

Lesson 12: Micah and the Levites; Civil War Judges 17-21

4th and 5th Grade Class

Jordan Park church of Christ

There is a man from Ephraim named Micah. He stole money from his mother but he returned it. It was 1100 shekels. His mother asked him to take some of the money and have idols made. Micah (not God) made one of his sons a priest.

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (17:6) Israel should have been recognizing God as their “king” but over and over they reject God and are surprised when things don’t go well.

Micah hires a Levite to stay and work as a priest for him which was not approved by God. Micah thinks that God will be happy with him.

The tribe of Dan sends spies to look for land to take among the people of Israel. They chose five men and came to stay at Micah's house on their journey. The men recognized the Levite and asked him if their journey would be prosperous and the Levite told them yes. The five men found a place called Laish that looked easy for them to take.

600 Danites went out to take the land and came to Micah's house. They saw Micah's ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image and they adopted this idolatry for themselves. They took these items from his house with them.

The Levite went with the army from the tribe of Dan. He was greedy and wanted to be the priest for not just Micah's family but a whole army.

When Micah sees that the idols have been taken from his house, he follows the army and asks for them. The army threatens Micah and refuses to give them back so Micah goes home empty handed.

The army went to Laish and conquered it. They rebuilt the city and named it Dan. The tribe of Dan officially adopts the idolatry that began with Micah.

In those days there was no king in Israel. A Levite from the mountains of Ephraim had a concubine that committed adultery against him. She went to her father's house for 4 months. The Levite went to her father's house to reconcile with her and bring her home. But he stayed at her father's house for five days before returning home. When it got late in the day, the Levite and the concubine stopped in Gibeah for the night. Gibeah was a city of Israel that the Levite thought would be safer than stopping at a city of foreigners. They could not find anyone to take them into their house to spend the night. But an old man also from the mountains of Ephraim saw them in the town square and brought them to his home to stay with him.

While they were in the old man's house, men from the city beat on the door and wanted them to bring the Levite out for carnal relations. The old man begged the men to leave but they refused. The old man offered his daughter or the concubine to the men instead. The old man took the concubine to the group of men outside and "they knew her and abused her". (19:25)

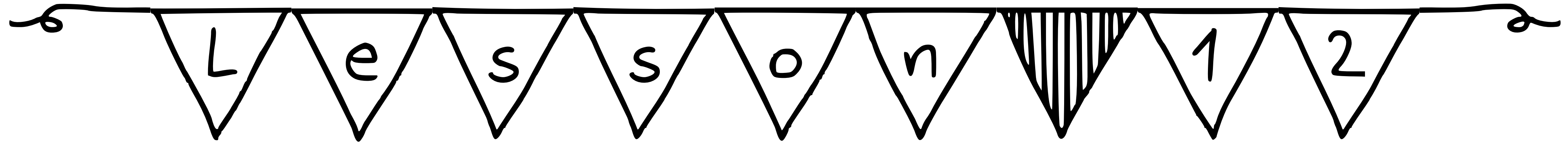
In the morning, the Levite went outside of the house and found the concubine dead. He took her body back to his house, cut it into 12 pieces and sent the pieces throughout Israel.

Men from all tribes of Israel gathered together at Mizpah. The Levite describes to them what happened at Gibeah. The men that gathered began to prepare to go to war with the people of Gibeah because of their sins. This group, the tribes of Israel, asked the tribe of Benjamin to give them the men from Gibeah but they were refused. The tribes of Israel and the men of Benjamin prepared an army to go to battle.

