

The Danites Look for a Place to Settle

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the Danites' conquest of Laish and the establishment of the city of Dan, highlighting the themes of idolatry, confusion, and the need for a guide and authority in times of crisis.

Duration: 25:03

Scripture: Judges 17:6, Judges 18:6, Judges 18:30, Matthew 6:33, John 1:14, John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Topics: "Danites"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the story of the Danites in Judges chapter 18. He highlights the importance of having a guide and authority in our lives, emphasizing that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Pastor Chuck also mentions existentialism and how it can lead to confusion and isolation. He concludes the sermon by encouraging listeners to draw closer to God and experience His peace and love.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole
Welcome to The Word for Today Featuring the Bible teaching of Pastor Chuck Smith Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California
Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse study through the entire Bible
And on today's edition of The Word for Today we'll be following the Danites as they look for a place to settle
So, let's follow along in Judges chapter 18, verse 6 as Pastor Chuck Smith begins today's lesson
And the priest said unto them, Go in peace before the Lord your way wherein you go That is, the Lord is with you, actually, in the way that you're going Go in peace
So the five men departed and they came to Laish
And they saw the people that were there how they dwelt carelessly after the manner of the Sidonians, or those from Sidon
They were secure, they were quiet They didn't have any judges in the land that might put them to shame for anything
They were just people living carelessly No law, no order
And they were far from the Sidonians Actually, several miles from Dan to Sidon However, Sidon is directly west from there
Sidon is over on the coast of the Mediterranean And Dan is probably 35-40 miles inland
And they had no commerce with any men They were just an isolated group up in this beautiful city Laish, the site of Laish is to me one of the most beautiful places that I've seen I mean, that takes Hawaii and New Zealand and a lot of places
One of the largest springs in the world is right there The water just comes gushing out of the ground It's one of the headwaters of the Jordan River The other one being over at Baniyas
And Dan is probably seven miles from Baniyas Baniyas is right at the base of Mount Hermon And the water just comes gushing out from the base of the mountain
One of the main headwaters of the Jordan

River The other one is over here at Dan And of course that's where you get Jordan which is down from Dan is the name, the literal name So the city of Laish, which later became known as Dan Because of this tremendous volume of water that just comes gushing right out of the ground It's just a beautiful place You hike up through the nature preserve there And there are all these little springs All of these little waterfalls and rivulets Just gloriously beautiful Just beautiful And these fellas came across this place Absolutely gorgeous With all this water and this good weather up there You're just in a beautiful valley And it's just one beautiful place So they came up there and they saw Hey, these people don't have commerce with anybody else They're living very isolated They're living very carefree lives And really what they thought is These guys are a pushover And so they came back to their brothers To Zorah and Eshtal And their brothers said to them Well, what did you find?

And they said, Arise! That we may go up against them For we have seen the land And behold, it's very good Why are you waiting? Don't be slothful to go And to enter in and possess the land Let's go, man, it's ready It's ripe for picking And when you go You're going to come unto a people Who are dwelling securely A lot of territory For God has given it into your hands A place where there is no want of anything That is in the earth I mean, it is just a very Fertile, fruitful, beautiful place And so there went up from there Of the family of the Danites Out of Zorah and from Eshtal Six hundred men appointed with weapons of war And they went up and pitched in Kirgath-Jerim in Judah And they called the name of the place Mahan-ed-Dan, which is the camp of Dan And unto this day Behold, it is behind Kirgath-Jerim So these families, six hundred men So you probably figure there's Two thousand, twenty-four hundred people or so That are in this movement Going up to take the land Moving slowly because of the Wives and children and all And they passed from there unto Mount Ephraim And they came to the house of Micah Then the five men That went to spy out the country of Laish They said to their brothers Did you know that In this house there's an ephod and a teraphim And a graven image and a molten image Now consider what we have to do And so they turned into the house and They came to the young man, the Levite Even to the house of Micah And they greeted him And the six hundred men Appointed with their weapons of war Which were of the children of Dan And they stood by the entering of the gate And the five men that went out to Spy out the land went up and they came in And they took the graven image and the ephod They ripped them off, the teraphim The molten image And the priest stood at the entering of the gate Where the six hundred men were waiting Who were all, you know, armed for war And these went into Micah's house And they fetched the carved image The ephod, the teraphim, the molten image Fetched is another word for ripped off And then the priest said to them Hey, what are you doing?

