

The Tribe of Dan

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This article first appeared in our church paper, *The Messenger of Living Righteousness*, July & August 1970. Brother Bill Race was a friend of Fred Wright, and fellow-believer in the message at least as early as 1962, when they were both involved in the Brinsmead Awakening.

One cannot make a study of the one hundred and forty four thousand without coming to the question of the tribe of Dan, for in the listing in *Revelation 7:4-8* of the twelve tribes to be sealed in the making up of the one hundred and forty four thousand, every tribe is mentioned except this tribe.

It is all too easy to jump to the conclusion that the tribe of Dan is to be omitted from the kingdom of heaven having no part with the hundred and forty four thousand, and this is the generally held view of the matter. It is remembered in the prophetic declaration of Israel over his sons that Dan was pronounced to be a backbiter, and it is argued that so certainly as no backbiter, while he remains such, will enter the kingdom, then Dan cannot enter there. For this reason it is concluded, the name of the tribe of Dan does not appear in the list in *Revelation seven*.

An example of such arguing is found in the following statement:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 482:

Since the tribe of Dan seems to have been the first to introduce idol worship into Israel (*Judges 18*)—and since this character would not qualify anyone for admission to the heavenly Canaan, the tribe of Dan alone, among the twelve tribes, is omitted from their enumeration in *Revelation 7*.

But are such conclusions valid? In the first case it must be apparent that it is dangerous to come to conclusions on such scant evidence. We are admonished again and again to dig deep for the buried treasure and to search with all diligence for the truth, which is like gold. You do not pick it up on the

surface, you have to dig for it until you find it. Therefore let us look again at the tribe of Dan and the one hundred and forty four thousand, to see what the Word of God has to say about the matter. As we do so we can be sure that the Teacher of all truth will have treasure for us.

The Old and the New

In our study we cannot and we will not begin with *Revelation* for this is not the beginning but the end of the Bible. No student in school is given the last lesson first for it would make no sense to him. He is given the first lessons first, so that when he has understood these then he can advance to the more difficult lessons which can only be understood in the light of the first.

So likewise the Lord has given to us the messages of the Old Testament so that as we understand these we shall be able to understand their antitype in the New Testament. Therefore we shall have to go to that place in the Old Testament where we have the type of the experience related in the book of *Revelation*.

In *Revelation 7*, we are afforded a picture of the Israel of God entering the heavenly Canaan. This is clearly the great antitype of the entry of ancient Israel into the land of Canaan of long ago. As it was then, so it shall again be, so that the better we understand the conditions of entry into the original Canaan then the better we shall understand the entry into the heavenly Canaan.

Revelation 7:4-8 makes it clear that there are twelve numbered tribes which enter the heavenly Canaan. In the order there given they are as follows: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph and Benjamin.

Just before the children of Israel entered the promised land they were numbered, and the Lord has given us the number-

ing of those tribes right on the banks of the Jordan River just before they crossed it. The record of this is found in *Numbers* 26:1-51 and here we find that just as there will be twelve numbered tribes entering the heavenly Canaan, so there were just twelve numbered tribes which entered the earthly Canaan.

They were back then in the order given: Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. You will notice at once that while the name of Levi is missing from this numbered list it is included as a numbered tribe in *Revelation* 7.

Did this mean that the tribe of Levi did not enter the earthly Canaan? No it did not, for we know that Levi did enter the promised land but not as a numbered tribe. This is but to say then that there were not twelve, but thirteen tribes which entered the promised land back then, twelve of whom were numbered and the one which was not.

As that was the great type of the entry of the Israel of God into the heavenly Canaan, then as it was, so must it be, for type must meet antitype. Therefore, thirteen tribes will enter the heavenly Canaan of which twelve will be numbered but the thirteenth will not be. Levi was the unnumbered tribe in the original and typical entrance, but for reasons which we shall explore later in this study, he cannot be the unnumbered tribe in the heavenly entry. He must give that place to another.

