

Judges 18 Danites Seek Territory

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

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

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

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. 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.”

11 Then from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men armed with weapons of war set out. 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. 13 And they passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.

Danites Take Micah’s Idols

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.” 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. 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.

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. 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?"

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

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

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." 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.

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. 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.

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. 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. 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.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Paul's Questions and insights

1. Israel had no leader and did as they each thought best for themselves.
2. The tribe of Dan, the Danites, went looking for new territory to capture and live in for themselves.
3. No land had been allotted, as the word of God instructed to Joshua, to take possession of the land, had been abandoned and had lost momentum.
4. The Danites sent out five spies to look for this new land.
5. They ended up at the house of Micah and stumbled upon a young priest who they seemed to know.
6. They ask the priest how he came to be there and what was he doing in Micah's house?
7. Remember, this priest had become like a son to Micah, yet his response to the spies seemed vacant of this affection. Why?
8. The five spies take this opportunity to receive guidance and confirmation from God, from the priest.
9. How important is it to do what we do, knowing that God wants us to do it?
10. The five spies discover land and a vulnerable people who they could attack and strip them of their land and their possessions. Was this right?
11. This people seem to be a people of peace.
12. The spies report to the Danites this opportunity to take possession of the land at ease.
13. The land had everything one might need for life.
14. 'Don't sit back anymore' was their approach, 'come let's possess the land', they used what the priest had said as guidance and confirmation from God.
15. Six hundred Danites went up to take possession of the land, but they too ended up at Micah's house with the five spies.
16. Why do you think they took the gods that Micah had made?
17. The young priest questions them and asks 'what are you doing'?
18. The five spies invite the priest to leave Micah and come back with them to be the nation of Dan's priest.
19. Why was the priest's heart glad to leave Micah? After all he had become like a son to Micah.

20. Why did they put the livestock and children in front of the army as they marched?
21. Why did Micah think that he could go up against a great number of fighting men and challenge what they were doing?
22. Micah's response to the army is one of astonishment when they ask him what he is doing, but the army point out to Micah, if he does not stop speaking he will lose his life and the lives of his family.
23. Micah accepts the reality of the situation. Is there a time in life where we have to accept defeat?
24. Was it right to destroy and annihilate the people?
25. The Danites took charge of the city and reigned in it. Was it right for the Danites to set up the graven images and the false gods?

The day of the captivity of this land was when Nebuchadnezzar came and took Israel to Babylon.