

Title: **WHEN PEOPLE DO WHAT THEY THINK IS RIGHT**
Text: Judges 17-21
Date: Sunday Morning — February 20, 2005
Tape # Y62a
Reading: *Deuteronomy 12:1-19*

1. These *are* the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.
2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:
3. And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.
4. Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.
5. But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:
6. And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:
7. And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.
8. Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes.
9. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.
10. But *when* ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;
11. Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:

12. And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.
13. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:
14. But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.
15. Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.
16. Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.
17. Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:
18. But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.
19. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.

INTRODUCTION

How often we commend people for doing what they think is right.

- “I admire anyone who tries to do what he thinks is right.”
- “That’s one politician who always tries to do what he thinks is right.”
- “If you think something is right, don’t let anyone keep you from doing it.”

I want to talk to you about that from the Book of God. The title of my message is — **WHEN PEOPLE DO WHAT THEY THINK IS RIGHT**. My text will be the last five chapters of the Book of Judges, Judges 17-21. But I want us to go back to Deuteronomy 12 before we look at those five chapters in Judges.

In Deuteronomy 12 the Lord God gave commandments to the children of Israel concerning the matter of worship, once he had brought them into the land of Canaan and given them rest. These commandments had a specific reference to this Gospel Day in which we live. The rest given to Israel in the land of Canaan was typical of the blessed rest of faith in Christ. In that chapter, as he does throughout the Sacred Volume, the Lord God tells us that...

Proposition: We must worship him alone and that if we would worship him, we must worship him in precisely the way he prescribes.

- **ONE GOD** — We cannot worship God if we do not worship him alone as God, holding all other imaginary gods and all other religions in utter contempt, having no regard for the religion and the gods of this world (Deut. 12:1-3). — “*Overthrow their altars!*” — “*Hew down the graven images!*”
- **ONE PLACE** — If we would worship the true and living God we can do so only in the one place he has prescribed and at the one altar he has established. — **That Place is Christ. That Altar is Christ!** — God cannot be worshipped anywhere except in Christ (vv. 5, 13, 14; Ex. 20:23-26; Heb. 13:10; John 14:6).

(Deuteronomy 12:5) But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

(Deuteronomy 12:13-14) Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: (14) But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

Christ is the place where God meets with sinners (Ex. 25:21-22). **He is the Altar of God's choosing and the Altar of God's making** (Ex. 20:23-26).

(Exodus 25:21-22) And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. (22) And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

(Exodus 20:23-26) Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. (24) An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. (25) And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for **if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.** (26) Neither shalt **thou go up by steps unto mine altar,** that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

(Hebrews 13:10) We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

(John 14:6) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

- **ONE WAY** — If we would worship the true and living God, if we would serve him, if we would be saved by him, we must we must worship him with willing, joyful, hearts of faith in Christ.

“*Ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto*” (v. 7). — “*Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou putteth thine hands unto*” (v. 18). What does that mean? It simply means this. — If we are to be accepted of God, we must be delighted to trust Christ alone for our acceptance with him, delighted to bring our sacrifices of praise to him by the blood, righteousness, and merit of Christ alone, bringing nothing but Christ himself to the holy God for salvation and acceptance with him. — “*Offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place!*” The Spirit of God gives us a commentary explaining all of this in Philippians 3:1-3.

(Philippians 3:1-3) Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe. (2) Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. (3) For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

- **A STRICT PROHIBITION** — Now, look at Deuteronomy 12:8. Here the Lord God gives a very strict prohibition that must be continually observed if we would worship and serve him. We cannot worship him if we do not heed this strict prohibition.

(Deuteronomy 12:8) Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes.

Nothing is more dangerous, nothing is more certain to ruin our souls than doing that which is right in our own eyes. “*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool*” (Pro. 28:26). Of this you can be sure, everything that is right in our own eyes is wrong. And that is most especially true when it comes to spiritual and religious matters.

(Proverbs 12:15) The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.

