

**JUDGES 21**  
**IN THOSE DAYS . . .!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 21 as we are going to finish up our in-depth study of the book of Judges this morning.

And what a journey it has been. This was truly a dark period of time for the nation of Israel as they had turned from God many times. And yes, they did turn back, but in the end, they returned to worship pagan gods and that brought them into bondage!

Let me set the stage for what is happening here in Judges chapter 21.

If you remember, way back in Judges chapter 19, a Levite, just meandering through life and not following the Lord, “**. . . took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.**” Judges 19:1.

But she ended up playing the harlot and went back to her father’s home in Bethlehem. And she was there four months and finally, this Levite decided to go and pick her up, to bring her back home with him.

And his father-in-law, in seeing him, was so excited he came back for his daughter and was willing to take her home. Not sure why he waited four months, but he did!

And he ends up staying five days there as his father-in-law encourages him to stay for food and drink, and he does!

But finally, late in the day he is heading back home, he is in the area of Jebus but does not want to stay there because this is where the Jebusites were located and they were not friendly to Israel. He thought it was better, even though it was getting late, to continue on and stay in Gibeah, where the Benjamite’s were located, where family was, the children of Israel!

And they were going to sleep out in the streets because no one was willing to take them in until an old man, from the mountains of Ephraim, where this Levite was from, came and offered them his home. He knew it was too dangerous to sleep out in the streets.

And this is what transpired, in Judges 19:22-25, **“As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!’ But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, ‘No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man’s concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!’ But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.”**

And, obviously, there is so much wrong in what took place here. But this poor woman, after being gang raped all night long, crawled to the door of the old man’s house and then, in the morning, this Levite gets up and goes outside and sees her laying there and calls for her to get up, it’s time to go home.

Talk about insensitive. He had a good night sleep. They abused her all night long. And he had no compassion for this woman that was his concubine!

And when she does not get up, he finds out she is dead and he brings her home, cuts her into twelve pieces and sends them to the tribes in Israel to show what was done to her.

And from Dan to Beersheba or from the north to the side the tribes of Israel gathered together to fight against the people of Benjamin that did this atrocity to this woman.

And the men of Benjamin refuse to hand over those who sexually abused and murdered this woman and thus, Israel came after the tribe of Benjamin.

In doing so, they almost completely wiped out the tribe of Benjamin. Only 600 men survived this civil war from the tribe of Benjamin. With this three day battle the tribe of Benjamin lost 26,100 men! This was a tremendous slaughter and a great victory for the children of Israel, or so they now thought, but a very sad day when brothers will fight against brothers.

And yes, the men that committed this murder against this woman should have been put to death, but I don't believe God wanted them to wipe out the tribe of Benjamin. But now only 600 men are left in this tribe and that is not good. How will this tribe survive, or will there be only 11 tribes of Israel?

That is what we will be looking at this morning, how to resolve this problem. One writer gives us this insight into everything that is going on. He wrote,

With the frenzy of battle over their blood beginning to cool, the Israelites become conscious at last of the full import [significance] of what they have done.

The tribe of Benjamin has been brought to the brink of extinction. And to make matters worse, now (too late) they remember an oath they had sworn at Mizpah: "No one of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin" (v. 1).

So the six hundred remaining men still in hiding are either doomed to die childless (all their women and children have been slaughtered) or to marry foreigners.

In either case the tribe of Benjamin will cease to exist.

It is perhaps strange that the rest of Israel should care about this, given the orgy of destruction in which they have just engaged. But the fact is that things often look very different after a battle than they do in the midst of it, and kinship was fundamental to the whole way ancient societies like Israel were structured and who they understood themselves to be.

The Israelites have almost destroyed themselves, and they know it. They want to fix the damage, to heal themselves if possible. But how?

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God is Chaos, p. 237

I have called this study – *IN THOSE DAYS . . . ?* And you can place whatever you want for the conclusion but the focus here is that in those days they had no King in Israel, no one to lead them, and they had turned from God, God was not guiding them and directing them, it was their own desires that were doing that. And, as we have seen over the last several months, it was not a good thing for Israel!

