

Judges 08-08-13a

This is Wednesday night the 13th of August 2008. We're in the book of Judges. We have finished chapter 16 and we're moving into chapter 17 tonight.

We'll take just a moment to go to the Lord in prayer. It's the opportunity to focus our concentration and remember the importance of the study of God's Word for our meditation and our application as we work through each of our allotted days. Shall we pray? Father, we're grateful for another opportunity to nourish our souls through the study of your Word.

Receive the blessings that come from spending time together so that the gifts you have distributed amongst us are in evidence and accomplish their purpose. We pray that our study will accomplish its purpose and that we will grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior as we study these passages tonight. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. The story we have just completed, the story of Samson, completes the formal cycle and the formal chronology of the book of Judges that began back with Othniel in chapter 3. We had a two-chapter prologue, if you recall, in this book just to step back and see where are we in the book of Judges. We're starting a new section tonight.

This is really the third section of the book. Section 1 was chapters 1 and 2. This was an overall introduction to the deterioration in Israel following the death of Joshua. They almost immediately began to miss their step to slip stitches, whatever analogy you want to use.

They started running into problems in the conquest of the land, which was their mission. They began to be distracted and to think that they needed to accomplish other things. They needed to get along.

They needed to consolidate. They needed to relax. They needed to syncretize, compromise, and apathize themselves.

That's not a word, but I like it. They became apathetic and indifferent to their purpose and the reason that God had brought them to the land. Of course, this is the same thing that befalls us.

It is common to man that we have a hard time concentrating on what we're supposed to be doing. It starts when we're children and it just seems to plague us all our lives. So chapters 1 and 2, this is the failure of Israel to complete the conquest.

They did not drive out the Amorites. They did not drive out the Canaanites, as they were enjoined, as they were commanded to do. Remembering that the land of Canaan, the promised land, the territory that Israel is supposed to seize and hold in the Old Testament is a picture of the territory of our soul.

The giants in the land, the enemies, the wickedness in the land that they're supposed to stomp out, this corresponds to the weaknesses and the vagaries and the wickednesses that exist in

our soul. God has given us the strength to weed these out. He has given us the strength to drive them out.

It doesn't mean that we're ever going to get every last Amorite out of the land, but we can dominate them. We can subjugate them. We can put them in abeyance to a great extent through claiming the promises of God, through remembering that this is our job.

We're not here to evangelize the world. We're not here to minister to the sick and afflicted round about us. It doesn't mean we can't do those things and that it's not a great privilege and a great blessing, but that's not why we're here.

We're here to take and maintain control of the promised land, and that is a soul that is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control, temperance. That's the fruit of the Spirit. That is the land flowing with milk and honey in which we dwell.

When we have that land in our soul, it doesn't matter what our external circumstances are. Young, old, healthy, sick, afflicted, prosperous, down, up, employed, unemployed, under pressure, under no pressure, blessed, cursed, doesn't matter, because we have the land flowing with milk and honey, the land of God's promise and possession in our soul. That's where we should be.

That's the mission. That's the goal. That's the objective.

That's the priority. But we constantly forget this. All of us do.

And to the extent that we forget, we follow the pattern in the book of Judges. It's introduced in the first section, chapters one and two. Then in part two, the cycle of deliverance, where God manifests His interest in bringing about this victory, His interest in returning His people to a cognizance and an awareness and a focus on this mission, is given in these cycles.

We saw Othniel in chapter three. We saw Ehud, the left-handed guy with the sword, in chapter three. We saw Shamgar, a very brief mention of him.

Then in chapter four and five, we saw Deborah and Barak. And the rebuke, the slap in the face that God gave Israel by having to raise up a woman to do a man's job. And the men wouldn't go to battle and the general wouldn't fight without this woman sort of propping them up.

Then in chapter six, and by the way, that was Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. That was down in southern Israel. In chapters four and five, you have the northern area with Deborah and Barak and the whole incursion from over there.

Then it concentrated on the center of the land. This was Gideon in chapter six and seven and eight. And the Midianites were the enemy in that situation.

Followed by the story of his descendants, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, as two judges who didn't really

seem to accomplish much. They were known for their show. What did they look like? They were riding donkeys.

