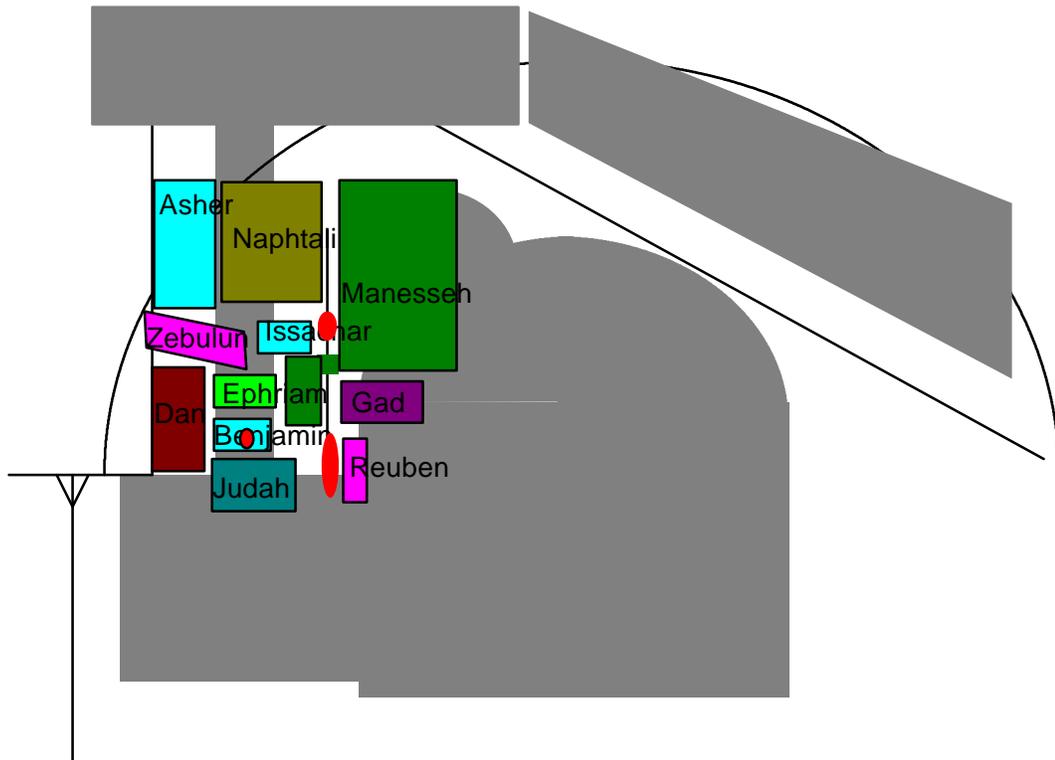


Patriarchs/ Sons of Jacob/ Places



ASHER

(ash' uhr) or Aser (New Testament Greek spelling) Personal, tribal, and place name meaning, "fortune," "happiness."

1. Eighth son of Jacob,

born of Zilpah, the concubine (Gen. 30:13). His four sons and one daughter began the tribe of Asher (Gen. 46:17).

Jacob's blessing

Jacob's blessing said Asher would have rich food that he would give a king (Gen. 49:20), perhaps suggesting a period when the tribe would serve a foreign king.

2. The tribe of Asher

numbered 53,400 in the wilderness (Num. 26:46), having grown from 41,500 (Num. 1:41).

Formed Rear Guard

They formed part of the rear guard in the wilderness marches (Num. 10:25-28).

Far Northwest to Tyre and Sidon

Asher's territorial allotment was in Phoenicia in the far northwest reaching to Tyre and Sidon on the Mediterranean coast (Josh. 19:24-31).

They could not drive out the Canaanites

and had to live among them (Judg. 1:31-32).

Didn't respond to Deborah

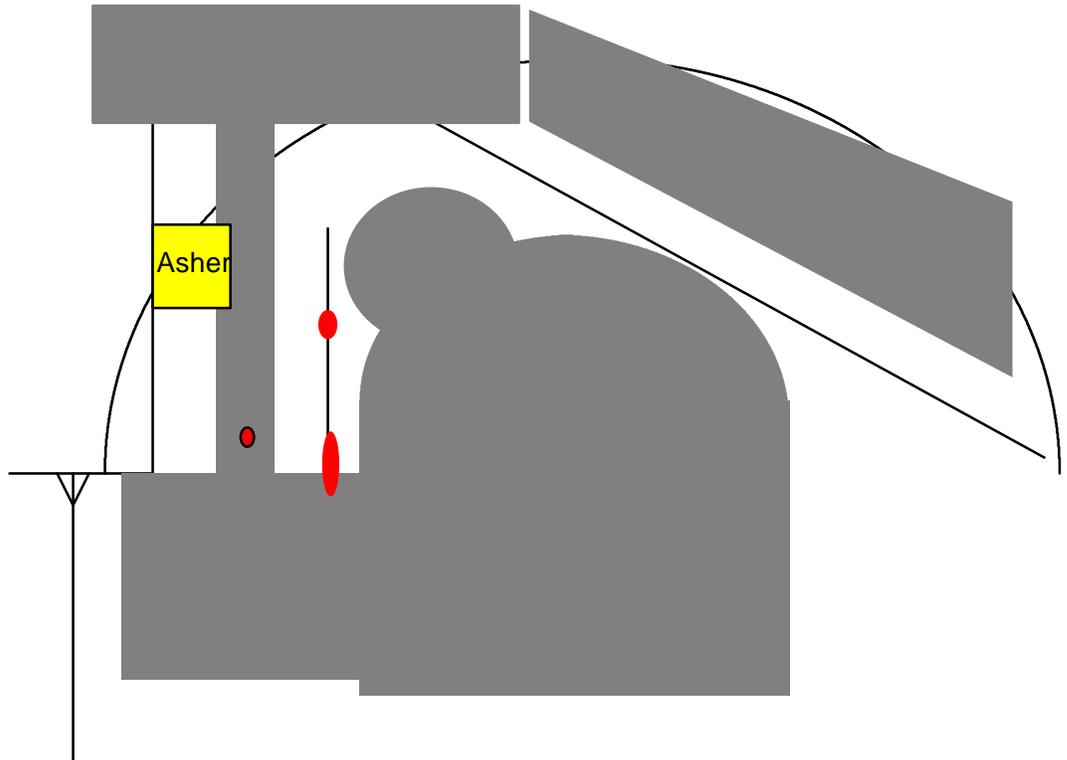
When Deborah summoned the tribes to action, Asher did not respond but "continued on the seashore" (Judg. 5:17). Apparently, Asher was working for the Canaanites in the ports of the Mediterranean.

