

IDOLATRY AT THE TRIBAL LEVEL

--JUDGES 18:1-31--

INTRODUCTION:

We began a new section in Judges last week where the focus shifts to show us how evil Israel has become in the eyes of the LORD, and we began by looking at one family in the hill country of Ephraim. This morning we will see how the idolatry of Micah corrupts a whole tribe in Israel. The picture painted for us by the author in these final chapters is a picture of total chaos, religious chaos in chapters 17-18 and moral chaos in chapters 19-21. The reason given for Israel being on the brink of self-destruction is because there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- I. DAN ABANDONS THEIR INHERITANCE (Judges 18:1-13)
 - a. We left Micah last week confident that the LORD would _____ him because he had made a Levite his priest.
 - b. The spies head north into the hill country of Ephraim, and just like the Levite who was journeying last week, they end up at the house of _____.
 - c. The spies recognize their good fortune in coming to Micah's house and they ask the priest to inquire of _____ for them and whether their journey will be successful or not.
 - d. They hurry back to give a report and tell their brothers that the place is ripe for picking and they need to ___ and _____ it for themselves.
- II. MICAH LOSES EVERYTHING (Judges 18:14-26)
 - a. As they approach Micah's house the five spies inform the rest that this Micah has a _____ with gods and a Levite as his priest.
 - b. It is not long before Micah discovers that his gods and his priest are _____, and he calls out his neighbors to go recover what was stolen from him.
 - c. He had _____ his own religion and had _____ himself on having a Levite as his priest.

III. CORRUPTION AT THE TRIBAL LEVEL (Judges 18:27-31)

- a. Micah has been put aside and pushed into the background. But unfortunately, the history of his _____ and his priest goes on.
- b. Two statements near the end of chapter 18 underscore for us what a mockery Micah's _____ was to all that Israel was supposed to be.
- c. The revelation of the ancestry of Micah's Levite comes as a complete _____ and was almost certainly withheld until now precisely to achieve this shock.
- d. The second statement that reflects on Micah's legacy is the last verse of the chapter, "*So they set up for themselves Micah's graven image which he had made, all the time that the house of _____ was at Shiloh.*" (Judges 18:31, NASB95)

CONCLUSION:

This chapter begins with, "*In those days there was no king of Israel...*" (Judges 18:1a, NASB95) And we saw how the Danites did what was right in their own eyes. Seeking a new place to live without consulting the LORD. This venture to a new place led to the corruption of the tribe of Dan through the idolatry of Micah. Is the remedy to this perversion that was overtaking a nation a king? A king could sort out the chaos and impose some order again to Israel's religious life. And we see this happen when God raises up David and he established Jerusalem as the place the LORD had chosen for Israel to worship, and he centralized worship there where his royal authority could guarantee it proper observance. Solomon continued this and built the temple to the LORD that David had planned. This solution would not have been needed if Israel had recognized God as their King. A human king could not guarantee Israel would stay true to God, at least not permanently as clearly seen in the end of Solomon's reign. A more permanent solution was needed that dealt with the root issue, man's sin. That solution was the birth of a Son, the incarnation of God, the divine King, Jesus Christ, the greater Son of David. He dealt with the root problem on the cross and now we can be delivered from idolatry through salvation in Christ.