

He Made Her Play the Harlot: Judges 19 through the Lens of Domestic Abuse

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The story of the gang rape and murder of an unnamed woman in Judges 19 is one of the bleakest narratives of the OT. Although it is mostly avoided in churches, since it is in the Bible it is important to ask how it might be read as a vehicle for justice.¹ Compounding the difficulties the text presents, certain key elements of the narrative are ambiguous—for example, what the woman's status was and why precisely she left the Levite. A close exegetical analysis, brought into conversation with the domestic abuse cycle, makes the story internally coherent and resolves the textual difficulties. Furthermore, by drawing attention to this dynamic in the text, churches can be challenged to address these issues more openly. Doing so must be a priority, given the prevalence of abuse and the imperative of the gospel.

Seeing and Understanding Domestic Abuse

In her seminal work, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, Phyllis Tribble says about Judges 19 that “to hear this story is to inhabit a world of unrelenting terror that refuses to let us pass by on the other side.”² This indirect call from Tribble not only to notice but to act when confronted with abuse cannot be made insistently enough. In our neighborhoods and churches people of every age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status are being hurt. Domestic abuse helplines in the USA receive more than 19,000 calls daily.³ More than twenty-three percent of women and almost fourteen percent of men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner, which means a significant minority of people who have experienced or witnessed severe violence are present in most churches. Indeed, there will almost certainly be abusers lurking in the pews. Many more will have had exposure to (or committed) other types of abuse or “milder” violence (is there such a thing as mild physical violence, given its emotional effects?).⁴

Domestic abuse can take many forms. As well as physical violence, those victimized may be subjected to emotional, psychological, financial, and sexual abuse or, usually, some combination of these in a pattern of controlling, coercive, and threatening behaviors.⁵ Even love-bombing (lavish affection), while appearing kind, in the context of domestic abuse is manipulative and controlling.⁶ The research shows that ending the abusive relationship without adequate safeguards in place often leads to serious and even fatal violence.⁷ In such cases, the most dangerous time is after the escape.

Churches have been largely and shamefully silent on the issue of domestic abuse. A Lifeway poll found that forty-two percent of Protestant pastors rarely or never speak about domestic abuse, presumably in part because thirty percent believed it was not a problem in their congregations.⁸ The statistics above suggest that they are almost certainly mistaken. It is past time for the church

to do the theological work, get educated about the facts and local sources of support, engage in educating others, speak out for justice, and offer safety to those who are hurting.

The theological work is vital, and it needs to consider not only those texts most often used to send victims back to their abusers (e.g., Eph 5:22 and 1 Pet 2–3) but also those which may shape the conversation in unseen ways.⁹ For example, Renita J. Weems broke new ground in her study of how depictions of Yahweh as an abusive husband in the prophetic literature may wrongly serve to legitimate human abuse.¹⁰ Reading the story of the Levite and his concubine through the lens of domestic abuse can be a refusal to remain complicit in the silencing and minimizing that surrounds the issue. Furthermore, just as feminist readings can sensitize us to other voices that are marginalized or silenced, so seeing domestic abuse in this text may open our eyes to violence elsewhere, both in the Bible and in the lives of our neighbors. Abuse can be challenged, and victims supported, only if it is first seen.

The Domestic Violence Cycle

In 1979, psychologist Lenore Walker proposed a cyclical model for understanding domestic violence, which she developed from interviews with 1,500 battered women.¹¹ In the first phase, tension builds, eventually leading to an incident of abuse. This is followed by reconciliation and then calm, together making a honeymoon phase. Gradually tensions increase again as the cycle repeats. This model has been critiqued for its emphasis on physical aggression, its neglect of the power and control aspects of domestic abuse, and its focus on male-on-female violence.¹² While it may be an imperfect tool in victim support and criminal justice settings, it is nevertheless a helpful model for the story of the Levite and his concubine.¹³

