

Micah's Story

This study presents the story of Micah, along with a possible antitype connected with the developments taking place amidst the Epiphany people of God since Bro. Hedman passed away (i.e. since 2004). It consists of three parts: Part I deals with the type; Part II discusses a possible antitype; Part III adds a few helpful explanations. I wish you God's blessing from examining these thoughts.

Part I – Historical Events

The last five chapters of the Book of Judges describe a difficult period in the history of the Jewish nation – Samson the judge had died, and no other judge was recognized; also, there was no king in Israel. We shall focus on the first of the two stories – the story of Micah of Judges 17 and 18.

Judges 17:1. **And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name [was] Micah.**

The story started in the Mount of Ephraim, which was situated in the very centre of the then state of Israel. To the south was the land of Benjamin, to the east – the land meant for the tribe of Dan. There was the city of Shiloh in the mount of Ephraim, where in Joshua's times the Tabernacle was located. Every year, Jewish people went to Shiloh for some holy feast.

Somewhere there, in that mount, lived Micah along with his family. Although it is not directly stated in the Bible, they were not Jews, nor proselytes or native Canaanites, but rich foreigners who had come to settle down in that area (just like Abraham). While studying their history, one should remember about it, since no Jew would ever have undertaken such activities as they did in their house. Still, God recognized what they did.

2-3. **And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred [shekels] of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou have sworn, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver I have received. And his mother said, Blessed [be thou] of the LORD, my son. And when he had restored the eleven hundred [shekels] of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image.**

The translation of v. 2 and 3 is infected with an incorrect conviction of most translators (making a thief out of Micah). The version suggested above is based on short comments by Bro. Johnson about the words underlined, i.e. “have sworn”, and not “have cursed”, and also “I have received” (the Hebrew word means “receive”, not “take” – E 10, 510).

Micah's mother was a wealthy woman. Somehow she had lost some of her wealth, i.e. 1100 shekels of silver. Though it was a handsome sum of money (comp. 17:10), she was not impoverished on this account. And she had made a certain vow. What could it have been? She was a heathen living among people believing only in one God. However, this God seemed to be stronger than all the other gods known to her; she had heard stories of the exploits of the judges and was a witness to the fact that that God did hear prayers. Faith in that God had been growing in her, and along with it, a desire to test His power. Of course, she did understand that God was not a hocus-pocus God, but one that answered reasonable, sensible requests.

When she lost the 1100 shekels of silver, the following thought may have sprung up in her mind: “If Jehovah God really is the Owner of all, if He wanted to, He could return the money to me, using some

special messenger. If so, I would recognize such a messenger and would help him prepare a temple to praise Him.” Her vow might have been gone like this: “I will recognize as the messenger chosen by God the person through whom Jehovah God will return the 1100 shekels of silver to me, and I will help him put up a sanctuary to praise Him in.” From the further account it follows that her son was familiar with the vow. When it turned out that Micah had received the silver (without knowing how), surprised he said, “behold, the silver I have received”, and he went to return it to her mother. Then his mother, full of faith, cried out that her son Micah be blessed of the Lord.

Micah was intimidated by the fact that he should be a messenger of Jehovah God, but the facts spoke for themselves. According to his mother, the key thing to be prepared was something that was called “a graven and a molten image.” Although we have bad associations with the term, **one should remember that it was God that acted in that family (both Micah and his mother knew about it).** The image was probably something akin to both an altar and a monument, consisting of two parts (maybe separate ones, as suggested by 18:17,18) – one of them carved in wood, the other cast in some metal (or covered with it), probably silver (from the molten silver shekels).

Doesn't it remind Bible students of something? Was the Ark of the Covenant not a kind of graven and molten image, too, partly made of wood, and partly of molten metal? As heathens, neither Micah nor his mother had ever been to the Tabernacle at Shiloh. However, somehow they knew something about how the Jews worshipped Jehovah God there. The little they knew, and the little they understood, they did (God did not require of them what they did not understand, all the more so that they were not in the Law Covenant relationship with Him).

4-5. Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred [shekels] of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. 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.

When the graven and the molten image found its way into Micah's house, the house became the house of God. An ephod was a piece put on before sacrifices were made. Teraphim, in turn, was a kind of carving or relief covered with symbols, and was to say whose spiritual property a given house was.

In the Bible, we read about the teraphim which Rebecca took while leaving the house of Laban (Gen. 31:19,34), about the teraphim that was situated in the house of David and Michal (1 Sam. 19:11-17), about the teraphim that was used for idolatry (Zach. 10:2; 2 Kings 23:24), about the teraphim that was part of worshipping God (Hos. 3:4 – this Scripture mentions three pieces analogous to those prepared by Micah: a graven and a molten image, an ephod and teraphim). Teraphim can be likened to a painting. In many houses one can come across various “holy paintings” which are worshipped and prayed to. Many Bible Students, in turn, put up a picture of Pastor Russell. We must agree, however, that even though in the nature of the case it is “the same object”, it does not serve “the same purpose” as the “holy paintings” mentioned. It is like that with teraphim: as such it was nothing wrong in itself, but it could be used in a wrong way (and the story goes to prove it). Does teraphim not remind Bible Students also of the door to the Tabernacle showing who it belonged to?

So Micah ordered an ephod and teraphim, and made one of his sons into a priest in that house of God, in line with the providential situations that he had been experiencing along with his mother.

Up to now, **all this had been inspired and accepted by God.** We sometimes tend to wrongly think that if God had entered into Covenant relationship with the Jewish nation, He ignored and left out of the picture all

the other peoples. But we must remember Naaman, or the widow of Sarepta, or the Lord Jesus who testified to a great faith on the part of a Roman captain, or the woman comparing herself to a dog that cannot be denied the crumbs falling from the table. The Lord God never ignored, nor will He ever ignore, real repentance and faith.

6. In those days [there was] no king in Israel, [but] every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes.

Crucial to the background of the story is the fact that there was no king in Israel

7-9. And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who [was] a Levite, and he sojourned there / and he was a stranger there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find [a place]: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I [am] a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find [a place].

We learn that a certain Levite family (not priestly) had settled in Bethlehem, and that they had a son who – feeling a stranger there – left his family looking for a better place (but he wouldn't go to Shiloh to serve as a Levite). Why was he a stranger in Bethlehem? The priests had been given nine cities from the tribes of Judah and Simeon: Hebron, Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain, Juttah, Bethshemesh. The Levites had not got any city in the land of Judah. And Bethlehem was an inheritance of the sons of Judah (Num. 35:7; Josh. 14:4; 21:1-41; 1 Chron. 6:57-81). It seems that having settled in Bethlehem, his family broke the guidelines that they had been given by Jehovah in the Law. They were considered strangers, and their son must have felt his “strangeness” very strongly. Still, he wasn't willing to escape to Shiloh, but was searching for another inheritance for himself. That's how he got to Micah's house, who took interest in him, heard out his story and plans.

10. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten [shekels] of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

The service of Jehovah God was carried out in the house of Micah. However, for some reason (maybe due to some failure of Micah's plans, or lack of clear indications from God, or some prayers left unheard) Micah thought the problem was not in himself, but in the way the offerings were made by his son. When he realized who his guest was, he imagined a service by a Levite would be appreciated by God more. Accordingly, he offered him handsome money and handsome respect: as father! The remuneration (10 shekels of silver per year), along with clothing and food, must have been a very good offer to make a Jew stay and work in a heathen's house.

11-13. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to [my] priest.

The Levite accepted the offer, stayed with the heathen, who treated him much, much better than a servant. Micah was very happy about the way things were going, as he seemed to believe that Jehovah God would bless his house on account of the service by a Jew, and that a Levite. So a substantial change transpired in

Micah's house, not being the result of inspiration from God, though. Soon it led to his and his loved ones losing the blessing they had enjoyed.

Chapter 18 could be entitled: "Two expeditions by the Danites". It contains an account of their spying and war expeditions. On both occasions, those undertaking it visited Micah's house.

18:1. In those days [there was] no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day [all their] inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

It was at that time that a part of the then God's people decided to undertake actions they had never undertaken before. Underlying them was the **fear to possess the land that God had given them as their possession**. They had too little faith, and chose to look for another and easier inheritance.

2. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

They selected the most trustworthy people and sent them on their search. Their target from the very beginning was Laish (v. 14 says about it), about which they most probably had heard before, although had it not been suitable for their purposes, they would surely have gone on searching for a more suitable place (in their opinion).

It is worth remembering who the then Danites were. Samson, the last known judge so far, was a Danite who lived between Zorah and Eshtaol (Judges 13:2,24,25). His next of kin must have been his closest support in his service for God. However, after his death, and despite the great destruction among the Philistines wrought by the dying Samson, they felt too weak to possess the inheritance that was meant for them, and giving up their fight so far, they undertook different activities.

3-4. When they [were] by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this [place]? and what hast thou here? And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

Five spies spent a night in the Mount of Ephraim, not far away from Micah's house. In the morning, when the Levite was offering his sacrifice, they must have heard the Hebrew singing his prayers. Surprised by his presence in a heathen house, they started asking, "what are you doing here", and the Levite tried to explain.

5. And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

The wording of v. 5 seems to suggest that they mocked him a little. If being a Levite, he acts as if he were a priest of God (i.e. a descendant of Aaron), they suggested that he get in touch with Him and ask about His will in their undertaking. "Maybe God will reveal it to you, as He does to real priests."

6. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD [is] your way wherein ye go.

The Levite does not seem to have sensed their intentions and did as requested. We don't know if he knew how God revealed His will to the priests, but he concluded that He had revealed it to him. However, the already REVEALED will of God for the Danites was to possess the inheritance that had fallen to their lot in the land of Canaan! Surely, what the spies heard could not have been the real message from God, but only a more or less conscious imagination by the Levite as to what God's will in the matter was.

7-10. 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. And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What [say] ye? And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it [is] very good: and [are] ye still? be not slothful to go, [and] to enter to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: [for you will possess it with your own hands], for God hath given it into your hands; a place where [there is] no want of any thing that [is] in the earth.

