## A Good Dan is Hard to Find

Joshua 19:40-48;

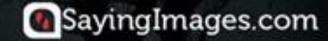
Judges 18:1-20, 27-31

# easy Way EXIT

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

APATHY IS THE
GLOVE INTO
WHICH EVIL
SLIPS ITS HAND.

BODIE THOENE



Joshua 19:41-46 lists 18 cities in Dan's tribal allotment, including the port city of Joppa.

It is a fertile and beautiful allotment of land.

#### **ANCIENT ISRAEL** • ljon ARAM Tyre Dan • NAPHTALI Kedesh • Hazore Merom • MANASSEH Acco • Cabul Rimmon . Golan . Ashtaroth ZEBULUN TRIBES Megiddo Dor | **ISSACHAR** • Edrei Jezreel Ramoth Gilead Beth Shan . Jabesh Gilead MANASSEH Tirzah Samaria • Shechem Succoth Joppa Shiloh . GAD River **EPHRAIM** DAN AMMON Mizpah Bethel Kiriath Jearim BENJAMIN Jerusalem Heshbon Bezer Ashdod Gath Beth Shemesh Bethlehem Ashkelon REUBEN Lachish • Hebron Dibon Gaza JUDAH Aroer En Gedi • • Gerar • Ziklag Beersheba • Hormah MOAB SIMEON **EDOM**

#### <u>Joshua 19:47a</u> "The territory of the sons of Dan proceeded beyond them"

34 Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley



# The Kest



#### <u>Joshua 19:47b</u>

"for the sons of Dan went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father."

"In those days there was no king of Israel and in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for themselves to live in, for until that day an inheritance had not been allotted to them as a possession among the tribes of Israel."

#### The Tribe of Dan JISHUA

Is the epitome of spiritual impatience, apathy, and unfaithfulness.

And therefore, it is no surprise that they are also characterized by spiritual compromise, idolatry, and willful disobedience to God.

#### <u>Judges 18:2</u>

"So the sons of Dan sent from their family five men out of their whole number, valiant men from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to search it; and they said to them, "Go, search the land." And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there."

3 When they were near the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young man, the Levite; and they turned aside there and said to him, "Who brought you here? And what are you doing in this place? And what do you have here?"

#### They Question the Levite JUSHUA

Who Brought You Here?
What Are You Doing In This Place?
What Is Your Business Here?

The irony here is that the Levite could ask the Danites the very same questions...

4 He said to them, "Thus and so has Micah done to me, and he has hired me and I have become his priest. 5 They said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous."

- "Inquire of God" (NASB, ESV)
- "Ask counsel of God" (KJV)
- "Seek a divine oracle for us" (NET)

The NET translation shows us that this is not a pious inquiry of the God of Israel.

The generic "elohim" is employed for God, as the Danites seek an oracle from heaven.



The priest said to them, "Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the Lord's approval."

#### <u>Judges 18:7</u>

"Then the five men departed and came to Laish and saw the people who were in it living in security, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure; for there was no ruler humiliating them for anything in the land, and they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone."

- Located at the foot of Mount Hermon and fed by several springs that feed into the Jordan, it was one of the most fertile regions in the country.
- The people are described as "quiet," and "secure," and "there was no ruler" in the land.
- Their location seems to have provided geographical separation from other nations, for they "had no dealings with anyone."







8 When they came back to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, "What do you report?" 9 They said, "Arise, and let us go up against them; for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good. And will you sit still? Do not delay to go, to enter, to possess the land. 10 When you enter, you will come to a secure people with a spacious land; for God has given it into your hand, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth."

- 1. The land is "very good" / beautiful
- 2. The people are secure / unsuspecting
- 3. The land has plenty of room for them all
- 4. The land has plenty of resources for all

This is sort of a perverse version of the Hebrew spies who went into Canaan.

