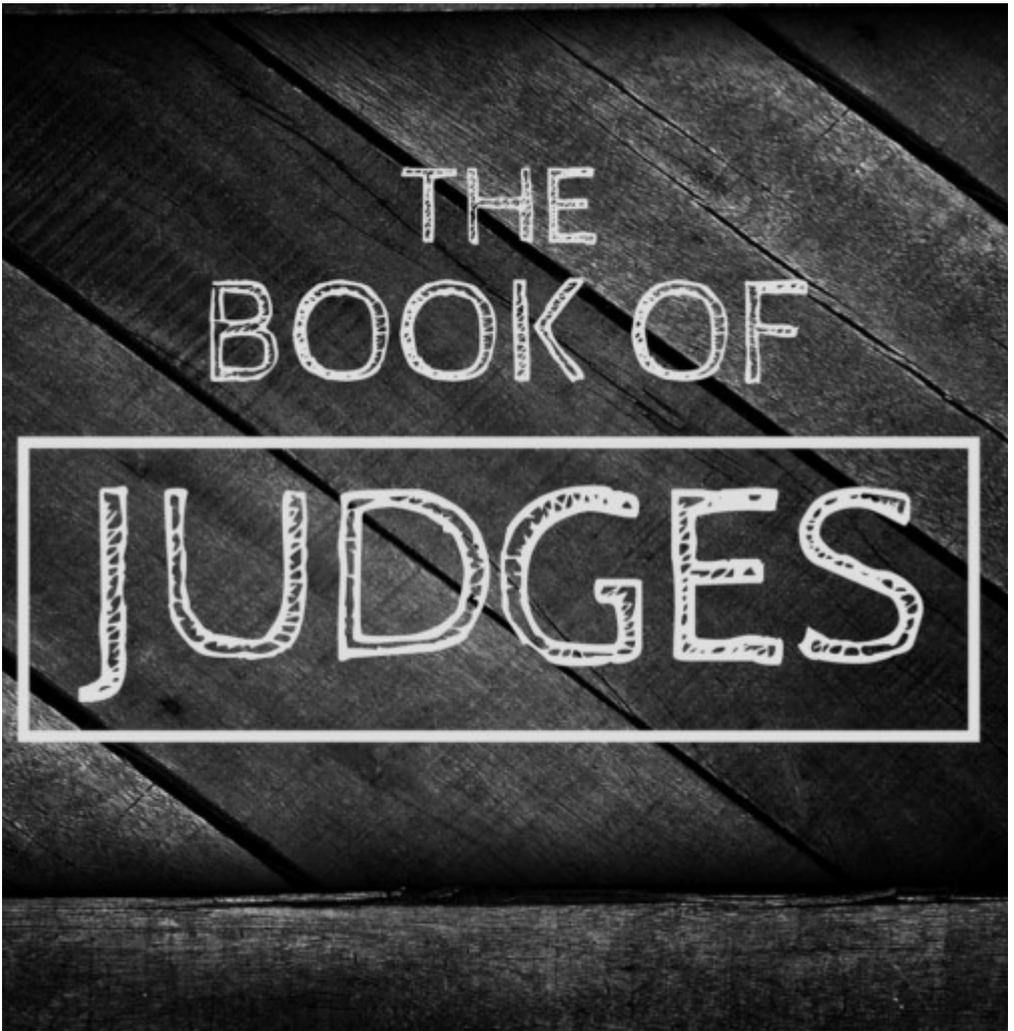


Let's Worship God

30th May - 4th June 2022
Judges



JUDGES

Monday - Judges 19:1 - No King in Israel

Judges 2:19 told us that, as we read the book, we should expect to find that each generation that forgets and forsakes the LORD will be more corrupt than the last. That has proven true, and now we come to the history of an event that demonstrates how depraved the Israelites were toward the end of the era of the judges. Over the next few weeks, we will be reading a very shocking tale involving the weak state of religion in Israel, a low view of marriage, lack of hospitality, murder, vengeance, and warfare.

The book reminds us at the beginning and end of this story that "In those days, there was no king in Israel," and that (as Judges 21:25 says), "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." When we studied Judges 17:6 and 18:1, we noted that the statement that there was "no king in Israel," pointed to the fact that the Israelites were refusing to be ruled by God. The consequence of this was that everyone did what was right in his own eyes, exercising authority in his own life that rightly belongs to the LORD alone.