The spies continued their expedition, got to Laish, which turned out to be as they had expected. Then, they returned to their relatives; it was a long journey, with a lot of time in which to think things over. They decided to conquer Laish quite consciously, and mobilized their brethren (who in their desires were like them, the only difference being that they feared "God's anger" a little more) to undertake a war expedition.

11-14. And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war. And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, [it is] behind Kirjathjearim. And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah. 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.

They took a similar path as before. When they got closer to Micah's house, the five spies who had already visited the place concluded that taking away some things from that heathen temple would make them wholly independent of the Tabernacle in Shiloh.

15-20. And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, [even] unto the house of Micah, and saluted him (or: asked about health). And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which [were] of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, [and] came in thither, [and] took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men [that were] appointed with weapons of war. And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: [is it] better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And

the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

The demeanour described here makes one wonder. 600 men with weapons of war stood at a distance, without walking in, fearing “God’s anger”. No visible condemnation from God (e.g. some fire coming down from heaven to destroy those reaching out to grab temple furniture devoted to Him) was understood by them as a sign that God was with them. And how treacherous the spies were! Not only did they steal, but they did it shamelessly, in broad daylight, grounding their courage on the presence of their armed tribesmen. When an attempt was made to stop them, they did not scruple to bribe the Levite. The Levite himself first made believe he did not know what was going on; he was waiting to see if God would stop the thieves in some miraculous way, or he may have been wondering what reaction would be more advantageous to him. When finally he decided to react, he was bribed to cooperate with the thieves with a vision of a wider cooperation than he might ever have in the house of Micah.

21. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage / baggage before them.

On getting control of the things consecrated to Jehovah God, the Danites regrouped and changed their ways. Everything started to look as if the expedition were a “peaceful passage”. The warriors marching at the end hid behind the backs of the children and the animals. As a result, anyone trying to stop or warn their dear ones must have come across the warriors, who stood in the way.

22-26. [And] when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that [were] in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? 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? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they [were] too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

There is no doubt that the presence of the 600 armed men around Micah’s house drew the attention of himself and his neighbours. However, it seems nothing happened for quite a while, and in the meantime the Danites had walked away “a good way”, changing the march for seemingly a “peaceful” one. Why had there been no reaction for so long? Probably, Micah’s neighbours did not know what to do. Of course, they did understand it was a temple consecrated to Jehovah God, but because it was in the house of Micah, they expected him to react first. Being much less wealthy and weaker, dealing chiefly with service, they were enslaved by thoughts that as such they should not start acting before Micah did. Even so, when he did nothing, they came to increasingly understand their own responsibility, which did not let them remain silent or wait passively any more.

Micah seems to have had much more confusion in his head. First, he would not believe it was theft, as it was not the Danites, but the Levite himself that took away the things consecrated to Jehovah God. And he was the man whom he showed such great respect! Also, he would not believe the Danites had such evil intentions! Were they not those wonderful (in his eyes) Israelites, and at the same time relatives of the last known leader of the then God’s people! He may have imagined that the Levite’s actions had been inspired by God, and that he would soon return with the sacred things. Also, he might have reasoned that it was God who should have miraculously acted (and all that was to be done was to “wait on the Lord” a little), with no

responsibility resting on Micah. His inactivity and lack of understanding the reality around him lasted much longer.

Accordingly, his neighbours were first to realize what was happening, joined forces and started the chase. They caught up with the sons of Dan, and began to rebuke them. It was only then that Micah joined in. He understood that appointing a Levite as priest had brought God's displeasure. The sons of Dan showed great reluctance to amend their ways, and demanded that Micah be silent on the pains of death, totally ignoring his dear ones, and just went on. **It was the last chance to return; after that, God did not try to stop them.**

27-31. **And they [the Danites] took [the things] which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people [that were] at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And [there was] no deliverer, because it [was] far from Zidon, and they had no business with [any] man; and it was in the valley that [lieth] by Bethrehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein. And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city [was] Laish at the first. And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.**

The sons of Dan reached Laish, destroyed it, murdered the inhabitants, and then rebuilt, reorganized it as they saw fit, giving it their own name. They set up their own place of worship there and their own priesthood, which survived until the time of captivity. Micah's graven and molten image was used by them, even though the real house of God was in Shiloh. It is also of interest that the priesthood appointed by them came from the tribe of Manasseh. The Levite, who was travelling with them from the house of Micah, most probably did not get to Laish – there's no mention of him (he might have died on the way, or fell ill and could not continue his service).

Summing up this story, it's worth presenting the general demeanour and evaluation of its characters.

Micah's mother – rich, but also a God-fearing woman. A good observer, well-informed. She believed God, and God recognized her faith. She wanted a house of God (a temple for Jehovah) to be organized in her house after the pattern of the Jewish house of God (a temple for Jehovah). She did as she understood, and God accepted it. She may have been dead at the time when Micah met the Levite, and lack of her support might have been one of the reasons Micah changed his ways.

Micah – in the beginning, a modest and straightforward man. He respected his mother, did his best looking after his family, lived honestly and worshipped Jehovah God. He was willing to accept a mission from God and involved his sons in serving Him. However, in the course of time, he began to change unobtrusively; something bothered him, even though the same service for God was still being carried out in his house as before. When the Levite looking for a place to settle down arrived, **he was too eager to believe** that it was God who had sent the Levite, and in no time he offered him handsome money **and recognition** for doing a priest's work. He reckoned that a Levite's service would be more to God's liking than a service by any of his sons. When the form of worship became more important to Micah than the worship itself, God turned away from him. Micah finally understood his mistake, but could not rectify what his own conduct had contributed to.

Micah's neighbours – turned out to be more sober, much quicker in their reaction to evil than Micah. It was their righteous attitude that made Micah make corrections to his conduct. As seen by the sons of Dan, their attitude towards them was full of criticism, but as a matter of fact, it was **the right and necessary rebuke**

in this situation, a call to justice. It was them, the anonymous ones, who were the first to recognize the situation. Even though pagans, they turned out to be much more righteous than some of those who considered themselves to be God's people then.

The Levite – it turned out he was an ambitious man, fearing man more than God. He was on the lookout for a better service than the one he could perform with God's blessing at Shiloh. He may even have concluded that it was God that directed him to the house of Micah. For pay, he agreed to do priestly service (to which as a Levite he would never have access). He was happy to receive recognition and promotion from Micah. He let others manipulate him, and twice he yielded up to the will of the Danites. First time, he believed he could be the one to recognize God's will, and second time he agreed to cooperate with thieves.

Five spies of the tribe of Dan – they came from the city of Zorah ("hornet") and Eshtaol ("begging"), where along with their brethren they complained about their fate and begged God to possess their land without them taking part therein. They were prominent individuals, knowing how to convince people to their way of thinking. Their tribesmen valued their opinion because they had been "men of valour" in the previous fights, helping other members of the then God's people to possess their inheritance. Still, they were not brave enough to fight for the inheritance that God had offered to them. They despised it, and looked for an easier one. They deliberately made a decision to attack the city of Laish, and got their brethren to cooperate in it. They had no respect either for the house of God in the pagan house of Micah nor for the house of God in the Jewish Shiloh, since they did not have proper reverence for God. They despised His will, becoming **cheats and thieves**, according to the dictates of their wills.

The tribe of Dan – a class of the then God's people complaining and expecting God to do everything for them in obtaining their inheritance. Thus, they recognized themselves as better ones than the other part of God's people. They took over and subjected to themselves the temple at Micah's house that had been recognized by God, changing its location and organization, and setting up their own priestly order. They turned deaf ears to the voice of rebuke, ignored Micah's neighbours, and silenced Micah himself with a threat of death. They did all they could so that their closed ones (whom they seemingly distinguished by letting them march on at the front) did not hear the voice calling for justice (uttered by Micah and his neighbours). They surprised (with their seemingly peaceful march) the inhabitants of Laish, slaughtered them, and destroyed the city. Then, they reorganized and rebuilt it in their own way, created their own religious organization (based on the furniture from the house of Micah that had been recognized by God before), and shut themselves off in their own company until the time of slavery by the heathen conquerors. As God did not react to what they were doing, they reckoned He was with them, blessing and accepting their activities.

The children of Dan – undeveloped individuals recognizing the Danites as their fathers and associating with them. They valued their distinction (being put forward) more than their destination or reproof by Micah's neighbours.

Animals of Dan – were also distinguished, but they were completely dumb, with no opinion of their own, without saying anything, letting others lead them wherever they wanted to.

Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh - a man who not only did not come from a priestly family, but was not even a Levite. Even so, he considered himself suitable for priestly service. He might have cooperated on the way to Laish with the Levite from Micah's house and picked something up from him; based on that, he regarded himself to be the most suitable person for that service (the one that God could choose Himself). He might even have concluded that he had been put in that situation providentially. His name means "gift of Jehovah", and he must have treated himself as a "gift of Jehovah" for the tribe of Dan. They also looked upon him in that way, making him the priest. Although he was not a Danite, he identified with their targets, aspirations and intentions, and ultimately he took a similar position to theirs. He

considered himself better than the other children of Manasseh, as the one chosen for more noble deeds. After his death, his sons became like himself.

The inhabitants of Laish – they were not Jews. On the one hand, they lived in a manner similar to the heathen, but at the same time they stayed away from them. They did not have many worries, lived safe and peaceful lives, with no arguments with anybody. When they were attacked by the Danites, no other pagan nation came to their rescue.

The story deals mainly with three groups of people who at that time despised their inheritance from God. The Levite looking for a better service than that at the house of God in Shiloh; the Danites looking for an easier place to conquer than the land pointed to by God; Jonathan, the son of Manasseh despising the inheritance in the land of Manasseh and looking for promotion to a priestly service.

