

MARCH 17

Read Judges 17-18

CHAPTER 17

AND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah.

2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed *be thou* of the LORD, my son.

3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

4 Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod,

and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

7 ¶ And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there.

8 And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find *a place*: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find *a place*.

10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the

young man was unto him as one of his sons.

12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

CHAPTER 18

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.

2 And 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.

3 When 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?

4 And he said unto them, Thus

and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

6 And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye go.

7 ¶ 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.

8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What *say* ye?

9 And 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.

10 When 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.

11 ¶ 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.

12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, *it is* behind Kirjathjearim.

13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

14 ¶ Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.

15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, *even* unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

16 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.

17 And 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.

18 And 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?

19 And 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?

20 And 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.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

22 ¶ *And* 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.

23 And 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?

24 And 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?

25 And 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.

26 And 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.

27. 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.

28 And *there was* no deliverer, because it *was* far from Zidon, and they had no business with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* by Bethrehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

29 And 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.

30 ¶ And 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.

31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTS

Samson is the last of the judges mentioned in the Book of Judges. Today's reading covers the story of Micah and his idolatry. Under pretense of devotion to the Lord, Micah's mother had several images made. Micah also had an idolatrous shrine and had made an ephod and teraphim (images).

In the spirit of the lawless age, he also installed one of his sons as priest. When a Levitical priest arrived from Bethlehem-Judah, Micah persuaded him to act as chaplain in his shrine.

This lawless, man-made religious arrangement, showing the spiritual apostasy of the day, was igno-

rantly claimed by Micah as a basis of divine blessing.

Today's reading also covers the migration of the Danites. They had been assigned territory that included the Philistine plain, which they had been unable to take. Part of the tribe, being cramped for room, migrated to the far north, stealing Micah's images, taking the Levite priest with them, and settled near the headwaters of the Jordan. This is another evidence of the lawless apostasy and political confusion of the period. Moreover, the aim of the last five chapters of the Book of Judges is to show Israel's deep internal corruption. The Levite did not object to this flagrant injustice to Micah, because it meant advan-

tage to him personally. Micah's objections against this outrage were made in the name of religion. His efforts to recover his losses came to naught.

PROVERB FOR TODAY

"Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (Proverbs 17:28).

TREASURE PATH TO SOUL WINNING

ASSIGNMENT 11: For today's memory verses, follow instructions on page 7.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

BILLY UNDERWOOD
GLORIA J. LEWIS
FLOYD WILLIAMS
PHYLLIS SAVAGE

HYMN FOR TODAY

TRUST AND OBEY

by John H. Sammis, 1846-1919

Life can often be a restless, disrupted existence until we give ourselves wholeheartedly to something beyond ourselves and follow and obey it supremely. Such implicit trust in God's great love and wisdom with a sincere desire to follow His leading should be every Christian's goal. Our willingness to trust and obey is always the first step toward God's blessing in our lives.

In 1886 Daniel B. Towner, director of the music department at Moody Bible Institute, was leading the music for evangelist D.L. Moody's series of meetings in Brockton, Massachusetts. A young man rose to give a testimony, saying, "I am not quite sure—but I am going to trust, and I am going to obey." Mr. Towner jotted down this statement and sent it to the Rev. J.H. Sammis, a Presbyterian minister and later a teacher at Moody, who wrote the present five stanzas.

Salvation is God's responsibility. Our responsibility is to trust in that salvation and then to obey its truths. "Trust and Obey" presents a balanced view of a believer's trust in Christ's redemptive work, and it speaks of the resulting desire to obey Him and do His will in our daily lives. Then, and only then, do we experience real peace and joy.

*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word,
what a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will He abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.*

*Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
but His smile quickly drives it away;
not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear,
can abide while we trust and obey.*

*Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
but our toil He doth richly repay;
not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross,
but is blest if we trust and obey.*

*But we never can prove the delights of His love
until all on the altar we lay,
for the favor He shows and the joy He bestows
are for them who will trust and obey.*

*Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,
or we'll walk by His side in the way;
what He says we will do, where He sends we will go—
Never fear, only trust and obey.*

Chorus:

*Trust and obey—for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus—but to trust and obey.*

ON THIS DATE IN HISTORY

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

This, of course, would lead us to pray for our friends, our Christian friends, in Ireland, and for the work of the Gospel in this great country.

1910

THE CAMPFIRE GIRLS WAS ORGANIZED.

This would call to our attention several things:

1. If you have a girl, have a special prayer for her life today, that God will always keep her clean and pure.
2. Do something nice for your girl today. Maybe surprise her with a gift. Better still, take her somewhere, just the two of you, and let her enjoy your company.
3. Dedicate yourself to be a better parent and to rear your girl in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

ON THIS DATE IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

1886

CARROLLTON MASSACRE, CARROLLTON, MISSISSIPPI. Twenty blacks killed.

