

EPILOGUE
JUDGES 17:1 - 21:25

In these final chapters we see the country spiralling out of control, pointing to the need for a monarchy. Idolatry in Dan and degeneracy in Benjamin (Saul's basis of power), point to the need for Judah to arise as YHWH's favourite to save the people.

¹There was a man in the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah. ²He said to his mother, "The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and even spoke it in my hearing,—that silver is in my possession; I took it; but now I will return it to you." And his mother said, "May my son be blessed by YHWH!" ³Then he returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, "I consecrate the silver to YHWH from my hand for my son, to make an idol of cast metal." ⁴So when he returned the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into an idol of cast metal; and it was in the house of Micah. ⁵This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and teraphim, and installed one of his sons, who became his priest. ⁶In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.

⁷Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah (*from a clan of Judah*). He was a Levite residing there. ⁸This man left the town of Bethlehem in Judah, to live wherever he could find a place. He came to the house of Micah in the hill country of Ephraim to carry on his work. ⁹Micah said to him, "From where do you come?" He replied, "I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to live wherever I can find a place." ¹⁰Then Micah said to him, "Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a set of clothes, and your living." ¹¹The Levite agreed to stay with the man; and the young man became to him like one of his sons. ¹²So Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. ¹³Then Micah said, "Now I know that YHWH will prosper me, because the Levite has become my priest."

There is heavy irony in the man's name. 'Micah' means 'Who is like YHWH?' It is also interesting that 'eleven hundred pieces of silver' was the price paid to betray Samson (see 16:5). Acting against one of the most basic of the laws governing Israel, the money is used to make an idol of cast metal (17:3; see Deuteronomy 5:8; 27:15). The 'ephod' (17:5) was a priestly vestment used in divining God's will. Gideon also had one made (see 8:27). The teraphim were household gods (see Genesis 31:19, 34-35).

Wherever the Deuteronomists found this story, their reason for including it becomes clear in verse six. When there was no king to establish order in the country, there was chaos, with everyone doing just as he pleased.

The story moves on to speak of a Levite whom Micah sets up as his priest in the shrine he has built with the stolen money. In verse seven 'a clan of Judah' seems to be referring to the inhabitants of Bethlehem. With a priest who can use the ephod to discover god's will, the shrine is complete.

Dan migrates north

As the opening line indicates, here we have another story of the anarchy that rules among the Yahwist tribes; hence the need for a king. The migration of the tribe of Dan from its original allotment to the west of Benjamin to the city of Laish at the foot of Mount Hermon is described in the blackest of terms. It is a story of stealing, idolatry and wholesale massacre of a peaceful city that posed no threat to them. According to the account recorded here, it was not YHWH who authorised the taking of Laish it was an idol consulted by the priest in the house of Micah (hence linking up with the previous story).

There is surely a connection between the negative view of Dan and its sanctuary and the fact that when Israel and Judah separated on the death of Solomon, Jeroboam I of Israel set up a calf there and at Bethel (at least this is how Judah saw it; 1Kings 12:29-30). This story fits nicely with the Deuteronomists negative view of sanctuaries that challenge that of Jerusalem, as well as there wanting strong and faithful kingly leadership if Israel is going to learn to live by the covenant.

¹In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking for itself a territory to live in; for until then no territory among the tribes of Israel had been allotted to them. ²So the Danites sent five valiant men from the whole number of their clan, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to explore it; and they said to them, "Go, explore the land."

Zorah was the birthplace of Samson (see Judges 13:2). Eshtaol also features in the Samson story (13:35; 16:31).

When they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they stayed there. ³While they were at Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they went over and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is your business here?" ⁴He said to them, "Micah did such and such for me, and he hired me, and I have become his priest." ⁵Then they said to him, "Inquire of God that we may know whether the mission we are undertaking will succeed." ⁶The priest replied, "Go in peace. The mission you are on is under the eye of YHWH."

