

**“The gods of Dan”**

**Judges 18**

**Scripture Ref: Joshua 19; Judges 1; 1 Tim 3:5; Ex 20:4; 1 Kings 11-12;**

**1. interesting account –**

**a. Decisions that are made today, that can affect generations**

**The Danites are Seeking**

18:1 In those days there was **no king in Israel**. 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. 2 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."

**Point #1 – When we are not when God has directed us to be, we are always searching for someplace to be**

**2. Starts in Joshua 19, where Dan is given an allotment of land, with instructions to “go and possess the land”.**

**a. Continues in Judges 1, where we saw that Dan failed to evict the Amorites, and were not able to possess the land**

**b. Now in Judges 19, and Dan is “seeking”**

**3. Nothing is ever good enough – nothing seems to be “the right place”**

**a. And so we search – but usually in the wrong places.**

**b. Reminds me of the “seeker”, someone who is seeking God, but is “seeking for God that works for them”**

**c. They have the perspective “Some Christians say ‘Jesus is the only way’, but I am looking for something that will fit my lifestyle.”**

***Brian McLaren: A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished CHRISTIAN***

**4. It’s dangerous to be “out of God’s will” but “seeking for another will!”**

**The Danites Find a Priest**

So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. 3 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?" 4 He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest."

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

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

**Point #2 – when we are out of God’s will, and searching, the enemy will usually put something in our path for us to find**

**5. Something that “looks fine”, looks “godly”, but is in reality trap from the enemy**

- a. **And if we are not seeing clearly, able to discern truth from falsehood, we can fall into the enemies trap.**
- b. **Usually a form of Christianity that is “easier”, one where I can “be me but still love God”**

*2 Tim 3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.*

**The Danites Find a Place to Dwell**

7 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.

8 Then the spies came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What is your report?"

9 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. 10 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."

**Point #3 – When we are out of God’s will, the enemy will put another will in front of us**

**6. And notice how now the spiritual deception has taken hold; “For God has given it into your hands”**

- a. **Just because someone says “this is of God” does not make it “of God!”**
- b. **And the first clue was that it was NOT the place that God told them to dwell.**
- c. **Or experiencing “success” and counting it as “Gods blessing”**
  - i. **Just because people flock to something does not mean that God is in it – sometimes just the opposite!**

**The Danites Score Some Gods**

11 And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with **weapons of war**. 12 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.) 13 And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the **house of Micah**.

14 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**." 15 So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man -- to the house of Micah -- and greeted him. 16 The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. 17 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.

18 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?"**

19 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?" 20 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.

21 Then they turned and departed, and put the **little ones**, the **livestock**, and the **goods** in front of them. 22 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**. 23 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?"

24 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?'**"

25 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!" 26 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.

**Point #4 – When we are walking outside of the will of God, we start setting our own standards**

**7. Suddenly robbing a family compound is OK**

- a. **Taking idols and images is ok (other than violating the second commandment!**

*Ex 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image -- any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.*

- b. **Taking the heretic priest is OK**
- c. **IOW – “everyone doing what is right in their own eyes!**

**The Danites Destroy an Innocent People**

27 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**. 28 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. 29 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.

**Point #5 – When we are outside the will of God, we start mis-applying God’s commands**

**8. God told the nation to drive out certain people in certain areas**

- a. **The Danites decided since it was OK in Canaan, it was OK here.**

30 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. 31 So they set up for themselves **Micah's carved image** which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

**9. One startling aspect of this, is that it would appear that the grandson of Moses was the true identity of this heretic priest!**

- a. **Ex 18 tells us that Moses wife Zipporah bore him two sons: Gershom and Eliezer.**
- b. **Eliezer had no sons, but Gershom had many**
- c. **Here we see Gershom is the son of Manasseh, but some texts identify this grandfather as “Moses”**
- d. **If this is true – then not only have the Danites lost their physical inheritance, but within two generations the family of Moses has lost their spiritual inheritance.**

**The step-by-step progression of being out of God's will**

1. Dan failed to step out in faith and overcome the Amorites and take possession of their allotment.
2. Led to having no inheritance – they needed a place
  - a. They HAD a place, but they wanted and EASIER place
3. They started LOOKING – God didn't tell them to, they were “going on their own”
4. Led to coming across a priest – a heretic priest – who gives them a “false blessing”
5. Because they cannot discern the voice of God anymore, they believe this false blessing, and assume it is from God.
6. They find an unprotected people and land – looks like a great place, *other than the fact that it is not where they are supposed to be.*
7. On the way they pick up the heretic priest, rob Micah. At this point they cannot even recognize the second commandment – “... make not idol or image...”
8. They are able to defeat the people, and take possession – again God must be with us! *other than the fact that God never told them to take out these innocent people.*
9. Next, along with their heretic priest they establish worship – **CORRUPT WORSHIP**
10. A few hundred years later what do we find?
  - a. 1 Kings 11 – 12 – Jeroboam becomes king over the divided 10 tribes, and establishes idol worship in, guess where – Dan!

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