

JUDGES 19:20



And the old man said,
"Peace be with you!
However, let all your
needs be my
responsibility;
only **do not**
spend the
night in the

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ הַזֶּקֶן
שְׁלוֹם לָךְ, רַק
כָּל-מַחְסוֹרְךָ עָלַי;
רַק בְּרַחוּב,
אַל-תֵּלֶן.

OPEN SQUARE.

12 Sept 2014 KALLERSON

Artwork by Douglas Kallerson

Judges 19:1-21 **(No King in Israel, Part V)**

The day I typed this sermon, a pod of 8-10 manatee was swimming just off our dock. They stayed about four hours, churning up the water, poking out their noses, playing with their young, and slapping their giant tails as they dove down for more sea grass.

I have never seen them stay in a single place along the bay for this long, and it was a real treat. I focused the livestream camera on them, which was quite distracting. But it was also so exciting that Hideko and I had to go out on the dock to watch them for a while.

People tuned in from Australia, Ireland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and elsewhere that day. I didn't get the sermon done on time, but it was worth it. A bonus of them coming was that I didn't have to think of a sermon introduction. The Lord just sent it our way.

Text Verse: *“So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent He had placed among men,
⁶¹ And delivered His strength into captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand.” Psalm 78:61*

As distracting as the manatees were, they really blessed us and others. The Levite in our passage today will also be a bit distracted. In fact, it will take him a couple of days just to get out of the area.

The old man, the Levite, and those with him left behind were probably sad at the loss of the company. But another old man will be happy about the company he receives that same evening.

In today's verses are all kinds of treats from the Hebrew. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Gladden Your Heart (verses 1-9)

¹ **And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel,**

v'hi bayamim ha'hem u-melekh ein b'yisrael – “And is, in the days, the those, and king naught in Israel.” The words are similar to Judges 17:6 & 18:1. It is prior to the establishment of the kingdom, but there is no judge named in the narrative either. In fact, Judges 20:28 will show that this is during the time of Phineas, son of Aaron.

At such an early time in the history of Israel, their passing through the Jordan would still be fresh in the minds of the majority of the people. And yet, the horrific events of this story come about. The vile conduct of the people of Benjamin is hard to imagine at such an early point in Israel's history, and yet it is on full display in the coming verses.

In the previous chapter, the typology reflected a time after Christ's first coming and prior to His second coming. It is a time when there is no king actively ruling Israel. As for the historical narrative, it next says...

¹ (con't) **that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim.**

vayhi ish levi gar b'yarkthe har ephrayim – “And is, man Levi, sojourning in flanks Mount Ephraim.” Like the previous chapter, another Levite in Mount Ephraim is highlighted. The word *yerekah* is used to describe where he is. It is the feminine of *yarek*, the thigh or flank. It is used when referring to inanimate objects such as a location, a house, a cave, and so forth. It indicates a side, be it an inner side or a remote side.

It is assumed that this is referring to the remote side of Ephraim in relation to Bethlehem Judah which is prominent in the story. It is interesting that the same location, Mount Ephraim, is mentioned in the previous narrative where Micah dwelt, and it is also the area where 1 Samuel begins.

Shiloh is within the tribal allotment of Ephraim. That is where the ark resided after it was moved from Gilgal in Joshua 18:1. The apostasy of Israel is highlighted in this early narrative in the time of the judges, which necessitated the calling forth of a judge.

That continues through the life of Samuel, Israel's last judge. Eventually, the apostasy leads to Israel calling for a king. This account being in Ephraim tends to explain the words of the Lord through Jeremiah in our text verse as well as here –

“But go now to My place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. ¹³ And now, because you have done all these works,’ says the Lord, ‘and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, ¹⁴ therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. ¹⁵ And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren—the whole posterity of Ephraim.” Jeremiah 7:12-15

Despite the ark being in Shiloh, there is a great deal of apostasy being highlighted in that very area. It is as if the evil of Israel, even with the presence of the Lord right at hand, permeates the lives and actions of the people.

Levi means Attached.

Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and also Ashes.

