

THE SECRET OF HIS PURPOSE .... THE PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES  
**TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE KING,**  
EVERYTHING IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH,  
**IN JESUS....**

By – Stuart H. Pouliot

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#35

***Israel's Tribes—Prophetic Meaning***

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As Jacob-Israel was on his deathbed, he gave a prophetic blessing to each of his 12 sons that spoke of the future of their descendants (Genesis 49). Shortly before this, Israel also adopted Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 48). Adding these two sons to the 12, including their father Joseph, actually totals 14 sons of Israel. However, when Manasseh and Ephraim are included with the 12, Joseph is sometimes excluded, which brings the total back down to 13. Also, Levi is often left out due to his unique place among the tribes. Interestingly, the lists of the tribes in scripture always total to 12, which signifies the perfect government of God.

While John was *in spirit*, he was told the number of the bond-servants of God that would be sealed from the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel. But, an examination of the listed tribes presents a challenge, for they do not match any listing found in scripture, either in order or content.

And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed. (Revelation 7:4-8 NASB)

In the above, Dan and Ephraim are left out. Most likely, Dan was replaced by Levi, and Ephraim was replaced by his father Joseph. However, Ephraim's older brother Manasseh is included. Further, the tribes are listed in what appears to be a strange order. They are not listed by age or mother, and there seems to be no historical perspective.

Many commentators believe that Dan was excluded due to his idolatry when he stole the graven images, the ephod, and the household idols from Micah's house (Judges 18:14-31). However, if this were the sole basis for exclusion from the list, there would be others that should have been left out as well. The fact of the matter is that Jacob's sons and their descendants were often a troubled, rebellious, dysfunctional lot.

So, what criteria were used by the spirit of God in listing the tribes? Perhaps, the answer lies with the meaning of the tribal names themselves. When each of Jacob's 12 sons was born, Leah and Rachel named their sons and spoke a special word that signified the meaning of the name. For example, Judah means "praise," for when he was born, Leah declared: "I will praise the Lord."

It has been proposed by others that there is a prophetic message revealed in the meanings of the names in the order they are presented. As to be expected, there are different interpretations of the message and to whom it applies. However, regardless of the interpretation, it seems clear that Ephraim was excluded because the meaning of his name essentially matches that of his father Joseph ("fruitful"; Genesis 41:52; 49:22). Ephraim's older brother Manasseh is included because the meaning of his name is needed to form the message. Dan is excluded because the meaning of his name does not fit into the message. Simple answer!

Let us begin with what scripture says on the matter. To do this, three charts are presented.

### Chart #1

Jacob's Sons	"Commentary on Birth" [Mother]
	Genesis 29:31-35; 30:1-24; 35:17-18; 41:50-52
1. Reuben	"Because the LORD has seen my <b>affliction</b> ; surely now my husband will <b>love</b> me." [Leah]
2. Simeon	"Because the LORD has <b>heard</b> that I am <b>unloved</b> , He has therefore given me this son also." [Leah]
3. Levi	"Now this time my husband will become <b>attached</b> to me, because I have borne him three sons." [Leah]
4. Judah	"This time I will <b>praise</b> the LORD." [Leah]
5. Dan	"God has <b>vindicated</b> me, and has indeed <b>heard my voice</b> and has given me a son." [Bilhah; commentary and name from Rachel]
6. Naphtali	"With <b>mighty wrestlings</b> I have wrestled with <b>my sister</b> , and I have indeed <b>prevailed</b> ." [Bilhah; commentary and name from Rachel]
7. Gad	"How <b>fortunate!</b> " [Zilpah; commentary and name from Leah]
8. Asher	" <b>Happy</b> am I! For women will call me happy." [Zilpah; commentary and name from Leah]
9. Issachar	"God has given me my <b>wages</b> because I gave my maid to my husband." [Leah]
10. Zebulun	"God has endowed me with a <b>good gift</b> ; now my husband will <b>dwell with me</b> , because I have borne him six sons." [Leah]
11. Joseph	"God has <b>taken away my reproach</b> ." "May the LORD give me <b>another</b> son." [Rachel]
12. Benjamin	Ben-oni (the son of my <b>sorrows</b> ) [Rachel] Benjamin (the <b>son of my right hand</b> ) [named by Jacob]
13. Manasseh	"God has made me <b>forget all my trouble</b> and all my father's household." [Asenath; commentary and name from Joseph]
14. Ephraim	"God has made me <b>fruitful</b> in the land of my <b>affliction</b> ." [Asenath; commentary and name from Joseph]

All fourteen sons of Israel are listed because Joseph's two sons, born by an Egyptian mother, were adopted by *Jacob-Israel* at the end of his life and given the birthright name of *Israel*. At the birth of each son, a statement was made about the son, based on the situation the parent faced in bringing the child into the world. From the statement came the son's name, along with its

meaning. Thus, within each statement, there are key words (in **bold**) that had some bearing on the naming of each son.

