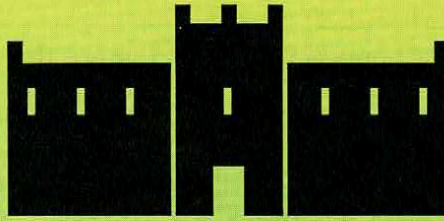


UPLOOK

OCTOBER 1996



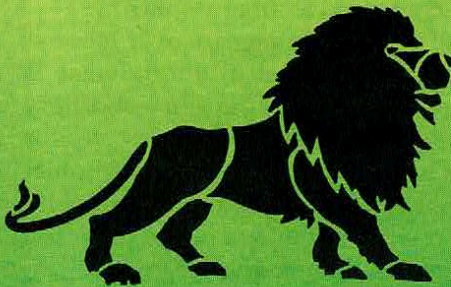
REUBEN



SIMEON



LEVI



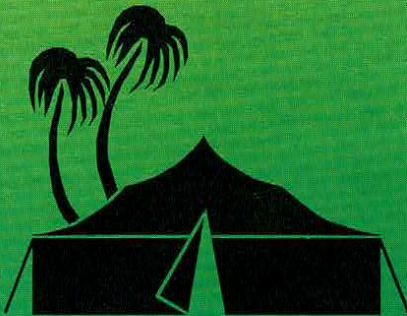
JUDAH



DAN



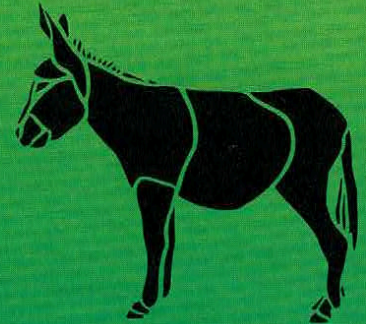
NAFTALI



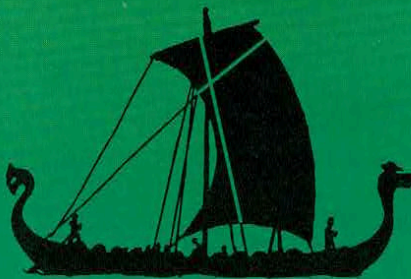
GAD



ASHER



ISSACHAR



ZEBULON



JOSEPH



BENJAMIN



Of Dogs and Men

"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," declared Jehovah at the end of the Old Testament (Malachi 3:6). But look what He says at the end of the New!

We took a few hours at the end of a busy Saturday to take our younger children for a little boat cruise on the Kalamazoo River at the quaint town of Saugatuck, MI. As the little paddle steamer edged from the pier, a tan spaniel deftly loped on board. We later learned he belonged to the captain/narrator and his name was Admiral Crackerjacks (the dog, that is, not the captain).

Our children were delighted with the journey, noting the scenery and wildlife as it passed. But their childish chatter seemed to disturb our captain and he turned several times to glare in our direction. Were we interrupting his train of thought? No, even when he was not narrating he looked our way, then turned back to his duty with an eloquent shake of the head. Were we overly loud? Hardly. Having seen his first scowl, we kept our voices at the quiet end of the scale.

It was merely that children bothered him. I don't think it was our children in particular. Some people seem to have a general bias in the direction of little people. After all, children are still learning how to be neat, how to be discreet with their voices, how to fit in, in our adult world. And some children just don't learn fast enough for some adults.

Oh, the dog? While the captain glowered regularly in our direction, Admiral was lying upside down on his lap, receiving his affections. I am reminded of the words of Frederick the Great: "The more I get to know people, the more I love my dog." Dogs overlook our failures, demand nothing but a basic maintenance agreement, and give affection with unswerving faithfulness. They have given to our language the word "dogged" to describe this constancy, even in trial, and have earned the title of "man's best friend."

God does not share this sentiment. Of course He feels a loyalty to His creatures. He included in His laws to men restrictions against animal cruelty. And hear His plaint to Jonah over repentant Nineveh: "Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are

more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; *and also much cattle?*" (4:11). Jonah was not concerned about the *people*; God was even concerned about the *cattle*.

Hear, too, the Saviour: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Mt. 10:29-31). It is at the same time humbling and heartening to be compared to "many sparrows."

Yet for all His sustaining care over His creation, God's great interest in the universe is with the sons of men. We are exceedingly small in the grand scheme of things, yet for our size we have proved exceedingly troublesome. I dare say God has had more difficulty with us than with all the rest of the universe! But He does not, will not, give up on us.

Look at these twelve sons of Jacob. Hear what their own father says of them. Only grace could turn his words into a "blessing." But seemingly that is what grace has in mind. For long after men have "had done" with those ill-fated patriarchs, when monsters like Pharaoh, Haman, and Herod and Hitler and the Great Antichrist, too, have tried to eradicate Jacob's boys and their seed; after a multitude of theologians have tried at least to eradicate their hope of restoration by spiritualizing them out of Ezekiel 48 and Romans 11 and Revelation 7; after all this, God will have the final say.

With what soul-stirring, mind-boggling, heart-stopping gasps of celestial air we read the description of the New Jerusalem! Look! There, on the twelve gates of pearl! Those troublesome twelve, their troubles long past (and ours as well), having their names engraved on the city gates! Only God would think of such a thing—putting the prodigals' names on the portals through which they came home to the Father! How could they—and we—not feel at home there!

P.S. "Without are dogs" (Rev. 22:15).

U

FEATURES

JOSEPH—BELOVED & HATED <i>W. Ross Rainey</i>	7
REUBEN, SIMEON & LEVI <i>C. H. Waller</i>	9
NAPHTALI, GAD & ASHER <i>A. & W. F. Naismith</i>	14
JUDAH & BENJAMIN <i>Frederick Tatford</i>	19
ZEBULUN, ISSACHAR & DAN <i>E. Bendor Samuel</i>	22
ARE THE TEN TRIBES LOST? <i>David Baron</i>	27
THE SON OF JACOB <i>R. E. Harlow</i>	29

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL	2
FRONT LINES	4
WHAT'S GOING ON?	6

To include material on all twelve tribes of Israel in this issue, some regular columns have been omitted; expect to see them in future issues, D. V.

UPLOOK

(USPS 620-640)

Founded in 1927 as *Look on the Fields*,
is published eleven times per year by



UPLOOK MINISTRIES
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to:
UPLOOK
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

ISSN #1055-2642

Printed in the U. S. A.

© Copyright 1996 Uplook Ministries

Periodical postage paid at Grand Rapids, MI.

UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor, J. B. Nicholson Jr., and the authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues from this publication, to God be the glory.

UPLOOK is copyrighted solely for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the material. It is not intended to limit the proper use of articles contained in the magazine. Please include the words: "UPLOOK magazine, by permission" on photocopies made for personal use. For large quantities or other purposes, contact UPLOOK.

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all unsolicited material.

News items must be submitted at least two months in advance of issue requested. Selected news items will be carried for two issues (if time permits). The editor reserves the right to determine those items best suited for the magazine. Editorial decisions are final. Black & white photos preferred but color photos accepted. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for photos you wish returned.

Uplook Ministries is a tax-exempt corporation looking to the Lord to provide for the needs of this ministry. This magazine is sent freely to those who request it, but evidently is not freely produced. Donations should be made payable to "UPLOOK" and sent to:

U.S. donors:

P.O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI
49501-2041

Canadian donors:

P. O. Box 427
St. Catharines, ON
L2R 6V9

Contributions may also be made using your *Visa* or *Mastercard*. When you write, please include your card number and expiry date and the amount in US currency that you wish to donate. Receipts are issued for all donations received and are valid for tax purposes in the United States and Canada.

Be sure to enclose your former address label when sending a change of address. Please let us know of changes six weeks in advance.

Front Lines

75th ANNIVERSARY

The Christians at Maplewood Bible Chapel (St. Louis, MO) plan to celebrate their 75th anniversary on Saturday, Oct. 26 from 2:00 - 6:00. They invite you to join them for a time of fellowship, friendship, and refreshment.

