

INTRO

Our last study in Judges.

Last 5 chs tell 2 stories of what life was like in Israel during the time of the Judges.

1<sup>st</sup> last week, 2<sup>nd</sup>, tonight.

Both sordid, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> is far worse than the 1<sup>st</sup>.

Warning: **R-rated** content tonight.

Ch19

We have some men here at CCO who speak at the Rescue Mission once a month.

They do a Bible study for the men in the program.

Well, some yrs back in another city, a man addressed a group of men at a downtown mission.

They were alcoholics and he was trying to persuade them on the evils of drink.

He put 2 glasses on a table; one was half-full of water, the other alcohol.

He put a worm in the glass w/the water.

It wriggled to the side where it raised its head above surface trying to get out of the glass.

The man reached in and pulled it out.

He then put it into the glass of alcohol.

It thrashed for a short time then died.

The man then asked the group “So; we see what happened to the worm.

What does this simple illustration tell us?”

A man at the back yelled out, “If you drink alcohol you won’t have worms.”

Our desires often obscure the truth.

It’s discouraging talking to someone bent on evil.

They want what they want and won’t be dissuaded from sating their lust.

Chs 19-21 are a shocking example of what happens when people turn their backs on God.

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

We already have a problem.

We read about an *errant* Levite in the 1<sup>st</sup> sordid tale last week. = Here’s another.

He’s errant because he has a—let’s call her what she really was – a **mistress**.

Concubine is just a fancy word for a mistress. The difference is that the wife **knew** about her.

It was a fairly common practice in the ancient world for men of means to have more than one wife, or a wife and a concubine or 2.

It seemed a practical arrangement; at least the men **liked to pretend** it was.

When warfare reduced the male population, there was a surplus of women.

There was no welfare system.

Women were utterly dependent on the men in their lives; fathers, husbands, and when the husband died, sons or a son-in-law.

But when the men were reduced in number due to war, the surplus of women meant the remaining men had to look out & provide for them.

One of the ways to do that was to take on additional wives or concubines.

At least – THAT’S who the men explained it to their wife.

They had ulterior motives as well, which you can figure out on your own.

We read nothing of this man’s wife; only his concubine.

And in this case, we see she **wasn’t** without provision. She has family.

So their relationship is totally inappropriate. // It gets more so ...

<sup>2</sup> But his concubine played the harlot against him,

She cheated on the cheater; then took off.

and went away from him to her father’s house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there 4 whole months. <sup>3</sup> Then her husband arose and went after her,

Why’d he wait 4 months?

to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. This Levite's doing well. He has a servant and multiple beasts of burden; all signs of some prosperity. 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.

Well – Yeah! He's wealthy.

<sup>4</sup> Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him 3 days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

Where does this Levite belong; where's home?

The mountains of Ephraim a couple days' journey north.

That's where his wife is; where he belongs. // He ought never have left there.

Now he's dawdling in Bethlehem.

<sup>5</sup> Then it came to pass on the 4<sup>th</sup> day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; 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."

<sup>6</sup> So they sat down, and the 2 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."<sup>7</sup> And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again. <sup>8</sup> Then he arose early in the morning on the 5<sup>th</sup> day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate. He's stalling. Why we don't know. Maybe it has to do with the daughter.

Could be this father doesn't want to let her go.

<sup>9</sup> 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, "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."<sup>10</sup> 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 2 saddled donkeys; his concubine *was* also with him. Because they got a late start, they only make it a few miles when the sun heads toward the horizon.

<sup>11</sup> 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."<sup>12</sup> 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."<sup>13</sup> So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to 1 of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah."<sup>14</sup> And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. Jebus is about 4 miles from Bethlehem; so a cpl hrs trip.

Gibeah is another 4 miles N of Jebus, so a cpl more hrs.

By the time they get there, the sun has set. // It will soon be too dangerous to keep going.

The Levite expected to be shown hospitality in Gibeah because it was a Jewish city and hospitality was the norm.

A failure to be hospitable was a scandal of the highest order.

<sup>15</sup> 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, for no 1 would take them into *his* house to spend the night. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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?" <sup>18</sup> 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; *now* I am going to the house of the Lord.

He was going to stop at Shiloh on the way home, to worship at the tabernacle there.

But there *is* no one who will take me into his house,<sup>19</sup> 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."

We brought our own provisions. We just need a roof.

<sup>20</sup> 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.”

Because he knew it wasn't safe.

He knew what would happen if these visitors were caught outside after dark.

<sup>21</sup> So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank. // <sup>22</sup> As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*”

They demand he produce his guest so they can rape him!

What does this sound like; what story in Genesis?