In Scripture, a *har*, mountain, is a lot of something gathered. In typology, it is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

¹ (con't) **He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.**

vayiqakh lo ishah philegash mibeith lekhem Yehudah – “And takes to him woman, concubine, from house Bethlehem Judah.” The words seem to imply that the Levite had a wife and that this woman is added as a second wife with lesser rights.

The word is *pilegash*, and is supposed by some to be a compound of the word *palag*, to split or divide, and *nagash*, to draw near or approach. If so, it would mean that the man divided his attention between his wife and his concubine. This is what was the case with Abraham –

“And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. ⁶ But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.” Genesis 25:5, 6

This concubine is considered a wife, belonging to one man alone, even if she is not a main wife, like Rachel and Leah, with full rights. The children of such a union would be categorized differently as well. It is remarkable that Bethlehem Judah is highlighted again, as in the previous chapter.

The Levite, taken in by Micah of Mount Ephraim, was from there. Now a Levite from Mount Ephraim takes in a concubine from there. Micah’s Levite committed harlotry against the Lord through idol worship. Now the concubine of the Levite will commit harlotry against her husband...

² **But his concubine played the harlot against him,**

The meaning is highly debated: *vatizneh alav pilagsho* – “And harlots upon him, his concubine.” Some feel this means she actually committed adultery and he found out about it (hence, “before him”). Others see it as her simply being unfaithful by leaving him. Some see it as her being a crummy concubine toward him and then leaving him.

The use of the word *zanah*, to commit fornication, is used both literally and figuratively, but it always gives the sense of harlotry, not simply departing from the home. When used figuratively about Israel, which is quite common, it means being adulterous against the Lord.

For example, it is used multiple times this way in the book of Hosea –

“Ephraim *is* joined to idols,

Let him alone.

¹⁸ Their drink is rebellion,

They commit harlotry [*zanah*] continually.

Her rulers dearly love dishonor.

¹⁹ The wind has wrapped her up in its wings,

And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.” Hosea 4:17-19

² (con’t) **and went away from him to her father’s house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.**

Again, the meaning is debated: *vatelekh me’ito el beith aviha el beith lekhem Yehudah vathi sham yamim arbaah khodashim* – “And walks from him unto house her father, unto Bethlehem Judah. And is there days, four months.” The term “days four months” could mean a year and four months, or it could mean “days, namely four months.”

The latter seems more likely. She left, and for four whole months, she did not return, making it likely she would not return. It would explain what is said in the next clause.

Either way, the focus is on the number four. Bullinger says, “It is emphatically the number of Creation; of man in his relation to the world as created; while six is the number of man in his opposition to and independence of God. It is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Bethlehem means House of Bread. It can also mean House of War. Judah means Praise.

³ **Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back,**

At times, there are differences in the Hebrew text when it is written (*kethiv*) and when it is read (*qere*). When this occurs, it usually means there is something in the written words that the scribes find odd, and they replace the part that is read with something that makes more sense to them.

In these words, there is a *kethiv* discord: *vayaqum ishah vayelexh akhareha l’daber al libah lahashivo* – “And arises, her man, and walks after her to speak upon her heart, to return him.” What would, on the surface, seem to make sense, and what the *qere* reads, is “to return her.”

However, there is strong reason to assume that it is referring to her heart, a masculine noun, and the nearest antecedent. Only Smith's Literal Translation follows this idea –

“And her husband will rise and go after her to speak to her heart, to turn it back” (SLT).

Because typology is being conveyed, Smith's is certainly correct. There is no reason to deviate from the written Hebrew unless the Jews somehow sensed that this passage sniffed of their own rebellion. This rendering is not without precedent. For example, in 1 Kings 13:4, the same verbal form refers to the hand of a person –

“So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, ‘Arrest him!’ Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back [*lahashivah*] to himself.”

When the Levite went to Bethlehem, it was specifically *l'daber al libah*, to speak upon her heart to bring him (it) back. It is a thought that is also seen in Hosea 2 when the Lord appeals to Israel, asking them –

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her [*v'dibarti al libah*].
¹⁵ I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.” Hosea 2:14, 15

This would explain the expression “days, four months.” Because the concubine would never return on her own, he instead goes to speak upon her heart.