The letter of the story itself makes those consecrated to God ask themselves some questions: **Am I rejecting God's will and looking for my own**, as did the Levite, the Danites, and Jonathan of Manasseh? **Do I value promotion more than justice**, as did the children of Dan? **Or maybe it is all the same to me**, as it was to the animals of the Danites? **Am I delaying taking proper actions**, as did Micah? **Do I value justice as much** as did Micah's neighbours? The ethical message of the story should be motivating to each and every child of God. If we are living at a time of similar experiences, **we will surely take a stand before God that is like our heart**. That's why it is so right that we ask ourselves the question, **"What is my heart like?"**

Part II – suggested antitype

In his explanations, Bro. Johnson linked the story described in Judges 17,18 with the events taking place from 1917 to 1919, and (in another picture) with the Gospel Age (without giving any details, though). It seems, however, that in this story God might have hidden much more than Bro. Johnson was able to decipher during his ministry. Part III of this paper contains extra premises that may justify it.

Abbreviations used:

YW – Youthful Worthies
CEC – Consecrated Epiphany Campers
QE – quasi elect
LHMM – Layman’s Home Missionary Movement

Generally known LHMM pilgrims:

RH, LS, DH – of the US Bible House
JP – former Bible House representative in Germany
PW, HO – Bible House representatives in Poland

Judges 17:1. **And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name [was] Micah.**

Micah (a heathen – “who is like God”) – Johnson, separated from the nominal Christendom (Israel), but associating with them (resides in the land of Israel);

mount Ephraim – “doubly fruitful”, the sphere of the Parousia and (later) Epiphany Truth.

2. **And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred [shekels] of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst / hast sworn, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver [is] with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed [be thou] of the LORD, my son.**

Micah’s mother – such consecrated ones (especially the Spirit-begotten ones) living in the sphere of the Parousia Truth who longed for further progress of the Truth as due;

eleven hundred [shekels] of silver – the power to explain the Truth as due, as possessed by Bro. Russell (1100 shekels of silver = 6,6 kg);

thou cursedst / hast sworn – “the one who explains further Truth as due will be recognized as Jehovah’s messenger”;

the silver [is] with me; I took it – Johnson receives from God an understanding of the Truth as due;

And his mother said, Blessed [be thou] of the LORD, my son – such consecrated ones from the sphere of the Parousia Truth who, longing for further progress of the Truth, recognized Johnson as Jehovah’s Messenger (they were most probably Spirit-begotten ones, already dead in v.7).

3. **And when he had restored the eleven hundred [shekels] of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.**

Micah returning eleven hundred [shekels] of silver to his mother – Johnson explaining the Epiphany Truth;

a graven image and a molten image – a monument of the Epiphany Truth and those preaching it (pilgrims).

4. **Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred [shekels] of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.**

Micah returning the money – Johnson completed the work of explaining the Epiphany Truth;

two hundred [shekels] of silver – most of Johnson’s work was confirming the Parousia Truth with the same power of the Truth (**eleven hundred [shekels] of silver**), but some of it was progressive Truth flowing out of the Parousia Truth. Two hundred [shekels] of silver = 20 years of service as a priest (compare v.10), the exact number of years priests were to serve according to the Law = the total of the Epiphany Truth as due given by Johnson;

founder – Johnson as a writer puts up a monument of the Epiphany Truth;

a graven image, and a molten image in the house of Micah – the Epiphany Truth and those preaching it under Johnson.

5. **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.**

Micah had an house of gods (in v.5) – Johnson in his work of setting up the last Little Flock movement (the establishment of the LHMM, supporting that movement);

ephod – the office powers of the LHMM Executive Trustee;

teraphim – LHMM magazines (vividly preaching the Epiphany Truth);

Micah’s son – Johnson, Jolly, Gohlke, Hedman as LHMM Executive Trustees;

Priestly work in Micah’s house – not connected with recognizing God’s will, the new Truth, etc., but with performing the duties of the Executive Trustee.

Up to now, everything was fine, inspired and accepted by Jehovah God.

6. **In those days [there was] no king in Israel, [but] every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes.**

In those days [there was] no king – at the time of the following events, there was no recognized leader of God’s people (possessing Biblical authority), i.e. after Bro. Hedman’s death;

every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes – everybody took such a stand before God to which his heart led him.

7-8. **And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who [was] a Levite, and he sojourned there / and he was a stranger there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find [a place]: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.**

Bethlehemjudah – “house of bread”, the sphere of the teachings of the Scriptures (the Bible);

a young man – Ralph Herzig, a prospective YW;

a Levite – a prospective Gospel Age Levite;

Born in Bethlehemjudah – having been taught Bible Truths;

was a stranger there (Bethlehemjudah) – he didn’t feel good with Bible teachings limiting him (as a YW) only to Levite work, and that he stood no chance of being a priest (or felt that Bible teachings pointed him out as a loser in his standing);

departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn (but not wanting to go to Shiloh) – he was looking for a teaching that might make it possible for him to act like a priest (or was looking for justification for himself at a different place than the one indicated by God (Shiloh “a place of rest”));

came to the house of Micah – in his desires, he came to the structure of the proper organization of work for God’s Epiphany people.

9. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I [am] a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find [a place].

Micah (up to v. 13) – some of Bro. Hedman’s helpers (chiefly some pilgrims, especially prospective YW) in the improper organizational work making it possible for ambitious individuals to achieve high positions among God’s people;

Whence comest thou? – interest in and examination of RH (before and after Bro. Hedman’s death);

And he said unto him, I [am] a Levite of Bethlehemjudah – with his conduct, RH presented himself as a prospective YW, versed in Bible teachings;

I go to sojourn where I may find [a place]– RH, who without being asked, skilfully presented himself as a suitable candidate for the work of the Lord (“**where I may find a place**”, and not “in the house of Micah”).

10. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten [shekels] of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest – some of Bro. Hedman’s helpers (chiefly prospective YW) encouraging RH, against Bro. Hedman’s wishes, publicly expressed through his actions, to come and stay at the Epiphany Bible House in order to function not only as a priest (Executive Trustee), but also as a father (General Teacher). They recognized (based on various intentions) that it was God that had brought RH to them;

The Levite’s remuneration – recognizing and supporting him in every possible way, especially as shown by the pilgrims at the special meeting after Bro. Hedman’s death;

So the Levite went in – through voting at the special meeting after Bro. Hedman’s death.

11-13. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to [my] priest.

the Levite was content to dwell with the man – RH agreed to become the LHMM Executive Trustee, even though he knew very well it was not Bro. Hedman’s preference;

and the young man was unto him as one of his sons – was shown more respect than due to an LHMM Executive Trustee, being referred to as the leader of God’s People (and treated accordingly), even before RH started to call himself one (i.e. between 2004-2007);

Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest – not God, but some pilgrims through their actions led to the consideration of only one candidate at the conventions and to voting him three times LHMM Executive Trustee;

Pushing aside Micah’s son – (logical conclusion based on the comparison of 17:5,10,12,13 and 18:3,4,15-17; pushing aside the special helper to Bro. Hedman (the pilgrims at the special meeting after Bro. Hedman’s death and at the convention business meeting referred to the rule of Heb. 7:7, which, however, is not applicable to the business office, but to the spiritual);

the Levite was in the house of Micah – RH remained at the Epiphany Bible House;

Then said Micah – after Bro. Hedman’s death, some pilgrims (especially prospective YW) understood (or convinced themselves) that if a prospective YW should be Executive Trustee, then all of them would be recognized by God (and God’s people) as prospective YW (that was the major motive behind their actions).

18:1. **In those days [there was] no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day [all their] inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.**

In those days [there was] no king in Israel – there was still no recognized leader of God’s people;
the tribe of the Danites – a part of God’s consecrated people who were afraid to undertake the Christian fight of faith (due to their unbelief) to possess their inheritance;

in those days the tribe of the Danites – emphasis put on the fact that it was at a time when there was no recognized leader of God’s people that a class of consecrated people started a new way of acting (as dictated by their lack of development in consecration so far);

sought them an inheritance – decided to get another inheritance, i.e. decided to change the teachings on justification (their original intention is described in v.14, and justification in v.28);

2. **And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.**

five men – the most trustworthy individuals (some of them teachers of the general church); “five” probably does not stand for their number, but signifies their large awareness of the actions taken, similar to that of wilful sinners of the Gospel Age (Heb. 6:4-6; E 1, 245), who broke the antitypical bone of the Lamb (E 8, 617-618);

men of valour – the most prominent, with many merits from previous fights when they helped other tribes of God’s people take their inheritance, but fearful when it came to fighting for their own, personal inheritance of salvation; to emphasise their valour so far, one should remember that Samson the Danite was a judge who in the Gospel Age picture represents secondarily prophets fighting against sectarianism. In E 10, 483, Bro. Johnson points out that in the two pictures pertaining to the Epiphany period Samson represents himself. He also seems to be a good representation of those Epiphany leaders (in various Epiphany groupings) who strenuously fought against sectarianism, and the Danites may represent those who cooperated with them in this (especially pilgrims);

Time – the developments take place some time after Samson the Danite’s death – after Bro. Johnson’s death fighting against manifested sectarianism (and clericalism, its major component) was increasingly put aside;

from Zorah [hornet], and from Eshtaol [begging] – from circles tending to complain and bite, which instead of doing things, just complain about their fate. Secondarily, it might apply to Polish people (a national trait); Bro. Johnson also had Polish origins;

came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah – in their search of a better place, they examined the Parousia and Epiphany Truth, especially in its aspects dealing with the teachings on CEC and justification (direction of journeying was north, towards Laish).

3-4. **When they [were] by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this [place]? and what hast thou here? And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.**

the voice of the young man the Levite – in the activity of the LHMM Executive Trustee, and especially in his attitude, one could recognize a different spirit and attitude from that of the previous Executive Trustees, the spirit which was well known to them as it was very similar to theirs;

they turned in thither – gave up their searching to examine the beliefs and ambitions of RH;

Their questions to the Levite – they started examining his spirit, attitude: “How did it come about you are the LHMM Executive Trustee (seeing that your spirit is the same as ours)? What are your plans, intentions? To what extent are you faithful to the Truth?”

And he said unto them – (1) he says what support he got from some of Bro. Hedman’s helpers after his death, and (2) argued that he had got such support from Bro. Hedman, too (which was not true); also, (3) he argued that he was carrying out a very important service for the Lord; RH’s attitude, the way he spoke about himself testified to his having a high opinion of himself.

