

**Friday, May 3**

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**Judges 17:1 - 18:31**

**17** **1** There was a man named Micah, who lived in the hill country of Ephraim. **2** One day he said to his mother, "I heard you place a curse on the person who stole 1,100 pieces of silver from you. Well, I have the money. I was the one who took it." "The LORD bless you for admitting it," his mother replied. **3** He returned the money to her, and she said, "I now dedicate these silver coins to the LORD. In honor of my son, I will have an image carved and an idol cast." **4** So when he returned the money to his mother, she took 200 silver coins and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into an image and an idol. And these were placed in Micah's house. **5** Micah set up a shrine for the idol, and he made a sacred ephod and some household idols. Then he installed one of his sons as his personal priest. **6** In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes. **7** One day a young Levite, who had been living in Bethlehem in Judah, arrived in that area. **8** He had left Bethlehem in search of another place to live, and as he traveled, he came to the hill country of Ephraim. He happened to stop at Micah's house as he was traveling through. **9** "Where are you from?" Micah asked him. He replied, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am looking for a place to live." **10** "Stay here with me," Micah said, "and you can be a father and priest to me. I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, plus a change of clothes and your food." **11** The Levite agreed to this, and the young man became like one of Micah's sons. **12** So Micah installed the Levite as his personal priest, and he lived in Micah's house. **13** "I know the LORD will bless me now," Micah said, "because I have a Levite serving as my priest."

**18** **1** Now in those days Israel had no king. And the tribe of Dan was trying to find a place where they could settle, for they had not yet moved into the land assigned to them when the land was divided among the tribes of Israel. **2** So the men of Dan chose from their clans five capable warriors from the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol to scout out a land for them to settle in. When these warriors arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, they came to Micah's house and spent the night there. **3** While at Micah's house, they recognized the young Levite's accent, so they went over and asked him, "Who brought you here, and what are you doing in this place? Why are you here?" **4** He told them about his agreement with Micah and that he had been hired as Micah's personal priest. **5** Then they said, "Ask God whether or not our journey will be successful." **6** "Go in peace," the priest replied. "For the LORD is watching over your

journey.” **7** So the five men went on to the town of Laish, where they noticed the people living carefree lives, like the Sidonians; they were peaceful and secure. The people were also wealthy because their land was very fertile. And they lived a great distance from Sidon and had no allies nearby. **8** When the men returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their relatives asked them, “What did you find?” **9** The men replied, “Come on, let’s attack them! We have seen the land, and it is very good. What are you waiting for? Don’t hesitate to go and take possession of it. **10** When you get there, you will find the people living carefree lives. God has given us a spacious and fertile land, lacking in nothing!” **11** So 600 men from the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. **12** They camped at a place west of Kiriath-jearim in Judah, which is called Mahaneh-dan to this day. **13** Then they went on from there into the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah. **14** The five men who had scouted out the land around Laish explained to the others, “These buildings contain a sacred ephod, as well as some household idols, a carved image, and a cast idol. What do you think you should do?” **15** Then the five men turned off the road and went over to Micah’s house, where the young Levite lived, and greeted him kindly. **16** As the 600 armed warriors from the tribe of Dan stood at the entrance of the gate, **17** the five scouts entered the shrine and removed the carved image, the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the cast idol. Meanwhile, the priest was standing at the gate with the 600 armed warriors. **18** When the priest saw the men carrying all the sacred objects out of Micah’s shrine, he said, “What are you doing?” **19** “Be quiet and come with us,” they said. “Be a father and priest to all of us. Isn’t it better to be a priest for an entire tribe and clan of Israel than for the household of just one man?” **20** The young priest was quite happy to go with them, so he took along the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the carved image. **21** They turned and started on their way again, placing their children, livestock, and possessions in front of them. **22** When the people from the tribe of Dan were quite a distance from Micah’s house, the people who lived near Micah came chasing after them. **23** They were shouting as they caught up with them. The men of Dan turned around and said to Micah, “What’s the matter? Why have you called these men together and chased after us like this?” **24** “What do you mean, ‘What’s the matter?’” Micah replied. “You’ve taken away all the gods I have made, and my priest, and I have nothing left!” **25** The men of Dan said, “Watch what you say! There are some short-tempered men around here who might get angry and kill you and your family.” **26** So the men of Dan continued on their way. When Micah saw that there were too many of them for him to attack, he turned around and went home. **27** Then, with Micah’s idols and his priest, the men of Dan came to the town of Laish, whose people were peaceful and secure. They attacked with swords and burned the town to the ground. **28** There was no one to rescue the people, for they lived a great distance from Sidon and had no allies nearby. This happened in the valley near Beth-rehob. Then the people of the tribe of Dan rebuilt the town and lived there. **29** They renamed the town

Dan after their ancestor, Israel's son, but it had originally been called Laish. **30** Then they set up the carved image, and they appointed Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses, as their priest. This family continued as priests for the tribe of Dan until the Exile. **31** So Micah's carved image was worshiped by the tribe of Dan as long as the Tabernacle of God remained at Shiloh.

### **John 3:1 - 21**

**3 1** There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. **2** After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." **3** Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." **4** "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" **5** Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. **6** Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. **7** So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' **8** The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit." **9** "How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked. **10** Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? **11** I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. **12** But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **13** No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. **14** And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. **16** "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. **17** God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. **18** "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. **19** And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. **20** All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. **21** But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

### **Psalms 104:1 - 24**

**104** **1** Let all that I am praise the LORD . O LORD my God, how great you are! You are robed with honor and majesty. **2** You are dressed in a robe of light. You stretch out the starry curtain of the heavens; **3** you lay out the rafters of your home in the rain clouds. You make the clouds your chariot; you ride upon the wings of the wind. **4** The winds are your messengers; flames of fire are your servants. **5** You placed the world on its foundation so it would never be moved. **6** You clothed the earth with floods of water, water that covered even the mountains. **7** At your command, the water fled; at the sound of your thunder, it hurried away. **8** Mountains rose and valleys sank to the levels you decreed. **9** Then you set a firm boundary for the seas, so they would never again cover the earth. **10** You make springs pour water into the ravines, so streams gush down from the mountains. **11** They provide water for all the animals, and the wild donkeys quench their thirst. **12** The birds nest beside the streams and sing among the branches of the trees. **13** You send rain on the mountains from your heavenly home, and you fill the earth with the fruit of your labor. **14** You cause grass to grow for the livestock and plants for people to use. You allow them to produce food from the earth— **15** wine to make them glad, olive oil to soothe their skin, and bread to give them strength. **16** The trees of the LORD are well cared for— the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. **17** There the birds make their nests, and the storks make their homes in the cypresses. **18** High in the mountains live the wild goats, and the rocks form a refuge for the hyraxes. **19** You made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows when to set. **20** You send the darkness, and it becomes night, when all the forest animals prowl about. **21** Then the young lions roar for their prey, stalking the food provided by God. **22** At dawn they slink back into their dens to rest. **23** Then people go off to their work, where they labor until evening. **24** O LORD, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.

#### **Proverbs 14:20 - 21**

**14** **20** The poor are despised even by their neighbors, while the rich have many “friends.” **21** It is a sin to belittle one’s neighbor; blessed are those who help the poor.