Romans 1:18-32 points out that, in our fallen state, this is the ordinary condition of all mankind. We reject the authority of our Creator, suppressing all knowledge of His Truth in our unrighteous desire to rule our own lives. The result is a society that spirals downward further and further into depravity until, not only is wickedness tolerated, it is approved and praised. Most, if not all, of us live in cultures that could be described this way. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes, knowledge of God is suppressed and wickedness is praised. May we lovingly point the people around us to the Creator, to Whom they are accountable, reminding them that He is King and that, therefore, we must not do what is right in our own eyes, but what He has declared to be right.

Questions

1. Why would Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25 say there was no king in Israel?
2. Does this describe the culture in which you live?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God's authority may be honored in our lives and other's lives.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah." Judges 19:1

Praise: Psalm 109 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Tuesday - Judges 19:1-9 - The Moral Decline of Israel

Last week we read the story of the Levite Jonathan, who moved from Bethlehem to the hill country of Ephraim, where, against God's law, Micah made him a priest. Worse still, while claiming to speak for the LORD, Jonathan served idols, first for Micah and then for the Danites who conquered Laish.

Today we consider the account of another Levite. The state of religious decline in Israel is evident not only in that Jonathan, a non-priest, was made a priest and that he served idols, but also in that a Levite, who should have been supported by the tithes of the people apparently needed to leave his home in order to make a living. Now we find another Levite who has left his home and is sojourning in Ephraim.

We also see, once again, the weak state of marriage in Israel. Rather than setting the example of obeying God's creation principles for marriage, this Levite, who should be well-educated in the Scriptures, has taken a concubine, a secondary wife who is more a slave than a bride. This concubine is unfaithful to her husband. That God's law for ancient Israel required the death penalty for adultery (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22) shows how seriously He takes the marriage covenant. That obedience to this statute seems not to have occurred to anyone in this account shows how little the Israelites regarded God's Law in this era.

As in the time of the judges, we can see rejection of God's Kingship evident in the culture around us. The Church is not supported, marriage as the LORD created it is not honored, and His Word is disregarded. However, as He did not leave Israel without a king, He will not leave us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is the rightful King of the nations (Psalm 2) has been given as the Head of all things to the Church (Ephesians 1:22). One day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11).

Questions

1. What are some evidences of the moral and religious decline in Israel?
2. Who is the rightful King of the nations?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Kingship of Jesus Christ be acknowledged by all.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah." Judges 19:1

Praise: Psalm 110 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Wednesday - Judges 19:10-15 - No Hospitality

In yesterday's reading, we saw that the Levite's concubine had left him and fled to her father's house in Bethlehem. The Levite followed her there, where he reclaimed her, with her father's approval. Each time the Levite attempted to leave, however, his father-in-law prevailed upon him to stay.

After five days, the Levite insists he must now take his concubine with him back to the hill country of Ephraim. Having gotten a late start, it is already late in the day when they pass Jebus (the future city of Jerusalem) only a few miles north of Bethlehem. At this point in history, Jerusalem has not yet been conquered by the Israelites, but is in the hands of the Jebusites, so, when his servant suggests they stay the night there, the Levite refuses to spend the night in this foreign city. Instead, he decides to continue on several more miles to the town of Gibeah which belongs to the tribe of Benjamin. He is counting on the hospitality of his Israelite brethren. Ironically, while he would not stay with foreigners, it is his fellow Israelites who will treat him abominably. The abominable treatment begins with a lack of hospitality. The Levite sits in the open square of the town and no one offers him a place to stay or food to eat.

Throughout Scripture, we find hospitality commended by God. Genesis 18 and 19 give examples of hospitality in the behavior of righteous Abraham and Lot. Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, and I Peter 4:9 exhort us to show hospitality, both to our fellow believers and to strangers. Leviticus 18:19 commanded the Israelites to "love your neighbor as yourself." That the people of Gibeah are not eager to show this man hospitality demonstrates the great decline in love of neighbor consequent in the Israelites' general disregard for God's Word. May we practice hospitality out of obedience to God's Word and love of neighbor.

