

Without A King-10
“Buffet-Style Christianity”
Judges 17 & 18

Hey Newsong!

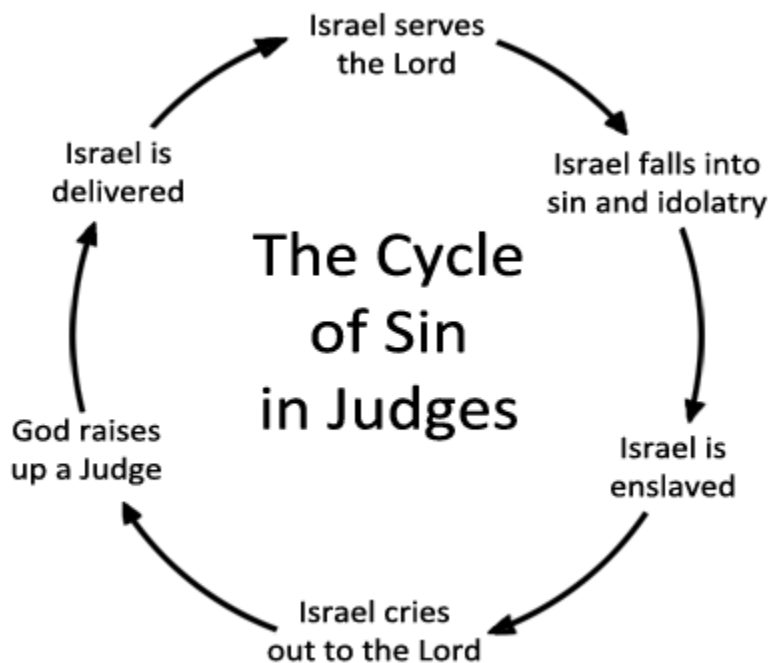
I want to take a second to welcome our first-time guests and those worshiping with us online! Hey if you're watching online would you guys say hello to each other? Give a little virtual high-five!

We've been in a series in the Book of Judges called “Without A King” and what we're learning is that even though it chronicles the 400 year history of Israel between the time of Joshua and Saul...

It's a reflection of our own culture today... Israel had lost its way...They were far away from God...

They were lost politically, morally & spiritually...

Throughout the book we keep seeing this same pattern...We call it the Sin Cycle Carousel... And over the first 16 chapters we see Israel fall into this pattern seven times



During these cycles God would raise up a Judge, a ruler, a deliverer, someone who would deliver God's people from His enemies...

The Book of Judges mentions 12 Judges...As each sin cycle happens...

We noticed that the Judges themselves are becoming more broken and flawed...The last Judge recorded in the book of Judges was a guy named Samson...

If you missed last week's message I suggest you go back and watch it, because Jacob did an excellent job teaching us what we can learn from Samson's life...

God had given Samson an amazing gift and calling...and Samson was his own worst enemy...Jacob said he wasn't Spirit-led...he was led by his own selfish desires...

What happens when you live your life like that? You become blind and enslaved...just like Samson

You see our series is called "Without A King" And what happens when Jesus isn't the King of your life?

Our series verse

***25 In those days Israel had no king;
everyone did as they saw fit.-Jdg 21:25 (NIV)***

God was supposed to be Israel's King...and as we study these last few chapters in the Book of Judges we're given some examples of what it looks like when everyone is doing what they think is right...

When everyone is living out they're own version of the truth...

What we're going to see that happens is what we see that is happening in our own culture right now...Because the Bible isn't just about what happened...it's about what always happens...

So what happens when we see people reject God's Word and yet remain "spiritual" and "religious"?

We see people creating a version of “god” that they can live with...one that agrees with them...

What happens when Jesus isn't King?

17 Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim 2 said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it.” Then his mother said, “The LORD bless you, my son!” 3 When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, “I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make an image overlaid with silver. I will give it back to you.” 4 So after he returned the silver to his mother, she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who used them to make the idol. And it was put in Micah’s house.

5 Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some household gods and installed one of his sons as his priest. 6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

This is what happens when Jesus isn't King...
This is what happens when we reject God's Word...When it is no longer the ultimate authority in our lives...