Judges 19

Given its clear parallels with Gen 19, commentators have readily treated this story as one about hospitality. Frank M. Yamada has done literary analyses of the rape narratives of the OT. He argues that the meaning of the rape in Judges 19 “is structured through the two hospitality scenes.”¹⁴ His summary is typical: “Both . . . stories are more properly understood not as a condemnation against homoeroticism . . . but instead as a failure of hospitality.”¹⁵ Quite apart from the fact that the story can be about both hospitality and sexual relations, note that there is no mention of the victim in Yamada's summary. The horrific gang rape of the woman readily becomes mere evidence in a discussion about hospitality.

The introduction to the book of Judges (1:1–3:6) tells first of social, then of religious fragmentation, and the epilogue (chs. 17–21) does the reverse, giving an A B B' A' framing to the book.¹⁶ As a result, the story of the Levite and his concubine can best be understood

in terms of social disintegration, of which both inhospitality and violence are aspects. The story “epitomizes the ultimate deterioration and betrayal of family relations—a moral bankruptcy the Bible chastises.”¹⁷ The story in Judges 19 may have many lessons to impart and possible polemics to share concerning hospitality, the relative merits of Benjamin and Judah (and by extension Saul and David), and the familial, social, and religious disintegration of Israel. But, just as importantly, here is also a story of a woman who was abused and was fatally unable to find safety.

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The Setting

An overview of the context of the narrative will be helpful at this point. The narrator says that the story takes place when there was no king in Israel (Judg 19:1). This signals to the reader that moral chaos similar to the previous narrative can be expected, which was also framed by the indication of the absence of monarchy (Judg 17–18). Likewise, the immediate mention of Ephraim, Bethlehem, Judah, and a Levite, which have been shown in a negative light in the previous story, lets the reader know that more of the same is likely to follow.¹⁸ These narrative clues communicate that what follows serves as a terrible warning rather than a good example.

The story starts with an unnamed adult male Levite who lives in a remote part of Ephraim and takes a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah (19:1). No one in this story is given a name: protagonists are marked by their origins and locations, their relationships to one another, and by their explicit or implicit status. This lack of naming “illustrates the disintegration and dehumanization of society while it universalizes the characters in this sordid story.”¹⁹ Although this man is a Levite (of the tribe set aside by God to provide priests for the nation) nothing that follows relates to his status as a Levite. Set alongside the story before, perhaps it simply serves to illustrate how far the religious life of Israel had crumbled. The Levites were not given land but were allocated towns to live in and allotted pastureland (Josh 18:7, Josh 21). The fact that this Levite lives in a tent (Judg 19:9) in the far reaches of Ephraim (v. 1) and not in a Levite town may also signal cause for concern. Here is a male protagonist about whom the reader is invited to have doubts.

Furthermore, the writer raises questions in the mind of the reader that are never answered: Why did the Levite take a *pilegesh* (usually translated “concubine”) and what is that exactly? Whatever translation is chosen for *pilegesh* (e.g., “concubine,” “second wife”), current scholarship on the word has not conclusively answered the questions about her status, rights, or inheritance procedures.²⁰ None of the references in the Bible define the status of a *pilegesh*, and their rights and those of their children vary from text to text.²¹ Based in

part on family experience and her cultural context as a Zimbabwean-American, Christine Mafana offers the intriguing suggestion that the *pilegesh* was a wife of lower status for whom the bride price had not been paid.²² Why not marry the girl properly? Why did her father accept this lesser status for his daughter? Why did the Levite take a woman from so far away, or why did he move to be far away afterwards? What is clear is that this is not a desirable situation for her, as she was unlikely to have “the legal protection of a primary wife.”²³ Although it is impossible to know the backstory, it seems the author intends to sow doubts in the minds of the readers. Right from the beginning the set-up is strange. The girl is in a dubious relationship with a questionable man, rendering her doubly vulnerable.

