

When Everyone Does What Is Right in His Own Eyes

Weird Things Happen

Judges 21.25

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • January 24, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2021

Scripture Reader and Reading: Paul Hannan – Deuteronomy 12.5–8

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – 872, Songs on being selfless

Prelude:

I. In Deuteronomy 12, Moses taught the people

- A. that when they entered the Land of Canaan
- B. they were not to practice idolatry.
 - 1. They were to destroy the idols.
 - 2. They were not to use the implements of idolatry in worshiping God.
 - 3. They were to worship God how and where He said.
 - 4. They were not to do what was right in their own eyes.

8 “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes...”

– Deuteronomy 12.8

II. In the last five chapters of the Book of Judges,

- A. incidents happened that violated every single one of these precepts.
- B. They did what was right in their own eyes, because or
 - 1. right along with that
 - 2. was the fact that they did not have a king.
 - a) They had God as king, but
 - b) they had no human king to guide them back to the word.

Persuasion:

I. Judges 17 • When Everyone Does What is Right in His Own Eyes: God’s Religion is Perverted

1 Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name was

Micah. 2 And he said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you, and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here is the silver with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my son!”

A. This all sounds good, so far, but then things change:

3 So when he had returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, “I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son, to make a carved image and a molded image; now therefore, I will return it to you.”

B. She had *wholly* dedicated the silver to the Lord, designating a use:

1. For her son to make an image.
2. Making an image violated Deuteronomy 12.

C. An idol for Micah,

4 Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah. 5 The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

1. A mother encouraged her son in his own religion,
 - a) which perverted the true religion!
 - b) The son did not abandon Yahweh God completely.
 - (1) Micah and his mother just wanted to do things their way.
 - (2) They liked the idea of worshiping God, and
 - (a) Micah liked some of the ways God commanded, but
 - (b) he thought they needed modification.

D. Judges 17.6 – Self-made-righteousness

6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in

his own eyes.

1. This is an insightful insertion.
 - a) Since there was no king in the days of the judges,
 - b) self-made-righteousness reigned.
2. This is why the Scriptures warn,

**12 There is a way that seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.
– Proverbs 14.12**

**2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
But the LORD weighs the hearts.
– Proverbs 21.2**

**23 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself;
It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.
– Jeremiah 10.23**

II. Judges 18 • When Everyone Does What is Right in His Own Eyes: False Religion Spreads

A. Judges 18 shows false religion spreading from

1. a mother
2. to her son
3. to a Levite
4. to the tribe of Dan.

B. Judges 18.1a – No leadership

1 In those days there was no king in Israel.

C. We have already been told this once (17.6),

1. we will be reminded again in 19.1 and
2. 21.25 will repeat it.

D. Why are we reminded of this situation four times?

1. What pattern shows up in the Book of Judges?
2. Without a king, Israel sinned. (Later, with a king, Israel sinned.)
 - a) There would be a judge to help them get back on the right track.
 - b) When the judge died, another one did not immediately replace him.

E. What was Israel's problem?

1. When they had good leaders, it showed them
 - a) the need for leaders and ultimately
 - b) their need for the leadership of God.
2. When they had bad leaders, it showed them
 - a) the failures of following their own hearts and
 - b) that the problem is the heart of men.

F. **Judges 18.1b-6 – God is with you**

1b And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day their inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. 2 So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. 3 While they were at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?" 4 He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest." 5 So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous." 6 And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The presence of the LORD be with you on your way."

1. Later, those men from Dan returned and they confiscated the idolatrous stuff from Micah's house.
2. Micah's priest confronted them:

19 And they said to him, “Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?” 20 So the priest’s heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

- a) The priest went to the highest bidder.
- b) He perverted God’s religion with Micah in Ephraim,
 - (1) why not with 600 men from Dan?
 - (2) There was more money and more prestige.

