

JUDGES

Lesson 8 w/Answers

Judges Chapters 17-18

As we complete our study of the book of Judges, we will be examining the final chapters over the course of two lessons. This lesson will cover Judges Chapters 17-18, and the next lesson will cover Judges Chapters 19-21. These closing chapters of the book of Judges (Chapters 17-21) reflect a kind of epilogue, illustrating the behavior and heart of Israel during the period of the Judges. The events illustrated in these final five chapters cover earlier history in the Judges period—with each having a specific purpose underscoring the fallen condition of the Israelites during the time of the Judges.

Chapters 17-18 are included to reflect the religious apostasy in the land, with Chapters 19-21 reflecting the moral degradation that was overtaking Israel in concert with the apostasy it had adopted (idol worship in particular).

For this lesson, let's read Judges Chapters 17 and 18 and consider the following:

Judges Chapter 17

1. How are the people of Israel living during this time? (Judges 17:1-6)
 - a. ANSWER: "Everyone did as they saw fit."
2. Describe some of the many evil things illustrated in this chapter (Judges 17:1-13)
 - a. ANSWER 1: In verses 1-4, the woman believes that consecrating her silver to God entails building an idol out of it.
 - b. ANSWER 2: In verses 5-6, Micah has a shrine and an ephod—which he should not possess—along with some "household gods," and installs one of his sons as "priest." All of these actions were in violation of God's Law.
 - c. ANSWER 3: In verses 7-12, a Levite who knew better, and should have corrected Micah, actually takes Micah up on his offer to be priest over this awful shrine and household gods in exchange for money and clothing.
3. Why was Micah happy once the Levite accepted the position in his home? (Judges 17:13)
 - a. ANSWER: Because Micah was superstitious and believed that somehow having a Levite living in the house was like a "good luck charm," and that the Levite's presence in his house would mean that the Lord "will be good to me."

Judges Chapter 18

1. What happens to the shrine, the ephod, and the silver clad idol? (Judges 18:1-19)
 - a. ANSWER: The Danites come and steal them from Micah.
2. Who actually helps the Danites steal from Micah, and what is he offered for doing it? (Judges 18:20)
 - a. ANSWER: The Levite steals all of it for them. They appealed to his pride, and offered him the opportunity to be a hero for an entire clan if he would steal for them. So we have a Levite essentially taking a bribe to steal for the Danites.
3. Who were the Sidonians? (Judges 18:7, Joshua 13:6, and 1 Kings 5:6)
 - a. ANSWER 1: The Sidonians were one of several tribes of people to be driven from the Promised Land which was "to be divided for an inheritance." However, at this point, the Danites did not have a land for their inheritance because the Sidonians and others living in Laish had not been driven from the land.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The Sidonians were essentially skilled timber men—lumber jacks—living at peace and feeling secure in Laish. However, when trouble came, they lived "a long way from Sidon," and there was no one to rescue them. They were all destroyed, and the city was burned to the ground. A new city—the city of Dan—was built on its ruins. Today, the ruins of the city of Dan, and evidence of its idol worship, are still visible.
4. Read the remaining verses of Chapter 18, following the theft of Micah's idols. (Judges 18:27-31) List below some of the things the Danites did that displeased the Lord:
 - a. ANSWER 1: They set up and worshipped the idol.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The grandson of Moses, Jonathan the Levite, and his sons became priests for the tribe of Dan until the Northern Kingdom is captured by the Assyrians in 722 BC.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Even though the Tabernacle was in Shiloh, the Danites, and Jonathan and his sons, i.e., the priests, "continued to use the idol Micah had made" rather than the worship the true God in Shiloh.

This is an important lesson for us, because we can see how easy it is for apostasy to poison our faith and our worship. As we think on this lesson, what are some of the signs that apostasy is beginning to slowly compromise our faith and our worship today?

If we look at the lives of Micah and the Levite, we can see that what was being compromised was not just their method of worship and the idols they used, but also their lifestyles; and how that lifestyle—idols, household gods, their love of money (silver) and success, a live-in priest (good luck charm), working for food and clothing, and so on—permeated their lives and those of everyone around them. It was so prevalent and so accepted as "righteous" behavior that they could not see it as sin. Aren't we living in that kind of world today?

Let's pray that God will keep us from the things that compromise our faith and worship, and that He will grant us the wisdom to see it when it does.

May he bless us this week with wisdom.

In Christ,

Wes