

# Archaeological Site of Dan — Jeroboam's High Place

*Lecture: 02-25 Lecture: Archaeological Site of Dan, Jeroboam's High Place | Israel 2026*

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## SITE OVERVIEW

Location: Tel Dan (ancient Laish, later Dan) — northern Israel, near the Lebanese border

Date of Visit: Not explicitly stated

Biblical References: 2 Kings 17:21–23 (quoted in full by Dr. Schilling)

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Jeroboam's High Place: The site is identified by both liberal and conservative scholars as the location where Jeroboam established one of his high places following the division of the united monarchy

Time Periods Covered:

- 18th century BC — The city existed as Laish during the era of Abraham
- Iron Age — The Danites conquered Laish, renamed it Dan, and the city became a northern cult center under Jeroboam
- Assyrian Period — The site is contextually linked to the Assyrian exile of the northern tribes of Israel, as referenced in 2 Kings 17:23

Historical Figures:

- Abraham — Present in the region when the city was still called Laish
- Jeroboam — Established a high place and cultic worship site at Dan, including golden calves
- The Danites — Conquered Laish and established the city of Dan

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

**Altar Structure:** A modern aluminum reconstruction has been placed on-site to indicate the approximate location and layout of the ancient altar of sacrifice. Dr. Schilling explicitly critiques this reconstruction as inaccurate and non-representative of authentic Jewish altar construction

**Altar Construction Note:** A legitimate Israelite/Jewish altar was required to be built of unhewn stones — no hammer or chisel was to be used — making the aluminum structure doubly inaccurate in both material and form

**Tiered Precinct Layout:** Archaeological or interpretive evidence suggests a three-tiered sacred precinct:

- Lower tier — designated for women
- Middle tier — designated for men and priests
- Upper/inner tier (Holy Place) — accessible only to the king and those he personally appointed as priests; location of the golden calves

**Walls:** Dr. Schilling notes that the high place would have been an enclosed, temple-like structure with surrounding walls — features that would have defined the sacred precinct

**18th Century BC Gate:** An ancient city gate dating to the 18th century BC is present on-site, contemporaneous with the period of Abraham when the city was known as Laish

**No Man's Land / Border Zone:** A buffer zone similar to UN-monitored zones is visible near the Lebanese border at this site

## DR. SCHILLING'S KEY POINTS

**Scholarly Consensus:** Both liberal and conservative scholars agree that this location at Tel Dan is where Jeroboam erected his high place — a notable point of cross-ideological agreement

**Critique of On-Site Reconstruction:** The aluminum altar structure is dismissed as neither archaeologically accurate nor culturally appropriate; Dr. Schilling emphasizes it fails to represent authentic Israelite altar requirements

**Biblical Fulfillment Narrative:** The quoted passage from 2 Kings 17:21–23 is presented as the theological and historical culmination of Jeroboam's sin — the Assyrian exile of Israel is directly tied to the cultic innovations begun at sites like Dan

**Name Correction:** Dr. Schilling clarifies that during Abraham's time, the site was not yet called Dan — it was Laish. The Danite conquest and renaming came later. (This corrects a common anachronistic assumption among visitors)

**Prophetic Warning Fulfilled:** The exile described in 2 Kings 17:23 is presented as the direct fulfillment of repeated prophetic warnings, lending narrative weight to the site's theological significance

## GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

**Proximity to Lebanon:** The site sits approximately 100 feet from the Lebanese border; a UN-style no man's land buffer zone is visible from the site

**Relationship to Other Sites:** Dr. Schilling draws a comparison to a previously visited UN-monitored zone, suggesting the group had earlier encountered a similar border or buffer area

**Strategic Significance:** Dan's northern location made it a logical site for Jeroboam to establish a cult center — providing northern Israelites an alternative to Jerusalem in the south, reducing the political risk of subjects traveling to worship in Judean territory

**Natural/Terrain Features:** Steps and elevated terrain are present on-site; the group is directed to ascend to a higher level for photography and continued tour

## QUOTABLE MOMENTS

“Scholars, both liberal and conservative, believe this is a place where Jeroboam set up his high place.”

“A Jewish altar had to have stones upon which a hammer and chisel [were not used]... this is not even an accurate representation.”

“Well then, of course, it wasn't Dan when Abraham was here. It was Laish.”

“Israel was exiled from the land to Assyria, where they remain to this day.” — 2 Kings 17:23 (as quoted)

## PERSONAL NOTES

⚠️ **Flag — Speculative/Interpretive:** The three-tiered gender/priestly division of the precinct is presented as established fact; it would be worth verifying the specific archaeological or textual basis for this layout

**Follow-up:** Confirm the precise excavation history of the Tel Dan high place and which archaeological seasons produced the current interpretive signage and aluminum structure

**Follow-up:** Research the 18th century BC gate at Tel Dan — this appears to reference the Middle Bronze Age gate, widely regarded as one of the best-preserved mudbrick arched gates in the ancient Near East

**Question:** What became of the golden calves at Dan archaeologically? Have any cultic objects been recovered from this high place?

The group is next being directed to the Lebanese border viewpoint and then to the 18th century BC gate — notes should continue for those segments