

IDOLATRY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

--JUDGES 17:1-13--

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 17 begins a new part of the book of Judges. So far, we have been looking at the judges the LORD raised up to deliver Israel. This chapter is a focus shift to the internal state of the nation of Israel and looks at the religious and moral decay that is weakening the nation within. The picture painted for us by the author is a picture of chaos, religious chaos in chapters 17 and 18, and moral chaos in chapters 19-21. These chapters show us a society that has lost its way and is on the verge of complete collapse. We begin with a man and his mother who seem to have no idea of what being an Israelite, one of God's chosen people is supposed to look like.

- I. RELIGION OF YOUR OWN MAKING (Judges 17:1-5)
 - a. This chapter opens up in the _____ country of Ephraim.
 - b. The events that are unfolded for us revolve around 1100 pieces of _____ that was stolen from Micah's mother.
 - c. This history of Micah and his mother could be looked upon as a _____ news event.
 - d. But as we look closer to what is happening here, we find things are not _____.
- II. WHY? (Judges 17:6)
 - a. Verse six gives us the answer as to why Micah and his mother saw nothing _____ in what they were doing, and it is because of unrestrained individualism.
 - b. We see Micah and his mother giving _____ service to the LORD but that is all it is. (Judges 10:6)
 - c. Fast forward to our world today, is it any different? Do we not see people _____ what is right in their own eyes? (Colossians 3:5)
- III. WILL A LEVITE HELP? (Judges 17:7-13)
 - a. Verse 7 opens with a young man from _____ in Judah, but the young man we are introduced to is not a son of Judah.

- b. First, the Levite's situation and behavior are both _____.
- c. Micah's _____ in this event are just as abnormal as they were in the first event.
- d. This chapter is full of religious words, objects, activities, and persons, but nothing in the actions has been done out of _____ for God's Law, or a desire to _____ or glorify God as an end in itself.

CONCLUSION:

We begin to see from this chapter that idolatry has become a way of life in Israel. Idolatry has become the way of the world. We live in a society in which people pursue their own interests. The God who created and sustains the world is either outright rejected or paid only lip service. People are only concerned about other things and how they relate to their lives. These other things may become idols because we allow them to take the place of God in our lives.

The history of Micah and his idols is not about pagans, it is about Israelites. It is about idolatry in the life of the people of God, those for whom it was least excusable. Romans 1 states that man is without excuse because God has made Himself known in His creation. But for Israel God had been revealed in their history and in the giving of the Law as well. It said that this happened because they had no king, but that was not true, their King was there but they ignored His rule and authority in their lives and did not adhere to the standard He had given them. Because of this He punished and delivered them over and over out of His love for them.

The same thing is taking place in our world today, people have become self-deceived that doing what is right in their own eyes has become a way of life, ignoring the standard of God's Word and the authority and rule of God in their lives. God's Word has not changed, and man is still without excuse, creation still displays God, and His wrath is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Do not get caught up in the things of this world like Micah, instead be a herald of truth in a world where men are suppressing truth.