⁷The five men went on, and when they came to Laish, they observed the people who were there living securely, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking nothing on earth, and possessing wealth. Furthermore, they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with Aram. ⁸When they came to their kinsfolk at Zorah and Eshtaol, they said to them, "What do you report?" ⁹They said, "Come, let us go up against them; for we have seen the land, and it is very good. Will you do nothing? Do not be slow to go, but enter in and possess the land. ¹⁰When you go, you will come to an unsuspecting people. The land is broad—God has indeed given it into your hands—a place where there is no lack of anything on earth."

Dan moved north

¹¹Six hundred men of the Danite clan, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol, ¹²and went up and encamped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. On this account that place is called Mahaneh-dan to this day; it is west of Kiriath-jearim. ¹³From there they passed on to the hill country of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

¹⁴Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land (that is, Laish) said to their comrades, "Do you know that in these buildings there are an ephod, teraphim, and an idol of cast metal?"

See the build-up to this story in 17:4-5.

Now therefore consider what you will do." ¹⁵So they turned in that direction and came to the house of the young Levite, at the home of Micah, and greeted him. ¹⁶While the six hundred men of the Danites, armed with their weapons of war, stood by the entrance of the gate, ¹⁷the five men who had gone to spy out the land proceeded to enter and take the idol of cast metal, the ephod, and the teraphim. The priest was standing by the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war. ¹⁸When the men went into Micah's house and took the idol of cast metal, the ephod, and the teraphim, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" ¹⁹They said to him, "Keep quiet! Put your hand over your mouth, and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one person, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?" ²⁰Then the priest accepted the offer. He took the ephod, the teraphim, and the idol, and went along with the people.

²¹So they resumed their journey, putting the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them. ²²When they were some distance from the home of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house were called out, and they overtook the Danites. ²³They shouted to the Danites, who turned around and said to Micah, "What is the matter that you come with such a company?" ²⁴He replied, "You take my gods that I made, and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then can you ask me, 'What is the matter?'" ²⁵And the Danites said to him, "You had better not let your voice be heard among us or else hot-tempered fellows will attack you, and you will lose your life and the lives of your household." ²⁶Then the Danites went their way. When Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home.

²⁷The Danites, having taken what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, came to Laish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, put them to the sword, and burned down the city. ²⁸There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon and they had no dealings with Aram. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth-rehob. They rebuilt the city, and lived in it. ²⁹They named the city Dan, after their ancestor Dan, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was formerly Laish.

³⁰Then the Danites set up the idol for themselves. Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the time the land went into captivity. ³¹So they maintained as their own Micah's idol that he had made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.

These concluding verses pose some difficulties. Suddenly the Levite about whom we have been reading in chapters seventeen and eighteen is given a name, 'Jonathan'. This is the first and only time he is mentioned in the biblical record. Secondly, he is linked, through Gershom to Moses (see Exodus 2:22). There is another Gershom (or Gershon) who was the son of Levi (see Genesis 46:11). In the standard Hebrew text (MT) an extra nun has been written above the name Moses to indicate that it should read Manasseh. They were not happy to see Moses' name linked with this idolatrous priestly cult.

Shiloh is mentioned as a connection with the next stage of the story which is about the last of the 'judges', Samuel, of Shiloh (see 1Samuel 1:34). The house of God was at Shiloh after the destruction of the sanctuary at Shechem by Abimelech (Judges 9:45) – so in the second half of the twelfth century BC. Jeroboam's sanctuary with its idol was set up in the latter third of the tenth century and was there till it was destroyed during the Assyrian invasion two hundred years later (734BC).

Outrage in Benjamin (19:1-30)

This dreadful story provides the background for an invasion and destruction of areas of Benjamin by Ephraim and may have originated in an attempt to legitimise the invasion. It is included here as yet another witness to the spiralling anarchy into which Israel fell 'when there was no king in Israel'(19:1).

¹In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite, residing in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. ²But his concubine became angry with him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there some four months. ³Then her husband set out after her, to speak tenderly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple of donkeys. When he reached her father's house, the girl's father saw him and came with joy to meet him. ⁴His father-in-law, the girl's father, made him stay, and he remained with him three days; so they ate and drank, and he stayed there. ⁵On the fourth day they got up early in the morning, and he prepared to go; but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Fortify yourself with a bit of food, and after that you may go." ⁶So the two men sat and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, "Why not spend the night and enjoy yourself?" ⁷When the man got up to go, his father-in-law kept urging him until he spent the night there again. ⁸On the fifth day he got up early in the morning to leave; and the girl's father said, "Fortify yourself." So they lingered until the day declined, and the two of them ate and drank. ⁹When the man with his concubine and his servant got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Look, the day has worn on until it is almost evening. Spend the night. See, the day has drawn to a close. Spend the night here and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early in the morning for your journey, and go home."

