

The Danites' Search for Territory

"Those who would be soldiers for Christ should closely estimate what will be the influence of accepting positions of trust in advancing worldly enterprises. They should consult the Lord Jesus, and at every step ask Him, Will this work serve to advance, to save, my spiritual interest, or will it hinder me from attaining perfection of character? If large gain is presented as an inducement to entangle you and imperil your soul, you have but one answer to give; 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'" —*Review and Herald*, June 16, 1896.

SUNDAY

- 1. Since there was at that time no king in Israel, what did some individuals and even entire tribes dare to do? Whom did some in the tribe of Dan send to explore the country and find suitable territory for themselves?**

JUDGES 18:1-3 *In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. ²And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. ³When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?*

"'Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes,' but 'ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.' Man is not to presume to put aside God's great moral standard and erect a standard according to his own finite judgment. It is because men are measuring themselves among themselves and living according to their own standard that iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Contempt is shown to the law of God, and because of this many presume to transgress, and even those who have had the light of truth are wavering in their allegiance to the law of God." —*Review and Herald*, June 12, 1894.

"The inheritance of the tribe of Dan, to which Manoa's family belonged, was adjacent to the country of the Philistines. Indeed, the little town of Zorah, which was Samson's early home, was in close proximity to the dwelling-places of this alien race...." —*Signs of the Times*, October 6, 1881.

THE DANITES CONSULTED MICAH'S PRIEST**2. When they came to Micah's house and spoke with the priest, what did they ask him?**

JUDGES 18:4-6 *And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. ⁵And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. ⁶And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go.*

"In no conference should propositions be rushed through without time being taken by the brethren to carefully weigh all sides of the question. Because the president of a conference suggested certain plans, it has sometimes been considered unnecessary to consult the Lord about them. Thus propositions have been accepted that were not for the spiritual benefit of believers, and which involved far more than was apparent at the first casual consideration. Such movements are not in the order of God. Many, very many matters have been taken up and carried by vote, that have involved far more than was anticipated and far more than those who voted would have been willing to assent to, had they taken time to consider the question from all sides." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 278.

TUESDAY

3. What was the outcome of their journey? What report did they give when they returned?

JUDGES 18:7-10 *Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man. ⁸And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye? ⁹And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land. ¹⁰When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.*

"The Lord has sought to show us how ready is God to hear and answer our request by the use of a most familiar and commonplace occurrence. He said: 'What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' Matthew 7:9-11. Christ made an appeal to us concerning the willingness of God to help, arguing from the natural love of the parent to his offspring. What father could turn from his son who asks bread? Should anyone dishonor God by imagining that He will not respond to the call of His children?... The Lord assures those that ask Him that He will give them the Holy Spirit." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 329.

4. Since the Lord had anciently promised to give Israel the land of Canaan, what did the people of Dan do?

EXODUS 13:11 *And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee.*

JUDGES 18:11-13 *And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war. ¹²And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim. ¹³And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.*

"Their service was an imposing one, and testified to the truth of a living God. Their sacrifices pointed to a coming Saviour, who would take the kingdoms under the whole heaven, and possess them forever and ever. Evidence had been given of His power to do this, for as their invisible Leader had He not subdued their enemies and made a way for His church in the wilderness? His people would never know defeat if they would abide under the shadow of the Almighty; for One mightier than angels would fight by their side in every battle." –Manuscript 134, 1899.

THURSDAY

5. When they reached Micah's house, what did they take from him? What did such actions reveal?

JUDGES 18:16-20 *And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. ¹⁷And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war. ¹⁸And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? ¹⁹And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? ²⁰And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.*

"If we would be spiritual worshipers of Jesus Christ, we must sacrifice every idol and fully obey the first four commandments. Matthew 22:37, 38: 'Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.' The first four commandments allow no separation of the affections from God. Nor is anything allowed to divide, or share, our supreme delight in Him. Whatever divides the affections, and takes away from the soul supreme love to God, assumes the form of an idol. Our carnal hearts would cling to our idols and seek to carry them along; but we cannot advance until we put them away, for they separate us from God. The great Head of the church has chosen His people out of the world and requires them to be separate.

He designs that the spirit of His commandments shall draw them to Himself and separate them from the elements of the world. To love God and keep His commandments is far from loving the world's pleasures and friendship. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. The people of God may safely trust in Him alone and without fear press on in the way of obedience." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 289.

FRIDAY

6. How did Micah react when he realized that he had been robbed? What did the Danites threaten?

JUDGES 18:21-26 *So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. ²²And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. ²³And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? ²⁴And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? ²⁵And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. ²⁶And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.*

"In ancient times it was customary for men to hide their treasures in the earth. Thefts and robberies were frequent. And whenever there was a change in the ruling power, those who had large possessions were liable to be put under heavy tribute. Moreover the country was in constant danger of invasion by marauding armies." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 103.

SABBATH

THE DANITES SETTLED IN LAISH

7. What did the Danites establish once they conquered Laish in the far north of Canaan? Who served as the tribe's priest?

JUDGES 18:27, 29-31 *And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.... ²⁹And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. ³⁰And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. ³¹And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.*

"Let us take in the idea of the privilege we have. There are so many who, when they are in trouble, fall into temptation and lose their bearings. They forget the invitations God has abundantly given, and begin to look and plan for human help. They go to human beings for aid, and this is the way in which their experience becomes feeble, and confused. In all our trials we are directed to seek the Lord most earnestly, remembering that we are His

property, His children by adoption. No human being can understand our necessities as Christ. We shall receive help if we ask Him in faith. We are His by creation, we are His by redemption. By the cords of divine love we are bound to the Source of all power and strength. If we will only make God our dependence, asking Him for what we want as a little child asks His father for what he wants, we shall obtain a rich experience. We shall learn that God is the source of all strength and power." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 55.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"We cannot at this time afford to be careless or negligent in the work of God. We must seek the Lord earnestly every day if we would be prepared for the experiences that come to us. Our hearts are to be cleansed from every feeling of superiority, and the living principles of the truth are to be planted in the soul. Young and aged and middle-aged should now be practicing the virtues of Christ's character. They should daily be making spiritual development, that they may become vessels unto honor in the Master's service." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 278.