

Judges 17-18 • Man-made Religion

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Open up your Bible to Judges chapter 17. Anyone who has read through the Book of Judges, even someone who is new in the Lord, and they got to this place where we are tonight, in the Book of Judges, you're going to notice that there's a difference in these last 5 chapters or so. It's like 17 through 21. We are basically done looking at the individual Judges. We finished with Samson.

These last chapters of the Book of Judges are given to us in the form of a running commentary on life in Israel. And we've seen, and I don't think you're going to be surprised by what we see here in this section of Judges. Because what we've seen in this study so far is a consistent deterioration in the spiritual life of Israel to the point of Samson being the last judge, who himself was a man completely given over to his passions, and given over to living his life for personal pleasure.

And even as we talked about last week, taking the gift of the Lord, the gift that God had given, and using it for his own personal gain. For just fulfilling his own, his fleshly desires, and so forth. And we saw what it got him in the end, too. It got him slavery and blindness. And there is a blindness that comes upon someone who just gives themselves over to the flesh. And there is a slavery to sin that takes place. We've seen that both figuratively and literally.

In these last chapters, we see here, and it is given to us I think to emphasize just how far the Israelites had fallen from the Word of the Lord, as they abandoned the covenant that God had made with them through Moses. Ratified and affirmed through Joshua, and so forth, but they have just completely gotten away.

Now, what happens when people get away from the Word of God, when they just ignore the Word of God, when they reject the Word of God, and yet they remain religious, what you have, is you have spiritual chaos that ensues. It's essentially what we're living in right here in the United States of America.

The United States of America, don't let anybody tell you that we are not a religious people. We are a religious people. Much, very much so. People may not believe in God or the God of the Bible. They may not believe in the Bible. They may not believe in heaven or hell but yet they remain a religious people.

A spiritually responsive people from—which can be a bad thing when you're spiritually responsive to the wrong spirits. Paul said in the New Testament, test the spirits to see if they're from God. (1 John 4:1)

Well, how are you going to do that? How are you going to test the spirits? You're going to test them by the Word of God. It's the only measuring stick we have. It's the only standard of truth that we have.

If you don't have the Word of God, if you toss this out, if you say, you know what, we're just going to take this and just set that over on a counter somewhere, on a shelf and so forth, and yet you remain spiritually active, now anything goes because it can just be anybody's opinion. Your element of authority is completely gone.

Those of you who are on Calvary Mail, you might remember a couple, about a week and a half ago, or a week or so ago, I shot out a message, an email, just asking for prayer for a group of teenagers that I started meeting with at a group home here in town.

And I was teaching a few weeks ago about making the most of every opportunity, and then this thing came to us, an opportunity to go and meet with these kids at this, these troubled kids at this group home. And I thought, well, I better practice what I preach. I wrote the gal back and said, okay, we'll come and we'll do a Bible study.

And I initially thought, well, I'm just going to take myself and Ken and Hector, and we'll probably just kind of tag team this thing. I don't think I'm going to give it to these guys anymore. I'm having so much fun. I really am. I'm having a good time. I'm really enjoying it, but I met with the kids last night. We meet on Tuesday evening. It's here in Ontario.

And we started going through the Book of Luke. Just I wanted to go through a gospel account and so we started on Luke. And as you can imagine, the responses of the kids from the things of the Bible is everywhere from excitement to complete and total boredom. And of course kids that are spiritually bored want to convey that to you in no uncertain terms, through their body, sort of visual actions, and so forth.

Anyway, but they come up with the most amazing questions. And we got done with our study last night and we started talking, of course. And it's usually pretty sensational type stuff that they want to talk about. They want to talk about Revelation, and the rapture, and the anti-Christ.

All those things that really, in the larger scheme of things, ultimately don't matter nearly as much as just understanding who Jesus is, and what He accomplished on the cross.

But I'm doing my best to accommodate the questions. And one of the kids said something which, and I'm not pointing this out to... I guess what I'm saying is I'm using this example is something that is very, very common among people. One of the kids, we were talking about the rapture.

