

## Lesson 8 – Judges 17-18

Text: Judges 17-18

Main Characters: God, Micah, a Levite, the Danites

Key Passages:

- Judges 17:6 – During the time of the Judges, everyone did whatever they wanted to do.
- Judges 17:13 – Micah thought that just because he had a Levite priest, he would be blessed.

Main Storyline:

Judges 17-18 describes an event which appears to have taken place during the early part of the Judges time period, or perhaps even before Joshua's death. They, unlike most of the previous chapters in Judges, do not describe a particular judge, but give insight into the lives and attitudes of the Israelites. The Israelites, during the time of the Judges, did not respect God as king but instead did as they pleased.

A woman in Ephraim had had 1100 shekels of silver stolen from her. She then apparently cursed the silver and the one who had taken it. At some point, her son, Micah, confessed to stealing from her and returned the silver. She told him that she had dedicated the silver "to the Lord" on his behalf, so she took the silver and gave it to a silversmith to create idols, even though doing so was a clear violation of God's laws. Micah took the idols to his house and also created a shrine and an ephod. He also decided to "consecrate" one of his sons to make him a priest (though he was from Ephraim).

One day, a young man, a Levite, came by, looking for a place to stay. Micah offered to take care of him in exchange for being the priest of his house. The Levite agreed and was content to live with Micah, even becoming as close to him as one of his sons. Micah figured that the Lord would be good to him now that he had a Levite as a priest (disregarding the other problems in his life).

Around that time, the tribe of Dan was still seeking their inheritance (they either had not yet chosen it or they had not yet defeated enough of the Canaanites there to settle it). They sent 5 men to spy out the land and report back on what they found. During their search, they came upon Micah's house and decided to stay there. While there, they cased the house and asked for counsel from God from the Levite, who apparently gave them a good report. They went on further and discovered a city, Laish, whom they believed would be an easy city to take due to its lack of allies and preparedness.

The spies returned to their people and informed them of the city. The Danites sent 600 men (a very small percentage of their army, see Numbers 26:42-43) to attack Laish. While on their way there, they saw Micah's house (Micah was apparently not there). The spies informed the army that there were idols in the house that they should take for themselves. They agreed, and while the army was stationed outside the house, the spies went inside and took Micah's idols. The Levite protested to the army, asking them what they were doing. The army hushed him, telling him that he should come with them and be priest rather than stay with Micah. The Levite became happy and decided to join the Danites.

Some time later, Micah found out what Dan had done and chased after them with his neighbors. When he caught up to them and expressed his displeasure with what they had done, the Danites threatened him with violence. Knowing there was nothing he could do, Micah returned to his home without his idols and priest. The Danites went to Laish, defeated the city, and set up the idols there as their gods. It seems that the Levite, a son of Moses, became their priest.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Being right in one area of life does not allow being wrong in the rest of the areas of one's life.
- 2.) Those who sin often have the same sin committed against them at some point in their lives.
- 3.) Living without God as king in one's life (using no standard) leads to moral and spiritual chaos.