

BREAKDOWN OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Judges 17

Review Last week:

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE HOME 17:1-6

- A. The Superstitious Mother v.2
- B. The Spoiled Child v. 3
- C. The Sin Filled Family vv.4-6

“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” Which is distinct from “doing what is right in the eye of the Lord” (Ex.15:26; Deut.6:18; 12:25,28; 13:19; 21:9, Jer. 34:15) The people did not need a king to lead them in sin as they did it by themselves very well!

I. THE FAILURE OF THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT THE PRIESTHOOD vv.7-8

A. God commanded His people to care for the Levites. – Deuteronomy 18:1-8

- a. They had no inheritance of the land, the Lord was their inheritance v.2, Deut.10:9
- b. They were to be supplied from the offering given at the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Vv.3-5
- c. They are to serve in the name of the Lord

B. In times when the nation did not worship the Lord the Levites returned to their cities and raised their families.

- a. When not serving in the Tabernacle or Temple they returned to their cities
- b. When the offerings were insufficient the Levites worked the land Numbers 35; Nehemiah 10:35-39; 13:10; Malachi 3:8-10
- c. Danger of bi-vocational ministry
 - Money more important than ministry
 - Loss of passion and attention to God’s people
 - Divided attention between home and temple

II. THE FAILURE OF THE PRIESTS TO BE FAITHFUL TO THEIR CALLING vv. 9-13

- A. The descendants of Aaron in the clans of the Kohathites received 13 cities from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. The remaining Kohathites received 10 cities from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The Kohathites’ special charge was the ark of the

covenant, the table, the candlestick, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary, and the screen (Num 3:31).

- B. They were to teach and lead the people in worship to the Lord.
- C. They began to farm and till the land to provide for their families
- D. The Failure of both to Serve the House of the Lord vv.11-13**

The people would not support the priesthood and the priests began to support themselves. It happened several times in the history of Israel and each time the religious community suffered as the worship of the Lord was diluted as priests attended to personal and family matters instead of the Lord's work and word! Without godly leadership the religious purity and activity became haphazard and sloppy. No accountability led to improper worship!

III. NEW TESTAMENT WARNINGS FOR THE CHURCH

- A. Christ identifies and warned of false teachers – Matt. 15:14; 16:6,12; 23:1-33; Mark 8:15; Luke 11:42-52; 12:1
- B. Paul urges caution and avoidance – Acts 20:28-31; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15; Ephesians 4:14; Colossians 2:4,8; 2 Timothy 2:17-18
- C. Warning of heretical teachings to Pastors– 1 Timothy 1:3-4,7; 4:1-3; 6: 20-21; Titus 1:10-11
- D. General Epistles warnings – 2 Peter 2; 3:3; 1 John 2:18-24; 4:1-6; 2 John 7-11; Jude; Revelation 2 – the Nicolaitans and the teachers of the doctrine of Balaam

APPLICATION

Last week I stated that the family was essential to the Church, Community, and the Culture.

As the family weakens, the Church's foundation begins to crack:

Religious institutions falter when the Focus is removed from God and His worship.

- Godly leadership begins in the home
- Biblical instruction must be followed by leadership
- Godly leadership affects every area of Church life
- Pray for your leaders (Hebrews 13:7)