1898

DEATH OF BLANCHE KELSO BRUCE (57), in Washington.

THE STORY OF THE PSALMS

Psalm 23

AUTHOR: David.

THE STORY BEHIND THE PSALM:

It is rather difficult to ascertain the exact occasion of the writing of the 23rd Psalm. There are those who feel that the Psalm was written when David was a lad tending the sheep, because it is a shepherd's psalm. However, there is evidence that this is not true. For example, in verse 5, he was old enough to have enemies. In verse 4 he was facing the danger of death. In verse 3 he was experiencing rest, and in verse 5 he was experiencing prosperity. These things all point to an older person, or at least one who had reached maturity or adulthood. Probably the 23rd Psalm was written while David was at Mahanaim wondering how the battle was between his forces and those of his son, Absalom, during the civil war caused by Absalom's rebellion. Of course, David was grief-stricken and heartbroken. It may have been the darkest hour of his life and this is where he penned the beautiful words, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." I wonder how many people have been comforted and strengthened in times of sorrow, bereavement and heartache through these immortal words.

I was on a plane flying from Cleveland, Ohio, to Chicago. I was reading the Bible. A lady beside me, to whom I had briefly spoken, noticed that I was reading the Bible. She said to me timidly, "Mister, when you finish with that Bible, could I read it?"

I said, "Why, of course, you may." Then I noticed tears in her eyes. I asked her if she had a heartache, whereupon she informed me that she was going to Houston, Texas, to see her dying father. She didn't expect to arrive before his death. I asked her what part of the Bible she would like for me to read. She said, "Please read the 23rd Psalm." I read audibly these great verses.

There are some things worth noticing in this beautiful Psalm. Notice in verse 2, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." The key word here is the word "maketh." Sometimes the shepherd MAKETH the lamb to lie down in green pastures. Oftentimes a lamb would not stay in the fold. He would leave only to be sought and brought back to the fold by the shepherd. Again he would leave, and again he would not stay. Finally, for the lamb's own good, the shepherd would take his leg and gently break it, forcing the lamb to lie down in green pastures.

Now the lamb cannot stray; he must stay close to the fold and to the shepherd. How often God does the same thing to us! He wants us close to Himself. We stray. He pleads with us to return. We stray again. Finally, to keep us close to Him, He has to break our leg or to cause some sorrow or heartache to come to our lives. What is He doing? He is MAKING us to lie down in green pastures.

Notice the words in verse 4, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The shepherd's rod had on one end a point and on the other end, a fork. The point on one end was used as a goad to prod the sheep when it would not move and obey. On the other end it had a fork that was used to place over the neck of the serpent in order to protect the lamb from reptiles. 'Twas the same stick—one end was used for protection and comfort; the other end was used for chastening. Ah, God has a rod—the blessed word of God. It is comfort, it is chastening—it is that sharp, twoedged sword. Thank God for its truths!

The last verse is beautiful. A famous preacher had a lady in his church who was not quite mentally normal. She kept coming to him and saying, "Pastor, two men are following me." The pastor would assure her that no one was behind her. Again she would say, "Pastor, two men are following me." He tried to reassure her. She kept coming again and again until finally one day the pastor said to her, "Yes, I know there are two men following you, and I know their names."

She said, "Oh, you do?"

"Yes," he said. "Their names are Goodness and Mercy," and he turned to Psalm 23:6 and showed her that goodness and mercy shall follow her all the days of her life and she shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. She was so pleased to know the names of the men who were following her, and she never again caused her pastor any trouble. Praise the Lord! Goodness and mercy are following me too, and they will all the days of my life.

THE WAY IT WAS USED BY GOD'S PEOPLE:

The 23rd Psalm was used in the deepest of sorrows. It was that Psalm which was reserved until the worst tragedy came. Many of the Psalms were used in times of trial and adversity, but this one was the most potent of all, reserved for the lowest valley and darkest midnight, for the densest fog and for the sharpest pain.

The Treasure Path to Soul Winning

MEMORY VERSE TOPIC FOR THIS WEEK:

RESULT OF GOD'S SACRIFICE

(Assignment 11)

Please recite all three components of each of these five verses aloud, five times each morning, and five times each evening, for seven days. The three components of each verse are: Subject, Scripture Reference, and Scripture Text. (For more details, see "The Treasure Path to Soul Winning" link back on the DailyKJV.com page.)

Man now can be:

Redeemed.

() Ephesians 1:7

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Reconciled.

() Colossians 1:20

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Righteous.

() Romans 5:19 (Phil. 3:9)

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Forgiven.

() Acts 13:38

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

Justified.

() Acts 13:39

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.