

April 1 Answers

- 1) Israel's first civil war. It began when a **Levite** and his **concubine** decided to spend the night in the **Benjamite** city of Gibeah. The Levite turned aside from Jebus (**Jerusalem** of the Jebusites; cf. Deut 7:1), only to find that the men of Gibeah were as bad or worse than the "**foreigners**" he wanted to avoid (Judges 19:12). What happened that night teaches us that when we compromise, we begin to **Canaanize** (we begin turning into the very thing God hates). It also shows us how **quickly** a society can degenerate into moral depravity (Judges 20:28—Phinehas was still priest in those days!). Gibeah had become like **Sodom**, and years later, **Hosea** would allude to "the days of Gibeah" to expose the moral rot of his own day (cf. Hos 9:9; 10:9). How sobering to realize that when we refuse to **submit** ourselves to God, we share a stubborn and rebellious heart with the sexual perverts of Gibeah. The Levite took his concubine home and used her dismembered body to call for retribution. The Benjamites refused to give up the perpetrators, and a bloody civil war began. This teaches us that we set a **snare** for our own feet when we **pity** those God says to destroy (Deut 7:16; cf. Deut 13:12–16). At the beginning of the war, the other tribes **inquired** of God at Bethel, but it wasn't because they loved God or were committed to doing His will. They were just going through the religious **motions**. It wasn't until they lost **40,000** men that they noticed God never said He would go **with** them or **give** the Benjamites into their hand (compare Judges 20:18, 23, 28). We should take heed, for this can happen to us if we ask God to bless our plans with **success** without first giving God our **loyalty** and allegiance. Summary: The people rightly condemned the wickedness of the men of Gibeah, but *not* because they loved God and respected His law. They took action against Gibeah because **they** thought it was the right thing to do. When we do what is right in our own eyes, the result is a confusing **jumble** of virtue and vice that shames God and dead-ends in disaster.