One of the kids just came out and just said, well, I believe there's going to be lots of raptures. And I said, okay, all right, fine. Why do you believe that? And he was taken aback for a second when I said, why do you believe that?

And I, before I even answered, I said, I want you kids to know something. When we study the Word of God, when we talk about things and you make a statement, I'm going to ask you, why do you believe that. And you better have a better response than, just because, or somebody told me. Because I said, listen, in the final analysis, you can believe anything you want. You can believe you're an avocado if you want to. Of course, it doesn't make it true, but you can believe it. You can believe anything you want.

And when it comes to God, you can believe anything you want to believe, but it doesn't make it true. The Book of Proverbs says that a man may live a life in such a way that everything he does, he believes is truly right, and proper, and so forth, but in the end it leads to death. (Proverbs 12:15) So we can be completely convinced in the direction that we're going and be dead wrong.

I asked this young man why do you believe in multiple raptures? Well, he started telling me about what he believed from bits and pieces of the Word of God, so he basically came up with a doctrine. Just kind of made it up sort of a thing. I said, wow, that's pretty incredible. That's very imaginative of you. But let me just tell you that there's only going to be one rapture according to the Scriptures.

Now, my, my statement, according to the Scriptures is key to what you and I believe and understand. And when I say that to you, you're not surprised by that. But we'll tell you the culture we live in, the people in this world, when we come back and we say, well, here's what I believe according to the Scriptures.

They're going to come back and go, well if you're going to believe that stuff. But that's our authority. It's not just, I believe it because there was this one guy

who came, I saw on TV one time, and he said such and such. Who's he and what's his authority?

Boy, there's so many beliefs that call themselves even Christianity, that have nothing whatsoever to do with the Bible. And you and I have to constantly come back and say, is it in the Word or did we make it up?

Boy, what we're going to be seeing tonight in Judges, is made up religion. We're just going to do it. We're flying by the seat of our pants. We're just going to come up with our own options. We're going to come up with our own ideas. Here we go.

It says, *“There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. ² And he said to his mother, “The 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “Blessed be my son by the LORD.””* (ESV)

And by the way, you'll notice that *“the LORD”* is in all caps, which means it is the tetragrammaton. It is meaning Yahweh, Yehowah, Jehovah. She's talking about the covenant God of Israel. So she says, *“Blessed be my son by (Yahweh)...”* Oh yeah. I know he's a thief but he, hey, we've got some good things going on here.

And it says, *“³ And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, “I dedicate the silver to the LORD (to Yahweh) from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a metal image. Now therefore I will restore it to you.””* Stop there for just a moment.

This is crazy. This is where life goes when we abandon the authority of God's Word and we just start shooting from the hip and doing what we think we ought to do.

What's going on? This guy comes to his mom, who obviously is pretty well to do because 1100 pieces of silver is a lot of money. And he says to her, mom, you know that 1100 pieces of silver that you lost? Yeah, you know what? I took it so I'm going to give it back to you.

Now, he's not repenting here of his sin. What happened is his mother spoke a curse over the money. Probably even said the curse in the name of Jehovah God. And she pronounced this curse over... Cursed it be the money, and cursed be the one who took this money. And may her arms rot off, and their breath

smell like a camel all the days of their life, and their feet stink, and who knows? And he hears this thing; his mother pronouncing this curse, and he's afraid because of the curse. So he says, mom, I'm going to give you the money back.

And this guy we know what we know about this guy so far is he's a thief and he's even willing to steal from his mother. We're not talking nickels and quarters. Eleven hundred pieces of silver.

And his mother responds. You got to love mom, who always loves her little boy. And she begins to bless him in the name of the Lord. Blessed be my son who's giving me my money back. She's just happy because she's getting her money back.

And she says, you know what, I'm just feeling so perky here because my son is such a good boy, and he was decided to give me my money back, I'm going to dedicate it to the Lord. And we're going to make a carved image. And we're going to worship that carved image. Yeah, what's the problem here? I mean, what's wrong with this picture?