We've got sons judging cities and things like that. And it's all formal appearance but no substantial gain, no victory, no return, no cry under oppression. The spiritual renewal that ought to be taking place in Israel isn't an issue.

It's all about, well, but I sure look good and aren't I prominent and well-known. Then in chapter ten, we saw the eastern portion of the land across the Jordan with Jephthah. And you have the story of him and his daughter and so on.

Followed by the brief mention of Ibzon, Elon, and Abdon. Same kind of thing. No great victory, no genuine enemy defeated, no return to any sort of peace or anything.

It's just notations. Then we have finished up most recently in chapter thirteen through sixteen with Samson. Quite a detailed story.

His physical strength, in many ways he reflects Israel in the flesh. In other ways he reflects Christ in the flesh. His weaknesses reflect the nation of Israel.

Christ bore our weaknesses. He bore our sins in his body. He emptied himself and took on the form of a servant and came in the likeness of men.

And so you have the beginning of deliverance pictured in the first advent of Christ. And as you see Jacob himself wanting to achieve blessing by his own work. I'll get the wife I want by working another seven years.

I'll get the blessing I want by wrestling with this man until dawn. I will get the blessing I want by fooling my brother and putting wool on my arms. I will get what I want by my own efforts.

This has been Israel's problem forever. It's also our problem. We have difficulty trusting God, resting in his promises and doing what we're supposed to do.

We finally saw Samson accomplishing more in his death than he did in his life. And it ends chapter sixteen with the notation that he had judged Israel, tells us once again, twenty years. Samson's time, Samson's twenty years end in the early lifetime of Samuel.

Samuel is already around. He is over there in and around Shiloh. Pretty soon Ramah is going to be his area of operation.

But he's around. You're going to have Ebenezer, the stone of help over there. Thus far has the Lord helped us.

He's going to start laying the foundation and the groundwork for ultimately the Davidic monarchy. So when Samson pulls the house down in southwestern Israel, down in Gaza, he's going to have God's got Samuel up in the northeastern portion, the west side of the Jordan, but

the northeastern, north-central portion of the city, of the nation of Israel. So now, that's the first sixteen chapters of the book.

As we begin chapter seventeen, it says there's a man from the mountains of Ephraim whose name was Micah. And this is chronologically separate. This isn't after the days of Samson.

It's not in the days of Samuel. We've actually gone back. We've gone back to the beginning portion of this time.

Back to not long after Joshua's death. How do I know this? I just do. I can see that's not going to be a sufficient answer.

But you will see before we finish this story why we know this is true. But I'm not going to mention it now because the text doesn't mention it. The things that are given to us in this text are given in a particular order for a particular reason.

It's the same reason that you don't give the punchline of a good story or a good joke at the beginning. If a duck walks into a bar and starts talking to the bartender, you don't give away the essential detail that's going to make the story funny at the end or make it poignant at the end. You save that.

And this account has some information later on that is going to be meaningful because we find it out later on. So I'm going to leave it until later on and you're just going to have to trust me for now that this is early. What we can tell, a Hebrew reader would realize that in the same way these other judges' accounts are not necessarily given sequentially, they overlap, they're in different parts of the nation, this is also separate.

So just be aware we're not on the cusp of Saul and David. We're back now in the earlier days. And there's two reasons we know this.

One of them we'll find out here in the near term. The other one that we'll really nail it, we'll find out later. So here we go.

Chapter 17. Let's read a little bit of this. Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim whose name was Micah.

Micah is the English transliteration of Micah Yahweh. In Hebrew I've given you this before. Who is he, he is she, and me is who.

Let's all say that together. Who is he, he is she, and me is who. Who is he, he is she, and me is who.

It's a little thing you learn first year Hebrew. Who is he, he is she, and me is who. Well, this is a case where me is who.

Me means who. Kah, kath, the letter k, is the preposition that means something that is like or

as. So Micah, who is like.

And you've got a lot of names that begin, other places you find variations of it. Micah occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament. Same name.

Me, kah, yah, or me, kah, Yahweh. Who is like the Lord? Who is like Yahweh? Me, kah, yah. So Micah.

