

Sunday Night Message

December 16, 2018

Judges 17 –

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 17

Introduction

The remaining chapters of the Book of Judges do not introduce us to any new judges. Nor do they necessarily advance any chronological narrative. But, they do reveal some things that happened in Israel during the period of the Judges that show us the spiritual condition of the people during much of this time in their history. These chapters are an appendix of sorts.

In chapter 17 and 18, we see a picture into a very apostate time in Israel's period of Judges. We see apostate religion, which brings a breakdown in the family life within Israel, which will then affect the morality of a nation. We see this same pattern in our nation today. The decay of our nation was caused by a collapse of the home, which was a result of the corruption of religion. "As goes the church, so goes the home. As goes the home, so goes the nation."

The key verses to this chapter and the next are v. 16 and 18:1:

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6)

"In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel." (Judges 18:1)

The story that is contained in chapters 17 and 18 is reminiscent of the wild west. It is survival of the fittest. Lawlessness prevails, both spiritually and militarily. Chapter seventeen reveals the spiritual condition of the period, while chapter 18 shows us how one tribe – the tribe of Dan – will move an army about one hundred miles to the north and attack a peaceful city in order to occupy it.

"The nation that once marched triumphantly through Canaan to the glory of God now disintegrates morally and politically and brings disgrace to His name. But what else can you expect when there is "no king in Israel" and the people are flouting the laws of God?"¹



¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). *Be available* (p. 127). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

There are two characters that are front and center to both of these chapters – Micah and a Levite from Bethlehem Judah who is un-named in chapter 17, but revealed to be named Jonathan in chapter 18.

I Micah Pilfers His Mother's Money (vs. 1 – 2)

Micah, who appears to be as spoiled rotten as Samson was, stole 1100 pieces of silver from his mother.

The amount of silver here was the same amount that we discussed in chapter 16 in relation to the Philistine princes and Delilah. It was about 27.5 pounds of silver, which is worth about \$6,000.00 in today's money.

His mother, not knowing who stole it pronounced a curse on whoever did. Micah gets nervous that the curse might come true, so he confesses. His mom should have taken him over her knee, but instead she thanks him and then does some spiritual back-pedaling and promises to dedicate the money to the Lord.

You will not that the money was used for idolatry, and it was not at all apparent to anybody involved that idolatry was wrong. Apparently, there was very little knowledge of the Word of God in the family of Micah, and perhaps throughout the entire nation.

2 Kings 22:8 – 23 – Note – America is rapidly becoming just as Bible ignorant as the people were in Josiah's day.

II Micah's Mother Pays For a Molten Image (vs. 3 – 4)

She sends 200 pieces of the silver to have an idol made, which ends up in the house of Micah.

III Micah Appoints What He Pleases (vs. 5 – 6)

See Exodus 28: 5 – 14 regarding the Ephod.

IV Micah Anoints Who He Pleases (vs. 7 – 13)

Jonathan was from Bethlehem Judah, which was not one of the Levitical cities, and he was travelling looking for a good place to stay. He was a vagrant of sorts. He was supposed to be serving God's people and living within one of the cities appointed for the Levites. Perhaps, God's people were no longer supporting the Levites.

We find out in Judges 18:30 who this Levite is. It is very confusing. He is said to be a Levite, but is also a son of Manasseh, and from the family of Judah. It could be that he had mixed parentage, or it could be that the Manasseh and Judah were names of people in Levi, but not a reference to the tribes themselves. Though he was a Levite, he may not have been from the family of Aaron, which were the only ones authorized to be priests. The other families of the Levites were servants in the Tabernacle and later, in the Temple.

10 shekels equals 4 ounces or 110 grams, which is about \$50 today. Not a very lucrative job prospect, but since he was homeless, it was better than nothing. Plus, it included "three hots and a cot." He was nothing more than a "hireling", however. He was a hired preacher, and he was willing to compromise everything he should have been taught in order to serve as a private priest for Micah.

Conclusion

Micah effectively made up his own religion, which had some resemblance of Judaism, but also included pagan rituals and idolatry as well.

See 2 Timothy 3:1 – 9

Does Christianity today truly follow the Bible or are we, like Micah, making it up as we go. Are we discarding practices from our faith that God did not discard? Are we adding things to our system of belief that are nowhere to be found in the Word of God?