

Dan

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(Heb. id. דָּן, a judge; Sept. Δάν), the name of a man and his tribe and of two towns. *SEE MAHANEH-DAN; SEE DAN-JAAN.*

1. (Josephus translates Θεόκριτος, *Ant.* 1:19, 8.) The fifth son of Jacob, and the first of Bilhah, Rachel's maid (*Ge* 30:6), born B.C. 1916. . The origin of the name is there given in the exclamation of Rachel — "God hath judged me (דָּן־נִי, *danan'ni*)... and given me a son,' therefore she called his name Dan," i.e. "judge." 'In the blessing of Jacob (*Ge* 49:16) this play on the name is repeated — "Dan shall judge (דָּן־יָדִין, *yadin*) his people." Dan was own brother to Naphtali; and, as the son of Rachel's maid, in a closer relation with Rachel's sons, Joseph and Benjamin, than with the other members of the family. It may be noticed that there is a close affinity between his name and that of DINAH, the only daughter of Jacob. *SEE JACOB.*

⇒Bible concordance for DAN.

TRIBE OF DAN. — Only one son is attributed to this patriarch (*Ge* 46:23); but it may be observed that "Hushim" is a plural form, as if the name, not of an individual, but of a family; and it is remarkable whether as indicating that some of the descendants of Dan are omitted in these lists, or from other causes that when the people were numbered in the wilderness of Sinai, this was, with the exception of Judah, the most numerous of all the tribes, containing 62,700 men able to serve. The position of Dan during the march through the desert was on the north side of the tabernacle (*Nu* 2:25). Here,

with his brother Naphtali, and Asher, the son of Zilpah, before him, was his station, the hindmost of the long procession (**Nu 2:31; Nu 10:25**). The names of the "captain" (אִשָּׁר) of the tribe at this time, and of the "ruler" (the Hebrew word is the same as before), who was one of the spies (13:12), are preserved. So also is the name of one who played a prominent part at that time, "Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan," associated with Bezaleel in the design and construction of the fittings of the tabernacle (**Ex 31:6**, etc.). The numbers of this tribe were not subject to the violent fluctuations which increased or diminished some of its brethren (comp. the figures given in Nu 1; Nu 26), and it arrived at the threshold of the Promised Land, and passed the ordeal of the rites of Baal-peor (Numbers 25) with an increase of 1700 on the earlier census. The remaining notices of the tribe before the passage of the Jordan are unimportant. It furnished a "prince" (nasi, as before) to the apportionment of the land; and it was appointed to stand on Mount Ebal, still in company with Naphtali (but opposite to the other related tribes), at the ceremony of blessing and cursing (**De 27:13**).

After this nothing is heard of Dan till the specification of the inheritance allotted to him (**Jos 19:48**). He was the last of the tribes to receive his portion, and that portion, according to the record of Joshua — strange as it appears in the face of the numbers just quoted—was the smallest of the twelve. But, notwithstanding its smallness, it had eminent natural advantages. On the north and east it was completely embraced by its two brother tribes Ephraim and Benejamin, while on the south-east and south it joined Judah, and was thus surrounded by the three most powerful states of the whole confederacy. Of the towns enumerated as forming "the 'border' of its inheritance," the most easterly which can now be identified are Ajalon, Zorah (Zareah), and Ir-Shemesh (or

Beth-shemesh, q.v.). These places are on the slopes of the lower ranges of hills by which the highlands of Benjamin and Judah descend to the broad maritime plain, that plain which on the south bore the distinctive name of "the Shefelah," and more to the north, of "Sharon." From Japho — afterwards Joppa, and now Yafa — on the north, to Ekron and, Gathrimmon on the south—a length of at least fourteen miles that noble tract, one of the most fertile in the whole of Palestine, was allotted to this tribe. By Josephus (*Ant.* v. 1, 22, and 3, 1) this is extended to Ashdod on the south, and Dor, at the foot of Carmel, on the north, so as to embrace the whole, or nearly the whole, of the great plain, including Jamnia and Gath. (This discrepancy may be accounted for by supposing that the Danites at some period may have overrun the country thus far, when the Philistines were humbled by the powerful Ephraimites and the still more powerful David.) But this rich district, the corn-field and the garden of the whole south of Palestine, which was the richest prize of Phoenician conquest many centuries later, and which, even in the now degenerate state of the country, is enormously productive, was too valuable to be given up without a struggle by its original possessors. The Amorites accordingly "forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley" (**Jg 1:34**) — forced them up from the corn-fields of the plain, with their deep black soil, to the villages whose ruins still crown the hills that skirt the lowland. True, the help of the great tribe so closely connected with Dan was not wanting at this juncture, and "the hand of the children of Joseph," i.e. Ephraim, "prevailed against the Amorites" for the time. But the same' thing soon occurred again, and in the glimpse with which we are afterwards favored into the interior of the tribe, in the history of its great hero, the Philistines have taken the place of the Amorites, and

