

RIGHT IN THE EYE

Stranger Than Fiction

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Scripture: Judges 19:22–25, 30; 20:1; 21:25

Idea: What you think is good for you is not only *not* good for you—it's not good for anybody.

Introduction

1. As we begin our new series, I want to tell you one of the strangest stories in all of ancient literature. It's found in a book of the Old Testament called Judges, which is where we will be for most of this series.
2. The narratives in Judges take place between the time Israel settled in the land known as the Promised Land and the establishment of Israel as a kingdom.
Joshua-----Judges-----David
1380 BC (330 years) 1050 BC
3. For about 300 years (1380–1050 BC), Israel was a **commonwealth** of twelve tribes that had common ancestry and religious belief.
4. But they had no king. God was supposed to be their king. They were to follow the Law. Judges were established to speak for God to the tribes.
5. *They were a lot like you and me. They didn't like being told what to do.*
6. So, for 300 years, there was a cycle:

Disobedience → Disaster → Deliverance

This is a cycle we've all experienced, Christian or not.

The Final Episode in the Book of Judges

This is graphic. So I'm going to let you read some of this silently out of sensitivity to those who didn't take your kids to UpStreet.

A certain Levite who lived in Ephraim, north of Benjamin, invited a woman (concubine) from Bethlehem (south of Benjamin in Judea) to move in with him. She was unfaithful and then ran home to her dad. Four months go by, and this Levite went back to Bethlehem to convince her to stay with him. She eventually agreed, and they left to go back: the Levite, a servant, two donkeys, and the concubine. On the way, they stopped in a town called Gibeah, where the tribe of Benjamin lived. They arrived late, went to the town square, and waited for someone to invite them in for the night: *the law of hospitality*. Nobody does. So they prepared to spend the night out in the open. Later that evening, an old man from the same area the Levite was from (but who was living in Gibeah) came home, saw them, and invited them in. While they were having dinner, some **wicked men from the town surrounded the house and shouted:**

Judges 19:22–25