

14.05a Micah and His Priest (Judges 17:1–13)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures. Since very few pictures are available of this story, I suggest using 3-dimensional figures and silver coins or stick figures drawn on a white board.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials. Also, see a separate document, “12.05a Micah and His Priest 1100 pieces of silver” for a visual of 1100 compared to 200 shekels and the priest’s ten shekels.
- Sixteen and one-half penny rolls (825 pennies) to show the weight of the idol in the story

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Mount Ephraim* (KJV): [locate] the mountain where Ehud had called Israel’s soldiers to fight against Eglon, king of Moab; the setting of today’s story
- *shrine*: a place to worship or honor a god or a person
- *Levite*: a man from the tribe of Levi whose job was to help priests or work at the tabernacle
- *ephod*: a sleeveless garment worn by priests

Scripture (ESV)

Judges 17:1 There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. 2 And he said to his mother, “The 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “Blessed be my son by the Lord.” 3 And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, “I dedicate the silver to the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a metal image. Now therefore I will restore it to you.” 4 So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took 200 pieces of silver and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into a carved image and a metal image. And it was in the house of Micah. 5 And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods, and ordained one of his sons, who became his priest. 6 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

7 Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. 8 And the man departed from the town of Bethlehem in Judah to sojourn where he could find a place. And as he journeyed, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. 9 And Micah said to him, “Where do you come from?” And he said to him, “I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find a place.” 10 And Micah said to him, “Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and a suit of clothes and your living.” And the Levite went in. 11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man, and the young man became to him like one of his sons. 12 And Micah ordained the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. 13 Then Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest.”

Introduction/Review:

Although this story is found near the end of the book of Judges, ✓it probably takes place close to the time of the second judge, Ehud. Who was Ehud? [The left-handed judge who slew the king of Moab.]

Story:

Our story today shows how low the nation of Israel had fallen in its idolatry and disobedience to God.

Mother's curse

Micah (not the same man who wrote the book of Micah), from Mount Ephraim, had stolen 1100 silver shekels from his mother. Can you imagine stealing from one's *mother*!? This 1100 shekels of silver would have weighed 28 pounds, ✓about four times as much as 1100 pennies. Today this amount of silver would be equal to about \$12,544 [in 2020].¹ When Micah had stolen the money, his mother had pronounced a curse on the money and the one who stole it. ✓Maybe she said, "May the money be lost by the one who stole it," or "May the person who stole it die soon."

✓Perhaps this curse scared Micah, for he confessed to his mother that he had taken the money. Now she changed her attitude towards her "beloved thief," saying, "May you be blessed of the Lord, my son!"

Micah's idol

Mother then said something else that doesn't make sense" "I dedicate the silver to the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a metal image." What?! She talked about giving the silver to the *Lord*, but how? By making an image—an *idol*! Would an idol please God? Would He be glad for such a "dedication"? No! Which commandment does an idol violate? [Second: do not make an idol.]. So would Micah's mother actually be giving the silver to the Lord? Absolutely not!

Some people today talk about the Lord as if they love Him, but then they live totally against His principles. For example, "I love the Lord, but—I like to watch wicked TV shows or movies; I disobey my parents all the time; I have been married to unsaved people three different times; I wear immodest clothing." God is not pleased with that "dedication" either.

Mother said she had dedicated the entire 1100 shekels to the Lord to make an idol; yet when she actually had the idol made, she took only 200 silver shekels, less than one fifth of the total, which amounts to ✓about five pounds or the same weight as 825 pennies.²

Micah made a special house or room for this idol and other idols he already possessed. He made a special robe for a priest and made his own son the priest. Micah was from the tribe of Ephraim. What tribe had God said was to be the priestly tribe? [Levi.] What family in Levi was the only family to have priests? [Aaron's descendants.] Was Micah doing God's will? Absolutely not! In fact, he was inventing a new religion, imitating some aspects of God's true worship, but turning away his own heart from the Lord.

Micah's priest

One day a young man, whose mother was from Bethlehem-Judah [locate] and whose father was a Levite, was passing through Ephraim, looking for a place to stay. The Israelites were supposed to take care of the Levites, but this Levite was needy. He stopped at Micah's house, ✓perhaps just asking to stay all night. When Micah learned he was a Levite, he thought, "Aha! Maybe the Levite—not from the family of Aaron but at least from the tribe of Levi—maybe he can be my priest."

