

Judges 18 - Confusion in Society; Migration of Dan; Birth of Idolatry in Dan

III. Depravity in Israel thereby necessitating the need for a King (Judges 17:1—21:25)

(1) Spiritual apostasy (Judges 17:1—18:31)

(B) Danite migration (18:1-31)

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1 Back in those days, Israel didn't have a king yet, and during that time the tribe of Dan had been seeking a territorial inheritance to live in, because up until that time no territory had been allotted to them as a possession among the tribes of Israel.

1 In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

- There was no king with a strong central government and a united army who could conquer the enemy and give the tribes their inheritance, and finalize the conquest
— If the people had forsaken their idols, and if the elders of Israel had consulted God's Law and obeyed it for God's glory, Israel could have been governed successfully
— Instead, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (21:25), and the result was a society filled with competition and confusion
— Judges 17 reveals the apostasy of the individual; Judges 18 shows the apostasy of the tribe

- It was Samson's failure (a Danite) to free Danite territory from Philistine control that now led to the Danite migration

— Land was allotted to the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:40-48), but they had not yet possessed it since they were repulsed by the Philistines, who forced them to limit their settlement to the hills of Zorah and Eshtaol

Tribe of Dan

The tribe of Dan descended from Jacob's fifth son, born of Rachel's handmaid Bilhah (Gen 30:1-6). Though not a large tribe (Num 1:39), it was given choice territory when the tribal boundaries were assigned (Joshua 19:40-48).

The Lord had assigned the tribal allotments under the direction of Joshua, with the help of Eleazar the high priest and the elders from the tribes (Joshua 19:51). As He did with the nations (Acts 17:26), so He did with the tribes: God put each tribe just where He wanted it. For the tribe of Dan to reject God's assigned territory and covet another place was to oppose His divine will. The Danites were being pushed by the Amorites (1:34-35; Cf. Joshua 19:47) and later the Philistines (with the rest of Israel; Cf. 13:1; 14:4; 15:11). The Danites, however, were not able to defeat and dispossess the enemy (1:34), thus they decided to go north and relocate. Most of the other tribes were able to conquer the enemy, dispossessed them, and claim their land, but the Danites coveted somebody else's land instead and took it in a violent manner.

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 explore it; and they said to them, "Go, explore the land." And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and stayed overnight there.

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.

2 So the tribe of Dan sent from their families five valiant men of their number from Zorah and Eshtaol to scout the land and search through it. Following their orders, which were "Go and scout the land," they came to the mountainous region of Ephraim, arrived at Micah's home, and stayed there.

2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

- These scouts were to search the land and see what was available to them, and if it was worth the effort

- The scouts' intent was to only spend a night in Ephraim on their trek north, but this chance encounter would lead to some long-term consequences

- God had begun the process of punishing Micah in place of blessing him

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?"

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?"

3 As they approached Micah's home, they recognized the voice of the young male descendant of Levi. They turned aside from there and spoke to him, asking him, "Who brought you here? What work are you doing here? And what's your business here?"

3 When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?

- As they approached Micah's house, the scouts recognized the voice of a Levite (Jonathan, Micah's personal priest, Cf. 17:7-13)

— The stopped to ask him some questions; none of the questions were of the man's identity (because they recognized his voice), only of his purpose and circumstance for being there

4 He said to them, "Micah has done this and that for me, and he has hired me and I have become his priest."

4 He said to them, "Thus and so has Micah done to me, and he has hired me and I have become his priest."

4 He answered, "Micah did such and such for me, and has hired me, so I've become his priest."

4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

- When they asked what a Levitical priest was doing in a private home in Ephraim—a very good question, by the way (1 Kings 19:9,13)—he told them the truth: He was hired to do the job!

5 Then they said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be successful."

5 They said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous."

5 They replied, "Go ask God, please, about whether or not we'll be successful in this journey."

5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

- When they learned that he was functioning as a priest, they superstitiously sought some word of God's blessing on their mission
- Since somebody else was paying the bill, the spies thought it was permissible to get "spiritual counsel" from Jonathan, and he told them what they wanted to hear
- This request would have been made through the ephod; the Danites were not concerned that the ephod was being used in an idolatrous way
- The route they were taking would've led them to pass by Shiloh, but they had no plans to inquire of the High Priest at the Tabernacle. They were content to inquire of a Canaanized Jewish Levite
- They were already rejecting God's counsel by refusing to remain in the land He had assigned to them, so it wasn't likely God would have revealed anything to them (John 7:17)

6 And the priest said to them, "Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the LORD'S approval."

6 The priest said to them, "Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the LORD's approval."

6 The priest responded to them, "Travel in peace. The mission that you're to accomplish is from the LORD."

6 And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go.

- The Levite never actually said that God would prosper them, only that the course on which they are going is "before the Lord"

— It was a non-specific answer to a specific question; the Levite was probably protecting himself from being charged with a false prophecy

- One wonders about the source of the priest's confident answer. The outward success of their mission did not correspond with the Lord's revealed plan for the tribe of Dan, and ultimately resulted in the establishing of a major center of idolatry (Cf. 18:30-31; 1 Kings 12:28-30)

— Many scholars attribute the absence of the sealing of the tribe of Dan in Rev 7 as a result of being the tribe through which idolatry entered the land

7 So the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people who were in it living in security, in the way of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting; for there was no oppressive ruler humiliating *them* for anything in the land, and they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone.