It should be noted that in the case of the surrogate mothers (maids), Leah and Rachel made the statements and gave the son the name. In the case of Benjamin, Jacob overrode the name Rachel gave her son as she died. In the case of Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph named his sons.

Next, Chart #2 is reordered to follow Revelation 7, but with Dan and Ephraim left out. Chart #3 takes the same order but lists a simplified meaning of each name, along with Jacob-Israel's prophetic blessing given to each of his sons.

## Chart #2

Jacob's Sons	"Commentary on Birth" [Key Word] Ordered according to Revelation 7:4-8
1. Judah	"This time I will <b>praise</b> the LORD."
2. Reuben	"Because the LORD has seen my <b>affliction</b> ; surely now my husband will <b>love</b> me."
3. Gad	"How <b>fortunate!</b> "
4. Asher	" <b>Happy</b> am I! For women will call me happy."
5. Naphtali	"With <b>mighty wrestlings</b> I have wrestled with <b>my sister</b> , and I have indeed <b>prevailed.</b> "
6. Manasseh	"God has made me <b>forget all my trouble</b> and all my father's household."
7. Simeon	"Because the LORD has <b>heard</b> that I am <b>unloved</b> , He has therefore given me this son also."
8. Levi	"Now this time my husband will become <b>attached</b> to me, because I have borne him three sons."
9. Issachar	"God has given me my <b>wages</b> because I gave my maid to my husband."
10. Zebulun	"God has endowed me with a <b>good gift</b> ; now my husband will <b> dwell with me</b> , because I have borne him six sons."
11. Joseph	"God has <b>taken away my reproach.</b> " "May the LORD give me <b>another</b> son."
12. Benjamin	"The <b>son of my sorrows</b> " <i>became</i> "The <b>son of my right hand.</b> "

**Chart #3**

<b>Tribal Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Prophetic Blessing (Genesis 48-49)</b>
1. Judah	Praise of God	His brethren shall praise; the scepter shall not depart from Judah
2. Reuben	A son seen	My first born; you shall not have pre-eminence
3. Gad	A troop or band	A troop shall overcome him
4. Asher	Proceeding right	His food (bread) shall be rich (fat)
5. Naphtali	My wrestling	A hind let loose; gives beautiful words
6. Manasseh	He made to forget; forgetting	Grow into a multitude, a great people
7. Simeon	Gracious hearing	Instrument of cruelty; dispersed in Jacob, scattered in Israel
8. Levi	My joining; associated	Instrument of cruelty; dispersed in Jacob, scattered in Israel
9. Issachar	He brings reward	A strong ass; a slave at forced labor
10. Zebulun	Dwelling wished for	Shall dwell at the seashore; a haven for ships
11. Joseph	He increases	A fruitful bough; a crown on the head
12. Benjamin	The son of my right hand	A ravenous wolf; devours the prey, divides the spoil

How are we to interpret these charts? Before offering my view on the matter, let us consider what others have said.

Various commentators have taken the meanings of the tribal names and, by adding words to create readable sentences, have formed what they believe to be prophetic messages about the church and her struggle to victory; the last one relates it to "repairing the breach." Here are three renderings.

I will praise the Lord for he has looked on me and granted good fortune. I am happy because of my wrestling, God is making me to forget. God hears me and is joined to me. He has purchased me a dwelling and will add to me, the Son of His right hand.

I will praise the Lord for He has looked on me and granted good fortune. Happy am I because my wrestling God is making me to forget. God hears me and is joined to me. He has purchased me a dwelling. God will add to me the Son of His right hand.

Praise Confession: Behold, a Son, a whole troop whose fortune has come. They are happy and blessed after wrestling and striving, forgetting their past troubles, hearing and obeying, *united as one*. Their recompense for their labor is to dwell with God, and He will increase and add to them many sons of His right hand.

