

BOOK OF JUDGES
MICAH AND THE DANITES
JUDGES 18:1-31

Introduction

Last time we saw the **IDOLATRY** of a man from **MT. EPHRAIM** named **MICAH**.

We will see more mentioned about **MICAH** but first we see the story transitions to the **TRIBE OF DAN**.

I. WE SEE THE DANITES SENT SPIES LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SETTLE.

A. The TRIBE OF DAN Sent Five Spies To Look For Land To Take Among The People Of Israel. (*Judges 18:1-2*)

It is reiterated here in the first part of *verse 1* what we saw in *verse 6* of *chapter 17*.

Understand that the **TRIBE OF DAN** had land apportioned to them, but for some reason it appears that they found their own land too hard for them to conquer. So rather than obey the **LORD**, they chose to take some other land.

We saw *Judges 17* was a story of **COMPROMISE** and **SELF-WILLED CARNALITY** in the lives of a few individuals. *Judges 18* shows how individual **SINS** made an entire tribe **WICKED** and **REBELLIOUS AGAINST the LORD!**

So, as these **DANITES** wanted an easier land to conquer and make their own, they sent out a search party which came to through the land to the **TRIBE OF EPHRAIM** and to the **HOUSE OF MICAH** and they lodged there at **MICAH'S** house.

B. These DANITES Recognized The Voice Of MICAH'S LEVITE And Met With Him. (*Judges 18:3-6*)

It may be that the spies from the **TRIBE OF DAN** knew this renegade **LEVITE** personally.

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Or they may have simply recognized his accent as being from the southern part of **JUDAH!**

This shows how it was a **SPIRITUALLY CONFUSED** time in **ISRAEL**. These **DANITES** who were on a **SINFUL** mission to take some other tribe's inheritance, met with a **SINFUL LEVITE** and wanted to know if their mission would be successful. Then the **SINFUL LEVITE** sent the **SINNING** men on their way with the "**LORD'S BLESSING.**"

C. These DANITES Journeyed On From There To A City Named LAISH For Their Expansion. (*Judges 18:7-10*)

They found this city that was occupied by a people who "*dwelt careless, after the manner of the ZIDONIANS*" The **ZIDONIANS** were one of the heathen groups that the **LORD GOD** had told **ISRAEL** to drive out of the land of **CANAAN. (Cf. Joshua 13:4)**

Look at the description of these people that dwelled in **LAISH found in Judges 18:7, 27-28:**

They were **CARELESS.**

They were **QUIET** and **SECURE.**

They had **NO MAGISTRATE** to accuse them in any matter. They were **FREE FROM TIES** and **CONCERNS** to other people.

With them seeing that the land was good, and that the city was not heavily defended, the **DANITES** believed this would be a good city to conquer and take as their own territory. It was in the northernmost part land that belonged to the tribe of Naphthali (who obviously had not driven these heathen out!)

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D. These DANITES Assembled An Army Of 600 To Take Possession Of Laish So They Could Occupy It As Their Own! (Judges 18:11-13)
It is odd that they assembled an army of 600 men to fight for the city of Laish in the land of another tribe; yet they could not fight for the land of their own tribal allotment.

II. WE SEE THIS 600 MAN ARMY OF THE TRIBE OF DAN TOOK THE RELIGIOUS MICAH'S IDOLATROUS SHRINE FOR THE DANITES. (Judges 18:14-18a)

They were on their way to **LAISH** and yet they took time to stop by **MICAH'S** house for the express purpose of taking his shrine for themselves.

This was a strange combination of **STRONG RELIGIOUS FEELING** with **LOW MORALITY**. It would be like someone really wanting to study the **BIBLE** and so they go steal a **BIBLE**.

So, these **DANITE SPIES** went into **MICAH'S** house and took the **CARVED IMAGE**, the **EPHOD**, the **TERAPHIM (HOUSEHOLD IDOLS)**, and the **MOLDED IMAGE** while the 600 soldiers stood at the gate of **MICAH'S** property.

They used the threat of violence to steal these items belonging to **MICAH** to supposedly advance a **RELIGIOUS** cause, and the **PRIEST** allowed them by standing at the gate with the army while they were doing it.

e.g. It reminds me of a news report during the Los Angeles riots in the 1990's. A reporter came across three looters leaving a store. He asked them what they took, and the first two told him off with profanity. But the third man said, *"I got some gospel music. I love Jesus!"*

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III. WE SEE THE LEVITE WENT WITH THE ARMY FROM THE TRIBE OF DAN. (Judges 18:18b-21)
They basically commanded the **LEVITE** to stop asking questions! Then they began convincing him to leave with them and be their **PRIEST** instead of **MICAH'S PRIEST**.