with the same result. Although Samson "comes down" to the "vineyards of Timnath" and the valley of Sorek, yet it is from Mahaneh-Dan — the fortified camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol, behind: Kirjathjearim — that he descends, and it is to that natural fastness, the residence of his father, that he "goes up" again after his encounters, and that he is at last borne to his family sepulchre, the burying-place of Manoah (Jg 14:1,5,19; Jg 13:25; Jg 16:4; — comp. 18:12; 16:31). It appears from that history that there was an under-current of private and social intercourse between the Philistines and the Danites, notwithstanding the public enmity between Israel and the former (Judges 13-16).

⇒ Definition of dan

These considerations enable us to understand how it happened that long after the partition of the land "all the inheritance of the Danites had not fallen to them among the tribes of Israel" (Jg 18:1). They perhaps furnish a reason for the absence of Dan from the great gathering of the tribes against Sisera (Jg 5:17). They also explain the warlike and independent character of the tribe betokened in the name of their head-quarters, as just quoted — Mahaneh-Dan, "the camp, or host, of Dan" — in the fact specially insisted on and reiterated (Jg 18:11,16-17) of the complete equipment of their 600 warriors "appointed with weapons of war," and the lawless freebooting style of their behavior to Micah. There is something very characteristic in the whole of that most fresh and interesting story preserved to us in Judges 18 — a narrative without a parallel for the vivid glance it affords into the manners of that distant time- characteristic of boldness and sagacity, with a vein of grim sardonic humor, but undeformed by any unnecessary bloodshed. In the "security" and "quiet" (Jg 18:7,10) of their rich northern possession the Danites enjoyed the leisure and repose which

had been denied them in their original seat. But of the fate of the city to which they gave "the name of their father" ([Jos 19:47](#)), we know scarcely anything. The strong religious feeling which made the Danites so anxious to ask counsel of God from Micah's Levite at the commencement of their expedition ([Jg 18:5](#)), and afterwards take him away with them to be "a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel," may have pointed out their settlement to the notice of Jeroboam as a fit place for his northern sanctuary. But beyond the exceedingly obscure notice in [Jg 18:30](#), we have no information on this subject. From [2Ch 2:14](#), it would appear that the Danites had not kept their purity of lineage, but had intermarried with the Phoenicians of the country. (See an elaboration of this in Blunt, *Coincidences*, pt. 2, ch. 4.)

In the time of David Dan still kept its place among the tribes ([1Ch 12:35](#)). Asher is omitted, but the "prince of the tribe of Dan" is mentioned in the list of [1Ch 27:22](#). But from this time forward the name as applied to the tribe vanishes; it is kept alive only by the northern city.' In the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 2 to 12 Dan is omitted entirely, which is remarkable When the great fame of Samson and the warlike character of the tribe are considered, and can only be accounted for by supposing that its genealogies had perished. It is perhaps allowable to suppose that little care would be taken to preserve the records of a tribe which had left its original seat near the head-quarters of the nation, and given its name to a distant city notorious only as the seat of a rival and a forbidden worship. Lastly, Dan is omitted from the list of those who were sealed by the angel in the vision of John ([Re 7:5-8](#)). — Smith, *Dict. of Bible*, s.v. Perhaps the portion of the tribe which remained south was in time amalgamated with the tribe of Judah (as appears in the cities enumerated after the exile, [Ne 11:35](#)), while the northern section united with the

northern confederacy, and shared in its dispersion.