The Domestic Violence Cycle: Escalating Tension and Abuse

The setting, then, includes a man about whom there is ambiguity and a female of uncertain status who is nevertheless in his power. In the cycle of abuse the first two phases of escalating tensions and an incident of abuse are folded into v. 2a: “But his concubine became angry with him” (NRSV) or “But she was unfaithful to him” (NIV).²⁴ These radically different translations reflect the two existing manuscript traditions. The Hebrew Masoretic Text uses *zanah* (“fornicate,” “play the harlot”) whereas the Greek Septuagint opts for “became angry.”²⁵ Translation is interpretation, so the task in the face of significantly differing options is “to reconstruct what the text must mean.”²⁶ The translation choice has a sharp edge here because it affects how the rest of the story is likely to be understood. To be sure, no one deserves to be gang raped, and rape is always sin, but the reader, or at least the reader imagined by the author, will hear the story differently if the concubine was sleeping with others before leaving the Levite. In his commentary on the book of Judges, Barry Webb rightly rejects any reading of “grim irony” where the woman who “played the harlot” winds up the “common property” of the men of Gibeah.²⁷

There are good reasons for reading the story with the assumption of the woman’s innocence. First, the fact that she goes straight to her father’s house suggests no wrongdoing on her part, but rather simple escape from the Levite. It cannot have been easy, nor particularly safe, for a woman to travel on her own from the far side of Ephraim to Bethlehem, so there probably was some desperation driving her to undertake the journey. This hints at the presence of domestic abuse, or at the very least a situation sufficiently intolerable that the risk of traveling alone was worth taking. The second reason to believe her innocence is revealed through an analysis of the grammar of vv. 2–3. Pamela Tamarkin Reis has done a lexical and grammatical examination of Judges 19, which leads her to offer a plausible new reading for vv. 2–3, namely that the concubine had been prostituted for the Levite (i.e., he was her pimp), so she ran away, and he then tried to persuade her to take *him* back.²⁸ To be pimped out is a horrifying form of abuse—domestic or otherwise—and, if this reading is right, the story is not only about one (gang) rape but also about many individual rapes. In this reading a man has charmed or otherwise won for himself a young woman, whom he then proceeds to abuse by selling her body to other men. In contemporary parlance this is sex trafficking. She has effectively been recruited, transported to the far reaches of Ephraim, and is now living as a sex slave. In response to this abuse, the woman makes her escape back to “her father’s house at Bethlehem in Judah” (v. 2).

In the domestic violence cycle, the next step is reconciliation, and this is precisely what happens next in the narrative. The Levite eventually sets out after her with the intention to “speak tenderly to her” (v. 3, literally “speak to her heart”) and bring her back. This suggests she was the injured party.²⁹ “To speak tenderly” is exactly the kind of charm offensive that is to be expected in this phase of the cycle of abuse, when the abuser typically uses kindness, gifts, and loving gestures to win back the trust of the victim. The Levite’s delay was likely due to initially waiting for her to come back and then setting out after her when it was clear she was not going to return.³⁰ As Reis says, “there is no illogic in supposing that a father would receive a wronged daughter and a husband would want to recover his meal ticket.”³¹

The next part of the story takes place in the father’s house. The woman is pushed to the very edge of the narrative with all the described interaction taking place between the two men. The girl’s father offers aggressive hospitality. It is he who welcomes the Levite “with joy” (v. 3) and who makes him stay (v. 4). The reader is told neither what has passed between the father and daughter in the previous months nor what, if anything, passes between her and the Levite. The repetition of the “heart” language in vv. 5, 7, 8 and 9 (which is usually obscured in translation) echoes the Levite’s desire to “speak to her heart” and highlights that, as far as the reader can discern, he has not done so successfully. There is nothing in the text to suggest that “genuine reconciliation has taken place.”³²

