

Judges 17 - 21: A Time Without Judges

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In our last study, we studied Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson.
- B. In this lesson, we will study the final chapters of Judges. During this lesson, we will study no judges. Instead, we will take a look at a period in Israel's history where there was no king and every man did what was right in his own sight.
- D. Let us begin our study with the idolatry of Micah, the Ephraimite.

I. THE IDOLATRY OF MICAH, THE EPHRAIMITE. (17:1-13)

- A. Micah, the Ephraimite, had stolen 1100 shekels of silver from his mother. After he returned the silver to his mother, Micah's mother had a carved image and a molded image made from 200 shekels of silver. (17:1-4)
- B. Micah made an ephod and a household idol for his shrine. He appointed one of his sons to be a priest. (17:5-6)
- C. Micah met a Levite from Bethlehem and asked the Levite to serve as his high priest. (17:7-13)

II. THE AGGRESSION OF THE DANITES. (18:1-31)

- A. The tribe of Dan had not received their inheritance of land. As a result, the Danites sent five men of valor to search for a land that could be their own. (18:1-10)
 - 1. The five men of the tribe of Dan went to the house of Micah the Ephraimite. The priest told the men to go on their journey in peace. (vs 1-6)
 - 2. The men journeyed to Laish. The five men observed how isolated was the city of Laish. The five spies returned to their home and reported that Laish could be taken. (vs 7-11)
- B. Six hundred men of the Danites left Zorah and Eshtoal armed for war. The six hundred men traveled to Laish and took the city. (18:11-31)
 - 1. The men of Dan came to the house of Micah, the Ephraimite. (vs 11-13)
 - 2. The five men who had spied out the land, took Micah's carved images, the ephod, the household idols and the molded image. They also invited Micah's priest to be a priest to them and their people. The priest joined the men of Dan. (vs 14-26)
 - 3. The men of Dan continued their journey to Laish. The men of Dan struck the people of Laish with the sword and burned the city. The men of Dan called

the city Dan. (vs 27-29)

4. The people of Dan set up the carved images in the city of Dan. The carved images remained in Dan all the time the “house of God was in Shiloh.” (vs 30-31)
 - a. It is possible that the “captivity” referred to was the Assyrian captivity. However, a greater possibility is that the “captivity” referred to the capturing of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines. (See verses 31)
 - b. The carved images stayed set up all the time the house of God (ark of the covenant) was in Shiloh. The ark was carried away by the Philistines during the time period of the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. (I Samuel 4:3-4)

III. THE IMMORALITY OF THE BENJAMITES. (19:1-30)

- A. A certain Levite who lived in the remote mountains of Ephraim took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem. The concubine went back to her father’s house in Bethlehem. This certain Levite followed his concubine to her father’s house. (19:1-4)
- B. After staying five days, the Levite took his concubine and left. An old man gave the Levite and those with him lodging for the night in the city of Gibeah. (19:5-21)
- C. That night, terrible men of the city took the Levite’s concubine and abused her. She died the next morning. (19:22-28)
- D. The Levite cut his dead concubine into twelve pieces and sent the pieces throughout Israel. He did this to let all of Israel know of the terrible deeds of the Benjamites. (19:29-30)

IV. ISRAEL PUNISHES THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN. (20:1 - 21:25)

- A. All of Israel was called together “unto Jehovah at Mizpah.” The Levite told all the children of Israel the story of the death of his concubine. He sought the advice and counsel of the children of Israel. (20:1-7)
- B. The men of Israel gathered together against the city of Gibeah in Benjamin. (20:8-11)
- C. The men of Israel told the city of Gibeah to deliver the men who had killed the Levite’s concubine. The inhabitants of Gibeah refused and the whole of the tribe of Benjamin united together with the town of Gibeah. (20:12-17)
 1. The tribe of Benjamin has 26,000 men who drew the sword and 700 men of Gibeah.