This is a reprise of what happened in Sodom when the angels visited Lot.

This writer knew *that* story and casts his in the same mold.

He wants us to understand things in Israel were as bad as Sodom when God destroyed it.

<sup>23</sup> But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act *so* wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage.

The host tried to reason with them about how wrong their behavior was.

He calls it was it was = **Wicked!** An **outrage**.

But **WHAT's** outrageous & wicked?

Not their grotesque sexual perversion that's willing to break out in a violent violation of another.

The host sees their trampling the duties of his hospitality as the great crime.

The proof of that is what happens next.

Things have been pretty messed up so far; here's where it goes off the rails. // The man says,

<sup>24</sup> Look, *here is* my virgin daughter and *the man's* concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!”

In his mind, offering these perverts these 2 women was the **lessor of 2 evils**.

His whacked out reasoning runs thus:

A host is responsible for the safety of his guests.

Men are more important than women.

These perverts won't stop till their lust is satisfied.

So, it's best to let them do so with my daughter and the man's mistress.

<sup>25</sup> But the men would not heed him.

They wanted and were determined to have the Levite!

He was a fresh encounter; someone they'd not enjoyed before.

Their blood was up & not going to settle.

So the Levite went out to them taking his concubine with him.

So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

When the pervs saw her, they changed their minds // The Levite turned her over to them.

There's nothing to say to this but = **SHAME! SHAME! SHAME!**

It's a man's responsibility to protect women, not imperil them ***This guy is a sick, immoral wretch!***

After turning her over to the mob to be gang-raped, he's able to go to bed and sleep.

He doesn't bother with her till the next morning.

We read this with a deep sense of outrage!

Something inside us wants to make sense of what's happening.

But there isn't any sense to it; no reason.

The men of Gibeah are perverse, debauched beasts.

Both the Levite and his host are seriously morally messed up.

AND THAT is the point of the story = Because there was no king in Israel, everyone made it up as they went along, doing whatever they wanted.

And there was no one to say otherwise.

I suggest the election yesterday indicates we're headed in the same direction, specially in CA.

<sup>26</sup> Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master

was, till it was light. <sup>27</sup> When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. An ancient idiom meaning she died.

<sup>28</sup> And he said to her, “Get up and let us be going.” But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

Where **OUGH**T he have gone? Not home.

Where’s the center of govt at that time? // Where’s there godly counsel to be had?

Shiloh; the tabernacle, where the high priest was.

But what happens if this Levite goes to see his boss, the high priest, with the corpse of his concubine?

Yeah – it’s not going to go well.

“Why do you have a concubine?”

“Why did you go to Bethlehem?”

“Why did you stay in Gibeah?”

“Why did you give her to the perverts there?”

He doesn’t **go** to Shiloh because he knows he has no good answers to these questions.

This guy has strayed so far from the right path he’s sunk himself in a world of trouble.

**And** – He’s going to make it worse.

<sup>29</sup> When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into 12 pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

The Jews had strict rules of burial.

The body was to be left unmolested and interred in a tomb ASAP.

This guy desecrated her by mutilating the body; carving it into a dozen parts.

Instead of burying her as a final act of honor, he **dishonored** her by sending the pieces to the tribes.

Now her family, here dad in Bethlehem who loved her so, has nowhere to go to remember her, no grave at which to make a memorial & lay flowers.

All the Levite can think of is his rage at being deprived of his concubine.

He wants revenge and know he can get it by this outrageous act.

**SHOCK** the elders of the other tribes. // His tactic works

<sup>30</sup> And so it was that all who saw it said, “No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!”

Ch20

Benjamites are victorious in 1st battle

They were great fighters

Ambidextrous; Excellent shots with a sling; each rock = 1 lb. @ 90 mph

11 tribes return to Mizpah and weep before the LORD

Go back in to battle - lose again!

They think they are the means of judging Benjamin but God is chastening them first

They return to Mizpah again and weep, repent, and offer sacrifices

Then they inquire of the high priest - he says to go again and they will be victorious

They do and defeat the Benjamites — Utterly

They wipe everyone out!

All that is left is 600 men who manage to flee to a rock fortress in Rimmon

<sup>1</sup> So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba,

From the far N to the deep S.

as well as from the land of Gilead,

On the E side of the Jordan.

and the congregation gathered together as 1 man before the Lord at Mizpah.

Gibeah was in the Territory of the Tribe of Benjamin.

Mizpah was on the border btwn Benjamin & Ephraim.

The men of Israel rally at Mizpah; staging in preparation for an attack on Gibeah.