Moses' blessing

gives another view of Asher, calling the tribe "most blessed," "favored by his brothers," and strong (Deut. 33:24-25).

other

Asher produced no judge in the Book of Judges; nor did it have a tribal leader in the chronicler's list (1 Chron. 27:16-22). Asher did provide troops for Gideon (Judg. 6:35; 7:23) and 40,000 for David at Hebron (1 Chron. 12:36). Some people from Asher made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to keep Hezekiah's Passover (2 Chron. 30:11). Perhaps Asher's greatest hero was Anna, the prophetess who bore witness to the baby Jesus (Luke 2:36-38). Twelve thousand from Asher are among the 144,000 sealed out of great tribulation to be fed by the Lamb (Rev. 7).



BENJAMIN

(Behn' juh mihn) Personal name meaning, "son of the right hand" or "son of the south." The second son Rachel bore to Jacob. He became the forefather of the tribe of Benjamin. His birth was difficult, and his mother named him Benoni, which means "son of my sorrow." She died giving him birth. His father Jacob, however, did not let that name stand. He gave the child the name Benjamin, which means "son of the right hand."

The tribe of Benjamin

occupied the smallest territory of all the tribes. Yet, it played a significant role in Israelite history.

Saul,

Israel's first king, was a Benjamite.

Jerusalem

Furthermore, the city of Jerusalem was near the border between the territories of Benjamin and Judah and may have been in Benjamin originally (Josh. 18:16; Judg. 1:21).

Jacob's blessing

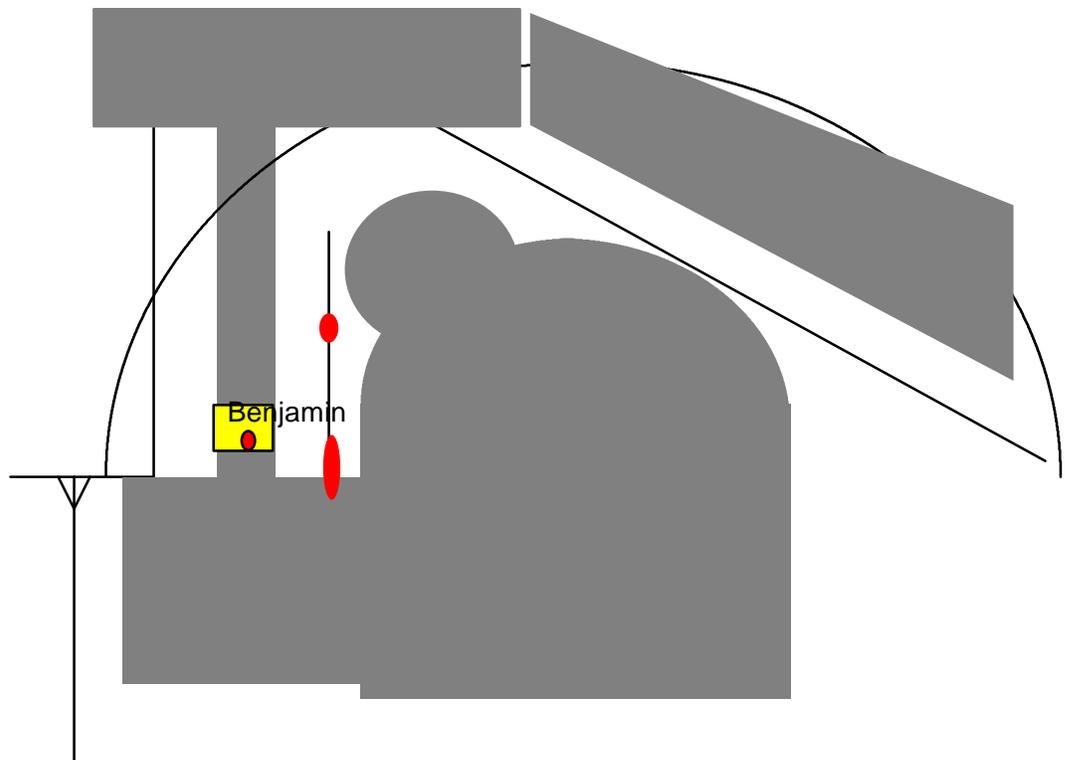
Benjamin's appetite for territory may be seen in Jacob's blessing (Gen. 49:27).

Moses' blessing

Moses' blessing highlights Benjamin's special place in God's care (Deut. 33:12). Late in the period of the judges, Benjamin almost disappeared from history when they mistreated a Levite and his concubine (Judg. 19-21).

Paul

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul proudly proclaimed his heritage in the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5). See Tribes of Israel; Patriarchs.



DAN

(Dan) Personal name meaning, "judge." 1. First son born to Jacob by Rachel's maid Bilhah (Gen. 30:6). He was the original ancestor of the tribe of Dan.

West coast with Philistines

When the Israelites entered Canaan, the tribe of Dan received land on the western coast. They could not fully gain control of the territory, especially after the Philistines settled in the area.

Samson

The last chapters of Judges show Samson of the tribe of Dan fighting the Philistines.

Tribe of Dan migrated north to City of Dan

Eventually, Dan migrated to the north and was able to take a city called Laish. They renamed the city Dan and settled in the area around it. Dan was always a small tribe, and it never exercised significant influence in Israel. The most prominent Danites mentioned in the Bible are Oholiab and Samson. See Tribes of Israel; Patriarchs. 2. The biblical city of Dan is often mentioned in the description of the land of Israel, namely "from Dan even to Beersheba" (Judg. 20:1). It has been identified with modern tell el-Qadi (or tell Dan). The tel, which covers about 50 acres, is situated at the northern end of the richly fertile Huleh Plain at the base of Mt. Hermon. The abundant springs of the site provide one of the three main sources of the Jordan River.

The city was formerly named Laish (Judg. 18:7 or Leshem in Josh. 19:47) when occupied by the Canaanites. This city is mentioned in the Egyptian execration texts and Mari tablets from the eighteenth century B.C. Later Thutmose III listed Laish among the cities conquered in his 1468 B.C. campaign. The name Dan was applied to the city conquered by the Israelite tribe in its northern migration (Judg. 18).