He says to his mother, and we seem to be picking up in the middle. You know how you are flipping around on the dial and you start watching something and it's been on for ten minutes and you have to kind of back fill. Well, this is what we're doing here.

It seems as though some stuff went on and we lost the first page or paragraph or first ten minutes. There is a man whose name is Micah and he says to his mother, the eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears, here is the silver with me. I took it.

Well, why doesn't this start earlier? Behold there was a man in the mountains of Ephraim and he stole eleven hundred shekels from his mother and he hid it. And his mother said, behold, whoever took this money, a curse. And Micah was smote with guilt and went to his mother and said, the eleven hundred shekels of silver.

You see, we've just had a concatenation here. We've had an ellipsis. Something is left out.

Why? Because this is not the real story. You know, how far back do you want to go? How did Micah end up in the mountains of Ephraim? How old is he? When did his mother have him? What happened to his father? Why is the mother managing the money? Well, you have to pick up somewhere and so the narrator just says, well, look, I don't want to give you the whole history, but just suffice it to say that this guy is returning some money to his mother that he stole and she put a curse on. Because this is the clue that tells us don't spend a lot of time like I just have in wondering about all of these details.

So the whole point being that there is this money. It was there. It was taken.

It was returned. And now it's special money. And here's the thing.

People are prone to make vows and promises when pressure is on. Oh, Lord, if you get me out of this jam, I will never do X again. Oh, Lord, I've suffered this loss.

If I get it back, you know, here's my loved one in the hospital and they're about to die and I just see a vast, yawning chasm of darkness ahead of me. If you'll restore them to me, I promise I'll never take them for granted again. I'll never say a cross word.

I'll do this. I'll do that. You know, we want to bargain with God.

We want to say, if you'll come across with what I want, I'll try to give you something that I think

you want. Oh, Lord. This lady lost a big chunk of money.

You may recall that the 1100 shekels of silver, which is about, as I recall, 28 pounds of silver. I mean, you don't lose 28 pounds of silver. This is a pretty sizable mass of metal.

Although silver is reasonably heavy, if you've ever put coins in a box, silver coins, not the old sandwich jobs, but if you save the other ones, stuff gets heavy pretty quick. I would guess that 28 pounds of silver would probably be maybe three cigar boxes full. It's not like a big bushel basket full.

That stuff is heavy. But it's something, the mass of maybe a cinder block would be maybe 28 pounds of silver. I'm just guessing.

So this is what got stolen. She knows it was stolen. And so while it's gone, apparently she says, she really wants it back.

And so she says, I pronounce a curse on whoever took it. Those of us who have been robbed often pray these imprecatory prayers. Father, wherever they are, you know where they are.

You know where my car stereo is or whatever. May it be a blight and may it burn their hands and may it bring nothing but trouble and may they not enjoy it and may it shock them every time they touch the dial. I mean, you just want somebody to get some kind of bad news for violating your privacy and your property.

I've told you many times that when I was off you know, getting shot at in Lebanon, somebody tried to steal my car stereo. And it just incenses you. You just feel so indignant.

Anyway, this is how this lady felt. So she pronounces a curse on whoever stole it. And her son is standing there and this must have been a scary curse.

May your eyes rot in their sockets and may your flesh fall from the bones. May this silver burn a hole to China and suck you down with it, etc, etc. And so Micah gets spooked because these are days of superstition.

In the area where he is, in the mountains of Ephraim, these people are far from God. They're immoral. They're indecent.

They are superstitious. They have been sucked into the culture of the Canaanites where people see two birds, two black crows fly over and they're throwing salt over their shoulders and running under ladders and breaking mirrors. It just horrifies them.

So he hears his mother pronounce this curse and it just puts the fear into him. I heard this curse. I heard you saying it in my ears.

Look, here's the money back. Lift the curse. So his mother says, well, gee, son, if I'd known it was you, I wouldn't have put such a horrendous curse on all this.

I don't want your flesh to fall off and your eyes to rot in your sockets and hole to shine and all the rest of it. So what I'll do is, I want you to be blessed by the Lord, my son. Now notice there's no father in the picture.

So who is this woman living with and relying upon? Where is she going to be if this curse befalls her son? She's pretty much kind of shot herself in the foot here by cursing the hand that feeds her, so to speak, unwittingly. So she wants the son to be blessed. And she's as spooky as he is.