RADIO CONFERENCE

Family Bible Hour announces its Annual Radio Conference, Oct. 26. Sessions begin at 10:00 AM and conclude at 3:30 PM. This year's conference will feature Dr. James Naismith, Mr. Greg Harris and Mr. Arnot McIntee. Brian MacDonald will provide music ministry.

The day's event will take place at the Renaissance Convention Center, 3045 South Creek Rd., Mississauga, ON.

For more information, please call the office at (800) 567-1218.

FEASTS OF JEHOVAH STUDY

The believers at Parkside Bible Chapel (Everett, WA) would like to invite you to a series of thought-provoking, informal studies on the Feasts of Jehovah. The Tuesday evening sessions will be led by Doug Kazen, beginning at 7 PM and continuing until around 8:45. The scheduled dates are: October 22, 29, November 19, 26 and December 17.

TUCSON CONFERENCE

Tucson Bible Chapel (AZ) will be holding their annual missions conference Nov. 1-3, 1996, in the will of the Lord. Speakers expected are Ron Harris (Mexico) and Charles Fizer (Emmaus) to cover the theme, "How effective is cor-

respondence ministry in spreading the Word of God?"

Accommodations are available and encouraged. Please contact:

Jim Yencarelli
2324 N. Norton Ave.
Tucson AZ 85719
Phone: (520) 795-3194

BIBLE/SCIENCE CAMP

Camp Sunrise (Fairmount, GA) will host its second Weekend Family Camp November 1-3. These weekends are centered around discovering the laws of science as they illustrate Bible truths and feature special projects and experiments for children ages 8-16. Excellent Bible teaching and fun for all ages should make this weekend beneficial for the whole family. The cost per adult is between \$35 and \$50. Children receive a discount.

For further information:
Camp Sunrise Planetarium & Science Museum
1427 Slate Mine Rd., SE
Fairmount, GA 30139-2835
Phone: (706) 337-2775

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The Florida Leadership Conference is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 2, 1996, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM at the Holiday Inn in Vero Beach (Rt. 60 & I-95). P. William Davis (Hillsborough College) is to be the speaker. Contact:

Robert Harper
(407) 831-6110

GOOD TIDINGS

Lord willing, Henry Sanchez (NY) and Chris Schroeder (MI) will be the speakers at the Metropolitan Missionary Confer-

ence on November 2 from 10:30 AM until 4:00 PM. The conference will be held at the Good Tidings Gospel Hall (345 Malcolm X Blvd., Brooklyn NY). Contact:

James McCall
(718) 994-1318

CALLING FATHERS & SONS

The annual Father/Son retreat at Camp Iroquoia will be held Nov. 8-10, 1996. Jim VanDuzer is the scheduled speaker. Fathers, treat your sons to a wonderful weekend at the camp which is situated on 200 acres of the Endless Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania. For further info:

Jim Weisbecker
(717) 967-2577

MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Lord willing, a missions conference will be held at Grace Bible Chapel (Fullerton, CA) Nov. 22-24. Scheduled speakers are Alex Sutherland (Surrey, BC) and Bill Stevenson (Aurora, IL). A variety of seminars will be held on Saturday.

For information or overnight accommodations, contact:

G. V. Mathai
(310) 924-5169

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

The assembly in York, PA, has started its ninth year of monthly Bible studies. On the weekend of Nov. 8-9, Steve Hulshizer plans to study 1 Corinthians in four sessions and Bruce Hulshizer will discuss the topic of eternal punishment in one session. On Dec. 13-14, Randy Amos hopes to cover the book of Hebrews in four sessions and Keith Keyser

will address the subject of the Trinity. The Friday evening session begins at 8:00 and the Saturday morning session is scheduled for 8:45.

For more information, call:
(717) 764-5979

A DAY IN TAVISTOCK

The Christians at the assembly in Tavistock (William & Oxford Sts.) would like to extend an invitation to their conference scheduled for Nov. 16. The Lord willing, Rick Jelley and Steve Hulshizer will be the speakers.

If you need further details:
Paul Booker
(519) 669-8362

GIVE THANKSGIVING

The Carrollwood Bible Chapel (Tampa, FL) will be hosting a Thanksgiving Bible Conference on Nov. 22-23, 1996. The theme for this year's conference is "Behold He Cometh." Roy Hill (England) and Dr. Arthur Garnes (MD) will be speaking. There will be a meal and nursery for babies provided. Contact:

John Bromfield
16202 Pebblebrook Dr.
Tampa, FL 33624
(813) 960-1302

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Are you looking for Bible study ideas for your assembly?

Fairhaven Bible Chapel (San Leandro, CA) hosted a Bible study program this past summer that gave an overview of the Old Testament. It was organized by Jeff Lanet. Six teachers presented outlines of the individual books plus a summary of their contents, in fifteen hours of lectures, using materials from *Walk Through the*

Bible, as well as the instructors' own study materials.

The program was held on two Saturdays and one Friday evening. Conventional wisdom would have been pessimistic about gathering students during the warm weather months but as it turned out, over ninety people enrolled, mostly young people.

The response was enthusiastic. Now there is a strong sentiment to follow up the classes with a New Testament survey.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Craig and Gwynne Funston have had their area code and mailing address changed:

391 Puett Ranch Rd.
Kamloops, BC V2H 1M9
(250) 578-7707 (home)
(250) 376-7705 (chapel)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

• Rest Haven Home

Rest Haven is an assembly-based nursing home in Grand Rapids, MI. They offer a variety of care levels ranging from complete care to independent apartments for almost 100 people. Currently they are looking for Christians to fill employment openings in housekeeping, maintenance, nursing, etc.

For further information, please contact Brian Wilson or Kathy Dahnke at (616) 363-6819.

• Burkehaven Christian School

There is an immediate opening for a headmaster/teacher at a well-established assembly-sponsored elementary school using A Beka and Bob Jones curriculum. A college graduate is preferred; commendation from your assembly would be helpful. Contact:

James Gay
Burkehaven Christian School
498 Park Dr.
Waynesboro, GA 30830
(706) 554-2822 (school)
(706) 554-5178 (home)

• Emmanuel Bible Camp

Emmanuel Bible Camp (PEI, Canada) is looking for a husband and wife team to manage the camp for the summer season which runs from June 4 5 1 until Aug. 31. Prayerful consideration is appreciated. Contact:

Ron MacDougall
18 Karen Dr.
Charlottetown, PEI C1E 1V3
Phone: (902) 566-2024

COMMENDATIONS

• Gary Goodkey

The believers at Marathon Bible Chapel (Marathon, ON) have recently commended Gary Goodkey for one more year to the Lord's work in Matheson, ON. Gary will be assisting the work at Matheson Gospel Chapel and with other assemblies in northeastern Ontario.

• David and Lubana Fleming

David and Lubana were commended to work at the Christian school and the Manarah Bookstore in Lebanon by the Carriage Hill Bible Chapel in Lansing, MI. With their children, Susanna and Josiah, the Flemings left for Lebanon on September 19.

There is a need for teachers and workers at the school in Lebanon. It is difficult for Americans, especially singles, to get visas at this time. All other nationalities—including Canadians—are getting visas easily.

U

What's Going On?

TUNNEL OPENED IN JERUSALEM

On orders from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the north end of a tunnel that stretches 500 yards from the north end of the Western Wall plaza to the Via Dolorosa opened on September 24 in a secret pre-dawn excavation. Because two-way traffic was impossible (in places the tunnel narrows to three feet) and the Palestinians objected to it, access was only available to small groups with registered guides. About 400,000 tourists per year are expected to see a First Century road, perhaps walked by the Lord Himself.

LIBERIA: NOTHING LEFT

Life in Liberia remains nasty, brutish, and short, despite the cease-fire. Monrovia, the capital city of a million people, has been picked clean by young guerrilla fighters and other looters. Relief agencies, tired of being special targets, have mostly left. "We've been working here for ten years, and everything is gone," said a Lutheran missionary who was evacuated in April. "It was too soon to come back. It may never be time to return."

