

# Judges: Broken Heroes/Faithful God

## JUDGES 17-18

### The Downward Spiral

#### Romans 1:21-32 (NLT)

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. 19 They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. 20 For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. **As a result, their minds became dark and confused.** 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead **became utter fools.** 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, **they worshiped idols** made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. **As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies.** 25 They traded the **truth** about God for a **lie**. So **they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself**, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. 26 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires.

Even the **women** turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the **men**, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

28 Since **they thought it foolish to acknowledge God**, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. 29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.

30 They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. 31 They **refuse to understand**, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. 32 **They know** God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

#### Judges 21:25 (NLT)

In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

#### Romans 1:21c (NLT)

As a result, their minds became dark and confused.

### 1. DARKNESS AND CONFUSION IN THE HOME (17:1-6)

#### Judges 17:1-6 (NLT)

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.

Christian Atheists...

- **Redefine God rather than submit to Him**

**Judges 17:6 (NLT)**

In those days Israel had no king; *all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.*

## **2. DARKNESS AND CONFUSION IN THE MINISTRY (17:7–13)**

**Judges 17:7-13 (NLT)**

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."

**Judges 17:13 (NLT)**

"I know the Lord will bless me now," Micah said, "because I have a Levite serving as my priest."

Christian Atheists...

- **Use God instead of worshipping Him.**

False religion says:

- God exists for me; if I do the right things, God owes me.

True faith says:

- I exist for God, and He doesn't owe me anything – I owe Him everything!"

False religion seeks control of God; true faith surrenders to God.

### 3. DARKNESS AND CONFUSION IN SOCIETY (18:1–31)

#### ○ Covetousness (vv. 1–2)

##### **Judges 18:1-2** (NLT)

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.

#### ○ Ungodly counsel (vv. 3–6)

##### **Judges 18:3-6** (NLT)

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."

#### ○ Breaking & entering, robbery & intimidation (vv. 14–26)

##### **Judges 18:14-26** (NLT)

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.

**Judges 18:24** (NLT)

Micah replied. "You've taken away all the gods I have made, and my priest, and **I have nothing left!**"

When you try to control God, you live with anxiety; when you surrender to God, you live in peace.

Idolaters worship gods they can carry, but Christians worship the God who carries them.

- Violence and murder (vv. 7–13, 27–29)

- Idolatry (vv. 30–31)

**Judges 18:30-31** (NLT)

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.