

Deuteronomy 33:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.

Analysis

Dan is a lion's whelp—Unlike Gad's mature lion (lavi), Dan is gur aryeh (a lion cub), suggesting youthful vigor, agility, and potential rather than established strength. This parallels Jacob's cryptic blessing where Dan is a serpent (Genesis 49:17)—both emphasize surprising, tactical strength despite small size. Dan's territory was initially confined, requiring expansive courage.

He shall leap from Bashan—Yezaneq (leap/spring forth) implies sudden, aggressive movement. Bashan, northeast of the Sea of Galilee, was far from Dan's original coastal allotment in southwest Canaan (Joshua 19:40-48). This blessing prophesies Dan's migration northward when Philistine pressure made their southern territory untenable. The Danites' conquest of Laish/Leshem (Judges 18) demonstrated the 'leaping' expansion from constrained circumstances to new territory near Bashan's vicinity.

Historical Context

Dan received a small coastal territory squeezed between Judah, Ephraim, and the Philistines. Failing to secure it fully, the Danites sent spies northward who conquered Laish and renamed it Dan (Judges 18), establishing Israel's northern boundary ('from Dan to Beersheba'). This northern Dan was indeed near Bashan and became infamous as the site of Jeroboam's golden calf (1 Kings 12:28-30). The 'lion cub' blessing was fulfilled through bold migration, but later compromised by idolatry.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can youthful courage ('lion's whelp') become either faithful initiative or presumptuous compromise, as Dan's history demonstrates?
2. When circumstances constrain you, do you seek godly expansion ('leaping') or merely escape into new problems?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| וַיֹּאמֶר | אָמַר | וְאֵת | וְאֵת | וְאֵת | וְאֵת | וְאֵת | וְאֵת | וְאֵת |
| And of Dan | he said | And of Dan | whelp | is a lion's | he shall leap | | | |
| H1835 | H559 | H1835 | H1482 | H738 | H2187 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | H4480 |

בָּשָׁן:

from Bashan

H1316

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 19:47 (Parallel theme): And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

Judges 18:27 (Parallel theme): And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