BLESSING IN HAWAII

Dennis and Grace Medeiros report from Pearl City, Hawaii, that they have seen a growth in the group of believers who meet Sundays for the Lord's Supper and Bible Study. They now meet every other Friday evening for prayer. Seven people were baptized in the past month (five men and two women).

ISLAMIC LAWS REVIEWED

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia, facing a surge in Islamic fundamentalism has called for a review of Islamic laws. "The most important aspect of Islamic justice is equity and forgiveness," he said. "Today, in the formulation and enforcement of Muslim laws, the tendency is to be as harsh as possible."

BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Belarus appears to be headed back to Soviet-style rule. President Alexander Lukashenko has outlawed the formation of all new businesses and ordered existing enterprises to be registered by the year end. Calling entrepreneurs "thieves," he stated, "The state and only the state will run our country, our economy." Earlier this year police broke up an anti-Lukashenko demonstration with gas and clubs.

MINISTRY TO IRAQIS

Ministry to the 400,000 Iraqi refugees in Jordan continues. Jordanian believers have opened special schools for refugee children. Recently they distributed copies of "The Bible for All Ages" to each family at one school. The volume presents 365 Bible stories in simplified Arabic. The Bible Society, at the request of Christians in Iraq, recently shipped 10,000 copies of the Bible storybook to Baghdad. In the last year the Bible Society distributed more Scriptures in Iraq than in any other year.

HIS WORD IN SENEGAL

Paul and Carol Bramsen have

been encouraged by many letters received in response to "The Way of Righteousness" radio program. A great number of listeners are Muslims—some even live in the "impenetrable city" of Touba, the "Mecca" of Senegal.

Christians are asked to join the Bramsens in prayer concerning the possible expansion of the radio ministry. Worldwide Radio HCJB has asked them to consider producing a daily Wolof program (5-6 days per week) on the most listened-to national station.

FOOD: YIELD SIGNS

Despite recent reports of food shortages and higher commodity prices, most scientists expect food supplies to be sufficient to meet the world's growing demand for at least the next 25 years. "We are still in the greatest period of agricultural transformation the world has ever seen," stated agronomist Donald Plucknett to the *Wall Street Journal*. "Yields are still going up rapidly around the world, and those places that aren't posting gains are facing wars" or economic restructuring. Continued innovation, however, is the key. "Without that, we're dead," Luther Tweeten of Ohio State said.

U

CORRECTION

In July, we published an incorrect e-mail address to receive current missionary prayer requests online. The correct address is:

majordomo@spare.cns.utoronto.ca
Indicate "subscribe mtn"

Joseph—Beloved and Hated



"A higher power than man's was working," writes F. W. Grant, "in Joseph's case. The path of humiliation was to end for him in glory."

W. Graham Scroggie, the widely known preacher and author, wrote of Joseph, "...Of all Hebrew characters, he is the most perfect type of Christ. We see him in three aspects: first, as *the princely son*; second, as *the patient sufferer*; and third, as *the people's saviour*. Was not Christ all this?"¹

More is told about Joseph than any of the patriarchs, the Holy Spirit's biography of him being one of the greatest accounts of divine sovereignty.

W. H. Griffith Thomas has commented on the value and importance of the story of Joseph from a fourfold standpoint:

1. It throws light on divine providence;
2. It supplies the reader with important historical information about the Hebrews;
3. It affords a splendid example of personal character in its portrayal of Joseph;
4. It provides a striking series of typical pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ.²

Regarding Thomas' fourth point, the Bible never describes Joseph as a type. However, it is noteworthy that Arthur W. Pink lists 101 correspondences between Joseph and the Lord Jesus, and Ada Habershon lists 121.³

In our Scripture passage of Genesis 37:1-17, two main things are brought before us regarding Joseph. He was loved by his father and hated by his brothers.

JOSEPH BELOVED OF HIS FATHER (37:1-3)

Genesis 36, which concerns the generations of Esau, is something of a parenthesis in the overall story. Scroggie points out that "At the beginning of this chapter Joseph is in *Canaan*; at the end he is in *Egypt*, and in this way preparation is made for the transformation of the household and tribe into a nation."⁴

The account opens when Joseph was seventeen years old (v. 2), always an age of great importance in a young person's life. We also note from verse 2 that Joseph was shepherding the flock with his brothers. The sons with whom he was particularly associated were

Bilhah's sons, Dan and Naphtali (30:5-8), and Zilpah's sons, Gad and Asher (30:9-13).

Just what the "evil report" was about, we don't know, nor do we know whether Joseph's action was right or wrong, although it would seem that his first responsibility was to his father, and in this light he acted properly. It may be that Joseph brought in the evil report about his brothers because of the glory of God, being ashamed that God's name was being blasphemed among the inhabitants of the land by reason of their wickedness, or perhaps he was just jealous for the family name, which had already been disgraced (34:30).

Jacob's experience of favoritism in his youth seems to have taught him nothing. He doted on Joseph, the son of his old age, and he showed his favoritism by the "varicolored tunic" he gave to his next to youngest son, marking him out as superior and expressing Jacob's intention to make him pre-eminent above his brothers. A similar garment is described in 2 Samuel 13:18, a dress of Tamar, King David's daughter, thus referring to royal apparel. At any rate, we are not surprised at the unhappiness registered by Joseph's brothers.

This brings us to the second thing in our passage:

JOSEPH HATED BY HIS BRETHREN (37:4-17)

Why did Joseph's brothers hate him? Three reasons are given:

1. Because of his evil report of them;
2. Because of his father's favoritism;
3. Because of his dreams.

For all this they hated him with a growing hatred (see vv. 4, 5, 8).

At this point we need to focus on two factors:

Joseph's revelation of his dreams (37:5-10).

Joseph was already hated (v. 4). Now his brothers' hatred of him was further fueled by his two related dreams. The first dream clearly affirmed that Joseph was to have the right to rule over his brothers. The second dream affirmed his supremacy over the entire family. Jacob had no problem understanding the meaning of this second dream (cf. v. 10).

Would Joseph have been better to have kept quiet about his second dream in particular? Was he possessed of a secret pride at this time?*

The family's reaction to his dreams (37:11). Joseph's brothers not only hated him; now they were envious of him. Jacob, however, reminds us of Mary who, concerning the things she heard about her child Jesus, "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19). He began to suspect that some divine purpose was involved in Joseph's unusual dreams.

Evidently, Jacob was not at ease about his sons who were shepherding the flock at Shechem, where they had already disgraced his name (cf. 34:30). Thus he sent Joseph to check on them. Was this a wise decision? Joseph immediately obeyed his father and traveled from Hebron to Shechem, a distance of over 50 miles. There he failed to find his brothers, but with the help of a stranger he eventually located them at Dothan.

In connection with Joseph's prompt obedience, Griffith Thomas has said, "It has often and truly

been pointed out that Joseph seems to have combined all the best qualities of his ancestors—the capacity of Abraham, the quietness of Isaac, the ability of Jacob, and the personal beauty of his mother's family. It is interesting to note that the same word is used of the mother and the son (29:17 and 39:6)."⁵

What should we learn from this passage of Scripture? Among other things, it clearly illustrates the sin of man and the grace of God, the sin of envy being particularly stressed (cf. Ps. 37:1; 73:3; Rom. 13:13). Envy is "the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30; see Jas. 3:16), and there can be no peace when it is present. It is the root of many of our sins against our brethren in Christ. Remember, it was "for envy" that the chief priests and elders of Israel delivered the Lord Jesus Christ to Pilate to be tried (Mt. 27:18).

If God were first in our lives, there would be no envy (cf. Ps. 37:3-7; 1 Cor. 13:4). Only the grace of God in one's heart and life is truly able to overcome this sin.

1. W. Graham Scroggie, *The Scripture Union*, May-June 1955.
2. W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary*, p. 354.
3. William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary, Old Testament*, p. 71.
4. W. Graham Scroggie, *op. cit.*, May-June 1955.
5. W. H. Griffith Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 358.



