

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 18

This chapter relates how the Danites, being overcrowded in their inheritance, sent out spies to search the land, and see if they could find any proper place to add unto it, and enlarge it, (^{<071817>}Judges 18:1-6) who returned and reported Laish as such, and encouraged the Danites to go and possess it; for which purpose they sent six hundred men up to it, (^{<071817>}Judges 18:7-12) and as they went, called at the house of Micah, and took away his priests and his gods, (^{<071813>}Judges 18:13-27) and having taken Laish, set up Micah's graven image there, (^{<071828>}Judges 18:28-31).

Ver. 1. *In those days there was no king in Israel*, etc.] No supreme magistrate, no judge, for it was before the time of the judges, after the death of Joshua and before Othniel the first judge; this is observed before, (^{<071716>}Judges 17:6) and here repeated to account for the evil things done by the Danites, their consulting Micah's oracle, taking away his priest and his gods, and setting up his graven image in Dan, by which means idolatry was spread in Israel, and brought on their servitude to Chushanrishathaim, from which Othniel the first judge was their deliverer:

and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; that is, a family of them, as in the next verse, not the whole tribe; for as a family is sometimes put for a tribe, (^{<031717>}Joshua 7:17) so a tribe for a family, (^{<071212>}Judges 20:12)

for unto that day [all their] inheritance had not fallen to them among the tribes of Israel: we rightly supply the words "all their"; for otherwise an inheritance had fallen to them by lot, as the other tribes. (^{<031940>}Joshua 19:40), but that was not only too little for them, (^{<031947>}Joshua 19:47) but all that was allotted to them did not come into their possession, but a part remained unsubdued; and some they had possession of they could not keep, either through the superior strength of the Amorites, or their own sloth and cowardice, or for want of the help of their brethren; (see ^{<001334,35>}Judges 1:34,35).

Ver. 2. *And the children of Dan sent of their family five men, etc.]*

According to Abarbinel one out of a family, as Moses sent one out of a tribe to spy the land; and so there must be five families concerned in this affair:

from their coasts, men of valour from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; these men were sent from the borders of the tribe, the extreme parts of it, as the word may signify, where perhaps they were the most pressed and overcrowded: Zorah and Eshtaol are particularly mentioned, and were the first cities in their lot, and were the coast of their inheritance, (see Gill on “⁶⁹⁴Joshua 19:41”) some take the phrase rendered “from their coasts” to signify persons of extreme meanness, men of the lowest class among them; but the above mentioned writers interpret it to a quite contrary sense, by “Katzinim”, princes, such as Moses sent to spy the land; and this better agrees with the next clause, “men of valour”: and the word used signifies not only magnanimity and fortitude of mind, but wealth and riches; and these were sent not to spy the land of Canaan, but such places as fell to this tribe, but were possessed by the Canaanites; and their errand was to observe in what condition they were, and whether fit for their purpose, and easy to obtain, and how they might get the possession of any of them:

and they said unto them, search the land; and see if some convenient place cannot be found out to enlarge their inheritance, and give them more room and liberty for their families, now pent up, and a pasturage for their flocks and herds:

who when they came to Mount Ephraim; which lay upon the borders of them:

to the house of Micah, they lodged there; that is, when they were come near to the house of Micah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, they took up their lodging in the neighbourhood of it, perhaps at a public house or inn; for the sense is not, that they lodged in Micah’s house, for after this we read of their turning into it, as in the next verse. According to Bunting ^{f375}, this place was twenty four miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, from whence these men came.

Ver. 3. *When they were by the house of Micah, etc.]* At their inn, which might be next to it, or as they were passing by it:

they knew the voice of the young man the Levite; who had been in their country, and they had been in his company and conversation, and they knew the tone of his voice when they heard it; a particular brogue he might have. Abarbinel conjectures, that he was singing to Micah's idol, or multiplying his prayers before him:

and they turned in thither; into Micah's house, and into the apartment where the young man was;

and said unto him, who brought thee hither? they knew he was of Bethlehemjudah; they inquire therefore how he came there, who sent for him, and by what means he was brought to that place:

and what makest thou in this place? they knew he was a Levite, and that such an one had no business to minister but at the tabernacle, and therefore they inquire what was his employment here: and what hast thou here? to support himself with, what he had for his maintenance, or how he lived.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto them, thus and thus dealeth Micah with me*, etc.] Told them the whole story, how he came to the door of Micah's house, how he inquired of him who he was, and from whence he came, and whither he was going, and then invited him into his house to stay with him:

and hath hired me; by the year, for ten shekels of silver, a suit of clothes, and meat and drink, and by this means he got a livelihood, and was supported:

and I am his priest; and that was his business to offer sacrifice for his family, and to consult his oracle for him, and for whomsoever should apply.