The text here demands an act of imagination on the part of the reader. If she did not tell her story, or was not believed, the father’s hospitality may be seen as compensation for the wrong he believes his daughter has done to the Levite. He is embarrassed and trying to make up for his daughter’s shortcomings. This may explain the hospitality, but not the pleading to stay because, in that case, he would presumably be delighted that the Levite was once again willing to take his daughter and urge them on their way. Note also that he does not take his daughter back to the Levite, although he had four months in which to do so. On the other hand, if the woman told her father what had happened, and if he believed his daughter, it may be that he wants to do what he can to protect her, but his hands are tied to some extent. In that case, the abundant hospitality and attempts to keep the Levite in his house may be read as both the desire to appease the Levite into better behavior and the only avenue for keeping his daughter with him in safety. It is thus fair to draw a tentative conclusion that the father recognized something was profoundly wrong but considered himself powerless to do anything meaningful or permanent about it.

The text supports this reading through the repetition of the word “father,” and particularly “girl’s father,” in this section (vv. 3–6, 8–9).³³ The particular phrase used (“the father of the *na’arah*”) occurs only here and in Deut 22:15–16, 19, where it concerns the father of a married daughter whose virginity has been cast into doubt by her new husband, to whom responsibility for her had been transferred upon marriage. If it is slander, the father can present the evidence, thus defending his daughter. Recall Mafana’s suggestion that this *pilegish* may be one for whom the bride price had not been paid. If that is correct, all parties would find themselves without

legal clarity in a lawless land. Thus, the repeated use of the phrase shows the father’s powerlessness in a situation where responsibility for her has been transferred to the Levite. He is the girl’s father, but unlike the father in Deuteronomy he has no legal way to defend his daughter. Thus, it serves to emphasize his incapacity rather than his indifference.

The way the nomenclature changes also speaks volumes. At no point in her father’s house is the woman called a *pilegish*. Her father is referred to as the father-in-law and the Levite as the son-in-law. She is a *na’arah*, a “maiden” or “girl.”³⁴ These changes are likely deliberate decisions highlighting the woman’s greater status and therefore relative safety in her father’s house. The use of “son-in-law” also reminds the reader of the obligations the Levite has towards her.

It is only in v. 9, the liminal moment between staying and leaving, that the text reverts to “the man with his concubine” followed immediately by “his father-in-law, the girl’s father.” The language signals a change is coming. Where the “servant” is consistently a *na’ar* (“boy,” “lad,” “youth”), the woman is no longer a *na’arah* (“girl,” “maiden”). It appears as if the male protagonist with the upper hand in the story also regains control of the way the story is told. As the Levite wrests agency back from the father, the language reflects the Levite’s perspective on the relationships. The final attempt of the father to get them to stay reverts to his use of language but is to no avail. As the light fails and evening approaches, the language of security fades and that of vulnerability reappears.

The Domestic Violence Cycle: Escalating Tension

The party leaves and manages to get as far as Gibeah by nightfall (v. 14). The next sequence has strong echoes of Lot and the angelic visitors of Gen 19, with the crucial and fatal difference that there the divine visitors save everyone from the mob. The absence of the divine in Gibeah results in the sacrifice of the woman. Social breakdown both causes and follows Israel’s unfaithfulness to the covenant with God, when “all the people did what was right in their own eyes”: This is the narrator’s final denunciation (Judg 21:25b).

When the travelers meet their eventual host in the town square—also an outsider from Ephraim—the Levite calls the woman *amah* (“maidservant”). Sarah uses the same word to describe Hagar when she wants her expelled, and it is also consistently used in the legal texts for female slaves (Gen 21:10; Exod 21:7, 20, 26–27). This appears to be demeaning, and it could be seen as a return to phase one of the cycle, escalating tension. It seems that her status has sunk even lower than before and any rights she may have enjoyed as a *pilegish* have been lost. She is entirely at the mercy of this Levite and how he presents her.

