

Last week we looked at Judges 16 as we looked at the end of Samson's life. We saw **WHEN BONDAGE TO SIN GIVES WAY TO VICTORY**

Today I want to look at Judges 17&18 as we look at two stories from everyday life in Israel during the time of the JUDGES.

Judges 17:1-18:31 v1 Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim v2 said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse--I have that silver with me; I took it." Then his mother said, "The LORD bless you, my son!" v3 When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you." v4 So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah's house. v5 Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and installed one of his sons as his priest. v6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit. v7 A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, v8 left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim. v9 Micah asked him, "Where are you from?" "I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay." v10 Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food." v11 So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man was to him like one of his sons. v12 Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house. v13 And Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest."

v18:1 In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. v2 So the Danites sent five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it. These men represented all their clans. They told them, "Go, explore the land." The men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. v3 When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?" v4 He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "He has hired me and I am his priest." v5 Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful." v6 The priest answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval." v7 So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, unsuspecting and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else. v8 When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers asked them, "How did you find things?" v9 They answered, "Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over. v10 When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever." v11 Then six hundred men from the clan of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. v12 On their way they set up camp near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is called Mahaneh Dan to this day. v13 From there they went on to

the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah's house. v14 Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their brothers, "Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, other household gods, a carved image and a cast idol? Now you know what to do." v15 So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him. v16 The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance to the gate. v17 The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance to the gate. v18 When these men went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" v19 They answered him, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?" v20 Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people. v21 Putting their little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left. v22 When they had gone some distance from Micah's house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites. v23 As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, "What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?" v24 He replied, "You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?' " v25 The Danites answered, "Don't argue with us, or some hot-tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives." v26 So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home. v27 Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. v28 There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. v29 They named it Dan after their forefather Dan, who was born to Israel--though the city used to be called Laish. v30 There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. v31 They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

Introduction

We do not need to look beyond the borders of our own country to realise that, to a large degree, society has rejected the ways of God, particularly that truth revealed in what we Christians know as the Bible. There are many signs that this has happened.

The rise in Private Morality – People talk about “MY TRUTH”.

The justification and promotion of Sinful Behaviour – A bi-monthly injection to prevent you from contracting AIDS, in place of a daily pill, rather than abstinence.

The massive increase crime. Every day this week there have been reports of mass killing related to drug war or taxi war. All motivated by GREED.

The flagrant disregard for the basic law. Just look at the way people drive.

SIGNS of a SOCIETY without GOD

The first SIGN of a SOCIETY without GOD is:

1. THE STANDARD FOR TRUTH IS MOVED FROM GOD TO MAN.

The message that flows through the book of JUDGES is this:

3:7 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.

3:12 Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD,

4:1 After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

6:1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD,

10:6 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

13:1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD

NOW WE GET TO THIS CHAPTER AND ONCE AGAIN:

Judges 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

As I mentioned above we see the rise in our day of Private Morality – People talk about “MY TRUTH”.

When you take GOD out of the picture, you must fill the void left with something else.

**WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT SATAN WANTED TO DO.
AND HIS SIN WAS PRIDE!!!!**

The second SIGN of a SOCIETY without GOD is:

2. THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY, THE FAMILY, IS CORRUPTED.

We read in the first two verses of *Judges 17 v1 Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim v2 said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse--I have that silver with me; I took it." Then his mother said, "The LORD bless you, my son!"*

In this story, the man admits to his mother that he stole her money. But notice, he only did that after she had “UTTERED A CURSE” against the person who stole the Silver.

You may say this is not a big issue, until you realise how much money he stole, which was 1100 shekels of Silver. That is equal to 110 Years of salary for we read in *v10 Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year,*

Last week we discovered two boys that were smoking dagga at school. When we called the parents in to have a meeting with them, I told them to look at home for things that are missing. For drug use is often tied to petty theft.

How many young boys are walking the streets of our towns because of the collapse of our family life?

The third SIGN of a SOCIETY without GOD is:

3. VOWS ARE NOT KEPT.

The mother makes a promise in Verse 3

v3 When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you."

But we read in Verse 4

v4 So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah's house.

How are vows broken in our day

Marriage vows – If people even bother to get married.

Business contracts not kept.

Political “Promises”.

Let’s not even mention Spiritual Commitment.

The fourth SIGN of a SOCIETY without GOD is:

4. RELIGIOUS SYNCETISM BECOMES THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

We read about the combination of Idol worship with Faith in God in:

v4 So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah's house. v5 Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols

The world is full of examples of SYNCETISM.

One of the greatest sins in the eyes of the world is to “HURT SOMEONE’S FEELINGS”. Many are offended when you preach from the Word about their sinful behaviour.

John 15:19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

1 John 4:5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

The fifth SIGN of a SOCIETY without GOD is:

5. COMPROMISED SPIRITUAL LEADERS.

We read about **UNTRAINED leaders** in:

*v5 Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and **installed one of his sons as his priest.***

We read about **GREEDY leaders** in:

*v6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit. v7 A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, v8 left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim. v9 Micah asked him, "Where are you from?" "I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay." v10 Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food." v11 So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man was to him like one of his sons. **v12 Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house.***

We read about **POWER-HUNGRY leaders** in:

*18:v18 When these men went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" v19 They answered him, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. **Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?**" v20 Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people.*

CONCLUSION

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN IS NO DIFFERENT

Luke 21:7-33 "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?" v8 He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. v9 When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." v10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. v11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. v12 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. v13 This will result in your being witnesses to them. v14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. v15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. v16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. v17 All men will hate you because of me. v18 But not a hair of your head will perish. v19 By standing firm you will gain life. v20 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. v21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. v22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. v23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this

people. *v24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

SO WHAT IS THE ANSWER

We read this in: *v31 They continued to use the idols Micah had made, **all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.***

GOD was in their midst.

**Jesus also said in *Luke 21:33*
Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never
pass away.**