Ver. 5. *And they said unto him, ask counsel, we pray thee, of God*, etc.] They did not reprove him for assuming the priestly office, when they knew he was a Levite, such was the corruption of those times, and the great depravity and declensions they were fallen into; nor even for the idolatry he was guilty of, but encourage him in it, and thought they had got a fine opportunity, which they readily laid hold on, to have counsel asked for them of God, about the success of the errand they were sent about; to this they were led at sight of the ephod, which was like that in the tabernacle, and of the teraphim, images which, according to a notion that prevailed, when consulted, foretold future things; whether by God they meant the true God, who they thought would give an answer by these, or Micah's

gods, is not certain; according to the Targum of Jonathan, they meant the true God, which paraphrases it,

“ask of the Word of the Lord:”

that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous or no; whether they should find out a proper place to dwell in, and be able to get possession of it.

Ver. 6. *And the priest said to them, go in peace*, etc.] After he had consulted the oracle, or had asked counsel by the ephod and teraphim; either of his own head, or by a voice he had heard, which Satan might be permitted of God to deliver, he very roundly told them that they might proceed on in their journey with their minds quite easy, and with full assurance of success:

before the Lord is your way wherein ye go; it is seen, observed, and taken notice of by him, and he approves of it; it is according to his will, and under his direction and protection, and success from him may be depended upon; though some observe that this answer is delivered in ambiguous terms, as generally the oracles of demons were, and might be taken in a good or bad sense, as the event should be; as that their way was before the Lord, and was seen by him either with pleasure or displeasure, with approbation or disapprobation, for their good, or for their harm: so that let it fall out as it might, the credit of the oracle was saved.

Ver. 7. *And the five men departed*, etc.] From Mount Ephraim, and Micah’s house there:

and came to Laish; which, according to Bunting^{f376}, was one hundred and four miles from Mount Ephraim, and so many he makes it to be from Jerusalem; it lay at the furthest northern border of the land of Canaan, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near the fountain of Jordan; it was four miles from Paneas, as Jerom says^{f377}, as you go to Tyre; it is the Caesarea Philippi of the New Testament, and the same that is called Leshem, (see Gill on “~~(1097)~~ Joshua 19:47”),

and saw the people that were therein; went into the city, and made their observations on the inhabitants of it, their number, strength, and manner of living:

how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; the inhabitants of Zidon, whose customs they might imitate, whose laws they might use, and might be under their government, since they are said to have no magistrate within themselves; and their carelessness and confidence might arise from their strong fortresses; or rather because they thought their city, and the land adjacent to it, did not belong to the land of Israel, and did not know that the Israelites made any pretensions to it, and therefore were quite easy, and in no fear of them; had no watchmen to guard their city, and did not take care to furnish themselves with weapons of war for their defence, even as the Zidonians; who, besides their city being a strong and fortified one, were in no fear of the Israelites, because their city was not in the land of Canaan, only the border of it reached to it:

and there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything; to restrain them from vice, and punish them for it, or even to reprove and correct them, and so put them to shame; or put any mark of infamy and disgrace upon them in a public manner, that might shame them; hence they lived in a disorderly and dissolute manner, whereby they became the more easy prey to others: or the sense is, there was no king, nor an heir of the kingdom, as Kimchi interprets it, so that there were none to contest his right to the government of the place, or to accuse another, and put him to shame for taking it away from him. Jarchi takes the sense to be, that none needed to turn back his neighbour empty, when he asked anything of him for his relief, since there was no want of anything in the land, as after observed; but the first sense seems best:

and they were far from the Zidonians; who were the only people that could help them, being in friendship with them; and it may be they were under their government, as before observed; they are said ^{f378} to be about eleven miles from them; Josephus ^{f379} says, a day's journey:

and had no business with any man; no trade or commerce, but lived independent of others, and within themselves, their land affording them everything sufficient for them. Some understand it of their not being in any league or alliance with any other people, and so had none to call in to their assistance in case of any attack upon them.