These pretty much sum up the heart of the matter; however, by joining into one paragraph the scriptural commentary on each birth as shown in Chart #2, we discover that it tells a story consisting of several themes.

"This time I will **praise** the LORD. Because the LORD has seen my **affliction**; surely now my husband will **love** me [**first son**]. How **fortunate! Happy** am I! For women will call me happy. With **mighty wrestlings** I have wrestled with **my sister**, and I have indeed **prevailed**. God has made me **forget all my trouble** and all my father's household. Because the LORD has **heard** that I am **unloved**, He has therefore given me this [**second**] son also. Now this time my husband will become **attached** to me, because I have borne him **three** sons. God has given me my **wages** because I gave my maid to my husband. God has endowed me with a **good gift**; now my husband will  **dwell with me**, because I have borne him **six [six]** sons. God has **taken away my reproach**. May the LORD give me **another son [seventh]**. The son of my sorrows *has become* the **son [eighth] of my right hand**."

So, what story does this tell us? What themes are interwoven in this statement?

First, it begins and ends with a good theme. It starts with praising the Lord and ends with a son of my right hand. The *hand* signifies "power," and the *right hand* signifies "eminent" or "divine power." Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33). Stephen, being full of the holy spirit, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55). In his Patmos vision, John saw Jesus holding seven stars in His right hand (Revelation 1:16). Further, the right hand was always used when a patriarch wanted to bestow a special blessing on a son, especially one being afforded the blessing of the inheritance of a firstborn (Genesis 48:14).

Second, sonship is the central theme. Sonship is all about maturing from a child of God into a son of God, and this comes about through spiritual perfection that is ultimately manifested through resurrection and transfiguration into an immortal, glorified, spiritual, celestial body in the image of the Son of God. This is our inheritance in the kingdom of God in God's age(s). When we believe, we become new creations in Christ that progressively go from glory to glory.

The above scriptural statement reveals a very important point regarding what it takes to be a conqueror, and it is discovered in the prophetic meanings of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> names listed.

Clearly, there are 12 sons in view in the statement, but notice that three sons, then six sons, then another son, and then finally a son of my right hand are mentioned, and in this order. In other words, the number of sons builds until what appears to be 8 sons, not 12. Another son and the son of my right hand would presumably be the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> sons, respectively.

This might seem strange but perhaps it is by design. Between Leah and Rachel, the two *free* wives of Jacob, were 8 sons, 6 from Leah's womb and 2 from Rachel's womb. However, special note needs to be made that it is not until after stating "*God has taken away my reproach*" that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> sons come into view. In other words, reproach must be removed before the last two of the eight sons come forth.

The numbers alone are prophetically significant. The number 7 signifies "spiritual perfection," and the number 8 signifies "new birth, new creation, or new beginnings."

In light of this, consider the following chart of the sons of Israel in the order as presented in Revelation 7; take special note of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> sons on the list.

As a reminder, these brothers and their ancient descendants are long gone, and the identity of their modern-day descendants is lost in a diverse gene pool. As an aside, I believe many Christians today are descendants of the tribes, in fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. Of course, no one is saved based on genetics, but I see the glory of God in the possibility that many of us in the western nations, in particular, are descendants. Nevertheless, this article is not about the physical nature of the tribes; but rather, about their prophetic and symbolic meaning. The next chart addresses the meaning of the names from the mother's view.

<b>Tribal Name</b>	<b>Mother's Meaning</b>	<b>Prophetic Meaning</b>
1. Judah	"I will praise the Lord"	praise, confess, give thanks
2. Reuben	"He has looked on me"	behold, a son
3. Gad	"He has granted me good fortune"	a troop, fortune has come
4. Asher	"Happy am I"	happy, bless
5. Naphtali	"My wrestling"	my wrestling, strife
6. Manasseh	"Making me to forget"	forgetting, one who forgets
<b>7. Simeon</b>	<b>"God hears me"</b>	<b>hearing/obeying, being in agreement</b>
<b>8. Levi</b>	<b>"Joined to me"</b>	<b>joiner, adhesion, unification</b>
9. Issachar	"Purchased me"	hired, there is wages/recompense
10. Zebulon	"Dwelling"	dwelling, habitation
11. Joseph	"God will add to me"	He will add
12. Benjamin	"Son of His right hand"	son of the right hand

*Simeon* means "to **hear**," and, at his birth, Leah said: "Because the LORD has **heard** that I am **unloved**, He has therefore given me this son also." *Levi* means "to **unite**," and, at his birth, Leah said: "Now this time my husband will become **attached** to me, because I have borne him three sons."

