



BETHEL AG CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE



THE TRIBE OF ZEBULUN



ISSACHAR

DAN



TRIBE OF ZEBULUN, ISSACHAR AND DAN

	Zebulun	Issachar	Dan
Meaning of Name:	Dwelling	There is a reward	Judge
Family:	10th son of Jacob born to Leah	9th son of Jacob born to Leah	5th son of Jacob born to Rachel's handmaid Bilhah
Jacob's Blessings:	Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships (Gen. 49:13)	<i>Issachar is a sturdy donkey.... will submit himself to hard labour</i> (Gen. 49:14-15)	<i>Dan will judge his people.... He will be snake beside the road</i> (Gen. 49: 16-18)
Moses' Blessings:	<i>Zebulun and Issachar will 'feast on the abundance of the seas, and on the treasures hidden in the sand'</i> (Deut. 33:18-19)	<i>Mentioned along with Zebulun as tribes who will "feast on the abundance of the seas and on the treasures hidden in the sand."</i> (Deut. 33:18-19)	<i>"Dan will be a lion's cub, springing out of Bashan."</i> (Deut. 33:22)
Notable men:	Warrior men	Men who understood the times & seasons	Samson

Tribe of Zebulun

What was Jacob's prophecy over Zebulun and its meaning?

Zebulun was the 10th son of Jacob, the 6th borne to him by Leah. Nothing is known of this patriarch's life with reference to his brethren.

Jacob prophesied to him as '*Zeubulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships, and his border shall be unto Sidon*' **Genesis 49:13**

The prophecy speaks of the tribe of Zebulun as maritime traders. But their tribal boundaries were landlocked as they lived between the seas of the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee (see **Joshua 19:10-16**).

They were heavily involved in commercial ventures. Later, Moses' blessing on the tribe (in Deuteronomy 33) reflects this characteristic. Among other things, he says, *"for they (Zebulun) shall draw the abundance of the seas, and treasures hidden in the sand."* (**Deuteronomy 33:19**)

Are there any notable events with the tribe of Zebulun?

In scripture, the most famous Zebulunite was Elon, who judged Israel for 10 years (**Judges 12:11-12**). The tribe as a whole is mentioned (**Judges 5**) in "Song of Deborah and Barak" for their willingness to *volunteer for the battle*. Particular honor was accorded to Zebulun: *"Zebulun and Naphtali were a people who jeopardized their lives unto death in the high places of the field"* (**Judges 5:18**). This testimony of bravery and willingness, of the Zebulunites, to risk their own lives for God's cause, serves as a stirring example to today's soldiers for Christ.

Also, Zebulunites had singleness of heart or an undivided heart to serve God. Here's what Scripture said about them: *"Of Zebulun, there were 50,000 men who went out in the army, who could draw up in battle formation with all kinds of weapons of war and helped David with an undivided heart."* (**1 Chronicles 12:33**) The men of Zebulun were disciplined. They recognized authority and submitted to it. They had singleness of purpose and allowed no distractions.

Practical applications from the tribe of Zebulun

1. Prosper where God placed you: Zebulun understood their call and destiny for life with their own gifts and abilities. They did not complain because they were placed between the seas. They knew how to prosper where God placed them. The tribe prospered in trade and commerce, which fulfilled the prophecy: to reap treasures from the sea.

2. Singleness of heart yields wholesomeness in life: The apostle Paul said, *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead ..."* (**Philippians 3:13**). Also in **Matthew 5:8** says, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

Tribe of Issachar

What was Jacob's prophecy over Issachar and its meaning?

Issachar was the 9th son of Jacob, the 5th borne to him by Leah. Even less is known about Issachar than his brother Zebulun. Jacob prophesied to him as *"Issachar is a raw-boned donkey lying down between two saddlebags. When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labour."* **Genesis 49:14-15**

To call Issachar a donkey was not a derogatory remark. In those days, donkeys were valued creatures; they were used as a beast of burden and for transport. The comparison of Issachar to "a rawboned donkey" is most appropriately viewed as a description of the strength of Issachar.

Are there any notable events with the tribe of Issachar?

The Judge, Tola, was from the tribe of Issachar (**Judges 10:1**). The men of Issachar stood with David when the kingdom was taken from Saul (**1 Chronicles 12:32,40**). And, at the command of the Lord, it was Baasha of the house of Issachar who struck down evil King Nadab, son of Jeroboam (**1 Kings 15:27**).

There are evidences of pockets of strength in the song of Deborah after the defeat of the Midianites. Issachar's contribution to the victory is recognized as that of a reliable backup. Issachar princes rallied to Deborah, Issachar stood fast with Barak, backing him up on the field of battle. (**Judges 5:15**)

Issachar is described to have possessed wisdom and understanding of the times; *"Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their kinsmen were at their command"*. (**1 Chronicles 12:32**). They had a special ability to discern the times and seasons of God's activity for Israel. They provided direction for Israel through their influential leadership. They had a sense of what to think, how to act, and the manner in which to respond ... i.e. the role their lives had to play in light of the moment in which they lived.