As to whom that other tribe is we are not left in any darkness for there is one and only one who is unnumbered on the banks of the heavenly Jordan and that is the tribe of Dan. Therefore Dan occupies the position in the heavenly entry, which Levi occupied in the earthly and typical entry.

It should now be apparent that we have a key to the question which will unlock some very precious and wonderful truth in regard to the destiny of God's people in eternity.

The Unnumbered Levites

But before we proceed too far with our conclusions let us clearly establish the fact that the Levites were indeed the unnumbered tribe in ancient Israel. This is not difficult to establish for the Word of God distinctly states that they were not to be numbered among the children of Israel. Reference to *Numbers* 1:17-46 will show that the tribes of Israel were numbered to twelve without the inclusion of Levi. Then the word says,

Numbers 1

⁴⁷ But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them

⁴⁸ For the Lord has spoken unto Moses, saying,

⁴⁹ Only you shall not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel.

This information is given again, after the numbering of the twelve tribes on the banks of the Jordan following the fearful apostasy at the Jordan:

Numbers 26

⁶² And those that were numbered of them (the Levites) were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

Thus the Word of God is clear and distinct in stating that the tribe of Levi was not numbered along with the rest of the tribes of Israel. That tribe entered the promised land along with the rest but it was not numbered with them. It was the unnumbered tribe.

To further certify this truth let us look at some facts in regard to the awful judgment pronounced upon the people of Israel at Kadesh Barnea when the Lord said,

Numbers 14

²⁸ As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as you have spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you:

²⁹ Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that

were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against me,

³⁰ Doubtless you shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

These words were terribly and literally fulfilled. While many of those people did die of old age and natural causes it is safe to say that the majority of them died under divine judgment and retribution.

A number perished with Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and next day fourteen thousand seven hundred perished of a plague because of their rebellion and murmuring.

Many more perished through being stung by the fiery serpents and refusing to look upon the brazen serpent, while the remnant of those who had been numbered as twenty years old and upward, perished at the Jordan as a result of their becoming involved in the immoral worship introduced by Balaam.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 456:

The judgments visited upon Israel for their sin at Shittim, destroyed the survivors of the vast company, who, nearly forty years before, had incurred the sentence, "They shall surely die in the wilderness."

The numbering of the people by divine direction, during their encampment on the plains of Jordan...showed that "of whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai...there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Therefore we have always concluded, without giving the matter any further thought or study, that not one single person of any tribe who was twenty years or older except for Caleb and Joshua, at the time of the judgment being pronounced at Kadesh Barnea, passed over the Jordan into the promised land. Even Moses and Aaron died, though it is not to

be understood that they did so because of their being a part of the rebellion or the victims of its judgment, for they were not. Because of his own sin Moses failed to pass over into the promised land, but went to heaven instead.

But to draw the above conclusion is to make a mistake, for it is not true. Let us note again what the word of the living God does actually say. It said,

Numbers 14

²⁹ Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against me...

The Word of God specifically states that this judgment was pronounced upon the numbered tribes of Israel and makes no mention of the unnumbered tribe of Levi. The ones who would fall in the wilderness were those who had been numbered, and this does not include those who were not in this category.

Reference to *Numbers* 13:6, 8, 16, will show that Caleb was from Judah and Joshua was from Ephraim, both of which were numbered tribes and, because the rest of these over twenty from the numbered tribes would not enter the land of Canaan, they had to be named as the exceptions and the only exceptions to this ruling. But let it be clearly borne in mind that they were the exceptions, not of all Israel, but of the numbered tribes of Israel.

This means then that they were not the only individuals who were over twenty at the time when the judgment was pronounced and yet entered the promised land. Certainly some and possibly a large number of Levites who had been twenty and over when the people of God had been numbered before Kadesh, did enter the promised land.

While it is not possible for us to know the number and the names of all of these, yet the word of God makes plain to the

earnest searcher, the name of at least one of them and that was Eleazar the son of Aaron who became the High Priest on his father's death.