<sup>2</sup> And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of

God, 400K foot soldiers who drew the sword.<sup>3</sup> (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the children of Israel said, “Tell *us*, how did this wicked deed happen?”<sup>4</sup> So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, “My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night.<sup>5</sup> And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died.<sup>6</sup> So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed *lewdness* and outrage in Israel.<sup>7</sup> Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!”

He leaves out details that impugn his judgment and behavior.

He spins a tale, accurate as far as it goes, calculated to set them against the Gibeonites.

He says what they did was *lewd*; = an act so vile it demands intense reprisal to utterly end it.

The Levite’s scheme works. The tribes unite to carry out justice on the heinous criminals of Gibeah.

<sup>8</sup> So all the people arose as one man, saying, “None *of us* will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house;<sup>9</sup> but now this *is* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: *We will go up* against it by lot.<sup>10</sup> We will take 10 men out of *every* hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of *every* thousand, and a thousand out of *every* ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel.”<sup>11</sup> So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

They cast lots to appoint 10% of their number as quartermasters; men assigned that task of supplying the rest with provisions.

Then they march against Gibeah a short way from Mizpah.

But they aren’t there to wipe the city out.

They are there to do justice and that means limiting their campaign to the guilty.

<sup>12</sup> Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What *is* this wickedness that has occurred among you?<sup>13</sup> Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!” But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.<sup>14</sup> Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel.<sup>15</sup> And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered 26K men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered 700 select men.

<sup>16</sup> Among all this people *were* 700 select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair’s *breadth* and not miss.<sup>17</sup> Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered 400K men who drew the sword; all of these *were* men of war.

When the tribes gathered at Mizpah, absent were the Benjamites.

So reps were sent to their cities to secure their support in prosecuting the guilty Gibeonites.

The Benjamites decided tribal solidarity was more important than justice.

They bring their 26K up to support the city against the 400K of the rest of Israel.

And we assume – this is going to be a slaughter.

And because we’re familiar with Scripture, THAT assumption is immediately suspect.

Rightfully so. Remember, this is the time of the Judges

When Israel is *so out of touch with God* He uses trouble like this as a way to discipline them.

So: Bcz we’d *assume* 400K whoop 26K, what should we *CONCLUDE* happens?

In vs18-46 we get the play by play for how it all went down.

Twice the tribes attacked Gibeah and twice they were repulsed at great loss of life.

Each time they lost, they went to the tabernacle at Shiloh to weep and pray.

Then, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> try, they succeed by setting an ambush.

They put men in hiding near the city and attacked with a small force.

That pulled the now over-confident Benjamites out.

The men in hiding rushed on Gibeah.

There was a fierce fight the attackers won, then they set the city to the torch.

THAT was the pre-arranged signal for the retreating troops to turn on the Benjamites who were now caught between two forces and wiped out.

Their force of 26K was reduced to just 600 men.

<sup>47</sup> But 600 men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for 4 months. <sup>48</sup> And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from *every* city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.

What began as a law enforcement action against the criminals in Gibeah ended up a civil war that almost wiped the tribe of Benjamin out.

All that's left is 600 men holed up in a refuge they're able to defend.

Ch21

<sup>1</sup> Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife."

When the Benjamites rejected the call of the reps sent them inviting them to be part of the law enforcement action against the criminals in Gibeah,

The tribes took a vow effectively **ending** the Tribe of Benjamin.

Their plan was to defeat the men of Benjamin in battle.

With no men to be fathers and no one marrying the Benjamite women, the tribe would die out in a single generation.

**THAT** had been a vow taken in the heat of the impending conflict.

Now that's it's a reality, they realize their error in taking such a foolish vow. So

<sup>2</sup> Then the people came to the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly, <sup>3</sup> and said, "O Lord God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe *missing* in Israel?"

They rue their earlier vow. It seemed right at the time; but it was only "right in their eyes."

They never consulted God. And they don't now.

They **SEEM** to seek Him. They **pray** in v3.

They ask **WHY** what's happened, happened // But the question isn't sincere; it's rhetorical.

We know that because they don't wait for Him to answer.

They **keep** doing what they've **been** doing; going thru the **forms** of religion without genuine obedience

<sup>4</sup> So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. <sup>5</sup> The children of Israel said, "Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the Lord?" For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the Lord at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death."

See? They made an altar; sacrificed. // But never waited on God for direction.

They did what **seemed** right.

Back in v3 they asked, "**WHY** has this come to pass?"

But it's not a **sincere** Why? It's a **protest** Why?

The honest why had an answer; what happened did so because they'd rejected God as king and were doing what was right in their own eyes.

The Protest-Why was more an **accusation** than a request for a reason.

The 5-year old wants to know **why** Mommy won't let her stay up till midnight.

Mommy tells her why; they have to get up early & without sleep the little girl is all-day cranky.

