

## Judges 18:1-31 **Idolatry of the tribe of Dan**

### No King in Israel

<sup>1</sup> In those days there was no king in Israel.

### Danites seeking an inheritance

And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day their inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. <sup>2</sup> So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from **Zorah** and **Eshtaol**, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land."

### Danite spies visit the house of Micah in the mountains of Ephraim

So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.

<sup>3</sup> While they were at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?" <sup>4</sup> He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest." <sup>5</sup> So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous." <sup>6</sup> And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The presence of the LORD be with you on your way."

### Spies sent to Laish

<sup>7</sup> So the five men departed and went to Laish. They saw the people who were there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. There were no rulers in the land who might put them to shame for anything. They were far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone.

<sup>8</sup> Then the spies came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What is your report?" <sup>9</sup> So they said, "Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land. <sup>10</sup> When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth."

<sup>11</sup> And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war. <sup>12</sup> Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah. (Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan to this day. There it is, west of Kirjath Jearim.)

### Return to house of Micah in the mountains of Ephraim

<sup>13</sup> And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

<sup>14</sup> Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." <sup>15</sup> So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man--to the house of Micah--and greeted him. <sup>16</sup> The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate.

### Take Micah's idols and priest

<sup>17</sup> Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the

gate with the six hundred men who were armed with weapons of war. <sup>18</sup> When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" <sup>19</sup> And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" <sup>20</sup> So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people. <sup>21</sup> Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them.

<sup>22</sup> When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. <sup>23</sup> And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, "What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?" <sup>24</sup> So he said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?' " <sup>25</sup> And the children of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!" <sup>26</sup> Then the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

### Laish taken by the tribe of Dan

<sup>27</sup> So they took the things Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. <sup>28</sup> There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there. <sup>29</sup> And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However, the name of the city formerly was Laish.

### Idolatry of the tribe of Dan

<sup>30</sup> Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. <sup>31</sup> So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh. NKJV

### Facts Revealed:

#### No King in Israel

- ✧ In those days there was no king in Israel. [Judges 18:1]
- ✧ Though God had established Himself as the divine ruler Israel could count on, yet because He is not visible the people tended to disregard His commands which always resulted to their disadvantage. God's Laws are for our good and have a glorious end for the ones wise enough to follow them.
- ✧ People today are the same, because God is not visible, we tend to changes His laws for concepts that lead us to destruction.
- ✧ How foolishly we follow human thinking to our ruin, when we have in writing the commandments of God Most High that would bring continued blessing if we followed them.
- ✧ Human nature has not changed since the creation of the world, we are as foolish today as they were 6,000 years ago.
- ✧ The heart cry of God is expressed in Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 5:29

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!  
NKJV

Deuteronomy 32:29

Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

### Dan's inheritance under Joshua . [Joshua 19:40-48 ]

✧ The cities distributed by lot to Dan through Joshua:

✧ **Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, Me Jarkon, and Rakkon**, with the **region near Joppa, Leshem** (Dan), these cities with their villages.

### Danites seeking an inheritance [Judges 18:1-2]

✧ The tribe of Dan was already living in the cities Joshua had distributed to them **Zorah and Eshtaol**, from which they sent out the five spies to search out the land.

✧ The cities of Dan allotted by Joshua were clustered around Jaffa and present day Tel-Aviv and bordered with Judah Ephraim and Manasseh.

### Danite spies visit the house of Micah in the mountains of Ephraim [Judges 18:2-6]

✧ So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. While they were at the house of Micah, **they recognized the voice of the young Levite**. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?" He said to them, "**Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest.**"

✧ So they said to him, "**Please inquire of Elohiym (God), that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous.**"

✧ And the priest said to them, "**Go in peace. The presence of the LORD be with you on your way.**"

✧ The priest was a Levite, hired by Micah and consecrated by Micah of the tribe of Ephraim.

✧ The spies asked Micah's priest to inquire of Elohiym concerning their mission and its success.

✧ Like many people to day who want to hear from God, what they actually wanted to hear was confirmation of their own choices, not the commandments or will of God.

✧ Like many religious leaders of the Church today, the priest was eager to please them by telling them what they wanted to hear.

### Spies sent to Laish

✧ So the five men departed and went to **Laish**. They saw the people who were there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. There were no rulers in the land who might put them to shame for anything. They were far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone. [Judges 18:7]

✧ The spies of Dan traveled from the area around **Tel-Aviv** through all the territory of Israel to **Laish** below the slopes of **Mount Hermon** to the territory Joshua had appointed for the tribe of **Naphtali** near **Hazor** and **Lake Merom**.