¹⁰But the man would not spend the night; he got up and departed, and arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). He had with him a couple of saddled donkeys, and his concubine was with him. ¹¹When they were near Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said to his master, "Come now, let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites, and spend the night in it." ¹²But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel; but we will continue on to Gibeah." ¹³Then he said to his servant, "Come, let us try to reach one of these places, and spend the night at Gibeah or at Ramah." ¹⁴So they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. ¹⁵They turned aside there, to go in and spend the night at Gibeah.

It is important to remember that Gibeah was the headquarters of king Saul, the first king and a Benjaminite. It is known as 'Gibeah of Saul' (1Samuel 11:4).

¹⁵He went in and sat down in the open square of the city, but no one took them in to spend the night. ¹⁶Then at evening there was an old man coming from his work in the field. The man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was residing in Gibeah. (The people of the place were Benjaminites.) ¹⁷When the old man looked up and saw the wayfarer in the open square of the city, he said, "Where are you going and where do you come from?" ¹⁸He answered him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; and I am going to my home. Nobody has offered to take me in. ¹⁹We your servants have straw and fodder for our donkeys, with bread and wine for me and the woman and the young man along with us. We need nothing more." ²⁰The old man said, "Peace be to you. I will care for all your wants; only do not spend the night in the square." ²¹So he brought him into his house, and fed the donkeys; they washed their feet, and ate and drank. ²²While they were enjoying themselves, the men of the city, a perverse lot, surrounded the house, and started pounding on the door.

'perverse lot' translates 'sons of Belial' – an evil spirit of the mythical underworld. In Psalm 18:4 it is translated 'perdition'.

They said to the old man, the master of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, so that we may have intercourse with him." ²³And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Since this man is my guest, do not do this vile thing. ²⁴Here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do whatever you want to them; but against this man do not do such a vile thing."

This part of the story is modelled on an equally awful scene in Sodom as described in Genesis 19:4-8. The culture that gives rise to such an offer clearly values a male above a female. The story gets worse.

²⁵But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them. They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go. ²⁶As morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, until it was light.

²⁷In the morning her master got up, opened the doors of the house, and when he went out to go on his way, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸"Get up," he said to her, "we are going." But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey; and the man set out for his home. ²⁹When he had entered his house, he took a knife, and grasping his concubine he cut her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

The authors of this part of the story imagined pre-monarchy Israel to be not just a connection between scattered clans that espoused Yahwism, but as an alliance of twelve tribes that could be summoned to a central shrine for a communal political decision. Not all scholars are convinced that the existence of such a political confederacy is evident.

³⁰Then he commanded the men whom he sent, saying, "Thus shall you say to all the Israelites, 'Has such a thing ever happened since the day that the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until this day? Consider it, take counsel, and speak out.'"

An Alliance against Benjamin (20:1-48)

¹Then all the Israelites came out, from Dan to Beer-sheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled in one body before YHWH at Mizpah.

Some scholars see here a priestly hand. Mizpah was the seat of the governor Gedaliah after the destruction of Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 40:10). It contained a 'house of YHWH' (Jeremiah 41:5). Is the post-exilic priest editor reading the sanctuary at Mizpah back into pre-monarchic Israel?

²The chiefs of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred *contingents* of foot-soldiers bearing arms. ³(Now the Benjaminites heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) And the Israelites said, "Tell us, how did this criminal act come about?" ⁴The Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered, "I came to Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. ⁵YHWHs of Gibeah rose up against me, and surrounded the house at night. They intended to kill me, and they raped my concubine until she died. ⁶Then I took my concubine and cut her into pieces, and sent her throughout the whole extent of Israel's territory; for they have committed a vile outrage in Israel. ⁷So now, you Israelites, all of you, give your advice and counsel here."