His heart was glad here probably because he figured his gig with **MICAH** was over at this point anyway. There were no **IDOLS**, no **EPHOD**, no **NOTHING** to be a **PRIEST** over at this point!

And maybe he saw an opportunity for a **PAY** increase and more **PRESTIGE** by being the **PRIEST** for a whole tribe instead of a mere family.

IV. WE SEE MICAH'S FOOLISH IDOLATRY COMES TO NOTHING! (Judges 18:22-24)

This is a powerful irony here! **MICAH** ran after the **DANITES** to hoping to rescue his own gods. Obviously, a real god ought to be able to care for himself. Don't you wonder if **MICAH** saw the foolishness of this.

We each either worship a god of our own making or we worship the one true **GOD** who made us. But the gods we make are always less than we are. **IDOL** worship is just another way of worshiping self.

Also, **MICAH** was foolish enough to have a **PRIEST** who could be convinced to leave him behind!

In **CHRIST**, we have a **GREAT HIGH PRIEST** who cannot change, and who can never be taken away from us. F.B. Meyer wrote, *"Whatever can be taken from us has the mark and signature of man upon it."*

Yet we know that **JESUS CHRIST**, our **GREAT HIGH PRIEST**, is unchanging and will never leave us or forsake us!

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And **HE** can't be taken from us or convinced to leave us!

MICAH'S words in *verse 24* shows just how empty **MICAH'S IDOLATRY** was. His false gods didn't bring him any lasting good!

V. WE SEE THE ARMY OF THE TRIBE OF DAN REFUSED TO GIVE MICAH HIS GODS BACK! (Judges 18:25-26)

They threatened **MICAH** not to say anything further or they would kill him and his household. So, **MICAH** went home empty-handed.

This event and these words illustrate the general **LAWLESSNESS** in **ISRAEL** during the time of the **JUDGES**. The children of **DAN** stole **MICAH'S IDOLS** simply under the principle of "*might makes right.*"

They were too strong for both **MICAH** and his **gods**. One should never have a **god** that needs protection.

VI. WE SEE THE ARMY FROM THE TRIBE OF DAN CONQUERED THE CITY OF LAISH AND RENAMED IT DAN. (Judges 18:27-29)

This is written in a way that appears to be meant to make us at least a little sympathetic for the people of **LAISH**.

Yes, the people of **ISRAEL** were instructed to take the land from the **CANAANITES**, but the **TRIBE OF DAN** wasn't much different than these heathens! They were **IDOLATROUS, UNPRINCIPLED, and WICKED!**

The city of **DAN** would become the most prominent northern city in **ISRAEL**. The phrase "*from Dan to Beersheba*" (*Judges 20:1, 1 Samuel 3:20*) became an expression meaning, "*from the north to the south of Israel*" indicating all of **ISRAEL**.

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VII. WE SEE THE TRIBE OF DAN OFFICIALLY ADOPTED THE IDOLATRY THAT BEGAN WITH MICAH. (Judges 18:30-31)

This was the reestablishment **IDOLATRY** in **ISRAEL** in the **PROMISED LAND**.

Through a strange chain of events, this began with a son stealing 1,100 shekels from his mother (*Judges 17:1-2*). It ended with an entire tribe of **ISRAEL** led into established **IDOLATRY**.

We can suppose that **MICAH** had no idea how far-reaching the effects of his **SIN** would become, because he didn't see it as **SIN!**

His personal **IDOLATRY** became the **IDOLATRY** of an entire tribe, setting up a rival center of worship to the **HOUSE OF GOD** in **SHILOH**.

SHILOH was the true centre of the national life, **THE HOUSE OF GOD**.

Nevertheless, at **DAN** they gathered about the false gods, and rendered a worship that was destructive.

Understand that many years later, when **ISRAEL** split in the days of **KING REHEBOAM, SOLOMON'S** son, that this city of **DAN** is where **KING JEROBOAM** of **ISRAEL** set up one of his two golden calves for worship. One was set up in **BETH-EL** in the south and the other in **DAN** in the north. (*1 Kings 12:28-29*)

DAN was already rooted in **IDOLATRY**, so it wasn't hard to get them to add a new god!

That's our **Bible Study** for this evening. Next week **LORD** willing, we'll see another strange story that has a section that reminds us of Sodom!