



A Spiritual Encouragement Message January 12, 2021

Let's Be Right in God's Sight

By Oscar Velazquez

The book that covers the period of the judges of Israel is a book that has been normally avoided for Bible Bowls, it's a book that is not usually chosen to be taught during VBS lessons, and it's also a book that is left aside by the majority of teachers during Sunday morning Bible class. In other words, it's a book that most believers don't read until they reach adulthood.

The main reason is that almost every chapter of the book describes murders, rapes, and massacres in detail. It seems like a rated-R Hollywood series because the Israelites were living as pagans at the time. The book of Judges reveals how quickly the children of Israel left the observation of the Torah, abandoned God's worship, and forgot about their Creator once they were in the promised land. The book also covers the most terrible and shameful stories of the Bible. One generation right after Joshua passed, the ungrateful Israelites became unfaithful to the Lord (Judges 2:10). Their story is also our story because we are God's people today (Rom. 15:4, 1 Cor. 10:6,11).

The Israelites fell in a shameless cycle were they sinned, then they suffered the consequences under the oppression of the nations that were left there to test them (Judges 2:21-3:6), then they would cry out to God for help, and finally, God would raise up a Judge to deliver them and govern them, but quickly they would fall in sins again repeating the shameless cycle over and over for about 450 years (Acts 13:20).

The book emphasizes seven times (2:11, 3:7,12, 4:1, 6:1, 10:6, 13:1) "the children of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord." God in His mercy raised up at least twelve different Judges to deliver them on separate occasions and places. These judges committed heroic actions to save Israel empowered by the Spirit of the Lord, but when left alone in their personal lives they were not precisely the best examples to follow.

At the end of the book, the author purposely takes us back to the beginning of it (Judges 18:30 and 20:28), right to (2:10) just one generation after Joshua. The purpose of that was to show us, readers, that during the entire period of four centuries, Israel lived in that disapproving manner. In fact, in the last five chapters, the Prophet Samuel (according to the Talmud), wrote the two worst and most shameful stories. Both stories involve each one a different Levite living in open sin and both Levites

were sojourning from the territory of Judah. With that, the author indicates that the tribe of Judah abandoned the worship of Jehovah and failed to provide for the Levites, much less for the vulnerable widows, the orphans, and the strangers (Deuteronomy 14:27-29).

One story (chapters 17-18) shows the idolatry of the whole nation of Israel along with the corruption of the priesthood.

The other story (Judges chapters 19-21) shows the moral depravity in which the Levites were degrading themselves along with the entire nation. In that story the coward Levite sacrificed his concubine twice, first to save himself and second to have vengeance, so then he dismembered her and sent her twelve body parts to the twelve tribes making the whole land unclean and obligating them all to give her a proper burial and to seek justice (Deuteronomy 21:1-9, 23, Numbers 5:1-3 and 19:11,20). In that terrible story, Christology stands out on how another indefensive victim from Bethlehem was brutally sacrificed and we all partake of His body and must seek His justice. Nowadays in America and in most of the world, annually hundreds of thousands of unborn living fetuses are being cut off from the wombs of their willing mothers and sent everywhere in pieces for scientific purposes. From 2008 to 2017, more than 800,000 to 600,000 annual induced abortions happened in America alone. (According to the CDC).

Both stories are mainly highlighting the tribes of Levi, Judah, Ephraim, and Benjamin, the four closest tribes to God's favor and blessings, but yet the worse ones standing out in sins and wickedness at that time. The writer describes their evil conduct four times (Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25) "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Indicating their need for a central authority, but also their failure to obey and follow God (1 Samuel 8:7). Jacob in his blessing had promised them a king from Judah (Genesis 49:8-10), meanwhile, God would raise them a king after God's own heart that would do according to His will (Acts 13:22), until the King of kings would come.

I can't get into details in a short article, but the key to understanding most everything happening in the book is that each character in the stories "did that which was good in their own eyes." They forgot about God and the Torah and lived by their own ideas and opinions (Isaiah 55:8-9, Proverbs 3:5).

The Israelites in a civil war, led by their thoughts almost extinguished their own brothers from Benjamin killing not just the warriors but all of their women, all of their children, all of their elderly, even all of their animals and burned their cities (chapters 19-21). Then they experienced a PTSD moment (Judges 21:1-7). After that, in an overreaction to their overreaction, they accorded with the remaining only 600 Benjaminites depraved men to take and abuse 400 young virgins from Israel that they have left orphans after massacring all their entire families in another war. Then they sent the remaining Benjaminites depraved men again to kidnap and abuse 200 more young virgins from Shiloh Israel, taking them by force with no other choice. So, the tribe of Benjamin would not cease to exist. Those were the kinds of "solutions" they commonly lived by. The tribe of Benjamin eventually recovered, but was from then on the smallest of the tribes of Israel and not like before when they were bigger than six other tribes in numbers (1 Samuel 9:21, Numbers 26).

They were not a nation without law, they were a nation without interest in God's law.

How many wrong things does our nation practice doing what is right in their own eyes?

How many wrong things do Christians practice doing what is good in their own eyes?

How many bad things do you personally practice doing what is right in your own eyes?

You see, doing what is good in our own eyes is doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord (Judges 2:11, 3:7,12, 4:1, 6:1, 10:6, 13:1 and 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25).

We should not live by bread alone following our own ideas and opinions, our King of kings trusted us with His inspired written will so we can live our lives by sharing and enjoying His Kingdom with all humankind.