***Editor's Note:** It has been long debated whether Joseph was right or wrong in telling his brothers and parents about his dreams. We must be careful to not creatively explain away the flaws and failures of Old Testament characters, especially when they are there to warn us: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). But was Joseph wrong here?

There is a similar situation in the life of the Lord Jesus when He told the Jewish leaders that they would see Him next in the glory of His Father, escorted by heaven's angels. It made the rulers apoplectic! Was it necessary? Obviously so, in the case of our Saviour. But what of Israel's "saviour"?

How else would it be seen that the meteoric rise of Jacob's shepherd son from prison to palace was not an act of political caprice but of divine will? As Joseph put it to his brothers, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50:20). So it was with the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, whom God has made "both Lord and Christ." And in the same way Peter pleads with the grief-stricken Jews: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:23-24). All the world will see, as it was with Joseph, that the suffering and the glory were all in the plan of God (see Acts 26:23).

Reuben, Simeon, & Levi



REUBEN

Reuben was the firstborn son, but lost his birthright, though his life, as a son of Israel, was saved. Jacob cast him out from the honors of the firstborn, but Moses, the mediator of the covenant, interceded for his life. His history is the history of many who shall be numbered with the Israel of God.

Sketching the career of Reuben as a man and as a tribe, there is nothing that we can take hold of till we come to the act for which his dying father rebuked him so pointedly. Jacob knew his son well, and ascribed his sin to utter moral weakness. Such character expresses itself in acts of wickedness; yet the act is of less importance than the root of evil from which it springs. The instability that appears in Reuben concerning Joseph is so noticeable: "Shed no blood, but cast him into the pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him, that he might rid him out of their hands to deliver him to his father again." This done, Reuben left, thinking by absence to separate himself from their evil deeds, though he was the eldest, and responsible above the rest.

How natural was Jacob's conduct in refusing afterwards to entrust Benjamin to Reuben's care. If Reuben could not save Joseph, what reason was there to suppose he could preserve Benjamin? Yet there was no lack of conscience. When Simeon was put in prison by Joseph, Reuben was the first to apply the lesson: "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." The words drew tears from the eyes of Joseph, who overheard them; but they could not undo the past.

And so Reuben came to his father's deathbed to hear of the strength and weakness of his character, his many advantages and his one seemingly incurable defect. There is natural ability, and the best of it; yet for want of moral steadiness this excellence is not to excel. Who has not seen this character and seen it fail? "Unstable as water" is a terribly accurate illustration. The force of water is one of the most powerful in nature, but it is frightful unless kept in bounds. The character of Reuben is one which has no power of concentration, and has not learned self-control.

Reuben develops this character in his father's lifetime, and the place of his tribe is de-

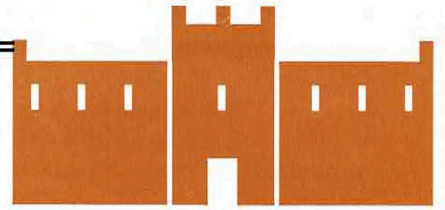
termined forever. That place may be second, it will never be first. But for redemption, it would be nowhere at all.

The after-history is soon told. The birthright of Reuben is given to the sons of Joseph; and so, when Judah has taken the lead and drawn to himself Benjamin, the remaining tribes are found following the lead of Ephraim, not Reuben. No king, no judge, no saviour of Israel is recorded of the tribe of Reuben. Was Judah from Reuben? His surname, Iscariot, suggests he was from Keriath in the land of Reuben. It may well be so. The only other men of note were "Dathan and Abiram...sons of Reuben," who insulted Moses, and "perished in the gainsaying of Korah." How far this rebellion was occasioned by the disappointment of the Reubenites in being thrust into a subordinate position it is impossible to say; but it is an indication of the same lightness of character.

Reuben and Gad, with the half-tribe of Manasseh, after helping their brethren in the wars of Canaan, were dismissed to the borders of the land, where they themselves seemed doubtful whether they would be able to maintain their standing as tribes of Israel and worshippers of Israel's God.

Thus far we have traced the progress of the tribe downwards; now we must observe the turning-point, marked in the blessing of Moses (Deut. 33:6). It takes the form of a prayer which is the salvation of the tribe. Mark the natural end of instability, if it were suffered to run its course: "Let Reuben live, and *not die*, and let not his men be few." Why should he pray that Reuben might not die, unless he were on the way to death? This prayer is most significant in the salvation of the Reubenites, for Moses is the "mediator" of Israel under the old covenant. It illustrates the intercession of the Saviour, the only salvation of those who fall, and yet do not die.

SIMEON



We find that from this time forward Reuben has a place and a work. He strengthened his brethren in the conquest of Canaan, fighting under the banner of Joshua. After this the Reubenites were greatly multiplied in Gilead. And "in the days of Saul they made war against the Hagarites, and cried to God in the battle; and He was entreated of them, because they trusted in Him" (1 Chron. 5:10). In Reuben was fulfilled the promise to Abraham that his seed should possess the land as far as the river Euphrates. So far did the Reubenites extend their possessions.

By what process are such Reubenites brought to a right mind? It is through the discipline of failure, arising from moral weakness. Disappointment, to those who have the natural ability to succeed, is humbling, and, through the great Mediator, the humiliation brings them to the foot of the cross.

This is the history of the new birth of many a soul. In the days of his great ability and instability, he is morally worthless, but he is made to feel his weakness. He loses the place that his birthright had entitled him to hold, by his unsteadiness of character, and falls from the first place to the second, though his talents were unsurpassed. Thus he is afflicted, and it is good for him. He is brought down to feel his need of a Saviour, and is born of God. Such characters as Reuben have sometimes gone a long way with the prodigal; they lose great opportunities and advantages, if they do not actually waste their substance with riotous living. Then they come to themselves, and arise and go to the Father against whom they have sinned. They are received into the arms of His mercy with joy unspeakable, and, *behold, a son* is born to God. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Not a few will bear witness to the truth of this experience. Perhaps there is something that answers to it in the history of us all. Who is there that has not lost some opportunity, wasted some advantage, that God gave him at first? Who is there that has excelled, with all the excellency that his birthright gave?

We may feel that in this life we never can be what we might have been if we had not wasted the goods given us, but they that have known the famine in the far country will feel quite contented if they may at last enter their Father's house above. Yes, there is a gate of Reuben in the golden city. Only let Reuben live, and not die, and he will bless God through eternity for his disappointments and trials here.

We cannot treat Simeon apart from Levi because their father put them together in his prophecy. These two seem to have clung together more than any of the rest. "Simeon and Levi are brethren," close companions in thought and action. But this companionship was not to last: "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." Their father speaks of their union with strong disapproval; "instruments of cruelty are in their habitations" or "bargainings."

There was the bargain between the sons of Jacob and the Shechemites, which Simeon and Levi turned into an opportunity for a treacherous massacre. When their father rebuked them, they replied with an indignant assertion of their right to do what they had done. He answered them on his deathbed. In their union Jacob declares that he will have no part: "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath (the outburst of passion), for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

Simeon next appears in the story of Joseph. When his brethren came down to Egypt, and he wanted security that they would bring Benjamin, he took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. Simeon was the eldest of those who took part in selling Joseph. Perhaps also Joseph preferred not to run the risk of having Benjamin entrusted to his brethren if Simeon were among them.

The Levites were dispersed through all the tribes of Israel in the Promised Land. But Simeon was no less distinctly parted from his brethren, though his tribe was not so dispersed. Simeon not only was parted from Levi, he was placed with Reuben and Gad. The effect of this turned out strangely for Simeon. When they came to Canaan, two of these tribes had a great multitude of cattle, and desired Gilead. The request was granted. It would seem natural for the whole of Reuben's division to go together; but, for some reason not explained, Simeon was thrown out. He had marched with Gad and Reuben for forty years, but at the entrance to the land they left him. Half of Manasseh joined them instead; and that half-tribe was stronger than the whole tribe of Simeon.