The following is a list of all the places in the tribe of Dan mentioned in Scripture, with their probable identification:

Ajalon. Town. Yalo. Allon. do. *SEE ELON*. Arimathaea. do. Ramleh? Ataroth-Joab. do. Deir-Ayub? Ba'aiath. do. Deir Balut. Bene-barak. do. Buraka. Beth-car. Hill. . Beit Far? Beth-shemesh. Town. Ain Shems. Charashim. Valley. Wady Mazeirah]?

Ekron. Town. A kir. Elon. do. [Beit Susin]? Eltekeh. do. [El-Maans reh]? Eshtaol. do. Yeshua? Gath-rimmon. do. [Rafat.] Gibbethon. do. [Saidon]? Gimzo. do. Jimzu. Gittaim. do. *SEE ARIMATHIA*. Hadid. do. El-Haditheh. Heres. Mountain. *SEE JEATAM*. Ir-shemesh. Town. *SEE BETH-SHEMESE*. Jabniel, or Jabneh. do. Yebna. Japho. do. Yafa. Jearim. Mountain. [Hills W. of Wady Ghurab]. Jehud. Town. El-Yehumdieh. Jethlah. do. [Ruins N. of Latrum]? Joppa. do. *SEE JAPHO*. Lod, or Lydda. do. Ludd. Mahaneh-dan. Plain. W. of Kirjath-jearim? Makaz. District. E. of Ekron? Me-jarkon. Town. [Danniyal]? Neballat. do. Beit Nebala. Ono. do. Kefr-Auna. Rakkon. do. [Kheibehl? Seir [or Seirath?]. Mountain. Saris. Shaalbin. Town. [Beit Sira]? Sharon. Plain. Vicinity of. Ludd. Shicron. Town. [Beit Shit]? Timnah, or Timnath. do. Tibneh. Zorah, or Zoreah. do. Sura.

The mention of this tribe in the "blessings" of Jacob and Moses must not be overlooked, but it is difficult to extract any satisfactory meaning from them. According to Jewish tradition, Jacob's blessing on Dan is a prophetic allusion to Samson, the great "judge" of the tribe; and the ejaculation with which it closes was that actually uttered by Samson when brought into the temple at Gaza. (See the Targum Ps. Jonathan on [Ge 49:16-17](#); and the quotations in Kalisch's *Genesis ad loc.*) Modern critics likewise see an allusion to Samson in the terms of the blessings which they presume on

that account to have been written after the days of the Judges (Ewald, *Gesch.* 1:92). Jerome's observations (*Qu. in Gen.*) on this passage are very interesting. Herder's interpretation as given by Stanley (*Palestine*, p. 388) is as follows: "It is doubtful whether the delineation of Dan in Jacob's blessing relates to the original settlement on the western outskirts of Judah, or to the northern outpost. Herder's explanation will apply almost equally to both. 'Dan,' the judge, 'shall judge his people;' he the son of the concubine no less than the sons of Leah; he the frontier tribe no less than those in the places of honor shall be 'as one of the tribes of Israel.' 'Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path,' that is, of the invading enemy by the north or by the west, 'that biteth the heels of the horse,' the indigenous serpent biting the foreign horse unknown to Israelite warfare, 'so that his rider shall fall backwards.' And his war-cry as from the frontier fortresses shall be, 'For Thy salvation, O Lord, I have waited!' In the blessing of Moses the southern Dan is lost sight of. The northern Dan alone appears, with the same characteristics, though under a different image; 'a lion's whelp' in the far north, as Judah in the far south: 'he shall leap from Bashan' — from the slopes of Hermon, where he is couched watching for his prey."

2. (Josephus τὸ Δάνιον,) The city so familiar as the most northern landmark of Palestine in the common expression "from Dan even to Beersheba." The name of the place was originally LAISH or LESHEM (*Jos* 19:47). Its inhabitants lived "after the manner of the Zidonians," i.e. engaged in commerce, and without defense. But it is nowhere said that they were Phoenicians, though this may perhaps be inferred from the parentage of Hiram — his mother "of the daughters of Dan," his father "a man of Tyre" (*2Ch* 2:14). They seem to have derived their security from the absence of any adverse

