



A Study of the Book of Judges

Lesson 14: Micah and His Gods... Judges 17-18

Now you will remember from our earlier lessons that the book of Judges is comprised of a double introduction followed by the stories of seven major judges followed by a double conclusion.

I have tried to make the book's structure a little more memorable along the way by repeating that idea in a simpler way as often as I could. This is how I put it.

Two beginnings and two endings with seven judges on a seesaw in between and Gideon in the middle.

TWO BEGINNINGS...
AND TWO ENDINGS...
WITH SEVEN JUDGES ON A SEESAW
IN BETWEEN...
AND GIDEON IN THE MIDDLE.

Now if you have been here much along the way, you will know that we have already worked our way through the two beginnings and the seven judges that follow after those two beginnings. You will also know that the stories have gotten progressively worse as the book has developed.

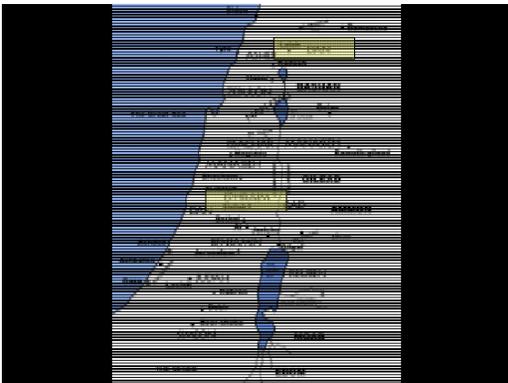
The stories of the first judges mentioned...Othniel, Ehud and Deborah...were almost all completely positive. But when we came to Gideon, the pivotal character and judge of the book, things began to change. Gideon's story started off positively but ended negatively. And it was the same with Jephthah and it was even worse with Samson.

You will also remember that the general movement of the stories of the Book of Judges has been from south to north. Now I want you to think about that. The stories get worse as the book unfolds and the book unfolds from south to north. That means that the further north you go in Judges the worse things are. Now over the years scholars have thought a lot about that. They have hypothesized that the book was written as a polemic, an argument, against all those who worshipped in the north away from Jerusalem...which you will recall is in the south. The two principal places established to draw worshippers away from Jerusalem were the northern cities of Bethel and Dan. They were established by Jeroboam after the division of the nation into southern and northern kingdoms...that is, into Judah and Israel.

Jeroboam set up worship centers in the cities of Bethel and Dan to keep his people from going south to Jerusalem to worship. 1 Kings 12:25 records Jeroboam's thoughts and actions.

NIV 1 KINGS 12:26... JEROBOAM THOUGHT TO HIMSELF, "THE KINGDOM WILL NOW LIKELY REVERT TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID. ²⁷ IF THESE PEOPLE GO UP TO OFFER SACRIFICES...IN JERUSALEM, THEY WILL AGAIN GIVE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THEIR LORD, REHOBOAM KING OF JUDAH. THEY WILL KILL ME AND RETURN TO KING REHOBOAM." ²⁸ AFTER SEEKING ADVICE, THE KING MADE TWO GOLDEN CALVES. HE SAID TO THE PEOPLE, "IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU TO GO UP TO JERUSALEM. HERE ARE YOUR GODS, O ISRAEL, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF EGYPT." ²⁹ ONE HE SET UP IN BETHEL, AND THE OTHER IN DAN. ³⁰ AND THIS THING BECAME A SIN...

NIV 1 Kings 12:25...Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel. ²⁶ Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. ²⁷ If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam." ²⁸ After seeking advice, the king (that is, Jeroboam) made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." ²⁹ One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ³⁰ And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there. ³¹ Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites.



Now most scholars think is that the Book of Judges was written to show the importance of abandoning these northern centers of worship with their idols and idol worship and reestablishing the proper worship of YHWH at Jerusalem in

the south.¹ That seems to make a lot of sense and if that is the purpose of the book then it makes sense that the book would have been written sometime after the people returned from exile in Babylon in 536 BC.²

Other scholars think the bulk of the Book of Judges was written as a polemic against Saul and in favor of David. I tend toward that view. It seems to me that Judah and Bethlehem of Judah, both readily associated with David, are pretty much always viewed positively in Judges while Benjamin, Saul's tribe, is pretty much always viewed negatively. That will be especially true in next week's lesson on the final three chapters of the book. I am right then the book would have been principally written after Saul's death but before David became king of the whole nation.

