Murray Baptist Church – 1/5/21 – Bible Study Outline – Judges 17

**Judges 17 – The Prequel Begins**

The key to understanding Judges 17-21, lies in the phrase “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). This frames the last five chapters of the book of Judges, which chronologically occurs before chapters 1-16. You can consider the chapters 17-21 the prequel to chapters 1-16.

Because everyone did as they saw fit, or in other words, they did what was right in their own eyes – many of the events are just incomprehensible.

In chapter 18:30 we learn that a central character is the grandson of Moses, which places the events before Othniel the first judge of Israel. Chapters 17-21 set the stage for what occurred in chapters 1-16. We have no insight as to why chapter 16-21 were placed at the end of the book.

Vs. 1-6

* We are introduced to a character – Micah (not the minor prophet from the OT but another character by the same name. Micah means “who is like God” or “God is incomparable.” That is ironic because this character is a thief who cannot be trusted. He stole his mother’s money.
* Micah’s mother first curses the one who stole her money, they she blesses him because it was her son. She the commits the stolen funds to make an idol which was forbidden by God (see Exodus 20:4, one of the ten commandments). We can see in Micah and his mother’s actions that these are not the most spiritually sound people we’ve met.
* Micah installs one of his sons as the priest
* Verse 6 tells us why we should not be shocked by anything that will happen in this or the following chapters – “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.”

Vs. 7-13

* Micah meets a young Levite from Bethlehem who was seeking shelter and makes him an offer to live in his house and be his priest
* More irregularities – the Levite is part of a group set apart by God to serve as priests, they had designated cities to live in and were supposed to be supported by the rest of the Israelites.
* Micah apparently disregards is son who he appointed as priest for his house
* Micah thought his association with one of God’s representatives would bring blessing to him and his house rather than his own relationship with God – “Now I know the Lord will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest.”

Study Questions

1. What does the Bible teach about idols (see Exod. 20:4; 23:13; Psalm 81:9; Isaiah 42;17; 1 Corinthians 10:7)
2. Read Amos 5:18-24 and Isaiah 1:10-17 and list the criticisms God levels at his people’s worship. What does he require instead? Look up Mark 7:1-15 and compare this to the attitude and practice of the Pharisees
3. In what ways is the church of the twenty-first century comparable to Micah’s home-made shrine? How have we let modern-day idolatry creep into the life of the church and what steps can we take to eradicate it?
4. Micah had convinced himself that he did the right thing even though he had disobeyed God. Are there times when you have been so determined to do something that you have claimed it to be God’s will? Think about the way in which you could have tested that belief.