Eleazar of Levi

In the first case there can be no doubt but that Eleazar the son of Aaron did pass over and occupy the promised land. For instance in *Joshua* 14:1, it is recorded that Eleazar worked together with Joshua in the distribution of the conquered land of Canaan, while the last verse in the book tells of his death and burial in the promised land.

There are many other references telling of the work of Eleazar in the land of Canaan but there is no need to note these here as there is no dispute about the fact that he did pass over the Jordan into the promised land. All that remains to be certified was that he was twenty years or older when the people were numbered just prior to Kadesh, and this is not difficult to do.

Aaron was eighty-three when they came out of the land of Egypt and the father of four sons of whom the third was Eleazar after Nadab and Abihu and before Ithamar. *Exodus* 6:23; *Exodus* 7:7.

The reading of *Exodus* 6:21-27, makes it clear that these four sons were born in Egypt during the captivity there, as was also the son of Eleazar, Phineas. Phineas is not an Israelitish but an Egyptian name, which is further indication that he was born in that land.

This indicates that Eleazar must have been a mature man who was certainly more than twenty and could have been as old as fifty or more, his own father Aaron being eighty three at the time, and he the third son of the marriage.

A few short months afterwards he was appointed with his brothers to assist his father, the high priest of Israel as a priest in the sanctuary, as recorded:

Exodus 28

¹ And take unto you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Now we have a rather precise stipulation that the Levites were not to minister in the sanctuary services, until they had reached a certain age. That minimum age as stated in *Numbers* 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47, was thirty years and extended until they reached fifty. This listing is concerned with the transportation of the sanctuary in which service the minimum age had to be thirty. *Numbers* 8:1-22 describes the consecration of the Levites in general to the regular duties of the sanctuary, which is more than the transportation of it and in this the minimum age was twenty-five. Later in the time of David this was reduced to twenty. *1 Chronicles* 23:24; *2 Chronicles* 31:17; *Ezra* 3:8.

It is to be understood in this connection that when speaking of the Levites it is speaking of the Levites other than those which constituted the house of Aaron. The Levites generally were devoted to the service of the sanctuary but only the priesthood, which was reserved for the house of Aaron, could enter the building and minister therein. Therefore it must be recognized that this is giving us the minimum ages for the service of the Levites but not necessarily for the priesthood.

One thing should be clear however and it is that the office of the priest was far more responsible than that of the Levites in general and therefore, if the minimum age for a Levite was twenty-five, that of the priest would certainly not be less and would in fact be more if anything.

Now, as we have seen already, Eleazar was anointed a priest to minister in the Sanctuary. Moreover, he was appointed to be the chief over the chief of the Levites as recorded:

Numbers 3

³² And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary.

All this was conferred upon him at Mt. Sinai well before the numbering of the people, wherein all those twenty and over should die in the wilderness. To hold such office and to bear such responsibility, he most certainly was more than twenty years of age at Mt. Sinai. Therefore he was more than twenty when the judgment was pronounced at Kadesh, and yet passed right into the promised land.

Without a doubt many other Levites who had been more than twenty at the time that the judgment against those “twenty years old and upward” was pronounced, also passed into the land without dying in the wilderness, for they were not numbered among the Israelites and therefore were not of those against whom the judgment was pronounced.

Therefore it is very clear that thirteen tribes entered the promised land back there in that physical entry into that physical and material land. Twelve of them were numbered and the other was not.

And the record on it was written for our learning upon whom the ends of the world are come so that we might know that just as surely as there were thirteen tribes which entered that land, so surely there will be thirteen tribes who will enter the heavenly Canaan.

And as surely as Levi cannot again be the unnumbered tribe for reasons we shall see a little later, then that position must pass to another, and which other but the tribe of Dan, for he is the only tribe not numbered in the numbering in *Revelation 7*.

Which Sins Exclude Us From Heaven?

