

## CIVIL WAR

--JUDGES 20:1-48--

### INTRODUCTION:

Last week we looked at society's moral breakdown. It began with worshipping the idols that they worshipped and doing evil in the eyes of the LORD, abandoning Him as their king and turning their back on His covenant with them. Once they had done this there was no standard of truth, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes and the result was moral chaos. In the end a Levite thrusts his concubine into the hands of some worthless men who rape and abuse her through the night then discard her in the morning where she dies on the doorstep of the house where her husband was staying. He picks her up puts her on a donkey and takes her home where he takes a knife and cuts her body into twelve pieces and sends a piece to each of the tribes of Israel. As we come into chapter 20, we find the response of the tribes to this gruesome call to arms issued at the end of chapter 19. Can it get any worse?

#### I. CALL TO ARMS (Judges 20:1-7)

- a. I cannot imagine what kind of \_\_\_\_\_ the Levite was hoping to receive as he dismembered his concubine and sent her parts out to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- b. Mizpah was on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Ephraim and Benjamin, just a few miles away from Gibeah.
- c. This nameless Levite from an obscure place in Ephraim has been able to accomplish something that none of the \_\_\_\_\_ raised up by the LORD and empowered by His Spirit had been able to do.
- d. In the mind of our nameless Levite, he has convinced himself that he himself is the principal \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. He has taken the high moral ground, but to do so he has distorted the \_\_\_\_\_, so that he gets the revenge that he wants.

#### II. CIVIL WAR (Judges 20:8-46)

- a. The response to the Levite's plea is described as the people arising as \_\_\_\_\_ man.

- b. Before going up to attack Gibeah, something is done that seems to offer some \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. With this first inquiry the Israelites are confident that what they are about to do is \_\_\_\_\_ and will end in purging the land of evil.
- d. The Israelites are \_\_\_\_\_. So, they go to God again before taking the matter further.
- e. The people of Israel are now \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. Energized by what they have just heard and with a new battle strategy they go up again to \_\_\_\_\_ Gibeah.

#### III. CULMINATION (Judges 20:47-48)

- a. Is this the end of it. No, as the Israelites return to Mizpah they go on a \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. So, \_\_\_\_\_ has finally been done, or has it? There are huge moral issues here.

### CONCLUSION:

What are we to make of God's involvement in all of this? Why did the LORD allow Israel to be defeated twice? Why did He promise victory the third time? Did this mean that God finally approved of Israel's actions? The LORD allowed Israel to be defeated to bring them to the point that they were at the third time in Bethel. They saw the sin in Benjamin but did not acknowledge their own sin. They were still doing what was right in their own eyes, by the third time they saw that was not working. Do we have perfect repentance and restoration? Not perfect, but progress was made as they sought the LORD's mercy. He showed mercy by giving them victory. The moral outrage committed in Gibeah has had terrible consequences. We have entered a very dark place, where Israel seems to have been given over to the full consequences of "everyone doing what was right in his own eyes." What can we take away from this chapter? Even in the midst of the moral chaos in Israel, God was still there. This should give us comfort, even in the midst of the moral chaos in our nation, even in some churches, God is still here and is still working in human hearts.