Well she's saying, I'm going to dedicate this to the Lord, but in the next breath, she's talking about disobeying the Lord. Breaking the second commandment about not worshipping any kind of, or making any kind of a carved, or graven image with which to bow down, and to worship, and so forth. And it's just, it's craziness.

But is it craziness that is completely unknown to us? No, I don't think so. We see these kind of inconsistencies in our culture. I dare say we maybe have even been guilty of them. But when you're watching the Academy Awards or something like that, and you see some actor, or actress, or director, or somebody, get up and who's won the latest Oscar. And they get up and they want to thank God.

Sometimes they'll even thank Jesus by name. And they're talking about a film that in some cases, is so contrary to the Word of God and to the wisdom of God, and to moral propriety, that it would make a sailor blush. And yet they're up there saying, I just want to thank Jesus for helping me make this movie and to win this award today.

And what is, and the rest of Christendom watches the Oscars and we say, oh, that is so cool. That is so, oh, praise the Lord. They talked about Jesus on national television. Wasn't that neat? Oh, man. Wow. Give one to God here.

Yeah. And you watch the movie and you realize, you know what? That's shameful. What went on in that film.

And yet, we're talking about God as if God just so blessed me making this film with all of the stuff that went on in it. All the profane language. And yeah, I know there were a few sex scenes with some total nudity. But you know what? That's what Hollywood does these days. Thank you Jesus for winning this award. It's the same disconnect. Right? It's the same kind of a disconnect that we're seeing here in Micah's mother.

And so it says in verse 4, *“So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took 200 pieces of silver and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into a carved image and a metal image. And it was in the house of Micah. ⁵ And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods...”*

Did you catch that? He made his gods. Yeah, that should always raise a red flag in your heart. When everybody makes their gods, that's not a good thing. When you make your gods, your gods can be stolen. And it basically puts you in a position of being the creator. You are the creator above your god when you make your god.

Now we pity this sort of a thing. And we say that—and we kind of smirk, and we're like, make your gods. How dumb is that? We do it. We create our gods, don't we? We create things that we worship. They're of our own making and we worship them just the same.

And then, it says at the end of verse 5, he *“...ordained one of his sons, who became his priest.”* He's, guys, made up religion. This is made up religion. According to the Word of God, the priests must come, first of all, the larger group of priests must come from the tribe of Levi. But the high priest, who actually ministers before the Lord, has to come through the lineage of Aaron. You can't just ordain a priest. This guy, he's just doing things all of his own. He's got, it's a custom made religious program. We're doing this thing ourselves here.

Now, I want you to notice verse 6, because this is really key to understanding these two chapters. It says, *“In those days there was no king in Israel. (and that includes the Lord, King, and it says) Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”*

Guys, this is a description not only of Israel in the time frame in which we are studying here, but it is a description of the United States of America in which

you and I live today. Everyone does what is right in their own eyes. We just simply call it, Relativism. It's if, it's, hey, you know what, if you want to worship that, that if that's if that works for you, we just, we do it in the name of tolerance. We call it Relativism, and everything is relative. Truth is relative and it's just whatever. You know what? Truth is what you believe, we tell people, right? That's our culture.

Truth is what you believe. There is no such thing as absolute truth. Really? Absolutely. That's how the argument goes. It's a ridiculous one. But see that's where our culture is today. Just where they were. And the writer here wants you to see that in all of its splendor.

Verse 7. *“Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. ⁸ And the man departed from the town of Bethlehem in Judah to sojourn where he could find a place. And as he journeyed, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. ⁹ And Micah said to him, “Where do you come from?” And he said to him, “I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find a place.” ¹⁰ And Micah said to him, (hey) “Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, (I guess this means he fired his son) and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and a suit of clothes and your living.” And the Levite went in.”*

Figured that was a pretty good deal. So he's established his own religious system. He set up his son as a priest, but then he found himself a real Levite.

Now remember, a Levite, the Levites really didn't minister before the Lord like the Arianic priests did. They were, mostly the Levites were in in charge of carrying things, packing stuff up, moving from here to there. They were, it was a little bit more menial sort of stuff, but it was still, it was a part of the temple rituals, and duties, and it was important, very important.

