

genesis

God's Book of Beginnings

Jacob Blesses His Sons: *The Twelve Tribes of Israel* (Genesis 49)

49:1-2 Before dying, Jacob (Israel) gathered his sons around him in order to bless(?) each one. Jacob told them to "listen", and his sons did listened intently, because they loved and respected their "father Israel", and this was the last thing they would ever hear from him.

Prior to his death, Jacob spoke his blessings/prophecies to his twelve sons (the tribes of Israel).

The contents of his pronouncements were chiefly based on the character of his sons up to that time and predicted the future tribal histories ("what will happen to you in the days to come" Numbers 24:14).

Hundreds of years later, Moses also pronounced patriarchal blessings to the tribes Deuteronomy 33:6-25.

The order of the blessings (with the birth Mother and actual birth order): Leah's six sons: Reuben¹, Simeon², Levi³, Judah⁴, Zebulun¹⁰ and Issachar⁹; one son of Bilhah: Dan⁵; Zilpah's two sons: Gad⁷ and Asher⁸; Bilhah's second son: Naphtali⁶; and Rachel's two sons: Joseph¹¹ and Benjamin¹².

49:3-4 Jacob recognized Reuben as being "[his] firstborn", with "strength...honor...power".

However, Reuben threw it all away by his acts of immorality and defiance against his father. Appropriately, Reuben's "rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph" 1 Chronicles 5:1-2, because of his incestuous behavior with Bilhah Genesis 35:22, which defiled his father's bed.

The phrase "turbulent as the waters" literally means "boiling", indicating his tribe's instability, which resulted in a tendency for indecision Judges 5:15-16. Reuben lost his priestly rights Exodus 13:2 to the Levites Deuteronomy 2:17 and his kingly (leadership) rights to the tribe of Judah 1 Chronicles 28:4.

Furthermore, the tribe of Reuben produced no judges, prophets, military leaders or any other important person noted throughout the Biblical text. In the blessings Moses pronounced over the twelve tribes, he prayed for Reuben's tribe to "live and not die" Deuteronomy 33:6, in spite of the fact members of Reuben's tribe were heavily involved in the rebellion against Moses Numbers 16:1-3.

49:5-7 Jacob decided to address Simeon and Levi together, because of their murderous rampage in Shechem Genesis 34. He prophesied the scattering of Simeon/Levi's descendants.

Genesis 49a & Review

Simeon, along with Levi, murdered all the males in Shechem in response to the rape of their sister, Dinah ^{Genesis 34:25-26}. As a result, Simeon's tribe declined in size by more than 60% in the wilderness wanderings ^{Numbers 1:23 and 26:14} (in fact they were the smallest tribe in the second census of Moses), Moses did not include Simeon's tribe in his blessings ^{Deuteronomy 33:6-25} and they had to share Judah's territory ^{Joshua 19:1}. However, the tribe of Simeon did not lose their identity ^{1 Chronicles 4:24-40}. Levi joined Simeon in the slaughter of the Shechemites, but his tribe's loyalty to God ^{Exodus 32:25-29} resulted in their being appointed as the priests of Israel ^{Numbers 3:5-10, Deuteronomy 18:1-2}. Additionally, the Levites were also blessed as the caretakers of the "tabernacle of the Testimony" ^{Numbers 1:50-53}, as the teachers of the law ^{Deuteronomy 33:9-10, 2 Chronicles 17:8-9}, as judges and musicians ^{1 Chronicles 23:3-5}, as the king's guards in times of danger ^{2 Chronicles 23:1-10}, and were not required to serve in "Israel's army" ^{Numbers 1:45-49}. Although, Jacob's pronouncement that Levi's tribe would be 'scattered' throughout the PL came to pass, because their inheritance was 48 assigned cities ^{Joshua 21:1-8,41}.

49:8-12 Jacob stated that Judah's brothers would "praise" and "bow down to" him ^{Genesis 37:5-7}, and Judah's descendent would defeat all enemies ^{Psalms 110:1}, including death ^{1 Corinthians 15:24-26}. Jacob equated him with a lion, who will rule forever ^{Micah 4:7} and produce abundance ^{Psalms 72}.

