

SPEAKERS

**Spring services with Titus Fraki, David Lappi, Mark Sunnarborg*

*April 29 – 7:00 p.m., *Atlantic Mine*

*April 30 – 6:00 p.m., *Atlantic Mine*

*May 1 – 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., *Tapiola*

May 8 – **Charles Korhonen**, *Holy Communion*

May 15 – **Ken Storm**

May 22 – **Ken Storm**, *Potluck Meal Following Service*

May 29 – **Herb Jarvi**

CHURCH SCHEDULE

Sunday School, 10:00 a.m.
No Sunday School May 1

Sunday Service, 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study,
7:00 p.m.

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The Idolatry of Micah

“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” - Judges 18:1

Dan was the last tribe of Israel to receive its territorial inheritance largely because they were reluctant to do so: *“And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?”* (Joshua 18:2-3). They may have thought that land would automatically become theirs without effort simply because God promised it to them some 400 years before. True, God promises to provide everything we need in life (not everything we want) but because of our sinful nature He insists that we work for it: *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread”* (Genesis 3:19). After much procrastination Dan finally agreed with God and captured Laish but their reluctance to stand fast on the Word of God led to long-term problems with their faith in God.

It is interesting to note how God uses seemingly insignificant events in life to test our faith. In the case of Dan we are first introduced to Micah who stole eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother. It’s not clear who Micah was but hearing his mother curse the unknown person who took the money compelled Micah to confess and return the money to her. This was Biblical; it revealed that Micah was a religious man. We learn more about his religious leanings when his mother told him to remove his sin before the Lord by having *“...a graven image and a molten image”* (Judges 17:4) made with some of the returned money. This was not Biblical; especially seeing that Micah placed the two images in his *“house of gods”* (Judges 17:5). Clearly, Micah practiced a semi-idolatrous form of religion. Furthermore, to lend an air of legitimacy he hired an itinerant Levite from Bethlehem: *“...now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest”* (Judges 17:13). This union between Micah and the Levite is curious because the Levite was set apart by God to service Israel’s tabernacle of which Micah’s house of gods was not.

As already alluded, Dan had problems with its faith in God and they came to light when five men went to spy on Laish. It was not the spying per se but it was that the spies happened upon Micah’s house of gods where they heard a familiar voice within which tested their faith. Upon entering the building they discovered a fellow countryman, the Levite priest. Feeling at ease they asked him to pray to God on their behalf: *“And the priest said unto them, Go in peace”* (Judges 18:6). Because the spies heard what they wanted to hear they were convinced that this hireling was a man of God; they did not use the Word of God to determine if the Levite was a believer. He wasn’t.

After witnessing that Laish was defenseless the spies returned to Dan to promote the attack and to assure the people that *“... God hath given it into your hands”* (Judges 18:10) just as the Levite had told them. So, six hundred men marched to the house of Micah and waited outside while the five spies went in. There they not only convinced the Levite to leave his post to become Dan’s priest but they also took the two images and other idols as they departed for Laish and later *“they set...up Micah’s graven image...all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh”* (Judges 18:31). The people of Dan did not question the use of idols along with their

worship of God because *“In those days...every man did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Judges 18:6), thus their religion eventually became one that satisfied multiple beliefs.

The negative effect of not questioning this false teaching was staggering because Shiloh became the religious center of Israel and never could rid itself of the idolatry of Micah. In fact, by the time Israel split into two kingdoms, roughly 200 years after the taking of Micah’s idols, the hearts of the people had darkened to where, Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom, easily led the people into an enduring wickedness: they willingly worshipped golden calves in place of the true God who had brought them out of bondage. Besides this moral corruption, the northern kingdom also faced political destruction when God allowed Assyria to defeat and depopulate their land. Sadly, the people in the house of God falsely believed that they were saved and that God would not allow harm to come to them—the same sentiments are spoken in our church today.

It was the false teaching of one man that destroyed the faith of Dan and many others. Moreover, it was the reluctance of the people to correctly use the Word of God that allowed false teachings to infiltrate their worship and to prosper within their church. That is why Jesus has commissioned us today to diligently study the Bible to know it and to unwaveringly preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name throughout the world, beginning first with our own heart.

God’s Peace,
Charles Korhonen