He takes this Levite and he says, come be my priest. Oh, see my religion just got a little more validity because I'm bringing some element of truth into it. Do you guys understand that is what people do who are basically forming their own sort of a cut and paste religious system.

They will talk about God to the degree that it gives at least their religion validity. They will ignore the word of God as it relates to truth and following the Lord, but they'll talk about just enough to get you snagged in. See, I got a priest. I got a Levite. Right? See, now it has just became that much more valid, that much more legitimate. So here we go.

And it says, and look at this. Look at this. It says, it goes on and says, “¹¹ And the Levite was content to dwell with the man, and the young man became to him like one of his sons. ¹² And Micah ordained the Levite, ...” Who gave him that right? Well, it doesn't matter because this is all of his own making. He can do anything he wants to do.

So he ordains him, “and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. (and) ¹³ Then Micah said, (look at this, look at this) “Now I know that the LORD will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest.””

See, now I'm doing things the way they're supposed to be done. Actually, he's not at all, but he's got himself convinced that with this Levite has come legitimacy from God, and a blessing from God. And this is really common. We're going to see this in other areas. We saw it with Micah's mother. We now see it with the man here with Micah as he responds to this Levite.

When things are going well, have you noticed that people have a tendency to think that God is blessing? And that this blessing is actually from the hand of the Lord? Right?

I mean, what did Micah's mom say when he returned the money? She didn't say, Hey, you dirty, rotten thief. What's the big idea that I have to curse this thing to even get you to own up to the fact that you stole my money.

No, she bless— oh Lord bless you. And she's ready to just say, oh, isn't God good. My thief of a son gave back the money. She, this is a blessing from the Lord. And now Micah, he finds this Levite. Oh, God is going to bless me now. Because this is all just going my way. We have to be so careful.

Chapter 18. “In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the people of Dan was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in, for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them. ² So the people of Dan sent five able men from the whole number of their tribe, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to explore it. And they said to them, “Go and explore the land.” And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.” Stop there for just a moment. What is going on here?

The Danites, apart, again, people are doing whatever they see right in their own eyes. That's the theme. That should color our vision of this entire 2 chapters. The Danites decide, we want a place to live. We want a place that we're going to call our own. Do they seek the Lord? No. Do they go to the leadership and say,

what is the allotment that the Lord has for our...? No, they don't. They say, we're just going to spy out. We're doing things our self here, you see. We're going to spy out the land.

They've just grown restless. So we're going to send our spies out and we're going to check out where we can live. Reminds me of what James exhorts us, when he says, those of you who say, we're going to go, we're going to move to Portland. We're going to move to Salem and we're going to start a business there. And we're going to, we're going to make money. We're going to live there and be prosperous.

He said, should you not say instead, if the Lord wills, we will move, and go to this, or that place, and set up business, and so forth. (James 4:15) Shouldn't that be your attitude? He said, that is the attitude, that ought to be the attitude of a believer whose life belongs to the Lord.

In other words, the lordship of Jesus Christ guides and directs our decision making, and our response of making plans is to be humble before the Lord. And say, Lord, You need to open the doors. You need to direct our path. We pray about things. Lord, if this is Your will, open the door, and show me. And if not, we're going to stay put.

There's none of that going on with the Danites. And I need to tell you that there's a lot of none of that going on in a lot of Christendom; a lot of believers lives. There's a lot of just making plans and we perpetuate it with our kids. We do it ourselves and we perpetuate it with our children. When it comes to college. When it comes to a mate. Are we really talking to them about submitting to the Lord, to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

Hey, you pray about where you're going to go to college? Pray where the Lord would have you to be. Pray about what you're going to do with your life. What your career is. Yeah, there's all these people that are getting your attention, and they look really cute, and you want a date, and this and... But why don't you pray about whether the Lord would have you to do that?

Why don't you pray about the person that you're going to be with? Why don't you pray about your future spouse? And ask God to prepare your heart and their heart right now. Why don't you be laying that before the Lord? And why don't you tell God, God I don't want someone in my life if it is not Your will.