Here you have a grown man still living with his mother...(BTW single ladies that's a red flag)
Who steals from her...(another red flag)

She finds out her life savings are gone and she starts calling down curses on whoever stole it...And he's spiritual enough to believe that those curses could come true so he confesses...I stole it...

He didn't confess because he's repentant...he confesses because he's afraid of the curse...

Instead of sending him packing with his PS5 and his collection of Funko figures...she blesses him in the name of YHWH

For some parents their children can do no wrong ever...She's like "what a good boy" he told the truth...so to celebrate she says she's going to dedicate the silver to God...

So she says let's say thank You to God by making a carved image...an idol...He then adds this idol to his funkio collection of household gods that he worships...and makes his own son a priest...does something seem a little off here?

Don't worry...It gets a little more bizarre, let's keep reading...

7 A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, 8 left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim. 9 Micah asked him, "Where are you from?" "I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay." 10 Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father (or my spiritual advisor) and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food." 11 So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 12 Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house. 13 And Micah said, "Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest."-Jdg 17:1-13 (NIV)

When Jesus isn't King, we decide what's
RIGHT

If Jesus isn't on the throne of our hearts...we
will be the ultimate authority in our life...

And when we're the ultimate authority we get to
decide which commands of God we want to
follow (if we follow any at all)

So watch this...

Micah steals from his own mother...He breaks
the eighth commandment 15 ***"You must not
steal.-Exodus 20:15 (NLT)***

They made an idol breaking the second
commandment ***4" You must not make for
yourself an idol of any kind or an image of
anything in the heavens or on the earth or in
the sea."-Exodus 20:4 (NLT)***

He violated the law that God established through Moses about where God's people were supposed to worship...

4 "Do not worship the Lord your God in the way these pagan peoples worship their gods. 5 Rather, you must seek the Lord your God at the place of worship he himself will choose from among all the tribes—the place where his name will be honored. 6 There you will bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, your sacred offerings, your offerings to fulfill a vow, your voluntary offerings, and your offerings of the firstborn animals of your herds and flocks-Dt 12:4–6 (NLT)

At this time the place that God had designated for worship was at the tabernacle in Shiloh...

So you have Micah breaking God's laws
His Mother is breaking God's law's

Micah makes his son his personal priest...that violates God's law because according to **Numbers 3:10** the priests were supposed to come from the tribe of Levi not Ephraim...

Even the actual levite priest does what he wants to do, because according to the law he's supposed to minister in the city that he's assigned...He decides nah...I'm not going to do that!

Instead, he ignores God's clear commands and becomes a priest ministering to pagan idols for money...

Now here's the crazy thing...These guys are all doing what they want to do...and yet they still expect that God is going to bless them...

Before we start pointing our fingers we have to remember that we have a tendency to do the same thing...

It's known as "Buffet Christianity"

Maria at the Buffet

Maria chose the chocolate pudding even though Pastor Cyndie told her to eat her veggies before she had her sweets...

Now think about how people have this same mindset spiritually...They treat God and His Word like a buffet...

God is love...pile that on...we need lots of that
God is full of grace...forgiveness...mercy...

But obedience? Mmmm I'll pass
Being a living sacrifice? I've got an allergy
Holiness? Forgive others? Serve others?

See these are the greens of the buffett...
The brussel sprouts and the lima beans of our walk with God...

And when we pick and choose what parts of God's Word we're going to obey and apply to our life we end up making an idol that we can worship...a little bit of Jesus and a lotta bit of me and my preferences...and my beliefs...

This is another example of syncretism...mixing your worship of the one true God with other worship systems and beliefs...even your own...

This is why you meet people who pray to God, read their Bible, go to church, but also are into crystals, follow the zodiac, practice reiki, pray to saints, go to a psychic

When you practice buffet christianity your walk becomes confusing, and inconsistent, powerless and eventually pulls you away in a current of compromise...

Why? Because your life isn't anchored in the Word of God...

It's interesting that the Apostle Paul tells young pastor Timothy about what people are going to be like in the end times...