✧ The people lived like the Sidonians over the mountains to the west but were isolated from them by the mountain range and were not tied to anyone.

✧ There is a place in current day Israel at the extreme northern border called Tel-Dan which might be the place of Laish whose name was changed to Dan. [Judges 18:29]

☆ Then the spies came back to their brethren at **Zorah** and **Eshtaol**, and their brethren said to them, "What is your report?" So they said, "**Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land. When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth.**" [Judges 18:8-10]

◇ The report of the Spies was extremely favorable to the people of Dan.

☆ And **six hundred men of the family of the Danites** went from there, from **Zorah** and **Eshtaol**, armed with weapons of war. Then they went up and encamped in **Kirjath Jearim** in **Judah**. (Therefore they call that place **Mahaneh Dan** to this day. There it is, **west of Kirjath Jearim**.) [Judges 18:11-12]

◇ The first encampment of the six hundred men of Dan was a place they named Mahaneh Dan in the borders of Judah as they traveled toward Laish.

Return to house of Micah in the mountains of Ephraim [Judges 18:13-16]

◇ Their travels toward Laish brought them through the mountains of Ephraim to the house of Micah.[Judges 18:13]

◇ When they arrived at the house of Micah, the original spies told them about Micah's idols and priest. "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do."

As the Scripture said:

Judges 2:19

**19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. NKJV**

◇ The Danites demonstrated their bent toward idolatry as Scripture revealed.

◇ So the six hundred of Dan on their way to Laish, turned aside to the House of Micah and posted the armed men of Dan at the entrance of Micah's gate. [Judges 18:14-16]

Danites took Micah's idols and priest [Judges 18:17-21]

◇ The five spies went in and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image.

◇ Micah's priest stood at the gate with the six hundred armed men and asked, "What are you doing?"

◇ They told him to be quiet and become their priest over the tribe of Dan.

◇ The Priest was glad and went with them.

◇ As they departed, they put Micah's little ones, livestock and goods in front of them.

Micah caught up with them, but gave in to them because they were mightier than he [Judges 18:22-26]

◇ Micah gathered his men and overtook the six hundred of the tribe of Dan and called out to them.

◇ They responded, "What ails you?"

◇ Micah issued his complaint "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?' "

◇ They threatened the life of Micah and his household, and departed.

◇ Micah saw that they were too strong for him and his men, so he turned back and went to his house.

- ✧ Here you see the degree of idolatry in the hearts of Israel as they blatantly disregard the commandments of Yehowah and gather to their tribe the idolatry of Micah.

#### Laish (Leshem) taken by the tribe of Dan [Judges 18:27-29, Joshua 19:47]

- ✧ So they took the things Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish
- ✧ Since Laish was isolated in the valley of Beth-Rehob and felt secure, the six hundred men of Dan struck them down with the sword and burned the city with fire.
- ✧ They rebuilt the city, named it Dan after the name of Dan their tribal father, and dwelt in it.

#### Idolatry of the tribe of Dan [Judges 18:30-31]

- ✧ Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image.
- ✧ Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- ✧ So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

#### The Law of Yehowah on the subject was:

- ✧ You shall have no other gods before Me. [Exodus 20:1-3, 34:13-17]
- ✧ You shall make no graven images. [Exodus 20:4-6, 22-23, 34:12-17, Leviticus 19:4, Deuteronomy 5:6-10, 6:14-15]
- ✧ Shrines became a curse against Israel. [Ezekiel 16:24, 31]
- ✧ The Ephod was to be worn by the high priest only. [Exodus 28:1-4, 29:4-7, 1 Samuel 2:27-28]
- ✧ Ephods became stumbling blocks for Israel as they became objects of worship. [Judges 8:27, Micah 17:5, 18:14-20]
- ✧ Priests of Israel were to be direct descendants of Aaron exclusively. [Exodus 28:1-4, Numbers 3:10]
  - ✧ The total form of worship of Micah, his mother, and the tribe of Dan, were in violation of the direct commandments of Most High God.

#### Everyone did what was right in his own eyes

- ✧ **In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.** [Judges 17:6]
  - ✧ It is the same today, everyone does what is right in his own eyes without searching out what God has commanded for our behavior, and this is to our shame.