powers in their neighborhood, and from confidence in the protection of Sidon, which was, however, too far off to render aid in the case of such a sudden assault as that by which they were overpowered. This distance of Sidon was carefully noted by the Danite spies as a circumstance favorable to the enterprise; and it does not appear that Sidon ever made any effort to dispossess the intruders. Living thus "quiet and secure," they fell an easy prey to the active and practiced freebooters of the Danites. These conferred upon their new acquisition the name of their own tribe, "after the name of their father who was born unto Israel" (Jg 18:29; Jos 19:47), and Laish became Daniel. The graven image which the wandering Danites had stolen from Micah they set up in their new home, and a line of priests was established, which, though belonging to the tribe of Levi and even descended from Moses, was not of the family of Aaron, and therefore not belonging to the regular priesthood. To the form of this image and the nature of the idolatry we have no clew, nor to the special relation which existed between it and the calf-worship afterwards instituted there by Jeroboam (1Ki 12:29-30). It only appears that Jeroboam took advantage of the confirmed idolatry of the Danites (Jg 18:30), erected a temple in their city, and set up there one of his golden calves for the benefit of those to whom a pilgrimage to Jerusalem would not have been politic, and a pilgrimage to Bethel might have been irksome (1Ki 12:28). The latter worship is alluded to in Am 8:14 in a passage which possibly preserves a formula of invocation or adjuration in use among the worshippers; but the passage is very obscure. The worship of the calf may be traced to this day in the secret rites of the Nosairian Druse saints of the vicinity (Newbold, *Jour. As. Soc.* 16:27). After the establishment of the Danites at Dan it became the acknowledged extremity of the country, and the formula "from Dan even to Beersheba" is

frequent throughout the historical books (Jg 20:1; 1Sa 3:20; 2Sa 3:10; 2Sa 17:11; 2Sa 24:2,15; 1Ki 4:25). In the later records the form is reversed, and becomes "from Beersheba even to Dan" (1Ch 21:2; 2Ch 30:5). It is occasionally employed alone in a somewhat similar meaning; thus, in Jer 8:16, "The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan; the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones" (also 4:15). Dan was, with other northern cities, laid waste by Benhadad (1Ki 15:20; 2Ch 16:4), and this is the last mention of the place.

Various considerations would incline us to the suspicion that Dan was a holy place of note from a far earlier date than its conquest by the Danites. These are:

(1.) The extreme reluctance of the Orientals — apparent in numerous cases in the Bible — to initiate a sanctuary, or to adopt for worship any place which had not enjoyed a reputation for holiness from pre-historic times.

(2.) The correspondence of Dan with Beersheba in connection with the life of Abraham — the origin of Beersheba also being, as has been noticed, enveloped in some diversity of statement.

(3.) More particularly its incidental mention in the very clear and circumstantial narrative of Ge 14:14, as if well known even at that very early period. Its mention in De 34:1, is also before the events related in Judges xviii, though still many centuries later than the time of Abraham. But the subject is very difficult, and we can hardly hope to arrive at more than conjecture upon it. With regard to Ge 14:14, three explanations suggest themselves.

a. That another place of the same name is intended. (See Kalisch, *ad loc.* for an ingenious suggestion of Dan-jaan). Against this may be put the belief of Josephus (comp. *Ant.* 1:10, 1, with v. 3, 1) and of Jerome (*Onomast.* s.v. Laisa, comp. with *Quaest. Hebr. in Genesim*, 14:14), who both

unhesitatingly identify the Dan near Paneas with the Dan of Abraham.

b. That it is a prophetic anticipation by the sacred historian of a name which was not to exist till centuries later, just as Samson has been held to be alluded to in the blessing of Dan by Jacob. **c.** That the passage originally contained an older name, as Laish; and that, when that was superseded by Dan, the new name was inserted in the MSS. This last is Ewald's (*Gesch.* 1:73), and of the three is the most feasible, especially when we consider the characteristic, genuine air of the story in Judges, which fixes the origin of the name so circumstantially. Josephus (*Ant.* v. 3, 1) speaks positively of the situation of Laish as "not far from Mount Libanus and the springs of the lesser Jordan, near (κατὰ) the great plain of the city of Sidon" (compare also *Ant.* 8:8, 4); and this, as just said, he identifies with the Dan in [Ge 14:14](#) (*Ant.* 1:10, 1). In consonance with this are the notices of Jerome, who derives the word "Jordan" from the names of its two sources. In [De 34:1](#), also, we find the phrase "all the land of Gilead unto Dan" employed by Moses some fifty years before the conquest of Leshem. The locality of the town is specified with some minuteness. It was "far from Zidon," and "in the valley (קִנְעָ, *Emek*) that is by (בְּ) Beth-rehob;" but as this latter place has not been identified with certainty, the position of Dan must be ascertained by other means. Josephus says that it stood at the "lesser" fountain of the Jordan . . . in the plain of Sidon, a day's journey from that city, and that the plain around it was of extraordinary fertility (*Ant.* 1:10, 1; v. 3, 1; 8:8, 4; *War*, 4:1, 1). Eusebius and Jerome are still more explicit — "A village, *four miles distant from Paneas*, on the road leading to Tyre; it was the boundary of Judaea (ὄριον τῆς Ἰουδαίας), and at it the Jordan took its rise." Jerome adds, "De quo et Jordanis flumen erumpens a loco sortitus est nomen. *Jor* quippe

