

## Judges

- 1<sup>st</sup> Epilog – Religious (17-18); Companion to intro (2:6-3:7)
- Inter-generational failure to pass the knowledge of YHWH
  - Failure of a family, Levite, a tribe
  - Their actions were right in their own eyes (JDG 17:6)
  - Their actions were evil in the Lord's eyes (JDG 2:11)
- Failure of a family – Mom tried...
  - Using YHWH's name (names & blessings)
  - Sensory oriented worship – visual symbols
  - Some knowledge of YHWH – Levite, Ephod, etc.
- Micah made it an appealing religion...
  - He built a place for it (House of God)
  - He provided for new revelation from God (ephod & teraphim)
  - He established a priesthood
  - He believed his actions would bring blessings from God
- Failure of the religious leaders - Levites
  - For prestige, pay, & power, the Levite made the religion semi-scriptural
  - He became their Authority (Father) and their representative to God (Priest)
  - They ALL proudly assumed they were doing RIGHT in YHWH's eyes

JDG 18:1 In those days there was no king of Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for themselves to live in, for until that day an inheritance had not been allotted to them as a possession among the tribes of Israel. 2 So the sons of Dan sent from their family five men out of their whole number, valiant men from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to search it; and they said to them, "Go, search the land." And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. 3 When they were near the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young man, the Levite; and they turned aside there, and said to him, "Who brought you here? And what are you doing in this place? And what do you have here?" 4 And he said to them, "Thus and so has Micah done to me, and he has hired me, and I have become his priest." 5 And they said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous." 6 And the priest said to them, "Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the Lord's approval." 7 Then the five men departed and came to Laish and saw the people who were in it living in security, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure; for there was no ruler humiliating them for anything in the land, and they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone. 8 When they came back to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, "What do you report?" 9 And they said, "Arise, and let us go up against them; for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good. And will you sit still? Do not delay to go, to enter, to possess the land. 10 "When you enter, you shall come to a secure people with a spacious land; for God has given it into your hand, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth."

11 Then from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men armed with weapons of war set out. 12 And they went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. Therefore they called that place Mahanehdan to this day; behold, it is west of Kiriath-jearim. 13 And they passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah. 14 ¶ Then the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their kinsmen, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod and household idols and a graven image and a molten image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." 15 And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young man, the Levite, to the house of Micah, and asked him of his welfare. 16 And the six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the sons of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. 17 Now the five men who went to spy out the land went up and entered there, and took the graven image and the ephod and household idols and the molten image, while the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war. 18 And when these went into Micah's house and took the graven image, the ephod and household idols and the molten image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" 19 And they said to him, "Be silent, put your hand over your mouth and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be a priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" 20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod and household idols and the graven image, and went among the people. 21 Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the livestock and the valuables in front of them.

## Which way for the tribe of Dan?

- Observations/comments/questions?

JDG 2:20-22 So the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not listened to My voice, I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it as their fathers did, or not. "

- How did Dan deal with the test of Amorites & Philistines?
  - Moved away from pressure (unlike Samson hundreds of years later)
- Do they want to do what's right in YHWH's eyes?
- Do they know the Lord's word about taking possession?

JOS 18:3 So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

JOS 19:40 The seventh lot fell to the tribe of the sons of Dan according to their families. 41 And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah and Eshtaol and Irshemesh, 42 and Shaalabbin and Aijalon and Ithlah,...(17 total cities)

- Ignored or Forgotten

## Which way for the tribe of Dan?

- How did the spies respond when they recognized the Levite's voice?
  - Three critical questions (Similar questions we had last week)
  - Who got you here?, What are you doing here?, What do you have?
  - "I moved here" – Not God's direction
  - "Now I'm a true priest, lead worship for YHWH" – God's established Levitical cities not good enough, ignore Aaronic high priest line
  - "I have a house of God, two images, an ephod, and teraphim to inquire of God" – God's Levitical Law mixed with error
- What was their immediate response to his answers?

JDG 18:5 And they said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know

  - Upon learning of the teraphim & ephod, they ask for direction
  - They're ignoring God's words about taking possession of the land, yet they ask for God's word about what they are doing

## Which way for the tribe of Dan?

- Where did Jonathan's prophecy come from (V6)?

