

Micah, the Levite, and the Idol

Introduction

I. Background

A. The Cycle of the Judges

1. Rebellion - Retribution - Repentance - Restoration - Rest

B. Chapters 1-16 - The cycle and the Judges

- C. As you come to Judges 13-16 you read of the last Judge that is recorded in the book of Judges and that is Samson. He is given the most text of any of the judges, but after the story of his life and death there still remain 5 chapters in the Book of Judges

II. Context of Today's Lesson

A. These chapters are somewhat like an appendix to the book itself

1. These chapters contain two stories of individuals and the nations surrounding them and show us from the very smallest of deeds to some of the greatest atrocities that we could even conceive within our minds today, just how Israel was departing from serving their God
2. This morning I want to look at the first of these two incidents for I think we will see that the departure from God's will during the time of the Judges directly applies to how many in this world and maybe even ourselves may be tempted to leave the ways of the Lord
3. We enter into the text of Judges 17 and see a mother and her son

III. Purpose of Today's Lesson

- A. By examining the events that occurred during the period of the judges that are recorded in chapter 17-18, I want us to clearly see how sin gets a foothold within lives and if not resolved can have devastating consequences. We must learn to expel sin from our lives so that God can reign as king of our lives, both collectively and individually.

The Text

I. Chapter 17

A. Micah and his Mother

- a) **Judges 17:1-3 - [1] There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. [2] And he said to his mother, "The 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it." And his mother said, "Blessed be my son by the LORD." [3] And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, "I dedicate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, ~~to make a carved image and a metal image. Now therefore I will restore it to you.~~" (ESV)**
1. Don't you wish that we could stop this story right here and move on to another but sadly for this man named Micah and his mother their story continues
 - a) Judges 17:3 - [3] And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, "I dedicate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, **to make a carved image and a metal image**. Now therefore I will restore it to you." (ESV)
 - b) V4 - Micah takes this silver to the silversmith and has a carved image and metal image made
 - c) V5 - Micah makes an ephod and then ordains one of his own sons to be a priest

B. Micah and the Levite

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- a) V7-8 - A Levite from Bethlehem of Judah happens to be sojourning through this land and wouldn't you know it, he winds up at the house of Micah
 - b) **Judges 17:9 - [9] And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find a place." (ESV)**
2. As we read the remainder of this chapter I can just hear the excitement in the voice of Micah when he hears that this man is a levite!
- a) **Judges 17:10 - [10] And Micah said to him, "Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and a suit of clothes and your living." And the Levite went in. (ESV)**
 - b) V11-13 - Micah and this Levite dwell together and they become like family to one another. Micah ordains this Levite as a priest for the house of Micah. Micah is so optimistic and joyful over the fact that he now has a Levite as his priest and just knows that God will be pleased with him because of this

II. Chapter 18

A. Danites and the Levite

- a) V1-2 - In these days the Danites were looking for a place to dwell as a nation. They send 5 men to spy out the land and find a place for them to dwell and these men find their way to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah himself
- b) V3-4 - These spies hear and see the Levite and ask what he is doing at this individual's home. The Levite recounts for these men what Micah had done for him and how he serves as his personal priest. Hearing that this Levite is a priest they now have a request to make of him.
- c) **Judges 18:5-6 - [5] And they said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether the journey on which we are setting out will succeed." [6] And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The journey on which you go is under the eye of the LORD." (ESV)**
- d) V7-10 - These spies find some wonderful land and they report back to their brothers that the land is spacious and the inhabitants are unsuspecting so they should go up and take it for themselves. They even invoke the idea that God has given this land into their hands based on the words of Micah's priest.
- e) V11-13 - So 600 soldiers of the Danites get ready for battle and make their way toward the land and make it as far as the house of Micah
- f) V14-18 - These men go into Micah's home and take for themselves the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image. All of this happens as the Levite priest looks on and he asks them, "What are you doing?"
- g) **Judges 18:19-20 - [19] And they said to him, "Keep quiet; put your hand on your mouth and come with us and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?" [20] And the priest's heart was glad. He took the ephod and the household gods and the carved image and went along with the people. (ESV)**
- h) V21-24 - I don't know where Micah was for the events above, but now that these Danites are leaving with his goods and his priest he gets angry and confronts them as they depart. How dare you come to my home and take my possession and think you can just walk right out of town.
- i) **Judges 18:25-26 - [25] And the people of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your**

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household.” [26] Then the people of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home. (ESV)

Lesson and Applications

I. Not All Idols Are Common To All Men, But Are Rather Personal And Within Your Own Home

A. Public Idols - We Refuse to Bow or Be Associated With

- a) **Ezekiel 8:16 - [16] And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD. And behold, at the entrance of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshiping the sun toward the east. (ESV)**
- b) **Daniel 3:16–18 - [16] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. [17] If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” (ESV)**

B. Private Idols - What have you put within your heart and home?

- a) **Proverbs 4:23 - [23] Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (ESV)**
- b) **Mark 7:15 - [15] There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” (ESV)**
- c) **Mark 7:21–23 - [21] For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, [22] coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (ESV)**

II. We cannot do whatever we desire “In the Name of the Lord” and expect him to be pleased!

A. What is it that Micah’s mother says to him?

- a) **Judges 17:3 - [3] And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, “I dedicate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a metal image.**

1. Making a carved image, making an ephod and household gods, ordaining one of his sons as a priest, ordaining a Levite as a priest

- a) **Matthew 7:21–23 - [21] “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ [23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ (ESV)**
- b) **Mark 7:8–13 - [8] You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” [9] And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! [10] For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ [11] But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God) —[12] then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, [13] thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.” (ESV)**

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III. We Are Culpable For Our Own Actions and Choices

A. The Levite's Choice

1. Was he of the lineage of Aaron? Did he know the law and know that God forbade idols?
 - a) The Levite was content to dwell with the man (17:11)
2. What was the Levite to do when the Danites took everything from Micah? Will he be loyal to Micah or will you now betray him and go with these men?
 - a) And the priest heart was glad and he went along with the people (18:20)
3. The problem with standing for nothing is that you will fall for anything
 - a) **Ephesians 4:14 - [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. (ESV)**
4. Well their heart is in the right place, they are wanting to do what is right. If we are wanting to do what is right then we better be getting into the word and discovering what the will go God is because his spirit has recorded his mind for us so that we can know
 - a) **2 Corinthians 5:10 - [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (ESV)**

IV. Man's comfort is false and fleeting

A. Micah's Comfort

- a) **Judges 17:13 - [13] Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest." (ESV)**
1. Maybe it wasn't exactly what the Lord wanted when my son was a priest, but now I have a levite and even though he may or may not be of the lineage of Aaron surely God will be pleased with me now
 - a) **Proverbs 30:20 - [20] This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I have done no wrong." (ESV)**
 - b) **Proverbs 28:13 - [13] Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. (ESV)**
2. All that Micah had is taken from him

Conclusion

I. From restoration to devastation

- A. From returning the silver that you had stolen from your mother, to having everything you owned ransacked and taken, if sin is allowed to take hold in your life will destroy you
- B. How can we have hope on the great and final day of judgement? How can we find comfort that is neither false nor fleeting but rather true and eternal?
 - a) **Judges 17:6 - [6] In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (ESV)**
 - b) **Judges 18:1a - [1] In those days there was no king in Israel...**
 - c) **Judges 19:1 - [1] In those days, when there was no king in Israel...**
- C. Don't do what is right in your own eyes as Micah and this Levite did. Make God king of your life and live to serve him doing what is right in his eyes and you can find mercy in time of need!