

BROKEN SAVIORS

THE BOOK OF JUDGES



MICAH, A LEVITE, & CULTURAL RELIGION.

This week, we meet Micah. Micah stole a large sum of money from his mother and then returned it - not because of any guilt or sense of decency but because of fear of a curse his mother enacted through a local deity. Micah's story does not end when he returns the money to his mother. In their exuberance, she created an idol, Micah named a priest for himself - basically they did a bunch of things to disrespect God *in the name of* honoring God.

Then, Micah meets a nameless, homeless, jobless Levite who is traveling around Israel trying to find work. Micah offers him a job and the opportunity to be part of his family.

This Levite is *actually* ordained by God to minister before him. Yet due to Israel's unfaithfulness to provide for the Levites like God commands, this man is desperate. And Micah makes him an offer he can't refuse, essentially giving him purpose, financial security, and relationship (family, "be to me a father"). These things become more important to the Levite than being faithful to God. He becomes a household priest, when he was meant to lead the nation in worship.

The Levite, who was supposed to lead Israel into having a right relationship with God, had also drifted away from God by not remaining faithful to God's word. His acceptance of the general attitude and stance toward God by the people around him led to his lack of faith instead of leading others into faith.

This cast of characters effectively meshed culture and religion all together.

IN THE BIBLE.

Judges 17:5-6

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.

Romans 3:3-4a

True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful? 4 Of course not! Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true.

QUESTIONS.

- 1.) When was a time you were absolutely sure you were right about something, only to discover later that you were wrong? What led to your complete confusion over what was true?
- 2.) What in your life is of such great value that it competes with your love for God? Your job? Your family? Pleasure? Money?
- 3.) Where in our culture do you see forms of religious expression with no real devotion to God behind them?
- 4.) So then what is the antidote to cultural religion? How have you shaken off periods of your faith that were dry or empty?

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?