The Domestic Violence Cycle: Abuse

As in Gen 19, men of the city surround the house, pound on the door and demand to have sex with the male guest. There is no ambiguity in the text about this; it is utterly condemned. The men are “a depraved lot” (Judg 19:22). The host begs the mob not to do this “scurrilous thing” (v. 23).³⁵ The host offers these worthless men the two women in his house, his own virgin daughter and the Levite’s

concubine. He says the men can 'anah ("afflict," "violate," "rape") the girls and "do what is good in their own eyes" (v. 24). The use of this refrain from Judges advertises the narrator's condemnation.³⁶ People doing what seems good in their own eyes, instead of what is right in God's eyes, is a core problem in Israel at the time of Judges. There is a catastrophic failure of Torah obedience.

Realizing his host is not able to resolve the situation by reasoning with the men, the Levite takes charge by seizing his concubine and "putting her out to them" (v. 25). The Levite here fails utterly in his duties as a master (as he is called in v. 26 and as is implied by calling her 'amah), let alone as a husband (as he is considered in the girl's father's house). As indicated above, the most dangerous time for certain women who are subject to domestic abuse is right after they leave. That sad fact is reflected in this story. The unnamed woman left her abuser at risk to herself, tried to find shelter in her father's house, but was returned to her abuser, who now exacts his revenge in a cruel move that demonstrates his utter disregard for her personhood. He sacrifices her to save himself.

The narrator does not mince words: they rape and abuse her all night and then send her away (Webb offers an evocative, "discarded her"³⁷). The third-person plurals indicate gang rape.³⁸ The repetition of the temporal phrases (v. 25c) emphasizes the length of time of the abuse.³⁹ On the basis of the brevity of the description in v. 25b, Tribble says the narrator is indifferent to the woman's suffering.⁴⁰ This seems unfair; as well as the wider context of the narrative, which consistently suggests sympathy for the woman, the brevity of the description suggests the brutality of the act (as Tribble in fact argues in relation to v. 25a).⁴¹

Having been released, one imagines she drags her bruised, bleeding, and battered body to the house where she should have been able to sleep in safety—the house, as the narrator says, "where her master was" (v. 26). The language in this verse is revealing. First, the man has become "her master," a clear highlighting of the inequality of power in their relationship. Second, it is the first time she is called 'ishah ("woman") rather than "concubine," "servant," or "girl." However fragile, as a concubine or servant she was tied into a relationship with the Levite; as a girl she was her father's daughter. Now she is an isolated woman: utterly abandoned and disconnected from all protective social bonds, physically and metaphorically outside the security of a home. Her hands on the threshold are a chilling sign that haunts the reader. After hours of abuse, she seeks the only safe place she can think of and almost makes it.

In the morning, the Levite gets up (v. 27). In contrast to the emphasis on getting up early at the father's house (vv. 5, 8), the different phrasing suggests he may have had a more relaxing start to the day. The succession of verbs conveys the sense that he was merely getting on with things.⁴² It is not clear from the text whether he planned to look for the woman.⁴³ His callous indifference is confirmed both by the sense of surprise in the text when he opens the doors to go and finds her on the doorstep (*hinneh*, "behold!") and his pitiless command to her to get up because they are going. When she does not answer he puts her on a donkey and brings her home (v. 28). Once there, he gets a knife, cuts her down to the bone into twelve pieces, and sends the body parts around Israel with a call to respond (vv. 29–30). There is double horror here. Instead of

a proper burial, he desecrates her body. But more dreadful still, the text never states when she dies, leaving open the possibility that he cut her up when she was still alive (did she die on the long journey or start to recover from her ordeal?). It says, after all, that he put *her* on a donkey, not that he put *her body* on a donkey. This ambiguity is deliberate and designed to add to the horror. The Levite is shown to be a man capable of personal physical violence by this act, whether violence to a corpse or a living person. In the following scene the reader learns he is also a manipulative liar, telling a twisted version of events designed to make him appear an innocent victim (Judg 20:4–5). These are traits typically seen in abusers, so a context of abuse is coherent with the facts as presented by the narrator.⁴⁴