I have broken down this chapter into the following main points that we will be looking at this morning. They are,

***A FOOLISH VOW – JUDGES 21:1***

***WHY HAS THIS HAPPENED – JUDGES 21:2-4***

***ISRAEL'S SOLUTION – JUDGES 21:5-7***

***KILLING MORE OF THEIR PEOPLE – JUDGES 21:8-15***

***FINDING A LOOPHOLE – JUDGES 21:16-23***

***LIFE GOES ON APART FROM GOD – JUDGES 21:24-25***

So with that as our introduction, let's pick up our study in Judges chapter 21, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at - *IN THOSE DAYS . . . ?*

**JUDGES 21****VERSE 1**

I spoke a little about this in our introduction, but make no mistake about this, it was – **A FOOLISH VOW!**

Listen again to this vow, **“None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife.”**

How could they make such a vow like this?

I think this was born out of anger and how many times do we say and do foolish things out of anger? I think a lot more than we would like to admit!

Now think about that for a minute. It might have sounded good at the time but in reality, if they went through with this, then the tribe of Benjamin would die out!

But again, in anger we don't think rationally and we react to what has happened and now that things are done, as they begin to think this through, knowing that only 600 men of Benjamin are left, that is not going to be good, the tribe is going to die out!

As Christians, we need to be careful not to let our anger get the better of us.

I have heard people make excuses for their anger, that it was a **“righteous anger”** and sorry, I don't believe it.

You see, the righteous anger that Jesus displayed was not because the people were against Him, but what they were saying about His Father!

When we are angry it is because of what someone else has done and that is wrong!

And by this vow, they thought they were getting their vengeance out upon the tribe of Benjamin, but vengeance belongs to the Lord not to us!

Think about all that went on in 2020!

Okay, maybe you don't even want to think about it any longer, you had enough of it, and you are done with it.

But think about it anyway.

We were angry at how the Democrats tried to remove Trump from office by saying he was conspiring with the Russians in the 2016 elections.

We were angry with this whole COVID-19 virus!

We were angry with the lockdowns!

We were angry with wearing masks!

We were angry that there was no toilet paper in the stores!

We were angry that we could not go to a restaurant to eat!

We were angry at the violent protests that went on!

We were angry at the destruction of businesses during these violent protests!

We were angry at how lukewarm the church has become!

And the list can go on and it does go on!

Let me share this with you. We are told,

There are many Bible verses about anger, but this one really stands out to me: ***“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”*** (James 1:19-20)

. . . Anger is an emotion that mostly causes harm. Harm to yourself and others. Harm to your heart and soul. Anger will often produce a sensation or feeling of intense rage that people describe by the common phrases of “seeing red” or “making my blood boil.”

We have all felt it at some point or another in our lives, towards someone, or something. Many times anger manifests itself in regrettable harsh words or actions towards the ones we love.

But how do you control your anger? How do you keep from acting upon the strong feeling of rage?

For most of us, anger has caused us to be mistreated or has caused us to mistreat or threaten others in non-loving ways. Some of us seem to be able to “let things go” or “take a lot” before having an outburst, while others are described as having a “short fuse” when things can escalate rather quickly. . . .

Controlling our anger can be a difficult thing. Screaming, shouting, and telling someone “what you really think of them,” can make us feel empowered over the situation while we’re in the midst of it, that is until the rage subsides and you realize how much you have hurt the other person.

We are warned in Proverbs to steer away from those who are easily angered because they will bring trouble and folly. Relationships can be scarred by the actions of an angry person.

Our pain comes to us in a physical or emotional sense. Knowing and acknowledging this pain is key in beginning to heal from it.

Second, is to lay that burden of pain at Messiah’s feet, to realize the things you cannot change or control and ask God to help in those areas.

Third, we can pray to God for healing and change. Having a changed heart full of grace and forgiveness is the best place to start overcoming the anger that wants to rise up from within.