(Proverbs 14:12) There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

(Proverbs 16:25) There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

(Proverbs 21:2) Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

With that as the background and introduction, I want you to turn with me to Judges 17. I want us to look at the last five chapters of this Book. They were not written just to fill up space. And they were not written just to give us historical information. They were written to bring us to Christ our

King, our Redeemer, and our God. These last five chapters of the Book of Judges are placed after the death of Samson; but these chapters record a terribly evil period in the history of Israel sometime between the death of Joshua and the first of Israel's judges (Othniel). Chronologically, what we have recorded in these chapters probably occurred at the period of time described in Judges 2:10-13.

It should not surprise us that these events are not revealed in chronological order. The Word of God was not written to give a chronological history. It was written to reveal Christ and the gospel. The fact is, the Scriptures rarely give us historical events in chronological order. We see that fact clearly in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke).

(Judges 2:10-13) And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. (11) And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: (12) And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. (13) And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroath.

NO KING

I. The first thing I want to point out is that all that is recorded in these five chapters took place at a time when **there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes** (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

(Judges 17:6) In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

(Judges 18:1) In those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

(Judges 19:1) And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah.

(Judges 21:25) In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

Actually, there was a King in Israel. They had no physical, visible king as other nations had. But we are told in **1 Samuel 12:12** that the Lord God was their King. The problem was not that there was no king, but that they did not know their King and refused to acknowledge and serve God as their King. And anytime men and women refuse to bow to, obey, and worship the Lord Jesus Christ as their King, the result is what we have described in these five chapters. — Everyone does that which is right in his own eyes.

These people got into the mess they were in, not by every man doing what was wrong in his own eyes, but by every man doing what was right in his own eyes. And when people do what is right in their own eyes, the results are exactly the same as the things recorded in these chapters.

- Idolatry
- Pragmatism
- Hedonism
- Humanism

CHRIST OUR KING

Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ is our God and King. That means that he is our Ruler, our Lord, our Savior, our Defender, our Provider, our Protector, our Judge, and our Deliverer. O for grace ever to acknowledge, worship and bow to him as our great King! The very first principle of saving faith is the surrender of our souls to Christ our King (Luke 14:25-33). — **To believe on Christ is to cease to do that which is right in your own eyes, bowing and surrendering yourself willingly to his dominion and his will as your Lord and King. Faith in Christ is the surrender of myself to him, trusting him alone as the Lord my Righteousness.**

(Luke 14:25-33) And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, (26) If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (27) And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. (33) So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

THE RIGHT PLACE

The events of these five chapters are out of order chronologically; but they are in exactly the right order of Divine Revelation.

- Moses (the law) was dead. He died in the wilderness because the law of God can never bring Salvation.
- Joshua had brought Israel into the land of Canaan. Joshua portrayed Christ bringing salvation.
- God had given Israel 12 judges (deliverers, saviors, and kings) who typified Christ and his continual deliverance of our souls by his grace.

- The last judge was Samson. As Samson brought deliverance by his death, so our great Samson obtained eternal redemption for us by his death.
- In these five chapters we see the corruption and depravity, idolatry and debauchery that possesses all men by nature. Yes, before they are converted by God's omnipotent grace, before Christ is revealed in them, God's elect are just like all other men, "*children of wrath even as others.*"
- Then, when we get to the next page in the Book of God, we see our great Samson revealed again in the Person of Boaz. Blessed be his holy name, Christ our Kinsman Redeemer will yet do all that is required for our souls.

THINGS PEOPLE DO

- II. Next, let me show you the things people do, when Christ is not acknowledged, worshipped and served, when everyone is his own king and everyone does that which is right in his own eyes.

If time permitted we would read these five chapters together and I would simply make brief comments on them. But that would not be reasonable. I cannot tell you how many times I have read these five chapters this week. I hope you will read them again today or tomorrow. For now, just hold your Bibles open in the Book of Judges, and let me call your attention to what you can always expect people to do when they simply do what they think is right. When I get done there will be plenty of room for more preaching; but I have picked out a few things here that need to be addressed.

MICAH THE EPHRAIMITE

First, let's look at Micah the Ephraimite and his family in chapter 17.