Ver. 8. *And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol, etc.]*

After they had well viewed the city, and made their remarks on the inhabitants of it, the condition and circumstances in which they were, and took notice of the goodness of the land about it, they returned to their

brethren that sent them, particularly those that dwelt at the two places mentioned:

and their brethren said unto them, what say ye? what tidings do you bring? what account of the place and country where you have been?

Ver. 9. *And they said, arise, that me may go up against them,* etc.] That is, prepare for war, and go up in an hostile manner against the present possessors of the land, not doubting of being masters of it easily:

for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good. Adrichomius ^{f380} says it was very good pasture land, and fertile, abounding with fruits of all kinds; and the same is attested by Josephus ^{f381}:

and are ye still? can ye sit still, and be easy, and not bestir yourselves to go up and possess so good a country, of which an easy conquest may be made? or, affirmatively, “ye are still or silent” ^{f382}; ye make no answer to what we say, and seem careless and indifferent about the matter; or by way of exhortation, “be silent”, either that the people may remain in their quiet, easy, careless state, and lest, on hearing designs against them, should prepare for their defence; or, as Abarbinel, lest any of the other tribes of Israel should hear of it, and go take it before them:

be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land; they suggest that there was scarce anything more to be done than to go and take possession, and that it would be altogether owing to their sloth and indolence if they did not.

Ver. 10. *When ye go, ye shall come to a people secure, and to a large land,* etc.] For though it was but one city, the territories of it were large, and the villages belonging to it might be many; which, with the security of the people, might easily be surprised and taken, not being upon their guard, are the arguments used by the spies to encourage their countrymen to go up and take it, to which they add others:

for God hath given it into your hands; which they concluded from the state and condition they found the people in, thoughtless and defenceless; or it may be on account of the oracle in Micah’s house they had consulted, and to which they gave credit; though some think their faith was grounded upon this place being given by lot to the tribe of Dan, but this does not appear:

a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth; in the land of Canaan; meaning, that there was nothing in the whole land but might be found there, as wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey, with all other necessaries and conveniences of life.

Ver. 11. *And there went from thence of the family of the Danites*, etc.] Or families, the singular being put for the plural; for it can hardly be thought that such a number of men, as after mentioned, went out of one family:

out of Zorah, and out of Eshtaol; the two places the spies were sent from, and now had returned unto: and upon their report, and at their instigation, and by the encouragement they gave, there were

six hundred men appointed with weapons of war; that set out armed from the above places, on the expedition to take Laish.

Ver. 12. *And they went up and pitched in Kirjathjearim in Judah*, etc.] Of which place (see ^{<0689>}Joshua 15:9,60). According to Bunting ^{f383} it was sixteen miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, and this was their first day's march:

wherefore they called the name of that place Mahanehdan unto this day; which signifies the camp of Dan, or of the Danites; so it was called in the times of Samson, (^{<0735>}Judges 13:25) and is a proof that this expedition was before his time; and it was so called, it seems, in the time of Samuel, the writer of this book:

behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim; to the west of it; for though they are said to pitch in that place, the meaning is, that they pitched near it, in the fields adjacent to it, which were the most proper and convenient for a camp.

Ver. 13. *And they passed thence unto Mount Ephraim*, etc.] Steering their coast still northward; this, according to Bunting ^{f384}, was eight miles from Kirjathjearim, or Mahanehdan, in which Micah's house was, for as yet they were not come to it, (see ^{<0785>}Judges 18:15).

Ver. 14. *Then they answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish*, etc.] That were sent by their brethren, (^{<0785>}Judges 18:5) and, as it seems from hence, were sent particularly to Laish; they had some notion of that place as proper for them, and therefore sent those men to reconnoitre it; and now as they had passed this way before, when they came within sight of Micah's house, it put them in mind of what they had seen there;

wherefore one in the name of the rest, and with their approbation, acquainted the company with it:

and said unto their brethren, do ye know that there is in those houses; in one of them, pointing to the houses of a village or town in sight:

an ephod and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? of which (see ⁴⁷⁷⁰⁶Judges 17:4,5) and no doubt but they acquainted them, only that they had seen them, and so were certain but had consulted them, and that with success:

now therefore consider, say they,

what ye have to do; whether it may not be proper to consult them again, or rather to take them with us, to consult as occasion may require, and as tokens and pledges of God being with us, and so may the rather hope that everything will succeed to our wishes.