Excavation of tell Dan has been led by A. Biran of Hebrew University in Jerusalem since 1966. Laish was founded at the end of the Early Bronze II Age (about 2700 B.C.) near the springs and flourished until about 2300 B.C. Significant pottery remains of this era were uncovered along with remains of floors and walls. The city probably remained unoccupied until the Middle Bronze II period (about 2000 B.C.), when a large, well-fortified city was constructed. A massive earthen rampart similar to that of Hazor was built for defensive purposes, and set into the rampart (about 1750 B.C.) was a well-preserved, mudbrick "triple-arched gate." The fifteen meter square gate system stood twelve meters above the surrounding plain and contained the earliest arched entryways known in the world. The gate was blocked and covered within a century for reasons unknown. The earthen ramparts continued to be the primary defense fortification through several wars and conquests until the Israelite period. Other significant finds from the period include jar burials, tombs, and pottery.

The Late Bronze Age is represented by a richly-supplied tomb containing Mycenaean and Cypriote imported wares; ivory inlaid cosmetic boxes; gold, silver, and bronze objects; and forty-five skeletons of men, women, and children.

Iron Age Laish was rebuilt by local inhabitants in the late thirteenth century B.C. but destroyed about 1100 B.C. by the migrating tribe of Dan. Scripture describes the conquest of the city as if the local people were unsuspecting of the coming invasion. Danites utilized the earlier rampart for defense and built their homes on the ruins of the previous city. The first Danite city, which contained some Philistine pottery remnants, was destroyed a century after its founding. The city was soon rebuilt and became a prominent Israelite city of the Iron Age.

Dan and Bethel became sanctuaries for northern tribes with golden calves

Following the establishment of the Israelite kingdom under David and Solomon, Jeroboam led the Northern tribes in revolt against Rehoboam (about 925 B.C.). As an

alternative to worship in Jerusalem, Dan and Bethel were fortified as border fortress/sanctuaries (1 Kings 12:29) with temples containing golden calf representations of Yahweh. This may have represented a combination of Baal worship with worship of Yahweh. The extent to which the Baal cult influenced Northern Israel is seen in the reign of Jehu, who did not destroy the altars at Dan and Bethel, despite eradicating the Baal priests from the land (2 Kings 10:32). Excavations at Dan have uncovered the "high place" of Jeroboam along with a small horned altar, the city gate (with royal throne) and walls (12 feet thick), hundreds of pottery vessels, buildings, and inscribed objects. This city was soon taken by Ben-hadad of Aram and then recaptured by Jeroboam II in the eighth century B.C. (2 Kings 14:25).

Dan fell to the Assyrians

The Israelite city of Dan fell to the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser III (Pul of Old Testament) about 743 B.C. (2 Kings 15:29). He annexed the city into an Assyrian district.

Fall of Samaria, imported foreigners

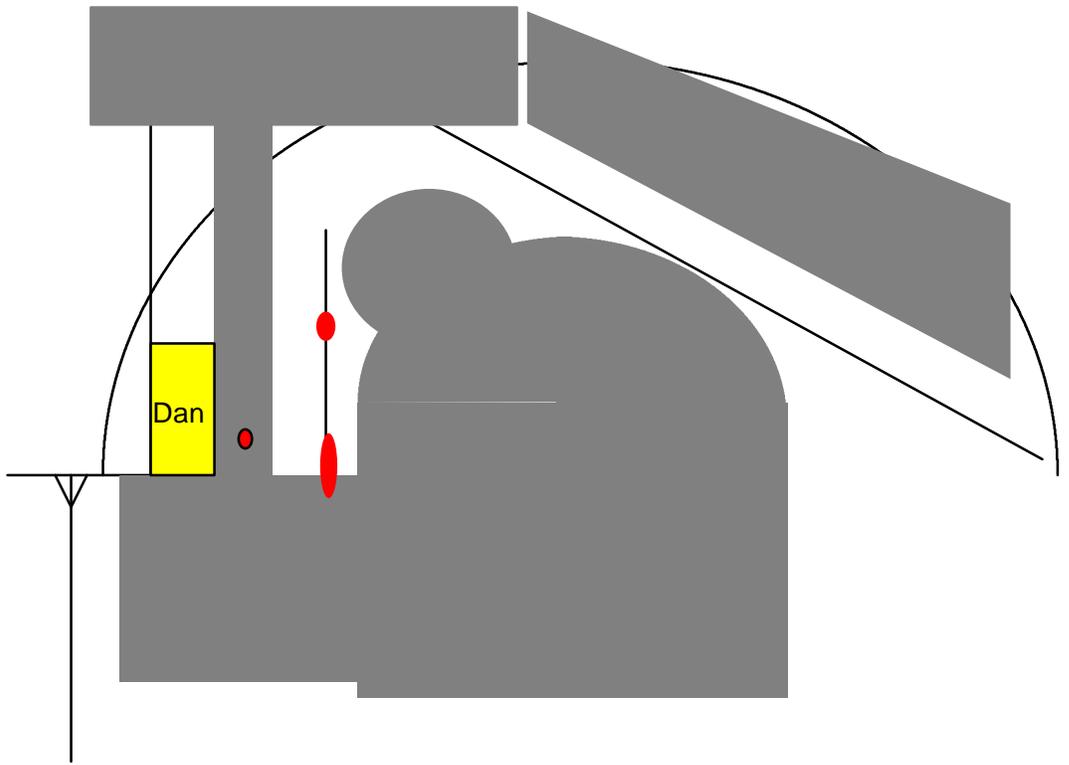
Many Danites were deported to Assyria, Babylon, and Media following the fall of Samaria in 722 or 721 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6) to Sargon II. Foreigners were brought in from Babylon, Aram, and other lands to settle Israel's territory. The writer of Kings ascribed the fall of the kingdom to the worship of gods other than Yahweh (2 Kings 17:7-20), and Dan was one of the key centers of this idolatry.

Josiah - "from Dan to Beersheba"

As Josiah came to the throne of Judah in 639 B.C., Assyria was on the decline. Josiah incorporated the former Northern Kingdom territories into a united country, restoring the classical borders of Israel to "from Dan to Beersheba." An upper gate to the city was built during this period, and the inscription found at this level, "belonging to Ba'alpelet," demonstrates that Baal worship continued to influence this area after the Assyrian destruction. The partially rebuilt city survived until the onslaught of the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar (about 589 B.C.; compare Jer. 4:14-18).