5. And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

Their ironic request – in their attempt to test his attitude, they picked up and supported his mind as to himself, and said they would recognise him as someone higher than just an Executive Trustee, that they would recognise him as General Pastor who may be able to tell them whether their search would lead them to the Truth as due, in which they might put their hopes and which would be the assurance of God’s blessing.

6. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD [is] your way wherein ye go.

the priest said unto them – not sensing their intentions (since they were in line with his desires), he gave a reply presenting himself as General Pastor. He concluded that God was revealing His will to him, and that the meeting was a providential one connected with the Truth’s progress;

before the LORD [is] your way wherein ye go – considering himself to be General Pastor, he supported their interpretations of the progressive Truth, especially in the teachings on CEC and justification by faith (Rom. 5:1), taking them to be God’s actions (compare v.14).

7. 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.

the five men departed, and came to Laish – realizing that their actions would not be opposed by RH, they went further on in their interpretations and openly went up to the teaching on tentative justification by faith;

Laish (“lion”) – Bible teachings that justified the existence of an unconsecrated quasi-elect class;

the people of Laish – unconsecrated quasi-elect as seen through the eyes of true Bible teachings;

dwelt careless – thanks to their justifying faith, freeing them from the burden of the Adamic sin;

after the manner of the Zidonians (...) **far from the Zidonians** (“fishing”) – like the world (nominal Christendom) since in their tentative justification, without consecration, they are still alive to themselves and the world, but “far from the world”, having given up sin and trying to live righteously;

Zidon (fishermen) – the Christian part of the world (nominal Christendom);

quiet and secure – in the spirit of tentative justification;

had no business with [any] man – lived in peace with God.

8-10. And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What [say] ye? And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it [is] very good: and [are] ye still? be not slothful to go, [and] to enter to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a

large land: [for you will possess it with your own hands], for God hath given it into your hands; a place where [there is] no want of any thing that [is] in the earth.

came unto their brethren – came back to the fellowship with other consecrated ones who only complained, bit and expected that God would save them Himself, without their participation in the work;

the journey – was a long one, with them having a lot of time to think; they consciously concluded it would be better for them to get involved in an attack against the justification doctrine than fight for their own inheritance pointed to by God;

What [say] ye? – the brethren awaiting their return, through extended waiting became confirmed that there must be a different, better inheritance than the one given by God; with this mental attitude they listened to the teachings of those teachers;

Arise (...) be not slothful to go, [and] to enter to possess the land – those prominent teachers started to preach to them new teachings on tentative justification, mobilizing them to support them;

it [is] very good (...) a place where [there is] no want of any thing that [is] in the earth – there will be much progressive Truth there;

you will possess it with your own hands – you don't even need the Sword of God's Word or Biblical arguments; all you need to do is trust us;

God hath given it into your hands – they assured everyone that they had the support of RH, who was presented by them as General Teacher.

11. And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

there went from thence of the family of the Danites – they got a wide support from a class which was unfaithful in fighting for their own salvation;

out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol – from the circles complaining and expecting the Lord to act instead of them (maybe chiefly from Polish speaking brethren in Poland and Germany);

six hundred men – probably meaning their traits, i.e. they were evil (6), and siding with the wilfully sinning (from among the consecrated and justified previously) people and angels, lower in nature from what is Divine (10x10; com. E11, 250);

with weapons of war – they put on a false conviction about Christ's righteousness along with an improperly developed character (breastplate), a false Truth as due (belt), a false conviction about protection from the snares and delusions of error (helmet), a readiness to preach those false teachings (shoes), non-biblical arguments (sword), and a false faith, not protecting against the arrows of the enemy (shield).

12. And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, [it is] behind Kirjathjearim.

and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah – in their journey, they entered the sphere of experiences by "the city of woods" (assemblies of faithful consecrated ones) who praised (Judah) the Truth on justification;

The camp of the Danites – the place of these experiences is called "the camp of judgment" because their fate was judged there;

unto this day – that will be remembered for ever, especially the attitude of the ones attacking the Truth on tentative justification and its defenders, as well as the attitude of those who defended the Truth;

behind Kirjathjearim – the judgement was of the Danites (unfaithful YW and CEC), and not of the faithful YW and CEC who opposed their arguments.

13. And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

they passed thence – they rejected, ignored the arguments given by the faithful consecrated ones;

unto mount Ephraim – instead, they delved into looking for arguments in the Parousia and Epiphany Truth;

came unto the house of Micah – they understood such arguments did not exist, and the only argument might be taking over the Executive Trustee office and using it in order to create such arguments.

14. **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.**

answered the five men – those prominent teachers were the source, instigators of this proposition;

that went to spy out the country of Laish – showing that from the very beginning their purpose was to change the teaching on tentative justification as only this (changing it) could make it possible to change the conditions that must be met to succeed (justified in v.28);

their proposition – they proposed taking over and changing: the office powers of the LHMM Executive Trustee (ephod), LHMM magazines (teraphim), Epiphany teachings and those preaching them (graven and molten image). It would make it possible for them to become wholly independent of the true teachings on justification (Shiloh).

15 **And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, [even] unto the house of Micah, and saluted him (or: asked about health).**

they turned thitherward (..) came (...) and asked about health – undertook some efforts by entering into direct contact, pretending to be friends, and realising at the same time that the state of RH's mental health was not at its best (suffering from dementia);

Their second visit and further actions at Micah's house – two attempts at attacking the teaching on tentative justification (in the first one, the most active one was JP, most actively supported from Poland by PW; here is its second form, the most active one being LS, most actively supported from Poland by HO).

16. **And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which [were] of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.**

six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war at the gate – unfaithful consecrated ones, equipped with their false arguments and truths, showed off both their false arguments and their support thereof. They waited on the Lord “by the entering of the gate”, i.e. in fear, they observed the situation to see whether the Lord would oppose them, or through lack of reaction would show them He is with them.

17-18. **And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, [and] came in thither, [and] took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men [that were] appointed with weapons of war. And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?**

the five men came in thither – those prominent teachers successively started getting control over:

- **the graven image** – they started from the Parousia Truth (the basis for the Epiphany Truth) and the teachers of that Truth (e.g. in India);
- **the ephod** – the LHMM Executive Trustee's official powers;
- **the teraphim** – the LHMM magazines;
- **the molten image** – the Epiphany Truth and the teachers of that Truth;

the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men – initially RH pretended not to see the activities of those “spies”; he “waited on the Lord” (i.e. he waited until God reacted somehow, or maybe he was considering what mode of reaction would be most advantageous to him);
the priest unto them, What do ye? – RH gave them to understand that he realised the character of their actions, and frustrated their first attempt of a take-over.

19. **And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: [is it] better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?**

Two attempts of a take-over – the first attempt at a **personal** take-over of the ET office by the Danites failed, and along with it collapsed the attempt at taking over the LHMM magazines, Epiphany teachings and their teachers (e.g. JP, while still being Bible House representative in Germany, sent his CV as a “suitable candidate” to work at the US Bible House, as related by DH; also, through long phone calls he tried to get support for his vision of tentative justification; he influenced the selection of general teachers, e.g. removing Bro. Michal Lotysz, etc.). Only the second attempt proved successful, arising as it did as a matter of expedience when it turned out that RH had understood their intentions;

The “courage” of the five spies in the activities undertaken – their boldness (in attempting both take-overs) was the result of a wide support for the new teachings from those led towards “Laish”;

Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth – with their attitude and influence, they forbade RH to oppose them. They indicated that with his official powers he should hold back God, who might speak through him;

go with us – they demanded that he support them in their teachings and actions;

be to us a father and a priest – they would continue to recognise him as General Teacher (father) and the LHMM Executive Trustee (priest);

Their question / offer – they suggested that it was only in this way that his activities and influence might be wide enough to cover all CEC, not only those associated with the LHMM.

20. **And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.**

the priest's heart was glad – RH agreed to cooperate;

and he took – RH supported their actions of transforming the LHMM Executive Trustee official powers, the LHMM magazines, the Parousia and Epiphany Truth and its servants;

went in the midst of the people – started to preach the same teachings about justification and CEC.

21. **So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage / baggage before them.**

turned and departed – seeing that the Lord did not react, they concluded the Lord was with them, and they gave up “waiting on the Lord” (even in this false sense in which they had been “waiting” so far), and more boldly headed towards changing the teaching on justification;

put ... before them – they regrouped, hiding their warlike intentions, taking a friendly stand towards the tentative justification teaching, and a more warlike one against those that might stop them or those associating with them from reaching their target. Also, it goes to show that they didn’t want to present their false arguments, false understanding or evil characters, and preferred to shield themselves with people and teachings better than themselves. This regrouping took place while Micah and his friends still “waited on the Lord” in their own way;

the little ones – those who treated them as their spiritual fathers were distinguished, made more prominent; it may be true of those consecrated who were becoming unfaithful and who were receiving

distinctions in the service with the Word in the general church, accepting it as coming from God (although the one showering them with those distinctions did not have any Biblical evidence that he was Divinely authorised to such actions); they did not do their utmost to examine the situation as carefully as they could have (maybe because of prejudice).

the cattle – those who were dumb, weak, leadable to any side, intimidated (indirectly or directly), were distinguished, made more prominent; it may especially be true of nominal Christians and tentatively justified ones associating with the LHMM that were becoming unfaithful (their association with the LHMM was the result of birth, friends, family, work, etc.);

the baggage – good things, teachings, qualities which they had (as the fruits of their previous proper attitude towards God); they tried to put these to the front to conceal their lacks and real intentions.

22-23. **[And] when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that [were] in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?**

when they were – when their actions were quite advanced;

a good way from the house of Micah – the activities of the 600 men with weapons did not escape Micah's and Micah's neighbours notice. Still, all of them "were waiting on the Lord".

Micah's neighbours were in their "waiting" enslaved by the thought that it was Micah who should have reacted first because they were "unskilled, unprepared to take a public stand". When he didn't, their own sense of justice did not close their mouths, and they started acting.