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! -2 Ti 3:1–5 (NLT)

When Jesus isn't King...When the Word of God isn't our anchor...we will still be "spiritual"

We'll "act religious"...And here's the thing...you can be really sincere about something...you can be really passionate about something...

But because you're not anchored in the Word of God you can still be wrong...

Over the years I've met some really "nice" people, and they're sincere about what they believe and even passionate about it...

Take the Jehovah's Witnesses for instance...Generally nice people...who are outside in all weather conditions to tell people about their "god."

They're sincere, but they're sincerely wrong, because they reject the full Word of God...

In fact the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses started the Watch Tower Organization

Because he didn't agree with what the Bible teaches about hell...He couldn't grasp how God could be loving and send people to hell...

By the way...most cults and other doctrines of demons that we see being taught today by false teachers...are a result of a person or people rejecting something that the Bible clearly teaches...

My Uncle used to tell me there's going to be a lot of nice, sincere, and religious people in hell...why?

Well first of all it's not "good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell"...Because apart from Jesus we're all bad people...Good people don't go to heaven...Saved people do!

People go to hell because they reject Jesus...the only power that can make them godly...They didn't have God's Word as an anchor...

They drifted away in a current of compromise...
They created a “god” that would allow them to
do what they think is right, and good...and they
worshiped that “god”

The bottom line is that people would rather
redefine God rather than fully surrender to
Him...

When Jesus isn't King...we decide what's right

Now what we're going to see is that Micah's
new religion ends up affecting others...

This is what so many people don't
understand...We have the power to influence
others...Our family, our friends

When Jesus is King...When we're anchored in
God's Word...We have the power to influence
others with the Truth...with the Gospel

But when Jesus isn't King...

We have the power to influence others in
ERROR

"False doctrine is like yeast: it grows quietly in secret and affects everything it touches"-Warren Wiersbe

18 In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of

Israel. Okay let me explain what's going on here...The tribe of Dan was given an inheritance of land...just like the other tribes...They were supposed to not just occupy it, they were supposed to conquer it...Remember when we started the series...all of these problems started because instead of driving out the pagan nations like they were supposed to do...they settled next to them

So basically the Danites are like living here is too hard...we want to move...they want to find an easier land to conquer...By the way, easier isn't always better...the easy path is sometimes the wrong path...

2 So the Danites sent five of their leading men from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it. These men represented all the Danites. They told them, "Go, explore the land." So they entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. 3 When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; "maybe they knew him, or just recognized his accent" David Guzik so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?" 4 He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "He has hired me and I am his priest."

5 Then they said to him, “Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful.” 6 The priest answered them, “Go in peace. Your journey has the Lord’s approval.”-Jdg 18:1–6 (NIV)

I said that when we practice buffet christianity we get confused...the lines are blurred...Look at the crazy that’s going on here...

The Danites are sinning because they want to live in a land that God didn’t give them...They are disobeying God’s boundries...

Then they find this priest who’s also living in sin that doesn’t seem to bother then at all...instead of calling it out they ask him to ask God if He is going to give them what they want...

Again...They’re asking God to bless disobedience...and the priest says “God says it’s all good”

Be careful who you allow to speak into your life...Don't get advice from people who don't walk with God...

Don't get advice from "pastor's" you don't know
Just because they have a huge ministry and their reels go viral doesn't mean you just blindly receive everything they say as truth!

This is what the Bereans did in Acts 17...
Paul and Silas go and start teaching them about Jesus...

11 And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. 12 As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.-Ac 17:11-12 (NLT)

So if you hear some person teaching something...you go to the Scriptures first...

Now If you find yourself wondering should you or shouldn't you do something...here's some truth to live by...

What does the Bible say about it? We go to God's Word FIRST. We pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Word to us...

If God's Word says something about it...yes or no then we have our answer...God's Word speaks to many things in our life...and as Christians we need to submit to God's Word as our rule of conduct...

Remember what I said a couple of chapters ago...it's okay to wrestle with scripture but at the end of the day, we need to submit to it... If we find ourselves disagreeing with God's Word...ultimately we're wrong!

What if God's Word doesn't say anything about it? Then it's okay to ask other godly people what to do...People that you know who have a healthy relationship with the God of the Bible...