. . . there are many things to get angry about, such as murder, child abuse, and those that make false accusations. But most things in our life, such as the long line at the grocery store, traffic jams or a child making an honest mistake are not worth the anger. Ask yourself is this something Jesus would get upset about? If not, pray about it and have God help you control your anger. . . .

- <https://bit.ly/2I4NnDM>

Maybe instead of getting involved in this battle with the tribe of Benjamin, I wonder if they would have agreed to meet in Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was located and get the matter settled with the Lord. Maybe this would not have happened but this anger lead to this battle and almost the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin and now, 600 men left and no women. In other words, the tribe would eventually just die out or intermarry with pagan women, which would have destroyed the tribe as well!

Let me share some verses with you about anger, first from the Old Testament.

First of all, in Proverbs 14:29 we are told, **“He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.”**

I think that makes sense. Don’t act rashly, but be slow to wrath, pray about it and seek direction from God before you respond in situations!

In Proverbs 14:17 we are told, **“A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of wicked intentions is hated.”**

Don’t act foolishly by being quick-tempered, and we saw that in the previous verse we looked at as well, slow to wrath!



We are told in Proverbs 29:22, “**An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression.**”

How true that is. Angry people tend to stir things up and nothing good comes out of it!

And in Ecclesiastes 7:9 we are told, “**Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.**”

The Lord is very clear, and He does not encourage this type of anger, it is not healthy for the person and it is not healthy for those around that person who is angry!

Even in the New Testament we see this played out in regard to anger and the trouble it can bring in our lives and those around us.

Paul warns Timothy in II Timothy 2:23-26, “**But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.**”

I think that is important because it is easy to get into a dispute with people and many times, you can spend hours and get nowhere. State your case and move on, don't quarrel and maybe, by the grace of God they may come to the truth!

Also, in Colossians 3:8 Paul wrote, “**But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.**”

Paul wants us to remove these things from our lives and, as he continues on, he speaks of putting on Christ! That is what we need to do!

In Ephesians 4:26-27 Paul put it like this, “**Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.**”

We can let anger build and build in our lives and before long it explodes and leaves a path of destruction. Don't give place to the devil to do these things in our lives, surrender to God, let that anger go before the sun goes down!

And lastly, in Ephesians 4:31-32 Paul wrote, **“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”**

In other words, be like Christ, be tenderhearted towards people, forgive them and keep in mind all that the Lord has forgiven you! As you do that, then all that bitterness, all that wrath, all that anger and clamor and evil speaking will flee away, and the nature of Christ will come forth!

Here we see that the tribes of Israel made – ***A FOOLISH VOW!***

But as we read on, and this is almost comical if it wasn't so tragic, we see them say – ***WHY HAS THIS HAPPENED!***

#### VERSES 2-4

So the children of Israel go to Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was set up, and they are seeking God's help in this matter.

And again, notice the question that they ask the Lord as they wept bitterly, **“O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe missing in Israel?”** Judges 21:3.

Now isn't that an interesting prayer!

***“Why did this happen, it is so unfair, how could this happen?”***

Now if we didn't know what took place, we may also ask that question. But we do know what happened and so did they!

They destroyed 26,100 men of Benjamin, besides the women and children and they made that vow that no daughter of theirs is to marry a man from Benjamin, which would wipe out that tribe, and now they come before the Lord wondering how this happened.

They did it to them!

**“Why has this come?”** give me a break!

You see, now the reality of their actions has set in and they realize this was not such a good idea and that vow, which they feel they have to keep, was foolish and it jeopardized the tribe of Benjamin, bringing them on the verge of extinction!

Now we can be hard against the children of Israel for what they have done, the foolishness of their actions and then their bewilderment about how this happened. But if we are truly honest with ourselves, don't we do that?

Of course we do.

What do I mean by that?

Simple. We do what we want and then something bad comes and we come before God crying out to Him, ***“Why has this come?”*** and the reality is, we brought it on ourselves!

Be wise; be careful before you rush into something.

