

# Judges 18:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

## Analysis

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**And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.** This verse highlights the tragic irony and inexcusable nature of Dan's idolatry. While they worshiped Micah's stolen graven image at their northern shrine, "the house of God was in Shiloh"—the legitimate tabernacle with God's authorized priesthood was available and accessible. The phrase "all the time" emphasizes the duration and deliberateness of their apostasy. They didn't worship idols because they lacked access to true worship; they chose idolatry despite having the true worship center available.

From a Reformed perspective, this demonstrates the human heart's idolatrous tendency and preference for self-constructed religion over God's prescribed worship. The Danites had the tabernacle at Shiloh with the ark of the covenant, the Aaronic priesthood, and the prescribed sacrificial system—everything God ordained for worship—yet they preferred Micah's unauthorized shrine because it was more convenient and under their control. This illustrates the regulative principle of worship: we must worship God only in ways He has prescribed, not according to human innovation. It also warns that proximity to true worship doesn't prevent apostasy; the heart must be regenerate and submitted to God's Word.

## Historical Context

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Shiloh served as Israel's religious center from Joshua's time (Joshua 18:1) through the early monarchy (1 Samuel 1-4). The tabernacle and ark resided there, and annual festivals drew Israelites from throughout the land (Judges 21:19; 1 Samuel 1:3). Dan's tribal territory in the far north (after relocating from their original southern allotment) was distant from Shiloh, but not impossibly so—faithful Israelites regularly made pilgrimages. The Danites' choice to establish and maintain their own worship center "all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh" represents deliberate rejection of authorized worship for convenient alternatives.

Archaeological excavations at Tel Dan have uncovered a large cultic platform and temple complex from the Israelite period, confirming the biblical narrative of an established worship site. Shiloh was eventually destroyed, possibly by the Philistines after capturing the ark (1 Samuel 4), an event alluded to in Psalm 78:60 and Jeremiah 7:12-14. However, Dan's idolatrous shrine outlasted Shiloh, persisting through the divided monarchy until the Assyrian conquest. This demonstrates how false worship, once established, can outlast even legitimate worship centers when God's people persistently reject Him.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How do we sometimes choose convenient, self-directed spiritual practices over God's prescribed patterns, despite having access to biblical truth?
2. What does the coexistence of Dan's false shrine and Shiloh's true tabernacle teach about religious pluralism and the danger of "alternative spirituality"?
3. How does this passage underscore the necessity of not just external religious access but internal heart transformation and submission to God's authority?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיִּשְׂאוּ יָמֹוֹ	אֶת לֶהֱמֹ	פָּסֶל	מִיֶּכָה	אֲשֶׁר	
And they set them up	H0	H853	graven image	Micah's	
H7760			H6459	H4318	
עָשָׂה	כָּל	יְמֵי	הָיוֹת	בֵּית	הָאֱלֹהִים
which he made	H3605	all the time	H1961	that the house	of God
H6213		H3117		H1004	H430
בְּשִׁלֹּה:					
was in Shiloh					
H7887					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 18:1** (Parallel theme): And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

**1 Samuel 1:3** (Parallel theme): And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

**Judges 19:18** (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house.