In his waiting, Micah was enslaved by the following:

- that it wasn't a theft because RH (to whom he showed such great respect) went with them, and it was RH who carried the things, not the children of Dan;
- he couldn't comprehend that RH (to whom he showed such great respect) might have conceded to some vile cooperation, that he might betray Jehovah God;
- also, he would not believe the "Danites" had robbed him, that they had deserted the targets that their last leader ("Samson") had been striving for;
- he had a misconception about God thinking that Jehovah God should have acted miraculously Himself;
- he had a wrong understanding of his own responsibility before God; he wouldn't admit to himself that the catastrophe had come through his own mistakes, lack of action and wrongs moves.

the men that [were] in the houses near to Micah's house – various brethren, more or less distinguished in their service for God's people, gathered in the classes associated with the LHMM; even though they did not have a direct influence on things connected with the organisation of the LHMM, they were the first to notice the irregularities at work there. They were the first to discover:

- sectarianism and clericalism (taking control over the LHMM, leading to a change in the way the Epiphany work was run and organised; they understood what had happened in Micah's house);
- false teachings on justification and the CEC (the direction in which the Danites were moving);
- their present place in God's Plan (the place where they were, i.e. understanding the Bible type from the Book of Judges, revealing their true position before God).

Understanding this type is no distinction for anyone. God wanted the type to be revealed in such circumstances and in this way. For it to be understood, the one who protested was needed, and the one who called, and the one who revealed, and the one who gave up service, along with many other providential situations. If the Lord wants stones to speak, they will, and it will not be to their credit, but to the Lord's. Hence, those close to Micah had a full understanding of the situation.

Diversity of Micah's neighbours – despite wanting to live righteously, they are still imperfect, which makes itself manifest here in the different ways those desires are carried out. One can notice that imperfection at least in three kinds of actions:

- they allow themselves to think that if they themselves see some injustice, others should see it too (they want more or less to make others see through their eyes, not their own);
- they allow themselves to think that if they themselves act righteously, others should act as they do (they want more or less to make others act according to their wills, and not according to their own conscience);
- they do not undertake actions they are up to - due to their various weaknesses.

On this account, for some time there are some disagreements between them. They see the wrong and tend to think that if others do not see it, they are evil, too. They see the wrong and tend to think that if others do not resist it, they are evil, too. They see the wrong, but avoid taking action thinking that others better than themselves should deal with it. In the meantime, the Danites, taking advantage of the confusion involved, “safely” walk away and reorganize.

were gathered together – gathered in their mutual work of revealing the actual character of the recent developments. This activity was mainly carried out on the Internet (e.g. Facebook) and at non-sectarian, independent meetings;

they cried unto the children of Dan – started to rebuke them, called on them to respect the rules of righteousness, but in the Danites' eyes they were seen only as critics, people with an “evil spirit”;

And they turned their faces – the children of Dan stood like a wall protecting from rebukes and admonishment those whom they regarded as their spiritual fathers and those who were dumbly obedient to them;

said unto Micah – they ignored those close to Micah and their admonishment; however, it turned out that among the rebuking and admonishing ones there were some teachers of the general church (Micah) who had not protested before;

the children of Dan's question – they showed disapproval of the attitude of the teachers who rebuked them.

24-25. **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? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.**

Micah's reply – some (previously unresisting) teachers of the general church expressed their indignation at:

- their getting control over the Parousia and Epiphany Truth and its servants;
- their getting control over the office of the Executive Trustee;
- their advancing towards a change in the teachings on justification.

Also, they were outraged because only then did they discover they had become “prisoners” of the newly set up religious organization. They did not expect such ignorance and pride of the “Danites”;

Dan's reply – making use of their influence, they took away the voice (privileges) from those teachers of the general church (or made them silent with a threat of their losing such privileges).

26. **And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they [were] too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.**

the children of Dan went their way – further moves towards changing the teaching on tentative justification; in the LHMM literature published today this whole period (especially from Bro. Hedman's death) is called by themselves a “transformation period”, which it indeed is;

Micah saw that they [were] too strong – in their opinion, a fight to bring back the proper organisation within the LHMM was doomed to defeat;

he turned and went back unto his house – after proper repentance, a change in the way of acting, such (previous) general teachers went back to teaching in their own classes.

27-28. **And they [the Danites] took [the things] which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people [that were] at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire, And [there was] no deliverer, because it [was] far from Zidon, and they had no business with [any] man; and it was in the valley that [lieth] by Bethrehab. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.**

they took [the things] which Micah had made – they took what they had no right to take;

and the priest which he had – controlling the office of the Executive Trustee;

and came unto Laish – without any further obstacles in the way, they changed the teaching on justification;

they smote them with the edge of the sword – destroyed (in their opinion) the quasi-elect (with false Bible arguments);

burnt the city – changed the teaching on tentative justification;

And [there was] no deliverer, because it [was] far from Zidon – neither the world nor nominal Christianity understood the teaching on tentative justification, so nobody was able to help them;

they had no business with [any] man – the quasi-elect were not known as such in the world or nominal Christianity;

it was in the valley that [lieth] by Bethrehab – the city was not situated in the mountains (a place suitable for the consecrated), but in a valley which was joined to the “house of width” (an assembly of people who like following the broad road);

they built a city, and dwelt therein – they built their own sectarian system of doctrinal teachings in which they felt good.

The city of Laish once represented the sphere of teachings on the tentatively justified. Building the city of Dan in the same place suggests that the new teachings on tentative justification force such (*Dan - judgement*) to consecrate (even though in their hearts they didn't). Such “forced consecrators” pass for the consecrated (without being such), and live at the level much lower than that required of the consecrated. Thus, the consecrated ones who did not want to fight for their own inheritance (the tribe of Dan) can freely live below the standard of consecration, at the same time passing for consecrated ones. That's why their new inheritance is easier than the one they were to have conquered as the consecrated.

29. And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city [was] Laish at the first.

they called the name of the city Dan – (“judgement”) eventually, they polluted everything with their influence, so the city could no longer be associated with righteousness (*Laish – lion*);
after the name of Dan their father – Satan (comp. Gen. 49:17).

30. And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

set up the graven image – set up their own set of teachings and appointed teachers to preach them;

priests – they set up their own clerical, non-Levite order (Executive Trustee);

Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh – LS, presenting himself as the Gift from Jehovah, as one possessing authority from the Executive Trustee of the YW class (Gershom – “foreigner”), and as a representative of the CEC class (Manasseh – “forgetting”);

What happened to the Levite? – he disappeared without a trace, as RH fell ill and could not perform any further service;

and his sons – his successors, students (perhaps at least two after LS, or it pertains to his chief co-workers, e.g. DH, who in his reports, in the same spirit as LS, presented a distorted picture of the situation in Poland);

until the day of the captivity – the LHMM will survive in its perverted form until the time when religious systems are destroyed in the time of trouble.

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

set them up Micah's graven image – they considered themselves to be the owners of the Parousia and Epiphany Truth and teachers of the general church;

the house of God was in Shiloh – the true order accepted by God was in Shiloh (“place of rest”) – in the true justification doctrine;

all the time – God did not need them, nor did He want them to put any hindrance to the preaching of the true teaching on justification.

Part III – justification for the antitype suggested

There are many premises justifying the fact of connecting the story of Judges 17-18 with the developments that are now taking place among God's people.

Premise no 1 flows from Gen. 49:17, which connects the tribe of Dan with some part of God's people, attacking as they do the "horse" ridden by its "rider". A horse represents various Biblical teachings (especially those touching on the Ransom) guaranteeing that the Lord Jesus (the major executor of God's plans) will carry out the work of salvation. Biting those teachings represents various attacks on the Ransom, seemingly blocking its materialization. Though primarily it concerns Satan (and Judas, his major executor of the work), who by killing the "rider" (Jesus in the flesh) attempted to wreck the work of salvation, it also pertains to all those who are his followers (the Danites) in attacking the ransom teaching. Since 2004, in the LHMM literature and the teachings of its representatives, views have been coming up to the surface, attacking the ransom doctrine, especially through changing the teachings on tentative justification. Accordingly, one is warranted in the conclusion that there must exist people who in their actions are followers of Satan's course (the Danites).

Premise no 2 flows from the fact that the period described in Judges 17-21 covers a time referred to in a special way, "In those days [there was] no king in Israel, [and] every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes." (*Compare* 17:6; 18:1; 19:1). There's no denying that ever since 2004 nobody can claim any Biblical arguments proving he has been chosen by God to be the present leader of God's people. The reality existing ever since 2004 goes to strengthen the assumption that it might be antityped in the events described in this part of the Bible.

Premise no 3. The Scriptures do not always link the Danites with people who give up God's will. When some individuals from the tribe of Dan are mentioned by name, most often (not always) they are presented favourably. Hence, there are "good Danites", who have been used by God. From this vantage point, the people cooperating with them can also be called "good Danites" (since in helping Jesus acting through a "good Danite", they make it possible for God to credit the work to them as well), and when they break this cooperation for good, they can be called "bad Danites" (since in giving up helping Jesus acting through a "good Danite", they make it possible for God to regard them as unfaithful).

Such "good Danites" mentioned in the Scriptures are Samson (judge), Aholiab (Bezaleel's chief helper while erecting the Tabernacle and its furnishings), the artisan Hiram (a prominent helper to King Solomon and Hiram while working on Solomon's temple), Ahiezer (a prince of Dan). There are four other Danites mentioned by name: Hushim (Gen. 46:23, "acting unwisely"), Shuham (Num. 26:42), "a pit digger"), Bukki the son of Jogli (Num. 34:22, "a loss", an "outcast's" son), Azareel the son of Jeroham (1 Chron. 27:22, "who is helped by the strong one", "showing mercy"). With reference to the last one, Bro Johnson says that along with all of his tribe he represents the second death class in Bro. Russell's times (E 14, 293).

