

Week 27

Key Verse: Judges 21:25 NIV In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Introduction to Judges 14-21

The last half of this book is consistent with the first half—the sin cycle is still going strong and God’s people are unfaithful to Him. However, this portion of the book zeros in on the lifestyles of specific people, including the judge, Samson; a hillbilly named Micah, and a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah. It is here we also find Israel’s first civil war between the tribe of Benjamin and all the other people of Israel. As we look into these Scriptures, we discover that continuous living in the sin cycle eventually leads to using religion as a tool for personal gain and fighting among ourselves. We could probably discover those same two truths in the headlines of our national newspapers and even within the walls of our churches.

Day One: Judges 13:1-16:31, Wasted Potential

- 1. To whom does the Angel of the Lord appear in chapter 13 and what does He tell her about her life? What sacrifice is required of her?

- 2. What sacrifice is required of women today in order to bring up children who will serve the Lord?

- 3. God gave Manoah’s wife instructions for her pregnancy that were above and beyond what was expected of most women. What specific instructions has God given you for your life that may not be expected of others?

- 5. Why was Samson’s wife disloyal to him? What could he have done differently to protect his marriage? What could she have done differently?

- 6. Is there something you should be doing differently to make sure your marriage (or future marriage) has enduring loyalty?

- 7. What obvious character flaws do you see in Samson and the women he desires?

- 8. Does it surprise you that Samson is listed among the faithful in Hebrews 11:32? Why would God continue to use a man with so many flaws and consider him faithful?

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In Samson's defense, he did not have the great benefit of the indwelling Holy Spirit as believers do today. Four of the seven times the Spirit of the Lord is mentioned in Judges is in reference to Samson (13:25; 14:6 & 19; 15:14), and results in phenomenal physical strength. Since the arrival of the Holy Spirit, after the ascension of Jesus Christ, each believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. Scripture reminds us of the responsibility and power we have to live Christ-focused lives since we now have the Holy Spirit living in us:

- "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words." (1 Corinthians 2:12-14)
- "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)
- "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)
- "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7)
- "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-7)

Prayer: 2 Timothy 2:21

Day Two: Judges 17:1-18:31, Genuine Fake

Yesterday we learned that God uses men of, shall we say, questionable character. Today we will see how men-of-the-cloth are not necessarily God's man. Jesus encountered this problem with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and quite possibly you, too, have encountered this problem with "Christian" leaders.

Genuine fake "Christian" leaders today, like Jonathan in today's Scripture, are politically correct and tolerant of sin, but not following the Lord Jesus Christ. Some characteristics of fake Christianity we see today that Jonathan demonstrated during his time are:

- Decisions based on monetary gains and maintaining a comfortable lifestyle (17:10; 18:4)
 - Presumed to speak for God but spoke contrary to God's Word (18:5-6)
 - Used the position as minister to build his own ministry (18:19-20)
 - Created a seeker-friendly, syncretistic (combining of differing and often contradictory belief systems) religion (18:30-31)
 - Taught generation after generation that they could depart from the Lord and remain "religious" (18:30-31).
9. Judges 17:6 tells us, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes." Is Israel supposed to have a king? (See Deuteronomy 17:8-20.) What were the instructions for a godly king?

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10. Why is it a problem when every man does what is right in his own eyes? (See Psalm 81:11-13; Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 1:25-32.)

11. Why do the Danites want Micah’s priest? (Judges 18:14-19)

12. Why does the priest go with the Danites?

13. Just like the people of Judges, we are influenced by the people around us, especially those we are with when we worship God. How can we know if we are among people, or in a church, which follow the God of the Bible? Consider Hebrews 10:23-25 and 1 John 4:1-6. What other Scriptures give insight into discerning true followers of Christ?

Charles Stanley outlines the following eight doctrines necessary in a fellowship that is teaching the truth:

1. The Bible is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
2. Deity of Christ – not only the Son of God, but Jesus is God
3. Virgin birth of Jesus Christ
4. Bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ
5. Second coming of Jesus Christ
6. Judgment – a time for each person to stand before God Almighty and give an account of his life
7. Heaven and Hell – different eternal destinations for people
8. Salvation through Jesus Christ’s death on the cross for our sins.

For further study on this subject, see intouch.org and search “How to find a church home.”

Prayer: Isaiah 55:6-13 can be voiced as a prayer to God for your country, your county, your home, and yourself.

Day Three: Judges 19, Shock and Awe

No doubt, this is a tragic story. It is also slightly familiar—remember the angels’ visit to Sodom and Gomorrah. Left to their own thinking, there is no limit to the depravity of mankind. News of sexual misconduct is common in today’s society, but this story reveals it could get much worse if men are left to do as they see fit.

14. What is the moral background of the Levite and concubine?

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15. As nightfall nears, why does the Levite pass the Jebusite city and go further to the city of Gibeah?

16. How are the people of Gibeah described? How does this story compare to Sodom and Gomorrah?

17. How does the Levite respond to the concubine's death?

18. How does this story compare to Jesus' description of end times society in Matthew 24:1-14 and Mark 13:5-20?

Prayer: Praise God that no matter the circumstances in this world, His righteousness endures forever. (Psalm 111)

Day Four: Judges 20-21, Un-Civil War

The shocking report of the treatment of the Levite's concubine causes reaction by all of Israel—and possibly over-reaction that created a new problem. In the conclusion of this story, we see the vengeance taken against the Benjamites on behalf of the immoral, unfaithful concubine results in 400 virgins being given to the tribe which allowed the gang rape and murder of the concubine. Like our world today, we see that sin has far-reaching consequences affecting the sinner and the ones they love.

19. What does the Levite's response to his concubine's death eventually do to, or rather for, Israel? (20:26-28)

20. The people of Benjamin won the first two battles even though the Lord told the children of Israel to "go up against them." See 20:18-28. Why do you think God allowed this to happen?

21. Did the men of Israel inquire of God for their plan to preserve the Benjamites? What actions were taken that indicate this plan was not from God?

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22. What challenges are you facing today that are tempting you to create your own plans instead of seeking God's wisdom?

Prayer: Colossians 1:9-12 is a good prayer outline for the challenges in your life and the lives of others on your prayer list.

Day Five: Judges 2:14, 3:8, 4:2, 10:7; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-22; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 5:9, Sold and Bought

We should not leave the book of Judges without a look at the Righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8), the Deliverer (Romans 11:26), and the Redeemer (Isaiah 54:5).

24. In Judges 2:14, 3:8, 4:2, and 10:7, what did the Lord do to His disobedient nation? Who did He sell them to?

25. Ultimately, God bought back His people (1 Corinthians 6:19-22; 2 Peter 2:1). What did God do to buy back His people? See Acts 20:28 and Revelation 5:9.

26. Which condition best describes you, sold or bought (dead or alive)? See Romans 6:23; John 3:16; and Romans 10:9.

27. How can we know we will never be sold again? See John 10:27-29; Romans 8:38-39; and 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Prayer: Use Psalm 19 and Revelation 5:12-13 for a time of commitment and praise.