

07-17-01 An Unholy House on a Hill (by *David L. Hatton*)

lordship, idolatry, self-will, family

Jdg.17

When the King's will doesn't rule, the heart is the throne of a fool.

INTRODUCTION:

--Today's situation is much like that near the end of the book of Judges: they had a wonderful spiritual heritage, but the influences of the Canaanite fertility religions had saturated society.

--Where there is no allegiance to divine authority, false standards guide people's decisions.

--A bird's eye view of this is in Judges chapter 17 (read it).

--Three areas damaged *when the Lord is off the throne . . .*

I. Family Relationships Are Deformed, v.1-3

A. Some detective work--

1. The mother's ploy-- "in her son's hearing."
2. Past tense: "I wholly dedicated it . . ."
3. Power of curses [Achan's family] & blessings.

B. The mother's sins (single parent--doubly responsible):

1. Loved money more than her son (compare with the Prodigal's Father).
2. False view of God [Ananias & Sapphira's lie & its result].
3. Idolized her money, not really wanting any to go to God:
 - a. "Carved image," beautiful to see: building pride.
 - b. "Cast idol," alluring to worship, bringing prestige.

C. The son's sins (only child--full responsibility):

1. Stole jurisdiction over his mother's will by imposing his.
2. Stole from the future [Prodigal Son, like credit plans].
3. Feared consequences, not God (Commandments #5 & #8).

TRANS: When God is not King, a fool sits on the throne of the heart. Not only the family... *when God is off the throne,*

II. Faith in God Is Defiled, v.4-6

A. They broke the first three commandments [Exod. 20:1-6]:

1. Replacing the real God with theirs ("Not how I see it").

2. Idolizing conceptual images (bull of the fertility cults).
 3. Sanctioning behavior with God's name ("God led me . . .").
- B. They invested treasure in adorable idols (Today's smiths?).
- C. They allowed the disease of idolatry to grow:
1. Temptation of "shrine"-building (getting others to join in).
 2. "Ephod" & "teraphim," divination usurping divine worship
[Gideon's Ephod... today's occultism: Gong He Fot Choy].
 3. Installing his son as a priest, "filling his hand" with a distorted faith in God, (What's in our children's hands?).

TRANS: When God is not King of life, a fool takes the throne!

But beyond *family & faith... when the Lord is off the throne,*

III. Future Success Is Defeated, v.7-13

- A. The Levite left Bethlehem ["the house of bread"] **v.8.**
1. By birth called to the Lord's service, **v.7**, but absorbed with the surrounding culture's popular idolatry.
 2. Roaming like a spiritual gadfly, **v.9** (a better church?).
 3. Meager wages for a unique title and position, **v.10**.
 4. Trading his heritage in Moses the Lawgiver for adoption in the household of Micah the Lawbreaker, **v.11**.
- B. Micah tried to increase his chances for success, **v.12-13**.
1. Unconcerned about the Levite's character, **v.9-10**, [Aristotle's "Friends"], (interchurch accountability?).
 2. A real priest to give his shrine more credibility.
 3. A legitimate priest to cancel any curse from his previous audacity (a false balance theory, Yin & Yang).
 4. A mechanical view of God, used for the goal of success.

CONCLUSION:

--**When the King's will doesn't rule, the heart is the throne of a fool.** Our society is saturated with idolatry: false gods have been invited into the home, the church, the heart. But with the King off the throne, God's intention for family life is deformed, biblical faith in God is defiled, and true future success and the happiness that goes along with it is defeated.

--Micah's unholy house on a hill was finally stripped of its priest

and idols by the Danites on their way to conquer Laish (Ch.18).
(was this a tragedy or an opportunity?)

--Are there areas of in your *family life*, your *personal faith*, or your *goals for success* where Christ should be King, but where His rule has been neglected, or even rejected?

--There is no middle ground. There is the path of the Lordship of Christ where His Word rules our lives, or the path where every throne is the heart of a fool who has forsaken Christ's Lordship.

--read "Two Paths" and give invitation prayer.

TWO PATHS

(by David L. Hatton, 1988)

There are in life two paths to tread:
The way of light, and that of dread.
The first is bordered by God's rules,
The second is the way of fools.

The fools' highway is wide and worn
By proud feet plodding out their scorn
For limits that the Lord designed,
For wisdom from the Maker's mind.
Each self as "king," the prey they stalk
For greed and gain confirms their walk.
With rage and haste they all descend
Until in hell their journeys end.

The narrow road of heaven's light
Leads through the darkness of the night
Where pilgrims, out of fear and love,
Pursue God's glory up above.
To them, commandments aren't austere:
They only make the pathway clear.
God's Word lights up the pilgrim's race
To see their Master face to face.

Two paths before each human heart:
Two destinations, far apart.
Choose, with God's pilgrims, to ascend;
Don't march along with fools, my friend.