

# If Fall to Pieces

Judges 19-21

## Goals

Students should learn that it takes one person to make a difference.

## Lesson Materials

- 1 Yo-Yo
- 4 Soda Cans
- 4 Chairs
- 1 Stop Watch

## Lesson Overview:

The story of the Levite's Concubine is more obscure than most. It tells of polygamous marriage, homosexuality, rape, murder, and mutilation of a dead body. Normally, the two previous sentences would deter a reader, but our goal is to teach the obscure stories. This story teaches important lessons for believers in our world today.

We will begin by telling the story. It encompasses three long chapters. Our main goal should be to teach the principles. Be careful to not allow telling the story to take the bulk of the class time. We want to focus on the details. Students should be encouraged to read the entire story in their personal study time. Next, we will see how the sinfulness of society motivated one man to action. Finally, we will see how one man motivated the masses and started a fire of change that would change the nation of Israel.

1. The Story
2. One Motivated
3. One Motivated the Masses

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## concubine

(kǎNGkyō,bīn) n.

### 1. Law

A woman who cohabits with a man without being legally married to him.

### 2. In certain societies,

such as imperial China, a woman contracted to a man as a secondary wife, often having few legal rights and low social status.

## Lesson Procedure:

**Let's Move:** Begin the session with a game of Yo-Yo Can. Place four empty soda cans on four different chairs. Choose three or four students. Each student will take a turn trying to knock the cans off the chairs with a yo-yo. However, the yo-yo will be tied to their back belt loop. The student with the fastest time wins. This is a fun game. Have music playing in the background, and encourage the spectators to cheer. Be animated.

**To the Lesson:** Of all the obscure Bible stories in this series, this one is probably the most unknown. Generally, when a story takes up three chapters of the Bible, it merits attention. This story, however, is filled with taboo material that has caused Bible teachers to overlook this section. It is a sad truth, but many of the taboo elements of the story have now become commonplace in today's culture. This story should not be ignored any longer.

1. Read "I Fall to Pieces-The Story," and ask the students,

*What words would you use to describe this story?*

One of the most challenging skills for any Bible student is reading the story as truth. God has this story in the Bible for a reason. We must see these events as real. This story is vile. It is disgusting. It is filled with wickedness. But, it is also a glorious story about God working in a nation.

a. Before we move to the positive elements of the story, we need to understand a few of the negative elements. The Levite took a concubine. During this period, polygamy, or being married to more than one person, was common. The Levite was not taking a prostitute

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While our culture condones it, homosexuality stands as the climax of ungodliness in a culture.

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into his home. He was taking a second wife. She would have fewer rights than the primary wife.

b. In our 21st Century minds, the Levite should be vilified for sending the girl out to the Benjamites. This also would have been common. The old man of the village would have protected his male guest above all else. This was a part of society at the time. In order to understand this story, we must not let our present cultural mindset get in the way. We must see the story through the eyes of the characters.

c. The Benjamites had reached the pinnacle of sinfulness. Even though our culture condones it, homosexuality is the ultimate ungodliness in a culture, according to the Bible.

i. Read Romans 1:21-25, and ask the students,

*What happened that allowed the people to become sexually deviant? God gave them over to it. These verses show us that homosexuality is not just another sin. It is the final destination of a society that has repeatedly forgotten God.*

i. Our culture today is saturated with this sin. We must not be overwhelmed by it. We must understand that our society is not suffering from a homosexuality problem, but a lack of respect for God.

Why 12 pieces? There were twelve tribes of Israel. He sent one piece to each tribe.

II. Read Judges 10:29, and ask the students, *What did the Levite do after finding his dead wife?* At this point, the story takes a turn that requires a strong stomach. He takes his young bride and cuts her broken body into twelve pieces.

a. Why 12 pieces? There were 12 tribes of Israel. He sent one piece to each tribe. The Levite was motivated by the wickedness of his nation. He was not interested in defaming the name of the Benjamites. He was interested in changing the behavior of the Benjamites, his fellow Israelites.

b. Believers who become excited about their beliefs begin the struggle between offense and defense. It is easy to see the wickedness of the world all around and choose to hide from it. Too many believers sit in walled castles hiding from the sinfulness of the world and shooting insults and judgments over the walls.

c. The Levite chose to meet the wickedness head on. He sent a message and a morbid illustration to the other tribes of Israel. He did not choose to wait on someone else to champion the cause. He chose to be the champion.

III. Read Judges 19:30, and ask the students, *How did the people respond to the Levite's message?* The people got the message. They were outraged. The people begged their leaders to tell them what to do. How would your pastor react if the entire church begged him to lead them in changing the world?

