

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 21- "What's Yours is Mine!"

Key text: Judges 18:1-31

Suppl. texts: Gen. 49:17

Introduction: Last time, we saw that the cycle of the Judges had ended. With the death of Samson, there will be no more judges, unless you include Eli & Samuel in that list. Next, we saw a new cycle begin, one that devolves from bad to worse. A new story also began: the story of Micah & his idolatry, their misguided act of worship, & a misappropriated priest. The cycle that began was one of covetousness. Micah coveted his mother's wealth, the mother coveted God's blessing, & the priest coveted safety & security. Tonight, we move forward & see that we're not done with Micah or his priest yet.

Outline: *read Judges 18:1-20.*

1. No king & no law

- The author repeats a similar statement to **Judges 17:6** when he says in **vs. 1a**; *"In those days Israel had no king..."*
- This drives home the point that everyone is doing whatever seems right in their own eyes. The **moral relativism** of that day is like our own.
- The cycle of covetousness is far from over; it has spread to an entire group of people, the Danites.
- The tribe of Dan had been allotted land in the Promised Land from Joshua but had failed to possess it. Their land was along the **eastern coast** of the Mediterranean Sea.
- There was a problem: the **Amorites** & the **Philistines** were their unruly southern neighbors, & Dan felt it wasn't worth the trouble to unseat them from the land.
- **Vs. 1b**; *"And in those days the tribe of Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel."*
- Instead of obeying the command of the Lord & taking their promised land, they decided to covet another land. However, that's not all they coveted.
- **Vs. 2a**; *"So the Danites sent five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it."*
- **Vs. 2c-3**; *"The men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, 'Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?'"*
- They come to Micah's home for lodging & encounter his Levite priest. However, Micah is either not present or not mentioned, as they are given hospitality.

- They must recognize the priest's accent & know he is out of place.
- **Vs. 4-5;** *"He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, 'He has hired me, and I am his priest.' Then they said to him, 'Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful.'" They suddenly wondered if their plan was God's plan.*

2. No word from the Lord

- Finding this 'man of God' in a strange place with a strange accent is a '*stroke of luck*,' or so it seemed. Instead, while already on **THEIR** way, they decide it's a good time to ask for God's favor.
- The priest answers them without a prayer recorded to the Lord. Maybe he thought, *"I'm a priest; I'll just tell you what you want to hear."*
- **Vs. 6;** *"The priest answered them, 'Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval.'" Yikes, that's super scary!!!*
- They, like Micah's mother before, are coveting blessing from the Lord.
- The error is clear. They could've correctly sought the Lord by going to the Tabernacle & inquiring of the high priest about the trouble they had with inheriting their land.
- They would've likely received no answer at all or a repeat of the command to go & possess the land that was allotted to them by Joshua. **Map pic.**
- However, they wanted other land, easier land, land that belonged to others.
- **Vs. 7;** *"So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, unsuspecting and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else."*
- These people were likely Sidonian in descent & peaceable, wealthy people. They were also without protection. Their relatives lived in & above northern Israel.
- Before we cast the first stone, let us think about how often we have gone shopping for God's approval after **WE'VE** already decided what we should do.
- **Vs. 8-9;** *"When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers asked them, 'How did you find things?' They answered, 'Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over.'" Their preconceived notion is clear to see! Let's go to war!*

3. No 'gods' left

- **Vs. 11;** *"Then six hundred men from the clan of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol."* Apparently, 600 warriors would be all that was needed to defeat & destroy a peaceful people & take their land.
- They may have felt they had the mandate & blessing of the Lord to take what they wanted, but the writer of Judges clearly presents this again as covetousness.
- To back this thought up, the author presents a mini act of coveting along the way.