But regardless of which of those two views you take for the overall purpose of the book the stories are consistent in the way they demonstrate that sin always runs down. That men left to themselves will, in fact, always go from bad to worse. It is a lesson that ought to humble us all. It is a lesson that ought to be perceived by us all. You see men, even the best men, apart from God's sustaining grace and mercy will slide downward toward evil. If the Lord ceases to renew...if He ceases to revive...even the best men and women's feet will slip in due time.

Calvin was right when he wrote long ago that men's hearts are idol factories...that are the most efficient factories in the world and that they operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and the idol they keep churning always looks like their maker.³

But I digress.

The point I was making is that when God ceases to renew, ceases to revive men run down. And in Israel's day that had been proven to be true over and over again. We saw that especially in the section concerning the seven major judges. How many times did we see the phrase or some variation of the phrase, **"again Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord and prostituted themselves with the Asherahs and the Baals?"**

Now in the two concluding stories of the book the author is going to switch to a different refrain. Instead of saying **"Israel again did evil in the eyes of the Lord and prostituted themselves with the Asherahs and Baals"** he is going to say, **"In those days there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes."** But the idea is exactly the same. The author's point is that the men of the period about which he was writing believed their lives to be their free from any societal restraints or of the law of God or of any other norms of decency.

You will see that in this week's lesson but you will see in spades next week when it becomes almost impossible to tell the actions of the men of Israel from the actions of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah recorded in the Book of Genesis. They look the same. They sound the same. They act the same.

Now I think the purpose of the author was to get the people of Israel to follow their king...but not just to follow the king...to follow the king as he followed God.

Now that ought to be the desire and hope all of the people of God. Our king, of course, is the Lord Jesus Himself.

Now with that in mind, let's take a look at the story of Micah and his gods starting in Judges 17:1.

^{NIV} **Judges 17:1**...Now a man named Micah⁴ from the hill country of Ephraim ² said to his mother, "**The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse-- I have that silver with me; I took it.**" Then his mother said, "**The LORD bless you, my son!**"⁵

Now the first thing I want you to know and you can not see this in English is that the name Micah is spelled differently in verse 1 than it is in the rest of the story. In verse 1, it is spelled out in a lengthened fashion and means "**Who is like unto YHWH**" or "**YHWH the Incomparable.**"⁶ In the rest of the story his name is shortened to simply mean "**Who is like?**" The idea seems to be that such a brazen idolater has no right to bear the name of YHWH.

I especially like the way Andrew Fausset put it writing in his commentary on Judges in 1885, "**the closing syllables containing the name of Jehovah are taken away from the name, when he dishonors Jehovah by idols. *Nor does Scripture see fit to record the name of his father and family, as he was a dishonor to Israel by idolatry.***"⁷

But I am getting ahead of the story. The story starts off with a confession of a son to his mother. Now the gist of what happened is that Micah stole 1100 pieces of silver from his mother...and when she discovered that the silver had been stolen...she pronounced a curse either upon the money itself or upon the person

who stole it. Apparently, the son feared the mother's curse, perhaps because his mother had dedicated the money to the Lord after it had been stolen, and made a full confession of the fact that he had taken the money. Now there are two things about that that ought to get your attention. First, a son in Israel was willing to impoverish his mother by stealing from her money and secondly this is not the first time the sum of 1100 shekels of silver has come up.

Do you remember the other place that sum of money came up in the Book of Judges? It occurred in the story of Delilah and Samson when the five Lords of the Philistines each offered Delilah 1100 shekels of silver to discover Samson's secret source of strength and to betray him into their hand. Commentators note that literarily in Judges, 1100 shekels of silver seems to have become connected with the idea of betrayal...something like 30 pieces of silver will be later.⁸

Anyway the mother quickly changes her curse into a blessing and blesses her son for returning the stolen silver in the name of YHWH. It seems like the transition going from cursing to blessing is awfully quick but the shocking part occurs in verse 3.

^{NIV} **Judges 17:3**...When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "**I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you.**" ⁴ So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol⁹. And they were put in Micah's house.