The name of Dan is missing from the list of the tribes who

make up the one hundred and forty-four thousand. As we have noted, the conclusion is immediately drawn by many that this tribe will be excluded from the heavenly Canaan. Having drawn this conclusion the student then searches for further evidence to support the conclusion already drawn, and thus tends to interpret the information found in the light of the already drawn conclusion.

So when it is read in the prophecies of Israel in regard to his twelve sons, that Dan was a backbiter, then this is seized upon as sure evidence that Dan could not possibly be there.

But is this just, fair and honest reasoning? I should think not! It is neither just nor fair because the same people who think this way, do not say that Reuben who was “unstable as water,” and who “would not excel”, and who defiled his father’s bed, would be excluded from the kingdom.

Nor do they expect that Simeon and Levi, whose course of wickedness was so bad that the Lord had not one good word to say for them, and whose indictment was far worse than that of Dan, will be excluded either.

In other words, consistency would demand that if every Danite was to be excluded from the kingdom because the basic characteristic of the tribe was that of a backbiter, then every Levite, Reubenite and Simeonite must also be excluded from the kingdom because of the basic wickedness in the tribal character.

This is not to say that backbiters, the unstable, the incestuous, and the cruel will be in the kingdom. Do not imagine this for a single moment. What it does mean though is that even though a person of a certain tribe, be it Reuben, Simeon, Levi or Dan, has a bad start as a backbiter or as an unstable one, he can be delivered from the evil character and be fitted for a part in the kingdom. And we can be assured that there are those of every tribe who have overcome the evil of their father’s ways, and will be in the kingdom.

As fine an example here as any is the tribe of Levi itself.

Consider the illustrious names of Phineas the grandson of Aaron who distinguished himself in the zeal of the Lord of hosts in slaying the adulterer Zimri, by which the priesthood was certified to his house forever.

Consider Samuel and his wonderful career of service for God.

Consider John the Baptist and his father Zacharias.

These Levites will be in the kingdom but only because they have been delivered from the cruel characteristics which were their human inheritance.

And what is true of Levi is true of Dan.

Consider the story of Samson, the Danite, who served the Lord, and died in that service. That he will be in the kingdom is made plain by the words of *Hebrews* 11:32, and yet he was of the tribe of Dan. As surely then as Samson will be in the kingdom, as surely will the tribe of Dan be there, for even if he was but the one representative of it, that is enough for that tribe to be there.

But he will not be the only one for there will be many, many more who have overcome the sin of backbiting and will thus qualify to be there.

This brings to view a serious implication in the whole matter. Though ever so unwittingly, yet very truly those who state that the Danites cannot be there because they began with the spirit of a backbiter, while they concede that Levi and Simeon and Reuben will have representatives there, are stating that the gospel is limited in its power and cannot give the victory over every sin.

They are prepared to admit that victory can be gained over instability, incest, anger and cruelty such as marred the lives of Reuben, Simeon and Levi, but are not prepared to believe

that the backbiter can also have that victory which would qualify him for a place in the city of God.

Thus it is that those who declare that Dan cannot be in the kingdom are making the gospel of none effect, for the moment we admit that there is just one sin which is beyond the power of the gospel, then we open the door for excuse to be made for any and every sin.

But the story of Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Dan clearly demonstrates that there is no sin, no difficulty, no weakness from which it is too much for the gospel to save us. Let no backbiter be discouraged with the thought that his case is hopeless, that because he is a Danite he can have no place in the kingdom of heaven.

There *is* a place for you there, as by the living power of the living gospel, you become an overcomer and leave the backbiting spirit behind you and go on from victory unto victory.

The Gates of the City

Remember that the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are inscribed on the twelve gates of that city, the new Jerusalem, and Dan is one of the twelve tribes whose name will be there. True, we are not given in *Revelation* a list of those twelve tribal names as they will appear on the gates. But back in the book of *Ezekiel*, we find conclusive evidence that Dan's name will be on one of those gates.