Dan again was occupied in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. In the area of the high place, statues and figurines of Greco-Roman and Egyptian gods such as Osiris, Bes, and Aphrodite have been excavated. The Greek and Aramaic inscription, "To the god who is in Dan, Zoilos made a vow," further evidences the religious significance of the city.

Dennis Cole



EPHRAIM

(ee fra ihm) Personal and tribal name meaning, "two fruit land" or "two pasture lands." The younger son of Joseph by the Egyptian Asenath, daughter of the priest of On (Gen. 41:52). He was adopted by his grandfather Jacob and given precedence over his brother Manasseh (Gen. 48:14).

Region slightly northwest of the Dead Sea

He was the progenitor of the tribe of Ephraim, which occupied a region slightly to the northwest of the Dead Sea (Josh. 16) and was the leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom, ever ready to assert its rights (Josh. 17:15; Judg. 3:27; 4:5; 7:24-8:3; 12:1).

Joshua

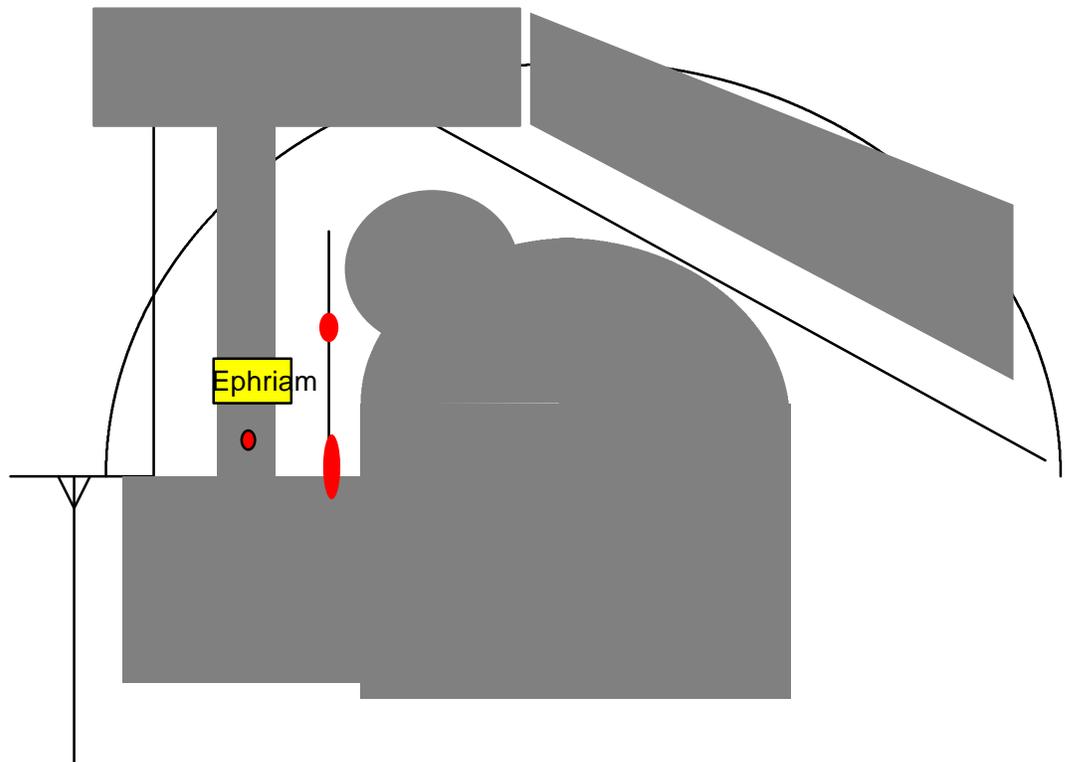
Ephraim played an important role in Israelite history. Joshua was an Ephraimite (Josh. 19:50). Samuel was an Ephraimite (1 Sam. 1:1). Jeroboam I was an Ephraimite (1 Kings 12:25).

Shiloh

The important sanctuary at Shiloh was located in the territory of Ephraim.

Designation for Israel

From the eighth century B.C., Ephraim was often used as a designation for Israel (Isa. 11:13; Jer. 7:15; Hos. 5:13). See Tribes of Israel; Patriarchs.



GAD

(Gad) Personal name meaning, "good fortune." 1. The seventh son of Jacob and the progenitor of the tribe of Gad (Gen. 30:9-11). His mother was Leah's maid Zilpah.

East of the Jordan, northeast of the Dead Sea

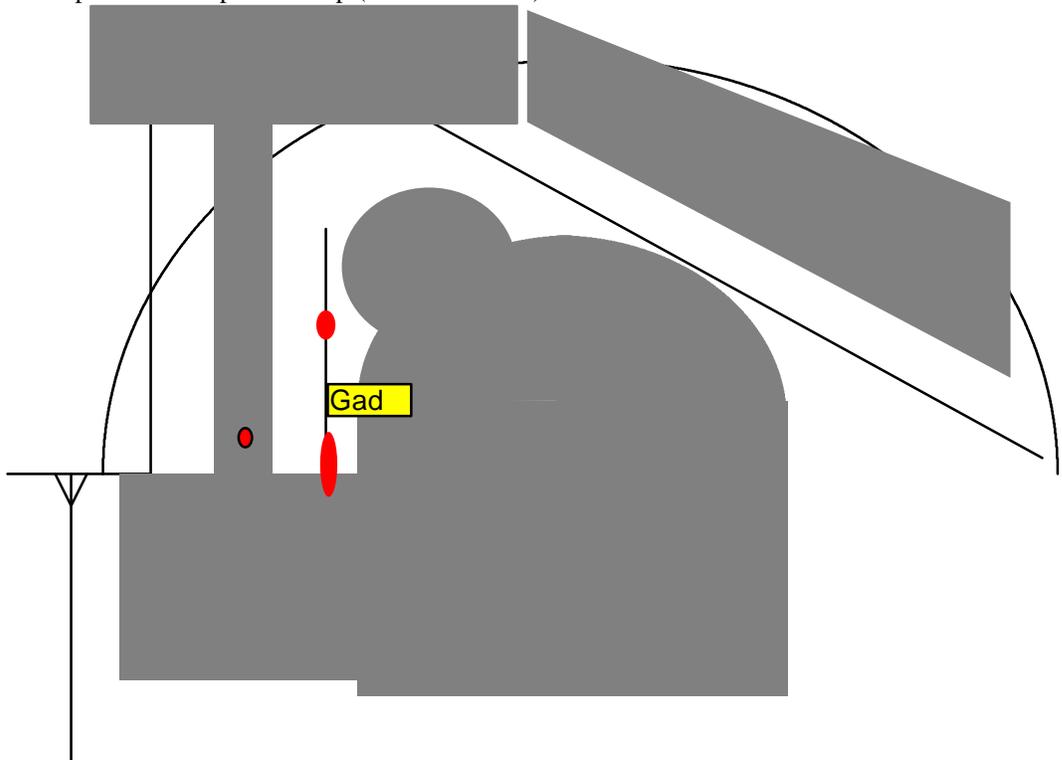
At the conclusion of the period of wilderness wandering, when the Israelites were preparing to occupy Canaan, the tribe of Gad requested permission, along with the tribe of Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh, to settle east of the Jordan. Their reason was that they owned large numbers of livestock and the territory east of the Jordan was particularly suitable for raising livestock (Num. 32). This territory became known as Gad (Jer. 49:1). Though the exact limits of Gad's tribal territory are difficult to determine, the Gadites generally occupied land to the northeast of the Dead Sea (Josh. 13:24-28). See Tribes of Israel.

