

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, יושבת לבטח) indicates they lived "securely" or "confidently," without fear of attack. "After the manner of the Zidonians" (kemishpat Tsidonim, כמשפט צדנים) suggests Phoenician customs, including prosperity, complacency, and possibly Baal worship. The terms "quiet and secure" (shoket u-voteiach, שקט ובטח) 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

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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

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?

Interlinear Text

אֶת	יִירָא	וְ	לִשְׁתָּה	לִבְּ	אוֹ	בָּאָנָשָׁים	חַמְשָׁת	וְלִכְיָה
H1980	Then the five	H2568	H376	H935	and came	H3919	to Laish	H853
מִן	אָשֶׁר	בְּקָרְבָּהּ	וַיֵּשְׁבָּת	לְבַטְחָה	לְמַשְׁפֵּט	לְבַטְחָה	כְּמַשְׁפֵּט	כְּמַשְׁפֵּט
the people	H834	H5971	that were therein	H7130	how they dwelt	H3427	careless	after the manner
מִן־יְדֵנִים	מִן־זִדּוֹנִים	וּבְטָהָה	וּבְטָהָה	וְשָׁקָטָה	וְשָׁקָטָה	מִכְלָה	מִכְלָה	מִכְלָה
from the Zidonians	H6722	quiet	H8252	and secure	H982	H369	that might put them to shame	H3637
וְלֹא־יָדַבְתָּ	וְלֹא־יָדַבְתָּ	בְּאֶרֶץ	בְּאֶרֶץ	וְלֹא־שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	וְלֹא־שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁׁמַרְתָּ
and had no business	H1697	in the land	H776	and there was no magistrate	H3423	H369	and had no business	H6114
וְלֹא־יָדַבְתָּ	וְלֹא־יָדַבְתָּ	בְּאֶרֶץ	בְּאֶרֶץ	וְלֹא־שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	וְלֹא־שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁׁמַרְתָּ	שָׁׁמַרְתָּ
and they were far	H7350	H1992	from the Zidonians	H6722	H369	H1697	וְלֹא־מִן־אָין	H0
אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ	אֶת־מְ
עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ	עַמְּ
with any man	H120							

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 19:47 (Parallel theme): And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.