

JUDGES 18
CONFUSION IN SOCIETY/GOVERNMENT!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 18 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Judges.

We have spent the last few weeks looking at confusion, and, as we have seen, this confusion in the home, in the church and in society and the government, which we will be looking at this morning, is the result of only one thing!

I know, that may be shocking, but listen carefully to why there was so much confusion back then and I think you will understand why there is so much confusion in our nation today.

In Judges 17:6 we are told, **“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”**

You see, God was to be leading the children of Israel, He was to be their King, but they took the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob off the throne of their lives and the result is as simple as this – **“... everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”**

Now we might not think too much of that, but it is a big deal, a huge deal!

Look at what we have seen.

First of all, we saw that there was – ***CONFUSION IN THE HOME!***

We saw Micah steal eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother and she does not know who stole it, and she places a curse upon the person that did this awful deed.

Well, Micah admits to his mom that he stole all that money and, instead of rebuking him, she tells her son **“May you be blessed by the LORD, my son!”** She even used the covenant name of God, ***YAHWEH*** to bless this thief!

Not only that, but she used this to make idols for her son so that he can worship God by and he went as far as consecrating one of his sons to be a priest and he was not of the lineage of Aaron, he could not be priest.

In other words, because they took the Lord from reigning in their lives there was much - ***CONFUSION IN THE HOME!***

Then, last week we look at – ***CONFUSION IN THE CHURCH!***

And we saw how this priest from Israel was wandering, was not satisfied where he was living, was not getting paid for being a priest, and he wandered to the house of Micah.

When Micah finds out that he is a priest, he makes him a deal that he can't refuse and this priest, Jonathan according to Judges 18:30, hires himself on to be the priest to Micah and his family.

But he used these idols to worship the true and living God by and once again we see all kinds of confusion!

In other words, because they took the Lord from reigning in their lives there was much - ***CONFUSION IN THE CHURCH!***

This morning we are going to finish up our study on confusion and we will be looking at – ***CONFUSION IN SOCIETY/GOVERNMENT!***

Let me share this article with you on confusion and you will see where we are at today. We are told,

The “Disease of Confusion”

For the remainder of these pages, I shall examine the thesis that a major element in the present-day crisis is a “sickness of society” brought on by the “disease of confusion.”

And, indeed, “confusion” is a medical term. *Blakiston’s New Gould Medical Dictionary* defines it as: “1. State of mental bewilderment. 2. A mixing or confusing.” And in *Webster’s New International*, we find these pertinent definitions: “State of being confused, or disordered; disorder, as of ideas, persons or things A mental state characterized by unstable attention, poor perception of present reality, disorientation, and inability to act coherently.”

The disease of confusion manifests itself in a human society by *disorder, disunity, the disintegration of unifying value-systems, and the abandonment of those principles which are the foundation and elements of the established order.*

Russell Kirk, in his article in the *University of Detroit Law Journal* on “Our Reawakened Consciousness of Order,” writes of the preeminent position of order as “the principle and the process by which the peace and harmony of society are maintained,” and quotes Richard Hooker to show the reverse side of the coin: “Without order, there is no living in public society, because the want thereof is the mother of confusion.” *The ultimate in disorder is anarchy - the absence of all order - confusion complete.*

With the foregoing definitions before us and having in mind that disorder and confusion are, in the context of this discussion, very closely related, we may venture this more specific definition of the disease of confusion as it affects the individual in society: Confusion is an infection which attacks the individual human being in his consciousness, character, and conduct. *It tends to destroy his anchorage in principle; to weaken his powers of perception, discrimination, choice, and decision; and to corrupt, retard, or halt his moral and spiritual development. An epidemic of confusion is particularly destructive of the capacity for self-government and freedom upon which the structure of a free society depends. . . .*

There can be no organized and ordered society in the absence of intelligent restraint of the individual, either from within the individual himself or from without. Edmund Burke, stated the point with his usual clarity of insight and expression:

Society cannot exist unless a controlling power of will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.

Under communism, and other forms of government which enslave the individual, the responsibility for restraint and direction of human relationships is largely vested in those exercising unlimited powers of government. The radical difference, therefore, for the individual citizen, between the free system and its opposite, lies not in freedom from restraint, but in the degree and purpose of restraint, and whether that restraint is self-generated and self-imposed (voluntary in this sense), or imposed from without and enforced by the power of coercion used at the ruler's sole discretion. . . .