Now the idea that a mother in Israel would dedicate 1100 shekels of silver to construct an idol which she would then give to her son to show her gratitude is remarkable. One commentator, Michael Wilcock, writes this:

Certainly we are meant both to look open-mouthed at this flagrant disregard of the second commandment, and to realize that the woman herself could not see the incongruity of it. Clearly the new image took an honored place in the shrine which Micah had apparently already set up in his home, along with everything else that a proper shrine required: an ephod like Aaron's or Gideon's, teraphim or 'household gods' like Rachel's and of course a priest.¹⁰

Now I ought to talk for just a minute about the idols that were made. It is hard to know exactly what they were. One was a carved image and the other was a molten image. In other words, one of the images was carved out of or on a piece of silver and one was cast in a mold by melting the silver...thus the word molten...and pouring it into a mold. The two words are different. Some scholars think one was the image and the other part was the base but others think they were two separate objects.

The first word is the word פֶּסֶל (pesel) and is the noun form of the word **“to carve.”** It was used of God when he carved out the Ten Commandments with His own finger. The noun can mean any carved image or inscribed image.

The second word מַסֵּכָה (masekah) was used in Exodus and Deuteronomy to describe the golden calf that Aaron cast in the wilderness for Israel to worship.

Both kinds of objects were forbidden under the law.

But as Micah's story develops, we find out that he not only accepts the images from his mother but he adds to them and puts them in his own shrine. Look at verse 5.

^{NIV} **Judges 17:5**...Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and installed one of his sons as his priest. ⁶ In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Now verse five is intended to be a summary statement of Micah's wickedness and it tells us that he even made his own ephod reminding us of Gideon's action earlier in the book and causing us to wonder whether or not the ephod will become a snare in his case as it was in Gideon's. You will remember that an ephod was a priestly garment, something like vest, that was to be used to discern God's will and that the genuine article was kept in the tabernacle in Shiloh and was to be used only by the High Priest.

The section also serves to introduce us to the next character in the story a young Levite from Bethlehem. His story starts in verse 7.

^{NIV} **Judges 17:7**...A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, ⁸ left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim. ⁹ Micah asked him, **"Where are you from?" "I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay."** ¹⁰ Then Micah said to him, **"Live with me and be my father¹¹ and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food."**

Now there are two or three things of interest here.

First the young priest is from Bethlehem in Judah, known by everyone to be the city of David. Now that does not mean he was of the tribe of Judah. No he was of the tribe of Levi but the Levites had no inheritance of their own and lived interspersed among the other tribes.

Secondly, Micah makes him his own personal priest. Such an act was forbidden under the law. The Israelites were not allowed to multiply places of worship which Micah was doing and by extension they were not allowed to independently choose their own priests.

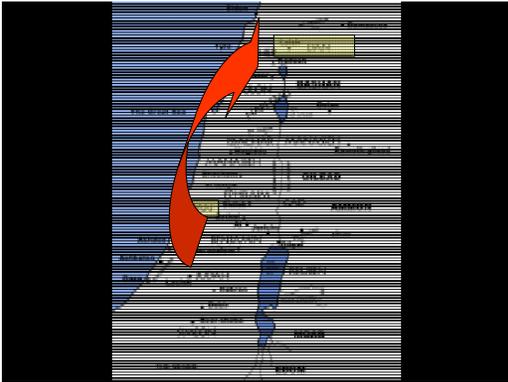
Thirdly, the young priest seems to have no objections or problems with serving as Micah's priest. He is willing, the money is right and it doesn't seem to matter that to him that Micah has set up an independent place of worship and that that place of worship is built around idols that Micah himself produced. Neither one of the men seems afraid of judgment or of invoking God's displeasure. In fact Micah comes to the opposite conclusion.

^{NIV} **Judges 17:11**...So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man was to him like one of his sons. ¹² Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house. ¹³ And Micah said, "**Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest.**"

Chapter 18 starts off with the same summary verse used earlier indicating an end to the section about the Levite and introducing the tribe of the Danites. Now I talked about the fact in an earlier that the Danites had been assigned the coastal plain we know today as the Gaza strip but that they had not been able to dislodge the Philistines living there and had as a result relocated to a different part of Israel. This is the area they were assigned.



But this is the area they actually wound up taking.



Now that is the story told in chapter 18 and as the story is told and the Danites are scouting out the territory they want to take in northern Israel the three characters of the story...Micah, the young Levite and the tribe of Dan...all converge together to make one story.