³ (con't) **having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him.**

v'naaro imo v'tsemed khamorim – “And his servant with him, and pair donkeys.” Here is a new word, *tsemed*. It signifies a pair. As such, it is used to designate a measure of land, as in the amount of land one can plough in a day, such as an acre. It is derived from *tsamad*, to join.

In this case, it is a pair of *chamor*, donkeys. That is derived from *chamar*, to be red, thus designating their reddish color. Specifically designating two shows that his intent is that

she will return with him on one of them. Thus, with a servant and two donkeys, the men went down and met with his concubine...

3 (con't) So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him.

vatviehu beith aviha vayirehu avi hanaarah vayishma liqrato – “And brings him house her father. And sees him, father the damsel, and rejoices to meet him.” Obviously, the Levite's speaking upon her heart was effective because she is willing to bring him to her father's house.

Nothing is said about why her father rejoiced to meet him, but it seems apparent that he was happy that the two would be reconciled. It doesn't seem there are any hidden motives. The Levite had gone out of his way to make reconciliation. The girl's father liked the Levite, and he was glad things were working out.

4 Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days.

vayekhezaq bo kothno avi hanaarah vayeshv ito shlosheth yamim – “And holds, in him, his affinity, father the damsel. And dwells with him three days.” The word *khathan*, to be joined in affinity, is used. It shows us that this union was considered a marriage.

In his happiness concerning things getting straightened out, he kept his son-in-law as a guest for three days. Bullinger says the number three denotes divine perfection, and it “stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire.”

4 (con't) So they ate and drank and lodged there.

vayokhlu vayishtu vayalinu sham – “And eat, and drink, and lodge there.” The girl's father provided everything, accommodating his guest as one would expect in such a situation. However, after three days, it was time to go...

5 Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart;

v'hi bayom harvii vayashkimu ba'boqer vayaqum lalekheth – “And is, in the day, the fourth, and arises early in the morning, and stands to walk.” In what seems an almost comical set of events, the Levite prepares to leave for the first of four times.

The visitors arose early. In doing so, they would avoid traveling during the heat of the day. They got themselves ready and once set, the Levite gets up, ready to head out...

⁵ (con't) **but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way."**

The father's words are imperative: *vayomer avi hanaarah el khathno s'ad livkha path lekhem v'akhar telekhu* – "And says, father the damsel, unto his affinity, 'Support your heart, bit bread. And after, walking.'" It is almost as if he is in a panic that the son-in-law intends to leave, so he admonishes him to have something to eat. The words he uses are similar to when Abraham spoke to the Lord in Genesis 18:5, except without the imperative –

"And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant."

⁶ **So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry."**

vayeshvu vayokhlu shnehem yakhdav vayishtu vayomer avi hanaarah el ha'ish hoel na v'lin v'yitav libekha – "And sit, and eat, they two, together, and drink. And says, father the damsel, unto the man, 'Yield, I pray, and lodging. And gladden your heart.'" The Levite agreed to stay and eat.

This would mean departing in the afternoon after the sun moved from its high point. But he probably reasoned it wasn't a terrible idea. While eating, however, the father-in-law asked him to lodge for the night and enjoy the evening with him. This didn't appeal to the Levite, and so...

⁷ **And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again.**

vayaqam ha'ish lalekheth vayiphtsar bo khotno vayashav vayalen sham – "And arises, the man, to walk. And presses in him, his affinity, and returns and lodges there." The Levite got up to leave and probably said, "We really need to get going. However, the father-in-law pressed him to stay the night and so he obliged..."

⁸ **Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.**

There are different ways to consider these words: *vayashkem baboqer bayom hakhamishi lalekheth vayomer avi hanaarah s'ad na l'vavkha v'hithmahmhu ad n'toth ha'yom vayokhlu shnehem* – "And arises early in the morning in the day, the fifth, to

walk. And says, father the damsel, 'Support [imp.], I pray, your heart [masc. sg.].' And lingered [masc. pl. *they*] until extends the day. And eat, they two."