So Micah asked, "Why don't you live here with us and be our priest? See, I have images and priest's clothes and even a house for the gods. I'll give you ten shekels of silver every year, a change of clothes, and all your food."³

This Levite should have known better than to disobey God's law, but he must have thought that being provided money, clothes, and food was a good enough excuse to do his own thing, not God's. Instead of being a *helper* to a priest, he could *be* a priest. Instead of wandering around, looking for a place to stay, he could stay here and get paid something. He answered, "Yes, I'll be your priest."

Then Micah said something strange, something totally out of character for God and His commandments. He said, "Now I know the Lord will bless me because I have a Levite for a priest." What an idiotic statement. It's like saying, "I know God will bless me because I have disobeyed Him."

Will God bless disobedience? No. Sometimes He might bless in spite of disobedience, but that is not what

we are to expect.

Oh, what a terrible thing happened in this story—a man setting up a religion contrary to God’s. We will continue this story in our next lesson.

¹“According to Judges 17:10, ten shekels was a decent day’s wage. So 1100 shekels would have been 110 days’ worth of pay. It was about 28 pounds of silver, which today would only bring about \$12,544” (https://www.answers.com/Q/How_much_is_1100_shekels_of_silver_in_the_old_testament).

²About 165 pennies equal one pound (<https://coincollectingenterprises.com/how-much-does-penny-weigh/>). Five pounds, then, would be 825 pennies, the weight of the mother’s idol.

³Paris Reidhead preached a sermon on this chapter entitled, “Ten Shekels and a Shirt,” that some say is the most influential of all sermons. It may be heard at <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=%22ten+shekels+and+a+shirt%22&docid=608026975106368200&mid=4CD21B6B5C31DFC42D4D4CD21B6B5C31DFC42D4D&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>.

Lessons from this lesson:

We see Jesus:

Jesus is the “way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through” Him (John 14:6). Only Jesus, not any religion, will bring you to the Father.

Activities:

- Play dough: coins; robe; food (do not ever have students make idols)
- Snack: Gold-colored chocolate coins if available. If not, bake sugar cookies with dollar-sign frosting.
- Count money. Show 16½ rolls of pennies. Count the rolls by 50s, the number of pennies per roll. The total number of pennies in the full rolls is 800. Add ½ roll (25). The final total is 825 pennies, the weight of Micah’s idol.
- Sing “Let’s Be True to Jesus” found in Lesson 14.02.
- For further study and thought-provoking questions for older students, see pages 1–3 at the following site: http://www.walkwiththeword.org/Studies/01_OT/07_Judges/07_Judges_17-18.html.
- Review questions: (Game: Give a penny or a dime to the student who answers a question correctly.)
 1. Who stole his mother’s money? [Micah.]
 2. Who much money did he steal? [1100 silver shekels.]
 3. Why do you suppose he told his mother he had stolen the shekels? [Because she had cursed the thief and the money.]
 4. How did the mother [speak sarcastically] “dedicate the silver to the Lord”? [By making an idol.]
 5. What items did Micah add to his idol in order to set up his new religion? [A shrine, an ephod, a priest (his son).]
 6. Who came through Ephraim and met Micah? [A Levite from Bethlehem.]
 7. What offer did Micah make to the Levite? [He asked him to become his priest.]
 8. What was the Levite’s answer? [He agreed to become Micah’s priest.]
 9. Why did Micah think God would bless him? [Because he had gotten a Levite to be his priest.]
 10. What kind of religion did Micah start, true or false? [False.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- John 14:6: Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- Or 1 Chronicles 16:29: “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”

Handwork:

- Make a purse to carry 10 pennies, or tape ten pennies to cardstock. The following site has a craft for making a paper-plate purse. Stapling the purse together might be easier than stringing it as per the instructions. <https://lifestyle.howstuffworks.com/crafts/paper-crafts/paper-purses4.htm>.

Here is a video to show how to make a purse out of a 1-ounce potato chip bag:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=make+a+purse+craft&docid=608039559450594243&mid=F9091A4FF651A9F883EFF9091A4FF651A9F883EF&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>.

Attach a statement found below to the back of the purse about the priest’s wages.

Mount Ephraim

shrine

ephod



(<https://www.gci.org/articles/judges-the-danites-and-civil-war/>)



The salary for Micah's Levite was 10 silver shekels per year, plus food and clothing (Judges 17). The salary for Micah's Levite was 10 silver shekels per year, plus food and clothing (Judges 17).

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