He comes by it honest, hereditarily and environmentally and every place else. They're both a couple of wild-eyed, suspicious, mystical, spooky, superstitious people. And they're both scared by the curse that she put on this silver.

So she says, oh, may you be blessed by the Lord, my son. So when he returned the 1,100 shekels of silver to his mother, his mother says, it says had in your New King James, that's interpretive, forget that, it's have. I have wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the Lord for my son.

Since I've got this big spooky curse, how can I lift it? Well, I'm going to dedicate this returned money to Yahweh. She's evidently got some remembrance of the Lord because she named her son, Micaiah, who is like the Lord. But in the meantime, they've gotten all superstitious.

So she says, I have wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the Lord for my son to make a carved image and a molded image. So therefore, I'm going to return it to you. You've brought it back to me, but I'm dedicating this to God and I'm still not sure that he's not going to bring this big blight, curse, eyes rotting in the socket thing.

So I'm going to give it to you in case the curse does follow the silver, why I'm giving it to you, but I'm giving it to you to dedicate to God and maybe we'll both make out this way. There's no reference to the law, no reference to God's promises. This is all just her idea and his idea of what will work to turn out for good instead of evil.

And this is a situation, if you think about modern Christianity today, people go to church, they put lyrics up on the overhead projector, they've got the LCD projector on the computer, they've got a PowerPoint display for the praise songs, and you know, we love you Lord, Majesty, and all the rest of it. Swelling orchestration coming off an MP3 player now because they don't do things live and people don't have genuine accompaniment. There's a synthetic form of worship that is centered on experience.

Now, there is no difference in centering worship on experience and living by superstition. There's no difference. There's no difference in living by superstition or living by, superstition is just a kind of experience.

I don't want a bad thing to happen to me, I want a good thing to happen to me. I don't want to walk under a ladder, I don't want to see a black cat, I don't want, you know, knock on wood, needles and pins, whatever it may be. I feel like something bad might happen, I'm going to take

a step to make something good happen.

There's no line of separation between that kind of thinking and experiential superstitious worship. I will go and get around holy people in a holy place and sing holy songs and get a holy feeling and my life will be better. There's nothing in the word of God that says your spiritual life has any relationship to how you feel.

Show me a passage of scripture that says your spiritual life can be gauged by how you feel. Joy and peace are attitudes. Joy and peace are policies, they are not emotions per se.

Count it all joy when you fall into various trials. If you're giddy and laughing and having what we call joy when you're in various trials, there's something wrong with you. You're not normal.

You're some kind of a masochist. Jesus, you know, the fruit of the spirit is joy. Jesus was in the spirit through his whole life.

He never sinned. Did Jesus have joy in the Garden of Gethsemane? Kind of a trick question. Yes he did.

And it tells you that joy is not an emotion. Joy is an understanding. Joy is an expectation.

What does the scripture say? The Lord Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. For the joy that was set before him. Did he have joy? Yes he did.

It was the expectation. That's another word for hope of eternal things. For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross.

He got through the cross by concentrating on joy. And that tells you that it's not a giddy sort of happiness. It's an understanding that God is in his heaven and God's plan is coming to fruition.

So, these people, Micah and his mother, are just spiritual people. Spooking around. Doing a bunch of things that have nothing to do with the word of God.

Nothing to do with actually appropriating the promises of God by faith. They're going to try to please God. This lady tries to please God by naming her son with God's name.

By dedicating this silver to God. Going to placate him now so that he won't bring this curse that she pronounced hastily. And so on.

I've dedicated this silver from my hand to the Lord for my son to make a carved image and a molded image. So, Micah, I'm returning it to you. You take this and let's, you know, we're both in trouble now because I pronounced this big curse.

You're the one that stole the money. So, let's superstitiously do something to please God with it. So, he returned the silver to his mother.

And his mother took 200 shekels of silver and gave them to the silversmith. And he made it into

a carved image and a molded image. And they were in the house of Micah.

They were. This is plural. People have tried to say, well, maybe this is one single image.

But this is two separate things. And all through this account they're referred to as two separate things. But yet they are one thing.

