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The Tribe of Dan
26: 42-43

The tribe of Dan DIG: What does the Second Census tell us about Dan's historical roots? Why did the tribe of Dan increase slightly from the First Census? Why did it move their territory from beside Ephraim and the Mediterranean Sea to the north? Why was Dan omitted from the 144,000 during the Great Tribulation?

REFLECT: What meaningful group are you a member of? How does being a part of it help to support you and make you grow spiritually? How does being a part of that group enable you to help others? What can you do to make sure that the positive parts of your past are accentuated in your relationship with God?

The steadfast love of ADONAI never ceases (Lamentations 3:22-23).



The First Census in the past found **the tribe** of **Dan** being **numbered at 62,700** (**to see link click Ak – Numbering the Tribes**). **Genesis 46:23** lists one **son** for **Dan**, namely, **Hushim**. It is unexpected that such a large **tribe** would be descended from only one **son**. The name **Dan** means *to judge*, and **Jacob** prophesied that **Dan** will **judge his people** as one of **the tribes of Isra'el (49:16)**. This is a play on words in Hebrew because here we learn that **Dan will judge his people**. The name **Dan** comes from the Hebrew verb *din*. So *yadin* here means *he will judge his people*. Interestingly enough, **he** will not only **be judged**, but **the tribe of Dan itself** would *be judged*. **Jacob** resorts to a metaphor to make **his** point. **Dan will be a judge** in a surprising way. **He will be a snake by the roadside** of the enemies **of Isra'el, a viper along the path that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward.** (see the commentary on **Genesis Lj – Dan Will be a Serpent by the Roadside, A Viper Along the Path**)**.** The imagery here seems to suggest that **Dan**, although small, will be quite capable of holding **his** own. In other words, **his strength** will be greater than **his** size. As small as **he** is, **he** will be able to strike panic into an animal as large as **a horse**.[597] We see much of this fulfilled in the exploits of **Samson**. After an impressive opening by **Dan**, however, we see the same gulf between the calling and the results that was seen in **Reuben's** disgrace.[598]

Just because his birth-mother was a maidservant did not mean he was some sort of second-class **son**. **He** was very important to the nation and history of **Isra'el**. The fact that **he** would **provide justice** was fulfilled by **Samson**, but the prophecy associated with **Dan** had nothing to do with territory **(Judges Chapters 13-16)**.[599] **The tribe** of **Dan** would provide many of the key **judges** in the book of **Judges**, with **Samson** being the most famous of that era. **He** had **his** ups and downs for sure, but in **his** grand finale **he** did the right thing and brought down the house. **Samson** was not always walking with **ADONAI**, but that's probably why **he** is in the TaNaKh. Like us, **he** was not sinless, but gave **his** life for the redemption of **Isra'el**. **He** is like that **snake** of **Dan**, biting at **the heels** of the enemy.

Then **Jacob** finished **his** prophecy by saying: **YHVH, I wait, I** expect, **I** long **for Your salvation** (Hebrew: *yeshuah*, meaning *salvation*) for the children of **Dan (Genesis 49:18). Jacob sensed the evils he foresaw that would rise up in the descendants of Dan; therefore, he expressed his confidence that they would receive the help of his God. The Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**) **interprets these words as being Messianic, and do not apply these words for the salvation of Gideon, the son of Joash, which is a temporal salvation; nor for the salvation of Samson the son of Manoah, which is a transitory salvation; but for the salvation that will come in Messiah the son of David, (which is eternal,) who shall bring the children of Isra'el to Himself.**[600]



2. The Second Census in the present: **The descendants of Dan** came from only **one clan: through Shuham, the Shuhamite clan. These were the clans of Dan. All of them were Shulamite clans, and those numbered were 64,400 (26:42-43),** an increase of **1,700** from **the First Census** (see **Ai – The First Census: The Old Generation of Rebellion**), or three percent. **The tribe** of **Dan** is not mentioned, only **the Shulamite clans**. Up to now **Moshe** had been dealing with **the tribal** names, but here **Moshe** goes away from the norm, because **the Shuhamite clan** was, in turn, **the Danite clan**. It was all the same.[601] The briefest description of all **the tribes** is given for **Dan**, and only **the clan** of **Shuham** is listed. Yet surprisingly, the total population is quite large, **64,000**, only **Judah**, with **76,500**, is larger. **Genesis 46:23** lists one **son** of **Dan**, namely, **Hushim**. The relationship of the words **Shuham and Hushim** is unknown (but these different names may have resulted from a transposition of some of the

Hebrew letters).[602] Although only one **clan** is mentioned here, it no doubt branched out into several smaller **sub-clans**, which are not mentioned here, simply because this list contains only **the** leading **clans** into which **the tribes** were divided. **Moshe's** prophecy about **Dan** was also the shortest of all **the clans, "Dan is a lion's cub, springing out of Bashan (Deuteronomy 33:22).** Comparing **Dan** to **a lion's cub** suggests the timidity and youthfulness of **the tribe**, but it showed great promise and great strength in **the far eschatological future**. **A lion's cub** grows up to be **a lion**!