And they said to him, hold your peace Put your hand on your mouth And go with us And be to us a father and a priest Isn't it better to be a priest To a whole family in Israel A whole tribe of Dan Rather than to just one man So they're hiring him away And the priest's heart was glad Hey, he liked this, a good opportunity, you know, advancement He took the ephod and the teraphim, the graven image And he went in the midst of the people They joined with him So they turned and departed And they put their little ones in the cattle And their luggage in front of them Because they were expecting You know, this guy's not going to sit still for this He's going to attack us And he'll attack from the rear So the men stayed back and put the women And all of the luggage and everything You know, up in front of them And when they were a good way On their road from the house of Micah The men that were his neighbors Lived in the houses near to him They gathered together And they overtook the children of Dan And they cried unto the children of Dan And they turned their faces and said to Micah The men of Dan turned and said Hey, what's your problem, man?

What ails you? That you come after us with these men with you And he said, you have taken away my gods Which I made And the priest And you are gone away And what have I more? What is this that you're saying to me? And you, you know, you ripped off my gods And then you say, what's wrong with you, man? I always think that it's a rather tragic And pathetic thing when a man has a god That can be ripped off I have a man that lives near me In the neighborhood That has a little god In his garage I see him polishing that little god of his I mean, it is, it's sharp looking It's a classic But the problem is His god Can get smashed pretty easily Or his god can get ripped off I mean, he devotes himself to that god He spends hours in worship Extremely devoted I see him just walking around Adoring his god Just stand there In rapt admiration But he's got a god that can get ripped off That's sad I think it's always a tragedy when a man says Hey, you ripped off my gods The men of Dan Said to him Don't let your voice be heard among us You better shut up, man Lest angry fellows run upon you And you lose your life And the lives of your household Hey, cool it Or, you know, we'll wipe you out Why should you lose your own life?

Just go home and forget it Honest? No Not at all Confused?

Yes, totally This was the condition of the people in those days And it's important to understand What was going on during this period of history So the children of Dan went their way And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him He turned and went back to his own house This is just sort of, you know, rule by force It's the stronger man is right Might is right And they took the things which Micah had made And the priest Which he had And they came to Laish Unto these people who were quiet and secure They smote them with the edge of the sword They burnt the city with fire And there was no deliverer Because it was far from Sidon And they didn't have any commerce with any other people And it was in a valley that lies by Beth Rehob And they built a city and dwelt therein And they called

the name of the city Dan After the name of Dan their father Who was born unto Israel Albeit the name of the city was Laish At the first There is today what is called Tel Dan That is the Tel That was created by the many civilizations That existed and were wiped out And building the new city on top They have done quite a few extensive excavations at Tel Dan It is one of the oldest cities in the world They have excavated a gate to the ancient city of Laish Which actually went back as far as the time of Abraham And as you stand there looking at that gate There is a scripture that refers to Abraham being there And he probably walked through that very gate That you can see that's been excavated at the present time It is interesting that When the tribe of Dan settled there They had settled in an

idolrous state That is they had ripped off Micah's idols And they took them with them And so idolatry was sort of woven into the very nature Of the area of Dan The tribe of Dan moving to the city they called Dan And they move in with these idols These images that had been created When Jeroboam split from the southern kingdom And the nation of Israel was divided into the northern and the southern kingdoms When Jeroboam established the northern kingdom The ten tribes of the northern kingdom He was fearful that the people Might be drawn back to Jerusalem When they would go back to worship God at the temple Three times a year they would come to the temple At the feast and worship God He figured if they go back to Jerusalem They see the temple, they see the king, they see the glory And all