Let me give you an example.

We are at work and the boss says something to us, and we don't like it. And we respond back in not so nice of a way. We say things we should not have said. We become angry!

And the boss, since he is the boss, sends us home for a week without pay.

***“Lord, how can this happen to me? I am serving you and now this. How am I going to pay my bills?”***

The reality is, like the children of Israel, we know the reason why this happened, it was because of the way we responded and now there are consequences to our actions, just as we see here with the children of Israel. They almost wiped out an entire tribe of Israel!

Again, we need to surrender to the Lord, be directed by the Lord in what we do and what we say so that in all that we do it would bring glory and honor to the Lord!

As we read on, we are going to see – ***ISRAEL'S SOLUTION!***

### VERSES 5-7

Here again Israel did something that seemed right at the time but was actually a horror.

They decided to slaughter a whole city of Israel, a city that refused to join with Israel in their fight against Benjamin.

Think about that for a minute. What they are doing is so wrong. They are doing one bad thing to make up for another bad thing that they did!

And I guess these guys like to make oaths and this one was made before they went into battle. It was very simple.

Like I said, any tribe in Israel, any group of people that refused to go to war against Benjamin would be put to death!

Why were they even concerned about this?

Because they had to rectify the previous vow they made regarding giving their daughters to the men of Benjamin as you will see. And again, it is not pretty!

Now you may be thinking, ***“Well, what in the world could they do? They had to try and save the tribe of Benjamin from extinction, didn't they?”***

Well, first of all they put them in this predicament and secondly, Israel should have repented of their foolish oath made at Mizpah, and they should have agreed to give their daughters as wives to the men of the tribe of Benjamin, renouncing the foolish vow of Judges 21:1.

But they didn't and they seem to be making things much worse. This was – ***ISRAEL'S SOLUTION!***

But listen carefully to what that solution was, and it will bring us to our next point. Their solution was the – ***KILLING OF MORE OF THEIR PEOPLE!***

#### VERSES 8-15

So this other vow they made before this battle against the tribe of Benjamin was that anyone who would not help them in this battle would be put to death!

And they checked their records about who did not go to war with them against Benjamin, and the men of Jabesh Gilead showed up on the list.

Now here is the solution to their problem.

If they wipe out all the men, women and children from Jabesh Gilead, except those women who were virgins, then they can give these women to the men of Benjamin.

How evil are they? They are willing to wipe out an entire city to fix a problem they caused in the first place instead of asking God for a solution to their problem!

I don't care how you slice it; two wrongs don't make a right!

One writer sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

A review is conducted, and it is discovered that “no one had come to the camp from Jabesh-gilead” (v. 8), and immediately a force of twelve thousand men is sent to serve justice on them (v. 10).

But of course, this has actually nothing to do with justice. It’s just a ruse to solve the problem at hand in a way that has a *show* of legitimacy.

And again the violence is extreme.

All the people of the city are slaughtered, including women and children, except “young virgins who had not known a man by lying with him,” who were seized by the raiders and carried back to their base in Shiloh (vv. 11, 12).

The only slightly mitigating element of this whole horrible episode is the word “compassion” in verse 6: “the people of Israel had compassion for Benjamin their brother,” which is why they did what they did.

But as we have seen, they themselves were the real cause of the problem they were trying to solve. They were making others pay for their own wrongdoing.

The decision to victimize the people of Jabesh-gilead smacks much more of expediency than justice, and of compassion horribly distorted by the lack of any sound moral basis.

And in spite of all the additional carnage involved, it did not achieve what it was supposed to do. Only four hundred virgins were found, two hundred short of the six hundred they needed (vv. 12-15).

So the chaos continued.

I have seen something like this played out.

Several years ago, I was talking to a man who said that he was a Christian and at that point I had no reason to doubt it, he came to church and he seemed to be genuine.

This man was divorced, and he had remarried and had a child with his new wife, and they had been married for several years now.

And he said to me that he felt he was living in adultery because he divorced his first wife and married this woman and felt that God wanted him to divorce his second wife and marry his first wife.