Prophetically, there seems to be two ways to view these meanings. One is from God's perspective; that is, He hears His people and attaches/unites them to Himself. The other is from the individual's perspective; that is, one hears God and becomes attached to God. Herein lies the secret of the true nature of Israel, which means "God rules." An Israelite hears God, comes under His rule (obeys), and becomes attached to Him in a living, personal way. To reiterate, the attachment comes when one not only hears but obeys what he hears, walking by faith and not by sight. *So, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ* (Romans 10:17).

True Israelites are also true conquerors, and in this regard, Simeon and Levi are types of conquerors. But how could this be so; after all, the testimony of their lives and the prophetic blessing given to them by their father Jacob-Israel was not so good.

"Simeon and Levi are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. "Let my soul not enter into their council; let not my glory be united with their assembly; because in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they lamed oxen. "Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. (Genesis 49:5-7 NASB)

According to the record, both brothers were what could be called *hotheads*; that is, one of their dispositions was anger. This manifested itself when they learned that Shechem had forced himself on their sister Dinah. In their anger, they fiercely killed Hamor, Shechem, and their sons (Genesis 34). So, when it came time to give his sons a prophetic blessing, Jacob-Israel joined the two brothers together in one blessing based on their anger. Notice that both were to be dispersed, divided, or separated in Jacob, and scattered or cast abroad in Israel.

Simeon and Levi seem to be the least likely candidates for such a task. How could two brothers, known for their anger and fierceness, be types of conquerors? Actually, their cruel character makes them the perfect candidates for becoming conquerors, just as their father Jacob was a twisted character. After all, God seems to take the most unlikely and outwardly disqualified ones and uses them the most so that, in the end, the boast is not in man but in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31). In fact, God seems to delight in taking the most unlikely ones and turning them into conquerors. Consider your own life! With God, all things are possible.

Third, let us look at the prophetic statement again for another theme.

"This time I will **praise** the LORD. Because the LORD has seen my **affliction**; surely now my husband will **love** me. How **fortunate! Happy** am I! For women will call me happy. With **mighty wrestlings** I have wrestled with **my sister**, and I have indeed **prevailed**. God has made me **forget all my trouble** and all my father's household. Because the LORD has **heard** that I am **unloved**, He has therefore given me this son also. Now this time my husband will become **attached** to me, because I have borne him **three** sons. God has given me my **wages** because I gave my maid to my husband. God has endowed me with a **good gift**; now my husband will  **dwell with me**, because I have borne him **six** sons. God has **taken away my reproach**. May the LORD give me **another** son. The son of my sorrows *has become* the **son of my right hand**."

Suffering, affliction, hardship, conflict, and wrestling together form another theme. Reading the statements as a unit, one can sense the conflict and the wrestling that went on between the two sisters, Leah and Rachel. They struggled with each other over having sons. We could say that it was a troubled love triangle between two women and one man. Who would be loved? Who would prevail? Who would get to dwell?

Fourth, just as Leah and Rachel were in conflict with each other so were their sons and their descendants. For example, the brothers entertained the thought of killing their youngest brother

Joseph, but in the end they sold him as a slave to the Midianites and then deceived their father into believing he was dead. We can only imagine what other conflicts and intra-fraternal arguments ensued as they were growing up.

Further, through the centuries, the history of the sons of Jacob and their many descendants reveals a rather dysfunctional and vengeful lot that often fought against and killed each other as enemies. A case in point is the near-total destruction of the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 20-21).

A little over 650 years from the time all 14 sons of Israel (includes Jacob's two adopted sons of Joseph), were reunited in Egypt, David became king over all of Judah and Israel. Truly, the kingdom that David built and passed on to his son, who then expanded and enlarged upon it, was a united kingdom. However, with the death of Solomon, all of this was lost as the Lord had prophesied because Solomon's heart had turned from the Lord (1 Kings 11:11).

The Lord's word was fulfilled, for after Solomon's death, the united kingdom of Israel ceased to be as it was split into two separate kingdoms that were at odds with one another. The northern kingdom consisted of ten tribes that took the birthright name of *Israel* and settled in Samaria. The southern kingdom consisted of two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) plus most of Levi that took the scepter name of *Judah* and remained in Judea. Consequently, a breach occurred in the house of David dividing Joseph [holder of the birthright] from Judah [holder of the scepter]. A *breach* means "a break or interruption in friendly relations."

