

# Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of My Inheritance

## Lesson #15 The High Cost Of A Tickled Ear

Dan's Birth: Gen. 30:5-6 Bilhah became pregnant and bore Jacob a son. <sup>6</sup> And Rachel said, God has judged *and* vindicated me, and has heard my plea and has given me a son; so she named him Dan [judged]. [Dan is the oldest of the 4 sons of the handmaids.]

Jacob's Prophecy Over Dan Judge or Minister Judgment Gen. 49:16-17 Son #5

"Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward.

Moses' Words Over Dan: Deut. 33:22 Dan is a lion's whelp that leaps forth from Bashan.

Two traits of Dan from Jacob's & Moses' Words:

1. Treachery: a serpent by the way, an adder in the path
2. Cruelty: Lion's whelp

In Judges 18, the Holy Spirit records how these predictions received their first fulfillment.

Key Verse: Judges 17:6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes. Doing what is right in one's own eyes is living by one's own assessment of good and evil, of what is right and what is wrong.

Doing what is right in God's eyes is living in obedience to God's revealed Word.

### I. Tribe Of Dan Is Plagued by Covetousness

Judges 18:1 In those days, there was no king in Israel, and the Danite tribe was Seeking An Inheritance to DWELL in.

*Up to that time no territory had been captured by them among the tribes of Israel .*

Josh. 19:40-48 The seventh lot BELONGED to the tribe of Dan by its clans.

Their ASSIGNED LAND included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, the waters of Jarkon, and Rakkon, including the territory in front of Joppa.

1. Dan was the last tribe to receive their allotment of land. [Joshua 17]
2. Dan was given a tract of land that was smaller than the other land grants, but it was very fertile with a boundary along the Mediterranean Sea. Fishing and commerce were readily available to them. This Was The Inheritance God Had Assigned To Them.
3. Dan's inheritance was located in the Shephelah, or low foothills between the coastal plain and the Judah mountains.
  - a. The Philistines lived to the west on the coastal plain and were superior to the Israelites militarily because they had the technology of iron (I Sam. 13:19-20). Constant Problem!
  - b. To the east were the allotments for the tribes of Judah and Ephraim. These tribes kept the tribe of Dan from expanding towards their land.
  - c. God had placed them between a rock and a hard place, with a formidable enemy close by. The story of the most famous Danite, Samson (Judges 13:24), echoes the problems that Dan

had with the Philistines.

4. Judges 1:34 The Amorites forced the people of Dan to live in the hill country.

The Danites never POSSESSED the fertile lowlands in the coastal plain.

5. They were one of the least successful tribes in Taking Possession of their allotted inheritance.

6. When the situation got particularly tough, they decided to look for a better place to live. It is too hard to dwell here! Enemy is strong & fierce!

7. Danites never liked the inheritance God gave them. For them to reject God's assigned territory and covet another place is to oppose God's divine will.

Question: Why do I oppose God's will in my life? I'm not really sure I can trust Him.

I want it my way! I want what looks, feels and tastes good. Way I want it & when I want it!

8. Failure to POSSESS Their Inheritance: Lack of faith and obedience.

II. Their Plan: Go North and Relocate: Find a prosperous but poorly defended area to conquer.

Judges 18:2 So the Danites sent from the whole number of their tribe 5 brave men from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and to explore it, and they said to them, Go, explore the land.

They came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the House Of Micah, and lodged there.

Question: Who Is Micah? The Case Of Homemade Religion

1. He stole a large amount of silver from his mother, but later gave it back to her.

2. Mom is happy and uses the silver to make a graven image for Micah so he can worship God in his own house. Mom's values are upside down! She doesn't discipline him!

3. Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim.

4. Micah consecrates one of his sons to be his priest and turn his house into a temple. Completely against God's word! They are Ephraimites. Only Levites are to be priests.

5. A Levite passes through town. Micah hires him to be a priest in his house. Micah's Offer >  
Judges 17:10: Dwell with me and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver each year, a suit of clothes, and your food.

