

# Judges 17:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

## Analysis

**And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.** This verse describes complete worship corruption. The "ephod" (efod, אֵפֹד) was the ornate garment worn by Israel's high priest containing the Urim and Thummim for divine guidance (Exodus 28:6-30). For Micah to manufacture his own ephod represents presumptuous appropriation of priestly prerogatives. The "teraphim" (terafim, תְּרָפִים) were household idols used for divination, explicitly condemned throughout Scripture (1 Samuel 15:23; Zechariah 10:2).

Most egregious is Micah "consecrating" (vayemalle et-yad, וַיִּמְלֹא אֶת-יָד, literally "filled the hand of") one of his sons as priest. This technical phrase for priestly ordination (Exodus 28:41) is misappropriated for unauthorized priesthood. God had designated Aaron's family exclusively for priesthood (Exodus 28:1). For a non-Levite to appoint his son violated the entire levitical order. From a Reformed perspective, this teaches the critical importance of divine call and proper ordination—no one takes the honor of ministry to himself but must be called by God (Hebrews 5:4).

## Historical Context

The proliferation of household shrines during Judges reflects Israel's progressive accommodation to Canaanite religious culture. The tabernacle at Shiloh continued

to function (Judges 18:31), yet many Israelites created parallel worship systems more convenient than traveling to Shiloh. Archaeological evidence confirms widespread domestic cult activity during Iron Age I. Excavations have uncovered "cult corners" in Israelite homes containing offering stands, incense burners, figurines, and cultic paraphernalia.

Micah's ordination of his son illustrates the breakdown of Israel's covenant structure. The Levitical system embodied theological truths about holiness, mediation, and consecration. By replacing God's ordained priesthood with family appointments, Israel reduced sacred office to hereditary privilege devoid of divine calling. This foreshadows northern kingdom problems where Jeroboam "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kings 12:31).

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How do contemporary churches sometimes prioritize convenience over biblical patterns for worship and church government?
2. What does unauthorized priesthood teach about the importance of God's call and proper ordination to ministry?
3. In what ways do we create syncretistic religious practices blending Christianity with worldly wisdom?

## Interlinear Text

## Additional Cross-References

**Genesis 31:19** (Parallel theme): And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.

**Judges 8:27** (Creation): And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

**Judges 18:14** (Parallel theme): Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.

**Genesis 31:30** (References God): And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?

**Judges 18:24** (Creation): And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me. What aileth thee?

**Exodus 29:9** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be their's for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

**Exodus 28:15** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.

**Hosea 3:4** (Parallel theme): For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:

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