Notice: JOSHUA

#### 1. "Arise"

- Joshua 1:2 "arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving..."
- 2. "the land...is very good"
  - Deuteronomy 8:7 "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land..."
- 3. "do not delay"
  - Joshua 18:3 "How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

"for God has given it into your hand"

They are claiming a promise from "God." But this is not the God of the Conquest.

In Joshua, God is never identified without the use of His covenant name: Yahweh.

11 Then from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men armed with weapons of war set out.

# Not all of the Danites head north.



#### <u>Judges 18:12-13</u>

"They went up and camped at Kiriathjearim in Judah. Therefore they called that place Mahanehdan to this day; behold, it is west of Kiriath-jearim. They passed from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah."

14 Then the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish said to their kinsmen, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod and household idols and a graven image and a molten image? Now therefore, consider what you should do."

### Judges 18:15-19

#### A Promotion for the Levite JISHUA

"come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be a priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?"

This rhetorical question doesn't require an answer, especially for a self-serving, opportunistic Levite.

He is basically made Pope over the tribe of Dan.

20 The priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod and household idols and the graven image and went among the people.

#### Judges 18:27-28a

27 Then they took what Micah had made and the priest who had belonged to him, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure, and struck them with the edge of the sword; and they burned the city with fire. 28 And there was no one to deliver them, because it was far from Sidon and they had no dealings with anyone, and it was in the valley which is near Beth-rehob.

## The Danites "Rest" on:

- JOSHUA
- 1. The "gods" that Micah had made and they had stolen
- 2. A priest whom they bought
- 3. A city so weak that its inhabitants could not defend it

It is on these flimsy foundations the Danites built their future in the North.

# Judges 18:28b-29

28b And they rebuilt the city and lived in it. 29 They called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father who was born in Israel; however, the name of the city formerly was Laish.





### Recall Genesis 49:16-17

16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. 17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

# Judges 18:30a

30 The sons of Dan set up for themselves the graven image

The city of Dan becomes a primary cult center, without any consideration of the Tabernacle as a central worship location or the construction of graven images.

This will continue after the kingdom divides under Jeroboam.





# Judges 30b-31

30b and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up for themselves Micah's graven image which he had made, all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh.

If you have an ESV, you will see a different name in v. 30 instead of Manasseh.

Moses

- "the son of Gershom"
  - Exodus 2:22 "Then she [Zipporah] gave birth to a son, and he [Moses] named him Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

It is shocking to see Moses' name here, and it shows that the idolatry in Israel was so great, even the household of Moses had been impacted.

### A Final Observation

Jonathan and his descendants served as priests of the tribe of Dan at this cult site until the day the land went into captivity.

2 Kings 15:29 tells us that Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria took the population of Dan into exile in 734 B.C.

We are prone to pursue lives of ease rather then faithfulness.

It is so tempting to carve out a Laish for ourselves – a quiet place where we can live in affluence and forget about the world outside, the growing opposition to the gospel, and the radical claims of the Lord Jesus Christ on our lives.

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline,

Communion without confession...

Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."



### DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

German pastor, theologian, and martyr
1906-1945

# You must worship the idols to live there.



- Matthew 10:22 You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.
- Matthew 24:9 Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.
- John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

- No consistent Bible-believer can live a life of spiritual laziness.
- No recipient of grace from the cross of Christ can retire and live apart from their faith.
- If you want to live a life of spiritual ease, you will need to find a different path than biblical Christianity.

- A tribe who were unable to claim a relatively small territory in which no city was larger than Laish.
- But a small band of 600 managed to march all the way to the northernmost reaches of the Promised land and apparently take this city without difficulty.
- The rest of the tribe of Dan disappears from history...

### When the Tribes of Israel JISHUA

- Are listed at the beginning of 1 Chronicles,
   Dan is the only tribe that is totally ignored.
- In Revelation 7, we are introduced to the 144,000 Hebrew believers; Dan is not represented.
- They are the ultimate example of the curses of the book of Deuteronomy played out in the history of Israel, and they are the epitome of unfaithfulness.

# JOSHUA