In the antitype pertaining to the Gospel Age, Samson represents "secondarily prophets" of the last four periods of the Church fighting against antitypical Philistines – sectarians oppressing God's people. In the antitypes pertaining to the Epiphany period, Samson represents Bro. Johnson fighting against sectarians oppressing God's people in the Epiphany period. Those who took part in the work, but eventually (especially after Samson's death) gave it up, seem to correspond to the actual Danites who, like their actual counterparts, turned out to be "bad Danites", deserting their inheritance.

Bezaleel represents the Lord Jesus in His function of building the Gospel Age Tabernacle (the Church) and its furnishings (teachings) – Ex. 31:2-6. His main helper in this work was Aholiab the Danite, who

represents all star members (including Bros. Russell and Johnson), used by the Lord as His special helpers in developing the Church and its teachings. Aholiab the Danite had his helpers, who were “especially, but not exclusively, the nonstar-membered general elders”, “writers instructed in the Kingdom who bring out of the treasury things new and old,” being general and special helpers of the seven star members (Matt. 13:52; electronic PTQB 394; BS 2001,3). The last of the star member’s helpers were Bros. Jolly, Gohlke, Hedman. And those helpers who gave up the work of helping the Lord and the star members in their work of building up the Church and its teachings became crown losers (or position losers), and if they did not return to the Lord, finally they became second death members or fully wilful sinners, i.e. “bad Danites.”

The artisan Hiram (not to be mistaken with Hiram the king) was a son of a Danite (2 Chron. 2:14). He represents Bro. Jolly as the executive in Divine matters. Just like in the previous cases, when the people who supported him (allowing the Lord to carry out through him the work assigned to him) left the Lord acting through Bro. Jolly, they became “bad Danites.”

Ahiezer was a prince of Dan and he represents the leaders of crown losers from the Baptist Church who made this church into a sect. Until 1917, crown losers had not been a separate class from the Little Flock, but together with them constituted the Church of the Gospel Age. That’s why it is possible to talk of them from this point of view as “good Danites”, who in spite of losing their crowns, after repentance did serve the Lord. They also had their helpers who remained “good Danites” as long as they supported them, helping the Lord do through them the work assigned to them; when they deserted the Lord acting through them, they became “bad Danites.”

In the picture of helpers to all these individuals one can recognize one general rule: the faithful retain their position before God, while the unfaithful (not repenting) not only lose the position held, but also become second death members (or prepare a place in it for themselves) as “bad Danites.”

Looking back at Bro. Hedman as a “good Danite” and his helpers, can’t the people who had been supporting the work he was supporting, but had deserted it and would not repent, be referred to as “bad Danites”? If someone proclaims himself to be the leader of God’s people without having any Scriptural proof, does such a one support or abandon the work carried out by Bro. Hedman? And do those who support such a self-appointed leader (especially prominent teachers) support or abandon the work carried out by Bro. Hedman? Reason and the facts go to show such ones as “similar to bad Danites”, at least until they embark on true repentance.

Premise no 4 making the suggested antitype of Judges 17-18 more realistic is connected with the above-mentioned antitype of Ahiezer the Danite and the stewardship doctrine of the Baptists, which is the following: “The Lord's people consist of those only who are justified and consecrated” (E 8, 383); it was that doctrine that was supported by Ahiezer the Danite with his helpers. Thus, the tribe of Dan is clearly linked with the teaching on who constitutes the real people of God (“only the justified and the consecrated”); that’s why those who change that teaching by saying that the “real people of God consist only of the consecrated, since every justified one that does not consecrate loses his or her justification” can be associated with “bad Danites.”

Premise no 5 is the use of another name for the city of Laish. In Joshua 19:47 it is called Leshem, meaning “precious stone, jewel”. Is the teaching of the ransom such a “precious stone?” If that “precious jewel” is indirectly being attacked now (through attacking the teachings on tentative justification), then it does make sense to associate the story of Judges 17-18 with the present developments among the Lord’s people.

Premise no 6 can be found in the interpretations recognised as the true ones, i.e. in harmony with the Scriptures, reason and facts, of the antitypes pertaining to Sidon and its neighbourhood. Judges 18:7 and 18:28 connect the possible suggested antitype of these chapters with the explanations by Bro. Johnson.

The name “Sidon” means “fishers”. Bro. Johnson associated the Sidonians with the Protestants, and the Tyrians with the Roman Catholics, seeing that Protestants (Sidonians) and Roman Catholics (Tyrians) brought large numbers of people enjoying vitalized justification. This context shows they are identified with the people providing those enjoying vitalized justification. The natural foregoer of vitalized justification is tentative justification, and the Bible, history and logic all prove that the numbers of those justified are much higher. According to Judges 18:7 and 18:28, the way of life of Laish residents in some respects resembled that of the Sidonians; hence one can conclude there is an indirect link here with tentative justification.

In E 10, 425, while commenting on Judges 3:1,3 (“Now these [are] the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them ... all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites”) Bro. Johnson wrote:

“In v. 3 three nations are mentioned apart from the five lords of the Philistines and in their order they represent the flesh, the world and the fallen angels, the latter being in harmony with Satan's empire, stretching from its religious to its secular aspects (v. 3). All these were by God designed to test His peoples between the Harvests and during the Epiphany as to whether they would be loyal to the truths and the spirit of the two Harvests (v. 4).”

Here the Sidonians are identified with the world, which as we know still exists as such, and is still one of the sources of testing our loyalty “to the truths and the spirit of the two Harvests.” Also, we can discern here some affinity to the tentatively justified, as all of them come from the world.

In the PT 1936, 118 (and 1920, 38; 1924, 22; 1930, 118), Bro. Johnson writes about Sidon and the other cities located in that region as of “a sphere out of harmony with the general trend of Nominal spiritual Israel, and yet ... more or less compromising (fishing, merchandising) with it.” That description is also indirectly linked with tentative justification.

The city of Laish is also situated near Lake Huleh, called “the waters of Merom”. In E 12, 521, Bro. Johnson pointed out that the waters of Merom well represent mankind in the state of perfection. Although it is a different picture, the location of the city of Laish (at the sources of the Jordan River) adjacent to the place which is a fit representation of the state of perfection also brings to mind a similar position before God, which essentially is a result of tentative justification.

While calling on the hard-hearted inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida to repent, the Lord Jesus compared them to the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, whose hearts were much softer (Matt. 11:21). Repentance is the first step leading to tentative justification, and what is of interest in this context is Jesus’ use of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon as those liable to repentance.

Premise no 7 can be found in the facts and happenings. For sure, there are facts which although unknown to the public may be revealed by those who were eyewitnesses to them or their participants. Things may surface which will confirm many details of the acts dealt with by the suggested antitype of Judges 17-18. Still, in addition to the unknown facts, there are those that are public knowledge, and they show that in 2004 RH, having the support of some of the pilgrims, took over the office of the LHMM Executive Trustee, and in 2007 proclaimed himself to be the leader of God’s people. Also, there are facts showing that LS, through usurpation, error and unrighteousness, is trying to make the office his own. In the teachings preached at LHMM conventions, and also in the PT and BS magazines published by the LHMM after 2004, one can hear and read errors concerning tentative justification, the Consecrated Epiphany Campers class, the quasi-

elect class, as well as those supporting clericalism and sectarianism. An example could be the PT 736 of 2011 (pp. 60-63) (written by RH), which among others contains (1) a suggestion that Bro. Jolly allegedly supported the view of all CECs having to die; (2) a suggestion about CECs' consecration placing an embargo on the ransom merit; (3) a suggestion that some "progressive truth" was about to be given on the last YW member; (4) support of the practice of sending a brother disfellowshipped from his own class with pilgrim visits to other classes, along with forcing the classes to accept his service; (5) a lie about Bro. Wayne.

Here is the background to Bro. Wayne: Due to the language barrier, Brother Wayne's parents (Polish people) attended a class which did not accept Epiphany teachings, but used Polish during the meetings. They did not have any other option, so they made use of what was available. Bro. Alex Wayne was never disfellowshipped from that class, but at some point was not elected elder in that class due to his belief that the High Calling was already closed and speaking out about it. Some time later, Bro. Johnson asked him to serve in the general church, even though in his own (non-Epiphany class) he had not been elected elder. The above information comes from Bro. Wayne's own testimony that he gave in his talks in Poland (the audio recordings are widely available). They can be compared with what was written about him in the said PT 736.

There have been more of such errors, misrepresentations and various suggestions. Also, the convention podium has been used many times to preach doctrinal and organizational error. LS has begun to officially call the LHMM "Jehovah's chariot" (by analogy with the way the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses is wont to refer to their organization), the channel, the Movement chosen by God here on earth to give the progressive Truth. Rules have been introduced which have no foundation in the Scriptures (e.g. the privilege of prayer at conventions only for the pilgrims and evangelists, and in the classes only for the elders and deacons), the classes have been told to be obedient to the servants of the general church (e.g. forced acceptance of pilgrims, including one that was disfellowshipped from his own class), fellow servants who dared to think for themselves "were smitten", disfellowshipped and called sifters, with their hearts being judged without any reasons being given for it, etc.

It is also remarkable that the major field of activity of the then Danites is connected with the Polish and English language sphere of the Parousia and Epiphany Truth. The Polish language sphere involves now the greatest number of brethren associated with the LHMM, so it seems quite reasonable to expect that many important experiences of God's people would be taking place in Poland, this fact bearing out the truth of this assumption.

As a matter of fact, the conformity of the suggested antitype of Judges 17-18 with the facts is one of the strongest premises in favour of its truthfulness.

Premise no 8 is worth considering, too. It's based on the examination of Rev. 21:8. There are eight attitudes mentioned there, which are manifested by the hypocrites (i.e. the Danites) in the trials of the Little Season. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Since part of the reward of the CECs is keeping them up in the trials of the Little Season (Is. 56:4,5), it is reasonable to suppose that what will keep them up is their character developed in today's experiences. It means that our trials are to a large extent similar to those in the Little Season, and the unfaithfulness of God's people manifested today is similar to that shown in the future. Of special interest is the attitude mentioned first, i.e. "the fearful", meaning cowardice. A fearful person allows his or her cautiousness to control their higher primary graces. Such a person waits on the Lord too much, and out of fear does not act wisely, justly or mercifully. Such a man is as guilty before the Lord as if he was

unbelieving, and abominable, and a murderer and a whoremonger, etc.”, and does not deserve to be rewarded with eternal life. Aren't the present experiences that we have been going through filled with loud calling for undue waiting on the Lord? Don't we hear such calls chiefly from prominent teachers of the general church?

