

Judges 17–18; Ruth

Day 1

Micah's Idols. Read Judges 17

1. What did Micah admit to doing (17:1–2)?

- How did his mother react to his confession (17:2b)? How should she have reacted?

FYI: “Apparently the blessing was to cancel out the effect of the curse, but this mother never condemned her son.”
– Gary Inrig (294)

2. When receiving the silver back, to whom did she dedicate it (17:3a)?

- For what purpose did she dedicate it (17:3b–4)? (How much of the silver did she use?)
- What does this mixing of pagan practices with a language of devotion to the Lord say about the kind of apostasy taking place in the land?

FYI: “Some believe this was an image of a false god (such as Baal or Ashtoreth). Others believe that it was an image representing Yahweh. Either way, God strictly forbade such an image, whether it was meant to represent the true God or not.”
– David Guzik

3. How did Micah try add to this idolatrous worship (17:5)? List the religious things and practices that Micah set up in his home. What was he copying?

FYI: “The last five chapters of Judges provide a direct insight into the moral depravity in Israel during one of their many periods of religious apostasy...Micah could, he thought, have his own worship center without having to travel to the tabernacle at Shiloh.” – The Defender’s Study Bible

“It does not make the slightest bit of difference what I prefer to think of God. God is who He is and what He is, and that is why any false image of God of any sort is forbidden. Human concepts of God are irrelevant. God has revealed Himself, and He demands that our understanding of Him conform to what He has revealed about Himself in His Word.

Micah was guilty of a self-made religion, a homemade god...Anything that we add to our lives to which we attach the worth and importance that belongs only to God becomes an idol in our lives. Idolatry is not a relic of the past; it is a constant problem for every believer...It is...religious practice without God’s truth.”
– Gary Inrig (297–298)

“household idols –*terephim* – gods that were worshipped in hopes of gaining prosperity and guidance...This was a completely man-originated and man-centered religion” – David Guzik

4. What reason was given for this departure from God’s words and commands (17:6)?

- How had the Israelites fallen into this same thinking earlier? See Exodus 32:1–6.

5. What had the Lord said about:

- idolatry: Exodus 20:3–5
- worship: Deuteronomy 12:4–8,14
- priests: Exodus 40:12–15

6. What warning had Moses given in Deuteronomy 8:19?

- What instructions had Moses given about idols in Deuteronomy 12:2–3?
- What was one of the curses that the people had recited when they came to the land (Deuteronomy 27:15)?
- How had Joshua challenged them? See Joshua 24:14,20,23.

7. Underline what Scripture says about man's reasoning on his own.

- Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a person, But its end is the way of death. NASB
- 1 Corinthians 3:19–20 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." NKJ

8. Who came to visit Micah and what was he seeking (17:7–8)?

- Where should he have been living? See Numbers 35:1–3 and Joshua 21.

9. From 7:10, what offer did Micah make him? Why do you think the priest agreed to it?

- What was motivating Micah (7:13)?

10. Why do you think Micah was finding it more attractive to seek the favor of the Lord in his own made-up manner of religion rather than following God's word?

✞ Applying the Word: Do you have any habitual ways thinking or acting that try to manipulate God? Why?

Day 2

The Tribe of Dan's Idolatry and Migration. Read Judges 18

11. What problem did the tribe of Dan encounter (18:1)? Why hadn't they found their inheritance? See Judges 1:34.

- What solution did they seek and to where did it lead to first (18:2)?

12. How did they respond to the explanation that the Micah's priest gave (18:3–4)? How did the priest serve them (18:5–6)?

- What picture do these first six verses give of the general apathy of entire tribes to the will and ways of God?

FYI: "This shows what a spiritually confused time this was in Israel. These Danites on a sinful mission met with a *sinful* Levite and wanted to know from a *righteous* God if their mission would be successful. Then the sinful Levite sent the sinning men on their way with God's blessing."

– David Guzik

13. From 18:7, what did the Danites find attractive about Laish?

- What did they propose to their tribe (18:8–10)? How many responded (18:11)?

14. When they came to Micah's house, on their way back to Laish, what did they decide to do (18:14–18a)?

- What strange mixture of religious zeal and evil intent did they have?

15. How did the Levite respond to their theft and (18:18b–21)? What does this say about the things that motivated him?

16. What did Micah attempt to do about the gods and priest who were supposed to rescue and serve him (18:22–24)?

- What did he reap from all this (18:25–26)?

17. Read Isaiah 44:6–20.

- How does God compare to idols (44:6–8)?
- What does He say about the fate of those who make idols (44:10–11)?
- What picture does He give of the origin of idols (44:12–16)?
- What understanding do idols have (44:18)?
- What is said about the foolish thinking and worshipping of an idol we have made (44:19–20)?