Ver. 15. *And they turned thitherward,* etc.] It seems as if the house lay a little out of their way, and therefore they turned on one hand to go unto it:

and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah; for the young man's house was only an apartment of Micah's, and lay very probably next to that in which the images, and oracle were; and they made up to the young man's apartment, rather than to Micah's, because the above things were under his care:

and saluted him; asked him of his welfare in a kind and obliging manner, the rather to ingratiate themselves unto him.

Ver. 16. *And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war,* etc.] Who were armed men, and marched with their armour about them:

which were of the children of Dan; for no other were concerned in this expedition: stood by the entering of the gate; not of Micah's house, but of the city in which his house was; here they stood while the five men went up to the house.

Ver. 17. *And the five men that went out to spy the land went up and came thither,* etc.] They first came to Micah's house, and saluted the young man, and after that salutation told him there was such a number of their brethren at the gate of the city, very probably, who would be glad to see him; and the young man being desirous also of seeing them, and paying his respects

to them, went with them thither, and after they had introduced him, left him discoursing with them, and then returned to his apartment:

and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and brought them away with them; and from hence it appears plainly that there were two images, the one graven, and the other molten, since they are so manifestly distinguished, and the ephod and teraphim are spoken of between them:

and the priest stood in the entering of the gate, with the six hundred men that were appointed with the weapons of war; who kept him in talk, while the five men went and stole the above things.

Ver. 18. *And these went into Micah's house,* etc.] Into that part of it where his gods were; not the six hundred men last mentioned, but the five men who knew the house, and the chapel where the things were:

and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and brought them away in their hands to their brethren at the gate, where the priest also was: and when he saw them,

then said the priest to them, what do ye? what do you mean by this? is this your kindness to me, to take away what are my care and charge, and on which my livelihood depends? and do you consider the wickedness, the sin of sacrilege you are guilty of, to take away these sacred things, these objects of religious devotion?

Ver. 19. *And they said unto him, hold thy peace,* etc.] Be silent, make no disturbance, be quiet and easy:

lay thy hand upon thy mouth; as a token of silence; so the Egyptians used to paint Harpocrates, the god of silence, with his fingers pressing his lips:

and go with us; for they wanted him as well as his gods, not knowing well how to make use of them without him:

and be to us a father and a priest; to direct them, instruct them, perform acts of devotion for them, and ask counsel on their account; it seems as if it was common in those days to call a priest a father, (see ^{<0710>}Judges 17:10)

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? suggesting, that it must be much more honourable for him, and more to his advantage, to officiate as a

priest to a body of people, that might be called a tribe, or to a family consisting of various houses, than in the house of a private person; this they left him to consider and judge of.

Ver. 20. *And the priest's heart was glad*, etc.] He rejoiced that such an opportunity offered; it suited well with his covetous, ambitious, rambling, and unsettled disposition of mind:

and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image; and no doubt the molten image also, out of the hands of the five men into his own, agreeing to go with them, and officiate for them:

and went in the midst of the people; the six hundred armed men, either for the security of himself, if Micah should raise his servants, and his neighbours, to pursue after him, and fetch him back, with his images; or, as others think, in imitation of the priests bearing the ark, who in journeying marched in the middle of the camp.

Ver. 21. *So they turned and departed*, etc.] Turned from the gate of the city where Micah dwelt, and marched forward to Laish:

and put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage, before them; partly for safety from Micah, and his friends and neighbours, and partly that they might not be overdriven: their wives, who doubtless were with them, though not mentioned, and their children, and also their flocks and herds, they brought with them from Zorah and Eshtaol, as never intending to return again thither, and being fully assured they should take Laish, and the country about, and settle there; and also all their wealth and substance, as the Targum renders the word for "carriage", whatever they were possessed of that was movable; their vessels, silver and gold, and other movables, as Kimchi interprets it, whatever was weighty, valuable and glorious, as the word signifies, or that was of any importance and worth.