During the period of **the judges**, when **Isra'el had no king (17:6, 19:2, 21:25)**, that lack of a central authority to muster an **Israelite** army no doubt aggravated the problem faced by **the tribe of Dan**, namely **Dan's** inability (or lack of faith) **to come into their inheritance** (see the commentary on **Judges Cb – The Migration of Dan to the North**). **The Danites** were being pushed by **the Amorites (Judges 1:34-35** and **Joshua 19:47)**, and later **the Philistines** (with the rest of **Isra'el** in **Judges 13:1, 14:4** and **15:11**) and forced to move further and further eastward into the territories of **Ephraim** and **Benjamin** (see the first map above). Because of **Dan's** cramped living conditions, **its people** decided to seek a new territory. **The Danites**, armed with **600 men for battle**, went north and destroyed **the peaceful and unsuspecting people of Laish, burning their city down.** More significantly (and sadly), **they** established a tribal center of

idolatrous worship under the priesthood of **Jontahan son of Gershom** (see **Au – The Clan of Gershom**). And when **Jeroboam** set up **his two golden calves** (see the commentary on **the Life of Solomon Dd – Golden Calves at Dan and Bethel**), one of **them** was in **Dan**. This descent into idolatry continued until the time of the **Assyrian** invasion and captivity of **Isra'el** in 722 BC **(Second Kings 17:6)**.[603]

3. The Messianic Kingdom in the future: The lists of names and numbers are the material and tangible signs of **God's** blessing, **God's** faithfulness to past promises, and the surety of **God's** future promise keeping (see **Ae – Stars of Heaven, Grains of Sand, and the Promises of God**). However, because **the tribe of Dan** introduced idolatry into the nation of **Isra'el**, that **tribe** is omitted from the **144,000** during the Great Tribulation (see the commentary on **Revelation Cr – Then I Heard the Number of Those Who Were Sealed, 144,000 from all the Tribes of Isra'el**). However, by the grace of **ADONAI**, **Dan** will be included in **the twelve tribes** of the Messianic Kingdom. **At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion (Ezeki'el 48:1-2** and **32)**. So, despite leading the nation of **Isra'el** into idol worship, **the LORD** will not cast **them** out. Moreover, during the Eternal State (see **Revelation Fq – The Eternal State**), **Dan's** name will be etched into one of **the** great **pearls** that will serve as **gates** to the **New Jerusalem** (see **Revelation Fu – A Great High Wall with Twelve Gates**). We will remember **him** for all eternity. However, like **Reuben**, **Simeon**, **and Ephraim**, our sins can have a long range, tragic consequences. Sin takes you further than we want to go, and costs us more than we want to pay. However, like **Dan**, all of our sins will be forgotten when we enter the future Messianic Kingdom and Eternal State. **The steadfast love of ADONAI never ceases (Lamentations 3:22-23).**

On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Isra'el (21:12). Those who believe in "Replacement Theology," (who believe that all of **ADONAI's** promises to **Isra'el** have been forfeited by **her** and given to the Church) have a tough time with this verse. For all eternity **the twelve tribes of Isra'el** will be remembered. **The LORD** has not replaced **Isra'el** with the Church. These **gates** will be an eternal reminder that it was through the faith of **Abraham**, **Isaac** and **Jacob**, with **the twelve** sons **of Isra'el** that the Gentiles first entered into the great family and **City** of **God**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** great love and holiness! Having a loving relationship with **You** as our Heavenly **Father** is so Awesome! There are*

many small joys in life, a good meal, a good friendship, a wonderful marriage, a great child, but all those very good things have only a very short earthly timespan. A wonderful relationship of love with ***You*** *will last for all eternity! Being strong in fighting for protection is a good characteristic to have, as* ***Moses*** *said of* ***the tribe of Dan*** *in his blessing* ***(Genesis 49:17).*** *There is a way of defense that is so much better and more effective than any skill of fighting that a man or tribe may have. The most important skill to have in fighting any battle, is a relationship of love and listening to* ***You****.* ***You*** *have never lost any battle that* ***You*** *wanted to win.* ***You*** *are Almighty!*

Having a relationship with you is of much greater value than being a good fighter. Though ***Dan*** *could fight well and win earthly battles,* ***he*** *lost the fight against sin when* ***he*** *established a tribal center for idolatrous worship. Earthly battles are nice to win, but they fade into the past so soon. Winning the battle against sin, by* ***Messiah's*** *righteousness, has value for all eternity!* ***Therefore He is also able to completely save those who draw near to God through Him, always living to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25). Your*** *children need to follow* ***David's*** *example of seeking* ***Your wisdom*** *before we try to decide on any action to solve a battle or problem. Thank you so much that when I am confused and don't know what to do,* ***You*** *have made several wonderful promises to me.* ***You*** *have promised to graciously give me* ***wisdom*** *when I ask for it.* ***But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all without hesitation and without reproach; and it will be given to him (James 1:5). You*** *have also promised that* ***You*** *will never leave me.* ***For God Himself has*** *said:* ***I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5c)****. Praise* ***You*** *always! In* ***Messiah Yeshua's*** *holy* ***Name*** *and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*