

221207-4 Judges 17, 18, Micah, a Levite, and the Tribe of Dan—CThurman

As we shall see in these chapters this history is about the time that part of the tribe of Dan migrates into northern Canaan.

Jud.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.

Remember that chronologically chapters 17.21 should be inserted between chapters 2 and 3 (ch. 2.10 to be exact), when the high priest Phinehas was living.

Jud.20.28 And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

The fact that these chapter are placed at the end of the book connects the Book of Judges to the Book of Ruth.

Chapter 17

1 ¶ 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,

swore

cursest, אָלַף, ah-lah, tss. to curse, to swear, to adjure; the fem. noun אָלַף, is tss. an oath, a curse, an execration, a swearing.

and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.

took it, Qal pret. of the verb אָקַח, lah-qach, tss. to take, to fetch, to have, to reserve, to marry, to receive, to take, to take away.

And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.

Micah's mother had sworn something (assuming she pronounced something evil) upon whoever took her silver. Evidently this moved Micah to fear so that he might restore it to her. Micah did not act out of fear for breaking the Law of God, the Ten Commandments. It didn't bother him that he broke the eighth commandment concerning stealing, *Ex 20:15 Thou shalt not steal*, or the tenth commandment concerning covetousness, *Ex.20.17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's*. But he was afraid that he might be cursed. Instead of having a proper fear of or reverence for God he was superstitious.

3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother,

when he had restored, I will restore, v.4, Yet he restored are each Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb שׁוּב, shoov, tss. to render, to reverse, to requite, to carry, to recompense, to deliver, to answer, to convert, to restore, to bring again, to return, to turn, to turn again, etc.

his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD

dedicated, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb שׁוּב, to hallow, to sanctify, to consecrate, to dedicate, to appoint, to keep; coupled with the Hiphil infin., in dedicating I have dedicated.

from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

Well ok. Though Micah stole his mother's silver, and acted in hate against her, the mother sees nothing wrong with the act because, well, she was going to give it to him anyway.

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 carved

founder, Qal part. POEL of the verb **יָצַרְךָ**, tzah-raph, *to try, to refine, to melt, to purge away*, and treated as a noun *a founder, a goldsmith*.

graven, **פֶּסֶל**, peh-sel, a masc. noun, tss. *a graven image, a carved image*.

The second commandment:

Ex 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth ...

and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

molten, **מִטָּכָה**, mas-she-kah, a fem. noun tss. *molten, molten image*; the verb **מָטָה**, mah-sah, tss. *to melt, to water, to consume away*.

Ex 34:17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Le 19:4 Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God.

When Israel came to mounts Ebal and Gerizim the Levites recited before the nation both the blessings they should receive from the LORD for obedience and the curses for disobedience.

Deu.27.15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

The first commandment:

Ex.20.2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. She tells her son that she had consecrated the entire amount of 1,100 shekels of silver to the LORD, but she only uses 200 shekels for the purpose she has intended. In other words she stole 900 shekels of silver from what she had consecrated to the LORD. If this is any indication of what Micah saw in her mother when he was growing up it's not difficult to understand how he could see nothing wrong with stealing from his mother.

Parents consider how powerful your example is to your children. It isn't so much what you say as it is what you do. And it will come back to you in some form or another.

5 *And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim,*

וַיִּמְלֵא אֶת־יָדוֹ
and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.
filled the hand of

ephod, אֶפֹּד, ey-phōd a masc. noun, and always tss. with the English, *ephod*. **The ephod of the high priest was a vest which was slipped on from overhead and draped over the shoulders and hung down.**

teraphim, תְּרַפִּים, t'rah'-pheem, a masc. pl. noun, tss. *images*, *teraphim*, *idolatry*.

Ge.31.17 ¶ Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;

18 And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

19 And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images (teraphim) that were her father's.

consecrated, Piel (intensive act.) fut. of the Hebrew verb מָלַא, mah-la, tss. *to fill, to expire, to replenish, to accomplish, to consecrate, to satisfy, to furnish.* **v.12.**

As is to be expected with a people that turn away from the true God of the Bible are like the idols which they make.

