

-Save This Page as a PDF-

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).



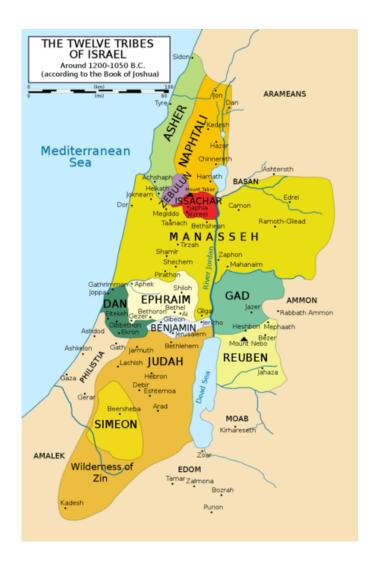


The First Census in the past found the tribe of Dan being numbered at 62,700 (to see link click Ak - Numbering the Tribes). Genesis 46:23 lists one son for Dan, namely, **Hushim**. It is unexpected that such a large **tribe** would be descended from only one **son**. The name **Dan** means to judge, 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 Li - 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 \mathbf{his} own. In other words, \mathbf{his} $\mathbf{strength}$ 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 secondclass **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**). 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

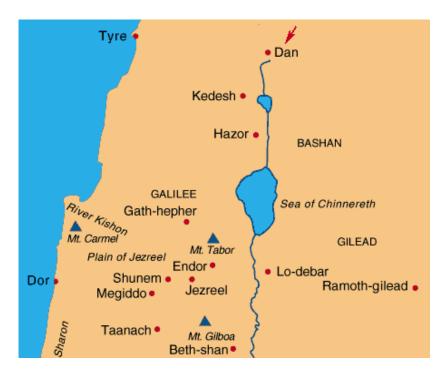




2. The Second Census in the present: The descendants of Dan came from only one clan: through Shuham, the Shuhamite clan. These were the clans of Dan. All of them were Shulamite clans, and those numbered were 64,400 (26:42-43), an increase of 1,700 from the First Census (see Ai - The First Census: The 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 Fg - 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