Or "...Support [imp.], I pray, your heart [masc. sg.], and linger [masc. imp. pl.: *yourselves*] until extends the day."

Either he asks the Levite to eat and then they all linger until later in the day, or he is asking the Levite to eat and also linger with the others until later in the day. The Hebrew tends toward the latter, but Lange says –

"Older Jewish expositors, as Abarbanel and Meir Obernick, very properly take this, not as imperative, but as 3d per. perf. It is against the sense to make the father say: "Delay till it become evening."

However, that appears to be exactly what the father-in-law is saying. The Levite sat the day before and then got up in the afternoon to leave. Once that happened, his father-in-law asked him to "yield" and stay the night. Now, the father-in-law uses a different word translated as "linger." It is like saying, "Just refresh yourself now, and then you can go in a little while." So the two of them did...

⁹ And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law,

vayaqam ha'ish lalekheth hu u-philagsho v'naaro – "And arises, the man, to walk. He, and his concubine, and his servant." He had granted the father-in-law's request and they had supported their hearts. Now, it is time to go as suggested. Therefore, the three of them arise to go. However...

⁹ (con't) the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening;

The words are unusual: *vayomer lo khotno avi hanaarah hineh na raphah hayom laarov* – "And says, to him, his affinity, father the damsel, 'Behold, I pray, slackens the day to darken.'" It seems evident that the father-in-law didn't want them to go at all. Now that they had spent a part of the day, he urges them to just stay the rest of the day. "See, it's getting dark. Evening is just around the corner! Therefore..."

⁹ (con't) please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home."

The words curiously change between singular and plural: *linu na hineh khaanth hayom lin poh v'yitav l'vavekha v'hishkamtem makhar l'dark'khem v'halakhta l'ohalekha* – "Lodge [pl.], I pray. Behold, declines the day. Lodge [sg.] here and gladden [sg.] your

heart [sg.]. And arise early [pl.] tomorrow to your way [pl.]. And walk [sg.] to your tent [sg.].” The change is more evident in the older versions that use you/your and thy/thine, but even then, most people just read right over the changes, not paying attention to the nuances.

The man is speaking to the Levite and then to all of them. He finishes by speaking to only the Levite. His word choice throughout these verses has been careful to sway all of them, but particularly the Levite.

In his words, there is a sort of pun. The word translated as decline, *khanah*, is normally used when referring to encamping, as in pitching a tent. It is where the word *makhaneh*, or camp, is derived from. As such, the old man is basically saying, “The day is encamping for the evening, stay here and walk to your tent tomorrow.”

*Stay a while and refresh your heart
And relax while the day goes by
No need to make such a hasty start
Rest! Give it a try*

*Stay a while and gladden your heart
You can remain here a bit more
No point in such an early start
No need to rush out the door*

*Don't hurry away, the day is just starting
Linger a while and relax before you go
No need to be hastily departing
Let the sun incline a bit, it's hot out, you know*

*Hold off till tomorrow, the day is almost gone
Yes, hold off and then depart at dawn*

II. Shalom To You (verses 10-21)

¹⁰ However, the man was not willing to spend that night;

v'lo avah ha'ish lalun “And no acquiesced, the man, to lodge.” He had been offered to refresh himself in the morning and then depart later in the day. Nothing would further detain him, so he refused to acquiesce to another appeal...

¹⁰ (con't) so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him.

vayqam vayelexh vayavo ad nokhakh y'vus hi y'rushalim v'imo tsemed khamorim khavushim u-pilagsho imo – “And arises, and walks, and goes until front Jebus – it Jerusalem. And with him pair donkeys, saddling, and his concubine with him.” A walk from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is a couple of hours. They are now facing the city, but it is mostly occupied by Jebusites at this time.

The word translated as saddling signifies to wrap firmly. Thus, it likely means saddled. However, it could mean they were loaded with things. Because the concubine is mentioned, being saddled seems to be the thought. The servant walked while they rode.

Jebus means Trodden Down or Trodden Underfoot.

Jerusalem means many things, but Foundation of Peace gets the intent.