Because there's not two separate images. So, it's hard to figure out. Because the one, the carved image, this is the word in Hebrew that's normally used for something that might be made of wood, could be made of a lot of different things, carved of stone, carved of wood.

The molded image, this is something that is cast out of the silver. So, it appears to me that this is an imitation Ark of the Covenant type of thing, where you've got a box with an image on top. Remember, the Ark of the Covenant is wood overlaid with gold.

And then you have the cherubim on top. And there's two of them. Well, apparently this is like some sort of a twisted, smaller version of that done in silver.

Because there is a carved image and there is a poured image. We don't know what this was. Many commentators have surmised that this is another sort of golden calf kind of thing, maybe a silver calf.

Later on, in this same area, much later in the days of Jeroboam, he's going to create another calf like Aaron made. And it seems like whenever they decide to make an image that's related to God, they always end up making a calf or a bull. I don't exactly know why that is, but maybe because that was the most common animal of sacrifice in the Levitical rituals.

So we don't know exactly what these are, but we know it's of two parts. One part is cast metal and the other part is carved probably out of wood, probably overlaid with silver. So 200 shekels out of the 1,100 are melted down to make this combination thing.

It's been suggested that this could also be a solid pedestal, which would be very heavy because 200 shekels of gold, that would give you a solid base. And then wood overlaid with silver as some sort of image, maybe a bull-headed man or man-headed bull or who knows what. It doesn't say what it is.

We just know that it has two parts. It's a carved image and a molded image. And it's some combination of the two.

And they're in the house of Micah. Now this explicitly violates God's command in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 4. You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water under the earth. Exodus 20, 23.

You shall not make other gods beside me, gods of silver or gods of gold. You shall not make for yourself. Exodus 34, 17.

You shall not make for yourself any molded gods, any cast metal gods. Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 4. Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods. I am the Lord your God.

So in the very act of trying to appease God and please God, because they are ignorant, they're actually directly violating one of the Ten Commandments and a commandment that's communicated multiple times in the law. This is exactly what happens today. Ignorant Christians, thinking that they are pleasing God, thinking that they are living a spiritual life, are actually committing what amounts to an abomination in God's sight.

And that is dragging Jesus down to the level of a mere man, losing the awe and the respect for God that is his due. Old Testament prophets fell on their face just in front of God's messenger. There's this casual, over-familiar, angels fear to tread sort of attitude in Christianity today.

It doesn't really matter how you dress when you go to church, but if it is a reflection of your attitude, if you really have a cut-offs and flicks attitude toward God and his throne and his justice and his righteousness and his Son and his plan and his word, it gets reflected. It really started with the Jesus movement and it has just continued in various forms down to the present day. That's what these people have done, and it happens today.

Thinking they're pleasing God, it's actually a stench in his nostrils. So, the man Micah verse 5, had a shrine and made an ephod and household idols. So, how many of you have seen this? How many false things does Micah have in his house? He's got a two-component idol that he started with, molded and carved.

That's two things. He's got a shrine, he's got an ephod, and he's got some teraphim. He's got some peripheral idols.

This would be sort of like having a Virgin Mary statue and then having some other little saint statues around. Or having a plastic Jesus and having some little plastic apostles around it. You've got the main molded God there with a base or a stand or a box, a fake Ark of the Covenant or something underneath.

And now, well that's not enough, so let's add some other little maybe gods of the Canaanites to stand around and do obeisance to the idol of Yahweh. Because we're showing how he's superior to Baal and Ashtoreth. And so there's these other little teraphim.

But you know what the Catholics do? Well, obviously God and Mary are the divine ones and then all the saints, like St. Christopher, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis, they've come up later, they pray to them. It's blasphemy, it's an abomination. You are treating a human being like God, as though a human being can answer prayer.

As though Mary can hear and answer prayer from millions of people simultaneously. You're making her divine. You are elevating her to the status of God.

Something she would come and slap somebody in the face for if she knew about it and could

do so. Catholics, every single Catholic that prays to Mary, Mary would come down and slap them across the mouth and say, quit that, what's the matter with you? The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of Glory. God the Father is the object of prayer and faith and worship.

You come to the Father by the Son, through the Spirit. That's the order. It's taught all through Scripture.

What's the matter with you praying to Mary? What's the matter with you calling some man Father, when Jesus specifically said, let no man call you Father? It's an abomination. People do it all the time. Look at the billions of Catholics that we've had over the centuries, freely disregarding what the Word of God says.

That's what Micah and his mother are doing here. He's got five things in his house, breaking every commandment in the book when it comes to worship of God. There's five commandments related to worship of God in the tablets of the law.

Remember that? Five on one tablet, five on the other. You've got essentially five dealing with God. The honor father and mother is basically reflecting your attitude toward God.

That's why he's called God the Father. Honor your Father. That's a reflection of your attitude toward God.

Love the Lord. Love your neighbor as yourself. The first neighbor you ever have as a child is your parents.

Your attitude toward God is reflected. You've got five commands oriented toward God. You've got five oriented toward man.

Don't covet, don't steal, don't murder, don't bear false witness, and so on. That's the man table. Over here is the God table.

Well, he's broken all five of them, essentially. He's got five abominations in his house. He's got a shrine.

He's got an ephod. He's got teraphim. He's got the molded and carved image, both of which are prohibited multiple times in the law.

Ostensibly, they're doing this because they're honoring God. So, this is not enough. In those days, there was no king in Israel.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. This is the narrator saying, this is back when, this is like the Wild West. Everybody did what could be tolerated in the local neighborhood.

There was no central rulership. There was no recognition that God was the theocratic king in Israel. Now, the story moves forward in verse 7. There was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah.

He was a Levite and was staying there. This, literally in verse 7, tells us that he's a Levite who had been residing in Judah. He's not of the tribe of Judah.

It almost sounds like it. It says, basically, there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah. He was a Levite who had been temporarily staying in Judah.

That's what it's trying to tell us. The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a place. So, he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah as he journeyed.

Now, you remember where the mountains of Ephraim are, and you remember where Bethlehem is, right? Bethlehem of Judah, down south. Mountains of Ephraim, up north. He has traveled from what will one day be the southern kingdom to the northern kingdom.

Where is the area of spiritual strength, typically, in Israel? Who's going to survive as a kingdom with some modicum of relationship with God the longest? It's Judah. That's going to be the last to go. Where does the apostasy begin and thrive? It's up in the north.

It's up in Ephraim. So, we're getting that contrast. This man is in a good place.

By the way, Bethlehem, this is where Boaz and Ruth and Salmon and Obed and Jesse, you've got a line of faithful believers. There is Bible teaching. There is an understanding of God.

There is a residue. There is a remnant. There's 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to whatever the Canaanite gods are in the area, and that's where they are.

This man is a Levite. You would think, wouldn't it be great as a Levite to minister to people like Boaz and Salmon and Obed and Jesse and this family in the area, right in and around Bethlehem. That's where they are.

That's where the people are. This guy, oh no, I've got to go somewhere else. So, where does he go? He goes up there where you've got your silver idols and your crazy women pronouncing curses and trying to get blessings and ephods and fake arcs of the covenant and so on.

So, this man moves from a good place to a bad place. We can see this much more clearly than probably the original readers of this story. So, he comes to the mountains of Ephraim to the house of Micah as he journeyed.

Micah says, where do you come from? Where are you from, boy? He says, I'm a Levite from Bethlehem and Judah and I'm on my way to find a place to stay. Don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way. Micah says, dwell with me.

Be a father and a priest to me. Be a father. Now, this guy, this young Levite is a Naar.

He is described as a young man. Naar means a youth. So, why would Micah say, I want you to be a father to me? Even if Micah is young, he can't be old enough to be Micah's father.

So, why does he say, be a father? What's he talking about? Be my spiritual leader. Be my advisor. Be my counselor.

Be my guide. And be my priest. Now, I think I left out up there in verse five that not only did Micah create the carved idol and the molten idol and the shrine and the ephod and the house of idols, he consecrated one of his own sons.

He's old enough to have his own sons and that son is old enough to function as a priest. So, you would think Micah has got to be in his late 30s, 40s, could be pushing 50 at a minimum to have an adult son who he can consecrate as a priest. So, that's how he gets started.

He says, well son, I've got all this stuff set up here and I want you to run the show. So, you do the sacrifices and swing the censer full of smoke and sprinkle stuff and mumble holy words and hand out rosaries and whatever else you're going to do. You do that for me.

I'm consecrating you. You're the priest. That's your job.

I'm not bringing you into the family business, whatever that may have been. You're not going to order the servants or run the crops in the field or manage the sheep or anything. All you have to do is run this little circus I've got going in the house here.

You just polish the silver and say the mumbo jumbo and ask prayers for all the rest of us while we do our stuff. And the son says, okay, fine. So that's what's going on.

Now this guy comes up and Micah says, wow, this is great. This guy is an actual Levite. He's the real deal.

This would be the equivalent of a small town having a little guy that grew up and he's 16, 17 and he says, I feel called to preach. And he's standing up trying to preach and he's got no training. And then some guy that's actually been to Bible college blows through town and they say, hey, why don't you be the pastor? You've actually been to school.

And the former guy just kind of gets shoved aside because he's just kind of a untrained amateur. And this guy's a pro. So Micah is just thrilled.

And he says, boy, you want to bring some legitimacy to the stuff I've just made up out of whole cloth that has no, no provenance and no, no legitimacy. Well, this'll put the stamp of reality on it because, hey, you know, can't argue with this. I got a Levite running the thing.

So stay with me, be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you 10 shekels of silver per year. Did you wonder what happened to the other 900 shekels after they melted it down? Well, of course, they spent some more to make the ephod. They spent some more to make the shrine.

They spent some more to make the other little teraphim. But he's still got some, some shekels left over. And so he says, look, I'll give you 10 shekels per year and I'll give you room and board and keep close on you and, and you stay here and be the priest.

So the Levite says, you know, this is the kind of thing I was looking for. I've candidated here and there, and here's the, here's the shrine for me. So the Levite went in and the Levite was content to dwell with the man.

And the young man became like one of his sons to him. So he's got evidently multiple sons. So Micah consecrated the Levite and the young man became his priest and lived in the house of Micah.

Micah said, well, now I know the Lord will be good to me. I know the Lord will be good to me. I've got a Levite for a priest.

Do you see an analogy to modern Christianity, modern denominational church where people say, well, but look, we've got Bibles in the pew. Look, we, we evangelize. Look, we do this or we do that.

There's one token thing that people believe is genuinely legitimate. You know, bring your tithes into the storehouse. Well, look, we, everybody's tithing or look, we're, we're doing this or we're, we're baptizing or we're, we do the Lord's table every time we open the doors or whatever.

And so God is bound to bless us because look at this one thing we're doing right. Individual believers can do the same thing. Well, I go to Bible class.

God's got to be good to me. Oh, no, he doesn't. If you come to Bible class, I'm here to tell you that you're responsible for what you hear and it would be better for you.

Remember there's, there are places in the scripture that say it'd be better if you'd have never heard than having heard and then turn away because now you're responsible for what you know and you know, you don't want to be one of these millstone around the neck cast of the C types. Uh, you don't want to be in that. Go to that passage where he talks about the dog returning to his vomit and the sow having been washed, returning to the mire.

That's the picture in scripture of believers who taste the good word of God and partake of the heavenly gift and, and see the power of the spirit and so on and then fall away. And it's impossible to bring them back to change of mind so long as you crucify the son of God afresh and put into an open shame. Hebrews chapter six, that's you and me.

If we come to Bible class and we don't really pay attention, we don't really do something about what we learn in those classes during the week. This, this is the, this is the way to actually gain some ground in spiritual life and God isn't happy about us coming in and squandering, uh, information from his word. So he expects a lot from those to whom much is given from those to whom much is given.

Much is expected and we're given a lot. All of us are, we learn from each other. Our, our fellowship produces a lot of understanding of God's word and we have an obligation to do something with that.

Well, Micah, I got a Levi and I am in like Flint, man. I, we're set now. No curse for me.

Well, that's where we're going to leave him until after the break. We'll pick up, uh, at the beginning of the next chapter. Look at that.

We covered a whole chapter in one session. You can't believe it, can you? We'll have to go back and review just so that doesn't actually come true. We'll start chapter 18 when we come back from the break.