- **Vs. 13-14;** *"From there they went on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah's house. Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their brothers, 'Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, other household gods, a carved image and a cast idol? Now you know what to do.'"*
- Not only do they want to steal the land & livelihoods from foreign people, but they want to steal valuables & people from their own countrymen.
- **Vs. 15-21;** *"So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him. The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance to the gate. The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance to the gate. When these men went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, 'What are you doing?' They answered him, 'Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?' **Then the priest was glad.** He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people. Putting their little children, their livestock, and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left." They silenced his objections by hiring him, a form of bribery.*
- Here we see not only the covetousness of the Danites, but also the priest, as he gladly turns on Micah, the hand that had fed & housed him.
- Now, we find the former thief, stolen from, & now in hot pursuit!
- **Vs. 22-26;** *"When they had gone some distance from Micah's house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites. As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, 'What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?' He replied, 'You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?' The Danites answered, 'Don't argue with us, or some hot-tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.' So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home."*
- As his mother was powerless when she was robbed, so Micah is outnumbered & powerless to recover his valuables or his priest. While his mother wasn't destitute when she experienced loss, Micah says, *"What else to do I have?"*
- *"Idolaters worship gods that they can carry, but Christians worship a God who carries them."*
- **Vs. 27-31;** *"Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the*

sword and burned down their city. There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. They named it Dan after their forefather Dan, who was born to Israel, though the city used to be called Laish. There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.”

- Jacob's blessings to his sons were given in Genesis 49. There speaks of Dan in vs. 17.
- **Gen. 49:17;** *“Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward.”* Jacob's prophecy comes true.
- We are never told how big the city of Laish was, but it only took 600 trained men to overthrow it. We don't know how many people died in the attack.
- We see that at least part of Israel has now devolved into a new murderous state of violence.
- Without God's command, their actions are nothing more than selfish genocide.
- At the end of the story, we learn the Levite priests name & lineage. His name was Jonathan & he is very likely from Moses' family tree, a grandson or, at most, a great-grandson of Moses through Gershom, Moses' son.
- This explains why Micah would've wanted him so fervently & why the Danites stole him away. This is a Levitical priest people would follow.
- See how the mighty have fallen so quickly from the Lord. Moses' own family has become corrupt.

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 21

Last time, we saw that the cycle of the Judges had ended. With the death of Samson, there will be no more judges, unless you include Eli & Samuel in that list. Next, we saw a new cycle begin, one that devolves from bad to worse. A new story also began: the story of Micah & his idolatry, their misguided act of worship, & a misappropriated priest. The cycle that began was one of covetousness. Micah coveted his mother's wealth, the mother coveted God's blessing, & the priest coveted safety & security. Tonight, we move forward & see that we're not done with Micah or his priest yet.

1. No _____ & no _____

- The _____ of that day is like our own.
- Their land was along the _____ of the Mediterranean Sea.
- There was a problem: the _____ & the _____ were their unruly southern neighbors.
- They must recognize the priest's _____ & know he is out of _____.
- They suddenly wondered if _____ plan was _____ plan.

2. No _____ from the Lord

- The _____ is _____.
- They would've likely received no _____ at all or a _____ of the command to go & possess the land that was allotted to them by Joshua.
- However, they wanted _____ land, _____ land, land that _____ to others.
- They were also without _____. Their relatives lived in & above northern Israel.
- Their _____ notion is clear to see! Let's go to _____!

3. No '_____ ' left

- They may have felt they had the _____ & blessing of the Lord to take what they wanted, but the writer of Judges clearly presents this again as covetousness.
- Not only do they want to steal the _____ & _____ from foreign people, but they want to steal _____ & _____ from their own countrymen.
- They _____ his _____ by hiring him, a form of _____.
- Now, we find the former _____, _____ from, & now in _____ pursuit!

- As his mother was _____ when she was robbed, so Micah is _____ & powerless to recover his valuables or his priest. While his mother wasn't _____ when she experienced loss, Micah says, *"What else to do I have?"*
- *"Idolaters worship gods that they can carry, but Christians worship a God who carries them."*
- **Gen. 49:17;** *"Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward."*
- We see that at least part of Israel has now devolved into a new _____ state of _____.
- Without God's command, their actions are nothing more than selfish _____.
- At the end of the story, we learn the Levite priest's name & lineage. His name was Jonathan & he is very likely from Moses' family tree, a _____ or, at most, a _____ - _____ of Moses through Gershom, Moses' son.