However, a much greater and more significant breach also occurred between the two nations and their relationship to the Lord as both Israel and Judah broke the covenant that the Lord had made with their forefathers, which brought iron-yoke judgments on both houses (Jeremiah 11:10).

*Israel* (ten tribes) was the first to be judged as they went into Assyrian captivity from 745-721 BC and were later scattered among the nations, losing their national identity as *Israel*, the holder of the birthright (Genesis 48:14-16; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Their identity continues to remain a mystery to most people in our day, including many Christians, nearly 2,700 years later. By the way, do not look to the modern state of Israel as a re-gathering of Israel. To locate Israel today, one needs to look to the western nations of Europe, British Isles, America, and elsewhere.

For more on this, check out these links.

*Abraham's Multitude of Nations* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art63.pdf>

*America—Wake Up!* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art67.pdf>

*Fullness of the Nations—All Israel Saved* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art64.pdf>

*Until Shiloh Comes* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art66.pdf>

At any rate, the heart of ancient Israel had turned so far from the Lord that He gave them a writ of divorce (Jeremiah 3:6-8). They were removed from their land and scattered and lost among the nations.

Judah was just as bad as Israel, so the Lord later sent them into Babylonian captivity around 620-604 BC. However, their captivity was limited to 70 years, after which they were allowed to return to their land. Judah was not divorced from the Lord at that time, for the king of Judah (Jesus) had to come forth from this tribe in fulfillment of Jacob-Israel's prophetic blessing on his son Judah and for the laying hold of the good figs of Judah who received their king and went from being the Passover church to the Pentecostal church.

Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (Genesis 49:9-10 NASB)

When Jesus came to Judah and took the scepter as the king of Judah, the religious leaders of Judah rejected Him and demanded His crucifixion. As a result, the bad figs of Judah were divorced from the Lord just like Israel had been and their city and temple were destroyed in 70 AD by God's Roman army (Matthew 22:7).

### **Divorce and Remarriage**

As an aside, this raises a question: How could the Lord remarry His people once He had divorced them without breaking His own law on marriage and divorce? The answer is simple: He died and rose again as a new man, the humanity the Father is after. In other words, the cross enables all who previously rejected the Son of God to have faith to believe on Him and ultimately to be married to Him.

Paul the apostle, a former Pharisee who lived under the law, explains it for us.

For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. (Romans 7:2-4 NASB)

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2 NASB).

In like fashion, the breach between the Lord and Israel and Judah is repaired in the Messiah of Israel. There is no other way, for He is the Way. Jesus is the repairer of the breach and all who believe on Him are no longer breached, so to speak, but are now new creations in Christ and ambassadors of the word of conciliation [God's peace with the world] (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

Fifth, there seems to be two levels upon which the breach is repaired. The highest or grandest level is in Yeshua the Christ. The second level involves the brothers themselves.

Obviously, repairing the breach requires a reunification or joining together of what has been separated or broken apart. In this regard, as already presented, two names, in particular, should catch our attention, Simeon and Levi. Again, *Simeon* means "to hear" and "be in agreement." *Levi* means "to unite." There was a reason why they were dispersed among their brothers. In type, they point to the fact that the breach between the sons of Israel is repaired in Israel's Messiah. On a brotherly level, the breach is repaired when they all come into agreement by hearing God's word. Out of obedience, they forgive and are united as one in Christ.

### Unloved Wife

Sixth, returning to the prophetic statement; can you feel the heart of Leah as she desired to be loved by Jacob, knowing that he truly loved her sister Rachel? Leah was an unloved wife who bore Jacob his firstborn son.

In God's economy, the firstborn son is afforded special status when it comes to a father's estate and his heirs. In His compassion and mercy, the Lord made provision for the unloved wife and her firstborn. The provision is explained in the law of the son of the unloved wife.

"If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved, then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the firstborn before the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn. "But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the firstborn. (Deuteronomy 21:15-17 NASB)

According to this law, Reuben should have received a double portion; however, he defiled his father's bed and was disqualified as a firstborn: *You shall not have pre-eminence.*

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright. (1 Chronicles 5:1 NASB)

Receiving a father's inheritance as a firstborn son requires worthiness to be the executor of the father's estate. In other words, a son could be disqualified from receiving the double portion. In this case, the birthright name of *Israel* went to Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of an Egyptian woman begotten by Joseph, and not to any of the sons of Leah begotten by Jacob.