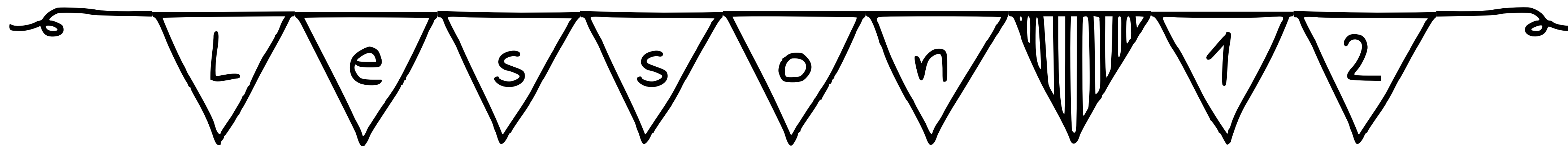
The first day of the battle, the tribes of Israel asked God who should go into battle first. God told them the tribe of Judah but they were defeated. After they were defeated, the people asked council of God. On the second day of the battle, the tribes of Israel are defeated by the tribe of Benjamin again. That night the people of Israel once again go to God and ask him what to do. God tells them to go to battle once more and he will deliver them. On the third day of the battle the Israelites defeated the men of Benjamin and set fire to Gibeah. In total, 25,000 men of Benjamin were killed that day. Only 600 men remained and fled into the wilderness.

At Mizpah, an oath is made that no one will give their daughter as wives for the tribe of Benjamin but they soon realize that the tribe of Benjamin will be in danger of extinction.

They decided to put to death anyone who did not come to the assembly of the Lord. So an army is sent to Jabesh Gilead because they did not send any men to the assembly. The army kills everyone in that land except for 400 young women. These women were given to the remaining men of Benjamin so their tribe's lineage would be able to continue. But this was not enough wives for the men. There is a yearly feast for the Lord in Shiloh and the men of Benjamin were instructed to take women who danced there as wives. So the men of Benjamin went back to their land and rebuilt their cities and continued their family lines.



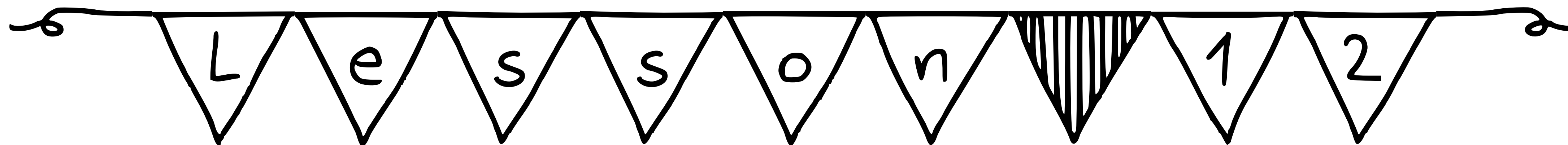
Micah took 1100 shekels from his mother. By comparison, 10 shekels a year was an adequate wage (Judges 17:10).



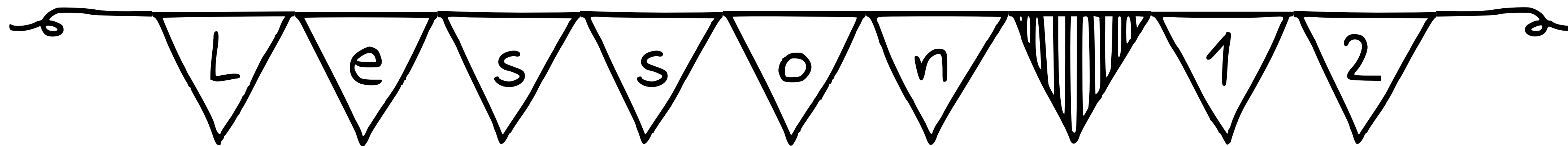
“Everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (17:6, 21:25)

This same verse starts off chapter 17 and ends the book of Judges in chapter 21. This is an accurate assessment of the people of Israel during the time of the judges.

This is also so descriptive of our society today. Our culture tells us to “follow your heart” and promotes “living in the moment”. Even if it seems right to us, if God says we shouldn’t do it then it’s wrong. We should not judge morality by our own eyes but by God’s eyes.



The comparison is made between Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:5) and the town of Gibeah. Both had problems with the same type of sin. But remember how God dealt with Sodom and Gomorrah? Gibeah is an Israelite town which is even worse because His people should know better.



The sins that happened in Gibeah are also written in the book of Hosea.

They are deeply corrupted, as in the days of Gibeah (Hosea 9:9)
O Israel, you have sinned from the days of Gibeah (Hosea 10:9)