The patriarch of the tribe of Judah (sounds like the Hebrew word for 'praise') committed incest with Tamar, his daughter-in-law ^{Genesis 38:12-26} and was the one who proposed that Joseph be sold to the Ishmaelites ^{Genesis 37:26-27}. However, in their favor, Judah was the leading tribe of Israel in the wilderness wanderings ^{Numbers 10:14}, the tribe of Judah was anointed by God to lead the conquest of the PL after the death of Joshua ^{Judges 1:1-2}, the "men of Judah...anointed David king over the house of Judah" ^{2 Samuel 2:1-4}, and Judah was loyal to David during the revolt of the ten tribes ^{1 Kings 12:20}.

And, the most important aspect of Judah is that the Messiah would come from this tribe ^{Matthew 1:1}.

The "lion" refers to the 'Anointed One' (Lion of the Tribe of Judah" ^{Revelation 5:5}), and the "he" is literally "Shiloh", which is widely accepted to be a cryptogram (a code word) for the Messiah.

The phrase "he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes" is an image of the torture and death of Jesus and the communion He offered. In addition, it also is a reference to believers and their garments becoming righteous (white) because of His blood ^{Revelation 4:4, 7:14}.

Genesis 49a & Review

49:13 Moses said Zebulun/Issachar would “feast on the abundance of the seas” Deuteronomy 33:19.

This is the most difficult blessing to interpret, because Zebulun’s land inheritance Joshua 19:10-16 did not border on the Mediterranean Sea, the Sea of Galilee or the Jordan River, and it was more than 40 miles southeast of Sidon (which was actually situated outside all of the tribal territories). However, Zebulun did benefit from one of the major trade routes through ancient Israel called the *Via Maris* (“the way of the sea” Isaiah 9:1), which was used to move goods from Egypt to Damascus.

49:14-15 Issachar would be rewarded with land good for work and would labor on that land.

Issachar (“man of wages”) received the Jezreel Valley (an area of rich farmland) as their land inheritance Joshua 19:17-23. The men of Issachar were hardy “fighting men” 1 Chronicles 7:1-5, “understood the times” 1 Chronicles 12:32 and provided David’s army with “plentiful [food] supplies” 1 Chronicles 12:38-40. Jacob also seemed to say v.15b that in spite of the fighting spirit of the tribe of Issachar Judges 5:15, they would later prefer to purchase peace from invaders with produced food rather than fight.

49:16-18 Jacob prophesied that the tribe of Dan (“judge”) would produce judges (e.g. Sampson Judges 13-16), be treacherous and desire God’s redemption.

Dan was given an inheritance in the PL Joshua 19:40-48, but later a majority of the tribe would migrate to a city in the extreme northern territory of the Naphtali tribe. The Amorites Judges 1:34 forced Dan out of their land, so they took the city of Laish, destroyed it, rebuilt it and named it Dan Judges 18:1-31. Dan does not appear in the list of sealed tribes during the tribulation Revelation 7:4-8, because his tribe was known for their idolatry Judges 18:30-31, 1 Kings 12:28-30. In fact, Moses prophesied Deuteronomy 29:18-21 “...the LORD will blot out [an idolater’s] name from under heaven”. However, Dan later received grace from God in response to their cry v.18, and will be restored in the Millennium list Ezekiel 48:1.

49:19 Jacob foresaw Gad’s strong response to the “raiders” who would attack their inheritance.

With their inherited land being east of the Jordan River Joshua 13:24-28, Gad was exposed to invasions, but they became mighty warriors 1 Chronicles 5:18-19, 12:8-15. Elijah came from the tribe of Gad 1 Kings 17:1.

49:20 According to Jacob, Asher would have rich land, resulting in prosperous agriculture.

Asher’s inheritance Joshua 19:24-31 consisted of fertile land along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Both Moses Deuteronomy 33:24 and Jacob prophesied Asher’s tribe would produce “rich” food, Job 29:4-6 “fit for a king”. The tribe of Asher was strong Deuteronomy 33:25, although they did not “drive out” the Canaanites from their land Judges 1:31-32. The prophetess, Anna, came from the tribe of Asher Luke 2:36.