It is the same with other attitudes which are described by Bro. Johnson in detail in E 16, 275; talking about the first of the attitudes in P 1, 107, Bro. Russell referred it to the present times, so we can do the same with the other ones. “If any, enlightened by the Truth, and brought to a knowledge of the love of God, and restored (either actually or reckonedly) to human perfection, become ‘fearful,’ and ‘draw back’ (Heb. 10: 38,39), they, with the unbelievers (Rev. 21: 8), will be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:23). This is the second death” (P1, 107). “The Revelator is mentioning various wrong characteristics which will be manifested by the incorrigible sinners in the Millennial Age, particularly at its end. The fearful are those who will not allow the spirit of love, which casts out fear (1 John 4: 18), to control them; the unbelieving – those who will not trust the arrangements of God for gaining everlasting life (Heb. 11: 6); the abominable – those who because of their wickedness will be an abhorrence to God (Rev. 21: 27); the murderers will be those who hate their brethren (1 John 3: 15), as well as those who will seek literally to murder the Ancient and Youthful Worthies at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20: 8, 9); the whoremongers – those who will be symbolic adulterers and fornicators (Ps. 73: 27; Eph. 5: 5), who will adhere to and bring the errors of the nominal church over into the Millennium; the sorcerers – the special propagandists of error (Rev. 18: 23); the idolaters – those who make idols of whomever and whatever they possess, or of friends, fellows, or recollections of the past life under sin (Col. 3: 5, 6; 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10); the liars – those teaching false doctrines (John 8: 44; 1 John 2: 22); all of these will “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (E16, 275).

Premise no 9, which can add strength to the suggested antitype of Judges 17-18, is the similarity between the position taken by Micah and Nicodemus in a similar situation. Nicodemus' fearful attitude is generally known. Pastor Russell wrote: “With pleasure we find Nicodemus, another wealthy and influential ruler of the Jews, associated with Joseph in caring for our Lord's body. We may be sure that these men received at the hands of the Lord special blessing because of the courage and zeal which they exhibited on this occasion. We may be sure that **those who are so fearful as to hold back when opportunities are offered for service to the Lord are unlikely to be approved of the Master and unlikely, therefore, to gain the great reward which he is now offering to victors.** To us the lesson in all this **is to be bold for the right, for the truth, for the Lord, for the brethren--at any cost.** Indeed, the more our courage and faithfulness to privilege and opportunity may cost us, the greater will be our reward, both in the present life and in that which is to come. This is the third mention we have of Nicodemus in connection with our Lord's ministry. First he visited Jesus by night, as recorded in John 3. Second, he cautiously interposed on Jesus' behalf when an attempt was made to seize the Lord, as recorded in John 7:44-52. And now, as someone suggests, he ‘improved a last opportunity for service with the bitter consolation of having failed where he might have done much.’ He was a rich man and brought an hundred Roman pounds (67 lbs. our weight) of myrrh, resin and pounded aloewood, aromatic and preservative, supposedly used by the Jews in wrapping up the dead. A lesson for us is that **we should not be content with neutrality in connection with the truth and its service. We should be positive as far as possible; we should take our stand for righteousness and do with our might on behalf of the Lord's cause and the Lord's brethren; while using wisdom and discretion, we should nevertheless be courageous.** We should bring our flowers to cheer and comfort in life and not wait until death has prevented an appreciation of these” (R 4173, 4174).

Bro. Johnson pointed out that Bro. Jolly was the antitype of Nicodemus (in matters connected with the cooperation with the antitypical Joseph of Arimathaea). To some extent Nicodemus, while being a

Sanhedrin member, allowed himself to associate with those who led to the Lord's death, putting their organization above Him. Nicodemus might have done much more, had he started acting when he should have, and with the courage he was capable of. But just like with those who repented in the suggested antitype of Micah, the repentance came too late to receive the blessings that had been available before. And in both cases it is the same – despite a loss of some blessings, after true repentance one can get some other, smaller ones.

Premise no 10 is somehow related to no 7, and is about one's personal examination if the fellowship we are in does not manifest features typical of Satan's kingdom. In each and every territory that Satan has succeeded in getting under his control, he introduced three characteristic rights thanks to which he has been able to rule. These are Divine right of the kings, aristocracy and clergy. The Divine right of the kings says that "the king can do no wrong" (meaning they do what God wants them to, with all their actions recognised by God), the Divine right of the aristocracy – "The aristocrats are the stewards and almoners of the Almighty" (meaning it is God's will that they possess and control all the earth, with others subject to them as servants and workers), the Divine right of the clergy – "the cleric is God's mouth and hand" (meaning that in religious matters God speaks and acts through the clergy, with laymen being obligated to believe and practice with blank and unquestioning minds whatever the clergy bind upon them). Are they not the three rights that have recently been preached from the rostrum? Many of the LHMM ministers preached (and still do) that everyone is to be blindly loyal to the Bible House, or they betray the Lord. They claimed and are still claiming that the LHMM is run according to the "master – servant" pattern, with servants having to unquestionably carry out their masters' orders, as in the military hierarchy. They have been saying that all that is done by the ET is as if God does it, seeing that if somebody is an ET, prior to this he must have been chosen to be the leader of God's people by God.

Below is a quote from E 4, 171: "The following is a partial list of the wrongs resulting from the doctrine of the Divine right of clergy: Priestcraft, pride, intolerance, hypocrisy, superstition, error, persecution of dissenters, blasphemy of the Divine Person, Character, Plan and Works, sanction of the wrongs of rulers and aristocrats, union of religions and states, secularization of religion, fomenting wars and national hatreds, rivalries, distrust and revenge, destruction of real religion, etc., etc. **Every one of these things is a violation of the Golden Rule, professedly accepted by the clergy, rests under the Divine disapproval, and is a demonstration of the error of the Divine right of the clergy.**"

Hence, the applicable question is: Do the effects of those satanic rights manifest themselves among the Epiphany God's people associated with the LHMM? If they do, it means that the LHMM has become a part of Satan's territory (and especially part of his spiritual "heavens"), which by the same token confirms the truthfulness of the suggested antitype.

Premise no 11 that might give credibility to the suggested antitype are the thoughts by Bros. Russell, Johnson, Jolly, Gohlke and Hedman related to the interpretation of Matt. 13:52, with reference to the "scribes instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven." The PT 1941, 13,198 explains the difference between speculative Bible study and "sudden illumination" of the mind on a given topic by God. In the PT 1950, 183 there is a suggestion as to what should be done by the one favoured with such an illumination. He should turn to the priestly mouthpiece for the matter to be examined, and only after he has approved it, can he pass it on to others. In the PT 1987, 45,46, Bro. Hedman explains the application of this rule for a time when Bro. Russell is no longer here, saying that "even though he should not have appointed another steward, he would yet use someone to bring forth such new things as he desired his family to eat. **Just so has our Lord been doing before and since His special steward died, and thus ceased being His steward.**" It seems evident then that God is not limited by the absence of a "steward", and should He desire to give something to His family, He will do it. The BS 1987, 13 draws attention to the character of the truths revealed in the

time of trouble, saying that God left some hard, troublesome truths for that period. They are especially destructive to Satan's empire, since the Lord Jesus destroys evil and evildoers, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 1:8). What should also be noted is the fact we were reminded of the Matt. 13:52 rule by Bro. Hedman shortly before his departure (PT 703, 42).

In harmony with the above, anyone receiving such a "sudden illumination" should be careful and ask for some critical evaluation from those possessing "Biblical authorization" (like Bros. Russell, Johnson, Jolly, Gohlke, Hedman), and should such a person not be available, he should consult other most prominent brethren known to himself, defending the principles of the Truth. In the author's opinion, such were some of the former pilgrims, willing to sacrifice their positions, reputations and respect to defend the rules of justice that were violated. That's why he first asked them for opinion. He listened to the advice to wait for some time with the publication, preferably for a year, so as to avoid unnecessary error or trial. The author concurred and shelved the whole thing with relief. In December 2015, without waiting for the demise of the previous ET, LS brashly nominated himself as the only candidate and ordered his election, claiming it is him who is the leader of God's people. As a result, at the US March 2016 convention, he received the necessary number of votes. Analysing the present run of events and providence, the author of this article came to the understanding that it seems to be the Lord's will that this interpretation should be presented to God's people now, before the last confirmation vote is taken on the ET.

The author did not come to understand this subject as a result of speculative Bible study. It happened suddenly, while he was preparing a regular talk for his class. After rejecting a few topics, he remembered how some weeks before a subtitle of some article had drawn his attention to the story of Micah, so he decided to read it (i.e. Judges 17 and 18). While doing so, he was intrigued by four things: (a) the phrase "at that time there was no king in Israel"; (b) "a young man, a Levite" becoming a priest in a way different from the priests of yore; (c) Micah's satisfaction with the new priest; (d) a new priesthood of Manasseh's tribe set up by the Danites. Then, he noticed Bro Johnson's explanation in E 10, 510 about the incorrect translation of v. 2 and 3, making the title Micah a thief, as well as reading the explanation of one of the antitypes concerning 1917-1919. When on doing so he started reading Micah's story again, suddenly, without any speculation, every successive verse associated itself with the present developments of which the author read, personally observed or experienced himself. All this (along with putting it intelligently into writing) happened within 24 hours, between 7 p.m. Sep.2 and 7 p.m. Sep.3 of 2015, and on the same night he sent it to one of the pilgrims asking him to read it.