The foregoing is only one area of our confusion in the world crisis in which we are so deeply involved. Let us now examine certain alarming symptoms of confusion in American understanding of the basic issue in the great conflict which precipitated the crisis. This conflict, as we are only too well aware, is with the aggressive tyrants of communism who have acquired unlimited power over, and have mobilized and are training (but not educating), for their wholly evil purposes, hundreds of millions of imprisoned people. . . .

Essentially the same confusing idea appears in other reports, wherein there is much talk of how much better the Russians are “succeeding” with their system in “competition” with ours, than had been anticipated by the observer before his visit. Repeatedly appearing in the reports are such assertions as the following: “The Russian people are happy with the progress they are making.”

One reporter grows ecstatic in saying, “They are contented with and proud of their system because it stresses equality, education, science, culture, more leisure and a shorter work week, the dignity of labor, free medical and dental care, and other cradle-to-grave services.” This same reporter, who is the editor of a large daily newspaper, warns that we had better quit brainwashing ourselves by circulating the idea that the Russians are not succeeding with this system, because it was obvious to him that they are making “progress” in their endeavor to improve the lot of their people, far beyond anything we had predicted. . . .

The communist concept of progress is advancement toward the realization of a dehumanized, depersonalized, and despiritualized society, to be attained by destroying what they call the “myths of religion and other superstitions which teach that there is a God or any Power in the Universe higher than man.” The Russian goal is to build a world communist society by conquering and enslaving the peoples of the world.

The purpose of the Russian “competition” with us will have been achieved if and when they have “buried us.” The means to their goals are any and all which will serve to crush the spiritual life of individual human beings and transform them into highly trained animals, conditioned to exist as mere replaceable units and having no significance except as tools to be used in the perfection of the communist ideal of a society of enslaved beings deprived of all individuality.

This is the “death camp” into which Communists are trying to lure and to drive the world; and this is the “essence of the conflict between the Communist Powers’ concept of progress without freedom and our concept of progress with freedom.” Now really, we do not need to go to Russia nor to have Russian communist leaders come to this country to learn that!

- bit.ly/34EBXOD

That nails it doesn’t it! That is what we see happening today. The only problem was that this article was not written in 2020 or 2000 or 1990 but it was written way back in 1960!

And the warning that was given we did not heed and without restraint, and let me be clear on that, without God in our lives who guides us, ***“In those days there was no king in America; everyone did what was right in his own eyes!”***

And that is what we will be focusing on in our study this morning – ***CONFUSION IN SOCIETY/GOVERNMENT!***

I have broken down these verses we will be looking at into several points, as we will be going through all of Judges chapter 18 this morning. Those points are as follows,

DOING WHAT IS RIGHT IN MY OWN EYES – JUDGES 18:1-2

UNGODLY COUNSEL – JUDGES 18:3-6

NOT A MISSION FROM GOD – JUDGES 18:7-13

WORSHIPING GOD YOUR OWN WAY – JUDGES 18:14-17

A HIRELING – JUDGES 18:18-21

HE LOST HIS GOD – JUDGES 18:22-24

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION – JUDGES 18:25-29

IDOLATRY – JUDGES 18:30-31

So with the remainder of our time this morning, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 18, beginning in verse 1 as we look at ***CONFUSION IN SOCIETY/GOVERNMENT!***

JUDGES 18

VERSES 1-2

I have called these verses – ***DOING WHAT IS RIGHT IN MY OWN EYES!***

Now you may be wondering how that fits in to what we see here in these two verses of Judges chapter 18. All we see here is that the tribe of Dan were seeking more land to live in, that is not wrong, is it?

The key to me is how this all opens up. **“In those days there was no king in Israel.”** In other words, as I have said, God was not on the throne of their hearts and thus, they did what they felt was right, and, as we will see, this was not right.

Now some feel that the tribe of Dan was given an inheritance back in Joshua chapter 19, and that is true.

Then what is the problem?

The problem was that they did not drive out the enemy, the Amorites and later the Philistines. This is the land that God had given them, but they were not satisfied with it, the enemy was too strong, and they were going to find a land that was easy to conquer!

