

## Episode #543 Judges 18 Part 1 – The Ungodly Tribe of Dan

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. Starting in Judges 17 we see the religious decline of Israel. Micah and his mother are stunning examples of hypocrisy in their every action. She blesses Micah for stealing from her. She wholly dedicates money to the LORD to make an idol. Wholly dedicated translates to two hundred of eleven hundred. When Jonathan, Moses' grandson, comes looking for work, Micah makes him his priest. He calls a younger man "father," though he really becomes like his son. He thinks Jehovah will be pleased with him for having a Levite as his priest, when what the Levite is doing is serving idols. This stunning hypocrisy shows the ignorance of the true God that prevailed.

III. The Ungodly Tribe of Dan. Judges 18:1-10.

- A. Judges 18:1. There was not only no ruler, but the Israelites were not obeying Jehovah their true king. The Danites never really took all their inheritance. Judges 1:34-35. Therefore they are feeling crowded. Note: this is not all the Danites. Some remained in their given land (Samson).
- B. Verse 2. Their sons (representatives) send out five spies to search for a place outside their own inheritance to dwell. Note: stealing territory from another tribe! They figure their brother tribes might have land easier to take than their own, but not thinking of conquered the rest of their rightful land! Yahweh would have helped, had they trusted in him. They come to the mountains of Ephraim to Micah's house and lodge nearby.
- C. Verse 3. While passing the house of Micah they hear the voice of the young Levite and recognize it. They ask him how he came there and what he is doing.
- D. Verse 4. He tells about his employment with Micah. He admits he is a hireling.
- E. Verse 5. They want to hear from "God" from an idolator! Note that they are just as hypocritical as Micah's house. This enquiry would be by the ephod (priestly garment) Micah made for himself. The urim and thummim in Micah's ephod would not work to reveal Yahweh's will as those in the true, high priestly ephod would. Perhaps they were made so the priest could manipulate them as he saw fit.
- F. Verse 6. Micah tells them what they wanted to hear, like a good hireling. Of course, the LORD approves of them stealing land from one of their brother tribes!
- G. Verse 7. Laish = Lion. North past where the tribes had currently expanded. In territory supposed to be either eastern Manasseh or Naphtali. These are Sidonians but far from the rest of their kind. They have no strong ruler and no close allies.
- H. Verse 8. They return. Zorah = Place of Hornets, the hometown of Manoah Samson's father (later). Eshtaol = Request, another Danite city. Where they should have stayed. Their brothers want a report.
- I. Verse 9. They encourage them to go into action and to take the land they found. They encourage them not to be slothful. As opposed to being slothful about taking their own land given them by God?
- J. Verse 10. Their plan. We are not really to feel sorry for the Sidonians, as they were to be cast out of the land. The problem is them taking easy pickings away from another tribe rather than trusting God to give them their own. Had God really given them another tribe's land? No; they are going off the word of the idolatrous Levite.

IV. The Theft and Conquests of Dan. Judges 18:11-31.

- A. Verse 11. An army of six hundred Danites goes on the mission. Their women, children, and elderly are along too, as noted later. Note: leaving their rightful home.
- B. Verse 12. They pitch camp west of Kirjath Jearim (House of Forests) in Judah. This place in Judah becomes famous for being their temporary camp, and is called Mahaneh Dan (Camp of Dan) from then on.
- C. Verse 13. They come again to Micah's (now-famous) house in the hills of Ephraim.
- D. Verse 14. The spies report what they found in this house as they come to it. They tell them to consider what to do. What should they have done? Destroy it all! By becoming idolaters all there were worthy of death by the law. This is not their plan.
- E. Verse 15. They go to Micah's house and greet the young Levite.
- F. Verse 16. The six hundred men stand with their weapons by the entrance. This would have been plenty to carry out judicial destruction on these people and city.

V. Judges 18 further shows us the religious decline of Israel. The tribe of Dan, failing to take the land God rightfully gave them, choose to steal land from another tribe instead. When their spies find Micah's idolatrous setup they "inquire of God" there. They find an easy place to conquer, not trusting God to help them conquer their own territory. When the whole tribal family with their army comes, they decide to do something about Micah's worship: not stopping it, but stealing it for themselves. Are we more faithful to our duties and the truth of God than the blatant and ignorant hypocrites of Ephraim and Dan?