Genesis 49a & Review

49:21 Jacob proclaimed a blessing of military swiftness and eloquence of tongue over Naphtali.

Rachel exclaimed that she had wrestled with her sister (Leah) and won ^{Genesis 30:8} when Naphtali was born to her handmaid (Bilhah). Later, the men of Naphtali became gifted soldiers ^{Judges 4:6, 5:18}. The song of Deborah and Barak (from Naphtali ^{Judges 4:6}) is an eloquent tribute to God ^{Judges 5} for victory in battle ^{Judges 4:13-25}, which reflects “the favor of the LORD” on Naphtali ^{Deuteronomy 33:23 25}.

49:22-26 Jacob offered the highest blessing on Joseph (applicable to his sons ^{Genesis 48:15-20}). Joseph was described as a “fruitful vine near a spring” (Ephraim: fruitful) ^{Deuteronomy 33:13-17}, and was referred to as a warrior who is able to fend off attackers, because of God’s blessings. Jacob stressed how God blessed Joseph, “the prince among his brothers” ^{Genesis 41:41, 50:18-21}.

The names: “Mighty One of Jacob” ^{Isaiah 60:16}, “Shepherd” ^{1 Peter 2:25}, “Rock of Israel” ^{2 Samuel 23:3}, “your father’s God” ^{Exodus 15:2}, and “the Almighty” ^{Revelation 1:8} are all references to the one true God.

Due to his high position in the family ^{Genesis 48:15-16}, Joseph received a double portion of the inheritance in the PL (his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, both received inherited land).

Joseph was the firstborn of Rachel, favored, despised, sold, imprisoned, and exalted ^{Genesis 37-50}. Verses 23-25 are a brief sketch of his life: Joseph remained faithful in the trials with God’s help.

Ephraim received land north of Jerusalem ^{Joshua 16:5-10}. Despite being the second born to Joseph, he received the primary blessing from Jacob ^{Genesis 48:20} and later became the leading tribe in Israel, the Northern Kingdom ^{Isaiah 7:2-17}. Samuel was a Levite ^{1 Chronicles 6:16-27} from Ephraim ^{1 Samuel 1:1,19-20}.

The half tribes of Manasseh each received plots of land, east and west of the Jordan River ^{Joshua 17}. He was known for valor under leaders like Gideon ^{Judges 6:15} (west) and Jephthah ^{Judges 11:1} (east).

49:27 Jacob’s last blessings went to Benjamin, who was referred to as a “ravenous wolf”.

Benjamin was the last of the twelve sons born; his mother, Rachel, died in childbirth ^{Genesis 35:16-18}. His inherited land ^{Joshua 18:11-28} included Jerusalem and Jericho. The tribe of Benjamin was famous for being great warriors who were proficient with bows and slings with either hand ^{1 Chronicles 12:1-2} and for wickedness and cruelty ^{Judges 19,20, 1 Samuel 22:17}. Ehud ^{Judges 3:15-25}, King Saul ^{1 Samuel 9:1-2,21}, Queen Esther ^{Esther 2:5-7}, and the apostle Saul/Paul ^{Philippians 3:4b-6} were all prominent Benjamites.

49:28 Israel completed the “appropriate” blessings for his twelve sons, the tribes of Israel.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

Reviewing the Outline of Genesis:

<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Central Theme/Character</i>	<i>Main Setting</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
1-2	Creation (Universe, Man)	Mesopotamia	Creation to c. 2170 B.C.
3	Fall of Man		
4	Cain, Abel & Seth		
5	Noah, Rampant Sin		
6-9	Flood of Noah		
10-11	Tower of Babel		
12-20	Abraham	Palestine, Canaan	c. 2170 – 1855 B.C.
21-26	Isaac		
27-36	Jacob		
37-50	Joseph	Egypt	c. 1855 – 1800 B.C.