2. The tribes of Israel has 400,000 men who drew the sword.
- D. After seeking the counsel of God, the men of Judah went up first against the men of Benjamin. Twenty two-thousand men of Israel were slain in battle. (20:18-22)
 - E. Again the men of Israel sought God's counsel. The men of Israel approached the men of Benjamin on the second day. Eighteen thousand men of Israel were slain in this battle. (20:23-25)
 - F. Once again the Israelites sought God's counsel. The Israelites wept, fasted and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. The Lord told Israel to go again and that he would deliver them. (20:26-28)
 - G. The men of Israel set up an ambush. They led the men of Benjamin away from the city of Gibeah. Ten thousand men of Israel attacked Gibeah. The men of Israel who were hiding, attacked the men of Benjamin. Twenty five thousand Benjamites were slain in battle. (Six hundred men of Benjamin had escaped to the rock of Rimmon.) (20:29-48)
 - H. Because of the loss of life, there were no wives for the remaining men of Benjamin. The men of Israel had vowed not to give their daughters to the six hundred men of Benjamin. Because of Israel's vow, the tribe of Benjamin would be lost. (21:1-7)
 - I. When all of Israel had been called to Mizpah (cf. 20:1), the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead had not answered the call. Twelve thousand men of Israel were sent to Jabesh Gilead to kill all the people except the young virgins. The four hundred young virgins were given to the six hundred men of Benjamin at the rock of Rimmon. (21:8-15)
 - J. For the remaining 200 men of Benjamin, the men of Israel devised a plan whereby the men of Benjamin would kidnap women from the daughters of Shiloh. By doing so, the men of Benjamin would have wives and the men of Shiloh would not have violated their vow. (21:16-25)

V. LESSONS LEARNED:

- A. When men do that which is right in their own sight, they sin.
 1. When Israel did that which was right in their own sight, . . .
 - a. They made idols. (17:1-6)
 - b. They worshiped God in a way they thought would please God. (17:13)
 - c. They stole from other people. (18:14-21)
 - d. They engaged in sexual immorality. (19:22-28)

2. Under the New Covenant, we still find people sinning when they do that which is right in their own sight.
 - a. There are people worshiping idols.
 - (1) Religiously speaking, some religions.
 - (2) More broadly, those who let “stuff” drive their lives, where their life is consumed with the drive to have more, never being content. (Colossians 3:5-7; I Timothy 6:6-10)
 - b. There are people who worship God in any way they see fit.
 - (1) Some teach for doctrine the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:8-9)
 - (2) Some people are led away by those who pervert the Gospel. (Galatians 1:6-9)
 - c. There are people who are living immorally. (Cf. Romans 1:19-32; Galatians 5:19-21)
 3. Are we doing that which is right or that which is right in our own sight?
- B. Be careful of those with whom you choose to unity.
1. The tribe of Benjamin supported wicked men. They paid the price. (20:1-48)
 2. With whom do we side ourselves? With Christ or with sinners?
 - a. Since we are children of God, Christians, then we are to be in fellowship with Christ and with other Christians. (I John 1:5-7)
 - b. Our relationship with others must not lead us into sin or cause us to condone sin. (II Peter 2:10-22)
 - c. Our relationship with others must not lead us into a religious union or fellowship with a false religion. (Cf. I Corinthians 10:15-22; II Corinthians 6:14-18)

CONCLUSION.

- A. In this lesson, we say the state of Israel when everyone did that which was right in their own sight.
- B. In our next lesson, we will look at the book of Ruth.
- C. As we close this lesson, let us remember the lessons learned from our study.
 1. We must always remember to do that which is right, not that which is right

in our own sight.

2. We must unite ourselves with the Lord first, and then with our brethren in Christ. We must never unite ourselves with those in sin or with those who are not following the doctrine taught by Jesus and His apostles.
- D. If you are ready to unite yourself with the Lord by becoming a child of God or you need to return to that fellowship with the Lord, come forward now as we stand and sing.

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