Let's read together in Judges 18:1.

NIV Judges 18:1...In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.¹² ² So the Danites sent five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and

explore it. These men represented all their clans. They told them, "**Go, explore the land.**" The men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night.

Now let me clear about what is going on here and in trying to do that let me repeat myself. The Danites had been given an inheritance but the cost of receiving that inheritance they either deemed to be too high or hopeless as a result they were out spying out the land to find a new place. Now that had already been done under Joshua but they had decided that they were not going to attempt to procure the allotment they had been given but were going, instead, going to make their own path and way. Notice they were from the area of Zorah and Eshtaol...the very area that would later produce Samson. Anyway, in verse 2, they find themselves camping out near Micah's house. Look at verse 3.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:3**...When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?" ⁴ He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "**He has hired me and I am his priest.**" ⁵ Then they said to him, "**Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful.**" ⁶ The priest answered them, "**Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval.**"

Now verse 3 says they recognized the voice of the young Levite but that probably does not mean that they recognized his voice as a person they knew. It probably means they recognized his southern accent. That is, they recognized the fact that he was from the area around Judah like they were and was not from one of the northern tribes.

Even the Bible, it seems, recognizes the difference between a southern and northern accent. Although in this case, the recognition of a southern accent is not necessarily a good thing.

The Danites want to know all of the facts about the priest.

They want to know why he is there, where he came from, who had brought him there, etc. and he answered all of their questions. Then, and this is remarkably ironic, they appeal to him to seek the face of the Lord and to determine whether or not the Lord will bless them on their way. You would have thought that they might have done that before they left the place that the Lord had assigned them. Now let me ask you a question, where would the young priest have gone to appeal to the Lord.

He would have gone to the shrine Micah had made, to the images of god Micah had made and he would have done that as the priest Micah had made. Notice his answer to their question is favorable which I think a tremendous lesson for us all. If we determine our own course of action and we if remold God into our own image or into something we think we can manage, we can almost always convince ourselves of the beauty of our own actions. When we inquire of the Lord, He will tell us what we want to hear and he will tell us what we want to hear with an accent that sounds very much like ours.

You see it all of the time. Men believe a certain course of action is God's will and that pursue that course with all of the certainty of the voice of God. Of course, what they actually listening is the Urim and Thummin of their own wicked hearts. It is remarkable how easy that is to do and how hard it is to stop.

I remember many years ago, I worked with a man named Danny and Danny was good friend and I think he was a believer. Anyway, Danny came to me one day and said to me, **"Tom, I want you to pray for me. I want you to pray that the lord will give me discernment about whether or not to stay with my wife or to leave my wife and marry this other woman...this woman that I have fallen in love with and truly love."**

You see he had already determined his course of action. He had already decided that he deserved happiness and that that happiness could best be obtained in following a particular course of action. It is something we all do and it is always much easier to see in the lives of those around us than it is in our own lives. It was the same thing with Micah and with Micah's personal priest and with the men from the tribe of Dan.

In verse 7, the men from Dan continue their trip north.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:7...**So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, unsuspecting and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else. ⁸ When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers asked them, **"How did you find things?"** ⁹ They answered, **"Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over.** ¹⁰ **When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever."**

Now apparently the appeal of the five men struck home to the heart of the Danites. They put together a raiding party and move northward toward Laish.

Along the way they passed by the house of Micah. We see that starting in verse 11.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:11**...Then six hundred men from the clan of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. ¹² On their way they set up camp near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is called Mahaneh Dan to this day. ¹³ From there they went on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah's house. ¹⁴ Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their brothers, "**Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, other household gods, a carved image and a cast idol? Now you know what to do.**" ¹⁵ So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him. ¹⁶ The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance to the gate. ¹⁷ The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance to the gate.

Now the scene in this particular section is very confused. On the one hand, the priest is standing with the six-hundred armed men at the gate of the house. On the other hand the five men that had been there before went into the house...that is they went into the shrine...and liberated...a technical term for stole...Micah's gods.

Verse 18 describes the scene when they bring Micah's gods out of the shrine.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:18**...When these men went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, "**What are you doing?**" ¹⁹ They answered him, "**Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?**" ²⁰ Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people.