also, Gad is a name for a Syrian god

2. Syrian god known from inscriptions from Phoenicia and Palmyra and used in biblical names such as Baal-gad (Josh. 11:17) and Migdal-gad (Josh. 15:37). It also apparently is meant in Isaiah 65:11 where the prophet condemned the people for setting "a table for Fortune" (NAS; Hebrew, Gad).

Prophet Gad

3. Prophet who advised David as he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 22:5) and who brought God's options for punishment after David took a census of Israel (2 Sam. 24:11-14). Gad also brought David God's orders to build an altar, apparently on the site of the future Temple (2 Sam. 24:18-19). The Chronicler pointed his readers to records of David's reign by Gad (1 Chron. 29:29) and of Gad's assistance in showing David God's plan for Temple worship (2 Chron. 29:25).

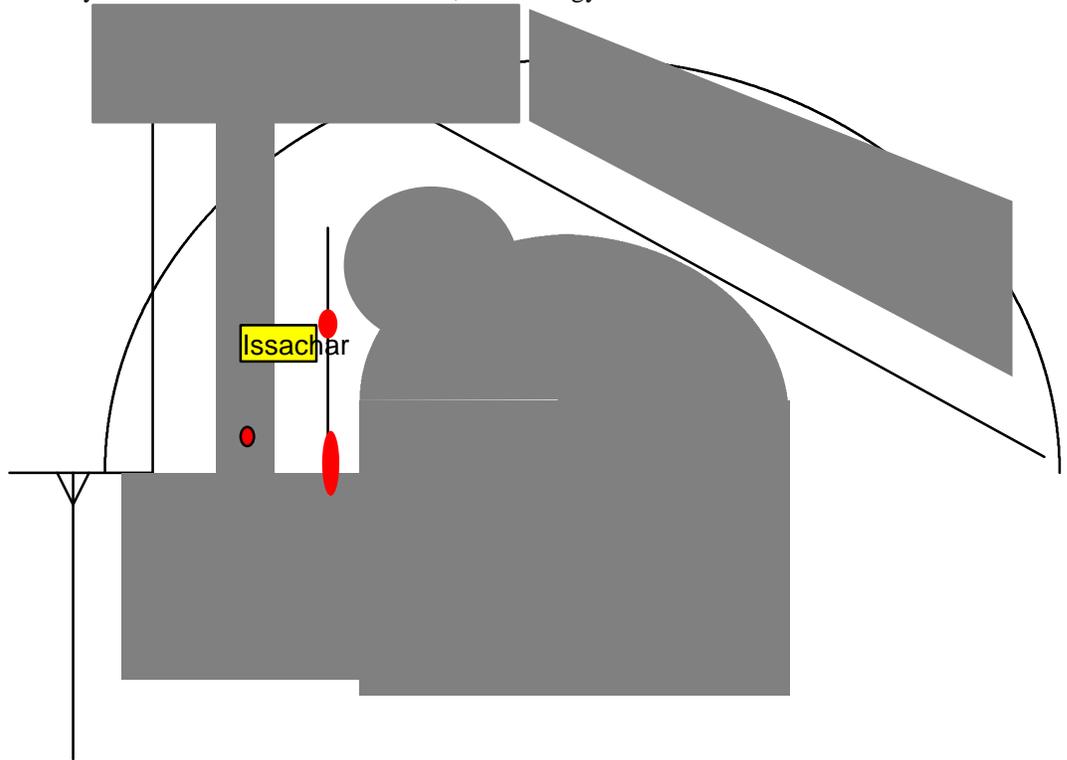


ISSACHAR

(Iss char) Personal name meaning "man for hire" or "hireling." Ninth son of Jacob, the fifth borne by Leah (Gen. 30:18). He became the progenitor of the tribe of Issachar. Almost nothing is known about his personal history.

Northern part of Palestine, southwest of the Sea of Galilee

The tribe of Issachar occupied territory in the northern part of Palestine, just southwest of the Sea of Galilee (Josh. 19:17-23). The tribe was not prominent in Israel's history. Tola, one of the so-called "minor" judges, was of the tribe of Issachar (Judg. 10:1-2). So was Baasha, the successor of Nadab as king of Israel (1 Kings 15:27). The city of Jezreel, which was an Israelite royal residence, was located in the territory of Issachar. See Tribes of Israel; Chronology of Biblical Period.



JUDAH

(Jew' duh) Personal, tribal, and territorial name meaning, "Praise Yahweh," but may have originally been related to the mountain of Jehud. 1. In Genesis 29:35, the fourth son of Jacob and the progenitor of the tribe of Judah. His mother was Leah.

Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar

Though Judah is prominent in the Genesis narratives, he seldom occupies center stage. Genesis 38 is an exception. It relates the seduction of Judah by his daughter-in-law Tamar. Their union resulted in the birth of Pharez and Zarah.

Jacob's Blessing

Genesis 49:8-12 preserves the blessing of Judah by Jacob. Through Judah ran the genealogical line that led to Jesus.

West of Dead Sea, South of Jerusalem

2. The tribe of Judah occupied the strategically important territory just to the west of the Dead Sea. The city of Jerusalem was on the border between Judah and Benjamin.