And since they were a fairly large tribe, they needed more land and thus, they are seeking to find a place to live.

Now the land that God had allotted for them was a beautiful piece of land that was located by the Jerusalem mountains to the Mediterranean Sea Coast. And, like I have said, this was also the area in which the Philistines dwelt.

But the tribe of Dan could not drive them out, but were only able to take a small portion of land to live in.

Thus, most of the tribe of Dan headed northward, to Laish. This is a beautiful, fertile area at the base of Mount Hermon. But, like I said, it is always tragic to see God's people dwelling in the place that God has not given to them.

I think this is a good lesson for us to learn. Just because something is easy does not mean it is of God. And just because it is difficult, it does not mean that is where God does not want you to be.

First of all, God needs to be on the throne of our hearts, and we need to obey Him. People wonder why they have so many problems and many times it is because they are wandering, they are traveling in areas that they should not be going.

Think about the marriage relationship. In a sense, that is the land or portion that God has allotted to you.

But you are not satisfied, and you go seeking another portion of land, you might say.

Think about that one for a minute. You are not satisfied with the person that God has given to you. That is not right!

And you may even say things like,

"We were not Christians when we got married so God is not in this marriage!"

"I don't love him/her anymore!"

And the list can go on for the reasons why you are in sin!

The key, if you are married, that is the portion that God has allotted to you. If you go looking elsewhere, like Dan was doing, you are wrong!

And let's face it, marriage is not easy. Now don't get me wrong, I love my wife dearly. But she doesn't always do things the way I like them to be done. Can you believe that?

And I am sure she feels the same way about me.

What is the problem?

Me, myself and I!

We are different people, and we do things differently. God never said that we would be married to someone who is exactly like we are. In fact, if we did, we probably wouldn't get along with them anyway.

God brings a man and a woman together in marriage and the woman is the helpmate for the man, and God knows we need a helpmate. We complement each other and those differences, are just that. Don't let that drive you apart but draw you together.

And that goes for anything we do. We want to be in the will of God, we want to obey Him because He has what is best for our lives.

Remember what Solomon said in Proverbs 3:5-8, "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.**"

Do not be wise in your own eyes, trust in the Lord, follow His direction. That is good advice, and it will bring health to our lives and strength to our lives if we obey the Lord. Again, not easy but it is what is best for our lives, follow the Lord's direction!

For Dan, remember, there was no King in Israel and thus, we see the tribe of Dan do what is right in their own eyes, it was not the will of God!

Listen to what Warren Wiersbe wrote regarding the actions of the tribe of Dan. He wrote, *God should have been the king in Israel and His Word the law that governed society, but the people preferred to “do their own thing.” If the people had forsaken their idols, and if the elders of Israel had consulted God’s Law and obeyed it for God’s glory, Israel could have been governed successfully. Instead, “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (21:25), and the result was a society filled with competition and confusion.*

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 468

And that is truly what we see in our nation, confusion, competition, all kinds of evil because God is not on the throne of this nation or many of the people in this nation!

Now, with Dan, in their travels, as they are in the mountains of Ephraim, these men from the tribe of Dan come to the house of Micah and they lodged there.

And that will bring us to our next point – ***UNGODLY COUNSEL!***

VERSES 3-6

Because the tribe of Dan was not satisfied with the lot they received from the Lord, they send out these five men, from the tribe of Dan, and they head northward to find an area of land for the rest of the tribe of Dan to dwell in.

And we see here that they rested at Micah’s house and while there they recognized Jonathan’s dialect and wondered what in the world he was doing in Micah’s house.

And notice that Jonathan is not ashamed to tell them that Micah hired him.

Now, since Jonathan was a priest, or so he was hired as one, these guys ask him to inquire of the Lord to see if their journey will be prosperous.

And Jonathan tells them not to worry and then he tells them the reason they were not to worry; it is because God is with them!

Now I truly doubt if that is what God said to him, I think more likely Jonathan was a man pleaser and just told them what they wanted to hear.

Why do I say that?

Because these men from Dan were not on a mission from God, they are on their own mission and Jonathan was not a priest of God, he was appointed by man!

Thus, I do not believe he was hearing from God but like many today, they use the tag, **“God said . . .”** and they think that legitimizes what they are saying!

That is totally wrong, and I don’t care how sincere you are about it.