Now that's foreign information for most Christians. It's flat out foreign information. We're just doing our own thing. We're doing just what the Danites

did. Hey, you, if you want to get restless? We want a place to put down our roots. We're not going to talk to God, we're just going to go! Alright, here we go! Five spies, go! Check out the land, find us a place to live.

See, it's what I can see with my eyes. It's what I can hear with my ears, what I can taste, what I could feel, what I can smell. It's all about how it affects me, how it appeals to me. Rather than saying, Jesus, You are the Lord of my life. I ask You to lead me by Your Spirit. I humbly come to You and say, Lord, lead me and direct me in the way that You would have me to go.

Verse 3, *“When they were by the house of Micah, (we find out and when) they recognized the voice of the young Levite. (he must have been speaking with some kind of a geographical accent or something) And they turned aside and said to him, “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is your business here?”⁴ And he said to them, “This is how Micah dealt with me: he has hired me, and I have become his priest.”⁵ And they said to him, (well) “Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether the journey on which we are setting out will succeed.”⁶ And the priest said to them, (I don’t have to) “Go in peace. The journey on which you go is under the eye of the LORD.”*”

And you know what this is? It's called a tickling ears. That's what that's called. The Bible says that in the last days, people are going to gather around them a great number of teachers who will tell them what their itching ears want to hear. (2 Timothy 4:3) And this is exactly what, this is again what happens when people are doing their own cut and paste religion. And putting together their own gods and directing their own path, but they like to talk about God!

Have you ever noticed that unbelievers like to talk about God? Have you ever noticed? They do. They like to bring God into the conversation. They like to bring religious ideas and stuff. But there's nothing of any sort of submitted obedience to God in their lives. It's just talk. It's just all talk.

But they, but if you talk about God, if you bring some God talk into the conversation, it makes us feel better. It's like a moral mouthwash. We can get rid of the bad taste of the world and all the other profanities that we speak the rest of the day, by just doing a little God talk for a while. And then I feel better. I feel better. Well we're just, we're just trusting the big guy upstairs. There's a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. (2 Timothy 3:5)

So talk to God, ask God here, would you? They say to this guy. And tell Him, find out if, whether we're going to succeed. He goes, oh, I don't have to. Yeah, go for it guys. Talk about telling them what they want to hear. Just, yeah.

“⁷ Then the five men departed and came to Laish and saw the people who were there, how they lived in security, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking nothing that is in the earth and possessing wealth, and how they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone.”

That means that they were isolated where they were living and they had no one who could come to their aid if they were attacked. And that's what it's saying there.

“⁸ And when they came to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, (well) “What do you report?” ⁹ They said, “Arise, and let us go up against them, for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good. And will you do nothing? Do not be slow to go, to enter in and possess the land. ¹⁰ As soon as you go, you will come to an unsuspecting people. The land is spacious, for God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is in the earth.”

¹¹ So 600 men of the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol, ¹² and went up and encamped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. On this account that place is called Mahaneh-dan (which means the camp of Dan) to this day; behold, it is west of Kiriath-jearim. ¹³ And they passed on from there to the hill country of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.” We keep coming back to Micah. He's on a crossroads, apparently.

“¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to scout out the country of Laish said to their brothers, (hey!) “Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod, household gods, (there's) a carved image, and a metal image? Now therefore consider what you will do.”” Well, they didn't have to consider very long.

“¹⁵ And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young Levite, at the home of Micah, and asked him about his welfare.” Which is a fancy way of saying how you doing there, bud?

“¹⁶ Now the 600 men of the Danites, armed with their weapons of war, (which you have to imagine is somewhat intimidating) stood by the entrance of the gate. ¹⁷ And the five men who had gone to scout out the land went up and entered and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, while the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the 600 men armed with weapons of war.”

This tells you what is going on in the hearts of these Danites. They have not come to seek the Lord. They've not come to honor the Lord. They have not come to serve the Lord. They have come to consume. They've come to take, and

it doesn't matter if it belongs to them. It doesn't matter if God wants them to have it. It doesn't matter if God doesn't want them to have it. They've come to take, and that's what they're going to do. Bottom line.