6. Micah: Now I know the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to be my priest.

III. Seeking Ungodly Counsel:

Judges 18:3 When they [5 spies] went by the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite, and they turned aside there and said to him, Who brought you here?

And what do you do in this place? And what have you here?

They realize Micah has a Levite priest. He is not from Ephraim.

Judges 18:4 He responds, "Thus and so has Micah done to me, and he has hired me and I have become his priest." [Hireling: Serves Micah; not God]

a. The 5 Danite spies realize they have come across a two-timing spiritual compromiser.

b. This is Great! The spies are interested in Jonathan's services. They reply, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our journey will be prosperous and successful"

c. The priest says, "Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the LORD'S approval!"

d. This priest resorts to ear tickling and confidently approves what God disapproves.

- e. If they really wanted God's counsel, they would have consulted with the high priest.
- f. They rejected God's counsel by refusing to remain in their allotted inheritance!
- g. It wasn't likely God would reveal anything to them in their disobedience.

#### IV. Confidence In The Hired Priest & On With OUR Plan - Judges 18:7-13

- a. The Danites scope out Laish with the blessing of the priest.
- b. They find a peaceful people who had no treaties with anyone.
- c. They were unsuspecting and secure, prosperous and isolated: perfect target for tribe of Dan.
- d. The spies return home to tell the tribe of the PARADISE they have discovered.

Judges 18:9-10 They said, Arise, let us go up against them, for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very fertile. And will you do nothing? Do not be slow to go and enter in and possess the land. <sup>10</sup> When you go, you will come to people [feeling] safe and secure. The land is broad [widely extended on all sides]; and God has given it into your hands—a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth.

- e. 18:11 And there went from there of the tribe of the Danites, out of Zorah and Eshtaol, 600 men armed with weapons of war.

Side Note: Another interesting fact the Danites did not realize was that this beautiful location they had picked was the first stop for every marauding army that came through the Promised Land. Dan would be destroyed and rebuilt numerous times because every army that sought to conquer Israel destroyed Dan first as they came into the country from the north. Dan had no Israelite neighbors to help fight, so they suffered greatly by moving to their new location.

#### Interesting Notes:

- a. Moses sent out 12 spies. Ten agreed the land was fruitful but agreed they could not conquer it due to heavily fortified cities and giants in the land. Two spies took courage in the strength of their God and that He would grant them the victory.
- b. The 5 Danite spies are full of confidence because they perceive the opponents to be weak and vulnerable. They are following the path of least resistance.

#### V. Breaking & Entering: Robbery & Intimidation Judges 18:14-26

Judges 18:14-16 Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish said to their brethren, Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, teraphim, a graven image, and a molten image? Now therefore, consider what you have to do. <sup>15</sup> And They Turned In That Direction and came to the house of the young Levite, at the home of Micah, and saluted him.

<sup>16</sup> Now the 600 Danites with their weapons of war stood at Micah's gate.

1. They make another visit to Micah's house and discover the idols.
2. Instead of being incensed with Israelite idolatry, they decide they want these idols for themselves.
3. 600 men are waiting at the gate. The 5 spies go into Micah's house and STEAL his idols.
4. Jonathan asks, "What are you doing?" They say, "Be silent, put your hand over your mouth and come 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 be the priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?"

5. The priest's heart was glad. He took the ephod and household idols and the graven image and went among the people. A priest for hire to the highest bidder!  
It didn't take this young Levite long to discern "divine guidance."
6. The hired priest leads the Danites into idolatry.
7. Micah returns and finds his idols are gone. He shouts at the departing Danites.  
Judges 18:24 You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? He is willing to risk his life for his gods!
8. Micah returns home defeated. He is a tragic example of a person who has placed his trust in a false religion. During the good times, he feels as though his religion is the cause of his prosperity. Suddenly when disaster comes, his gods are powerless to prevent it. He is left with a feeling of emptiness and helplessness. Many realize this without any repentance and faith. Others God graciously brings to the end of themselves so they will repent and embrace God's only means of salvation.

#### VI. Violence & Murder - Judges 18:27-29

With 600 armed men, they captured Laish, killing all the inhabitants and burning the city. They had failed to conquer their assigned inheritance.