(Judges 17:1-6) And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah. (2) And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed *be thou* of the LORD, my son. (3) And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. (4) Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. (5) And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. (6) In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

1. **Micah's mother thought it was right to pretend to be more devoted and spiritually minded than she really was.**

She was upset because someone had robbed her of 1100 shekels of silver which she said she had wholly dedicated to the Lord. When she got the money back, she only used 200 shekels, and that was to make a graven image by which she pretended to worship the Lord.

Illustrations: "I'm strong in the Lord."
"I'm really very spiritually minded."
"I'm a holy person."
"You'd be surprised at how much I know."

God's people do not pretend great devotion, but lament their lack of devotion to Christ.

2. **Micah himself thought it was right to worship God anyway he saw fit, so long as he said he was worshipping God.**

- He thought repentance arising from a sense of guilt exposed and the fear of wrath was true repentance. Guilt and fear is not repentance. Repentance arises from the revelation of Christ in the heart by God the Holy Spirit.
- He thought it was fine to worship God at his own house, when God had established his altar at Shiloh.

Illustration: "We worship at home."

- He thought he could make an "*ephod*" (a righteous, priestly garment) for himself (v. 5).
- He thought he could worship Jehovah by worshipping gods (*teraphim*) of his own making (v. 5).
- Micah thought he could come to God and be accepted of him by a priest of his own choosing. — He consecrated his son to be his priest. At least he thought his son would do until he could get a better one. Soon, he found a preacher for hire.

THE HIRELING LEVITE

3. **When people do that which is right in their own eyes they find preachers for hire; and there are always plenty of preachers who can be hired.**

There was a young Levite from Bethel-judah looking for a place (a preacher looking for a church) that Micah hired to be his priest. Micah hired him for minimum wages, a new suit, a place to stay, and groceries (17:10).

(Judges 17:10) And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

- God’s servants are not hirelings.
- God’s servants are not looking for a place.
- Hirelings can always be hired by someone else.

This preacher soon got a better offer. In chapter 18, the Danites offered him more money and a bigger place, and he the worthless, self-serving preacher gave them the counsel they wanted to hear (18:5-6).

(Judges 18:5-6) And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. (6) And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye go.

When they told him to speak, he spoke what they wanted to hear. And when they said, “*hold thy peace*” (18:19), he shut up.

CEREMONIALISM

4. **When people do what they think is right, they find peace, security, and satisfaction in empty religious ceremonialism.**

(Judges 17:13) Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

Micah’s gods were as useless as his religion, but his gods and his religion meant everything to him (18:24).

(Judges 18:24) And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what *is* this *that* ye say unto me, What aileth thee?

(Judges 18:6-7) And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye go. (7) Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no magistrate in the land, that might put *them* to shame in *any* thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no business with *any* man.

(Judges 18:10) When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth.

- **Religion without Christ makes men careless, quiet, secure, and shameless.**

(Judges 18:31) And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

UTTER DEBAUCHERY

5. When we get to chapter 19 the story gets even worse. **The Benjamites, the men of the tribe of Benjamin, doing that which was right in their own eyes, lived in utter debauchery in open homosexuality and collective, brutal rape.**

ANOTHER LEVITE

- III. But, thank God, the story doesn't stop there. Another Levite appears in chapter 19. **Let's look briefly at this other Levite, who is a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus.**

Our blessed Savior is not a priest after the order of Levi, but after the order of Melchisedec. Yet, the Levitical priesthood portrayed him who is our true Priest before God.

- Christ alone represents us before God.
- God accepts no sacrifice but that which Christ brings.
- Christ alone consecrates us to God.

(Judges 19:1-4) And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. (2) And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months. (3) And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. (4) And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there.

Here is our great Levite, the Lord Jesus. — “*For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us*” (Isa. 33:22).

- This Levite took for his wife a woman who was nothing but a harlot (Hos. 1-3).
- Though she fully deserved to be put to death, this Levite went after his whoring wife, to speak friendly to her (to speak to her heart –marginal reference) and to fetch her back to himself. Hear the Savior's own words. — “*Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord*” (Jer. 3:1).
- This Levite found no place of lodging and rest among those people who were his own kinsman and people. — The people should have known that this man was a Levite. He wore the Levitical garments. — So, too, Israel should have known who Christ was when he appeared.
- An old man coming home from work met this Levite, and asked him where he was going. He said, “*I am going to the house of the Lord.*” — Now, read verse 20 and see a wonderful picture of substitution.