Ps.115.4 Their (the heathen, the Gentiles [v.2]) idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

King David wrote this of the heathen, but he knew that there were many of the LORD's people caught up with idolatry, the worship of idols. Some of whom are professing Christians today. Such folks are highly superstitious. Being superstitious is a tell-tell sign of idolatry. If we think that there is such a thing as *good luck* then our worship of God is only lip-service. Be honest. If we carry around good luck charms, wear good luck pins and jewelry, or carry good luck coins, perhaps carry the coin of some *saint* for protection, or whatever it might be that we think affords us some blessing or protection, we're every bit idolatrous as the world is. We are trusting in things rather than in God. Put away these evil practices. Let us repent and put our whole confidence in the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Micah's understanding of a priest was anyone that could do some religious things. Micah provided everything that he thought one of his sons needed to fulfil this role. There was no consideration of whether or not God has appointed the man to this servant office. Later, in v.12 Micah consecrates or fills the hand of a Levite to do this service.

6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

This is what comes of a people left to their own imaginations. *Every man does that which is right in his own eyes.* I think the implication is that a righteous king would lead the people to follow after God. (cf. Jud.18.1)

7 ¶ And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there.

Bethlehem Judah tells us which Bethlehem it is. It is a city of this name located in Judah's lot. We know from previous Scriptures that the cities dedicated to the Levites by the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin were given to the sons of Kohath descended from Aaron. So it could be that this Levite was descended of Aaron. If so this Levite seems to be discontented with his lot in this area and travels from place to place hoping to find a place suitable for service. It is difficult to tell if it was proper for the Levites to travel from place to place outside of their allotments looking for service in other part of Canaan, but it is what this Levite did.

8 And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah,

לַעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכָו
as he journeyed.
made his way
worked his way

9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find [a place].

10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a

לְיָמִים
priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year,
for the days

and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

and a suit of, עֵרֶךְ, [g]eh, rek, a masc. noun tss. *things to be set in order, an estimation, a value, a taxation, a proportion, an equal.*

victual, מִחַיָּה, mich-yah, a fem. noun tss. like a verb *to preserve life*, as an adj. *quick [flesh]*, and as a noun *sustenance, victuals.*

So there is nothing but confusion. Here is a Levite leaving the tribes to which he should be ministering, Judah, Simeon, and Benajamin, and moving into central Canaan where the other sons of Kohath were appointed to serve the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh (west of Jordan), and Dan. Micah, a man of central Canaan pays for the service of a Kohathite that should have been serving in the south. And it was a nice arrangement. Micah agrees to pay the Levite money, clothing, and food for his services. It's a very good arrangement.

11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.

— בְּמִלָּא מִיכָה אֶת־יָד —

12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, filled the hand of

consecrated, Piel (intensive act.) fut. of the Hebrew verb מָלָא, mah-la, tss. *to fill, to expire, to replenish, to accomplish, to consecrate, to satisfy, to furnish. v.5.*

and was in the house of Micah.

13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

Micah's faith was an external religious form. It was not true worship of the LORD except in form.

2Ti.3.5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Chapter 18

1 ¶ In those days there was no king in Israel:

Again, as stated in the previous chapter (cf. Jud.17.6) Israel was acting according to the dictates of their own understanding.

Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

The phrase *in those days* shows that the writer lives in the days of the kings of Israel. The 30th verse agrees by the words ... *until the day of the captivity of the land.*

Jud 18:30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

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.

The tribe of Dan met with great difficulty to take possession of the land that was allotted to them during the days of Joshua.

Jud.1.34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley...

Because of this it seems the tribe began to look for other lands to settle.

Jos.19.47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

to search, Qal infin. of the Hebrew verb חָקַר, chah-qar, tss. to search, to seek, to search out, to try, to sound, to find out (discover).

Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

3 When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: discerned

knew, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the Hebrew verb נָכַר, nah-kar, tss. to discern, to take notice, to acknowledge, to respect, to regard, etc.

and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?

4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

hath hired, Qal fut. of the Hebrew verb שָׂכַר, sah-kar, tss. to reward, to earn wages, to hire. The noun שְׂכָר, includes the idea of price, fare.

5 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.

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, judgment custom

careless, , beh-tach, a masc. noun tss. *boldly, to safety, secure, careless, without care, with confidence, securely.*

quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, idle possessor of restraint

quiet, Qal part. POEL of the Hebrew verb שָׁקַט, shah-qat, tss. *to rest, to be quiet, to be still, to be idle.*

that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the reproach them

Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

Here is a people living carefree and isolated, without anyone to correct them for disregarding the reality of enemies around them that posed threats. Ignorance of danger does not change the reality of danger.

8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?

... to the following report.

9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.

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.

11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites,

And there went, Qal fut. of the Hebrew verb נָסַע, nah-sa[g], tss. *to journey, to depart, to set forward, to remove, to go forth, to go their way.*

out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.
girded

appointed, Qal part. PAUL of the Hebrew verb צָהַר, chah-gar, tss. *to restrain, to put on, to appoint, to gird.*

12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah:

Kirjathjearim was just a little further north of Zorah and Eshtaol.

wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim.

Mahanehdan simply means 'The Camp of Dan.' מַחֲנֵה דָן, mah-^{cha}-neh, *camp* + Dan.

13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

14 ¶ Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do. (or, And now, you know what you are to do.)

15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. (and said to him, 'Peace.')

16 And the six hundred men appointed (girded) with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.

gate, שַׁעַר, a masc. noun tss. gate, door, etc.

17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.

18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?

19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?

20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

So like Micah that had no qualms with stealing 1,100 shekels of silver from his mother, and his mother stealing 900 shekels of that which she had consecrated to the LORD, so the priest has no qualms stealing all that was Micah's and using those things in the service of the LORD in the city of Dan.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

valuables

(Inter. Bible, J.P. Green Sr.)

carriage, כְּבוֹדָהּ, k^e-vood-dah, tss. *carriage, stately, all glorious*; the verb of this כָּבַד, kah-vad is tss. *to be rich, grievous, to be sore, to be heavy, to be glorious, to honour.*

In other words the men of war expected some resistance from Micah's house and put themselves between the priest and his family and all his stuff and Micah's house.

22 And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, far off

were a good way, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the Hebrew verb קָרַח, *to be far, to be far off, to go away far, to be far removed, to be loosed*, etc.

the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

were gathered together, Niphal (simple pass.) pret. of the Hebrew verb נִצַּח, nah-[g]aq, in Niphal this is tss. *to come with such a company (v.23), to assemble.*

23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?

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?

25 And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee,

angry, מָר, an Hebrew adj. tss. bitter, angry, chafed, heavy.

and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.

26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

27 ¶ And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet (idle) and secure (careless): and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

28 And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon,

deliverer, Hiphil (causative act.) part. of the Hebrew verb נָצַל, nah-tzal, tss. to deliver, to escape, to take, to recover, to save.

and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by

Bethrehab. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

The place of an Enlarged House
Shortened to Rehob, Nu.13.21

Nu 13:21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin (in the south) unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath (in the north).

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

Laish is also called Leshem.

Jos 19:47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed

it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

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

These last two verses show that perhaps the Book of Joshua was written as late as the time that the Assyrians carried away the ten northern tribes of Israel. So, in the days of the kings of Israel. Notice in chs. 18, 19 the phrase *in those days*. It is my opinion that someone of the southern kingdom must have collected the information and eventually recorded these this history into what is now called the Book of Judges.

2Ki.15.29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.

2Ki.17.6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.