

“Little Children, Keep Yourself from Idols”

Judges 17:1-13

May 3, 2020

I. The Unified Message of Judges 17-18 and Israel’s Religious Corruption

- A. Families were religiously corrupt. (Judges 17:1-6)
- B. The priesthood was religiously corrupt. (Judges 17:7-13)
- C. Society was religiously corrupt. (Judges 18:1-31)
- D. All of Israel was steeped in superstition, syncretism, and idolatry.

II. Family Religious Corruption (17:1-6)

- A. The curse uttered reveals the superstition of Micah and his mother.
- B. The graven image “to Yahweh” and the household idols reveal their syncretism and idolatry.

Deuteronomy 5:6–7 - ⁶“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ⁷ “You shall have no other gods before me.”

Deuteronomy 5:8–9a - ⁸ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁹ You shall not bow down to them or serve them...”

- C. Micah’s idolatrous shrine also shows his disobedience regarding the place of worship.

Deuteronomy 12:13–14 - ¹³ “Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every religious place you see, ¹⁴ but in the place which the Lord chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.”

- D. V. 6 shows that Micah’s family was just like all other families – doing what was right in their own eyes.

III. Priestly Religious Corruption (17:7-13)

- A. The Levite should have rebuked Micah for his idols and shrine.
- B. Instead he takes a job, joining with Micah in his sins of superstition, syncretism, and idolatry.
- C. We’re to assume that this Levite was like the vast majority of other Levites in his day.

IV. Judges 17 and Christians Today

- A. We are not immune from temptations to modern forms of superstition and syncretism.
 - 1. Do we still fear things like bad luck and chance?
 - 2. Do we mindlessly treat Christian words and practices like magic formulas and ceremonies?
 - 3. Do we compromise the faith to make league with other religions or with the world?
- B. We are not immune to formal idolatry.
 - 1. Think of venerated images of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.
 - 2. Are their visible “aides” to your private worship?
- C. We are definitely not immune to putting other “gods” before the Lord.
 - 1. Anything we serve more than God is a false god.
 - 2. How can we know what that is?

Judges 18:24 - ... “You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have?...”

- 3. What could you not stand to lose?
 - a. If the answer is anything but God himself, then that is our heart’s god.
 - b. No one is immune to this. Check out who the Levite was all along!

Judges 18:30a - And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses.

- D. Israel went far down such roads because they had no king.
 - 1. Our perfect King has come.
 - 2. He has conquered the guilt of our sin, freeing us to examine our lives without fear.
 - 3. He has blessed us with His empowering Spirit.

1 John 5:21 - Little children, keep yourselves from idols.