

## Judges 18

Verses 1 – 6

**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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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?” <sup>4</sup> He said to them, “Thus and so has Micah done to me, and he has hired me and I have become his priest.” <sup>5</sup> They said to him, “Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous.” <sup>6</sup> The priest said to them, “Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the Lord’s approval.”**

**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.**

This statement cannot be true because we are told that the tribe of Dan had in fact received their inheritance in Canaan.

See Joshua 19:40

In addition, we were told that all of the tribes were given their inheritance before the eastern tribes returned home.

See Joshua 22

The Amorites had confined them to the hill country but the tribe of Dan had been given an inheritance.

See Judges 1:34

Being confined to the hill country was a real problem for the Danites because they were the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest tribe by population and yet they were given one of the smaller portions of land in Israel.

**<sup>2</sup> 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.**

Since the tribe of Dan could not take the territory in their inheritance that was held by the Amorites, they decided to search for additional land within the Promised Land that had not been conquered yet.

When they reached the land of Ephraim they met Micah and he extended hospitality to his fellow Israelites.

**<sup>3</sup> 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?”**

The spies knew the Levite and he was willing to reveal to the spies the arrangement that he had with Micah.

**<sup>5</sup> They said to him, “Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous.” <sup>6</sup> The priest said to them, “Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the Lord’s approval.”**

The spies sought God's counsel before leaving on their journey to the north and the Levite gave them a favorable answer to their inquiry.

Verses 7 – 10

**<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> When they came back to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, “What *do you report?*” <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> When you enter, you will 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.”**

<sup>7</sup> 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.

Laish is mentioned in Joshua 19:47 as Leshem. It is 26 miles east of Tyre.

See map 1805



The tribe of Dan had come upon a paradise on earth.

See video 1810 Tribe of Dan moves to Leshem

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.29.html>

**<sup>10</sup> When you enter, you will 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.”**

The spies based their claim on the words of the Levite and on the fact that it was an isolated area; they had no allies to depend on.

Verse 11 – 13

**<sup>11</sup> Then from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men armed with weapons of war set out. <sup>12</sup> They went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. Therefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan to this day; behold, it is west of Kiriath-jearim. <sup>13</sup> They passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.**

### **Six hundred men armed with the weapons of war**

We later learn that the wives and families of these 600 men accompanied them. In all, it must have been a company of 2000 or more.

**<sup>12</sup> They went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. Therefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan to this day; behold, it is west of Kiriath-jearim.**

See map 1815



Kiriath-jearim is on the border of Benjamin and Judah. However, they were camped on the west side of the city in the land of Judah.

**<sup>13</sup> They passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.**

The house of Micah may have been in a remote location considering no city or town is mentioned. He had some neighbors but their numbers were limited.

Verse 14 – 20

**<sup>14</sup> Then the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish 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.” <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the sons of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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?” <sup>19</sup> 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?” <sup>20</sup> The priest’s heart was glad, and he took the ephod and household idols and the graven image and went among the people.**

**<sup>14</sup> Then the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish 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.**

Micah must have been fairly wealthy considering the fact that he had more than one house. It seems the property was also surrounded by a wall with a gate.

The 5 spies then give their kinsmen a heads up about the household idols.

**15 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.**

The Levite was living in one of the houses owned by Micah.

The men treated the Levite with respect hoping he would come with them to Laish in order to be their priest.

**16 The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the sons of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate.**

The 600 men of war stayed outside the gate not wanting to alarm Micah and possibly cause a skirmish with any hired men that worked for him.

**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.**

This was an act of robbery but it seems that Micah had enough sense not to put up a fight considering the army was just outside the gate.

**19 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?”**

What the men said to the Levite was logical. What preacher wouldn't like a bigger congregation? But if he gets the job because the congregation has just stolen a church building and warned him to be silent about it, it should be a sign that not all is well in Churchville.

**20 The priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod and household idols and the graven image and went among the people.**

Was it right for the Levite to be “glad” about this situation?

See Matt 6:24

Verse 21 – 26

**<sup>21</sup> Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the livestock and the valuables in front of them. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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?" <sup>24</sup> 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?'" <sup>25</sup> The sons of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, or else fierce men will fall upon you and you will lose your life, with the lives of your household." <sup>26</sup> 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.**

**<sup>21</sup> Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the livestock and the valuables in front of them.**

They expected Micah would pursue them.

**<sup>22</sup> 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**

It had taken Micah some time to round up his neighbors and pursue the Danites but they overtook them because the Danites had their wives, little children, and cattle.

**<sup>24</sup> He said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and have gone away, and what do I have besides?"**

There is no doubt that the Danites had acted in a dishonorable way, but it makes one wonder if Micah saw the irony of the situation.

If a person has to rescue his gods, what does that say about his gods?

**<sup>26</sup> 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.**

Micah protected his family and neighbors by making a wise decision.

Verse 27 - 31

**<sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> 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.**

**<sup>27</sup> 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.**

This quiet and secure community was no match for the fierce men in the tribe of Dan. In chapter 20 we will see just how fierce these men could be.

**<sup>28</sup> 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.**

The citizens of that city had not made any treaties or alliances with others who might have been able to help them in such a disaster.

**<sup>30</sup> 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.**

The apostasy of this grandson of Moses was an embarrassment to the Jews.

So they wrote the word "Manasseh" above the word Moses but did not change the text.

When read aloud they could avoid any connection with Moses.



### “Until the day of the captivity of the land”

If these words are a reference to the Assyrian captivity then it presents a problem to those who say that Samuel wrote the book of Judges.

The Assyrian captivity occurred in 722 BC, about 300 years after Samuel died. So this would have to be an editorial addition made to the text at a later date.

However, the next verse is a clue to what Samuel means by “the captivity of the land”

**<sup>31</sup> 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.**

Micah's idols continued during all the time that the house of God remained in Shiloh.

See chart 1820

Scripture	Place	Began	Ended	Years
Joshua 5:10	Gilgal	1406	1396	10
Joshua 18:1	Shiloh	1396	1070	326
Jeremiah 7:14	Shiloh destroyed	1070		
	Not sure	1070	1020	50
I Sam 21	Nob	1020	1010	10
I Chron. 16:39-40	Gibeon	1010	960	50
I Kings 8:3-4	Temple	960		

Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines in 1070 B.C. and we have no record of where the Tabernacle was for about 50 years.

In addition, Israel was under the control of the Philistines during that period of time.

Samuel was a prophet/judge during this time and wrote about it but did not mention the Philistines by name.

The Tabernacle reappears in the city of Nob in 1 Samuel 21 in the year 1020 BC.

See the chart above.