¹¹ They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent;

hem im y'vus v'hayom rad m'od – “They with Jebus, and the day flattened, very.” If it was a two-hour or even three-hour walk, this means that, depending on the time of year, the father-in-law detained them until at least mid-afternoon, maybe later. He had actually put their lives in peril through his actions.

A new word is used, *radad*. It means to tread in pieces. In 1 Kings 6, it is used to indicate the spreading of gold over the cherubim in the temple. Thus, the day has been almost completely exhausted, thus, flattened.

¹¹ (con't) and the servant said to his master, “Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it.”

The servant's words are imperative and contain a cohortative: *vayomer hanaar el adonav l'khah na v'nasurah el ir hay'vusi hazoth v'nalin bah* – “And says the servant to his lord, ‘Walk-ward, I pray, and we will turn aside unto city the Jebusite, the this, and lodge in her.’” He urges his master to walk toward Jebus, and they will turn in there. It is the only logical option because night would be coming very quickly...

¹² But his master said to him, “We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah.”

The intent is understood even though the words are complicated: *vayomer elav adonav lo nasur el ir nakhri asher lo mib'ne Yisrael henah v'avarnu ad givah* – “And says unto him, his lord, ‘Not we will turn aside unto city strange, which not from sons Israel here. And we will pass over until Gibeah.’”

Jebus was not completely subdued by Israel yet, even if it was partially at the time of Joshua. In continuing to Gibeah, which was another two-and-a-half hours or so, they would be in an Israelite city filled with Benjamites. It is the town from which Saul would come.

Gibeah means Hill. It is etymologically connected to the word Gabbatha. If Gibeah was his destination, it seems odd that he would then add in another destination that is not much farther away, as is seen with the words...

¹³ So he said to his servant, “Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah.”

vayomer l’naaro lekha v’niqrevah b’akhad hamqomoth v’lanu bagivah o baramah – “And says to his servant, ‘Walk, and we will approach in one the places, and lodged in the Gibeah or in the Ramah.’” The Ramah is not far from the Gibeah, and so they could stop at either. They are so close that they are mentioned together at times –

“When Saul heard that David and the men who *were* with him had been discovered—now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him.” 1 Samuel 22:6

“Blow the ram’s horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud *at* Beth Aven,
‘Look behind you, O Benjamin!’” Hosea 5:8

The Ramah, is from *rum*. It means The Height or The Lofty, but it could be from *rama*, and would thus mean The Deceit or The Loose (as in the “being trustworthy” department).

¹⁴ And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.

vayaavru vayelekhu vatavo lahem ha’shemesh etsel hagivah asher l’binyamin – “And passes over, and walks, and goes in, to them, the sun beside the Gibeah which to Benjamin.” They were on the road that could take them to either Gibeah or Ramah, but the day was spent when they were at the point where the road joins with Gibeah.

This is probably stated to set the tone of the narrative for what lies ahead. Benjamin means Son of *the* Right Hand.

¹⁵ They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city,

vayasuru sham lavo lalun bagivah vayavo vayeshev birkhov ha'ir – “And turns aside there to go in to lodge in the Gibeah. And goes in, and sits in plaza the city.” The city gates were still open, so it was before night had completely settled in. Once inside, they went to the plaza, which was probably inside the gate. It is where people would gather.

The common courtesy of the times dictated that someone would welcome them into his home. Not this time...

¹⁵ (con't) **for no one would take them into *his* house to spend the night.**

v'ein ish m'aseph otham habeithah lalun – “And no man gathering them the house-ward to lodge.” It was a command of the law to love the stranger. As such, one would expect them to be taken in. Even before the time of the law, Job noted that this was his custom—

“(But no sojourner had to lodge in the street,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler).” Job 31:32

The unfriendliness of the people is set forth markedly. However...

¹⁶ **Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also *was* from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place *were* Benjamites.**

v'hineh ish zaqen ba min maasehu min ha'sadeh ba'erev v'ha'ish mehar ephrayim v'hugar ba'givah v'anshe ha'maqom b'ne yemini – “And behold! Man old came in from his work from the field in the evening. And the man from Mount Ephraim. And he sojourning in the Gibeah. And men, the place, sons Benjamin.”