And for the Danites, this area of land they will occupy will become a place of idolatry down the road, so it was not a good thing for them to be out of the will of God doing their own thing even if they felt God was in it, He wasn’t!

And the reality is, they go into idolatry right away and it is only going to get worse until the Assyrians finally take them into captivity with the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B. C.

Thus, this is nothing more than – **UNGODLY COUNSEL!**

We see that today with pastor’s, with leaders who tell people what they want to hear but not what is right and what they need to hear!

Paul warned us of that very thing in the last days as he told us in II Timothy 4:3-4, “**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**”

Notice that they will look for teachers to tell them what they want to hear and these teachers, like Jonathan, will be more than happy to do that very thing!

We see this not only in the church, but in society as well. People will say things that will make us feel good, they will tell us what we want to hear, and yet, it is a lie, and we love it.

And even in government. Thank God the Presidential race is over because the commercials were driving me crazy.

For instance. Joe Biden said that he is not going to raise taxes, that he is going to give a free college education to those who go to two year schools, that he is giving us money if we are a first time home buyer, that he is going to raise our salary \$15,000 per year and on and on it goes, and we love it.

We hear – ***FREE STUFF!*** And it tickles our ears, and we buy into those lies!

I can’t stress this enough. If you want good counsel, great counsel in life, listen to what God is saying to you.

Now some feel that God is not speaking to them!

My answer to them is – ***READ THE WORD OF GOD, HE IS SPEAKING THROUGH HIS WORD!***

Others feel that they are not hearing God speak to them! They are not hearing the voice of God!

My answer to them is – ***READ THE WORD OF GOD OUT LOUD AND YOU WILL HEAR GOD SPEAK TO YOU!***

The problem is that we don't always like what God is saying so we find teachers and people who will tell us what we want to hear!

Please, please, please do not seek out people who will tell you what you want to hear, seek the Lord, receive instruction from Godly people and not from those who will just tell you what you want to hear.

Let me give you a few verses to show you what we need to do.

First of all, in Psalm 73:24 we are told, **“You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.”**

If the Lord is guiding us, that means we need to be looking and looking into His Word as He speaks to us and then obey what He is telling us!

In Psalm 16:7-8 we are told, **“I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.”**

You see, as you seek the Lord's direction, He will show you what to do, where to go, what to say. He will give you the strength, the confidence to move forward because you trust in Him!

In Psalm 119:24 we are told, **“Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors.”**

We should delight in the Lord because He is speaking to us and directing our lives.

And in Psalm 33:10-12 we are told, **“The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.”**

Here we see God speak against governments and people who are devising plans that go against His will, what He wants to be done.

We see that so clearly today as governments and people are trying to do their own thing and the foolishness of their actions. They are not going to get away with it in the end.

And, as a nation, as we get back to the Word of God, as we obey the Lord, there are blessings, but if we don't, well, it is not a good thing and we see that in our nation today where right is wrong and wrong is right and people have no direction!

For this tribe of Dan, their mission was sinful!

They met with a sinful Levite and sought direction!

They wanted to know from a righteous God if their sinful mission would be successful.

And this sinful Levite sent these sinning men on their way with the blessings of God, at least that was what he told them!

And that brings us to our next point – ***NOT A MISSION FROM GOD!***

VERSES 7-13

These five spies and the 600 men with them, will travel from the tribe of Dan traveled some 100 miles from Zorah to Laish, a town that was inhabited by the Sidonians. Right now go to Micah's house first. Laish was a city about 25 miles north of the Sea of Chinnereth or Kinnereth; we know it as the Sea of Galilee.

And this area is very lush, had a large amount of vegetation, a good water supply and the men of Dan felt that this would be a great place to raise a family or really relocate their tribe to.

As for the people of Laish, they were a peaceful people, and because of their location, they were isolated from other nations who might be able to help them in case of a war. The men of Laish were not strong militarily and because of all of this, the tribe of Dan felt it would be easy to defeat them and the land was ripe for them to live in.

So these five spies return home and tell their brethren what they found, this fertile land that should be easy to take from the people of Laish and 600 men gather with them to go and fight to attain this land.

And they come to Micah's house.

Now it would seem that Micah's house was the place to stop by as you are passing through the area! Maybe it was known for its shrine or just a place to rest before you continued on in your journey!

