

MICAH AND HIS PRIEST

Introduction:

1. The last section of the book of Judges (chapters 17 – 21) covers the period of time between the judges Othniel and Ehud.
2. The events recorded serve to illustrate the departures of Israel from the law of God.
3. They demonstrate clearly why God allowed His people to suffer punishment at the hands of foreign peoples.
4. They also serve as warnings to God's people of all ages about the dangers of apostasy – and of how quickly and easily the faithful can fall away.

- I. Micah's Philosophy (17:1-6)
 - A. The explanation for the sinful actions of Micah comes in verse 6 – *“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”*
 1. Sadly, this way of thinking was not limited to Micah.
 2. Instead, it had begun to characterize the entire nation of Israel.
 3. Thus, the story of Micah and his wickedness illustrates the depravity of the nation and God's motivation in allowing them to be punished.
 - B. Because Micah had rejected God and His Word as the standard for his life, he felt he could do whatever he needed or pleased to take care of himself.
 - C. Micah was a thief.
 1. He had stolen 1,100 shekels of silver from his mother!
 2. Stealing is wrong in any situation, but it is disturbing to see one steal from his own mother.
 - D. Micah was superstitious.
 1. Some take his mother's curse to mean that she caused her son to take an oath as to whether or not he took her money (cf. Lev. 5:1).
 - a. If this is correct, it would indicate that Micah and his mother still had a fear of God.
 - b. It would also show their desire to serve God, even though they had become idolatrous in their worship.
 2. Others think that it means that, in her anger, Micah's mother took an oath and placed a curse on whoever stole her money.
 - a. If this is correct, it indicates the superstitious beliefs of both Micah and his mother.
 - b. This would further demonstrate their abandoning of the true God for the idolatrous beliefs and practices of those around them.
 - c. It is interesting to consider that pagan religions often center on a belief in cursing or bringing harm to another.
 - d. The religion of Jehovah instead centers on blessing others.
 - E. Micah was idolatrous.
 1. When he returned the money to his mother, she used it to make an idol – a graven and molten image.
 2. Though God is invisible, man often attempted to represent Him in the form of images or idols.

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3. In Canaan, their gods were often pictured riding on the back of a bull or a calf.
 4. In time, man began to worship the bull (which could be seen) in place of a god (who could not be seen).
 5. The words used in this passage seem to indicate that the idol created was the image of a bull or calf (cf. Exodus 32:4).
 6. Notice that in both of these instances the people claimed to worship Jehovah, but did so by creating an image (Exo. 20:4-5).
- F. Micah was rebellious.
1. Not only did Micah worship graven images, but he also established his own system of religion.
 2. He established the house of Micah.
 3. He had a house of gods – instead of worshiping at the House of God, the tabernacle, at Shiloh (Deuteronomy 12).
 4. He made his own ephod – in imitation of the priestly garment ordained by God (Exodus 28:4, 15).
 5. He made teraphim – household idols to worship in place of God (cf. Genesis 31:19; 1 Samuel 15:23).
 6. He even made his own son to be his priest – instead of obeying the priests of the tribe of Levi as God instructed (Exodus 28:1; 29:29; Numbers 3:10).
- G. Micah was selfish.
1. He sought only to do that which was right in his eyes.
 2. As we shall see, his goal was his own prosperity.
- H. Like many who would follow after, Micah abandoned the true religion of God for one of his own making for pragmatic reasons.
- I. This story presents a discouraging picture of a home that fails to follow God's pattern.
1. Seven of the Ten Commandments were broken without leaving the house!
 2. Clearly, God's Word did not govern this home.
 3. The mother/grandmother failed in her responsibilities.
 4. Micah failed in his duty as a son to honor his mother.
 5. Micah failed in his duty as a father to guide his son.
 6. There was a home of moral and religious confusion – filled with lying, stealing, materialism, covetousness, and idolatry.
- II. Micah's Priest (17:7-13)
- A. Next, we learn of a young Levite who came to Micah's house.
1. This young man's name was Jonathan (18:30).
 2. He was a descendant (likely, grandson) of Moses.
 - a. The name "Manasseh" in the KJV is possible.
 - b. However, the older manuscripts have it as "Moses."
 - c. This fits the teaching of Scripture for Moses was of the tribe of Levi and had a son named Gershom (Exo. 2:22).
 - d. Remember, there are no vowels in the Hebrew language.
- B. We are not told why this Levite was wandering from place to place, but we soon learn what he was looking for.
1. Micah offered him provisions, new clothes and ten shekels of silver every year if he would be his priest and father.
 - a. Remember, this was a young man.

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- b. When Micah asks him to be his father, he means in a religious sense.
- c. Micah wants his own personal priest and “papa” – a personal connection to God.
- 2. Clearly, this offer greatly pleased the Levite and he agreed to it.
- 3. He was not the first, nor would he be the last to sell out the true religion of God for creature comforts.
- C. We also learn what Micah desired from this arrangement.
 - 1. Obviously, he wanted his own personal priest.
 - 2. However, he also wanted a priest with connections to God – thus, one from the tribe of Levi was preferable to any other.
 - 3. Ultimately, Micah desired material prosperity – he wanted the Lord to “do him good.”
- D. Sadly, both Micah and the priest convinced themselves that their way was better than God’s way.
 - 1. Micah said, “I know,” but he was self-deceived.
 - 2. Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:13
- E. Unfortunately, their attitude has not died out in the religious world of today.
 - 1. Matthew 15:9-13
 - 2. Like Micah, many mix a little bit of truth with much opinion and interpretation and think that God will be pleased with their creation.
- F. Sadly, our world is filled with religious hirelings (cf. John 10:12-13).

Conclusion:

- 1. The story of Micah reveals the depravity of the children of Israel.
- 2. By abandoning God and His standard of authority – His Word – the Israelites opened the door to doing whatever they wanted in the name of God.
- 3. But, like Micah, they were self-deceived and soon would reap the wrath of God.
- 4. May we determine to remain steadfast in obedience to God’s Truth.