

Day 17 – Feb. 20

This story of Micah and his priest is displaying a world post-judges but pre-kings. “In those days Israel had no king; all the people did what seemed right in their own eyes,” we read again and again, and this will not change until the monarchy is begun, but that’s a story for the future.

Here we find idolatry, priests-for-hire, unjust armies taking what they want, and no mention of God at all. The idol is the result of stealing, and there are no heroes to these stories. Tomorrow’s is even worse, but today’s is enough. There are no more Judges, no people appointed by God to rescue them from their captivity, and no angelic visitations. There are just people without a religious leader, doing whatever seemed right to each of them.

The most scary thing about this section of the book of Judges is the eerie similarities to our evening news. If the motto of this section – no single religious leader, everyone does what they determine to be right – doesn’t describe America today, I don’t know what does. Idols? We make a game show out of it! Priests-for-hire? You can be ordained online in 20 minutes. Unjust armies taking what they want? Anywhere and everywhere, from our own Capital on Jan. 6 to tribal warfare in third-world countries to first-world countries dominating others for resources from oil to trees to iphones. And the only prophets we are willing to listen to are profits, which guide every business (and sadly most churches as well).

To whom does our world turn for spiritual or religious guidance? The Pope? Some. Denominational leadership? A few. The most charismatic speaker/author/blogger from Billy Graham to Rob Bell to Joel Osteen? Even less. We can say we turn to Jesus, but the vast denominational landscape of America says we cannot decide how to follow Jesus, and unity seems a pipe-dream of Christendom. In fact, we’ve been taught to be deeply suspicious of anyone who might even begin to unite the Church of God.

In our world where “all the people are doing what seems right in their own eyes,” how can God direct us to effective life and ministry? Perhaps through a King. Perhaps through the King of Kings. Perhaps if we can begin to obey the life, the truth, and stories of Jesus instead of pop-culture leaders or pharisaical institutions, we might be able to find some semblance of unity as we follow our King.

Or maybe we’ll just have to endure until He comes again. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus.