

# Judges & Ruth

God's *Faithfulness* Remains

women's | BIBLE STUDY

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LESSON *Twelve*

Micah and the Levite

**A**t this point in history, Israel rapidly declined. A simple man from the hill country was highlighted as another example of “doing what was right in his own eyes.” Contrary to God’s commands, Micah crafted an idol and hired a priest to oversee cultic worship of God. As people from the tribe of Dan traveled through Micah’s town, they stole his priest. Ultimately Israel continued their downward spiral of faithlessness to a faithful God.

## EPILOGUE

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This section begins the Epilogue to the book of Judges with stories that serve as continued examples of Israel’s decline.

## SYNCRETISM

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Israel is in full-blown syncretism. Remember, syncretism is the combination of several belief systems into one. Here, Israel has a Levitical priest presiding over an idol, a practice explicitly forbidden in the Old Testament Law.

## SHILOH

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At this time, God prescribed that worship should take place at the tabernacle in Shiloh, not far from where Micah lived.

## PRIESTS

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God specified that priests were to be from the tribe of Levi, descendants from Moses’ brother Aaron (Exodus 28:1-3). They were considered mediators between God and man and had very strict standards for serving in such a role (Leviticus 21).

**Read Deuteronomy 12:1-14 and Judges 17-18 before answering the following questions.**

1. From Deuteronomy 12:1-14, how does Yahweh, the One True God of Israel, want to be worshiped?

What is the problem with not worshiping God the way He asks? Note: This is a major theme in these chapters, so keep it in mind throughout this lesson.

**Read Judges 17.**

2. What happened in verses 1-6? What did this reveal about Micah’s character?
3. Read Exodus 20:1-6 and consider what was happening in this chapter. What was wrong? Why do you think God made these commands?

4. Write down Judges 17:6 below:

What do you think it means to “do what is right in [your] own eyes”?  
(See also Proverbs 16:25.)

5. The Levites were the spiritual leaders in Israel. What happened when the spiritual leaders compromised God’s standards and how did this affect the health of the nation? How could this affect the Church today?
6. Micah revealed his true motive in verse 13. What did he say? How did this prove a misunderstanding of God and His desires for His people?
7. Everyone in this chapter demonstrated either great ignorance for God’s instructions or outright rebellion, and the results were tragic. Read Psalm 1. What wisdom do you glean from this psalm about the benefits of following God’s Word? (See Appendix: God’s Word.)

**Read Judges 18:1-20.**

8. Spies from Dan noticed several things about the people in Laish that made it favorable to conquer. List them in the space below:

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## SPIRITUAL LEADER

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Micah was likely the spiritual leader of the family, indicated by the shrine in his home.<sup>69</sup>

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## EPHOD

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As a reminder, an ephod was “a sacred vestment that was worn and employed by the high priest.” (See Exodus 25:7; 28:4-35.)<sup>70</sup>

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## MICAH’S RELIGION

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“Micah’s religion, though focused on Yahweh, is indistinguishable from that of the Canaanites.”<sup>71</sup>

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## NO KING IN ISRAEL

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Notice the repetition of “there was no king in Israel.” This phrase will continue to be used through the end of the book of Judges. This is significant because Israel didn’t submit to God as their King, a choice that would lead to pain and destruction.

## CHAPTER 1

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“While chapter 1 recounts Israelites not conquering what they should, chapter 18 recounts Israelites conquering what they should not.”<sup>72</sup>

## DAN

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Read Joshua 19:40-48 and Judges 1:34 to remind yourself why the tribe of Dan was looking for a new place to live.

## PARALLELS

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There are many parallels between this section of Scripture and Numbers 13-14.

## EXILE

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Verse 30 mentions the “day of captivity,” foreshadowing the day Israel will be overcome by a great enemy and taken into exile. For more on this story, read 2 Kings 24-25.

## HOUSE OF GOD

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There was a “house of God” in Shiloh, and in light of Deuteronomy 12, there should not have been another place of worship set up.

The people of Dan desired something they thought was “better” than what they had been given by God. In what ways can you relate?

9. Starting in verse 14, the focus shifts from the people in Laish to the home of Micah. The people of Dan became envious of not only the people of Laish but also of what Micah had in his possession. Define envy. How can envy affect your relationship with God? With others?

“In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:6-8

**Read Judges 18:21-31.**

10. The tribe of Dan took Micah’s idol and priest. His response was “what have I left?” What does this reveal about Micah’s heart? Think about it. What loss would make you say something like this?
11. The extent of Israel’s depravity can be seen in verses 30-31. Summarize their situation in one or two sentences.

12. Judges 17-18 paint a clear picture of how devotion to and worship of God can be vastly influenced by the culture. What helps you resist the influence of culture on your devotion to God?

## SIN

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While Israel has been influenced greatly by the Canaanites, ultimately the sin in their hearts is their biggest problem. The same is true of all believers today: the problem is our sin, not the culture around us.<sup>73</sup>

## BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Notes