Now notice how the priest at first objects to the stealing of the idols...and then determines after finding out that he is going to get to go with them that taking the idols is not such a bad thing after all. In fact he thinks it a wonderful idea. It affords him an opportunity to expand the scope and influence of his ministry.

Of course, when you are reading the story you wonder what happened to Micah. Verse 21 brings him back into the story. First though, I want you to notice that the armed men take their children, presumably their wives and livestock out in front of them. Now the only reason for doing that is that they expected Micah to come after them. To move their loved ones and possessions to the front meant that they expected to be attacked from behind. Look at verse 21.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:21**...Putting their little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left. ²² When they had gone some distance from Micah's house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites. ²³ As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, "**What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?**" ²⁴ He replied, "**You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?'**" ²⁵ The Danites answered, "**Don't argue with us, or some hot-tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.**" ²⁶ So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home.

Now the story is pretty easy to follow. The most awful verse in the whole story is clearly verse 24. It is awful and ironic and tragic.

I love the way Robert Boling translates the verse. He translates it perhaps it would better to say paraphrase it like this, "**My God which I made, you have**

taken.”¹³ But it pretty well gets to the sense of the passage. “My God which I created...my priest which I created...you have taken.”

Now there is a sense in which Micah gets exactly what he deserves. But there is sense also in which the Danites get what they deserve as well. Notice that they are not commended for the slaughter they are about to undertake. They are presented in the text as being vicious and cold hearted and reprehensible.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:27**...Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. ²⁸ There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. ²⁹ They named it Dan after their forefather Dan, who was born to Israel-- though the city used to be called Laish.

The people of Laish are victims of the Danites. Micah is a victim of the Danites. They are ruthless and heartless and are willing to kill those they were not commanded to kill and unwilling to kill those they were commanded to kill. They were set on doing what was right in their own eyes. And they got what they wanted.

It is wonderful and terrible lesson, I think, for us all. When we determine an agenda and give up decency and propriety and justice to achieve what we want, God will let us have what we want and when we get what we want we ought not be surprised or disappointed or discouraged.

Verse 30 wraps up the section and identifies for the first time in the text the actual identity of the young priest.

^{NIV} **Judges 18:30**...There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. ³¹ They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

Did you get that? The young priest is a descendant of Moses. Now we knew, of course, that he was a relative of Moses in that he was a Levite. But he is not just a distant relative. He is direct descendant of Moses. The text seems to present him as Moses's grandson and he may well have been but he may have been his great grandson or his great-great grandson...the word that is used for son does not have to mean "son" in the technical sense. It may mean direct descendant instead.

Now what is the point? The point is that even a descendant of Moses will go wrong if he does what is right in his own eyes. Lineage and upbringing can be overcome by a prideful and independent heart...a heart set on fulfilling its own desires.

Verse 31 reminds us that all of these things happened while the true House of God was nearby in Shiloh.

You see, God had appointed a means for men to come to Him and to learn of Him and to be in fellowship with Him. But Micah and the young priest and the Danites decided they wanted to mold God's ordained ways into their way. That is they wanted to mold God like a wax nose to fit their own faces and when they did God gave them what they wanted.

Now this story has so many wonderful applications that we could spend an hour or more gleaning from what it has to teach us but let me just make one application.

God has appointed Christ as the mediator between God and man. There is no other mediator. When we attempt to come to God in our strength or in our own image instead of through Christ we are worshipping at the shrine of Micah and the image before which we are bowing down looks a lot like us. God deliver us from doing that...for the Redeemer has come out of Shiloh.

Are there any questions?

Let's pray.

¹ Yairah Amit, "Hidden Polemic in the Conquest of Dan: Judges XVII-XVIII" in *Vetus testamentum* 40 no 1 Ja 1990, 4-20. Amit holds that the underlying purpose of these two particular chapters was to denigrate the importance of Bethel as a center for worship.

² The northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians (led by Sargon) around 722 BC. The southern kingdom of Judah went into captivity in Babylon (led by Nebuchadnezzar) around in 606 BC. A remnant of the nation returned under Zerubbabel in 536 BC (principally Judah and Benjamin) and another remnant returned under Ezra in 445 BC.

Cf. "Captivity" in *the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* or any other good bible dictionary.