⁸All the people got up as one, saying, "We will not any of us go to our tents, nor will any of us return to our houses. ⁹But now this is what we will do to Gibeah: we will go up against it by lot. ¹⁰We will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand of ten thousand, to bring provisions for the troops, who are going to repay Gibeah of Benjamin for all the disgrace that they have done in Israel."

¹¹So all the men of Israel gathered against the city, united as one.

¹²The tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What crime is this that has been committed among you? ¹³Now then, hand over those scoundrels in Gibeah, so that we may put them to death, and purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjaminites would not listen to their kinsfolk, the Israelites. ¹⁴The Benjaminites came together out of the towns to Gibeah, to go out to battle against the Israelites. ¹⁵On that day the Benjaminites mustered twenty-six *contingents* of armed men from their towns, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah. ¹⁶Of all this force, there were seven hundred picked men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair, and not miss. ¹⁷And the Israelites, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred *contingents* of armed men, all of them warriors.

The Benjaminites are outnumbered twenty-six contingents to four hundred contingents. However, they have the advantage of being highly skilled fighters.

¹⁸The Israelites proceeded to go up to Bethel, where they inquired of God, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the Benjaminites?" And YHWH answered, "Judah shall go up first."

¹⁹Then the Israelites got up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah.

²⁰The Israelites went out to battle against Benjamin; and the Israelites drew up the battle line against them at Gibeah. ²¹The Benjaminites came out of Gibeah, and struck down on that day twenty-two *contingents* of the Israelites. ²³The Israelites went up and wept before YHWH until the evening; and they inquired of YHWH, "Shall we again draw near to battle against our kinsfolk the Benjaminites?" And YHWH said, "Go up against them." ²²The Israelites took courage, and again formed the battle line in the same place where they had formed it on the first day.

²⁴So the Israelites advanced against the Benjaminites the second day.

²⁵Benjamin moved out against them from Gibeah the second day, and struck down eighteen *contingents* of the Israelites, all of them armed men. ²⁶Then all the Israelites, the whole army, went back to Bethel and wept, sitting there before YHWH; they fasted that day until evening. Then they offered burnt offerings and *communion* sacrifices before YHWH. ²⁰⁷And the Israelites inquired of YHWH (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, ²⁸and Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, ministered before it in those days), saying, "Shall we go out once more to battle against our kinsfolk the Benjaminites, or shall we desist?" YHWH answered, "Go up, for tomorrow I will give them into your hand."

Version 1 of the Victory (21:29-36)

This is modelled on the account of the victory at Ai (see Joshua 8)

²⁹So Israel stationed men in ambush around Gibeah. ³⁰Then the Israelites went up against the Benjaminites on the third day, and set themselves in array against Gibeah, as before. ³¹When the Benjaminites went out against the army, they were drawn away from the city. As before they began to inflict casualties on the troops, along the main roads, one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah, as well as in the open country, killing about thirty men of Israel. ³²The Benjaminites thought, "They are being routed before us, as previously." But the Israelites said, "Let us retreat and draw them away from the city toward the roads." ³³The main body of the Israelites drew back its battle line to Baal-tamar, while those Israelites who were in ambush rushed out of their place west of Geba. ³⁴There came against Gibeah ten *contingents* of picked men out of all Israel, and the battle was fierce. But the Benjaminites did not realize that disaster was close upon them.

³⁵YHWH defeated Benjamin before Israel; and the Israelites destroyed twenty-five *contingents* (one hundred men) of Benjamin that day, all of them armed. ³⁶Then the Benjaminites saw that they were defeated. The Israelites gave ground to Benjamin, because they trusted to the troops in ambush that they had stationed against Gibeah.

Version 2 of the Victory (21:37-43)

³⁷The troops in ambush rushed quickly upon Gibeah. Then they put the whole city to the sword. ³⁸Now the agreement between the main body of Israel and the men in ambush was that when they sent up a cloud of smoke out of the city ³⁹the main body of Israel should turn in battle. But Benjamin had begun to inflict casualties on the Israelites, killing about thirty of them; so they thought, "Surely they are defeated before us, as in the first battle." ⁴⁰But when the cloud, a column of smoke, began to rise out of the city, the Benjaminites looked behind them—and there was the whole city going up in smoke toward the sky! ⁴¹Then the main body of Israel turned, and the Benjaminites were dismayed, for they saw that disaster was close upon them. ⁴²Therefore they turned away from the Israelites in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the city were slaughtering them in between. ⁴³Cutting down the Benjaminites, they pursued them from Nohah and trod them down as far as a place east of Gibeah.