Now, I may be stretching this a bit, but it seems to me that, prophetically speaking, a double portion did go to Leah's son. However, instead of it going to one son, it went to two sons, much like the birthright name went to two of Joseph's sons. In other words, together Simeon and Levi divided up the double portion.

Putting this together, perhaps it could be said that the unloved was heard (typified by Simeon) and became attached (typified by Levi) to her husband. In the grand plan of God, the husband is Christ. Again, keep in mind that we are dealing with the prophetic significance of the names.

### Maturing of the Sons of God

Now, there is perhaps one more way to view the tribal names as they are ordered in Revelation 7. They could be a prophetic progression of how a child of God matures to the adoption of or placement as a son of God.

**Judah: Praise, Confession, Thanks.** It all starts with Judah as a type of Jesus as King. When one's eyes are first opened to Jesus and His saving grace, he sees Jesus as not only Savior but also as King, and this brings forth praise and confession of who He is. It all begins with the King of kings and Lord of lords.

**Reuben: Behold, a Son.** One soon realizes that he is a child of God growing up to be a son of God. He has not arrived yet, but he knows that God sees him as a son.

**Gad: Good Fortune.** One soon learns that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose (Romans 8:28).

**Asher: Happy, Blessed.** Being saved and called according to God's purpose is truly a cause for celebration. After all, the inheritance of the kingdom is set before all who are called to become sons in the next age. Happy are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5:1-12).

**Naphtali: Wrestling, Strife.** The future is glory for a son, but the path to glory involves struggles and sufferings, for without trial and tribulation, there is no glory or inheritance in the coming kingdom of God's Son.

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans 8:16-19 NASB)

"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22 NASB)

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. (2 Thessalonians 1:3-5 NASB)

**Manasseh: Forgetting.** As a son of God matures, his eyes are opened to the glorious destiny that is set before him that is brought about through resurrection and transfiguration into the image of the Son of God. This causes him to forget what lies behind as he presses on toward the goal for the prize of the *out*-resurrection into a son brought unto glory.

...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the [out-] resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:10-14 NASB)

**Simeon: Hearing, Obeying, Agreeing.** Sonship in God's age is about conquering while still in mortal bodies. Ones who hear the Lord and obey Him are conquerors, and they will reign with Christ as manifested, glorified sons of God. But hearing is a two-way street, for the Father hears His son, and the son knows and hears the voice of his Father.

**Levi: Joiner, Unifier.** Being a conqueror is also about being a unifier not a divider, a builder not a destroyer, a repairer of the breach not a widener of it. As Paul the apostle testified: *The Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down* (2 Corinthians 13:10).

**Issachar: Purchased, Wages, Recompense.** Clearly, all who believe know that they have been purchased with the precious blood of God (Acts 20:28). But there is more to the meaning of Issachar's name, especially in relation to the conqueror. According to John's Patmos vision, the blood purchases all mankind.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (Revelation 5:9 NASB)

However, there is a first fruits purchased from among men that precede the rest of mankind.

These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. (Revelation 14:4 NASB)

The first fruits are the conquerors who are rewarded for their faithfulness to the Lord. They are the first to receive the inheritance of the kingdom of the heavens.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (Colossians 3:23-24 NASB)

If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. (1 Corinthians 3:14 NASB)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." ... "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth." ... "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3, 5, 10 NASB)

**Zebulon: Dwelling.** There are many references to God's people being the house or dwelling of God; but there is a special exhortation to conquer in reference to God's house.

For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE.... (Hebrews 3:4-7 NASB)

Take note that this is a conditional statement. *If* we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm to the end. In others words, do not give up, heed the voice of the spirit of God. If we endure, we will also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12) in the glory of His kingdom today and in the ages to come.

**Joseph: Add, Fruitfulness, Crown on Head.** Joseph is a type of Christ and a type of a conqueror. Christ is crowned with glory and honor, and He is coming as the victorious king to reign with His conquerors who He will crown with the victor's wreath and who will sit upon His throne (Revelation 3:21). Also, built into Joseph's name is *fruitfulness*, for this is what it means to add. The blessing given to Joseph by his father Jacob-Israel was to be *a fruitful bough* (Genesis 49:22). A conqueror bears the fruit of the kingdom.