FYI: “Imagine being able to steal a religion – gods, priest, and all! Imagine Micah’s putting his life on the line, trying to defend his gods, since his gods can neither defend nor protect him. Imagine being will to kill for self-made, stolen gods! This is Canaanization at its worst. It is also a reminder that when we turn away from the living God, we turn towards death, not life, and we fall into utter confusion and self-deception. And so Micah , who enters our story as a thief, exits as a victim of thieves.”
– Gary Inrig (304)

18. Note the adjectives and titles He gives to idol makers and idols in 44:9–10,19–20

Idol makers	Idol
<i>(vs. 9) Futile/useless/nothing</i>	<i>(vs. 9) No benefit/worthless</i>

19. What became of Micha’s idols (18:30–31)?

- Shockingly, who were the priests for these idols (18:31)?

20. What meaning does this account give to the closing verse (21:24) of Judges?

- ✎ Applying the Word:** “Want of trust is at the root of almost all our sins and our weaknesses; and how shall we escape it but by looking to Him and observing His faithfulness?” (Hudson Taylor) Can you identify any areas of your life where you are not trusting the Lord? Can you identify what fear or motives are behind that?

Day 3

Read Ruth 1–2

FYI: “The book of Ruth is a powerful answer in personal form to the national problem of Judges....The book is full of the most rational, life-giving decisions. From Ruth’s choice of Israel’s God, to Boaz’s choice of covenantal love and his careful public processing of the marriage of Ruth (chapter 4) the book demonstrates how godly people reason and think...Judges is full of death, while Ruth is full of life.”
 – Dr. Chris Miller notes on Ruth

21. What losses did Naomi and Ruth experience in Moab? 1:3–5
 - How do you think these losses affected them emotionally, financially, socially, etc.

22. What did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to do (1:8a)? What did she wish for them (1:8b–9a)?

23. From the reaction of the daughters-in-law, what kind of relationship did they seem to have with their mother-in-law (1:9b,10)? What does this say about Naomi’s character?

24. How did Orpah and Ruth respond to Naomi’s concerns for them about returning with her (1:14)?

25. What glimmer of hope is given in the timing of Naomi and Ruth’s arrival in Bethlehem? 1:22
 - Where did Ruth end up? 2:3

26. What do you learn about Boaz’s character from his words and actions Ruth in 2:4–16?
 - What contrast does this give to most of the accounts in book of Judges?

27. How did Naomi respond to Boaz's kindness (2:17–22)?

- What renewed hope did Naomi express in 2:20b? (This is the middle verse in Ruth.)

✞ Applying the Word: “They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (Ruth 1:22.)” HOPE! Naomi had lost everything. She was hungry. She didn't have a clear path for her future. In the hard spaces of your life, ask God to let you see the glimmer of HOPE. Does it feel impossible to find hope? What trusted friend can you invite into praying and searching for hope with you?

Ruth simply did the only thing in front of her that she knew to do, and God used that to provide for them. In whatever challenging circumstances you have, is there anything God is simply asking you to do the next thing in front of you?

Day 4

Read Ruth 3–4

28. What did Naomi want to seek for Ruth? 3:1 (What had she wished for her earlier? 1:9)

29. What instructions did Naomi give Ruth (3:3b–4)?

- How much of the plan did Ruth agree to (3:5–6)?

30. What was this asking Boaz to do (3:9)?

- In Ezekiel 16:8, what did the Lord say he would do for the nation?

31. What promise did Boaz make (3:11–13)? What stood in the way of Boaz taking Ruth as his wife (3:12)?

32. What other barriers could they have allowed to stand in the way?

- 2:6
- 3:10
- 4:6

33. How did Boaz's actions immediately begin to demonstrate that he wanted to protect and provide for Ruth and Naomi? 3:14–17
34. Underline the reasons given in the following verses give for waiting/trusting in the Lord?
- Psalm 147:11 the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. NIV
 - Proverbs 3:5–6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. NASU
 - Isaiah 64:4 For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him. NASU
 - Isaiah 40:31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. NASB
 - Isaiah 49:23 ...Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame. NASB
35. Where did Boaz go (4:1)? In 4:1–10, how do you see Boaz assuring that the redemption of Naomi and Ruth was legal and binding?
- How would you describe the atmosphere that Boaz created? How did he make it easy for the kinsman redeemer to back out?
36. What did it cost Boaz to redeem Ruth (4:9–10)?
- What did it cost Christ to redeem you? 1 Peter 1:18–19
 - Why was God willing to pay such a high price? I John 4:9
37. What did the Lord give Boaz and Ruth (4:13)? How long may Ruth have waited for a child? (See 1:4)
- What blessings did the women wish for Naomi and the child? What was their opinion of Ruth? 4:15
38. How was Obed related to King David (4:17)? (See I Samuel 22:3,4 for an interesting event between David and the Moabites)
- From Matthew 1:5,16, who was a descendant of Ruth?

39. What does the story of Ruth, that takes place during a time of a great falling away from the Lord, say about God knowledge of, and work through, a few who are His?

✂ Applying the Word: What challenges you the most about waiting? When have you had to wait a long time for something that you finally received? What, if anything, did you learn from the wait?

Has a friend ever given to you at a personal cost to themselves? How did that make you feel?