The closing chapters of the book *Ezekiel* reveal the plan of God in the restoration of the land and its reoccupation by the twelve tribes after the end of the Babylonian captivity.

The division of the land was to be between the twelve tribes with the tribe of Levi occupying the land around the city and the sanctuary, so that once again we have the thirteen tribes involved in this. This is to be read in *Ezekiel* 48:1-29 though too lengthy to be included in this study. Now this makes it clear that thirteen tribes occupy the land of Israel.

When it comes to the city of Jerusalem however, there is a difference. While that city had belonged to Judah and to Benjamin, the two more faithful tribes before the captivity, it was to be the common possession of all the twelve tribes after the restoration. Now the number is reduced to a straight twelve again, with the unnumbered tribe of Levi having a gate along with the rest, and the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's double portion, being given but the one gate and it being named for Joseph.

Now this prophecy has not as yet found any fulfillment. In the restoration, such a division of the land and an appointing of the gates did not take place and it is now left till the full and final restoration of Israel for such a thing to be done. And then it will be done and then the names of those twelve tribes will be inscribed on those gates,

Ezekiel 48

³¹ And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel, three gates north-ward: one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

³² And at the east side...three gates; and one gate for Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan.

³³ And at the south side...three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

³⁴ At the west side...three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.

³⁵ It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city for that day shall be The Lord is there.

There is the glorious picture of that glorious city with each gate named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Each tribe numbered, or unnumbered will have a gate to that city, and Dan will be among them.

Therefore let every one who has been delivered from the sin of backbiting rejoice, and everyone who has not, take courage to overcome, for there is a gate to the city for you. The Danites will be there. There is a way into the city for

them as well as for all the others.

Dan Shall Judge his People

To certain of the tribes were made some outstanding promises. The outstanding ones of these are Judah and Joseph and just about the only other one is Dan.

To Judah was promised the royal line which is to be understood not merely as the earthly kingship of the house of Israel but as the eternal kingship of Christ in eternity. That is to say, just as the promise of an inheritance and a city to Abraham was not the promise of a passing earthly inheritance, but an eternal one, even a “City whose builder and maker is God,” so the promise to Judah was not of this earth but of heaven.

This is easily and clearly understood by all. And this being so for Judah, it is equally so for Dan of whom it is said:

Genesis 49

¹⁶ Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

Except for the brief period under the leadership of Samson, this prophecy and promise has received no fulfillment as yet, but it certainly and surely will in the heavenly kingdom.

It was the unnumbered tribe of the Old Testament who were the ones who judged Israel in all matters of spiritual concern. It was the priest Eleazar, who portioned out the land in the inheritance of the promised Canaan. It was the priest who determined as to whether a man had the leprosy or not; as to whether he was clean or unclean. Moses and Aaron judged Israel and they were of Levi.

While the leadership passed to Joshua of Ephraim, the Levites did not lose their important position in Israel. Samuel of Levi was prophet, priest, and judge of Israel at the very time when Israel stood in an excellent position to move fully into her destiny.

But the people did not desire God’s way, and asked for a

king so that a different order of things was brought in which ended in the captivity in Babylon. But with the restoration, the leadership of Israel passed again to the house of Aaron for Ezra was a direct descendant of that family.

After their faithful stand at the incident of the golden calf at Mt. Sinai, God had set Levi apart as His special ministry. They were to devote all of their time and energy to the work of the sanctuary and the spiritual needs of the people and were to typify the heavenly ministry of Jesus on behalf of sinners.

By that ministry they have given to us in type the whole picture of the work of Jesus in the sanctuary in heaven so that we are able to understand that work as we otherwise could never have done. They then were the assistants on this earth among the people of God, to Christ as He ministered above. As He worked in His place so they worked in the place He had appointed them and together He and they ministered life to the people.