Why was it easier for them to fight against the people of this distant land than in the land that God had given them?

Maybe the reason is that the grass is always greener on the other side, but the reality is, they use more fertilizer!

May we be content with what God has given to us and fight for what God has given us. May we not go outside of God's desire for us!

These men were – ***NOT ON A MISSION FROM GOD!***

And for the men of Dan, they did not see this as a problem, they were getting what they wanted, and it was not going to be difficult for them to take it!

Maybe you heard of these sayings before, but they do apply to what many do today. They are,

What's mine is mine, I'll keep it! What's yours is mine, I'll take it! What's mine is yours, I'll share it!

Well, the Danites were following the second one, what is yours is mine, I'll take it!

That is a good lesson for us. That we don't take what is someone else's! Think about what we do today to protect what we have. We put up all kinds of security cameras and things like that to protect our stuff.

Why do we have to do that?

Because people want to come and take it.

But I think there is another application here and we need to be careful that we don't feel that we are on this mission from God when we are on our own mission, God is not in it!

What do I mean by that?

There are many different ways to look at this.

Think about taking someone's spouse, I don't care what you say, that is not of God!

What about taking someone's job, that you put a bad report about this person, and they get fired and you end up getting their job? That is not of God!

And we can go on but if you are doing something that goes against what God has said in His Word, then this mission you are on is not from God, but it is from your own fleshly desires.

That was the tribe of Dan, they were not satisfied with what they had, and they are looking for more and, in the end, what they wanted will be what brings them into bondage. Be careful!

And that does lead us into our next point, all the result of doing your own thing, because, then you will be – ***WORSHIPING GOD YOUR OWN WAY!***

VERSES 14-17

What a sad picture this is. They wanted to know if what they were doing was from God and the Levite told them that God would bless them, which was not true. And now, look at what they do!

Here we see that these five men, along with the 600 who were standing at the gate, come to Micah's house, they go in and take the carved image, the ephod, the household idols and the molded image!

Why in the world did they do this?

I guess they wanted to worship God by these things and to do that they needed to take them!

They didn't even think twice about this, they just go in and take them!

Isn't it interesting that as you are not walking according to God and His Word, you do all kinds of things to show that you are a godly person? And that is what does happen over and over again.

Now, as strange as that sounds, people do all kinds of evil in the name of God.

Way back in the 1990's, in the Los Angeles riots, there were many looters.

And a reporter happened to come upon three men who were looting a store and he asked them what they had taken.

The first two men refused to answer, and they just spewed out some profanity and continued on.

Interestingly enough the third man said, ***“I got some gospel music. I love Jesus!”***

That is amazing to me because what he was doing contradicted what he said about his love for Jesus!

May our words and actions match our love for the Lord!

And today, in the church, we see this grow, this idea of worshiping God any way that we want!

No, we can't worship God any way that we want, we must worship Him as He wants and that is in Spirit and truth!

In other words, we first must be saved and secondly, we worship God according to His Word and not apart from His Word!

Alexis de Tocqueville, upon his visit to the United States, observed in his famed work Democracy in America that ***“there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.”***

These words, originally written in the mid-19th century, might not ring quite so true to us as they once did over 100 years ago.

Let me show you what I mean as we see the church today trying to worship God their own way instead of what God desires.

We are told,

Worship services abound in the nation. We have more mega churches than ever before, it seems. We have worship services brought into our homes by television. Many churches are filled with loud music and raised hands. Some even resemble rock concerts with the music being so loud that you can hardly hear yourself sing. There are all sorts of musical instruments from guitars to drums to cymbals to orchestras. Worship services abound and music abounds in them.

Many churches have become seeker friendly and have Saturday night worship services or very informal services on Sunday morning. We have experts in worship. We have books on worship. We have seminars and teaching on how to conduct worship. We have the latest state of the art audio and projection systems in our churches. We no longer need hymn books. It's all on the screen or screens before us. We have well trained worship teams to lead us. Worship abounds in evangelical churches.

Yet, in all of this are we pleasing God? Is He the center of our worship?