The other fact, that Moses did not mention Simeon in his blessing, is equally strange. The Simeonites had no separate inheritance; they received a portion of the inheritance of Judah (see Josh. 19). Here the

separation from Levi was most complete, for though the Levites had cities in every tribe of Israel, and the priests were placed to a great extent in Judah, yet in the part of Judah's inheritance allotted to Simeon there was only one Levitical city.

The Simeonites occupied the southern border around Beersheba. When Israel was divided into two kingdoms, Benjamin and Judah followed the family of David, while the other ten tribes, Simeon among them, followed Ephraim. Thus the Simeonites were separated by Judah and Benjamin from the kingdom to which they belonged, for we later read that "strangers out of...Simeon were gathered to Asa King of Judah in abundance."

It might seem that the whole history of the tribe was made up of disappointment but his course, like Reuben's, was first downward and then upward. In the final division of the land, foretold by Ezekiel, there is a portion for Simeon. And in the Revelation, "Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed 12,000." There is also a gate to the golden city over which the name of Simeon is inscribed. But how do such men find entrance into the city of God?

The natural character represented by Simeon is hard and cruel. Men who think to advance the kingdom of heaven by the sword are here. "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" says Simeon, or Simon Peter of the New Testament; and before he has heard the answer, he has smitten his Master's enemy, and cut off his ear. If the Kingdom of Christ were of this world, then must His servants fight. But "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." This is a truth that the Simeonites find it hard to learn. They cannot see why they should not do justice, even severely, on others. They are austere in their religion. Of this tribe are many who will put down false doctrine by open violence, forsaking the simple remedies which the Master has prescribed.

It is always difficult to draw the lines between intolerance and discipline, and between tolerance and neglect. But cruelty and violence, especially when accompanied with treachery, are not the weapons for a disciple of Christ. No one ever yet accomplished by the sword what has been accomplished by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

Separation and isolation are the results of this conduct. God's cruel servants find themselves deserted and alone. There is a defect in their apprehension of the gospel. Theirs is the spirit of fear, and not

of love; and the remedy for them is this: they are first brought low in their affliction, and then overwhelmed with the revelation of the love of God.

This method of God's dealing is illustrated by the history of Simeon in an unexpected way. He had no blessing while he was joined with Levi, no prosperity while with Reuben; he only grew weaker. But in Canaan he was joined with Judah; and this is the turning-point in the history of the tribe. When we remember that all these names are significant, we shall see great beauty in this part of the story. Simeon means hearing—"The Lord hath heard that I was hated"—and Judah's name is praise. When the character of the Simeonites had made them hated, the Lord heard it, and placed them in the midst of a tribe whose portion was all praise.

The natural character of Simeon is not disposed to praise, because it does not recognize His lovingkindness. It is all for prayers and fastings and services—"What can I do for God?" not "What has He done for me?" And how does God deal with such a character? He first shows him that he can do nothing, and then reveals the fullness of what God has done for him. In the first chapter of Judges it is recorded that Judah and Simeon went up together. It is as though "Praise said to Hearing of Prayer, his brother, Come up with me into my lot, and I also will go with thee into thy lot. So Prayer went up with him, and Praise went up; and the Lord delivered the enemy into his hand."

From this time Simeon has a place and a work in Israel; for we read in 1 Chronicles 4:39-43 that in the spread of the tribe of Simeon on the borders of Israel to the far south, a detachment of them went to Mount Seir, in the days of Hezekiah, about the time when the ten tribes went into captivity, and "smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day." Those last words become significant when we remember that the book was written after the captivity. We see that these Simeonites never went into captivity at all! No; from the time that the Simeonites become aware of what God had done for them, there is no more captivity for them. Their instruments of cruelty were turned into instruments of war against the enemies of the Lord.

And so, after the last victory, the Simeonites, like the Reubenites before them, enter in through the gate of One Pearl into the city. Some of those that have once been cruel persecutors shall at last meet with the persecuted, where all is peace.



LEVI

The extraordinary official position of the Levites in the history of

the chosen people does not destroy their individuality, nor make the tribe less representative of a certain side of the Christian life. The tribe of Levi contained a long line of great men from Moses to John the Baptist; yet "of the tribe of Levi were sealed 12,000," and no more. And as one gate is inscribed with the name of Reuben, so is there one of Levi. What have Levi and Judah above others in the New Jerusalem, whose citizens are all kings and priests to God?

Levi, though under the ban of Jacob, was fitted, by the discipline of trial, to discharge a most important public duty in Israel—a duty which made Levi second in importance to none but Judah, whose forerunner and counterpart he was formed to be.

The relation between Christ and Moses is the relation of Judah to Levi. Samuel, a Levite, was the forerunner of David, to prepare the way before him; John the Baptist, a priest of the tribe of Levi, was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. And foremost in all the great changes that passed over Israel you will find men of Levi. In the dark days of the kingdom of Judah, when Athaliah seized the throne of David, and thought to have destroyed his family, it was Jehoiada the priest that saved one child and preserved him till he was old enough to fill the throne. The prophet who foretold every step in the captivity of Judah was Jeremiah, priest of Anathoth. Contemporary with him was the priest Ezekiel, by the river of Chebar, speaking to the captives of the glorious restoration when captivity was done.

Consider the labors of Levi in the Scriptures. Moses who began, and Ezra who well-nigh completed, the Hebrew Bible, were both of this tribe. The second Joshua, in the return from captivity to Jerusalem, was the son of Josedech, the high priest. In the Law, in the Prophets, and the Psalms, we find traces of Levi's hand.

We have already noticed the prophecy against Levi, delivered by his father Jacob, who set him and his brother Simeon together under the same curse. Both tribes were joined to the Lord through separation from their brethren. Both recovered their blessing through connection with Judah—Simeon by sharing his inheritance, Levi by dividing the chief ministry to Israel with him.

Isolation is a feature in the history of Levi, quite

as much as Simeon. The capacity to stand alone, which made Simeon and Levi so conspicuous in their attack on the Shechemites, proved a valuable instrument for the work of the Lord.

Look at Moses when he was come to years, refusing "to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and finally forsaking Egypt, "not fearing the wrath of the king." When compelled to flee to Midian, we find him standing as the fearless champion of the daughters of Jethro against the shepherds at the well. Moses in these things acted not only from natural impulse, but in the fear of God. At first Simeon and Levi acted from natural character; but it is the same character throughout—a fearless unconsciousness of self, and disregard of danger, in the cause of right.

Moses for his own part was "very meek, above all men on the face of the earth." It was for others he was bold, and in the cause of justice, not in self-assertion or for selfish gain. When the fear of God is the ruling principle, this is the material that makes men of God. These men are visibly successful in His cause. They are most perplexing to an enemy because they are immune to fear or favor. It is said that "every man has his price" but what is the price of a man who will give his life for a cause which he is not supporting for gain? That kind of man was Moses, and that kind of tribe was Levi.

Of course there were exceptions—all Levites were not as Moses. There were Nadab and Abihu, and Korah; there were Hophni and Phinehas, sons of Eli that were sons of Belial; Abiathar that turned after Adonijah, and some other blots upon the tribe. But, on the whole, the Levites were men who would risk their lives for God. He took them for His inheritance, and gave them Himself for theirs; and as long as they held by that position, there were none in Israel like them. They were the very men for their post. The incident which seems to have brought them to their position is found in the story of the golden calf, when the Levites did according to the word of Moses, and put 3,000 idolaters to the sword.

We see Phinehas with the javelin executing judgment on Zimri and Cozbi; the Levite that raised all Israel to avenge his wrongs in Gibeah; Samuel hewing Agag in pieces; Jehoiada taking vengeance on Athaliah; Ezra in his vigorous reformation after the captivity, and compelling the inhabitants of Jerusalem to part from the wives whom they had married contrary to law; John the Baptist denounc-

ing the "generation of vipers," with language such as no other except Christ ever used. What other tribe affords so many examples of stern, uncompromising attachment to the law?

