating at a yearly feast in **Shiloh**.
 2. We can't "**give**" them to you **but** you can **take them**.
- E. (24,25) The last 2 verses of Judges summarize the unstable condition of Israel in the years before the rise of the monarchy.

1. Vs.24 presents *a quiet picture* & is even how Joshua ends 24:28.
2. But then vs.25 gives **the final word**. Each Israelite **was** living on his own land...**but** he was **also** doing whatever seemed right to him.
 - a) They were living as if there was *no nation, no tribe, no clan, or no family*...**just** a mass of individuals each pulling in whatever direction they wished.
- F. **So the book ends in despair**. People acting w/o God. People finding their own solutions. But these solutions are sometimes **worse** than the *initial problem*.
- G. **Slide19a** The book of *Joshua* started off with Israel as **one** people, **united** in vision & spirit. The book of *Judges* ended with Israel **fractured** into many pieces. **Slide19b**
- H. **How do we tie this in to Christmas season?**
 1. **What they needed was a leader. A king. But** not just a king...**but** *The King of Kings*. Who came to earth as a little baby **for all** who admit their need for Him.
- I. When **people disobey**, their **society** will **decay**.
- J. When **darkness abides**, **leadership** must **arise**.