Does the author think of himself as the leader of God's people? No, on the contrary! Each and every leader of God's people has Bible arguments proving that he is such an agent in the Lord's hand, and the author has none. Rather, he likes to think of himself in the context of Matt. 13:52 as an unprofitable servant, who cannot do anything more than was given to him. Also, he cannot explain why it was him that was distinguished, and not others, who are more faithful, more brave in their deportment, with more merits in fighting for the Truth. Maybe using someone prominent might trigger recognizing such a person as the "leader", instead of encouraging looking for other reasons of such God's leading.

Does the author think there are no more YW alive? No, since God has not revealed this important news to anyone yet. However, one might suppose that they are no longer able (chiefly due to age) to lead God's people. If God had chosen a leader (a general teacher, a guide for God's people) from among CECs (as LS claims of himself), then the living members of the YW class would find themselves under the leadership of a person from a lower class, which would contradict the rule of Heb. 7:7, of which Bro. Jolly (just like Apostle Paul) proved as being an eternal, unchangeable rule of God. If there is a leader (an individual appointed by God), then the rule of Heb. 7:7 works to the FULL, i.e. pertains to the leadership class

standing of the highest class alive (at any given time). That's why it is evident that at the moment no CEC could be appointed as a "special mouthpiece for God, guide and leader for God's people" (even the rebellious LS is afraid to claim there are no living YWs, although he does so through his usurpations). The rule of Heb. 7:7 cannot include cases of a "sudden illumination" (Matt. 13:52), since it does not make anyone a special mouthpiece for God, guide and leader for God's people, just as it didn't make such Bro. Barton, J.M. Edgar, P.S.L. Johnson and Stephen or those who received the gift of prophecy at the time of the primitive church, or just as it didn't make Balaam's ass a special mouthpiece for God. As a rule, "sudden illumination" is a special reward for the attitude and fighting so far (e.g. with demons or sifters), though it does not have to be so in this case.

The facts prove that as of 2004 the Lord God has not shown any new leaders for God's people, which may mean that God has no new truths to explain to His people, or that He has such truths, but wants to give them in a different way than before. Reason says the first option should be ruled out, as God always has truths which He has promised to reveal, seeing as the destruction of Satan's kingdom is being, and is to be, carried out through various kinds of Truth. It seems logical then to expect that God can give such new truth in a different way than before. The only other way known and explained is the one from Matt. 13:52. In this context, an examination of the developments since 2004 leads to the conclusion that the first serious mistake was made in 2004, when Bro. Hedman's demonstrated will was not respected - his will shown in his quite telling acts towards his special helper. The ET office went to the person who, as it soon turned out, manifested strong leadership ambitions and who did not respect the guidelines left by Bro. Hedman as to Matt. 13:52. As a result, any truth that God can give to various persons in harmony with Matt. 13:52 will be rejected by bad, usurping leaders (LS claims to be the only "channel" through which God can give anything); also, it will not be published by the LHMM, which most probably would not be the case, had Bro Hedman's real will as expressed in his actions been respected in 2004 as an indication from the Lord.

The history of God's people proves that all religious movements that Satan has been able to take control of have been transformed by him into organizations ("chariots"); to deceive their supporters, he started to give them false revelations. Probably, many of the future experiences of the CEC class will be connected with deciphering which message comes from God, and which does not. The way to an absolute and undisputed examination if something is the Truth or not is through the proper use of the seven Biblical axioms. Everyone is free to judge whether what he has heard or read is in line with God's Word, reason, facts; whether he hears in it the voice of the Good Shepherd. Also, it's worth remembering the warning that matters relating to the future are never fully understood, especially when they are connected to testing God's people.

The study method based on the seven axioms is described by Bro. Johnson in E 5, 477,478:

"First of all, Christ is made of God unto us wisdom. What does this mean? It means that He makes the consecrated wise. This is done by His acting as their Teacher. To teach means to cause another or others to know and understand. The teaching process implies two things: a teacher and a learner. No one teaches another unless he makes him know and understand. One may explain, prove, compare, contrast, argue and illustrate ever so well; but if he does not cause another to know and understand, he does not teach him. As our Teacher, our Lord does cause us to know and understand those features of God's Word and Plan that are due to be understood. The Faithful do take Him as their Teacher and do this especially in two ways: they learn from Him to know and understand the subject matter of His teachings—the various phases of the Truth that He teaches them—and they learn to know and understand these by the proper tests of Truth. Of course, He presents only Truth to them. Satan, however, presents to them a mixture of Truth and error. How may they know what things those are that come to them from Christ and what things those are that come to them through Satan? The Lord gives them certain axioms or criteria whereby the Truth or error on any

religious subject can be recognized by the Faithful. Harmony of thought is the heart of these axioms or criterions. This harmony must be established in seven respects; and if it is, a faithful follower of the Lord may be sure that he has the Truth on the subject so harmonized. A teaching, to be true, must be harmonious (1) with itself; (2) with every Scripture passage; (3) with every Scripture doctrine; (4) with God's character; (5) with the Ransom; (6) with facts and (7) with the objects of God's Plan. If any religious teaching impinges against any one or more of these axioms, it is thereby proven to be untrue. We know that an understanding of a subject is given us by Christ, our Teacher, when it is in harmony with these seven axioms, as we also know that an understanding of a subject is given us by Satan when it contradicts one or more of these axioms. The Faithful build upon Christ in wisdom as the Rock by subjecting every thought that is presented to them for acceptance to the acid test of these seven axioms and only then accepting it, if it stands this acid test (1 Thes. 5: 21; 1 John 4: 1-4; Ps. 45: 1; Is. 8:20; Matt. 4: 3-10; John 17: 17). Thus they build the faith part of their structure in the right way and out of the right materials, and thus and thus only do they build upon Christ in wisdom as the Rock. Accordingly, they do His sayings as to their taking Him to be their Teacher in wisdom.”

Surely, the Camp of the Epiphany period was not built by the priests or Levites. The major part of the work (based on the instructions received) was done simply by the Campers themselves – the Camp was built by the campers. The work of putting up the Tabernacle has been completed, that on the Court is in its final stage, and the most important, the most fundamental work to be done before the Kingdom is established remains putting up the Camp (consisting chiefly of the unconsecrated faith justified). Up to 2004, the LHMM had been a publisher, a business, a company whose main purpose of existence was to support the above-mentioned work. However, since 2004 it has become a religious organization, with self-exalting leaders, membership rights, etc. Instead of supporting the putting up of the Camp and preaching Christian liberty, it has started to transform into an enslaving system, restricting freedom and salvation. Such changes block an effective work on building the Camp. At some point, such an institution ceases to be useful to God. Since He does not do anything that He has not foretold in the Bible (Amos 3:7), so that those in full harmony with God may not be led into darkness, He will on occasion decipher a prophecy or a type by giving someone a “sudden illumination.” Maybe such knowledge will make it possible for those who are in full harmony with God to enter into real work related to the building of the Epiphany Camp, unrestricted with non-Biblical prohibitions? If it should be so, it will be **one more premise (no 12)** making the suggested antitype of Judges 17-18 a true reflection of the story; liberating God’s people to act more actively would be in line with the purposes of God’s Plan, which requires a complete erection of the pre-Millennial Epiphany Camp.

And maybe it will influence favourably the position and views of the brethren at the Bible House, who have caused so much suffering and scattered the flock. However, if their attitude remains stubborn, it may become a help to some brethren who may start to wonder whether it is not God’s will for them to separate themselves from such an organization. And to those who have already been scattered, or have made their own decision to leave, it may become a consolation from the Lord that they have made the right choice.

Summing up, we are among the last people on earth to understand the meaning of the Epiphany Truth, its value, depth, and harmony. The Epiphany people are not multiplying, but getting smaller with every passing day. How many are there who know it today – 1,000, 2,000? And how many of them do understand it? And how many are really obedient to it? Everyone who has come to know and understand the Epiphany Truth has found himself not only in a very distinguished situation, but also one marked with great responsibility, similar to which he or she will most probably never be in again before the Kingdom. The total sum of the knowledge, the experience, the work of all the star members, of all the Spirit-begotten ones, has been put in our collective hands. Why? Are we anybody special? Surely not, there are many great CECs in other groups

and denominations of Christendom. Still, it pleased God to do it this way, whether we realize it or not. What a great example of faithfulness it can make us if today we defend it and those who truly serve it! The whole of mankind will one day get the same Truth and will comprehend it. Also, their loyalty to, and appreciation of, it will be tested. Although today it is hard to imagine it, mankind will draw on the example and the strength of those who have a chance to become such an example today. Maybe that's the reason why they will lovingly come to recognize them as suitable princes of the ages to come (along with other CECs outside of the Epiphany Truth). And on the other hand, what a terrible example of unfaithfulness it can make us if today we will not defend it and those who truly serve it! The whole world of mankind may recognize it as an example comparable to the one who had been so long and so near the Lord Jesus while He was here on earth, but even so finally concluded some other ways were better. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin [is] a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

The history of God's people shows that many good and faithful children of God have remained in various religious systems. Sometimes they were deluded, sometimes they had social and family reasons, sometimes it was age, and sometimes not understanding the Lord's further steps; sometimes because of Adamic weaknesses, and sometimes simply because the Lord still needed them there. God knows our capabilities, our conditions, our conscience; He realizes fully what kind of frame we are. Speaking out what we believe to be the truth and what we believe to be error is always necessary, but that's almost all that we can do – one can't violate anyone's will. Each of us will give account to God of our own fight, our own choices, our own conscience, so it's always advisable to avoid judging anyone's heart (until God manifests His judgement).

As the last comment, I would like to quote severe, but full of love words by Bro. Jolly from the PT 1960, 59: "This one is quite ready to rush in where angels fear to tread, and to presumptuously take over "to a conclusion" Bro. Johnson's priestly ministry. (...) But the strangest and most astonishing thing to understand is how any who were once Epiphany-enlightened could fall for such sophistry and presumption and accept such an one as their leader. Why have they lost so much of the spirit of a sound mind? and why have their eyes waxed so dim that they cannot see?"

Whatever conclusions you arrive at, I believe that the Lord will show such a way to His children, and will provide such helps, as to lead us safely and successfully into His Kingdom. May all of us find ourselves there together, joined by faithfulness to the Lord, our Head.

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