See Moses with the golden calf, pounding it to dust in his deliberate fury, and not resting till he literally forced the idol down the throats of its worshippers. Is not this force of character a weapon with which men must not be trusted unless they are men of God? We see the reason for the diminishing of the strength of Simeon, who had not, like Levi, surrendered himself so early to the work of the Lord.

But we must observe that this character, valuable as it is for God's service, has no merit for salvation. Though constituted the priest and representative of Israel, Levi needed a priest himself—a priest that must be more than man. And thus Moses says to him, "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim," thy perfection and brightness (not thine own), "be with thine Holy One"—that is, the One that is accepted for thee, even Christ—"whom thou didst prove at Massah" (i.e. in Horeb, where the rock was smitten first), "and with whom thou didst strive over the waters of Meribah" (i. e. at Kadesh, where the rock was smitten last). The Smitten Rock must be Levi's only hope.

Let us draw the character of Moses, the representative man of Levi, and see what kind of persons the true Levites ought to be. A goodly child even from his birth, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in words and deeds," perhaps even heir to the throne, he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

To whom but Moses did the Lord ever appear in such a striking parable from nature—"in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush"? Follow him again to Egypt after forty years' absence, now so great in the sight of Pharaoh and all his servants that he was dreaded like a king. Yet see him humbly receiving reproof and counsel from Jethro in the early days of his success. See him in the noblest act of all, as the true king and priest and shepherd, offering his life for Israel on the mount of God. Follow him as he bears their "cumbrance and their burden and their strife" for forty years in the wilderness—for "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

What wonderful love for the people breathes in all his writings, and yet he himself might have taken the place of them! God gave him the offer: "I will

smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they." Yet he did not even take an inheritance for his children. "Concerning Moses...his sons were named of the tribe of Levi," neither kings nor priests.

The princes of heaven and hell strove for his dead body, and he stood side by side with Elijah on the holy mountain to talk with the Saviour of "His exodus." With him the Lord spoke "face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." And who but Moses first syllabled the name of Jesus (Joshua) in the Hebrew tongue? He first put together the name that Gabriel brought back from heaven after 1400 years.

What can be found anywhere to surpass the sublimity of the Mosaic records? In history, in poetry, in law, in prophecy, the world has not seen his like. And when he died the Lord buried him, and raised him again, as though He would not lose even for a time the bodily presence of His friend.

In heaven the heavenly harpers celebrate their victory in "the song of Moses, the servant of God," as well as "the song of the Lamb." Of all the twelve tribes of Israel there were none like Levi and Judah, and of Judah and Levi there are two glorified members inseparable on earth, inseparable beyond the grave—Moses, of the tribe of Levi, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. If there be a man whom the Bible has put near to Christ, it is Moses. None were so dear to their brethren, and none so near to God. Yet for all this, the Word is quick to point out that while Moses was a great servant in the house, Christ is the Son over the house; while the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. There is still an infinite gulf between the "man of God" and God who became man.

Yet in this union with the Lord we find the true glory of the tribe of Levi. "The Lord God is his inheritance." The old lawless covenant with Simeon is exchanged for "the secret of the Lord." The tribe separated from his brother is united to Jehovah. Herein is fulfilled the prediction of the mother of Levi when she bare him—a prophecy of closer union between the bridegroom and the bride—"Now will my husband be joined unto me;" and she called his name Levi—that is, joined. The true Levites are the men who have been made lonely among their brethren that they may live alone with Jehovah, and so dwell in the families of others that they may unite them to the family of God.

U

Naphtali, Gad, & Asher

It is interesting to connect the "hind let loose" with the title of Psalm 22. The words "Aijeleth Shabar" have been translated, "the Hind of the Dawn." What more fitting symbol to introduce the tale of such sufferings and such rising glory as are depicted in Psalm 22:7?

The second son of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, was named "my wrestling" by Rachel to signify the rivalry between herself and Leah for the place of honor in Jacob's house (Gen. 30:7-8). In Genesis 49, Jacob, who frequently associates his sons' names with their blessing, employs for Naphtali a figure entirely at variance with the idea of a wrestler. "Naphtali is a hind let loose," he says, conjuring before us the beauty, timidity, and fleetness of foot associated with the female deer.

The first characteristic was to be *freedom*, "a hind let loose." May we not apply this to the release of the believer and the inception of freedom hitherto inexperienced, through Christ? "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

In Judges 4:6 we read of a man of Naphtali dwelling in Kedesh Naphtali, a city of refuge. Barak, whose name means *lightning*, though at first slow to move, when roused to activity by Deborah, proved himself swift as lightning in gathering his tribesmen and venturing against the enemies of God's people. There the men of Naphtali, swift not to flee but to attack, "jeopardied their lives" in the battle (5:18), displaying the prowess of wrestlers as well as the fleetness of hinds. Would there were more of the King's ambassadors eager in Christ's service, "swift as the roe upon the mountains," like the men of Naphtali and Gad who came to David—ready to put their lives in jeopardy for the sake of the Lord.

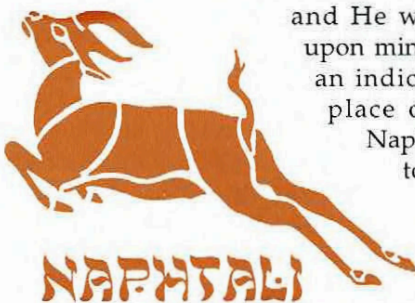
The hind is often associated with high places (2 Sam. 22:34; Ps. 18:33; Hab. 3:19). "He will make my feet like hinds' feet and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." Here is an indication of the dwelling place of every true man of Naphtali: set free and swift to serve the Lord, He has made us "sit together in heavenly places in Christ."

Of ten verses in the Bible in which the hind is mentioned, three associate its feet with high places, and three (Job 39:1; Ps. 29:9; Jer. 14:5) refer to the hinds calving, suggesting fruitfulness. The figure of the hind is thus very appropriately applied to the tribe of Naphtali, for from the four sons of Naphtali who went down into Egypt there sprang in the course of 215 years 53,400 men capable of taking their place in the ranks of battle (Num. 1:43).

It was also fitting that such a productive tribe should obtain a prolific inheritance (the Hula valley, breadbasket of Israel, was in their territory; as was the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee with its abundant fish). So also, in spiritual experience, fleetness for God and fruitfulness in His service are concomitant. As on the hem of the high priest's robe the golden bells with their joyful sound and the pomegranates with their abundant seed were always found together, so in the truly emancipated and consecrated servant of God will zeal in service have fruitfulness.

The song of Deborah and Barak (Jud. 5) has been considered at least a partial fulfillment of the prophecy, "He giveth goodly words." Certainly it ranks with the great songs of the Bible. The song commences with a paean of praise to Jehovah for His deliverances, and goes on to tell of victory through Him all along the line. So the goodly words of the redeemed will be full of praise and worship to God (Col. 3:16). To the unregenerate they can be "beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life."

Those engaged in the ministry of Christ always have this character of freshness, giving goodly words. Naphtali's blessing in Deuteronomy 33 as in Genesis 49, is pressed within the compass of a single verse: "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor and full of the blessing of the Lord; possess thou the west and the south." Divine *favor* and divine *fullness* were to become the portion of Naphtali. No doubt this refers first to the fertility of the country that this tribe inherited. The land was



so fruitful that the Naphtalites were generally the first to bring their firstfruits to the temple and receive the priestly blessing.

But there is a special sense in which the favor of Jehovah was to shine on Naphtali, and it was left to Isaiah to throw further light on Moses' prediction in his prophecy in chapter 9:1-2, 6-7, and to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself to fulfill it in His advent and gracious ministry (Mt. 4:15, 16). "The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." The favor of God was to be the glorious effulgence of that true Light that came into the world, bringing rejoicing and deliverance to these on whom the healing rays shone. Galilee, the portion of Naphtali, was specially privileged in the days of our Lord who performed His beneficent miracles and proclaimed His message of salvation. His residence was at Capernaum in the land of Naphtali (Mt. 9:1; Mk. 2:1), and our Lord, for this reason spoke of it as a city highly privileged, "exalted unto heaven." It was then that the inhabitants of that region truly became a people "satisfied with favor."