The second part of Jacob's blessing implies that, with the enticement of a resting place, Issachar would not mind submission to forced labour. These individuals are those characterized with the ability to discern the times and to know what needs to be done, but not doing it. They are content to be like donkeys that lie down between two saddlebags-of burdens of responsibility and work that is theirs-and yet leave it for somebody else. Issachar's land was fertile and pleasant, (**Joshua 19:17-23**). Due to the fertility of the land, invading armies would find this a soft target with little resistance from a laid back Issachar. The tribe had strong characteristics but their passive and laid back attitudes made them forced labourers.

Practical applications from the tribe of Issachar

1. We as believers must understand / discern to live for Christ in this perverted culture: It is an important thing to understand the times in which we live, and to know what those times require with the help of the Holy Spirit (Esther 1:13; Matthew 16:3; Luke 19:44). We no longer look at things from the limited perception of our own experiences, but must be able to discern matters from the point of God's Holy Word.

2. Be committed to diligence: Knowing information is one thing. Having the wisdom to know what to do with that knowledge is immensely valuable. The Book of Proverbs records many warnings against slothfulness, and throughout Scripture we find instructions to live with diligence. **Hebrews 11:6** shows that God takes diligence seriously: *"He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

Proverbs 4:23, *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life".*

3. At all cost, avoid comfort zone: According to brain science, almost all people like to remain in their comfort zone because our brain is wired not to take any discomfort or risks. So there are high tendencies of laziness and giving excuses to avoid risk. We cannot become what we want to be, by remaining what we are. We must work hard to achieve great things for God because *‘what is impossible with man is possible with God’ (Luke 18:27).*

2 Thessalonians 3:11-13, *“For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.”*

Amos 6:1, *“Woe to you who are complacent in Zion and to you who feel secure on Mt. Samaria.”*

Tribe of Dan

What was Jacob’s prophecy over Dan and its significance?

Dan is the 5th son of Jacob born through Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid. Dan was born out of judgment reflected in Rachel’s declaration as Dan was born “God has judged my case”. Jacob prophesied as *“Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse’s heels, so that its rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!” (Genesis 49:16-18).*

Most probably Dan, along with Gad, Asher and Naphtali – sons of the handmaids, grew up feeling somewhat inferior since they were not the sons of Jacob’s wives, Leah and Rachel. He wanted to assure these four sons that, regardless of their so-called inferior births, they would be included and blessed as tribal groups.

During the distribution of lands by Joshua, by casting lots in the presence of God, the tribe of Dan received their portion (**Joshua 18:1-10; 19:40-46**). They seemed the only ones who did not occupy the land that God Himself had chosen to give them. Acting on their wilfulness instead – asking permission of neither God nor Joshua – they attacked a place called Leshem, destroyed its inhabitants, and settled in it. They renamed that place as Dan (see **Joshua 19:17**). By doing so, they lost a blessing that was rightfully theirs. Relying on their own strength, they moved away from the plan of God and lacked faith in what He could do for them.

In Deborah’s song, after Israel’s victory over the Canaanites, she questions why the Danites shied away from the fight: *“And Dan, why did he linger by the ships? (Judges 5:17).* The Danites seemed to loiter around, while others fought to protect the land. Moses calls the tribe of Dan as *“lion’s cub leaping out of Bashan” (Deuteronomy 33:22)* speaking of their playful attitude and not taking important matters seriously. Danites did not even take God seriously; they settled in Bashan and drifted away from Him.

The only famous person from the tribe of Dan was Samson (**Judges 13:2**). Samson was not stable enough to decide between the things of God and the things of the world. Sometimes the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him and he would suddenly become an instrument in the hands of God. At other times he would not have the stability to refrain from acting according to his own will.

Jacob's association of a "serpent" with the tribe of Dan is to characterize its association with the cunningness of a serpent. It also indicates the wilful acceptance of satanic influence that became dominant in Dan's future. They became the cult centre for idolatrous worship and eventually led other tribes (northern tribes) into idolatry (**1 Kings 12:25-30**). They thus fulfilled the prophecy of Jacob - to bring the horse and the rider backward.

The most striking information is the total omission of Dan from the extensive tribal genealogies of **1 Chronicles 2-10**. Also in the final book of Revelation, Dan is not listed among the other tribes in the 144,000 Jews who were sealed for salvation (**Revelation 7:4-8**). What a tragic end of the tribe of Dan!

Jacob closed his prophecy by turning his attention from Dan to the Lord himself: *"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord"* (**Genesis 49:18**). Jacob himself expressed his longing for God's ultimate act of deliverance from all evil and spiritual illness – Salvation in Yeshua (Jesus)! The reference to the "serpent" and the "heel" reminded him of the original promise of a deliverer given in **Genesis 3:15**: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel."*

Practical applications from the tribe of Dan

1. Your giftedness can be lost by wrong influences.

Dan was called to be a judge but he failed utterly due to selfish ambitions and because he did not depend on God for his success. No matter how attractive something might seem, we must not allow it to come between God and us.

Proverbs 16:17, *"The highway of the upright avoids evil; those who guard their ways preserve their lives"*.

2. Avoid all idols in life and obey God alone.

We need to walk in obedience to God's Word and maintain a constant, consistent relationship with Him. The Bible says, *"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon"* (**Psalms 92:12**).