

JACOB'S CHILDREN IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL



THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL



At an assembly held in Shiloh, Joshua cast lots before the gathered tribes, and there according to the way the lots fell, Joshua apportioned the land among the Israelites according to their groupings. These 12 tribes were descended from the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel), borne of 2 wives, sisters Leah and Rachel, and 2 slave-wives given to him by the two sisters.

Rachel remained barren, so God opened the womb of Leah first. Leah conceived and gave birth to a son whom she named Reuben. Soon thereafter she also gave birth to Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel, seeing that she herself gave Jacob no offspring, became jealous of her sister Leah who had quickly produced four children for Jacob. So she gave her slave-girl, Bilhah to her husband as a wife that she might have a child through her. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and then Naphtali. Leah did the same, giving her slave-girl (Zilpah) to Jacob who conceived first Gad and then Asher. Afterward, Leah herself conceived Issachar, Zebulun and a daughter, Dinah. Finally, God remembered Rachel, Jacob's favorite, bringing Joseph to birth in her womb. After that, Rachel conceived Benjamin as well, bringing Jacob's male progeny to twelve.

When Jacob's sons reached early manhood, they became jealous of Joseph who was his father's favorite. They kidnapped him, and sold him to a caravan headed for Egypt. Living in the land of Egypt, Joseph became very important and powerful, overseeing all of Pharaoh's graineries. When a great famine swept the Middle East, Egypt remained fully stocked with food on account of Joseph's brilliant skill and foresight.

Knowing that Egypt had ample food, Jacob gathered his children and wives together and took them there to seek bread so that they not starve to death. Once there he discovered his missing long-lost favorite son. Joseph held no grudge against his brothers. He welcomed them all with open arms and gave them as much as they wanted to eat. As a reward for his generosity and love, Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manesseh, and blessed them that they might also share in the tribal legacy God had promised Jacob concerning his twelve sons.

Because Joseph had borne two of the twelve, he became a patriarch himself, rising to a level above his brothers. He was accorded a position of supreme honor, joining Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the progenitors of the twelve tribes. For this reason, he is not counted among the landowners.

Jacob's third son, Levi, was removed from landowning status as well, for it was in this

tribe that the priesthood of Israel was formed. The Levites became the caretakers of the religion. That is why neither Joseph nor Levi have their names ascribed to geographical areas on the map above.

Dan was first given land in an area that looked on Joppa, east of Benjamin. However, the Philistines resisted them there, blocking their efforts to capture the towns awarded to them in the original inheritance of the tribes. So the descendants of Dan headed north to a city called Leshem. Capturing this city, they renamed it 'Dan' after their ancestor, and settled there instead. This city proved to be the northernmost boundary of the land of Israel, stretching from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.

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**"Sound the Trumpet in Zion,
Give the Alarm On My Holy Mountain!"**

Joel 2:1