An Eternal Priesthood

This system of things does not end with the establishment of the heavenly kingdom, for the need of the people does not end there. There must always be a ministry of life to the people of God in which Jesus as the High Priest will be assisted by His sons in glory who have been redeemed from among men.

This is not to say for one moment that there will still be the need to forgive sin and to save from being in sin during eternity, for sin will have come to an end, a perpetual end at that time. But then, is the only concern of the ministry of Christ and His faithful servants upon this earth that of forgiveness and salvation from being in sin? By no means! The larger part of that work is education in righteousness and in worship of God and fellowship with Him. In all this the ministry of Christ is the leadership, the guiding force and the living

power, and as truly as we shall spend eternity learning righteousness, praising and worshipping God and fellowshiping with Him, as surely will there be the need of a priesthood to lead and guide in all of that.

That priesthood will have its high priest even Jesus Christ made a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. But He will not be alone in that ministry even as in this ministry for sin He has not worked alone. As Aaron the high priest had sons who assisted him within the temple, so Jesus will have many sons who will assist Him even within the temple on Mt. Zion in the earth made new. These will be the one hundred and forty four thousand, and just as the sons of Aaron alone could accompany him within the temple back there so only the one hundred and forty four thousand can enter the temple on Mt. Zion.

As it was, so shall it be, for all these things are written as a type of the great antitype to come. Many and wonderful are the things revealed in regard to the heavenly priesthood and its ministry which space does not allow the study of in this article.

A certain chosen portion of the people of God were set aside for the ministry in the days of old and they entered the land of Canaan as a separate class not numbered among the people. So likewise a portion of the people of God will enter the heavenly Canaan as a special class of people whose life and service in eternity will be devoted to the ministry of their brethren.

But the house of Levi cannot be that tribe in the eternal ministry. The whole argument of Paul in *Hebrews* makes that very plain indeed. The Levitical priesthood provided the type of the ministry of Jesus during that time when He was not yet the king, but serving as a priest in the heavenly sanctuary was preparing to acquire the kingdom which will be given to Him at the end of the great day of atonement. Then He will be

priest and king, a work and position which the Levites never having been the royal tribe, could never typify. Another priesthood, that of Melchizedek who was both priest and king, typified this work of Christ in the eternity.

It is for this reason then that the Levites return to a position as a numbered tribe on completion of their work as a typical priesthood and another tribe takes the position held by them.

That it will be another tribe is a certain fact for there will be no other people apart from Israel in the kingdom. Therefore it must be a part of Israel which will be the priesthood in the kingdom not another people apart from them.

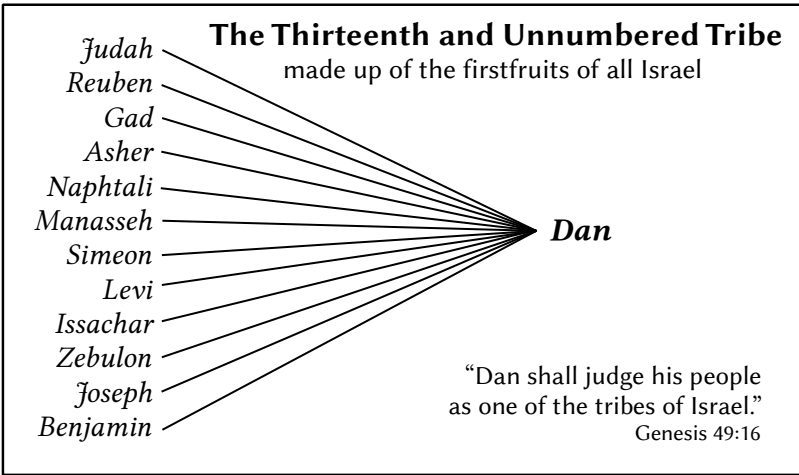
That unnumbered tribe, as we have before seen, is the tribe of Dan, by which we know that they will be the one hundred and forty four thousand kings and priests who will accompany Christ wherever He goes and who alone can enter with Him into the temple on Mt. Zion.