Are you still with me?

Well, I just couldn't let that go by and I told him that he is married and has a child and God is not going to have him divorce his wife to fix the mistake he made in the first place.

Two wrongs don't make a right.

Well, he didn't like what I said and shortly after that I saw him no more.

Don't be foolish and don't rush to decisions and don't make foolish vows, walk by faith in the Lord, following His leading that is in His Word!

The men of Israel were not doing that and look at the mess it brought about, an entire city wiped out because of their foolish vow.

And isn't it amazing how easily they forgot the wickedness of the men of Benjamin.

They wiped out almost the entire tribe in battle, and then they just say, "***Let's forget about what has happened!***"

The men of Benjamin did not repent of their actions and yet Israel was willing to forget what has happened.

It is amazing how easily they were guided by their emotions.

They had compassion on the men of Benjamin, and they had no compassion for the brethren from Jabesh Gilead! How messed up they were!

And they still had a pretty big problem for they only were able to gather together 400 virgins from Jabesh Gilead after they wiped everyone else out and they are still short some 200 women.

There were 200 men of Benjamin still needing wives.

I wonder what they will do.

I will give you a hint, they will not seek guidance from the Lord but they will come up with another plan to help solve this problem and that is never good when we come up with the plans!

And, as we will see, we have gone from – ***KILLING MORE OF THEIR PEOPLE*** to solve their problem but they needed more help and thus, the next point, - ***FINDING A LOOPHOLE!***

#### VERSES 16-23

I don't know about you, but as I read this I am thinking, ***“You have to be kidding me, this is the solution that they came up with!”***

Now let's think this through for a minute. All these men come up with a solution like this instead of repenting of their foolish vow. Notice what they are looking for. They are looking for loopholes to get around the vow.

Now in breaking the vow, that is not good, but this is worse!

Look again at what their plan was.



In Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was located, where God dwelt and they worshiped God there, they had a yearly feast and thus, they found a solution to their problem.

Now think about that. They are in Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was located, and no one thought about asking the Lord for direction in this. No one thought it was important to seek the Lord's direction in this matter, but their own way was a better way to go.

Maybe, in their minds that was too simple of an answer, to pray about it, to seek the Lord's direction, when they have a brain, and they were going to use it.

And this was their plan, and not a good one, even though it did work.

There was this yearly feast in Shiloh and as the virgin women of Israel danced, the men of Benjamin that needed a wife would come and steal them away!

That is better than asking the Lord? Give me a break!

What about their father's or brothers, wouldn't they be upset when this took place? Of course they would. Remember, there was that oath not to give your daughters to the men of Benjamin and now this.

But they came up with another solution.

If their father's or the brothers of these women questioned their actions they would tell them that it was okay because they did not give them their daughters but these men from Benjamin took them, and thus they did not break their oath to God.

And maybe they are thinking, ***"Thank God we didn't break this vow!"***

Again, look at where they are at. It is not good. We are told,

Now we really have hit rock bottom. *Everything* is wrong here. The festival itself is not easily identifiable as any of the three great annual festivals (the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles; Deuteronomy 16:1-17; cf. Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Numbers 28:26) prescribed in the Law of Moses, none of which involved girls dancing in the vineyards!

The association with the grape harvest suggests it may, at best, have been a semi-pagan, corrupt version of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The festival itself is a manifestation of what is at the heart of the moral malaise that has overtaken the whole nation: the Lord is paid lip service, but people do as they please.

In that situation the foundations of morality have been destroyed. Worse, an assumed obligation to *obey* God (and thereby honor him) has been used here as a pretext for doing evil – first by slaughtering the people of Jabesh-gilead and then by abducting (effectively stealing) the young women of Shiloh.

The justification for both has been oaths sworn to the Lord in Mizpah (vv. 1, 5).

Here is a dishonoring of God's name that is almost beyond belief. And at a purely human level, the most shocking aspect of what happens here in this final ploy to solve a problem caused by all the moral chaos is the total objectification [degrading] and abuse of women.