Bible Listings of the 12 Tribes of Israel

- ✧ **Genesis 35:23-26** – Jacob’s 12 sons; original list
- ✧ **Genesis 46:8-24** – Jacob’s 12 sons; who went to Egypt
- ✧ **Genesis 49:3-27** – Jacob’s 12 sons; patriarchal blessing
- ✧ **Exodus 1:2-5** – Jacob’s 12 sons; who went to Egypt
- ✧ **Number 1:5-15** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; tribal leaders for census
- ✧ **Numbers 1:20-42** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; first census numbers
- ✧ **Numbers 2:3-31** – Levi plus Joseph’s sons (13 tribes); tribal camp arrangement
- ✧ **Numbers 7:12-78** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; tabernacle dedication offerings
- ✧ **Numbers 10:14-27** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; marching order
- ✧ **Numbers 13:4-15** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; men Moses sent into the PL
- ✧ **Numbers 26:5-50** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; second census numbers
- ✧ **Numbers 34:13-28** – No Levi plus Joseph’s sons; men who defined land inheritances
- ✧ **Deuteronomy 27:12-13** – Jacob’s 12 sons; mounts of blessings and curses
- ✧ **Deuteronomy 33:6-25** – Jacob’s 12 sons minus Simeon (11); Moses’ blessings
- ✧ **Joshua 13-21** – Levi plus Joseph’s sons (13); tribal land/city inheritance
- ✧ **Judges 5:14-18** – No Simeon, Levi, Judah, Gad plus Manasseh illusion (9); song of Deborah
- ✧ **1 Chronicles 2:1-2** – Jacob’s 12 sons; genealogies
- ✧ **1 Chronicles 12:24-37** – Levi plus Joseph’s sons (13); sent soldiers to support David
- ✧ **1 Chronicles 27:16-22** – No Gad, Asher plus Joseph’s sons and Aaron; tribal officers
- ✧ **Ezekiel 48:1-29** – Levi plus Joseph’s sons (13); millennial land division
- ✧ **Ezekiel 48:30-34** – Jacob’s 12 sons; names of the millennial city gates
- ✧ **Revelation 7:4-8** – No Dan, Ephraim plus Manasseh, Joseph; sealed tribulation Jews

Sons and Grandsons of Jacob/Israel

(the Tribes of Israel in their birth order)

Mother	Son	Grandson	Name Meaning	Biblical Reference
Leah	Reuben		See, a son	Genesis 29:32
Leah	Simeon		One who hears	Genesis 29:33
Leah	Levi		Attached	Genesis 29:34
Leah	Judah		Celebrated	Genesis 29:35
Bilhah (Rachel)	Dan		Judge	Genesis 30:4-6
Bilhah (Rachel)	Naphtali		My struggle	Genesis 30:7-8
Zilpah (Leah)	Gad		Good fortune	Genesis 30:9-11
Zilpah (Leah)	Asher		Happy	Genesis 30:12-13
Leah	Issachar		Reward	Genesis 30:16-18
Leah	Zebulun		Honor	Genesis 30:19-20
Leah	(Dinah)			Genesis 30:21
Rachel	Joseph		May Jehovah add	Genesis 30:22-24
Rachel	Benjamin		Son of my right hand	Genesis 35:16-18
Asenath		Manasseh	Forgetful	Genesis 41:51, 48:5
Asenath		Ephraim	Fruitful	Genesis 41:52, 48:5

God's Directive for the Encampment of the Tribes in the Wilderness

The camps of the 12 (4 groups of 3) tribes were divinely situated around the tabernacle ^{Numbers 2}.
 Four tribes (Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan) were recognized as tribal leaders ^{Numbers 2:3,10,18,25}.
 The four tribal group leaders had specific banners. According to Jewish tradition the banners were:

- ✧ Judah camped to the East with a standard of a **Lion** (of gold with a scarlet background).
- ✧ Reuben camped to the South with a standard of a **Man** (on gold background).
- ✧ Ephraim camped to the West with a standard of an **Ox** (of black on gold background).
- ✧ Dan camped to the North with a standard of an **Eagle** (of gold on a blue background)