Ver. 22. *And when they were a good way from the house of Micah*, etc.] For it might be some time before Micah knew that his gods were stolen, and his priest was decoyed from him; and it must take up more time still to get his servants and neighbours together to pursue after those that injured him:

the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together; no doubt at the request of Micah, who informed them of what had happened to him: and they being not only his neighbours, but deeply

involved in the same superstition and idolatry, and closely addicted to it, and to whom it might in some respects be advantageous as it brought people from various parts to worship, or to consult the oracle: these being got together in a body, pursued

and overtook the children of Dan; who were obliged to move but slowly, because of their wives, little ones, and heavy substance they carried with them.

Ver. 23. *And they cried unto the children of Dan*, etc.] When they had got pretty near them, and in their hearing, they called to them aloud, and desired they would stop, having something to say to them:

and they turned their faces; that is, the Danites turned and looked at them, and stopped to hear what they had to say to them; these were they who were in the rear in marching:

and said unto Micah; who was at the head of them:

what aileth thee that thou comest with such a company? as if he intended to attack them in an hostile way, and therefore asks what should be the occasion of it? what affront had been given him, what injury had been done him, that had provoked him to come out and follow them in such a manner?

Ver. 24. *And he said, ye have taken away my gods that I made*, etc.] Meaning his graven and molten images, which he had made, or caused to be made, out of the silver his mother gave him, or however had paid for the making of; and though this might be an argument proving his right unto them, it was a very poor one in favour of their deity; and it is astonishing he should call them gods he knew the making of, and who could not save themselves from being stolen and carried off:

and the priest and ye are gone away; they had not only took away his gods, but the priest that sacrificed for him unto them, and assisted him in acts of devotion to them, or to God by them, and were gone off with both:

and what have I more? signifying, that all he had in the world, wife, children, and substance, were all nothing in comparison of these; there was nothing he so much valued as he did these, nor could he take any pleasure or comfort in anything, being deprived of them, so much was his heart set on them:

and what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee? what a question is this you ask, as if the injury done me was none at all, and that I had no reason to complain; that it was a trifling insignificant thing, worthy of no regard, when it was a matter of the greater moment and importance to him in life.

Ver. 25. *And the children of Dan said unto him, let not thy voice be heard among us,* etc.] Complaining of us as having done an unjust thing, charging and reproaching us with theft and sacrilege, insisting upon a restoration of the things taken, and abusing with odious names and characters:

lest angry fellows run upon thee: lest men of bitter and passionate spirits, provoked by ill language given them, should draw their swords and fall upon thee:

and thou lose thy life, and the life of thy household; the life of himself, his family, servants, tenants, and neighbours with him, which ought to have been more precious and valuable than his gods; of which there was great danger in demanding his gods, which by this they let him know they would not part with.

Ver. 26. *And the children of Dan went their way,* etc.] Went on their way, would not stay to have any further talk with him, as being an impertinent man, and unworthy of their regard, bidding him defiance, and do his worst, having nothing to fear from him:

and when Micah saw they were too strong for him; that he could not prevail upon them by words and arguments; to take up arms, and use them, he perceived it was to no purpose, since they were more numerous and more mighty than he and his neighbours:

he turned and went unto his own house; and if he returned from his idolatry to the true God, and the right worship of him, having lost his gods, it was well for him they were taken away.

Ver. 27. *And they took the things which Micah had made,* etc.] The ephod, teraphim, and the two images, the Danites took them, or having taken them kept them, and went on with them:

and the priest which he had; him also they took, and who was willing enough to go with them:

and came unto Laish, unto a people that were quiet and secure; having no sentinels placed at any distance to give them warning of an enemy, nor any watchmen on their walls to discover one; and perhaps their gates not shut, nor any guard at any of their passes and avenues, having no apprehension at all of being visited by an enemy, especially from Israel, not being apprized that they had any pretensions to their city, and the land about it:

and they smote them with the edge of the sword; entered their city, and fell on them suddenly, and cut them to pieces:

and burnt the city with fire; to strike terror to all about; or it may be only they set fire to some part of it, as they entered, only to frighten the inhabitants, and throw them into the greater confusion, that they might become a more easy prey to them; for their intention was to inhabit it, and it seems to be the same city still, though they rebuilt it, and called it by another name.

