

In Times of Crisis

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MORNING READING

A Goodly Heritage

A Michtam of David.

1 Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

2 O my soul, you have said to the Lord,
"You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing
apart from You."

3 As for the saints who are on the earth,
"They are the excellent ones, in whom is
all my delight."

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.

5 O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. **6** The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance. **7** I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

8 I have set the Lord always before me;
Because He is at my right hand I shall not
be moved. **9** Therefore my heart is glad,
and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will
rest in hope.

10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see
corruption.

11 You will show me the path of life; In
Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your
right hand are pleasures forevermore.

MAIN READING

Judges 19: 9-29 & Judges 20: 1-18

Judges 19: 9-29. NIV

Judges 19: 9 Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the woman's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home."

10 But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

11 When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, “Come, let’s stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night.”

12 His master replied, “No. We won’t go into any city whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah.”

13 He added, “Come, let’s try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places.” **14** So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. **15** There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them in for the night. **16** That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the inhabitants of the place were Benjamites), came in from his

work in the fields. **17** When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, “Where are you going? Where did you come from?”

18 He answered, “We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD. **[a]** No one has taken me in for the night.

19 We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, the woman and the young man with us. We don't need anything.” **20** “You are welcome at my house,” the old man said. “Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square.” **21** So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, “Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.”

23 The owner of the house went outside and said to them, “No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this outrageous thing.

24 Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing."

25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.

26 At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

27 When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. **28** He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer.

Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

29 When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel. **30** Everyone who saw it was saying to one another, “Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Just imagine! We must do something! So speak up!”

Judges 20: 1-18 New International Version

The Israelites Punish the Benjamites

1 Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah. **2** The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of God's people, four hundred thousand men armed with swords. **3** (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.)

Then the Israelites said, “Tell us how this awful thing happened.”

4 So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, “I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night.

5 During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.

6 I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and outrageous act in Israel. **7** Now, all you Israelites, speak up and tell me what you have decided to do."

8 All the men rose up together as one, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house.

9 But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it in the order decided by casting lots. **10** We'll take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to get provisions for the army. Then, when the army arrives at Gibeah[a] in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for this outrageous act done in Israel."

11 So all the Israelites got together and united as one against the city.

12 The tribes of Israel sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What about this awful crime that was committed among you? **13** Now turn those wicked men of Gibeah over to us so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel.”

But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites.

14 From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites.

15 At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred able young men from those living in Gibeah. **16** Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred select troops who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

17 Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fit for battle.

18 The Israelites went up to Bethel[b] and inquired of God. They said, “Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?”



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