As the seventh son born from the wombs of Jacob's free wives, Leah and Rachel, Joseph also speaks of the *spiritual perfection* that will be attained by the sons of the resurrection who will reign on earth over the nations, starting with the seventh day.

**Benjamin: Son of the Right Hand.** Just as Joseph is a type of the Anointed One so is Benjamin a type. Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father (Acts 7:55-56), and He has called and chosen a company of conquerors to do likewise in the next age. Further, just as Joseph's birth order is significant so is Benjamin's birth order, for he was the eighth and last son of the two free wives. As previously shown, the number 8 signifies a new birth or new creation. Surely, the conquerors are the fruitful sons of the new creation; the ones that will be fully transfigured into the likeness of the Son of God, the firstborn of all creation. They are the saints through whom the Lord will judge the world and the angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3) according to His fiery law.

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. (Deuteronomy 33:2-3 KJV)

Notice that the saints are in His hand, presumably His right hand, and that His fiery law goes forth from His right hand. Stated another way, His law will go forth from the sons of His right hand.

By the way, Benjamin is also the twelfth son in the order of sons listed in Revelation 7. Again, the number twelve signifies governmental perfection. Thus, Benjamin, as a type of the Son of God and the many sons of glory, brings about the perfect government of the kingdom of God.

**Gematria of the 12 Sons of Israel**

Finally, as I was researching the number code found in the Bible, I came across a very interesting fact about the gematria of the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel.

In case you do not know, gematria is based on Hebrew and Greek alphabets being dual-character systems—meaning their letters serve two purposes. One system is for sound or phonetics, and the other system is for amount or numbers, meaning each letter is assigned a numeric value.

Hebrew and Greek words consist of letters or symbols with each having a numeric value. Summing up or multiplying the value of each letter in a word yields another number. Likewise, the same thing can be done with sentences or phrases to yield another number. Studying these numbers as revealed throughout scripture often reveals spiritual meanings to the numbers that speak mightily of God's plan and purpose. This is the science of gematria.

Amazingly, the 12 sons of Israel, as listed in Revelation 7, gematrically total to the number 8880.

<b>Tribal Name</b>	<b>Numeric Value</b>
1. Judah	485
2. Reuben	630
3. Gad	8
4. Asher	309
5. Naphtali	650
6. Manasseh	700
7. Simeon	1495
8. Levi	445
9. Issachar	1112
10. Zebulon	1360
11. Joseph	1518
12. Benjamin	168
<b>Total</b>	<b>8880</b>

The amazing fact is the gematria for the name *Jesus* is 888. The gematria for the phrase "*I am the life,*" which speaks of Jesus, is also 888. As if to drive the point further, the sentence "*He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet*" (1 Corinthians 15:25) is 8888.

This is no coincidence. The spirit of the Lord has placed a neon sign before us telling us of the identity of the 144,000. The sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel not only belong to Jesus but are representative of the very life and character of Jesus. We could say that they are the very embodiment of Jesus Himself. They are fully identified with Him in the number 888.

As I point out in my article *Until Shiloh Comes*, Jesus or Yeshua is Israel. He came to earth in His inaugural manifestation as Israel's Messiah and as Israel's God. But He also came as Israel itself.

He suffered as Israel suffered throughout its history, and fully identified with their plight. The number 888 associated with the tribes makes the point!

Think about what this means in light of the history of the ancient tribes that were divorced from the Lord. In Revelation 7:4-8 and, we could add, Revelation 14:1-5, they have arrived at the greatest and highest calling anyone could ever hope to achieve. They are the first fruits to God and to the Lamb (14:4). Those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful (Revelation 17:14). These 144,000 are representative of the true Israel of God that God has always intended there to be.

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. (Ephesians 1:9-10 NASB)

The number 144 is derived by multiplying the number 12 by 12, and the number 12 signifies "divine government." Consequently, it signifies that God is going to have a perfect complement of rulers to reign with Christ as the government (kingdom) of God is established among the nations on earth in the ages to come. That the number is intensified by 1,000 further adds to its signification.

(By the way—whether the 144,000 is a literal number or simply symbolic, as well as how all the 144,000 play into the eschatological interpretation of the book of Revelation, I leave to others to debate. I have chosen to consider the 144,000 purely from a spiritual perspective.)

The 144,000 are not sealed based on their flesh or bloodline but on their spirit life in the Lord Jesus. This is their testimony...