Ver. 28. *And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon*, etc.] Under whose government and protection they seem to have been; and that city being at a distance from them, and the Danites coming upon them suddenly, there was no time to send to them for help, or any to come in to their assistance, and save them from their enemies, (see ^{<07187>}Judges 18:7)

and they had no business with any man; that could have given them notice of the design of the children of Dan against them, nor to the Zidonians to come soon enough for their protection and defence; none there were in alliance with them except them:

and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob; which lay in the northern border of the land of Canaan, as you go to Hamath of Syria, (see Gill on ^{<04132>}Numbers 13:21”).

and they built a city to dwell there; not a new one altogether, but they rebuilt and enlarged Laish, and made it convenient for them to dwell in.

Ver. 29. *And they called the name of the city Dan*, etc.] The name of their tribe, and to show that though they were at the furthest part of the land northward, and at such a distance from their tribe, which lay to the southwest, yet they belonged to it:

after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel; one of the twelve sons of Jacob or Israel:

however, the name of the city was Laish at first; which signifies a “lion”, and might be so called from its being infested with lions, which might come from the mountain of Lebanon, near to which it was, and whither Dan, as a lion’s whelp, leaped, (^{f332}Deuteronomy 33:22) and now the prophecy had its accomplishment. This place was also called Leshem, (^{f397}Joshua 19:47) and it is remarkable that Leshem is the name of the precious stone in the high priest’s breastplate, on which the name of Dan was engraved, which was done many years before this city fell into the hands of the Danites, though that might portend it.

Ver. 30. *And the children of Dan set up the graven image*, etc.] In their new city Dan, and very probably had a house built for it, peculiar to it, in the same place where Jeroboam, in later times, set up one of his golden calves. The Danites having succeeded, according to the oracle in Micah’s house, they had a very great veneration for the images they brought away with them from thence, and set them up for religious worship in a proper place; for though only mention is made of the graven image, yet no doubt the molten image, and the teraphim, with the ephod, were all placed together for devotion and consultation:

and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan: not to the whole tribe, but to that part of it which resided in this city, called Dan; and this Jonathan seems to be no other than the Levite Micah took into his house, and made a priest of; and whom the Danites took with them to Laish, to be their priest, who is said to be the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh: now Gershom was the son of Moses, and this man is thought by some to be a grandson of his; and with this agrees the time in which he lived, for as Phinehas the grandson of Aaron was now living, (^{f718}Judges 20:28) so might a grandson of Moses; and though he is called a young man, he might be a younger son of Gershom’s; nor is his being a Levite any objection, since it is a clear case that Moses made no provision for his family, so disinterested was he, which may be observed against the deists: and it is remarkable that the “nun”, or “N” in Manasseh, is suspended over the other letters in our printed copies of the Hebrew Bible, and so without it may be read, Moses; and the Jews ^{f385} have a notion, that this was done for the honour of Moses, and to observe that he was more like a son of Manasseh than of Moses; though rather this being the first letter of חָצַן, “to forget”, may suggest, as Altung ^{f386} observes, that he had forgot the virtues of his grandfather; and the Vulgate Latin version reads, the son of Moses; and some ^{f387} are of

opinion that this is the true reading of the text; though it may be that another Gershom than the son of Moses, and another Manasseh we know nothing of, are here intended, so Marcus Marinus^{f388}: however, this man, and his sons in succession after him, were priests in Dan,

until the day of the captivity of the land; not till the captivity of Sennacherib or Salmaneser, when Dan, with the rest of the ten tribes, were carried captives, as Jarchi; for this idolatry, and these idolatrous priests, can hardly be thought to be continued here through the times of Samuel, David, and Solomon: nor is it to be understood of the captivity of Israel by Jabin king of Canaan, as Ben Gersom; for as the other is too long a time, this is too short, since it is clear, by the next verse, that this idolatry continued all the time the house of God was at Shiloh; and which directs us to the captivity here spoken of, when the ark was carried captive by the Philistines, and the house of Shiloh was forsaken; which is the sense of Kimchi, R. Isaiah, and Abarbinel; and may be illustrated and confirmed by some passages in (^{<19788>}Psalm 78:58-61).

Ver. 31. *And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made,* etc.] Which is repeated for the sake of the time of its continuance next expressed:

all the time the house of God was in Shiloh; which, according to some Jewish writers^{f389}, was three hundred and sixty years; that is, so long as the tabernacle was there, which was afterwards removed to Nob.