They put the sword to Laish, took possession of it, rebuilt it and proudly called it Dan.

Note: The Danites were a deceptive people who exploited others to get what they wanted.

Recall Jacob's Prophecy: Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward.

Dan was known for his crafty nature and his habit of making sudden attacks on his enemies.

They attacked a people who were minding their own business.

Jer. 8:16-17 From Dan is heard the snorting of his horses;

At the sound of the neighing of his stallions the whole land quakes;

For they come and devour the land and its fullness, The city and its inhabitants.

<sup>17</sup> "For behold, I am sending serpents against you, Adders, for which there is no charm, And they will bite you," declares the LORD.

VII. Idolatry Moves In: Judges 18:30-31 And the Danites set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. <sup>31</sup> So they set them up Micah's graven image which he made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.

Note: Until now the Levite was known as a young Levite. Now we are told his name - Jonathan who is the "son of Gershom, son of Moses." Wow! A not-too-distant heir of Moses is now serving as a priest for hire, and the tools of his trade are idols. His place of ministry is not Shiloh - where the house of God was - but Dan, located in Israel's far north.

He ministers not to the nation as a whole, but to one tribe, or rather a portion of one tribe.

How quickly Israel has fallen, and how far.

Note: Both Shiloh and Micah's "house of gods" were located in the hill country of Ephraim. Micah had his house of gods, his private priest, and his private religion in the shadow of Shiloh, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, where the priests should have been serving, and where God was to be worshipped. It wasn't that the proper place of worship was so distant that Micah and others had to make other arrangements; it was because Micah, Jonathan, and Israel were doing what was right in their own eyes, and they were worshipping "their way," rather than God's way. Their number one worship "hymn" would be "I Did It My Way."

1. Tribe of Dan was the first in Israel to officially adopt an idolatrous system of religion. Their idolatry continued nearly 500 years until the captivity of the land.
2. Even though there was a house of God at Shiloh, they preferred their mages and idols.
3. Due to their rebellious move, they now lived next door to Tyre and Sidon, where Baal and Asherah worship was most fervent. They began to dabble in that.
4. Dan was one of Ahab and Jezebel's royal cities where Baal was worshiped and acknowledged as the main god of the northern tribes.
5. All this led to the area of Dan becoming the most pagan place and the center of idolatry in Israel. [Amos 8:14]

6. Two centuries later, the kingdom was divided. Dan was part of the northern kingdom. I Kings 12:25-33 King Jeroboam was afraid those who lived in his northern kingdom would still go to the southern kingdom to worship at Jerusalem, site of the temple God had authorized. So Jeroboam built two additional altars for the people of his nation to worship. He built a golden calf at Beersheba and one at Dan. He instituted special days and feasts to encourage the whole nation to turn away from the true and living God.

I Kings 12:28 It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.

Spiritual Application: What can we learn about discerning the will of God?

It seems Micah's mother, Micah and the Danites embraced as God's will or work ANYTHING that contributed to or confirmed their fleshly desires.

1. When Micah's mother got her silver back from her sticky-fingered son, she praised Yahweh and commissioned the making of idols with some of the returned silver.
2. Micah viewed the arrival of the young Levite as a providential indication of God's provision of a private priest.
3. The Danites interpreted their discovery of Micah's gods and his personal priest as a divinely provided opportunity to confiscate these for their own benefit.

Truth: God's will is revealed in His Word.

- a. It is SIN to fashion idols.
- b. Levites were to serve in the way God appointed and not on the basis of "the best offer."
- c. When the Danites finally figured out that Micah was an idolater, Scripture makes it clear the guilty parties should have been put to death and their town destroyed.
- d. When favorable circumstances accompany clear Biblical approval, then rejoice.
- e. When circumstances are favorable and the Scriptures are not, we MUST go with Scripture, not what circumstances permit.

Spiritual Application: Take Note!

