

Judges 18:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

Analysis

In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in. Dan had been allotted fertile western territory (Joshua 19:40-48), but Amorites "forced the children of Dan into the mountain" (Judges 1:34). Rather than trusting God for victory, Dan sought easier conquest elsewhere. The phrase "sought them an inheritance" reveals unbelief—God had already given them an inheritance; their responsibility was to possess it through faith. Their refusal mirrors Israel's unbelief at Kadesh-barnea (Numbers 13-14). From a Reformed perspective, God's promises require faith-filled obedience to realize. We cannot abandon God's assignments because they're difficult and expect blessing in self-chosen paths. Dan's choice had lasting consequences: geographic isolation, vulnerability to attacks, and becoming synonymous with idolatry when Jeroboam placed a golden calf there (1 Kings 12:28-30).

Historical Context

Dan's original allotment was prime agricultural land in the Shephelah bordering Philistine territory. Philistine military superiority (iron weapons and chariots) and Amorite resistance made conquest difficult. Rather than persevere in faith, Dan sought easier territory in the far north. Archaeological excavations at Tel Dan

confirm the city's Canaanite destruction and Israelite rebuilding during the Judges period. This relocation isolated Dan geographically and spiritually, contributing to their later apostasy. The city of Dan eventually became Israel's northernmost point, referenced in the phrase "from Dan to Beer-sheba," but also became a center of idolatrous worship that persisted for centuries.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do we abandon God's clear assignments because they're difficult, seeking easier alternatives?
2. What does Dan's choice teach about the long-term consequences of faithlessness?
3. How does Dan's failure illustrate the necessity of faith-filled perseverance in claiming God's promises?

Interlinear Text

בָּהּ	מִ	בַּיִם	וּמִ	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בָּהּ	מִ	בַּיִם	וּמִ
In those days	H1992	H369	אֵין	בָּהּ	מִ	בַּיִם	וּמִ	יִשְׂרָאֵל
H3117			אֵין	בָּהּ	מִ	בַּיִם	וּמִ	יִשְׂרָאֵל
the tribe	of the Danites	sought	לֹא	מִבְקָשׁ	לֹא	מִבְקָשׁ	לֹא	בְּתוּלָה:
H7626	H1839	H1245	H0	all their inheritance	H5159	all their inheritance	H3427	to dwell in
H3808	had not fallen	H0	H5704	In those days	H3117	In those days	H1931	unto them among
H5307								H8432
the tribe	in Israel	all their inheritance						
H7626	H3478	H5159						

Additional Cross-References

Judges 17:6 (Kingdom): In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Judges 1:34 (Parallel theme): And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley:

Judges 19:1 (Kingdom): And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah.

Judges 21:25 (Kingdom): In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.