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If we are going to change our culture, we must not seek to destroy the opposition; we must choose to save the opposition.

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a. Read Judges 20:1, and ask the students, *What was Israel's first move?* They met before the Lord. If we want to make a comparison, they met as a church to hear the story.

b. Read Judges 20:11, and ask the students, *What was Israel's second move?* They united together against the city. They discussed the situation as a group, but they chose to not stop with discussion. They unified and acted.

c. Read Judges 20:21-23, and ask the students, *What happened to the Israelites?* The Israelites suffered loss. In the initial wave of battle, they suffered heavy losses. They questioned their purpose, but God commanded them to go again. When we step out in faith and try to change our world, we will suffer loss. Any battle worth fighting will come with consequences. Does fear of loss or struggle keep you, your youth group, or your church from acting?

d. Read Judges 20:46-48, and ask the students, *What was the final outcome of the war?* The Benjamites were defeated. They were held responsible for their actions and were punished.

e. Read Judges 21:15, and ask the students, *What did the Israelites feel for the Benjamites?* The Israelites grieved for the Benjamites. Because most of the women of Benjamin were killed, the men did not have any

wives. The tribe would die without heirs. The people chose to provide women for the men of Benjamin. The goal was never to destroy Benjamin, but to save Benjamin. If we are going to change our culture, we must not seek to destroy the opposition. We must choose to save the opposition.

**Conclusion:** This story covers the spectrum. It goes from polygamy to homosexuality to rape to murder to dismemberment to war and finally to forgiveness and repentance. It would be easy to be intrigued by the story and miss the point. All of the change that happened in the nation of Israel began with one man. One man saw the sinfulness of his people and chose to take action. He asked his people to help him change his world. One man was motivated. One man motivated the masses. Change occurred. Will you choose to be that one person? Will you allow the sin around you to motivate you to action? Every journey begins with one step, and every change begins with one person!

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# I Fall to Pieces - The Story

**Student 1:** A Levite from Ephraim traveled to Bethlehem to take a concubine, or a second wife. On the long journey home, he came close to a town called Jebus, but he chose to spend the night in a town called Gibeah. He felt he could trust Gibeah because it was a village of Benjamin, a tribe of Israel. Jebus was not an Israelite city. A nice old man of Gibeah invited the Levite and his friends to spend the night in his home.

**Student 2:** During the night, while the Levite and the old man were enjoying themselves, a group of wicked men from the town surrounded the house. They beat on the door saying, "Send that stranger outside. We want to rape him!" The old man went outside and said, "Don't be crazy! This man is a guest in my house. You are a disgrace! I will not give you the man!" They continued harassing the man. The old man said, "I cannot give you the man. Here are my virgin daughter and the man's concubine. Do what you want with them, but you cannot have the man!"

**Student 3:** The wicked crowd of men took the concubine and raped her all through the night. The next morning, the Levite found her on the doorstep. He said, "Let's go," but she did not move. She was dead. He took her body and traveled to his home in Ephraim. He cut her body into 12 pieces. He sent one piece to each of the tribes of Israel, showing them what the Benjamites had done.

**Student 4:** The people of Israel were disgusted. They met before the Lord and had the Levite explain what happened. They decided to join forces and hold the Benjamites accountable for their sins. During the first wave of attacks, the Benjamites killed 22,000 Israelite soldiers. The Israelites wept and asked God, "Should we keep fighting?" God answered, "Go and fight!" In time, the Israelite army defeated the Benjamites, killing large numbers of them.

**Student 5:** When the war finished, the Israelites realized that too many of the Benjamite women had been killed. Without wives, the tribe of Benjamin would cease to exist. They found a way to provide wives for the Benjamites, saving the tribe from complete annihilation. The Benjamites took the women, rebuilt their towns, and the nation was united once again.

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# I Fall to Pieces

Judges 19-21

## One Man

The Levite was \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of his nation.

Too many believers sit in walled \_\_\_\_\_ hiding from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world and shooting insults and judgments over the \_\_\_\_\_.

He did not choose to wait on someone else to \_\_\_\_\_ the cause. He chose to be the \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Masses

They \_\_\_\_\_ before the \_\_\_\_\_.

They \_\_\_\_\_ together against the city.

The Israelites \_\_\_\_\_ loss.

The Benjamites were \_\_\_\_\_.

The Israelites \_\_\_\_\_ for the Benjamites.

## The Point

If we are going to change our culture, we must not seek to \_\_\_\_\_ the opposition. We must choose to \_\_\_\_\_ the opposition.

One man was \_\_\_\_\_. One man \_\_\_\_\_ the masses. \_\_\_\_\_ occurred.

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