

## Judges 19: 1-30 (NRSV)

### The Levite's Concubine

<sup>1</sup>In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite, residing in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. <sup>2</sup>But his concubine became angry with him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there for some four months. <sup>3</sup>Then her husband set out after her, to speak tenderly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple of donkeys. When he reached her father's house, the girl's father saw him and came with joy to meet him. <sup>4</sup>His father-in-law, the girl's father, made him stay, and he remained with him for three days; so they ate and drank, and he stayed there. <sup>5</sup>On the fourth day they got up early in the morning, and he prepared to go; but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, 'Fortify yourself with a bit of food, and after that you may go.' <sup>6</sup>So the two men sat and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, 'Why not spend the night and enjoy yourself?' <sup>7</sup>When the man got up to go, his father-in-law kept urging him until he spent the night there again. <sup>8</sup>On the fifth day he got up early in the morning to leave; and the girl's father said, 'Fortify yourself.' So they lingered until the day declined, and the two of them ate and drank. <sup>9</sup>When the man with his concubine and his servant got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, 'Look, the day has worn on until it is almost evening. Spend the night. See, the day has drawn to a close. Spend the night here and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early in the morning for your journey, and go home.'

<sup>10</sup> But the man would not spend the night; he got up and departed, and arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). He had with him a couple of saddled donkeys, and his concubine was with him. <sup>11</sup>When they were near Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said to his master, 'Come now, let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites, and spend the night in it.' <sup>12</sup>But his master said to him, 'We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel; but we will continue on to Gibeah.' <sup>13</sup>Then he said to his servant, 'Come, let us try to reach one of these places, and spend the night at Gibeah or at Ramah.' <sup>14</sup>So they passed by and went on their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. <sup>15</sup>They turned aside there, to go in and spend the night at Gibeah. He went in and sat down in the open square of the city, but no one took them in to spend the night.

<sup>16</sup> Then at evening there was an old man coming from his work in the field. The man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was residing in Gibeah. (The people of the place were Benjaminites.) <sup>17</sup>When the old man looked up and saw the wayfarer in the open square of the city, he said, 'Where are you going and where do you come from?' <sup>18</sup>He answered him, 'We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; and I am going to my home. Nobody has offered to take me in. <sup>19</sup>We your servants have straw and fodder for our donkeys, with bread and wine for me and the woman and the young man along with us. We need nothing more.' <sup>20</sup>The old man said, 'Peace be to you. I will care for all your wants; only do not spend the night in the square.' <sup>21</sup>So he brought him into his house, and fed the donkeys; they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

### Gibeah's Crime

<sup>22</sup> While they were enjoying themselves, the men of the city, a depraved lot, surrounded the house, and started pounding on the door. They said to the old man, the master of the house,

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‘Bring out the man who came into your house, so that we may have intercourse with him.’<sup>23</sup> And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, ‘No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Since this man is my guest, do not do this vile thing.’<sup>24</sup> Here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do whatever you want to them; but against this man do not do such a vile thing.’<sup>25</sup> But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them. They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.<sup>26</sup> As morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man’s house where her master was, until it was light.

27 In the morning her master got up, opened the doors of the house, and when he went out to go on his way, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold.<sup>28</sup> ‘Get up,’ he said to her, ‘we are going.’ But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey; and the man set out for his home.<sup>29</sup> When he had entered his house, he took a knife, and grasping his concubine he cut her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.<sup>30</sup> Then he commanded the men whom he sent, saying, ‘Thus shall you say to all the Israelites, “Has such a thing ever happened since the day that the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until this day? Consider it, take counsel, and speak out.”’