III. Judges 19 • When Everyone Does What is Right in His Own Eyes: Immorality Happens

A. I shudder every time I hear people say:

- 1. “What is right for you may not be what is right for me.”
- 2. “The majority rules.”
- 3. “Do your own thing.”
- 4. “I am just being me.”
- 5. “You be you.”

B. **Judges 19.1 – What happens when there is no king**

1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

1. When men do not recognize God as their King,

“In those lawless times when in theory God was king, but in practice men did what was right in their own eyes...” (Charles Pfeiffer in *Wycliffe*).

- 2. Having said those things, we are introduced to a Levite, and
 - a) he met an old man in the town of Gibeah.

- b) No else showed the Levite hospitality, but the old man did.
3. This old man knew something though,

20 And the old man said, "Peace be with you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

- a) The old man's urgency indicated
- b) that it would not be a good thing to spend the night in the square.

C. Judges 19.22–28 – His concubine is abused

1. Sodom revisited,

22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, {Literally sons of Belial, worthless men} surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!"

- a) They did not ask for the woman, but
- b) wanted to homosexual gang-rape the visitor.

2. The old man's Lot-like solution,

23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. 24 Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"

- a) The situation got worse,
- b) just as it did in Sodom.

3. The Benjamites did horrible things,

25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and

brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

- a) Remember they had no king, but
 - b) they did whatever was right in *their own* eyes.
4. The woman died,

26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light. 27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. 28 And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

- a) Everything about him seemed right.
 - (1) How do we explain the offering of his concubine?
 - (2) How do we explain his callousness?
- b) Why did they offer the women and not the young male servant?
 - (1) When people do what is right in their own eyes,
 - (2) their behavior becomes inexplicable.

IV. Judges 20 – When Everyone Does What is Right in His Own Eyes: Genocide Happens

A. Judges 20.1–2 – Israel gathered together

1 So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.

- B. Everyone saw it as his responsibility to do something about the evil.
 - 1. The congregation was united.
 - 2. They appeared before the Lord.

C. Later, the chapter shows the slaughter of the tribe of Benjamin:

44 And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these were men of valor. 45 Then they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them. 46 So all who fell of Benjamin that day were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these were men of valor. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months.

V. Judges 21 • When Everyone Does What is Right in His Own Eyes: Weird Things Happen

A. Judges 21.1 shows a decision Israel had made:

1 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife."

B. Judges 21.5 • Who did not fight?

5a The children of Israel said, "Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?"

8 And they said, "What one is there from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly.

1. Israel attacked Jabesh Gilead,

10 So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. 11 And this is the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately."

a) However, Israel would leave certain women alive.

b) Only the women who had known a man intimately would die.

C. Judges 21.12–15 • They found 400 wives for Benjamin

12 So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

- a) They found 400 virgins, but
- b) Benjamin had 600 men.

D. Judges 21.19–22 – They steal some women

19 Then they said, “In fact, there is a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.” 20 Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, “Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin.”

- 1. Was this idea much different than what the men of Gibeah did?
- 2. True, the men of Gibeah fornicated and murdered.
 - a) In this case they would marry, but
 - b) what about taking women against their will?

Exhortation:

I. Judges 21.25 – Summary of the time of the Judges

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- A. What is the assumption about a king?
 - 1. He would lead the people to do what is right in the Lord’s eyes.
 - 2. Do you see what happens when men do not lead or
 - a) when people do not recognize God’s leadership?
- B. For the past couple of decades our nation

1. has been deciding that it does not want God in national life.

2. Let us not be surprised by

a) the increase in evil and

b) inexplicable things that happen.

C. For me, these last five chapters explain the sad behavior we witness today.

II. When people use their own eyes to decide what is right: weird things happen.

III. Remember

**23 O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself;
It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.
– Jeremiah 10.23**

**2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
But the Lord weighs the hearts.
– Proverbs 21.2**

IV. Do you understand now why it is necessary to confess that Jesus is Lord?