Some Benjamin Survivors (21:44-48)

⁴⁴Eighteen *contingents* of Benjaminites fell, all of them courageous fighters. ⁴⁵When they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, five *contingents* of them were cut down on the main roads, and they were pursued as far as Gidom, and two *contingents* of them were slain. ⁴⁶So all who fell that day of Benjamin were twenty-five *contingents* of arms-bearing men, all of them courageous fighters.

⁴⁷But six hundred turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and remained at the rock of Rimmon for four months. ⁴⁸Meanwhile, the Israelites turned back against the Benjaminites, and put them to the sword—the city, the people, the animals, and all that remained. Also the remaining towns they set on fire.

How to ensure Benjamin's survival (21:1-25)

¹Now the Israelites had sworn at Mizpah, "No one of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin." ²And the people came to Bethel, and sat there until evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. ³They said, "YHWH, the God of Israel, why has it come to pass that today there should be one tribe lacking in Israel?"

Underlying the concern of Israel is a conviction that YHWH would not want to see a sinful tribe annihilated. There must be a way to find redemption.

⁴On the next day, the people got up early, and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and *communion* sacrifices. ⁵Then the Israelites said, "Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come up in the assembly to YHWH?" For a solemn oath had been taken concerning whoever did not come up to YHWH to Mizpah, saying, "That one shall be put to death." ⁶But the Israelites had compassion for Benjamin their kin, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel this day. ⁷What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by YHWH that we will not give them any of our daughters as wives?"

The first solution (21:8-12)

⁸Then they said, "Is there anyone from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to YHWH to Mizpah?" It turned out that no one from Jabesh-gilead had come to the camp, to the assembly. ⁹For when the roll was called among the people, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead was there.

It is hardly accidental that Jabesh-gilead was noted for its support of Saul (see 2Samuel 11; 31:11-13; 2Samuel 2:4). We seem to be coming up against a pro-Judah bias again.

¹⁰So the congregation sent twelve *contingents* of soldiers there and commanded them, "Go, put the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead to the sword, including the women and the little ones. ¹¹This is what you shall do; every male and every woman that has lain with a male you shall devote to destruction." ¹²And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins who had never slept with a man and brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

¹³Then the whole congregation sent word to the Benjaminites who were at the rock of Rimmon, and proclaimed peace to them. ¹⁴Benjamin returned at that time; and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead; but they did not suffice for them.

The second solution (21:15-24)

¹⁵The people had compassion on Benjamin because YHWH had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. ¹⁶So the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since there are no women left in Benjamin?" ¹⁷And they said, "There must be heirs for the survivors of Benjamin, in order that a tribe may not be blotted out from Israel. ¹⁸Yet we cannot give any of our daughters to them as wives." For the Israelites had sworn, "Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to Benjamin." ¹⁹So they said, "Look, the yearly festival of YHWH is taking place at Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

Is this the Festival of Booths? (see Deuteronomy 16:13-15, page 132)

²⁰And they instructed the Benjaminites, saying, "Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, ²¹and watch; when the young women of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and each of you carry off a wife for himself from the young women of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. ²²Then if their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, 'Be generous and allow us to have them; because we did not capture in battle a wife for each man. But neither did you incur guilt by giving your daughters to them.'" ²³The Benjaminites did so; they took wives for each of them from the dancers whom they abducted. Then they went and returned to their territory, and rebuilt the towns, and lived in them. ²⁴So the Israelites departed from there at that time by tribes and families, and they went out from there to their own territories.

²⁵In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.

This refrain (see 14:1, 3; 17:6) picks up the central theme of these final chapters. Something has to happen if Israel is going to learn to be faithful, and survive. The only hope lies in having a king, like Josiah, who can pull the people together.