

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
5-8-24

Judges 17

Micah Returns A Large Amount Of Stolen Silver To His Mother – Verses 1-2

¹ Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim ² said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels^a 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!”

17:1 Now there was a man: Judges 17-18 present a detailed example of the spiritual confusion and sin in Israel during the days of the Judges. These two chapters show us just how bad things were. Micah, from the tribe of Ephraim, stole 1,100 shekels of silver from his mother and then returned them. His mother blessed her son for returning the money, even though he had originally taken it. This account reveals a lot about the character of Micah, his mother, and the general spiritual state of Israel during this period.

17:2 Micah and his mother seemed to be good and moral and may have sincerely desired to worship God, but they disobeyed God by following their own desires instead of doing what God wanted. The attitude that prevailed in Micah’s day was this: “Everyone did as they saw fit” (17:6). This is remarkably similar to today’s prevailing attitudes. But God has given us standards. He has not left our conduct up to us and our opinions. We can avoid conforming to society’s low standards by taking God’s commands seriously and applying them to life. Independence and self-reliance are positive traits, but only within the framework of God’s standards.

Micah’s Mother Directs That Some Of The Money Be Used To Make An Idol – Verses 3-4

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 an image overlaid with silver. I will give it back to you.” ⁴ So after he returned the silver to his mother, she took two hundred shekels^b of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who used them to make the idol. And it was put in Micah’s house.

17:3-4 To make a carved image and a molded image: Some believe this was an image of a false god (such as Baal or Ashtoreth). Others believe that it was an image representing Yahweh. Either way, God strictly forbade such an image, whether it was meant to represent the true God or not. By his fallen nature, man wants to make God into his image. Many religious people carve their own concept of God and assume that this is the God of the Bible. It takes effort to understand and accept the God of the Bible. The sense of this passage is that Micah did all this easily. It wasn’t hard to have an idol made in Israel at that time. This shows how Israel’s society was bent towards idolatry.

Micah Establishes An Elaborate Worship – Verse 5

⁵ Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some household gods and installed one of his sons as his priest.

17:5 Micah had a shrine: Micah first sets up a shrine - sort of a small temple, a place where others came to worship these idols. And made an ephod: Micah imitated the worship at the true tabernacle of God by making an ephod. This was a specific garment worn by priests of Israel. In addition to this first idol, Micah also made household idols - literally, terephim - gods that were worshipped in hopes of gaining prosperity and guidance.

He consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest: Finally, Micah established an order of priesthood among his sons. In each of these, Micah did everything he could to set up a rival religion in Israel.

i. All of this came from Micah and not from God. This was a completely man-originated and man-centered religion. Therefore, the purpose of the shrine, the beautiful ephod, the attractive idols, and the established priesthood was to serve and please man, not God. This pattern of man-pleasing religion continues to be common with many religions and churches today.

⁶ In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

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^(d) 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 father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels^(d) of silver a year, your clothes and your food." ¹¹ So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 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."