The fact that the man is only a sojourner is given as a contrast to the inhabitants of the city. He is old and he is a field worker at the end of the day. And more, he is only a sojourner in the city. He had every reason to want to be alone for the evening and let someone else take care of things...

¹⁷ **And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, “Where are you going, and where do you come from?”**

vayisa enav vayar eth ha'ish haoreakh birkhov ha'ir vayomer ha'ish ha'zaqen anah telekh u-meayin tavo – “And lifts his eyes, and sees the man, the wayfaring, in plaza the city. And says the man, the old, ‘Where walk, and from whence come?’” Here is a new word, *arakh*. It signifies to go wayfaring.

The old man came through the gate into the open area and saw the Levite with his companions and donkeys, and it was obvious to him that this was a wayfaring man. Therefore, out of curiosity, he asked about the route of their trip.

18 So he said to him, “We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah;

vayomer elav ovrin anakhnu mibeith lekhem Yehuda ad yarkthe har ephrayim misham anokhi vaelekh ad beith lekhem Yehudah – “And says, unto him, ‘Passing over, we, from Bethlehem Judah until flanks Mount Ephraim – from there, I. And walks until Bethlehem Judah.’”

He answers the second question first. They have come from Bethlehem Judah and are going to Ephraim. To explain further, he then notes that he is from there. In other words, he is on a return trip from Bethlehem Judah. He then says...

18 (con’t) *now* I am going to the house of the Lord.

Wow! Complicated: *v’eth beith Yehovah ani holekh* – “And House Yehovah I walking.” Cambridge (of course!) says the text is corrupt and it should read, “I am going to my house.” Most say that it means he is going to the house of Yehovah. However, he just said he was going to his home in Ephraim.

Some insist that the words, which bear an accusative, must signify “And I walk at the house of Yehovah.” In other words, he was a Levite who served there. This seems likely. Numbers 18:2, 3 says –

“Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of witness. ³ They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also.”

The verb in these words is a participle that acts as a verbal adjective – like “walking papers” (Beat it. You’re fired!). It would explain why he says the next words...

18 (con’t) *But there is no one who will take me into his house,*

v’ein ish m’aseph othi habay’tah – “and no man gathering me the house-ward.” He is a walking Levite at the House of the Lord. Either he is saying that he is reliable, but no one has taken him in, or it is because he is a Levite in Yehovah’s house that nobody wants anything to do with him. Either way, the reception is very disgraceful.

¹⁹ although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything.*

v'gam teven gam mispo yesh lakhamorenu v'gam lekhem vayayin yesh li v'laamatekha v'lanaar im avadekha ein makhsor kal davar – “And also straw, also fodder is to our donkeys. And also bread and wine is to me, and to your maid, and to the servant. With your servant no deficiency all word.”

Here is a word used for the fifth and last time, *mispo*. It signifies fodder, coming from a word meaning to collect. It is food gathered for animals' use. He has everything he needs for his animals as well as for himself and his companions. Nothing is lacking except a place to spend the night. Despite this...

²⁰ And the old man said, “Peace *be with you!* However, *let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square.*”

The final clause contains a jussive: *vayomer ha'ish ha'zaqen shalom lakh raq kal makhsorkha alay raq ba'rekhov al talan*– “And says, the man, the old, ‘Shalom to you, only all your deficiency upon me. Only in the plaza not shall you lodge.’” “Shalom to you” means that he would give them lodging. However, he then extends himself beyond that, saying that he would provide all their needs.

As for spending the night in the plaza, he is adamant that they shall not. It is apparent he knows the character of the people and what they are prone to doing. Therefore, he insists on personally caring for them.

^{21 (fin)} So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

vay'viehu l'beitho vayibol lahamorim vayirkhatsu raglehem vayokhlu vayishtu – “And brings in him, to his house, and mixes to the donkeys, and washes their feet, and eat, and drink.” The old man prioritized the animals first to ensure they would be taken care of for the continued journey.