For the people of God who have entered into freedom, whose feet have become fleet to run in His service, and whose lives are filled with fruit and freshness, here is a further blessing, the satisfying favor of the Lord. That favor will mean to us just what it meant to Naphtali, that is, the constant presence of Christ with us, continually revealing Himself in fresh and beautiful aspects to our responsive hearts.

Satisfaction with divine favor brings fullness of blessing and enlargement to the tribe. Its land gave birth to most of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, was the earthly home of the Lord Himself, and became the cradle of the Christian faith. It thus received "of His fullness, and grace for grace." From the land of Galilee the gospel spread worldwide, making its way in those early days into the lands of "the west and the south." Western Asia, Europe and North Africa were the first lands to be evangelized, and there Christian churches sprang up and flourished in apostolic times and for centuries after. May we, too, progressing in spiritual blessings and activities, know also the favor of God and the fullness of Christ, that our lives may be redolent with "the blessings of the gospel of Christ."

GAD



The blessings of Gad, the seventh of Jacob's sons, are acknowledged by commentators to be more difficult to understand with reference to the tribal history than those of the other tribes. The Hebrew word, "Gad," apart from the name itself which is of frequent occurrence, is used in the Old Testament only four times—twice of the manna where it is translated "coriander seed," and twice in our Authorized Version translated "troop" (Gen. 30:11; Isa. 65:11). The RV and other translations render it "fortune" in these two verses, and certainly this rendering gives much better sense in the latter passage if we understand it of the Syrian god of Fortune, equivalent of the Roman god, Jupiter.

When Leah and Rachel left their father's house in Syria to accompany their husband back to Canaan, they took with them their household gods and all the polytheistic superstition with which their childhood had been surrounded. When we consider the custom prevailing among such people of giving their children the names of their gods, it is to be wondered at, since the privilege of giving names to their offspring seemed to be the mother's that only one of the twelve sons of Jacob bore the name of a heathen god. The truer significance of Gad's name is therefore "fortunate," and not a "troop," as the AV seems to suggest.

For the people of God there exist no such considerations as fortune and fate, associated as they are with supposed astronomic influences and the smile of heathen deities. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Gad, like others considered fortunate, owed its prosperity to the blessing of the Lord who makes rich.

In Genesis 49:19, Jacob predicts a struggle in which Gad is to be harassed by the enemy, yet to obtain final victory, overcoming "at the last." Fierce and warlike the Gadites proved to be, and, by reason of this very trait, drawn into numerous hostilities, they discomfited and dispossessed their enemies (1 Chron. 5:18-22). Victory was theirs, for "they cried to God in the battle, and He was entreated of them, because they put their trust in Him."

Men of Gad, too, are found in the forefront of David's warriors: "men of might, men of war fit for the battle, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains."

Happy tribesmen they, who could look forward to the final triumph of David's cause and ally themselves with the persecuted victor (1 Chron. 12:8). For was not David's history analogous to their own: "a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last"? The enigma of the baffled people of God finally emerging victorious is repeated, too, in Christian experience. But the Christian, even when the troops that oppose press closest and cruelest, when "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and the sword" threaten his undoing, can exclaim with Paul, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

The Mosaic benediction (Deut. 33) contains for Gad a reference to the choice of inheritance on the east side of Jordan, and to the agreement into which the Gadites, with the Reubenites and half the men of Manasseh, entered to cross Jordan with the other tribes and "execute the justice of the Lord" on the nations that were to be dispossessed. Some see also in "the portion of the lawgiver" an allusion to the burial place of Moses in Moab, which was presumably captured by Gad when they enlarged their borders. "The justice of the Lord and His judgments with Israel" may also have in view the rise of Jephthah the Gileadite, of the tribe of Gad, who judged Israel after delivering them from the Ammonites.

"Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad." Fortunate indeed was Gad in having the living God to enlarge him. It was impossible to confine such people as the men of Gad: they would not be shut in. "The place where we dwell...is too strait for us" was to be their repeated avowal. Warlike and energetic, they soon extended their inheritance beyond its original limits, and covered the whole of Gilead. Such acquisition was pleasing to the Lord.

Do we, in our day, realize that it is not God's intention that we should be confined in our spiritual possessions? In Psalm 119:32, David says, "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." However dangerous may be the enlargement of heart physically, an enlarged heart spiritually is a thing to be desired. Let us go in for this and we shall cease to confine our interests, our affections and intercessions to the narrow sphere that encircles self, and throw our hearts open to all the people of God. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged," and exhorted them to be also en-

larged (2 Cor. 6:11-13). In the instructions that follow (vv. 14-18), the apostle indicates that true separation from the unequal yoke, from unrighteousness and darkness, from infidelity and idolatry, is necessary before enlargement can be realized.

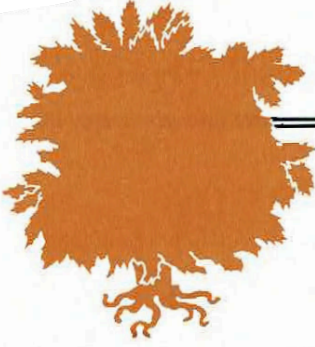
The three great heroes of Gad illustrate what God can accomplish even in days of repression through the man of the enlarged heart. When hated, persecuted, disinherited and exiled, Jephthah turned his eyes from his own troubles to see the distress of his people under the oppression of the enemy. His heart was enlarged to take up his people's cause and enlarge their borders by dispossessing the enemy.

In the period of David's rejection, another Gadite, Barzillai, had his heart enlarged to minister to his king. Already a man of fourscore years, he could not follow his liege lord to the battle, but "brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and... sheep, and cheese of kine, for David."

A later day of declension under the wicked tyranny of Ahab and Jezebel witnessed the rise of another man of Gad with an enlarged heart and an enlarged mouth: for Elijah the Tishbite was also one of the tribe that looked to Jehovah, the living God, for enlargement. There is also the need of an enlarged mouth, opened wide to receive the good things God has to bestow. "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it" (Ps. 81:10). The same Hebrew word, "rachab," translated frequently "enlarge," is here tendered "open wide." It is cognate with the name, "Rehoboth" given by Isaac to his well when God "made room for him," or "enlarged him." Such enlargement could only be realized after Esek and Sitnah, "contention" and "hatred," had been left behind.

David, in his song of deliverance twice recorded (2 Sam. 22; Ps. 18), enumerates among God's many mercies to him the enlargement of his steps, "so that my feet did not slip," a blessing that we too are often conscious that we need to keep us from stumbling.

God promised Israel, in anticipation of their possession of Canaan, that He would enlarge their borders (Ex. 34:24; Deut. 19:8); and for this kind of enlargement Jabez prayed (1 Chron. 4:10). Conflict and victory are the necessary preliminaries to territorial expansion, and if we, like Gad, would enlarge our heavenly possessions and enjoy our full spiritual privileges, we shall find persistent opposition by the forces that occupy that territory. But let us be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and He



ASHER

will enlarge us in due time.

Concerning the tribe of Asher, the descendants of Jacob's eighth son, sacred history is almost silent, and we are therefore chiefly dependent for what knowledge we possess of this tribe on the patriarchal and Mosaic blessings of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33. Asher lacked that bellicose spirit which stimulated some of the other tribes to territorial conquest, and were unable to exterminate the Canaanites and obtain full possession of the portion assigned to them in the land. They were, with other tribes, censured by Deborah for their indifference and love of ease when Israel went forth in Jehovah's cause against the oppressor. "Asher sat still at the haven of the sea and abode by his creeks" (Jud. 5:17, R.V.). Perhaps they were too engrossed in the benefits with which Jehovah had loaded them at home and thus lost sight of their responsibilities further afield, like some of God's people today.

