

Sermon Title: **“SIGNS OF THE TIMES”**

Judges 21:8-25

- Summary of Judges 21:8-12:
 - The 11 Tribes identify one region who DIDN'T come to the meeting where they vowed NOT to give their daughters
 - They sent 12,000 soldiers to this area & wipe out EVERYONE except for 400 women
- After hiding in these caves for 4 months, messengers of peace are sent to the 600 men of Benjamin
- God sovereignly allowed ALL of this sinning to happen
 - The glimpse we're allowed to see reveals it was at least in part to bring the Israelites back to the God they kept wandering away from
 - NOTHING will get in the way of God's sovereign plan (our sin CAN'T change it, stop it, or hinder it from happening)
- It's believed that this feast mentioned is most-likely the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) – it's a Jewish Autumn Festival
- This was the plan:
 - 200 Benjaminites (without wives) were to wait in the vineyards
 - When the women came out to dance, these 200 men would go out from hiding & grab a wife for himself
- This was spun & twisted to present this kidnapping & forced marriage as actually a good thing!
 - The result everyone went back to their home & life seemed to go back to “normal”
- This verse really summarizes the entire book of Judges
 - Unfortunately, Israel decided to NOT follow God & instead they looked to another source ... themselves
- We serve a Just God
 - When we deliberately break God's rules, when we try to do things on our own terms, we're guilty
 - If we remain in an untreated state, the wrath of God looms over us
- Instead of following God, who NEVER led them astray, they chose to wander away & serve idols (an inanimate object)
- God had been previously holding back the flood gates of the consequences of sin, but that was NO longer the case
 - God allowed Israel to hit low points, so they would cry out to God (so they would beg God to take away their discomfort)
 - Hardships AREN'T necessarily BAD, they often help us to see our NEED (they stop us & shake us out of our false sense of security)