Jon D. Payne in his book *In the Splendor of Holiness* writes, "Indeed, the so-called seeker-sensitive churches, well-meaning as they may be, put more emphasis upon what man will get out of a service of worship (unbeliever or believer) than upon what God will get out of it. To be sure, we are supposed to be seeker-sensitive when designing and executing worship, but according to Scripture, God (not man) is the Seeker toward whom we are to be sensitive in worship." (p. 25)

Payne goes on to write, "In the New Covenant, as in the Old, Christians are called to worship God in the manner that He prescribes, and not according to the shifting desires and changing fads of the unbelieving culture. If we worship in God's Spirit and according to His truth, the object of our worship will inevitably be God Himself. In other words, our worship will be God-centered. Therefore, to make anything other than God the center of our worship is, in a word, idolatry." (p. 26)

This is a very serious charge and something that we need to be concerned about in our modern day worship services. . . .

The preaching of the Word of God should be foremost in our worship services. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his book *Preaching & Preachers* writes, “The primary task of the Church and of the Christian minister is the preaching of the Word of God.” (p. 19)

Jon D. Payne writes, “. . . I have discovered time and again through the study of Scripture that it is through the primary means of Word-centered proclamation that God advances His redemptive purpose in the course of history. This is precisely why the preaching of God’s Word has historically held a central place in Protestant worship.” (Payne, p. 83)

Today, many evangelical churches have done away with the pulpit entirely to make room for the worship team. The preacher either has no lectern at all or only a small one that takes up little room. The days of the large pulpits with the big pulpit bibles are just about gone in modern evangelical churches. What does this tell us about the importance of the preaching the Word today? . . .

If the preaching of the Word of God is portrayed in scripture as of supreme importance, why then have modern evangelical churches relegated the preaching of the Word to an inferior position?

Payne explains, “If the Word of God, then, is the primary means by which God saves and nourishes the elect and the faithful proclamation of His Word is His primary method of accomplishing His redemptive purposes, why has preaching taken a back seat in modern-day evangelical churches? In short, it is because God-centered, careful, exegetical, authoritative preaching is not appealing to the culture. In order for the church to get big, church growth experts surmise, biblical preaching must go (or be changed into a superficial, therapeutic, anecdote-filled message).” (Payne, p. 85)

True worship should then have the proclamation of the Word of God at its center and everything else should take their place behind it. . . .

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I hope you can clearly see that we are not to worship God any way we want, as these Danites were trying to do. We must worship Him in Spirit and in truth!

And our next point, we have talked about this, but when you want to do something your way instead of God's, you will have to find teachers who will tell you what you want to hear.

And thus, our next point - *A HIRELING!*

VERSES 18-21

Here is a picture of a hireling or a person who is only doing the work for money and position and not for the Lord. These men threaten Jonathan and then they offer him a better position with them, and he takes it!

Before we saw that Micah offered him a good deal, but these Danites offer him a better deal now and he takes it.

Make no mistake about it, Jonathan is not a true shepherd of God but is only interested in his own wellbeing!

Jesus put it like this in John 10:12-13, "**But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.**"

Many do the same today; they are not interested in the flock that God has entrusted to them but always looking for bigger and better things for themselves! That is sad and that is not a true shepherd of God!

Now here is something we also have to look at. Why do the men of Dan place the little ones, the livestock and the goods in front of them?

Because these men of Dan recognized that Micah might not appreciate what they did, so they place the young, the livestock and their goods in the front, so that if Micah attacks from the rear, they would be ready for him.

Their behavior illustrates their serpent behavior mentioned in Jacob's prophecy for this tribe back in Genesis 49:17, where we are told, "**Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward.**"

This tribe was treacherous and as we are seeing, they are introducing idolatry into the tribe and by the time we get to Kings, it is out of control!

But the main point here, Jonathan was a hireling, out to make the best deal possible instead of following the Lord and obeying what the Lord instructed the priests to do!

A HIRELING!

VERSES 22-24

Maybe it is just me, but this is funny to me and yet, it is very sad.

Micah has to go on a rescue mission to get back his god's that were stolen.

How tragic when a man's god's can be carried away.

You see, idolaters worship god's that can be carried away, but we as Christians worship a God who carries us!

Who do you want to worship, a god that is stolen, a god that has fallen and can't get up, a god who can't do anything, or the true and living God who is actively involved in our lives?

The choice is simple; I am going to worship the true and living God!

