

# Judges 18:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

## Analysis

**Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure.** Laish's vulnerability made it attractive target for conquest. The phrase "dwelt careless" (yoshevet labetach, יָשְׁבֶת לְבֶטַח) indicates they lived "securely" or "confidently," without fear of attack. "After the manner of the Zidonians" (kemishpat Tsidonim, כְּמִשְׁפַּט צִדְוֹנִים) suggests Phoenician customs, including prosperity, complacency, and possibly Baal worship. The terms "quiet and secure" (shoket u-voteiach, שָׁקֵט וּבֵטָח) emphasize peaceful, prosperous life without military preparedness.

The statement "there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing" is difficult Hebrew, possibly indicating no strong ruler to organize defense or administer justice. "They were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man" explains their vulnerability—geographically isolated from their mother city (Sidon) and lacking defensive alliances. From a military perspective, Laish was ideal prey: wealthy, undefended, isolated. Yet this wasn't the territory God had given Dan. The ease of conquest doesn't validate disobedience. From a Reformed perspective, Satan often makes sin appear

attractive and consequence-free (Genesis 3:4-6), but apparent ease doesn't indicate God's approval.

## Historical Context

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Laish (later renamed Dan) was located in the fertile Huleh Valley near the Jordan River headwaters, approximately 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. This northern location made it distant from Sidon (about 30-40 miles west), explaining the lack of immediate military support. Archaeological excavations at Tel Dan confirm a prosperous Canaanite city destroyed and rebuilt during the late Bronze/early Iron Age transition, consistent with the biblical narrative. The city's isolation and wealth made it attractive to landless groups seeking territory. The Phoenician connection suggests Laish was a trading outpost maintaining Sidonian culture but lacking military protection.

## 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 does Satan make sin appear attractive by highlighting immediate benefits while hiding long-term consequences?
2. What does Laish's peaceful prosperity teach about the danger of complacency and lack of spiritual vigilance?
3. In what ways might apparent ease of a course of action actually be a warning rather than confirmation of God's will?

H853

H7200

**after the manner**

H4941

that might put them to shame

H3637

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