(Judges 19:20) And the old man said, Peace *be* with thee; howsoever *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only lodge not in the street.

- Those wicked Benjamites of Gibeah, when they could not have him, raped and murdered his wife.
- This Levite divided his wife's dead body into twelve pieces and sent through all the tribes of Israel, and Israel rallied as one man to destroy those wicked men. — They sat in judgment with the Levite over Benjamin and the Levite was avenged. — “*Shall not God avenge his own elect?*”

ISRAEL PRESERVED

IV. Now, in chapters 20-21, the Book of Judges closes with **a sad, but blessed portrayal of God preserving his elect**, even in such terrible days as those we have seen described in chapters 17-19.

Though it appeared that no man knew, worshiped, and acknowledged God as King and that every man did that which was right in his own eyes, that was not entirely the case. There was an elect remnant even then. Thank God, he always reserves to himself a remnant, according to the election of grace.

- When confronted with the wickedness of those vile men of Gibeah, **all Israel was united as one man** (20:8-11).

(Judges 20:8) And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any *of us* go to his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into his house.

(Judges 20:11) So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

- **There was a terrible warfare between Israel and Benjamin.**

Israel went to war against these Benjamite sons of Belial, these worshippers of Baal. At first, it looked like Benjamin would destroy all Israel (20:21-25). Day after day, Benjamin prevailed over Israel. **Robert Hawker**, in his commentary, wrote, “The apparent success of Benjamin, is a lively representation of the seeming success of Satan in the holy war. How frequently are God’s people apparently worsted and, in the conflict, prompted to exclaim, ‘*Surely the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me!*’” But, blessed be his name, that shall never be the case! — **The race is not to the swift. And the battle is not to the strong. “The battle is the Lord’s.”**

The Lord commanded Judah to lead the battle (20:18).

(Judges 20:18) And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first.

Our Savior is “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah.*” He hath prevailed, and he shall prevail. As the Lord appointed Judah to lead, I see the Lord Jesus, who according to the flesh, sprang out of Judah, going before to fight for his people.

- I have to quit. But let me show you one more thing. In chapter 21, Israel (the Lord God) stopped short of completely destroying Benjamin, because **the twelve tribes of Israel must, for typical reasons be preserved.** Why? — Those twelve tribes represent the whole election of God, the 144,000 of the earth who must be saved. In the New Jerusalem, their names are written on the gates of the city. It is written, “*And so all Israel shall be saved.*”

Rather than that Benjamin be destroyed, everyone in Jabeshgilead was sacrificed to provide wives for the remnant of Benjamin and preserve Israel.

There was a remnant (600 men) in Benjamin who escaped the slaughter by fleeing to the rock of Rimmon (Jud. 20:45).

(Judges 20:45) And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them.

Those six hundred men of Benjamin fleeing to the rock; remind me of the blessedness and safety of those who flee to the rock Christ Jesus as a refuge from every evil. For the sake of these men, hidden in the rock of Rimmon, the men of Israel destroyed Jabeshgilead completely, except for 400 chosen virgins who were spared. The men of Israel brought these 400 virgins captured at Jabeshgilead to the men in the rock preserve the tribe of Benjamin (Jud. 21:12).

(Judges 21:12) And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.

(Isaiah 43:1-4) But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Read the last verse of the Book of Judges, and understand that as it was in those days, so it is in our day.

(Judges 21:25) In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

Still, let us take sweet consolation from the verse that precedes that. **All is well in Zion and all shall be well in Israel at last.**

(Judges 21:24) And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

(Romans 11:25-27) For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (27) For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Application: I call upon you who hear my voice this day to come to God.

- Bow to Christ your King, our great Deliverer.
- Come to God at his Altar — Christ.
- Bring his Sacrifice — Christ.
- Do not lift up your tool upon the Altar. — No works!
- Do not attempt to climb up to the Altar by degrees. — Trust Christ alone for everything (1 Cor. 1:30).

Amen.