David

was from the tribe of Judah.

Southern Kingdom

3. When the kingdom was divided following the death of Solomon, the southern kingdom took the name Judah. See Judas; Tribes of Israel; Patriarchs; Israel.

Persian province alongside Samaria and Galilee

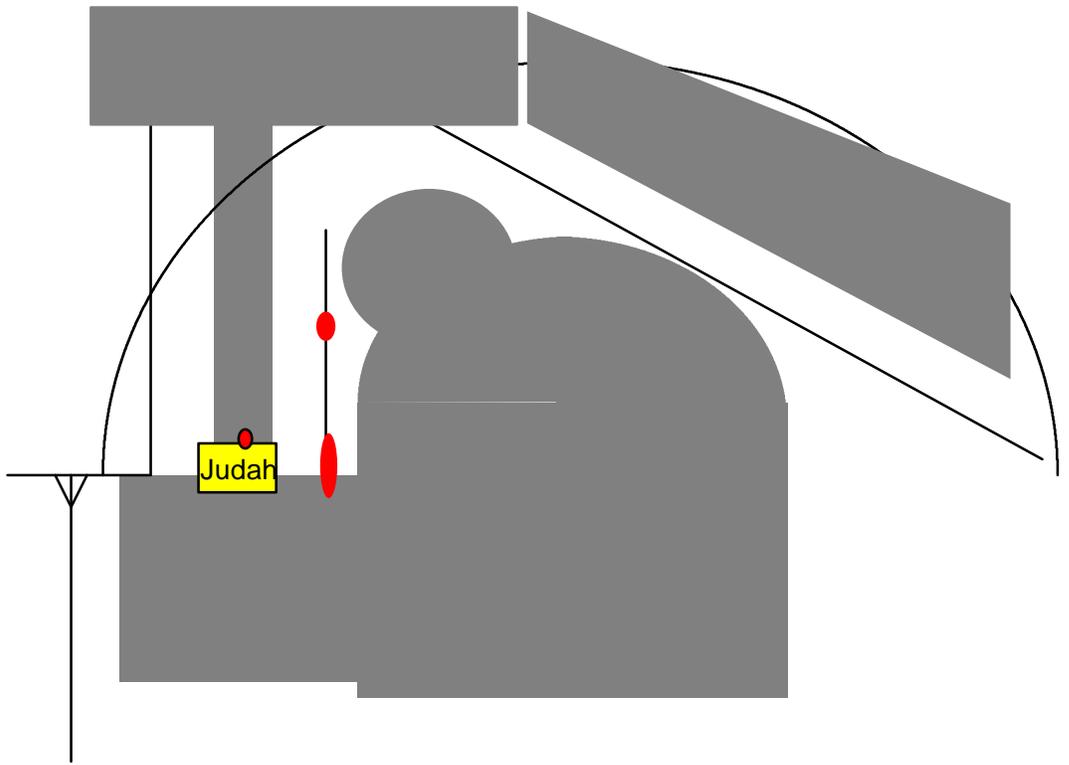
4. The province set up by the Persian government to rule a conquered Judean kingdom (Neh. 5:14; Hag. 1:1). Judah formed one small province alongside Samaria, Galilee, and Idumea. All these reported to the Satrap of the Persian satrapy of Abarnaharah which encompassed the land west of the Euphrates River with its center in Damascus (Ezra 5:3,6; 6:6,13). The satrap reported to a higher official over Babylon and Abarnaharah with headquarters in Babylon. When Judah's exiles returned from Babylon, Zerubbabel was governor of Judah; Tattenai, satrap of Abarnaharah or Beyond the River; and Ushtannu, satrap of Babylon and Abarnaharah.

4 Other Judah's

5. Priest whose sons helped Zerubbabel and Joshua begin work on restoring the Temple after 537 B.C. (Ezra 3:9; compare Neh. 12:8). 6. Levite whom Ezra condemned for having foreign wife who might tempt Israel to worship other gods (Ezra 10:23). 7. Member of tribe of Benjamin who lived in Jerusalem after the return from Exile and was second in command over the city (Neh. 11:9). He may be the official who joined Nehemiah in leading the celebration of the completion of the Jerusalem wall (Neh. 12:34). 8. Priestly musician who helped in Nehemiah's celebration (Neh. 12:36).

Confusing Geographical Reference

9. An obscure geographical reference in the description of the tribal borders of Naphtali (Josh. 19:34). The earliest Greek translators could not understand the reference and so did not translate it. (Compare TEV, NIV). Naphtali's territory does not touch that of the tribe of Judah. Some try to define Judah here as the sixty towns of Jair east of the Jordan (Josh. 13:30). Others translate Judah as "low-lying land" (REB). Some scholars try to make another place name such as Jehuda out of the reference. It may be that a copyist confused Jordan and Judah, which resemble one another in appearance in Hebrew writing, and miscopied Jordan as Judah and then copied Jordan. No sure solution exists to explain Judah in this text. 10. City of Judah (2 Chron. 25:28) is Jerusalem.



LEVI

(Lee' vi) Personal name meaning "a joining." 1. Third son of Jacob and Leah (Gen. 29:34) and original ancestor of Israel's priests.

Savage and merciless

He is characterized in Scripture as savage and merciless, avenging the rape of his sister, Dinah, by annihilating the male population of an entire city (Gen. 34:25-31).

No blessing from Jacob

Later, Jacob spoke harshly of Levi rather than blessing him (Gen. 49:5-7).

Instruments of wrath

The tribe which bears his name also is characterized as instruments of wrath. After the people of Israel sinned in the wilderness by making the molten calf, Moses commanded the people of Levi to slaughter those who had participated in the debacle (Ex. 32:28).

Tribe of priests

Levi's descendants became a tribe of priests. See Levites.

Other Levis

2. Name of two of Jesus' ancestors (Luke 3:24,29). 3. A tax collector in Capernaum who became a follower of Jesus (Mark 2:14). In the parallel account in the Gospel of Matthew the man's name is given as "Matthew" instead of "Levi" (9:9). The name of Levi appears in none of the lists of apostles.

MANASSEH

(Muh nas' seh) A personal name meaning "God has caused me to forget" (trouble). 1. One of at least two sons born to Joseph by Asenath (Gen. 41:50-51). Manasseh was adopted by Jacob as one to receive his blessing. Along with Ephraim, Manasseh became one of the twelve tribes of Israel and received a landed inheritance.

