

Judges 17

Before we get into the text it might be good to explain why chapters 17 thru 21 are placed after chapter 2 rather than at the end of the book. The main reason is that the text of these chapters includes people that belong shortly after the death of Joshua not 300 years later in time.

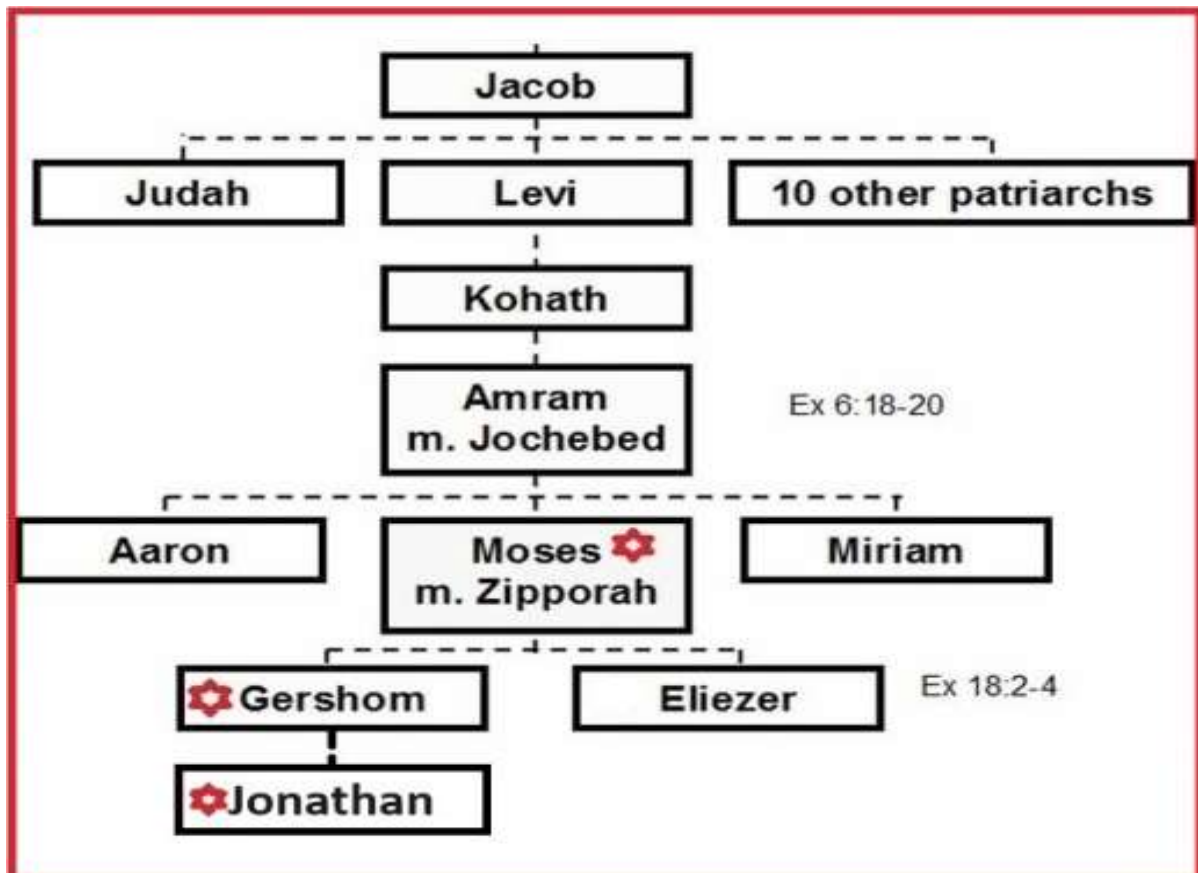
1. Chapters 17 & 18 center around a Levite named Jonathan who is a priest to the tribe of Dan. He is the son of Gershom.

See Judges 18:30

³⁰ **The sons of Dan set up for themselves the carved 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.**

This Jonathan is the grandson of Moses. So why does the text say Manasseh in many bibles? See comment on Judges 18:30.

See chart 1705



2. Chapters 19 thru 21 center around the story of how Israel had to war against one of its own tribes. Phinehas is the High Priest at that time.

See Judges 20:28

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 stop?" And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will hand them over to you."

The very last verse of the book of Joshua tells us that Phinehas had just become the High Priest.

See Joshua 24:33

33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of his son Phinehas, which was given to him in the hill country of Ephraim.