Then it will be at last that the promise to Dan will be fulfilled, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel," as surely as at that time the promise of a city will be fulfilled to Abraham and the eternal kingship to Judah.

The First Fruits

A question which arises at this point is this: The one hundred and forty four thousand are made up from each of the twelve tribes which in turn must be designated as the tribe of Dan. How then can Dan be a nucleus from each tribe? Should he not be a separate tribe of his own?

Now if we were speaking in physical terms this must be true but here it is a matter of spiritual descent, not of physical. This arrangement will still be better understood when we realize and understand what the original plan was and remember that the Lord will revert to the original and perfect plan once sin has been removed.



It was never God’s plan that one distinct and separate tribe should be the priest class but that the first born son of each tribe should hold this office. There was to have been the twelve complete tribes but out of them the first born or the first fruits of each family were to be gathered into a thirteenth company or tribe which were to be the priests of the nation.

What that tribe was to be called we do not know because the plan never matured. Before the sanctuary service even began, the families of Israel rebelled in the matter of the golden calf and thus the first born lost the right to be the priest tribe in Israel.

That this is so is stated in the following extracts:

Malachi 2

⁵ And you shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, says the Lord of hosts.

⁶ My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 236, 350:

In the case of this tribe, (Levi) however, their fidelity to Jehovah when the other tribes apostatized, secured their ap-

pointment to the sacred service of the sanctuary, and thus the curse was changed into a blessing.

By divine direction the tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. In the earliest times every man was the priest of his own household. In the days of Abraham the priesthood was regarded as the birthright of the eldest son.

Now, instead of the first-born of all Israel, the Lord accepted the tribe of Levi for the work of the sanctuary. By this signal honour, He manifested His approval of their fidelity, both in adhering to His service and in executing His judgments when Israel apostatized in the worship of the golden calf.

So it was that the first born of Israel lost the privilege of being the priests of the Lord, but all that is lost through sin is to be regained in the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, the thirteenth tribe there will be made up of the first fruits of the family of God, just as it should have been back in the first case.

Now we know that the one hundred and forty four thousand are the first fruits, the first born of the family of God and therefore are the unnumbered tribe of Israel in the kingdom, or if you wish to put it another way to make the meaning a little clearer, the tribe which will be numbered apart from the others just as Levi was numbered apart from the rest in their day.

Had the firstborn been formed into the priest tribe as was the original plan of God, then that company would no doubt have been given its own special name, but we do not know what it might have been.

When Joseph, because of the sin of his brethren was given the double portion there were formed the thirteen tribes, so that the name of the one of them became the name of the priest tribe. Those thirteen tribes exist to this day and for eternity, so that the name of one of them must be given to the priest tribe in the kingdom, and that name, as we have seen

will be the name of Dan who at last will judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

Take Courage

Take courage then, in the sure knowledge that evil as some of those tribes were in their beginning, just as we are all evil in our beginnings, there is no sin too deep or too grievous for the Lord to cleanse us and save us from. For every tribe there is a gateway into the city. There is a gate there for Judah as there is for Joseph, but there is also a gateway there for Reuben and Simeon and Levi and one for Dan. He will not be excluded. There are those from that tribe who have tasted of the power of God unto salvation from sin and who will march triumphantly through that gate into the city.

But best of all, Dan will be the unnumbered tribe, the one hundred and forty four thousand, who will follow the lamb wherever He goes and will minister with Him as priests forever after the order of Melchizedek.

It is the privilege of all who are still living in this generation to strive to be among that number. Let the people of the Lord put heart and soul into the work of character preparation so that the latter rain can come and perfect the people of God so that they are ready for His coming.

It matters not how deeply stained with sin our lives may have been, for the Lord can and does save even the Reubenites, Simeonites, Levites, and the Danites from their sins as they are willing, and gives them a place in eternity.

Let the Lord enable you to be there and you will be there.