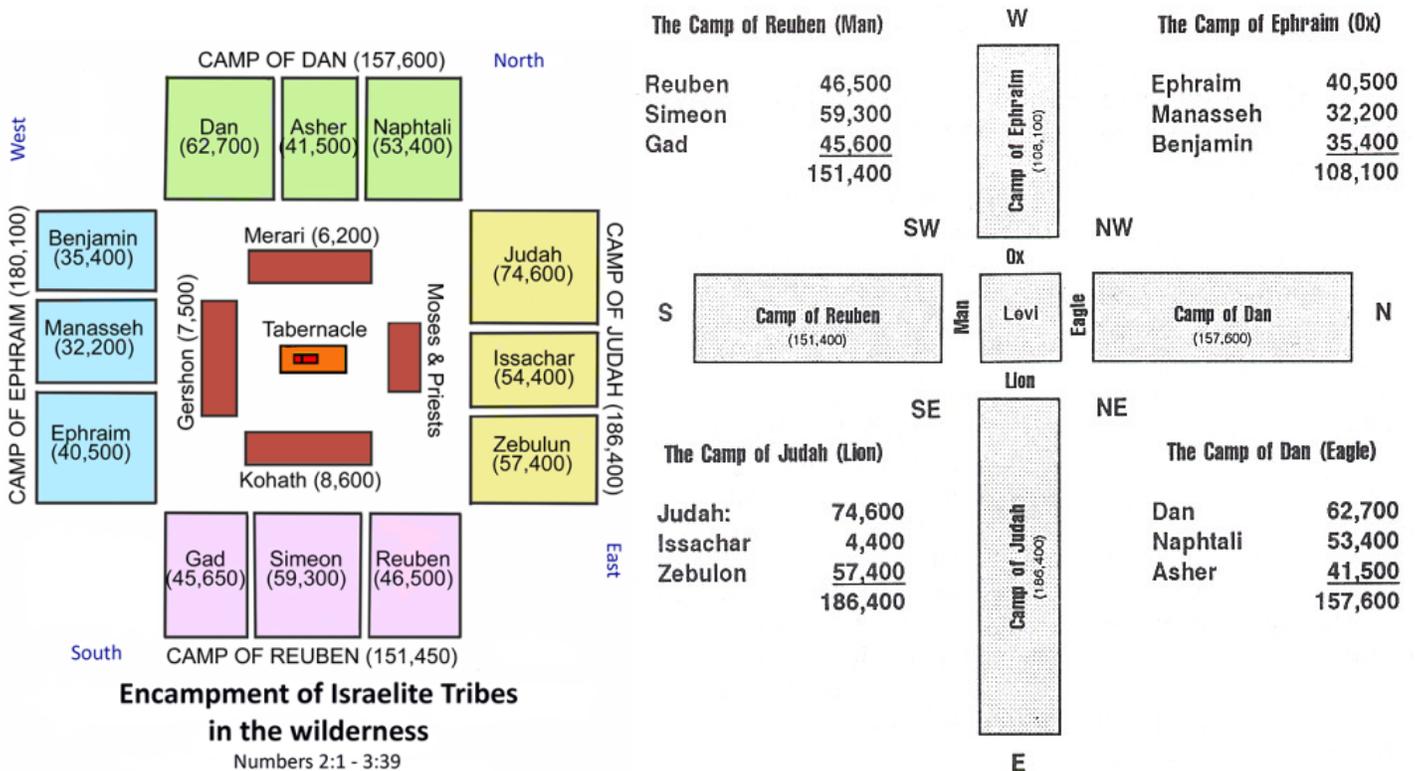
Four Living Creatures (Cherubim?)

Ezekiel 1:10 The four living creatures faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.

Revelation 4:6b-7 Around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

Four Gospels These same four images are commonly applied to the four New Testament Gospels.

Matthew: Lion (Lion of Judah); Mark: Ox (Servant Leader); Luke: Man (Born of Woman); John: Eagle (Fully God)



Correcting the count errors above ^{Numbers 1:20-43}. The map on the left: the Camp of Ephraim total = 108,100; the map on the right: Gad's total = 45,650, the Camp of Reuben total = 151,450, Issachar's total = 54,400.

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Original Joshua 13-21 and Millennial Ezekiel 48 Land Inheritances for Israel

LAND ALLOTMENT IN THE MILLENNIUM ACCORDING TO EZEKIEL