But for Micah, all that he had placed his faith in, even his priest, was taken away. In other words – ***HE LOST HIS GOD!***

Listen to what Micah said in verse 24, “**Now what more do I have?**”

His god was stolen, but how many have their god's taken away by other things? And in the end, what are they left with? Nothing.

That is Micah's complaint, that he has nothing left. How sad!

But for us as Christians, you can take everything else away from us, you can take away from us everything that is material, our health, our relationships and yet, we still have the ***LORD!***

You see, He will always be with us, He will never leave us and that should bring great comfort to us!

But this statement of Micah reflects the emptiness of idolatry - ***HE LOST HIS GOD!***

VERSES 25-29

Make no mistake about it, the Danites were into idolatry, just as Micah and this priest were. And it is out of this idolatry that we see their immorality come forth. If you are not walking with God, it will be reflected in the things you do and the things you say to others!

And what we see here with the Danites is – ***DEATH AND DESTRUCTION!***

First of all, their words were harsh towards Micah and they basically told him to watch his mouth or he would lose more than just his gods, he would lose his life! They were living out the idea that, ***WHAT IS YOURS IS MINE AND THUS, I WILL TAKE IT!***

It is a philosophy that has emerged today, and it is because people have moved away from the true and living God!

And from there we see that after they took this priest and his idols with them they came to Laish and destroyed the people of Laish, and they rebuilt the city and now call it Dan after their father or the son of Jacob, one of the 12 sons of Israel.

Now we don't know how many people lived in Laish, but even a few hundred murdered by the Danites was wrong! I am sure they justified their actions, but this was not of God!

When you move away from the true and living God, when you are serving the god's that you have created in your own mind, or even worshiping the true and living God in the wrong way, there will be ***DEATH AND DESTRUCTION*** manifested in your life, in your actions.

In fact, violence is growing in that we see it in sports, we see it now in protests and they try to legitimize it, but it is just violence that brings about ***DEATH AND DESTRUCTION!***

Now maybe you are thinking that I am being too hard on the tribe of Dan. I am not and you will see how this played out as we finish up this chapter and see, very clearly – ***IDOLATRY!***

VERSES 30-31

Now some may read this and not see a problem, but there is a big problem.

First of all, the place of worship for Israel was to be in Shiloh as we are told in Joshua 18:31.

That is where the Tabernacle was set up.

But the tribe of Dan sets up their own idolatrous place of worship here in Laish and we have moved from individual idolatry with Micah to a whole tribe adopting idolatry and this will peak as we get to I Kings chapter 12 as a golden calf is set up in Dan to worship God by!

Were they sincere in what they were doing?

You bet they were, but what they were doing was in direct opposition to God and that is important for us to understand today as people want to worship God any way they want, according to how they feel and as I have said, God *MUST* be worshiped in *SPIRIT* and in *TRUTH!* That is the only worship that God will accept. I don't care how sincere you may be!

As close this morning, I want you to see the confusion that was going on in society and, in a sense, with government as the people and the tribe of Dan were into idolatry! It is what we are seeing today!

Let me share this with you. We are told,

It would appear that one of the many ways in which God punishes the sins of men and nations is to give them over at times to widespread perplexity and confusion. . . .

If perplexity and confusion are, as we think, judgements of God on sinful nations, we need to confess that God's hand is manifestly 'stretched out' (Isa. 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4) upon us at this hour. For confusion and perplexity are everywhere to be seen - from the throne to the poorhouse and from the prince to the prelate [minister]. In just about every sphere of life there is a widespread uncertainty and agony of distress.

Our jobs and our currencies are about as unsteady as our morals. Those who lead us appear frequently to be without any sense of vision. Too often they are found wanting in their private lives. Our modern world has become sophisticated and clever.

But the problem is that God is cleverer still and he frustrates us at every stroke by turning our unblest efforts to vanity and futility. Concerning very few of our modern societies would it be true to say: 'Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure' (Isa. 33:6). God has set his face against us and thrown over us the mantle of confusion.

Those who take the Bible seriously are in no doubt as to how and why this modern confusion has become so widespread. Men are attempting to live without any understanding of the principles of righteousness. Society is stampeding towards greater and greater misery and damage because it **will not stop** to listen to the voice of God speaking in Scripture and in providence. When each new crack appears in the wall, instead of examining the fault to its foundation, men are content simply to 'daub it with untempered mortar' (Ezek. 13:10).