What started with the rape of the concubine in Gibeah has led to the abduction (and effective rape) of four hundred virgins in Jabesh-gilead, and ended with the seizure of two hundred more in Shiloh.

To make matters even worse (is it possible?), the perpetrators of the crime, even before they commit it, have worked out a justification that will absolve everyone involved from guilt.

When we have to find loopholes to solve our problem, loopholes that will try to justify our actions before God, we are in trouble.

And make no mistake about it, what happened back then continues to go on today in the name of God!

You see, the Jews still find loopholes in the Law to allow them to do things that the Law tells them they are not to do.

For example, every seventh year the land was to rest, but what some of the Jews will do is hand over the land to an Arab for that seventh year and then come back and retrieve it in the eighth year.

A good loophole but that is not what God had in mind.

Also, in Israel everything closes up on the Sabbath, but if you want to remain open you would have your Arab employee run your business for the day.

Times have not changed much.

But we, as Christians, would never do that, would we?

Of course we would and of course we do!

God tells us not to do something and we come up with loopholes why we can do those things.

God says don't date an unbeliever and we come up with the idea of missionary dating!

There is no such thing!

God says don't steal from your employer and we say that they owe it to us; they don't pay us enough in the first place.

Folk's, loopholes are not to be used so we can sin.

God tells us what is best, He does not want us to make foolish vows or if we do make them, don't do another wrong to make the first wrong right!

Again, a loophole is nothing more than trying to justify your sin, and God does not accept it. He never has and He never will!

But we still use them, these loopholes. Listen carefully. We are told,

I work in a typical office building, but today I saw something interesting. My coworker #11 has been leaving around lunch time to go to the gym. Except I had to get something out of my car and I saw her (in her workout clothes) eating out of a tub of fried chicken. I didn't say anything but she walked back in 15 minutes later saying how sore she would be tomorrow. She "works out" everyday. My boss has a policy that if you're going to work out you don't have to clock out, which means my coworker essentially gets paid to eat fried chicken in a jogging suit in her minivan.

As annoyed as I am, I'm also slightly impressed that she thought of this.

My boss will often check the "Date Modified" on certain files on our server to see if I have updated or even opened a certain file recently. So, I have installed a changer utility that allows me to modify the "Date Modified" on any file. This comes in most handy when my boss wants to give me weekend assignments. I just come in on Monday Morning and change the "Date Modified" to Saturday night and he thinks I was actually doing something for work on Saturday night! I've actually received a lot of kudos for this. I don't feel bad though, because my boss is a huge jerk.

I knew someone who would hold 1 religious ceremony in his house every year so that it could be considered a place of worship and he didn't have to pay taxes.

- <https://bit.ly/388SHRc>

You see, and there are many, many more out there, these loopholes that people will use to justify the wrong that they are doing and we must be careful that we don't go down that path, because it will keep moving us farther and farther from God as we justify more and more of our sin!

Now the tribe of Benjamin did survive and out of this tribe will come the first King in Israel, King Saul!

Now don't think that if it wasn't for the children of Israel coming up with this plan Benjamin would have been obliterated! Not at all.

God has a plan and God has ways that are beyond our ways, may we trust in Him and walk in the path that He has set for us!

And that brings us to our last point and the closing of the book of Judges – ***LIFE GOES ON APART FROM GOD!***

#### VERSES 24-25

Think about this for a minute. After all we have read in just the three chapters of the book of Judges, all the immorality, all the wickedness, all the violence, all the bad decisions and then, **“So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.”** Judges 21:24.

Did you see that?

Everyone goes back to their homes as if nothing has happened. Life just continues on amidst all the immorality that is around them.

In other words – ***LIFE GOES ON APART FROM GOD!***

And the reason again for their failure, in case you have missed it, is that the Lord was no longer important to them. He was not reigning on the thrones of their hearts and they thus were doing whatever they felt was right in their own eyes.

What did they do?