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.

7 So the five men left and went to Laish, and observed the people who were living there carefree, as Sidonians tend to do, in peace and quiet. There was no ruler in the land oppressing them for any reason. They were living far away from the Sidonians, and had no dealings with anyone.

7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

- The five spies traveled 100 miles north from their encampment at Zorah to Laish ("Irshemesh," Joshua 19:41, modern Tell el-Qadi), a town inhabited by the Sidonians, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Kinnereth and 27 miles east of Tyre on the Mediterranean
- These were a peaceful people who minded their own business and had no treaties with anybody (so no one would be obliged to come to their aid if attacked)
- There was no central authority or external power near enough to threaten them
- They were "unsuspecting and secure," "prosperous" (v7, [NIV]), and isolated;
- Their town was isolated from the Sidonians by the Lebanon range of mountains, and from Syria by Mount Hermon and the Anti-Lebanon range, so that they were without close military allies. Thus, a perfect target for the warlike tribe of Dan.

8 When they came back to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, "What *do you say?*"

8 When they came back to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, "What *do you report?*"

8 When they returned to their relatives at Zorah and Eshtaol, their relatives asked them, "What's your report?"

8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?

9 And they said, "Arise, and let's go up against them; for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good. And will you sit still? Do not hesitate to go, to enter, to take possession of the land.

9 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.

9 They replied, "Let's get going and attack them. We've scouted out the land—and look!—it's a very good one. Why should we sit still? We can't wait to go back, invade, and take over the land.

9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the

land.

10 When you enter, you will come to an unsuspecting people with a spacious land; for God has handed it over to you, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth."

10 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."

10 When you invade, you'll meet a carefree people living in a spacious territory. God has given it into your control—it's a place that lacks nothing on this earth!"

10 When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.

- They encouraged the Danites to attack Laish without hesitation. They felt that God had given it to them.

— Though their theological affirmation is debatable (based on their interpretation of Jonathan's prophecy), their anticipated victory seemed inevitable

— Since they thought they were divinely prospered in finding it, they assumed they would have divine help in conquering it

— Their theological conclusion was that God help them find it, therefore God will help them conquer it

11 Then from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men armed with weapons of war set out.

11 Then from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men armed with weapons of war set out.

11 So 600 descendants of Dan from Zorah and Eshtaol set out for battle, armed with military weapons.

11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

- The 600 Danites were a "strike force" to take the city, with the rest of the tribe following later

— In the rest of biblical history, the Danites are never again found in the southern region, but are only mentioned as being in the north, showing that the entire tribe migrated

12 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.

12 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.

12 They went out and encamped at Kiriath-jearim in the territory of Judah. (That's why they call the place Mahaneh-dan to this day. It lies west of Kiriath-jearim.)

12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-Jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-Dan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjath-Jearim.

13 And they passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.

13 They passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.

13 They proceeded from there to the mountainous region of Ephraim and arrived at Micah's house.

13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

- The 600 men first camped near Kiriath-Jearim (about six miles east of the Zorah-Eshtaol area)

— Their campsite, Mahaneh-Dan ("Camp of Dan"), was where Samson later first sensed the work of God's Spirit in his life (13:25)

— They went on to Ephraim where Micah (Cf. 17:1; 18:2) lived

14 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 carved image and a cast metal image? Now then, consider what you should do."

14 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."

14 Then the five men who had gone to scout out the territory of Laish told their relatives, "Are you aware that in these houses there's an ephod, some household idols, a carved image, and a cast image? You know what you need to do."

14 Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.

15 So they turned aside there and came to the house of the young man, the Levite, to the house of Micah, and asked him how he was doing.

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.

15 So they turned aside from there, went to Micah's house, and greeted him.

15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

16 Meanwhile, the six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the sons of Dan, were positioned at the entrance of the gate.

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.

16 While the 600 Danite soldiers, armed with military weapons, stood guard at the entrance to the gate,

16 And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.

17 Now the five men who went to spy out the land went up *and* entered there; they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the cast metal image, while the priest was standing at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war.

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.

17 the five men who had gone to scout out the land arrived, entered Micah's home and confiscated the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the cast image. Meanwhile, the priest stood outside by the entrance to the gate with the 600 men armed with military weapons.