What ought to be happening to us as a society when so many problems are enveloping [surrounding] us is to question the prevailing philosophy of life as a whole. But that is, sadly, the last course of action which men welcome. The pretense is kept up on every side that our troubles have nothing to do with our sins. Prosperity is always 'just around the corner'. Tomorrow, or the next day, our national debts will be paid off, jobs will be here for all and peace and plenty will be on hand for every citizen. But this hollow optimism is itself nothing more than a symptom of our tragic confusion.

Massive questions call for an answer but are presently meeting only a deafening silence: What new factor in tomorrow's world is going to make our vast populations industrious, law-loving, neighborly, upright, wise and moral? What new influences deriving from our prevailing philosophy of Atheism are capable of making the society of tomorrow any happier or better than the society of today?

The frank and honest answer - for those who are prepared to hear it - is that there is none. Society is spiraling ever further downwards because of the bankruptcy of its moral and religious outlook. Men need to have the mists of spiritual ignorance dispelled from their minds by a new vision of the world, as God has given it to us in his Word.

Nothing novel is needed to lift our modern civilization out of its moral quagmire. No new formulas are required to put the ship of state back on a safe and prosperous course. What is needed is to return to an understanding of those ancient truths of revelation which our forefathers cherished in their day but which have been sinfully neglected and ridiculed for so long.

The need of the hour, to put matters plainly, is for society to be renewed and reformed from the pulpit outward. Let all who enter pulpits see it as their unique calling to labor in Christ's name to lift society up by giving it large doses of biblical teaching. When fogs and mists overspread the face of society the only power that will dispel them is the genial sunshine of pure evangelical preaching.

Let us be convinced of that more than ever in the light of the evident failure of political humanism or social science to heal the troubles of mankind. What the modern man needs to hear is the old curriculum of religious truths which used popularly to be referred to as the 'three Rs': ***ruin by the Fall; redemption by the blood of Christ; and regeneration by the Spirit of God.***

If the reader feels a momentary disappointment that we have nothing else to offer as a remedy for present ills in the world, let him ponder the historic and undeniable fact that this is the apostolic message which God has blessed times without number in the past to 'turn the world upside down'. Nothing else is the 'power of God unto salvation' (Rom. 1:16). If society today is to be raised again from its acknowledged depravity and confusion, it must be done in the same way as in the past. God will bless what he has given to man as the gospel, and he will bless nothing else.

But it is at this point that the churches of Christ are generally failing today. Preachers are themselves confused. The true message is not sounding forth from even one pulpit in twenty. The generality of preachers do not tell their people of their sinful and lost state. The wrath of God is not pronounced against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Jesus Christ is not being held forth as the only Savior of hell - deserving sinners. And the New Birth is not being preached as indispensably necessary to men.

Those preachers who *do* proclaim these old truths are few and precious. Even once evangelical pulpits are sliding into the sleepy confusion and apathy which has come to be the prevailing norm. Preaching has given way to something akin to entertainment. The trumpet has been muted. Heaven and hell are not felt realities in the consciences of most preachers. We are all in danger of becoming so polite that the sinners who come to listen to us will never hear one awakening sermon till they die in their blood.

As Christians, we will not be able to see above the general confusion if we live only at the level of the world around us. The prophet must climb the high mountain and dwell in a watchtower. The smoke of modern permissiveness and ungodly entertainment can only blind us unless we shun it and discipline ourselves to live apart and only for God. The call of the hour is to live near to Christ and to get ever closer to him till we have that power with God which will prevail and which will call down the fire of fresh authority on this generation of preachers.

God has darkened our age very extensively with judicial blindness at every level of society. The mists of confusion thicken visibly. But our glorious confidence is that the same God is well able to remove the veil of obscurity which covers the eyes of the multitudes. This he always does, when he does it to mankind, only by one means: by the old gospel preached faithfully and ‘with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven’ (1 Pet. 1:12).

Let us labor steadfastly to have this judgement on society removed to the eternal glory of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Confusion in our lives can easily be removed by returning back to God and not only listening to His voice, but then obeying what He is saying to us.

And that goes for confusion in the home, confusion in the church and confusion in society and the government!

And I will close with this, from Paul as he wrote in I Corinthians 14:33, **“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”** May we never forget that!