

Opening Prayer Dear Lord, as we once again open the Scriptures together, remind us that it truly is your Holy Word. Give us proper respect for it and give us the humility to accept your will and the faithfulness to live by it. Amen.

Girl Dismembered—Body Parts Shipped Throughout The Country!

JUDGES 19:1-20:9

- 1 No King earthly OR divine (ignoring Sinai Covenant), SO bad things happen
 1 Levite Tribe of Levi: Priests is desc. From Aaron, otherwise religious teachers or tabernacle/temple workers
 No land given to their tribe, instead spread out over 48 cities to serve

PROBLEMS

- 1 Remote Area Not in one of the 48 cities
 1 Concubine Against 6th Commandment
 2 Unfaithful Hebrew indicates sexual
 2 Persuade If she was unfaithful he was REQUIRED to divorce her
 11-15 Not wishing to stay with pagans, they press on to Gibeah
 16-21 Typical hospitality for that time and place (but another reason coming up!)
 22 Violent Sexual Predators (loose transl. of “wicked men”=“local hell-raisers”)
 24 daughter/concubine NOT a proper alternative. Protecting this minister, natural sex as opposed to unnatural. Is that what he was thinking?

THE LEVITE

Good: Although he was the one who was wronged, he went over and above to reconcile with his concubine, put up with over-eager in-laws, steered away from the pagans in Jebus.

Bad: Grabs his concubine, throws her out the door, let her be raped and abused to death. Meanwhile, he slept until he was ready to go. He found her dead and loaded her up with his other possessions.

- 29-30 Knife Well-trained to use a knife skillfully—preparing/dismembering sacrifices
 29-30 12 Tribes 12 sons of Jacob – Levi = 11 – Joseph = 10 + 2 Joseph's sons (Eph.&Man.)
 Everyone should know—but know what? 1) The wickedness in Gibeah
 2) The wickedness of the Levite

How bad were things in Israel? Some places as bad as Sodom & Gomorrah.
 Some Levites were not godly, but wicked.
 Some people had no love for each other

Long-Winded Preacher Kills/Heals Sleepy Parishioner!

ACTS 20:7-12

- 7 Break Bread Believer ate a meal together, beginning with breaking the bread, then would celebrate the Sacrament also. All together this was “the Lord's Supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).
 7 Kept Talking Limited time with them, so he made the most of it.
 8 Deep Sleep Wouldn't you? Midnight, Penthouse Room with lamps—hot & stuffy
 9 Dead Not just seemed to be—he was, Luke says
 10 Alive God used Paul to raise him from the dead
 11 Broke Bread Ate another meal—midnight snack, breakfast
 11 Talking Greek word suggests conversation, not preaching/teaching like earlier that night (v.7)

What happened? The people had heard God's Word and witnessed God's power & were comforted

“Man After God’s Own Heart” Calls For Revenge On Terrorists!

PSALM 109

Imprecatory Psalms

Contain curses or prayers for the punishment of the psalmists enemies. (55, 56, 58, 69)

They do not, however, come from a bloodthirsty heart.

(David was often too lenient—Saul—1 Sam. 24, 26, Absalom—2 Sam. 18-19, Shimei—2 Sam. 16)

Luther: every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are cursing. “Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done” = praying that the plans of Satan and those who serve him be ruined & that they will receive judgment.

The concern of the psalmist is God’s glory and for God’s plans to succeed.

NT—Gal. 1:8, 2 Tim. 4:14, Rev. 6:10)

We oppose God’s enemies not with our strength and will, but with prayer for God to take vengeance justly and in his time.

1-5 Unfair treatment of a godly man

6-20 Harsh curses—but based on biblical principles.

Position uses to harm others

Sins not repentant

6 Accuser Hebrew = Satan Deliver this person over to Satan whom he serves!

9-10 Family—they support his sinful actions (multi-generational families lived together—solidarity and shared responsibility—different from modern Western practice)

16-19 Justification for the prayer As he did to others, be it done to him (Ex. 21:24 “eye for an eye” and Luke 6:38 “measure you use, it will be measured to you”)

21-29 Seeking God’s Blessing

30-31 Praise for God’s justice

Why are these part of God’s inspired Word? We find ourselves in similar situations—we can relate and respond as a fellow believer.

Police Boat Crashes, Arrested Preacher Among Survivors!

ACTS 27:1-28:6

1 We Luke is with Paul!

1 Prisoner In custody for being a Christian

9 Fast The Great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29). Not much sailing was done after mid-September on the Mediterranean.

10 Warned Paul warns them of the danger of the storm—common sense, not prophecy
Paul may have been understandably anxious about a shipwreck—he’d already been in three of them! (2 Cor. 11:25—written prior to these events).

13-20 The Storm

21 I Told You! Actually, this would give credence to what he would speak now.

23 Angel This is prophecy—given by God

30-32 Smart work Paul gets the soldiers to take care of the deserting sailors!

33-36 The Prisoner assumes leadership!

3 Viper Causes them to first consider Paul a murderer, but then a god!

Why does God allow this/record this? Those unbelieving people got to see Paul’s example, hear his witness, and see miracles. Recorded for us to see those very things.

Assassin Kills Obese King In His Own Bathroom!