JDG 20:18 Now the sons of Israel arose, went up to Bethel, and inquired of God, and said, "Who shall go up first for us to battle against the sons of Benjamin?" Then the Lord said, "Judah shall go up first."

JDG 20:23 And the sons of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until evening, and inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall we again draw near for battle against the sons of my brother Benjamin?" And the Lord said, "Go up against him."

JDG 20:26 Then all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel and wept; ...27 And the sons of Israel inquired of the Lord (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, Aaron's son, stood before it to minister in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the sons of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?" And the Lord said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

  - Like 1KI 13, this prophecy was likely not from the Lord
- What did they want to hear?
  - This prophecy was exactly what they wanted to hear – tickled ears

JER 23:16-32 Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the Lord. 17 "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said,' You will have peace ";And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' 18 "But who has stood in the council of the Lord, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? 19 "Behold, the storm of the Lord has gone forth in wrath, Even a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the wicked. 20 "The anger of the Lord will not turn back Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it. 21 "I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied. 22 "But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds. ... 25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!' 26 "How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, 27 who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? ... 30 "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who steal My words from each other. 31 "Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.' 32 "Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the Lord, "and related them, and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit," declares the Lord.

## Which way for the tribe of Dan?

- What items seem to be most important to Danites? Priest?
  - Ephod & Teraphim, then Graven, then Molten (V14, 17, 18, 20)
- Why?
  - New revelation from YHWH most desirable!! – better than the old
  - Graven images similar to surrounding peoples – something to look at
- What moved the priest to join with the Danites?
  - More power, more prestige
  - Larger congregation, bigger impact on lives – surely this MUST be from the LORD
  - His ambition was stronger than loyalty to Micah AND God's Word

JDG 18:22 When they had gone some distance from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house assembled and overtook the sons of Dan. 23 And they cried to the sons of Dan, who turned around and said to Micah, "What is the matter with you, that you have assembled together?" 24 And he said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and have gone away, and what do I have besides? So how can you say to me, 'What is the matter with you?'" 25 And the sons of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest fierce men fall upon you and you lose your life, with the lives of your household." 26 So the sons of Dan went on their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house. 27 Then they took what Micah had made and the priest who had belonged to him, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure, and struck them with the edge of the sword; and they burned the city with fire. 28 And there was no one to deliver them, because it was far from Sidon and they had no dealings with anyone, and it was in the valley which is near Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and lived in it. 29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father who was born in Israel; however, the name of the city formerly was Laish. 30 And the sons of Dan set up for themselves the graven image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up for themselves Micah's graven image which he had made, all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh.

## YHWH Worship in City of Dan

- What's Micah's rationale for forming a posse?

- These are my god's, my religion, I made it!!

- What is the key descriptor of god's and priest in V27 & 31?

27 Then they took what Micah had made and the priest who had belonged to him, and came to Laish,

31 So they set up for themselves Micah's graven image which he had made...

- The god's were MAN MADE – Micah made them!
- The Priest was not GOD's priest – Micah owned him!

- Why repeat what Dan did with images twice (V30 & V31)?

30 And the sons of Dan set up for themselves the graven image...until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up for themselves Micah's graven image which he had made, all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh.

- 1) Eventual judgment resulted; 2) It competed with true worship

- This worship originated from & belonged to MAN – NOT GOD
- It seemed right in their eyes – NOT the Lord's

## YHWH Worship in City of Dan

- So, any principles of MAN-MADE worship of YHWH?
  - The name of the Lord used often (names, blessings, idols, etc.)
  - It appeals / oriented toward the bodily senses
  - Location is important – “House of God”
  - Focus of worship becomes the experience – visible, tangible
  - Some from scripture, some from culture – mixture truth + other
  - New revelation becomes paramount
    - Takes precedence over established revelation
  - The leader (Authority of a Father) can speak for God
  - Single leader over larger numbers of people
  - The number of followers implies value & validity
    - Ambition stronger than loyalty to God’s word
    - Leaders say what the people want to hear – increases numbers!
  - It competes with the true worship of the Lord
    - Viewed by most as a valid variation
  - IT SEEMS RIGHT IN MAN’S EYES (Sincere)