17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.

- The five spies, who met Micah and Jonathan previously, went into the temple house while the other 600 men stood outside by the gate, serving as a diversion

— They were guilty of god-napping, but never asked how gods that could be stolen could ever be of any benefit to them

18 When these *men* entered Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, household idols, and the cast metal image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

18 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?"

18 After they went into Micah's home and took possession of the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the cast image, the priest challenged them. "What are you doing?" he asked them.

18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?

- Jonathan protests the spies stealing his gods, albeit mildly

19 And they said to him, "Be silent, put your hand over your mouth, and go 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?"

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?"

19 They told him, "Shut up and keep quiet. Come with us and be our spiritual father and priest. It's better for you, isn't it, to be a priest to an entire tribe and family in Israel than to be priest to the home of one man?"

19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?

- The Danites offered Jonathan to be the priest for their entire tribe...

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

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

20 The priest was happy to oblige, so he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image and went along with the army.

20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

- The Danites not only broke into Micah's shrine and stole his gods, but they also stole his chaplain. Not a bad day's work!

— As serious as these crimes were, it's hard to not giggle after envisioning five brave men stealing gods that can't even protect themselves!

— The Scriptures that come to mind are Is 40:18-26; 44:9-20; Ps 115

21 Then they turned and left, and put the children, the livestock, and the valuables in front of them.

21 Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the livestock and the valuables in front of them.

21 Then they turned around and left, sending their little ones, their livestock, and their valuables on ahead.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

- Anticipating that Micah might pursue them, the Danites sent their families and possessions on ahead of them and formed a rear guard

— This is the first mention of families with the 600 troops; the fact their families are with them shows they were very sure of victory

22 When they had distanced themselves from Micah's house, the men who *were* in the houses near Micah's house assembled by command and overtook the sons of Dan.

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.

22 When they had been gone a short distance from Micah's home, some of Micah's neighbors assembled a search party and overtook the descendants of Dan.

22 And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

- By the time the Danites had traveled some distance away, Micah discovered that his shrine was out of business, having neither gods nor priest; so he called his neighbors together, and they pursued the invaders. After all, a man must protect his gods!

23 Then they called out to the sons of Dan, who turned around and said to Micah, "What is *the matter* with you, that you have assembled together?"

23 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?"

23 They yelled at the descendants of Dan, who turned around to face Micah and asked, "What's wrong with you? You've assembled together...?"

23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?

24 And he said, "You have taken my gods which I made, and the priest, and have gone away; what more do I have? So how can you say to me, 'What is *the matter* with you?'"

24 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?'"

24 Micah replied, "You took my gods that I crafted, along with the priest, and left! What do I have left? So what's with this 'What's wrong with you?'"

24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?

- With his gods and priest gone, Micah thought nothing else worthwhile was left for him

— Micah still does not see the need to resolve the problem that his god would be stolen, and why his god needed his protection

- Micah's sad question reveals the folly and the tragedy of religion without the true and living God. Idolaters worship gods they can carry, but Christians worship a God who carries

them (Is 46:1-7).

25 Then the sons of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, or else fierce men will attack you, and you will lose your life and the lives of your household."

25 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."

25 The descendants of Dan answered him, "You had better not talk to us about this, or else these bad guys here will attack you. You will lose your life, along with the lives of your whole household."

25 And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy 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.

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.

26 Then the descendants of Dan went on their way. Because Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back home.

26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

- Since the Danites outnumbered him and were too strong for him, Micah and his neighbors had to turn around and go home defeated

Nothing more is recorded of Micah. From him, we learn the following:

(1) Micah entered the story as a thief, and the story ends with Micah becoming the victim of grand larceny.

(2) The objects the Danites stole from Micah were made from silver, the same substance he had stolen from his mother.

(3) The gods that he had made had been taken. These gods were not his creators, since they could be stolen and so were not able to save themselves. They were victims of "god-napping" and needed to be rescued, instead of helping him out of his situation. The man who installed them into his house now finds his house plundered.

(4) The very reason the priest had agreed to join Micah is the reason Micah could no longer retain him: namely, he hired out for money.

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 unsuspecting, and struck them with the edge of the sword; and they burned the city with fire.

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.

27 But the descendants of Dan took what Micah had made, along with the priest who had worked for him, and went to Laish, to a quiet and carefree people, and killed them with swords. Then they set fire to the city.

27 And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

- With 600 armed men, plus their women and children (v21), they marched north and captured Laish, killing all the inhabitants and burning the city

— Later they rebuilt it and proudly called it Dan, after the name of the founder of their tribe

Jacob's Prophecy

Unfortunately, what Jacob prophesied about the tribe of Dan came true:

Gen 49:16-18:

16 "Dan shall judge his people,

As one of the tribes of Israel.