JUDGES 3:7-31

- 7 Evil God was watching as they turned away from him to idol worship.
- 8 Sold them God brought punishment upon them
- 8 Cushan “Black One”
- 8 Rishathaim Hebrew nickname = “doubly wicked” Names repeated 4x in Hebrew—produces a rhyming couplet “*Cushan-Rishathaim* and *Aram Naharaim*” name of the country is repeated 2x –they wouldn’t forget this guy!
- 9 Deliverer God calls Othniel to the task of “judge” (he is an “ideal” judge, unlike the rest)
- 12 Evil Recurring theme!
- 12 Eglon Punishment for Israel
Name means “little calf”, but extremely obese (3:17, 21,22)
- 15 Deliverer God calls Ehud—a left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin “son of the right hand”)
- 15 Left-handed Hebrew = “restricted as to the right hand”—either preference or handicap
Possibly handicap—no threat to the king, unchecked by guards. Is there a better “cover” for an assassin?!
- 16 Right thigh A limp to go with his crippled right hand?
- 19 Secret A private audience with the king—obviously this man was no threat
- 22 Fat Sword went through belly and intestines and point of it went out the back.
- 24 Relieving Embarrassed to go in with locked doors and probably deceived by the smell of his filth spilling onto the floor, they believe the king is using the bathroom.
- 26-31 The rest of the story—recorded to show God’s deliverance of his people once again. God is faithful, even when his people have not been.

Talking Donkey Rescues Prophet!

NUMBERS 22:1-41

- 4 Balak King of Moab
- 5 Balaam Prophet of God or World Religions Expert?
- 13 Faithful to God’s prophecy
- 18 Faithful to God’s prophecy Balaam seems interested and seems to want to be able to provide the curse, but God will not allow it.
- 28 Talking Donkey!
- 32 Angel Probably the Angel of the Lord, Jesus

God used the angel and the donkey to drive home the point that the Israelites were blessed and not to be cursed and that Balaam should have listened the first 2 times!

Prophet Marries Prostitute!

HOSEA 1:1-10

Even before he is called to preach, God informs him that he will not only be speaking God's Word, but will a Living Message to the people!

By their idol worship, Israel is committing spiritual idolatry.

God has been a faithful Husband to them. They are "prostituting" themselves to other gods (Judges 2:17)

Hosea represents the LORD.

Unfaithful Gomer represents the nation of Israel.

Her "children of unfaithfulness" represent the individual Israelites.

Street whore or cult prostitute at a Canaanite shrine?

Was it fair of God to ask this of Hosea?

The ministry is more important than the individual.

God calls for sacrifice in many ways.

Hosea is called to the unlovable, just like God himself!

What about us? Romans 5:6-8

The children: Jezreel A city, the residence of Israel's kings Destruction

2 Kings 10:11 and 2 Kings 15:8-12

Lo-Ruhamah "Not Loved" Time of grace for Israel is at the end.

722 BC Assyrians conquer.

Lo-Ammi "Not My People" Message of judgment. They said they would be faithful to God (Exodus 19:8) but were not.

10 Yet From THREAT to PROMISE! God still promises his grace and faithfulness
Messianic promise—Jesus will rule over all of "Israel"

Jezreel Play on words—Hebrew = "God will sow" God will plant and grow and harvest in his kingdom.

Difficult ministry! God calls his people to serve him in ways that he knows will accomplish his will.

Life is NOT about our comfort, but about serving the LORD!

Church Benefactors Struck Down After Presenting Gift!

ACTS 5:1-14

2 Knowledge Partners in deception

3 Peter God revealed to him what Ananias and Sapphira had done.

4 What was the lie? Evidently they made a big deal about bringing the whole amount from the sale as an offering when that wasn't true.

4 Did they have to give all the proceeds? No. But God expects honesty!

5 Died God's righteous, stern judgment on: lying, deceit, ego, misusing the church

8 Paul's question Unfair? No. He could certainly ask if the lie was a plot between them.

9 Prophecy

10 Died Once again, God's righteous judgment and warning to others.

11 Fear No natural explanation for their deaths—this was God's judgment!

14 Believed Even though there was fear of God and fear of Sanhedrin, who outlawed preaching in Jesus' name, many came to faith!

Why is this recorded in Scripture? Warning to us that God knows the heart and the truth!

ANTHRAX: Biological Warfare Unleashed On World Power!

EXODUS 7:17-18, 20-21

8:1-4,12-14

9:3-6

9:8-11

- 7:17-18, 20-21 Dead fish, stench, undrinkable water
- 8:1-4 Frogs leave the Nile, which was filled with bacteria-laden algae
- 8:12-14 Dead frogs everywhere, probably because they carried the *Bacillus anthracis* virus from the Nile River algae
- 9:3-6 Plague on livestock—horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, goats
The flies of the 4th plague (8:20ff) probably carried the anthrax bacteria that now infected the animals (God using them as the instrument to bring the plague). This was not simply a health issue, but a religious one, as many Egyptian deities were animal-headed gods.
“All the livestock” = all out in the open (cf. 9:19-21) [OR exaggeration]
- 9:8-11 Soot = symbolic of the extent of the plague OR the black color of the boils
Boils = probably cutaneous anthrax, black, burning pus-filled abscess.
(*Bacillus*—from Latin; bacteria, *anthrac*—from Greek “coal”, “carbon”)
First plague on the people—magicians included!

The plagues God sent may have “triggered” ensuing plagues. This does NOT mean that these were all natural occurrences that Moses took advantage of to save his people! God caused them to happen in his creation for the good of his people and to declare his power and glory!

Are you surprised that God used biological warfare? His creation! His divine judgment!

Closing Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven, we thank you for opening our eyes to new portions of your Word and for helping us to see things we have never seen in familiar portions of it. Help us to hunger and thirst after the knowledge you promise by your Holy Spirit through Scripture. Enlighten us by your gospel, especially, so that we appreciate your love and cling to you always. In Jesus' name, Amen.