ῥεῖθρον, id est, fluvium sive rivum Hebraei vocant" (*Onomast.* s.v. Dan). Some writers, both ancient and modern, have confounded Dan with Paneas or Caesarea Philippi (Philostorgius, *History*, 7:3; *Theodoret in Genes.*; Sanson, *Geog. Sac.* s.v.; Alford on [Mt 16:13](#)). This error appears to have arisen chiefly from indefinite remarks of Jerome in his commentary on [Eze 48:18](#): "Dan . . . ubi hodie Paneas, quae quondam Caesarea Philippi vocabatur;" and on Amos viii, "Dan in terminis terrae Judaicae, *ubi nunc Paneas est.*" It is plain from Jerome's words in the *Onomasticon* that he knew the true site of Dan, and therefore these notices must be understood as meaning that Caesarea Philippi was in his days the principal town in the locality where Dan was situated, and that both were upon the border of Palestine. The Jerusalem Targum calls it "Dan of Caesarea," intimating its vicinity to the latter (on [Ge 14:14](#); see Reland, *Palaest.* p. 919-21). In perfect agreement with this is the position of Tell el-Kadi, a mound from the foot of which gushes out "one of the largest fountains in the world," the main source of the Jordan (Robinson, *Later Res.* 3, 390-393). The tell itself, rising from the plain by somewhat steep terraces, has its long, level top strewn with ruins, and is very probably the site of the town and citadel of Daniel. The spring is called el-Leddān, possibly a corruption of Dan (Robinson, 3, 392), and the stream from the spring Nahr ed-Dhan (Wilson, 2:173), while the name, Tell el-Kadi, "the Judge's mound," agrees in signification with the ancient name. Those who have visited it give the exact agreement of the spot with — the requirements of the story in Judges 18 — "a good land and a large, where there is no want of anything that is on the earth" (Thomson, *Land and Book*, 2:320). Tell el-Kady is cup-shaped, resembling an extinct crater, and is covered with a dense jungle of thorns, thistles, and rank weeds. Its circumference is about half a mile, and its

greatest elevation above the plain eighty feet. There are some traces of old foundations, and heaps of large stones on the top and sides of the southern part of the rim, where perhaps the citadel or a temple may have stood. There are also ruins in the plain a short distance north of the tell. There are doubtless other remains, but they are now covered with grass - and jungle. At the western base of the tell is the great fountain, and there is a smaller one within the cup, shaded by noble oak-trees (Porter, *Damascus*, 1:303). About a quarter of an hour north, Burckhardt noticed ruins of ancient habitations and the hill which overhangs the fountains appears to have been built upon, though nothing is now visible (Burckhardt, *Syria*, p. 42; Robinson, *Researches*, 3, 351-358).

3. "Dan also" stands in the A.V. as the rendering of דַּן (*Vedan*, lit. *and Dan*; Sept. translates undistinguishably), an Arabian city mentioned in [Eze 27:19](#) as a place from which cloths, wrought iron, cassia, and other spices were brought to Tyre. By it is probably meant the city and mart of *Aden*, in connection with which Edrisi enumerates these very wares: "The town of Aden is small, but celebrated for its seaport, from which vessels sail bound for India, China, and neighboring countries, returning with cargoes of iron, Damascus sword-blades... cardamom, cinnamon . . myrobolan... and various kinds of rich figured and velvet stuffs" (i. 51). (See M'Culloch's *Gazetteer*, s.v. Aden). **SEE [VEDAN](#).**