Like I have said. They committed murder, sexual immorality, homosexuality, idolatry, civil war, stealing and I think you get the picture.

Right was wrong and wrong was right.

This is what happens when there is no recognized King over Israel or any people; you have moral, political, social and spiritual chaos! And the King was to be God!

People wonder why our nation is so messed up. Why we have so many problems. The answer is really simple, and we have seen it some four times mentioned in the book of Judges.

Here it is, “**In those days there was no king in Israel: everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**” Judges 21:25.

We have our own standards of what is right and what is wrong and that does not work because the heart of man is evil!

David Guzik shows us where we are at by describing some advertising slogans. He wrote:

*This is certainly the spirit of our age. We can think of this reflected in advertising slogans from our generation, within recent memory: Nothing is taboo . . . Break all the rules . . . To know no boundaries . . . Relax: No rules here . . . Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road . . . We are all hedonists and want to do what feels good. That's what makes us human . . . Living without boundaries . . . Just do it.*

*The message is the same: "You make your own rules. You answer to no one. You are the one that matters. Your universe revolves around you."*

- David Guzik

Folks, when man follows his own way, when he does his own thing, it ends up being the way of death and not life.

That is what Solomon tells us in Proverbs 16:25, "**There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.**"

Thus, man apart from God is in trouble and we can clearly see that today!

The book of Judges closes with confusion, bloodshed, anarchy, spiritual apostasy, moral decay and it is not a great place to end.

But as we get into the book of Ruth next time, it is the story of the kinsmen redeemer, Boaz who is a type of Jesus Christ, our Kinsmen Redeemer!

And what a beautiful picture it is, as we will see next time. You see, in the midst of all this chaos, there is Christ who wants to set us free. May we listen and obey!

As I begin to close this morning, let me share with you these words from J. Vernon McGee as he wrote in his commentary on the book of Judges:

Here in this twentieth century the heads of state would do well to study the Book of Judges. Back in 1928, when the depression first began, a brief editorial appeared in the staid [serious] Wall Street Journal, which went something like this:

What America needs today is not Government controls, industrial expansion, or a bumper corn crop; American needs to return to the day when grandpa took the team out of the field in the early afternoon on Wednesday in order to hitch them to the old spring wagon into which grandma put all of the children after she washed their faces shinning clean; and they drove off to prayer meeting in the little white church at the crossroads underneath the oak trees, where everyone believed the Bible, trusted in Christ, and loved one another.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Vol. II, p. 86

Amen to that! If we want to fix the trouble in our own lives, in this nation, in this world, the only lasting way is by coming to Christ. He needs to be the center of our lives. May we learn the lessons God has given to us in the book of Judges for if we don't, we are doomed to repeat them!

Why continue on in life apart from God when He loves you so much and wants to live with you and guide you!

Let me close our study with these words of encouragement from the Lord.

In Psalm 27:1 we are told, **“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”**

We need not be afraid because our God is with us and He will guide us and strengthen us!



Remember the encouraging words that the Lord gave to Joshua, who was fearful in Joshua 1:9, **“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”**

In the days we are living in, where many are fearful, we need to remember these words, to be strong, not to be afraid, but know that God is with us no matter how difficult and dark things may get in our nation!

And in Proverbs 28:1 we are told, **“The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

The reason for that is because our God fights for us and all He wants us to do is to walk by faith.

And lastly, in Isaiah 41:10 we are told, **“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”**

God’s promise to us. We don’t need to be afraid. We don’t need to be dismayed or shocked by what we see going on around us and in our lives, because God is with us and He will strengthen us and help us with His mighty hand of power! Amen to that!

And I will close with this, changing those words in Judges 21:25 and pray that is what we desire in our lives – ***“In this day there was a King in America, Jesus, and everyone did what was right in the King’s eyes because they loved Jesus and followed Him all the days of their lives.”***

Maybe not in America, but one day, when Jesus comes back, we will be able to say that because He will rule and reign and righteousness will fill this land! But, until then, let Him reign in your life now!