Older brother, who did not receive blessing of the firstborn

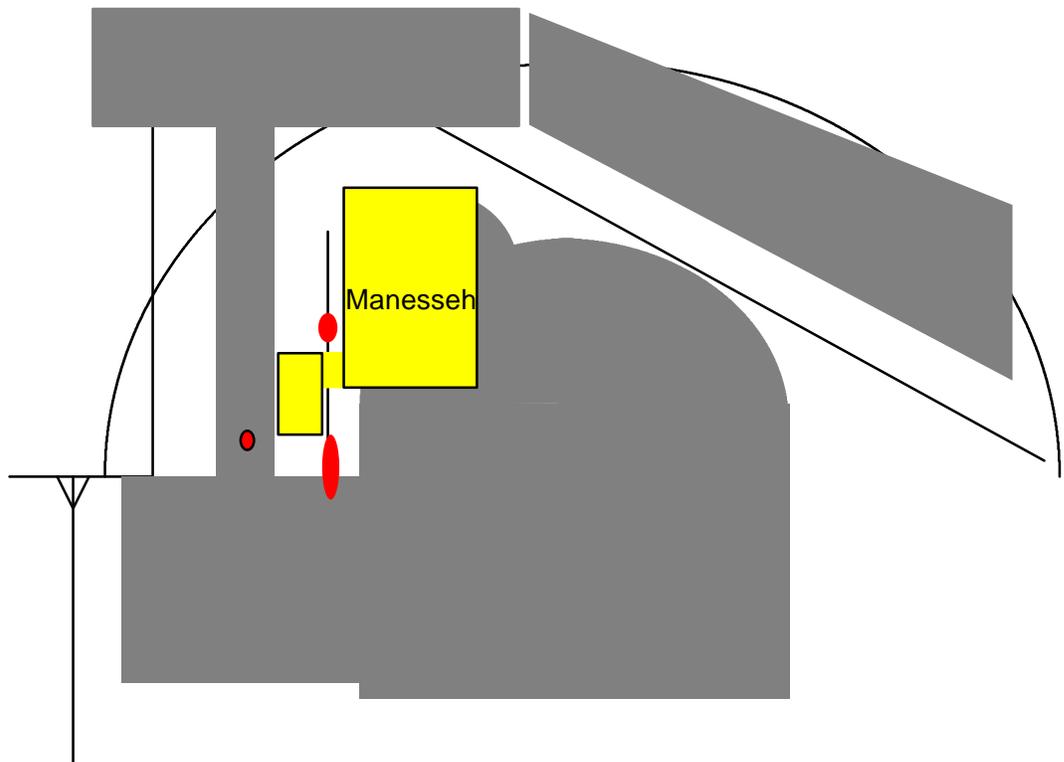
In almost typical Old Testament fashion, Manasseh, the elder brother, did not receive the blessing of the firstborn (Gen. 48:13-20). Jacob crossed his hands and gave that blessing to Ephraim. When the Promised Land was apportioned, half of the tribe of Manasseh, the elder brother, did not receive the blessing of the firstborn (Gen. 48:13-20). Jacob crossed his hands and gave that blessing to Ephraim.

Half on east bank, Half on the west

When the Promised Land was apportioned, half of the tribe of Manasseh settled on the east bank of the Jordan and half on the west. See Tribes of Israel.

Unfaithful King of Judah

2. King of Judah (696-642 B.C.) who was a son of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:21). His was the longest reign of any Judean king. Manasseh's reign was known as one of unfaithfulness to Yahweh. Second Kings blames him for Judah's ultimate destruction and exile (2 Kings 21:10-16).



NAPHTALI

(Naf' tuh li) Personal name meaning, "wrestler." Sixth son of Jacob and second son by his concubine Bilhah (Gen. 30:6-8).

Jacob's blessing

In blessing him, Jacob likened Naphtali to a hind let loose (49:21), probably a reference to unbridled energy.

Northwest of Sea of Galilee

The tribe which bears his name inhabited a territory north of the Sea of Galilee that extend along the northwest side of Jordan beyond Lake Huleh (Josh. 19:32-39).

Praised in Song of Deborah

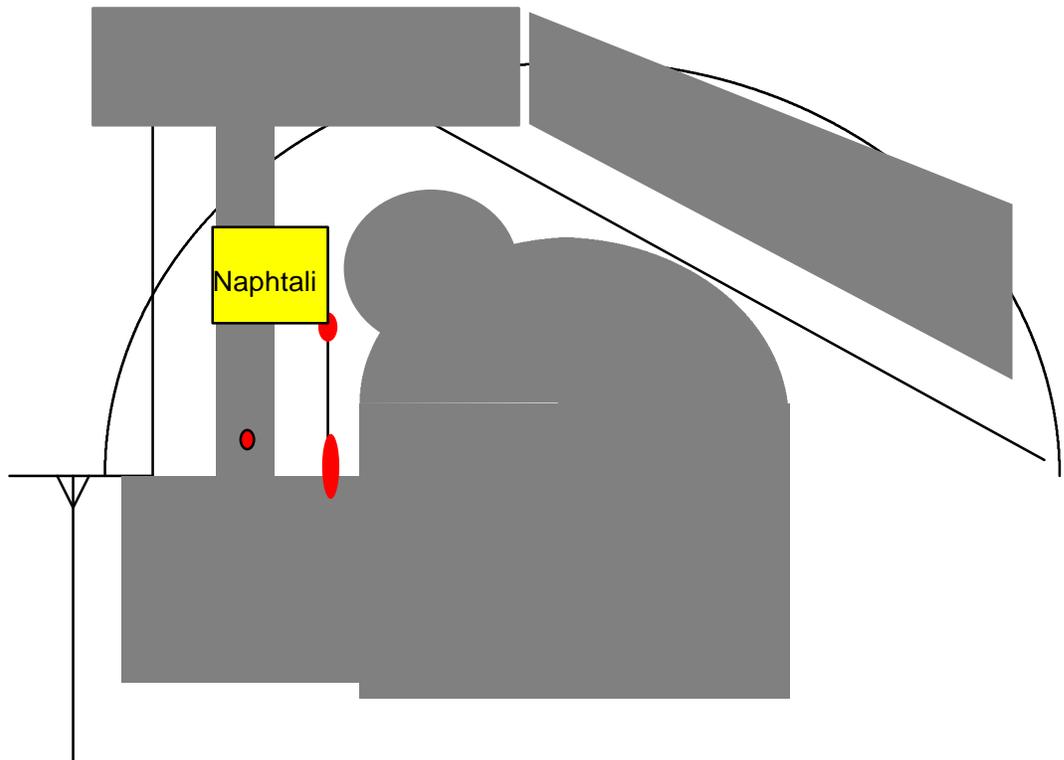
Naphtali is praised in the Song of Deborah for placing itself in jeopardy on behalf of Israel (Judg. 5:18). The tribe joined with Asher and Manasseh to help drive the Midianites out of the land (7:23).