Questions

1. Were the people of Gibeah hospitable?
2. What does this tell us about their regard for God's Word?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we might grow in our love of neighbor.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah." Judges 19:1

Praise: Psalm 111 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Thursday - Judges 19:16-21 - One Hospitable Man

The Levite, his concubine and his servant sit in the town square of Gibeah at the end of the day. Though they are clearly travelers in need of a place to stay, no one offers them hospitality. Finally, a man comes in from the fields and notices the travelers. Two things about this man are noteworthy. First, he is described as an "old" man. Perhaps he can remember the LORD's gracious deliverance of His people under one of the judges. Second, he is not from Gibeah, originally, but is an Ephraimite sojourning there. The culture of the town, and perhaps of the entire tribe of Benjamin, at this time has downplayed the importance of hospitality. While the Benjaminites of Gibeah are inhospitable, an Ephraimite offers the Levite and his party a place to stay for the night. When the Levite assures him they have enough supplies to feed themselves and take care of their donkeys, the Ephraimite insists that he will meet the travelers' needs. Much as righteous Lot offered hospitality to the angels in Genesis 19, this Ephraimite is hospitable toward the Levite, his concubine, and his servant.

Hebrews 13:2 tells us that people who have practiced hospitality have "entertained angels unawares." Abraham in Genesis 18 and Lot in Genesis 19 are examples of this. The commendation of hospitality in Hebrews 13:2 is the first application of the commandment in Hebrews 13:1 "Let brotherly love continue." If we seek to obey this commandment, if we want to see brotherly love prevail, we, like this Ephraimite, need to show hospitality.

Questions

1. Why is it noteworthy that this hospitable man was old?
2. Why is it noteworthy that he is an Ephraimite?
3. Why ought we to follow his example of hospitality?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to help us to be hospitable.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah." Judges 19:1

Praise: Psalm 112 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Friday - Judges 19:22-28 - An Evil Deed

As the Levite, his concubine, and his servant rest in the house of the Ephraimite, certain "worthless fellows" (literally, "sons of Belial" - men who have rejected all righteousness and have embraced wickedness whole-heartedly) surround the house, beat on the door, and demand to "know" the Levite. Leviticus 18:22 calls what these men intend to do an "abomination." It is something the LORD reviles and holds in special contempt.

There are many parallels in this story to the history recorded in Genesis 19. A man not originally from the city (Lot; the Ephraimite) offers hospitality, insisting that the strangers do not stay in the town square. The men of the city surround his house and demand to commit an abomination. The man, seeking to protect his guests, offers his own daughter/daughters. Unlike Lot in the account in Genesis 19, the Ephraimite offers his guest's concubine, as well. Also unlike the events of Genesis 19, the Levite, with apparent cowardice, sends his concubine out to be abused by the men of the town. In the morning she returns to the house and falls at the door, dying as a result of the abuse she has received.

When we read Genesis 19, we might be unsurprised that a culture that has been steeped in idolatry for generations might stoop to such wickedness. By contrast, these are Israelites! The people who have been called to holiness by the LORD (Leviticus 11:44), who are supposed to be a kingdom of priests unto Him (Exodus 19:6), and who are commanded to have a special love for sojourners (Deuteronomy 10:19), are engaging in some of the greatest abject wickedness possible. May Christians never forget the call of God to be holy as He is holy.

Questions

1. How is this account similar to Genesis 18?
2. How is it different?
3. Why is this event even more shocking than what happened at Sodom?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we may never forget to strive for holiness in our lives.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah." Judges 19:1

Praise: Psalm 113 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Saturday - Judges 19:27-30 - A Shocking Message

In the morning, the Levite comes to the door of the Ephraimite's house where he finds his concubine lying at the threshold. When he speaks to her, there is no reply, for she has died from the abuse she received at the hands of the men of Gibeah. Seeing that she is dead, the Levite puts her body on his donkey and takes her to his home. There he does a bizarre and grisly thing. He cuts her body into twelve pieces and sends them throughout Israel - one part of her body for each tribe of Israel. No doubt, as the messengers carry the body parts, they tell the Levite's account of what has happened at Gibeah. The Israelites are shocked. The Levite has gotten their attention. They exclaim that nothing like this has been heard of in the entire history of Israel's nationhood, "from the day the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day." Their response is to confer over what should be done about this abominable deed. They "consider it, take counsel and speak."

In our own time, similar outrageous and abominable acts are committed seemingly on a daily basis. Abuse and murder of Christians, terrorist attacks, beheadings, murder of unborn children, and other acts of violence are regular news items. We must consider these things, take counsel, and speak, not only decrying wickedness, but calling upon the civil magistrates to whom the LORD has entrusted the power of the sword (Romans 13:3-4) to use that power righteously, defending the weak and oppressed and punishing evil.

Questions

1. What shocking thing does the Levite do to get the attention of the people of Israel?
2. What is their response?
3. How should we respond to news of similar events?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters

Memory Verse

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah." Judges 19:1

Praise: Psalm 114 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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