17 "Dan shall be a serpent in the way,

A horned viper in the path,

That bites the horse's heels,

So that its rider falls backward.

18 "For Your salvation I wait, LORD.

28 And there was no one to save *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. So they rebuilt the city and lived in it.

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.

28 They had no one else to deliver them, because they lived far from Sidon and had no dealings with anyone. It lay in the valley near Beth-rehob. They rebuilt the city and lived in it.

28 And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-Rehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

- The peaceful and unsuspecting people of Laish (v7) were no match for the determined Danites who defeated them and burned down their city

— The people of Laish were 27 miles from Sidon and had no allies to come to their rescue

29 And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father who was born to Israel; however, the name of the city was previously Laish.

29 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.

29 They renamed the city Dan, after the name of their ancestor Dan, who had been born in Israel. The former name of the city was Laish.

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

- The northern city, Laish, near one of the sources of Jordan, was named Dan (modern Tell el-Qadi or Tell Dan)

— It was the most northernmost Israelite city, hence the phrase “from Dan to Beersheba” (20:1)

— It was the first to fall into idolatry (v30; golden calves, 1 Kings 12:28-29; Jeroboam...2 Kings 10:29...until Jehu)

— The shrine established here under the priesthood of Moses' grandson Jonathan and his descendants was elevated (along with Bethel) to the status of a national (idolatrous) sanctuary by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:29f), and so remained until “the captivity of the land” under Tiglath-pileser III.

Some members of the tribe, however, remained in their earlier settlement, with the Philistines as their W neighbors; it is in this region that the stories of Samson, a Danite hero, have their setting (13:1ff). It is possibly the remnant of the tribe that stayed in its first home that is described in Deborah's song (5:17). The southern remnant appears to have been absorbed ultimately in Judah; the northern Danites were deported by Tiglath-pileser III in 732 BC (2 Kings 15:29). The aggressive qualities of the Danites are celebrated in the benedictions of Gen 49:16f and Deut 33:22.

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.

30 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.

30 The descendants of Dan set up the carved image, and Gershom's son Jonathan, a descendant of Manasseh, served along with his descendants as priests to the tribe of Dan until the land was taken captive.

30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

- The City of Dan now became the center of Danite idolatry, which included the Danite priesthood, who served as priests for the entire tribe

- "...Manasseh" - the Hebrew text reads "Moses," but it has a hanging nun, which allows for it to read "Manasseh"

- However, the hanging nun was inserted by a scribe to avoid connecting Moses with idolatry

- Moses was the father of Gershom (Ex 2:22)

- Being the son of Manasseh would not make Jonathan a Levite, but being a son of Moses would. What this shows is that even the line of Moses had been Canaanized, affirming Judges 2:6-10.

- If Jonathan were the grandson of Moses, it would put the event early in the Book of Judges. However, the text allows it to mean not a direct son or grandson, but a descendant of Moses through Gershom.

- The best way to view the migration chronologically is to put the event following the death of Samson, with this Jonathan a descendant but not a direct grandson of Moses

- "...captivity" - many scholars refer this to either the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:6) or the captivity of the Galilean population under Tiglath-Pileser III in 733-732 BC (2 Kings 15:29)

- However, an early monarchial date of the authorship of Judges suggests that the statement refers to an earlier unknown captivity (some have suggested the Philistine capture of the Ark; Cf. 1 Sam 4:11)

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

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.

31 Micah's carved image, that he himself had crafted, was in place during the entire time that God's tent was set up at Shiloh.

31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

- Thus, a counter-priesthood was created, along with a new worship center

- This established a tradition of Dan serving as an idolatrous worship center, which sets the stage for Jeroboam doing the same thing (1 Kings 12:29), using this as precedent

- The reference to the "house of God in Shiloh" (modern day Seilun, 19 miles north of Jerusalem) implies that the worship at the Danite shrine opposed the true worship of the

Lord at Shiloh (Cf. Joshua 18:1)

— This false worship in Dan was a forerunner of that of Jeroboam I, who later established a Northern Kingdom shrine at Dan (Cf. 1 Kings 12:28-31)

- Someone has said that there are only three philosophies of life in today's world:

(1) "What's mine is mine, I'll keep it"

(2) "What's yours is mine, I'll take it"

(3) "What's mine is yours, I'll share it"

— The Danites followed the second philosophy, and so do too many other grasping people

- The tribe of Dan was the first tribe in Israel to officially adopt an idolatrous system of religion

— Even though there was a house of God in Shiloh, they preferred their images and idols.

Years later, when the kingdom divided, Jeroboam I of Israel would set up golden calves in Dan and Beersheba and encourage the whole nation to turn away from the true and living God (1 Kings 12:25-33).