It is easy to get distracted by entertaining guests and forget the needs of the animals. And so, the old man showed careful attention to his guests so that they were able to be on their way early in the morning.

Washing feet was a custom not to be ignored. After only a couple of miles, while wearing sandals, the feet would be rather grody. It would be a relief to each of them. And then they all together ate and drank.

Nobody in Gibeah was willing to take them in except a foreigner. It is not unlike Lot, a stranger in Sodom, who did the same thing for the messengers who came there –

“Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them*, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. ² And he said, ‘Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.’ And they said, ‘No, but we will spend the night in the open square.’” Genesis 19:1, 2

It is evident that the town is an inhospitable place. What is coming will reveal it is much worse than that.

We are finished for the day. Think about what has transpired and what you’ve learned. Then, take time to read the coming verses and see if you can come up with any conclusions about what is being said. The word is telling us details so that we can peer into the future of redemptive history. Take your time and think about it. Next week’s sermon is just around the corner.

Closing Verse: *“But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’ ¹² But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.”* Luke 10:10-12

Next Week: Judges 19:22-30 *Some people are destined for hell. It’s the only fix...* (No King in Israel, Part VI) (53rd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part V

And it came to pass in those days
When there was no king in Israel to lead the team
That there was a certain Levite staying
In the remote mountains of Ephraim

He took for himself a concubine
From Bethlehem in Judah, not Lichtenstein

But his concubine played the harlot against him
And went away from him

To her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah
And was there four whole months, things were lookin' grim

Then her husband arose and went after her
To speak kindly to her and bring her back
Having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him
So she brought him into her father's house to get back on track

And when the father of the young woman saw him
He was glad to meet him, happy to the brim

Now his father-in-law
The young woman's father, detained him, he did ensnare
And he stayed with him three days
So they ate and drank and lodged there

Then it came to pass on the fourth day
That they arose early in the morning, and he stood to
-----depart that day
But the young woman's father said to his son-in-law
"Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward
-----go your way

So they sat down
And the two of them ate and drank together, fun very
Then the young woman's father said to the man
Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry

And when the man stood to depart
His father-in-law urged him to stay
So he lodged there again
There goes another day...

Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart
But the young woman's father said, yes he did state
"Please refresh your heart
So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate

And when the man stood to depart, he and his concubine
-----and his servant
His father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him
-----being quite forthright

“Look, the day is now drawing toward evening
Please spend the night

See, the day is coming to an end
Lodge here, that your heart may be merry
Tomorrow go your way early
So that you may get home (before next January!)

However, the man was not willing to spend that night
So he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus
----- (that is, Jerusalem)
With him were the two saddled donkeys
His concubine was also with him

They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent
And the servant said to his master
“Come, please, and let us turn aside
Into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it and keep from disaster

But his master said to him
“We will not here into a city of foreigners turn aside
Who are not of the children of Israel
We will go on to Gibeah, that’s what I decide

So he said to his servant
“Come, let us draw near to one of these places
And spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah
With some familiar Israelite faces

And they passed by and went their way
And the sun on them went down
Near Gibeah which belongs to Benjamin
Yes, as they neared Gibeah town

They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah
And when he went in, he sat down at some site
In the open square of the city
For no one would take them into his house to spend the night

Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening
Who also was from the mountains of Ephraim like him

He was staying in Gibeah
Whereas the men of the place were of Benjamin

And when he raised his eyes
He saw the traveler in the open square of the city
----- (cue the music dum de dum...)

And the old man said
“Where are you going, and where do you come from?”

So he said to him, “We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah
Toward the remote mountains of Ephraim, yes toward
I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah
Now I am going to the house of the LORD

But there is no one who will take me into his house
Although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys
-----yes, we did bring
And bread and wine for myself, for your female servant
And for the young man who is with your servant; there is
-----no lack of anything

And the old man said, “Peace be with you!
However, let all your needs be my responsibility
Only do not spend the night in the open square
No way shall it be!

So he brought him into his house
And gave fodder to the donkeys too
And they washed their feet
And ate and drank beaucoup

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...