Verse 18, *“And when these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, the priest said to them, ‘What are you doing?’”*¹⁹ *And they said to him, ‘Keep quiet; put your hand on your mouth and come with us and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?’”*²⁰ *And the priest's heart was glad.* (yeah, his stock portfolio just went up, and) *He took the ephod and the household gods* (here, let me help you carry those) *and the carved image and went along with the people.*

²¹ *So they turned and departed, putting the little ones and the livestock and the goods in front of them.”* They always would do that. They would always put the little people, the children in front when they were traveling, when they expected an attack. So that means they knew Micah was probably going to come after him once he got home. In other words, they know they did wrong.

*“*²² *When they had gone a distance from the home of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house were called out, and they overtook the people of Dan.* ²³ *And they shouted to the people of Dan, who turned around and said to Micah, ‘What is the matter with you, that you come with such a company?’”*²⁴ *And he said, ‘You take my gods that I made and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then do you ask me, ‘What is the matter with you?’”*²⁵ *And the people of Dan said to him, ‘Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your household.’”*²⁶ *Then the people of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home.”*

This is such a sad picture, because what we see Micah doing is calling out to the Danites and saying, hey, what are you doing? You took my stuff. But what does he say? You took the god that I made. You took the god I made, took it, taking it away from me.

And they basically respond by saying, if I were you, I'd keep my voice down because some of the guys here haven't eaten or slept for a while and they're kind of owly. And if they hear you talking, they're liable just to pull their sword out of its sheath, and come after you, and wipe out you, and your whole family. So why don't you just turn around and go home? And that's exactly what Micah did.

“²⁷ But the people of Dan took what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, and they came to Laish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, and struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. ²⁸ And there was no deliverer because it was far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth-rehob. Then they rebuilt the city and lived in it. ²⁹ And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was Laish (originally, or) at the first.” Or formerly.

“³⁰ And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons (we finally find out what this priest's name is) were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land.”

In other words, they continued on with their practices all the way until they were conquered by the Assyrian army, which was in the northern kingdom of Israel. *“³¹ So they set up Micah's carved image that he made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.”*

You'll remember that before Jerusalem was conquered by David and Jerusalem became the center of Israel's worship, the tabernacle was actually at Shiloh. But even though the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, the Danites continued to worship at their own shrine. Their own religious makings there in the land where they had created their own religious experience.

Now, this chapter ends, and you'll notice that it kind of, nothing happens from the standpoint of anything that would appear to show any negative consequences for what the Danites did. Did you catch that?

We expect things to resolve somewhat where it says, and God was angry with the Danites, and sent a wasting disease, and they all died, or something like that. It doesn't say that. There's no reference here of anything that is going on in any sort of a negative way.

Actually, you have to get into the Word farther, and I'm not going to ask you to turn here with me, but when we go to books like 1 Chronicles, for example, and we begin to see things like a list of the tribes and the families in Israel, and all the things that they're given, we find the tribe of Dan is missing. It's not spoken of. No reference to Dan.

Why? Well, they probably vanished into obscurity. They had gotten so far away from any sort of a understanding of following the Lord God of Israel that they

probably just intermarried with people's in and around where they lived, and they just became assimilated into those cultures and societies.

We get into the New Testament. In fact, the end of the New Testament, we get to Revelation, chapter 7, where it talks about the 144,000 Jews who are raised up during the tribe of the tribulation to minister before the Lord and to have this special ministry to God during the time of the tribulation. And when it mentions the tribes that make up the 144,000, no mention of Dan. The tribe of Dan is missing. It's gone. No explanation except what we've read here in the Book of Judges.

And this is a reminder to you and I, that even though the consequences of sin may not hit right away, they will come. As Paul said to the Galatians, I'll put this one up on the screen for you so you can see it. Galatians chapter 6,

Galatians 6:7-8 (ESV)

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows,... (eventually, you know what? There's going to be a reaping) *For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,* (it's going to happen, God promises) *but the* (converse is also true if we so properly) ... (if we sow) *to the Spirit...* (we will) *reap eternal life.*

That is the promise of God's Word.