If they're like hey it's ultimately up to you...God's Word doesn't say either way...

Then ask yourself, is this a wise decision? Ask God to give you more wisdom...

No one in chapters 17 & 18 is doing this...they're just doing what they think is right...

So the Danites go and spy out the land and decide that they can conquer the people living there...Again God hasn't told them to do this...

So they go back to their tribe...get an army of 600 men together and decide to go to war...But on the way they stop at Micah's house...

16 The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance of the gate. 17 The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the idol, the ephod and the household gods while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance of the gate. 18 When the five men went into Micah's house and took the idol, the ephod and the household gods, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" 19 They answered him, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?" 20 The priest was very pleased. He took the ephod, the household gods and the idol and went along with the people. -Jdg 18:16–20 (NIV)

So now the crooked priest who's only in all of this for this for the money...is going along with the confused and disobedient tribe...

And Micah hears about it...get's some men together to go and chases after them

23 As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, "What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?" 24 He replied, "You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?' "

Do you see how hopeless Micha's reply is? Idolatry leaves us with no hope...

Aren't you glad that we serve a God who can't be stolen? A God who doesn't need to be protected? A God who is our Savior, our Protector, our Deliverer, our Living Hope!

How sad it is if you're more powerful than your god...If you know more than your god...If you have to deliver your god...

25 The Danites answered, “Don’t argue with us, or some of the men may get angry and attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.” 26 So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home. 27 Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a people at peace and secure. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. 28 There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. 29 They named it Dan after their ancestor Dan, who was born to Israel—though the city used to be called Laish. Just because you succeed at doing something doesn’t mean it was in the will of God...it doesn’t mean that it’s blessed by God...

30 There the Danites set up for themselves the idol, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. 31 They continued to use the idol Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh-Jdg 18:23–31 (NIV)

When Jesus isn't King...You will influence others in error...Micah had no idea that the Tribe of Dan was going to adopt his new religion...and as a result...Dan becomes the first Tribe to officially make idol worship their official way to worship...all the way to captivity...

Now as we close this crazy story...You'll notice that the story just kind of ends with the Tribe of Dan worshiping idols...with what seems like no consequence...no rebuke from God..

But what I want you to see is this...

Unrepentant sin can have a long-term **IMPACT**

Let me fast-forward a little to the times of the Kings...You have Saul, David and Solomon...

After Solomon, the kingdom splits...Solomon's son rules over the two southern tribes and Jeroboam rules over the 10 northern tribes...

The tribe of Dan is in Jeroboam's kingdom and he sets up a golden calf in Dan...And because the Danites were already into pagan worship and idolatry...they actually help lead the other tribes around them to fall into the same sin...

Fast-forward to First Chronicles...where we get a listing of the tribes of Israel and their families...Dan is only mentioned as a geographical location, but the families are not listed...

Fast-forward to the Book of Revelation during the Tribulation period, the 144,000 witnesses

Those who will preach the Gospel to those left behind...There's 12,000 from each tribe of Israel...All of the Tribes are mentioned except one...

The Tribe of Dan...

Dan...Dan seems to have vanished...

Many scholars believe that Dan fell into such deep idolatry and had intermarried with so many different people groups that they simply became just another pagan people...

So much so that they're not around in the end...They're just not mentioned with no explanation as to why...

The only thing we have to connect it to is what we read about here in the book of Judges...

Let this be a reminder to us that just because there's no imminent consequence to sin...doesn't mean there won't be...

7 Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. 8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

-Ga 6:7–8 (NLT)

As we close today...

I want to remind you that although the Book of Judges keeps repeating the fact that in those days Israel had no King...

The good news today is that The King has come! His Name is Jesus!

Where Micah led others away from God
Jesus provides the only way to God

Micah had his gods and priest stolen away and
tried to rescue them and failed...

Jesus is our God and High Priest who didn't
fail...He rescued us!

It all points to Jesus...

What's the Holy Spirit Saying To You Today?

Are you practicing buffet christianity?

Are you redefining God instead of surrendering
to Him?

It's not too late to turn around...

Ask Him to forgive you...

Get a fresh start...

He's mighty to save!

Altar Time