1. There is no foreign oppressor identified! The enemy is within, not without.
2. They are not accused of worshiping any foreign gods. They are worshiping God in a pagan way. They employ idols or forbidden image, but they believe they are worshiping Yahweh.
3. The danger is not that of Israel blatantly rejecting God and turning to pagan gods. It is syncretism - the blending of true worship with that which is false.
4. Syncretism occurs today. Much of what is seen in Protestant and Catholic churches has its origin in pagan practices, rather than in the Bible.

Example: An area where syncretism infected the church was in the area of psychology. The self-esteem movement was baptized into the church in preaching and counseling. People were given the idea that our main problem was in thinking too little of ourselves. The Bible teaches our problem stems from thinking too highly of ourselves. Christians were told to work harder at loving themselves and taking care of self first.  
The Point: Do not allow any theory or claim to "truth" take precedence over Scripture.

Example: There are many who seek to maintain a label like: conservative, Bible-believing, orthodox, evangelical when the substance of their beliefs and practices indicates otherwise. Movements like the Emergent Church are setting aside the teaching and practices of the Scriptures for something more politically correct and more culturally appealing.

The Point: Do not become syncretistic about your faith! Be uniquely Christian, uniquely Biblical! Take up your cross and follow Jesus and obey His Word!

Today, many people follow various man-made religions and are convinced that all ways lead to God. Unfortunately, these groups follow the ways of the tribe of Dan.

Proverbs 16:25 "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Jesus taught the way to God was specific when He said, in John 14:6:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me."

John 3:36 "he who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Worship the God of the Bible alone and live for Him by faith.

Note: Judges 18 concludes with the Danites experiencing no VISIBLE consequences, apart from their idolatry.

Consider: There is pleasure in sin for a season, [Heb. 11:25] but eventually God brings His discipline. [Heb. 12:5-11]

Gen. 46 Reference is made to the children of Jacob's sons. His grandchildren are listed in order with their respective father. However, Dan's children are not listed; they are missing. Only the tribal name, Hushim or Shuham, is listed.

Numbers 26 Occurs again! The grandchildren are listed in order with their respective father, but only the tribal name is listed.

Consider: This concealment of the names of Dan's children is the first indication of that silent "blotting out" of his name.

a. I Chronicles 2-10: Total Omission of the tribe of Dan from the genealogies record.

Note: Dan did not take what God had given to them. They took what God had not given.

In the process, they lost ALL they had.

b. Rev. 7:5-8 No mention of any being "sealed" from the tribe of Dan for the 144,000 witnesses; the Jewish believers who will carry out a special ministry for God in the Tribulation. They refused to follow God's mission for them in the land of Israel. They chose their own easy way. Therefore, God refuses to give them His special ministry of blessing for Him in the future. A probable reason for blotting out of Dan's name in Revelation 7:

Deut. 29:18-21 so that there will not be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood.<sup>19</sup> It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, 'I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered *land* with the dry.'<sup>20</sup> The LORD shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.<sup>21</sup> Then the LORD will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law.

Recall Gen. 49:17 Jacob likened Dan to a serpent. This pointed to God's prophecy the serpent would bite the heel of God's promised deliverer, but the Messiah would finally crush his head and bring the long-awaited salvation.

Notice the antichrist elements of this prophecy. Serpent, Viper, Heel Biting

Consider The Significance: Having spoken of Dan as "a serpent by the way," the Holy Spirit seems to bring to Jacob's mind the words spoken by God to that old Serpent the Devil, recorded in Gen. 3:15.

1. The eye of the dying patriarch looks beyond the "Serpent" to the one who shall yet "bruise his head."

2. Jacob says, "I have waited for Thy Salvation, O Lord."

3. Rom. 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Gen. 49:1 states, "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that which shall befall you in the last days.*"

49:18 Jacob directly speaks of Dan: "I have waited for Your *salvation*, O LORD."

Most of Dan's descendants will have to wait for salvation until after God seals the 144,000.

Recall Rachel's Words: God has judged *and* vindicated me, and has heard my plea and has given me a son

Grace Triumphs In The End - Ezek. 48:1 Dan is named 1<sup>st</sup> in the future distribution of the land at the beginning of the Millennium.