That answer, while perfectly reasonable, isn't enough for the little girl because it doesn't get her what she wants.

Fact is, **no** answer will satisfy her. No answer will be good enough, because her good is decided by what she wants – just like Israel at the time of the Judges.

[Podcast: Why did God do this or that?]

When they'd 1<sup>st</sup> gathered at Mizpah, they took inventory to see who'd failed to answer the summons.

Only 1 city came up short; Jabesh Gilead, just E of the Jordan.

They'd determined to punish it once they were done with Gibeah.

Now they rethink their plan & come up with a way to make sure the Tribe of Benjamin ISN'T wiped out.

But it's a really lame plan because it's devised without considering God.

As the plans of man always are – lame that is, when they neglect God.

Good intentions do not for wisdom make.

It doesn't matter what label you stick on an agenda, platform, system, or ideology.

If it merely **SEEMS** good but neglects God, it's doomed.

Years ago in Yellowstone, wolves were hunted to near extinction because they preyed on elk.

It seemed like the right thing to do to save the big animals.

The elk herd population *exploded*.

Elk love to feed on young aspen trees.

When aspens disappear, it radically changes the ecosystem because conifers move in.

Bird populations change.

The content of the soil changes.

Erosion patterns change.

Meadows turn to swamps or barren patches.

There are countless examples of decisions people make that seem right at the time, but end up disastrous.

This is why it behooves us to take EVERY decision to God for His review.

The solution Israel came up with was well intended, but ridiculous.

<sup>6</sup> And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today.

<sup>7</sup> What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the Lord that we will not give them

our daughters as wives?" <sup>8</sup> And they said, "What 1 *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to

Mizpah to the Lord?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. <sup>9</sup> For when

the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead *was* there. <sup>10</sup> So the congregation

sent out there 12k of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of

Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. <sup>11</sup> And this *is* the thing that you

shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately." <sup>12</sup> So they

found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead 400 young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they

brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. <sup>13</sup> Then the whole congregation sent *word* to

the children of Benjamin who *were* at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them. <sup>14</sup> So Benjamin came

back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and

yet they had not found enough for them. <sup>15</sup> And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the Lord had made a

void in the tribes of Israel.

This isn't the quest for justice they originally set out on. // This is a travesty of justice.

How do these young women feel about the way they've been treated?

To be torn away from parents and siblings they watched butchered.

Then given as chattel to men who'd fought on the side of perverts.

This whole thing has gone from heinous to hideous.

<sup>16</sup> Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?"

There were 200 Benjamites who still needed wives.

<sup>17</sup> And they said, "*There must be* an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed

from Israel. <sup>18</sup> However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn an

oath, saying, 'Cursed *be* the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.' " <sup>19</sup> Then they said, "In fact, *there is* a yearly

feast of the Lord in Shiloh, which *is* north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to

Shechem, and south of Lebonah." <sup>20</sup> Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait

in the vineyards, <sup>21</sup> and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then

come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the

land of Benjamin. <sup>22</sup> Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say

to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for *it is not as*

*though you have given the women to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.’ ”*

This is so LAME!

Now they *condone kidnapping* as a way to get around their stupid oath.

Each year at a set time, many of the young women of Israel attended a special event at Shiloh.

It was a way to let the young men know they were now officially ready for marriage.

The leaders of Israel tell the 200 remaining Benjamite bachelors they won't be stopped from nabbing one of the girls.

When their dads and brothers complain, they'll smooth things over.

After all, not one violated the vow not to **GIVE** their daughter; the Benjamites **TOOK** them.

All these poor young women who would be snagged.

So much for their dream of marrying the love of their life and having a glorious wedding.

They came up with all these bloody and brutal machinations because they thought their stupid vow was more important.

Behold how mixed up morality get when God is ejected from the center.

<sup>23</sup> And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. <sup>24</sup> So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

## CONCLUSION

Let's chart the tale of these chs.

It starts with a Levite who has an illicit relationship with a concubine.

She then, has one too & runs home afterward.

He goes and gets her, & on the way home stops for the night in wicked Gibeah.

In a scene eerily reminiscent of Sodom, the men of the City threaten to rape him.

He offers his mistress instead. // They torture her to death.

Israel gathers to judge them & ends up in a bloody civil war.

Then, the city of Jabesh Gilead which has just wanted to stay out of the whole wretched business is wiped out.

Sin, if not resisted, grows

Even private, small things can increase and bring catastrophic ruin to hundreds.

Sow a thought, reap an act

Sow an act, reap a habit

Sow a habit, reap a destiny.

To explain WHY and HOW all this happened . . .

<sup>25</sup> In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.