Beyond the Text

Seeing the dynamics of domestic abuse in this text can helpfully put a range of related issues on the table for discussion. I offer here some ideas for further exploration. First, while the narrative most closely follows Walker's domestic violence cycle, linking domestic violence with this ancient story opens the door to a much wider conversation about all forms of domestic abuse and the church's role in supporting and protecting victims, while holding justice and mercy in tension in relation to perpetrators. Second, although the precise status and power of this Levite is unclear, in general Levites enjoyed the special status that came with the responsibility for Israel's corporate worship. In the current context of the #metoo movement and its challenge to sexual assault perpetrated by powerful men, the text can become a jumping off point for necessary conversations about power and authority, about its abuse in churches by (male) leaders, and what safeguards need to be put in place to prevent the power vested in religious leaders being abused in any way. Third, as indicated, the first part of the story of the Levite and the concubine echoes the dynamics of sex trafficking in recruitment and transportation. Whether these contemporary understandings can be read back into the text with integrity is an open question, but to allow these hints in the text to stimulate discussion in the present can only be helpful. Finally, the sexual violence in this story can and should stimulate conversation about pornography, and whether the sexual violence there reflects inherent violence and misogyny, functioning in a permission-giving way, or whether it generates a violence that was not previously present. Perhaps the deepest questions of the human condition lie there, in what comes first: action or representation, whether evil is inherent, or merely imitated.⁴⁵ Indeed, the book of Judges as a whole might be read as an extended meditation on the root of evil in disobedience to God, and humankind's responsibility for choosing to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with . . . God" (Mic 6:8).

Conclusion

Reading the story of the Levite's concubine through a lens of the cycle of domestic abuse makes sense of some of the superficially puzzling aspects of the narrative. It becomes clear why she left him, why he chased after her, why her father behaved the way he did, and adds depth to why he threw her to the mob. In key narrative moments the escalating tension, abuse, and reconciliation of the domestic violence cycle can be discerned. The value, however, of reading the story in this light is not only for its internal narrational coherence, but also because it becomes an avenue for bringing these issues out into the open in churches.

The Bible aims to move its readers towards justice and mercy.⁴⁶ When this story is read as an example of domestic abuse, there is hope that even a tale this unrelentingly horrific might move the church towards justice and mercy. The suffering can be redeemed, the woman's life not given in vain, if it leads to a better response from churches to the issue of domestic abuse (and indeed human trafficking). Churches need to be, and be seen as, safe spaces for people being abused. The church cannot be trusted by those who are suffering to listen well until it has shown that it can speak well, addressing the issues in preaching and in the community.

After her one moment of agency, when she leaves the Levite, the concubine's personhood is gradually deconstructed, from concubine to servant to isolated woman, until she is literally deconstructed with a knife. Remembering her can be a way of bearing witness and thus a positive resource in the face of domestic and other forms of violence.⁴⁷ To read the story of the Levite's concubine through a lens of domestic abuse can help us to see, to remember, and to give a voice to all those who have been so victimized.

