

**JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS**  
**Part XII: Learning The Value Of FULL Obedience To Scripture**  
**(Judges 19:1-20:26)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. A believer might think he can be selective about what to heed in Scripture, and how closely to heed it!
- B. Just how *fully* we should **OBEY** Scripture is taught by the events of Judges 19:1-20:28 in their setting:

**II. Learning The Value Of FULL Obedience To Scripture, Judges 19:1-20:26.**

- A. The events in Judges 19-21 occurred **early** in the era of the **judges** (and thus **soon after godly Joshua**):
  - 1. Judges 20:27-28 tell us Phinehas, Aaron's grandson ministered with the ark of God at Bethel.
  - 2. As this location for the ark and Phinehas's presence predated the tabernacle's relocation to Shiloh, the Judges 19-21 events came "early in the period of the judges," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to 20:27-28.
- B. These events came to pass against the **setting** of God's stated withdrawal of His blessing on the twelve tribes for their failure to obey Him on several counts, Judges 1:2, 19; 2:1-4:
  - 1. God had ordered the tribe of Judah to take its divinely allotted territory from the Canaanites, Jud. 1:2.
  - 2. Yet, Judah failed to drive out all the enemy for faithless fear of the Canaanites' iron chariots, Jud. 1:19.
  - 3. This unbelief that tolerated the Canaanites to remain allowed the people of God to adopt Canaanite false idolatries (Jud. 2:1-2), the very thing about which God had warned them in Deut. 20:17-18.
  - 4. Accordingly, God removed His full blessing, allowing the Canaanites to plague Israel, Judges 2:3-4.
- C. Because of Israel's **softening** on its resolve to **heed** God's Word, tragic civil war erupted early in the land:
  - 1. A personal apostasy erupted due to a softening of commitment on heeding the Lord's Word, 19:1.
    - a. A Levite who was to be a man of God's Word took a mistress from Bethlehem in Judah, Jud. 19:1.
    - b. He thus failed to heed fully the Scripture he as a Levite should have known, for the pattern in marriage that Genesis 2:20-24 presented was for one woman to be permanently joined to one man.
  - 2. This personal apostasy led to a marital apostasy, Judges 19:2: the Levite's mistress became unfaithful to him, and she left him, returning to her own home town of Bethlehem of Judah.
  - 3. This marital apostasy led to an horrendous tragedy in Israel's society, Judges 19:3-30:
    - a. The Levite sought a reconciliation with his mistress four months later by traveling to her father's home to acquire her again, Judges 19:3. He was received well by the woman's family, 19:3-9.
    - b. However, upon returning home, the Levite with his concubine and servant were not extended the usual customary hospitality expected in the Ancient Near East, but at the last minute stayed with an old man in Gibeah of the tribe of Benjamin, Judges 19:10-21.
    - c. In the process, evil men of Benjamin publicly sought to abuse by homosexual copulation the Levite only to be given the Levite's mistress to abuse by the Levite, Judges 19:22-25a.
    - d. The concubine was gang-raped all night until she died at the doorway of the home, 19:25b-28a.
    - e. Outraged, the Levite dismembered his concubine's body into twelve parts, and sent its pieces throughout Israel to arouse the wrath of the other eleven tribes to take revenge, Judges 19:28b-30.
  - 4. This social atrocity led to civil war in Israel, Judges 20:1-28:
    - a. The eleven other tribes rallied to punish Benjamin for allowing this atrocity to occur, Jud. 20:1-14.
    - b. When they asked God who should first attack Benjamin, God said it should be Judah, 20:15-18.
    - c. However, the first two times the tribes attacked, God did not give the victory to the eleven attacking tribes, but allowed Benjamin to prevail, Judges 20:19-26.
    - d. Apparently, God was allowing the civil war as punishment on the entire nation for its general waywardness from Him and His Word as per His words in Judges 2:3-4 with 1:2, 19.

***Lesson:*** *Because Israel failed FULLY to heed God's Word, but TOLERATED SOME of the Canaanites to remain in the land due to unbelief, she adopted their errant idols and their immoral tolerances. Thus, very soon after even the godly Joshua's era, Israel fell into GREAT depravity. Thus, God let Israel experience the tragedy of civil war before helping the nation out of its troubles!*

***Application:*** *We can NOT allow ourselves to FUDGE ever so SLIGHTLY on obeying God or we will very SOON open the FLOODGATES of MASSIVE sin with its GREAT and TRAGIC consequences!*