Someone may wonder why the writer of Judges put these chapters at the end of the book rather than where they belong chronologically. Good Question.

After reading these 5 chapters one gets the image that things were totally out of control in Israel. The writer may have been making the point that the people knew they needed some civil enforcement of the law because as a nation everyone was doing what they thought was right in their own eyes.

See Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1 and 21:25

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Verses 1 – 3

Now there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah. ² He said to his mother, "The eleven hundred *pieces* of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse in my hearing, behold, the silver is with me; I took it." And his mother said, "Blessed be my son by the Lord." ³ He then returned the eleven hundred *pieces* of silver to his mother, and his mother said, "I wholly dedicate the silver from my hand to the Lord for my son to make a graven image and a molten image; now therefore, I will return them to you."

² He said to his mother, “The eleven hundred *pieces* of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse in my hearing, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “Blessed be my son by the Lord.”

Micah felt guilty after hearing the curse of his mother concerning her lost coins and he quickly confessed to his sin.

³ He then returned the eleven hundred *pieces* of silver to his mother, and his mother said, “I wholly dedicate the silver from my hand to the Lord for my son to make a graven image and a molten image; now therefore, I will return them to you.”

When she recovered the money from her son she decided to dedicate it to The Lord.

So she gave it back to her son to make a graven image and a molten image.

This shows the lack of understanding that permeated the people of Israel at this time.

This woman, along with much of Israel, didn't know or was ignoring the very first commandment given to Israel at Sinai.

See Exodus 20:3

You shall have no other gods before Me.

A graven image was something carved or hewn. A molten image was cast in a mold.

Verses 4 – 6

⁴ So when he returned the silver to his mother, his mother took two hundred *pieces* of silver and gave them to the silversmith who made them into a graven image and a molten image, and they were in the house of Micah. ⁵ And the man Micah had a shrine and he made an ephod and household idols and consecrated one of his sons, that he might become his priest. ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

His mother took 200 pieces of silver and gave them to the silversmith

It seems his mother did not totally trust her son to use the money as she had promised so she gave part of the money to the silversmith to make her idols.

⁵ **And the man Micah had a shrine and he made an ephod and household idols and consecrated one of his sons, that he might become his priest.**

Micah already had a shrine, so he made an ephod and household idols (probably from some of his mother's money). He also consecrated one of his sons to be his priest.

The tabernacle that was located in Shiloh (most of the time) was the only place that Israel was supposed to offer sacrifices and offer their gifts. But we see here that people were doing whatever they thought was right (in their own eyes).

Only the High priest at the tabernacle was to have an ephod.

See pic 1710



In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

The fact that Israel had no king at this time has been verified by archeology.

See video 1715 Israel in secular history

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.28.html>

Verses 7 - 10

⁷ Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite; and he was staying there. ⁸ Then the man departed from the city, from Bethlehem in Judah, to stay wherever he might find a *place*; and as he made his journey, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. ⁹ Micah said to him, “Where do you come from?” And he said to him, “I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to stay wherever I may find a *place*.” ¹⁰ Micah then said to him, “Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten *pieces* of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance.” So the Levite went *in*.

⁸ Then the man departed from the city, from Bethlehem in Judah, to stay wherever he might find a *place*; and as he made his journey, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah.

The man mentioned here was a Levite living in Bethlehem of Judah.

The fact that he was looking for a place to stay suggests that most of Israel had forsaken the system that God had set up whereby Levites had been given cities and pasture lands throughout Israel.

¹⁰ Micah then said to him, “Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten *pieces* of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance.” So the Levite went *in*.

Micah knew enough about the law that he wanted a Levite to be a priest for him. Not every Levite was qualified to be a priest but that issue was never broached.

The fact that this Levite could be tempted to accept an inappropriate arrangement for such a meager living indicates his options were limited.

Verses 11 – 13

¹¹ The Levite agreed to live with the man, and the young man became to him like one of his sons. ¹² So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in the house of Micah. ¹³ Then Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, seeing I have a Levite as priest.”

¹² So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in the house of Micah

Micah had no authority to consecrate the Levite, at least not according to the law, but it seems the law was not even a consideration in the minds of the people.

¹³ Then Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, seeing I have a Levite as priest.”

The tribe of Levi was elected by God to oversee the offering of sacrifices and to teach the people of Israel the law.

The Levite should have started that process by reminding Micah that having idols and your own place of worship was a sin.