

# Judges 18:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

## Analysis

**And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it.** The tribe of Dan faced a crisis: Amorite pressure prevented them from possessing their allotted territory (Judges 1:34-35). Rather than seeking God's help to defeat their enemies, they sent spies to find easier conquest elsewhere. The phrase "men of valour" (anashim benei chayil, אַנְשִׁים בְּנֵי-חַיִּל) typically commends military prowess, yet their mission reveals faithlessness—courage misdirected toward abandoning God's assignment.

The Hebrew verbs "spy out" (leragel, לַרְגֵל) and "search" (lachkor, לַחְקֹר) echo the reconnaissance mission in Numbers 13-14 that ended in unbelief and judgment. Like their ancestors at Kadesh-barnea, Dan looked at circumstances rather than God's promises. The parallelism is deliberate: both involved sending spies, both faced strong enemies, both chose unbelief over faith. God had given Dan their inheritance; their responsibility was to trust Him for victory, not seek alternatives. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates the danger of pragmatism over obedience—choosing what seems achievable by human strength rather than what God has commanded.

## Historical Context

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Zorah and Eshtaol were Danite towns in the Shephelah (lowlands) bordering Philistine territory (Joshua 19:41). This was prime agricultural land, but Philistine military superiority (iron weapons, chariots) and Amorite resistance made conquest difficult. Rather than persevere, Dan sought conquest elsewhere. The five-man reconnaissance mission mirrors the twelve spies Moses sent (Numbers 13:3-16), though with only five representing Dan's diminished faith. Archaeological evidence confirms Philistine expansion into the coastal plain during this period (c. 1200-1100 BC), creating pressure on Israelite settlement.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How do we sometimes abandon God's clear assignments when they become difficult, seeking easier alternatives?
2. What does Dan's response to opposition teach about the difference between faith-filled perseverance and pragmatic compromise?
3. How can we discern whether obstacles indicate we should change course or persevere in faith?

## Interlinear Text

וַיֵּשְׁלַח ו	בְּנֵי	וְ	מִמִּשְׁפַּחַתָּם	הַ	חֲמִשָּׁה	יָם	אֲנָשִׁים
sent	And the children	of Dan	of their family	five			
H7971	H1121	H1835	H4940	H2568		H376	
מִקְצוֹתָם	אֲנָשִׁים	בְּנֵי	חַיִּל	מִצְרָעָה			
from their coasts		And the children	of valour	from Zorah			
H7098	H376	H1121	H2428	H6881			
וּמֵאֶשְׁתָּאֹל	לְרַגֵּל	אֶת	הָאֶרֶץ	חִקְרוּ	וַיֹּאמְרוּ		
and from Eshtaol	to spy		out the land	and to search	it and they said		
H847	H7270	H853	H776	H2713	H559		
וְ	חִקְרוּ	אֶת	הָאֶרֶץ	וַיָּבֹאוּ	הָ		
	and to search		out the land	who when they came	to mount		
H413	H1980	H853	H776	H935	H2022		
עַד	בֵּית	מִיכָה	וְלִינֹה	שָׁם:			
Ephraim	to the house	of Micah	they lodged				
H5704	H1004	H4318	H3885	H8033			
H669							

## Additional Cross-References

**Judges 13:25** (Parallel theme): And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

**Joshua 2:1** (Parallel theme): And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

**Numbers 13:17** (Parallel theme): And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

**Judges 18:11** (Parallel theme): And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

**Judges 18:8** (Parallel theme): And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?

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