³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I. Chapter 11.8, Calvin write: "Next, what is held in the book of Wisdom concerning the origin of idols is received virtually by public consent: that the originators of idols were those who conferred this honor on the dead, and thus superstitiously worshiped their memory. Of course, I admit that this perverse custom was very ancient, nor do I deny that it was a torch with which to fire men's mad dash into idolatry all the more; yet I do not concede that this was the original source of the evil. For it appears from Moses that idols were in use before this eagerness to consecrate images of the dead prevailed, which is frequently mentioned by secular writers. When he relates that Rachel stole her father's idols, he is speaking of a vice that was common. **From this we may gather that man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.**"

⁴ Robert Boling, *Judges* in the Anchor Bible Commentary Series, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975), 258. The name Micah is spelled only here in its full spelling. Elsewhere it is shortened. Here the name, the full name, means “Yahweh the incomparable”. Boling writes, “It appears that the redactor was almost saying, ‘Think of it. Images! And with a name like that.’”

⁵ Boling, 256. The mother quickly forgets what her son had done...namely, steal her fortune.

⁶ Boling, 258. The name Micah is spelled only here in its full spelling. Elsewhere it is shortened. Here the name, the full name, means “Yahweh the incomparable”. Boling writes, “It appears that the redactor was almost saying, ‘Think of it. Images! And with a name like that.’”

⁷ Andrew R. Fausset, *Judges* in the Geneva Commentary Series (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Publishers, 1885; reprinted in 1999), 264. The same point is made by Keil and Delitzsch. See C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Volume 2...Joshua-2 Samuel*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1984), 428.

⁸ Fausset, 264. Fausset makes the point that the use of the 1100 shekels of silver is spiritually suggestive of the betrayal of Delilah. See also Dr. Thomas Constable’s notes on Judges, Chapter 17 at <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/judges.pdf>. “The events recorded in these two chapters evidently took place while the Philistines were putting pressure on the tribes of Dan, Judah, and Benjamin. Perhaps the writer included them here because of their connection with the arena of Samson’s activities that he just related (chs. 13–16). Another connection is the mention of “1,100...of silver” (16:5; 17:2).”

⁹ Boling, 256. “Idol” here is “molten figure”...**וּמִסְכָּה**...that is, a poured out figure...poured into a mold. Probably the teraphim of verse 5...an instrument of divination. Cf. Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1975), 148-9. He writes, “Not only were Micah and the Danites wrong in having private sanctuaries, but also in employing images which to worship. Their sin would not have been quite so serious if had worshiped God without these. Micah’s mother had paid for images to be made, a “graven image” (*pesel*) and a molten (*nuvssekah*), and then Micah had added ‘terraphim’ (*tetaphim*), probably were smaller, household-type images (cf. Gen. 31:19; Su Later, the Danites had stolen all of these and continued to use them. actions of both Micah and the Danites were in clear disobedience of God’s command...”

¹⁰ Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Judges*, (Downer’s Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 155.

¹¹ Boling, 257. Boling writes: “A title which apparently emphasizes the priest’s role as cultic diviner, responsible for ‘yes’ or ‘no’ oracular advice (as in 18:4–6). The equipment of Micah’s shrine suggests that it was noteworthy for this reason. See the numerous references and allusions to the importance of proper Yahwist inquiry in the period. Later the title, “father,” and the oracular responsibility belonged to prophets during the monarchy (II Kings 6:21; 8:9; 13:14). The characterizations before us suggest that in the case of Micah’s Levite and the Danites, the weighty responsibility of the “father” is being exploited. Deborah was renowned as ‘mother’ in Israel’ for having produced the right answer (5:7).”

¹² Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1975), 148. "Joshua had been used of God to allot those portions selected by God for each tribe, with God controlling the lot to this end. This meant, of course, that each tribe was to accept the assigned portion as from God, and therefore without question. If God had directed in its choice, it should be the best for any respective tribe. Because of this, the movement of Dan to new quarters was wrong. When the people found their assigned territory cramped, because of the many Canaanites living in the lowland area, they should have fought and dislodged them. This had been God's directive. They should not have been surprised at finding Canaanites there, but should have expected it and then planned how they might defeat them. They should, in fact, have been delighted that God had assigned so much lowland to them, for this was the best land and would provide excellent fields to farm."

¹³ Boling, 261-2.