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death." (Revelation 12:11 NASB)

The fact that the 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel are sealed for the living God indicates that the breach has been repaired in Jesus Christ, and there is truly only one kingdom, the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15). Again, this is clearly proven by the gematria of 888 that signifies Jesus.

It could be said that the 144,000 represent those who have been (and will be) betrothed to *Another* who was raised from the dead (Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2).

With this light, the following is a reedit of the scriptural statement presented earlier. As you read this, read it as if you were speaking it from your heart.

"We **praise** the LORD, for He has seen our **afflictions**; surely the Lord **loves** us. How **fortunate and happy** we are! With **mighty wrestlings** we have wrestled with one another and with the Lord Himself, and we have indeed **prevailed**, for God rules. God has made us

**forget all our troubles.** Because the LORD has **heard** that we are **unloved**, He has therefore given us sonship. He is our Husband and we are **attached** to Him. God has given us our **wages**. God has endowed us with a **good gift**; now our Husband will  **dwell among us**. God has **taken away our reproach**. The LORD has given us **another Son**, the **Son of Sorrow** who died and now lives as the **Son of His right hand**."

The fact of the matter is that the conquering body of Christ is the true Israel today, the spiritual Israel as represented by the 12 tribes, and this statement is the testimony of all the conquerors in Christ.

By the way, this is not replacement theology. It is based on graftage. For more on this topic, check out the following link.

*Dualism, Reversionism, Graftage* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art39.pdf>

Given the gematria of 888 for the name Jesus, we could say that our beloved is the 8<sup>th</sup>-day man, the resurrection man, and the one who unites not only His body but all creation. He is the repairer of the breach of all things that have been breached in creation. So, let us never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is central and supreme in all the work that God is doing to accomplish His plan to bring about His ultimate purpose of ALL.

Now, here is one more intriguing fact. Dropping the zeroes from 8880 and 12,000 (number from each tribe) and multiplying 888 x 12 yields the number **10656**. The gematria of the sentence *And I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God, the New Jerusalem* (Revelation 3:12) is **10656**. This alone has some intrigue, but when it is joined with the gematria for the original 12 apostles of Jesus, the intrigue becomes a clear sign of the hand of God.

<b>Apostles</b>	<b>Numeric Value</b>
1. Peter	755
2. Andrew	361
3. James	1103
4. John	1119
5. Philip	980
6. Nathanael	150
7. Levi (Matthew)	445
8. Thomas	1050
9. James (son of Alpheus)	2115
10. Labbaeus (Thaddeus)	320
11. Simon the Canaanite	1573
12. Judas	685
<b>Total</b>	<b>10656</b>

Just as Jesus was with the 12 sons of Israel, so He was with His original 12 apostles. Spiritually speaking, this means that Jesus will not fail to unite all into one, repairing the breach and bringing all to the glory of God, even to the point that *all Israel will be saved* (Romans 11:26).

As a side note, Paul, who is not included in the above list, went from being *Saul* (gematria = 901) to *Paul* (gematria = 781). Numerically, the difference between the two names is 120, which is a factor of 12 times 10. According to E.W. Bullinger, the number 10 signifies: "Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete. ... It signifies *the perfection of Divine order*" (*Number in Scripture*, 1967, Kregel Publications). Saul became Paul, the apostle of the nations, to signify that God, through His Son, was and is bringing divine order, that is, divine, perfect government, to all the nations. This is the plan of God to achieve His ultimate purpose of all in all.

The Son upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3), and He will sum up all things, even subject all things to Himself so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28).

When God has reached His ultimate purpose of being all in all, New Jerusalem will fill the new earth with the glory of God that will shine into the entire universe. The names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel are written on the gates of New Jerusalem, and the names of the 12 apostles of the Lambkin are written on the foundation stones of New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12, 14). New Jerusalem is the holy temple in the Lord made up of all the conquerors of Christ built together into the dwelling of God in spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

A final thought—I use the term *conquering body* to include the entire body of Christ, which is the ecclesia Jesus is building. Those called and predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son are conquerors—designated beforehand to conquer through the one who loves us! Paul gives us the foundation of this truth.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30 ESV)

The point is that the above gematria speaks to the very heart of what God is doing and will ultimately do through His Son and His conquering Body. *Love never fails*, and so there is no doubt that *God is love* will not fail to accomplish all that He has purposed.

"Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'.... (Isaiah 46:9-10 NASB)

Glory to God!