Hiram

During Solomon's reign the territory was designated a separate economic district (1 Kings 4:7,15) and produced Hiram, the king's chief brass worker (7:13-14).

Invaded by Syrians

The Syrians invaded Naphtali during Baasha's reign and inflicted heavy losses (15:20). The territory finally succumbed to Tiglath-pileser III in 734 B.C. (2 Kings 15:29). See Tribes.



REUBEN

(ITES) (Roo' behn ites) Eldest son of Jacob, born to Leah (Gen. 29:32) while the couple was living with her father, Laban, in Paddan-aram, and the clan or tribe descended from him.

Mandrakes and sexual relations

Among his acts recorded in the Bible, Reuben found mandrakes (out of which a love potion probably was made for his mother to use with Jacob 30:14,16-17), and had sexual relations with one of his father's concubines (35:22), for which he later was chastised (49:4).

Compassion for Joseph, responsible for Benjamin's welfare

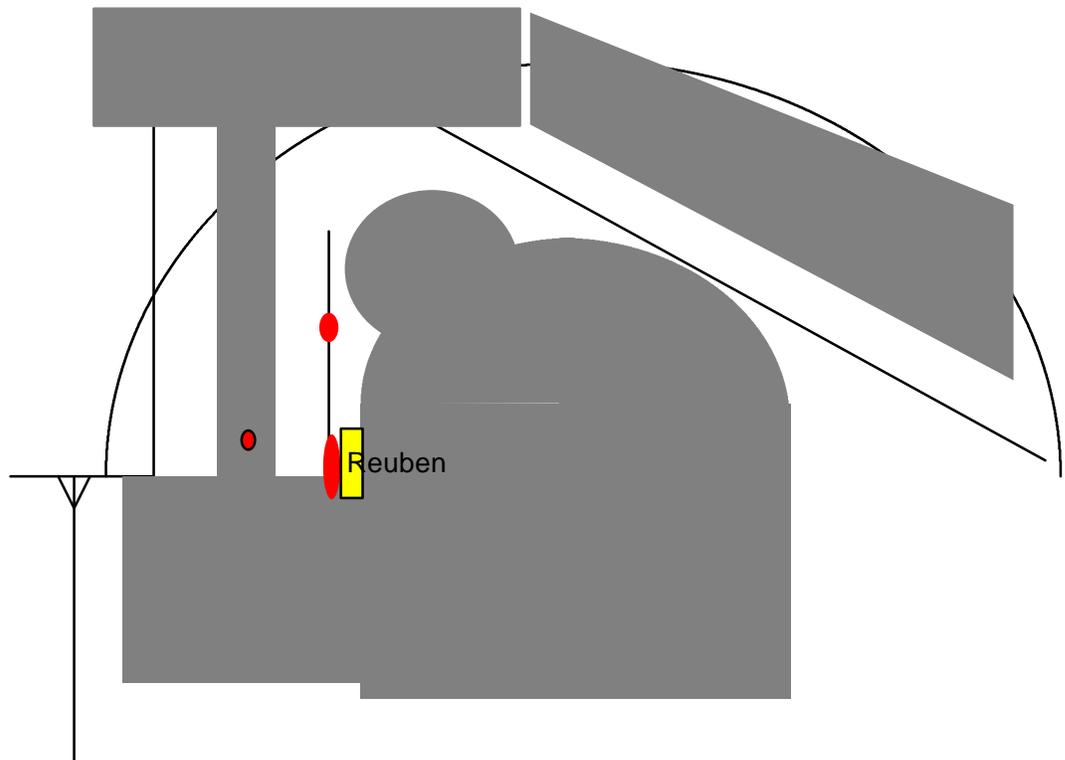
Reuben felt compassion for young Joseph when his brothers wanted to kill the brash dreamer (37:21-22), and was willing to be responsible to his father for Benjamin's welfare when the unknown Joseph commanded that the youngest brother be brought to Egypt (42:37).

Place of honor among the other tribes

The tribe which was named for Reuben held a place of honor among the other tribes.

East of Dead Sea

The territory the tribe inherited was just east of the Dead Sea and was the first parcel of land to be bestowed (Num. 32).



SIMEON

(sihm' ih uhn) Personal name meaning, "hearing" or possibly, "little hyena beast." 1. One of Jacob's twelve sons, the second by Leah (Gen. 29:33). He joined Levi in avenging Dinah's rape by Shechem (Gen. 34:25-31). Joseph kept Simeon bound in Egypt to ensure that he would see Benjamin (Gen. 42:24). See Jacob; Tribes of Israel.

Location?

Other Simeon's

2. A devout Jew who lived in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus' birth. He was seeking the fulfillment of messianic prophecy when Israel would be restored (Luke 2:25). God promised Simeon that he would not die before seeing the Christ. When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple for the purification rites, Simeon announced to them God's plan for the boy (2:34).

3. Ancestor of Jesus (Luke 3:30). 4. Prophet and teacher in church at Antioch (Acts 13:1). 5. Alternate form in Greek for Simon, original Greek name of Peter. See Peter; Simon.

ZEBULUN

(Zehb' ew luhn) Personal and tribal name probably meaning, "elevated dwelling." Jacob's tenth son and sixth by Leah (Gen. 30:20).

Between sea of Galilee and Mount Carmel

The tribe named for him settled in the area between the Sea of Galilee and Mount Carmel (Josh. 19:10-16).

Religious festivals at Mt. Tabor

The tribe hosted the other tribes with religious festivals at Mount Tabor (Deut. 33:18-19). Their menu included the delicacies fished from the Sea of Galilee.

Deborah, Barak, and Gideon

Militarily, the tribe distinguished itself in the struggles to possess the land, fighting faithfully in the armies of Deborah and Barak, and Gideon (Judg. 4:6; 6:35). See Israel; Palestine; Tribes.