their hearts will be drawn back So he made a golden calf And he set it up in Dan And he said these are the gods that delivered you out of Egypt And they began the worship of the calf In the northern kingdom under Jeroboam And this was a problem to the northern kingdom Until the day that they were conquered by the Assyrians It was a constant problem And when we get into Samuel and Kings and Chronicles You'll realize what a problem this was There in the northern kingdom, a center of idolatry The city of Dan It's

interesting that today When you go to the city of Dan There's a fishery there now But then this beautiful nature preserve that you walk through But they have also uncovered the altar That is in the city of Dan The very altars that are referred to in the Bible Have been uncovered and

you can go and stand on them Where they used to offer to the pagan deities Where the golden calf was placed And it's just quite a vivid Confirmation of what the scripture tells us And also you see the reason why Israel was destroyed Turning away from God So the children of Dan set up the graven image Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh He and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan Until the day of the captivity of the land And they set them up, Micah's graven image Which he had made all of the time That the house of God was in Shiloh At that time the tabernacle was in Shiloh Which was in Ephraim And during this period of time They were worshipping up there in Dan This confused religious state Now it is interesting as we read of this confusion The horrible things that were

happening Among the children of Israel In that same setting when we finish the book of Judges We'll come to the book of Ruth And we'll see that in the midst of all of this confusion God was still working among a selected few And that seems to be the case God always has his remnant As Elijah said, Lord I, only I am left And God says, come on now I've got 7,000 men in Israel Who have not bowed their knee to Baal I reserve for myself God always has those he's reserved for himself Today of course the religious scene is confused As is the world Existential philosophy has really pervaded our entire society It's affected every area of our society The arts are affected by existentialism You look at a picture and you wonder, what is that?

Now if you have a picture of a barn and a cow And all I can say, hey that's a barn and there's a cow and there's a tree But the impressionistic art Which is a reflection of existentialism Where it looks like a person just stood back And took the paint and threw it at the wall And then puts a title to the painting It's a good illustration of existential philosophy Because you look at that And you may see something in that That I don't see Oh look at that, you know, there's a cow over there You know when we were kids they used to have textured plaster on the walls And you lie there at bed and look up at the ceiling at night And you could see in the textured plaster all kinds of things But it's sort of like modern art You had to use your imagination a lot And you're not always sure that the next fellow can see the same thing you see You try and point it out and show them what you're seeing But you see what it does is it isolates us I have to experience it for myself And that's what existentialism is Truth is what you experience it to be But because there isn't a distinction of form As I look at it I see really nothing But I can let my mind play And I can see well yeah that could be a cloud over there And you know that could be a hand It looks like a finger you know But the finger isn't attached to anything And then there's a nose over here And I'm confused And I'm alienated from you Because I'm not sure that we're together in this I'm not sure that you're seeing what I see And I feel all alone And that's what existential philosophy does It alienates you and makes you feel isolated Whereas when there is a picture that has distinct form and all You and I can stand there and we can admire and say Oh look at that beautiful horse And look at that meadow Look at those beautiful flowers there you know And we're unified because we know we're seeing the same thing Now in the theater There are a lot of movies that are also expressions of existentialism As the movie comes to an end The guy is walking down the road And you don't know where he's going You have to finish the story yourself What's the guy doing?

Is he going to go back home to his wife? Or is he going to end it all? And you've got to put the end on And they don't put the ends on the stories They leave you hanging And that again is just the expression of existential philosophy Whereas you've got to experience it yourself How do you relate to it? How do you

experience it you see? And because I'm sort of an idealist I always put a happy ending on it Well he's going to repent and he's going to get right But it isolates us again Because I don't know that you've put the same end to the story that I have Everybody doing that which is right in his own eyes Is always a state of confusion We need a guide We need an authority We need a king Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life We need him We need his authority over our lives Lest we be confused And caught up in the confusion of our age We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study Through the book of Judges in our next lesson As we follow the story of the Levite and his concubine And we do hope you'll make plans to join us But right now, I'd like to remind you That if you missed any part of today's message Or perhaps you'd like to order a copy For that special friend or loved one You can do so by simply contacting One of our customer service representatives And they'd be more than happy to assist you With the ordering details Simply call 1-800-272-WORD And phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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