

Numbers 10:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Analysis

The standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. Dan marched last as the me'assef (מַעֲסֵף, "rereward" or "rear guard"), gathering stragglers and protecting the assembly's back. The Hebrew term suggests "gathering" or "collecting"—Dan swept up those who fell behind and defended against rear attacks. Though last in march order, this wasn't a position of dishonor but of strategic protection.

Ahiezer (אֲחִיעֶזֶר, "my brother is help") led Dan's 62,700 warriors (Numbers 1:39), the second-largest tribe. Dan's placement as rear guard utilized their strength to protect the vulnerable. Jacob blessed Dan saying "Dan shall judge his people" and "Dan shall be a serpent by the way" (Genesis 49:16-17), prophecies fulfilled in Samson's judgeship and Dan's later guerrilla tactics. Yet Dan also became infamous for establishing Israel's first idolatry (Judges 18) and maintaining Jeroboam's calf worship (1 Kings 12:29-30).

Historical Context

Ahiezer served as Dan's census representative (Numbers 1:12) and brought offerings at the dedication (Numbers 7:66-71). Dan's northern camp position

(Numbers 2:25) and march as rear guard both placed them at the assembly's defensive perimeter. Dan's original coastal territory (Joshua 19:40-48) proved difficult to conquer, so they migrated north and captured Leshem/Laish, renaming it Dan (Judges 18). This northernmost city became proverbial—"from Dan to Beersheba" described Israel's full extent. However, Dan's early embrace of idolatry (Judges 18:30-31) and continued apostasy meant they're omitted from Revelation's 144,000 sealed tribes (Revelation 7:4-8), replaced by Manasseh.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does Dan's rear guard position teach about how God uses strength not just for conquest but for protecting the vulnerable who struggle to keep pace?
2. How does the phrase "my brother is help" (Ahiezer) challenge competitive individualism with a vision of mutual support in Christ's body?
3. What warning does Dan's later idolatry (despite blessed march position) offer about how external religious structure doesn't guarantee internal heart faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

וְנִסְּ ע	וְגָל	הַמַּחֲנֵה ת	בְּנֵי	דָן
set forward	And the standard	of all the camps	of the children	of Dan
H5265	H1714	H4264	H1121	H1835
מַאֲסָף	לְכָל	הַמַּחֲנֵה ת	וְעַל	וְעַל
which was the rereward	H3605	of all the camps	and over his host	H5921
H622		H4264	H6635	
וְעַל	אֲחִיעֶזֶר	בְּנֵי	עַמִּישַׁדָּי:	
and over his host	was Ahiezer	of the children	of Ammishaddai	
H6635	H295	H1121	H5996	

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 6:9 (Parallel theme): And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

Numbers 1:12 (Parallel theme): Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.