Notes

1. No part of this story is included in the Revised Common Lectionary, for example.
2. Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Fortress, 1984) 65.
3. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), Domestic Violence (2020), https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/domestic_violence-2020080709350855.pdf?1596811079991.
4. NCADV, *Domestic Violence*.
5. Natalie Collins, *Out of Control: Couples, Conflict, and the Capacity for Change* (SPCK, 2019) 15.
6. Collins, *Out of Control*, 30–31.
7. Kevin Barry, "Domestic Violence: Perspectives on the Male Batterer," *Journal for Pastoral Counselling* 38 (2003) 60.
8. Anon., "Intimate Dangers: Domestic Violence Is Pervasive but Hidden," *ChrCentury* 131/2 (Oct 2014) 7.
9. Steven Tracy, "Domestic Violence in the Church and Redemptive Suffering in 1 Peter," *CTJ* 41/2 (Nov 2006) 279–96 has a helpful analysis; Merle W. Longwood, "Theological and Ethical Reflections on Men and Violence: Toward a New Understanding of Masculinity," *Theology & Sexuality* 13/1 (Sept 2006) 47–61, offers constructive avenues for theological exploration and action.
10. Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Fortress, 1995).
11. Crystal Raypole, "Understanding the Cycle of Abuse," <https://healthline.com/health/relationships/cycle-of-abuse>; the original book is Lenore E. Walker, *The Battered Woman* (Harper & Row, 1979).
12. Raypole, "Understanding the Cycle of Abuse."
13. For those interested in learning more about the dynamics of domestic abuse, the "Power and Control Wheel" is a helpful tool, offering a multifaceted understanding of intimate partner violence; see <https://theduluthmodel.org/wheels/>.
14. Frank M. Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible: A Literary Analysis of Three Rape Narratives*, StBibLit 109 (Peter Lang, 2008) 70.
15. Frank M. Yamada, "Rape," *NIDOTTE* 4:102.
16. Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Eerdmans, 2012) 32.
17. Pamela Tamarkin Reis, "The Levite's Concubine: New Light on

- a Dark Story," *SJOT* 20/1 (2006) 146.
18. Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges*, Berit Olam (Liturgical Press, 2000) 246.
19. Reis, "The Levite's Concubine," 146.
20. Schneider, *Judges*, 248.
21. Schneider, *Judges*, 248.
22. Christine Mafana, "Judges 19: The Story of the Unnamed Woman" (paper presented at RELS 2326 Women and the Bible in 2013), <https://sites.stedwards.edu/pangaea/judges-19-the-story-of-the-unnamed-woman/>.
23. Chuck Pitts, "Judges 19 as a Paradigm for Understanding and Responding to Human Trafficking," *Priscilla Papers* 29/4 (Autumn 2015) 3.
24. All quotations from Scripture are NRSV unless otherwise indicated.
25. Trent C. Butler summarises the linguistic debates: Butler, *Judges*, rev. ed., WBC 8 (Zondervan, 2014) 418.
26. Schneider, *Judges*, 249.
27. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 456.
28. Reis, "The Levite's Concubine," 129.
29. Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, AB (Doubleday, 1975) 274.
30. Schneider, *Judges*, 253, proposes that the Levite waited four months to be sure she was not pregnant, which would imply there had been fornication. This interpretation is dubious; pregnancy could have been the result of promiscuity on the road or after she returned home, so waiting four months would have guaranteed nothing.
31. Reis, "The Levite's Concubine," 129.
32. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 461.
33. Reis, "The Levite's Concubine," 133, argues unconvincingly that the constant repetition of "father" is meant to show his uselessness by reminding the reader of his relationship with and responsibilities towards her, in which duties he falls far short.
34. Boling, *Judges*, 274, argues that this change shows a redactor was using two different sources. Multiple sources and redactors, however, are not needed to explain this shift. Furthermore, a redactor is capable of making lexical changes to suit his ends.
35. Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, 3 vols. (Norton, 2019) 2:150.
36. Butler, *Judges*, 424.
37. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 469.
38. Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 76.
39. Schneider, *Judges*, 262.
40. Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 76.
41. Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 76.
42. Schneider, *Judges*, 263.
43. Schneider, *Judges*, 263.
44. Collins, *Out of Control*, 15, 20.
45. Catherine Madsen, "Notes on God's Violence," *Cross Currents* 51/2 (Summer 2001) 230.
46. Madsen, "Notes on God's Violence," 231.
47. Paula M. Cooley, "Re-Membering the Body: A Theological Resource for Resisting Domestic Violence," *Theology & Sexuality* 3 (Sept 1995) 27.

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