The keynote of Asher's history is the significance of the name given to the progenitor of the tribe at his birth. Asher means "happy:" and the plural "ashere," found 42 times in the Old Testament, is the word with which we are so familiar in the Psalms: "Blessed is the man," and which might fittingly be rendered, "O the happiness of the man!" Asher was welcomed into the world with the rapturous ecstasy of Leah, who in her few words of rejoicing at his birth employed both the noun—"osher"—"with my happiness," and the verb "ashar," "call blessed" (Gen. 30:13). The happiness of Asher was to be a legacy to his posterity, for from him sprang a tribe blessed in its possessions, rejoicing in its privileges, and living in happy relationship with others.

The triumph of the life of faith is strength through joy. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." With an entrance into the family of God celebrated by the rejoicing of the heavenly angels (Lk. 15:7). The consciousness of a standing before God banishes every fear, and the believer, possessed of that "joy unspeakable and full of glory," cannot but carry with him through life all the blessedness that is assured to those who tread the path of faith and manifest the fruits of righteousness. This will be a happiness, not only independent of outward circumstances, but tri-

umphant in adversity and perplexity. Like Habakkuk we shall be able to say, whatever may befall us, "I will rejoice in the Lord: I will joy in the God of my salvation." It is easy to be happy in prosperity as Asher was. Yet, for the believer in Christ prosperity is assured to him even when circumstances seem most adverse. David's psalms, so full of the blessedness of the man whose trust is in the living God, were born in sorrow, for "David's psalms had ne'er been sung if David's heart had ne'er been wrung."

The less we are occupied with the happiness of material possessions, the more room is there for the joy of faith. Many thousands have found their portion in God and experienced this joyous prosperity amid earthly adversity, this happiness of spirit in spite of brokenness of soul.

Asher could say, with David, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." They were, as God's people ever are, a pleasant people with a pleasant portion and a pleasant prospect (Ps. 16:3, 6, 11). The wealth of the land between the Phoenician coast and Carmel's slopes which fell to Asher's lot is described in Genesis 49:20 and Deuteronomy 33:24-25. There was rich soil producing fields of waving grain from which would come the bread that was to be "fat," and even dainties fit for a king: there need never be a famine among the Asherites so long as hostile marauders could be kept at bay. Its olive trees were to produce so prolifically that there would never be a lack of oil. Not only was there to be sufficient for such ordinary purposes as lighting, cooking and anointing, but it was to be so plentiful that Asher would literally dip his foot in oil. This was an indication of unusual prosperity, as is proved by the words of Job who refers to his erstwhile prosperous days as the time when he washed his feet in butter, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil (Job 29:6).

The hills and rocks were also to yield their mineral wealth to the sons of Asher, providing iron and brass either for shoes or armor or fortifications. Several alternative readings are given for this verse, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass." The RV renders it, "Thy bolts shall be iron and brass" with "shoes" in the margin.) Rich ores were to be quarried from the ground on which they trod and transformed by the skill of the Phoenician artisans for the defense and use of the inhabitants of the land.

Like Asher, the believer can rejoice in an abundance of "fat" bread, for in Christ, the heavenly manna, he has sufficient to sustain his soul till life's journey is ended. The Holy Spirit's fullness also avails, not only in ever-fresh supplies for dally anointing (Ps. 23:5; 92:10), but also for our steps so that, dipping his foot in oil, he may "walk in the Spirit." All the wealth of the wonderful Word of the Lord is at our disposal also, so that, putting on the whole panoply of God, we may be fortified against the adversary's onslaughts. Truly, "Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

Asher was also happy in his posterity "blessed with (or through) children." The RV margin renders this, "blessed above sons." It has been pointed out that Asher was not one of the tribes whose numbers continued to multiply, for in the reign of David so insignificant had it become that Asher furnished no chief ruler, as did the other tribes (1 Chron. 27:16-22). This verse cannot therefore refer to numerical increase. It rather seems to indicate that Asher was to be blessed through his progeny, or perhaps above the other sons of Jacob. The second half of the verse is complementary, "Let him be acceptable to his brethren." We do not read of the men of Asher quarreling with the other tribes or provoking them to jealousy or hatred. In spite of Asher's special blessings the tribe was not envied by the others, because its sons possessed a spirit that made them acceptable to their fellows. We might well emulate that sincerity and humility of spirit that will disarm all jealousy on the part of our brethren and give us that acceptance which is often an evidence of true godliness.

The promise made to Asher in Deuteronomy 33:25 has been appropriated by many of God's people in all ages. It is one of those universal truths which is an anchor sure and steadfast through life. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The RV margin gives as alternatives for strength as "rest" and "security." We may read all these into the promise and it remains equally true. Asher was happy in the promise of God that so fittingly closes the individual blessing of the tribes. Jehovah provides perennial strength, security and rest for His people.

While Asher seldom figured as a warlike tribe, but seemed to prefer the enjoyment of the prosperous land it inherited to the daring and dangers of the battlefield, there were occasions when the Asherites

quitted themselves well in the conflict. Their leaders are described as "mighty men of valor" and the common rank and file of their fighting forces as soldiers "apt to war and to battle" (1 Chron. 7:40). Though their exploits are not recorded, they are commended as "expert in war," keeping their rank (AV marg.) and able to go forth and set the battle in array. They were happy in their prowess, for they were endowed with qualities befitting faithful soldiers. The army of the Lord needs such today, expert in war and able to keep rank with other true-hearted soldiers of Christ.

The tribe of Asher gave to Israel no illustrious hero or delivering judge as far as we know, but its record is adorned with the name of a heroine of 84 years. Anna, of the tribe of Asher, was happy in her privileges, for she found delight in "speaking of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Hers was the true blessedness of possession, for she hailed the advent of the promised Saviour. She knew, too, what it was to dip her foot in the oil, to be guided in her steps by the Holy Spirit, for she was led to the precincts of the temple when Mary the mother of Jesus brought the infant Messiah into the holy place. Proving by long experience that "as thy days, so shall thy strength be," she had served God with fastings and prayers night and day and had reached in her ministry the advanced age of fourscore and four years (Lk. 2:36-38).

Feeding on the true Bread of God that came down from heaven, she was able to "yield royal dainties," for she "spake of Him" to her fellow Jewish friends, those who "feared the Lord and spake often one to another" and who waited for the coming Saviour. Night and day she was to be found in the temple, praying for that redemption which the prophets had foretold, till the day the "salvation of Jehovah," the little Lord Jesus, was brought into the temple. Doubtless she gazed on Him as He lay in the arms of the aged Simeon: and from that moment she commenced to serve Him who was greater than the temple, and hers was the joy of proclaiming abroad the advent of the Redeemer.

To all truly happy in the enjoyment of the divine blessings found in Christ Jesus there is given the great privilege of yielding royal dainties, of witnessing concerning Him who has completed redemption's work and now lives, exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high. May we esteem it our greatest joy to "speak of Him."

U

Judah & Benjamin



Judah's father took up the symbol of the lion, applying it to his son personally and tribally. Judah, he said, was like a lion's whelp which had gone up from the prey.

Judah was Leah's fourth son and, at his birth, she declared, "Now will I praise the LORD, therefore she called his name Judah," which means "praise" (Gen. 29:35). On this occasion the neglected woman apparently lost sight of her complaint and lifted her heart to God.

The early conduct of Judah was not entirely praiseworthy. There was, for example, the occasion when he cheated his daughter-in-law, Tamar, of the husband he had promised her, and was consequently tricked into an incestuous relationship with her (Gen. 38:26).

He was the instigator of the scheme to sell his brother into slavery in preference to murdering him (Gen. 37:26-28), which might possibly be counted in his favor, although one is hardly better than the other. It was he who persuaded his father to allow Benjamin to accompany his brothers to Egypt at Joseph's request and offered himself as surety for his safety (Gen. 43:8-14) and he took the lead in acknowledging the faults of himself and his brothers to Joseph and offered himself to him as a substitute for Benjamin (Gen. 44:14-34).

I Chronicles 5:2 states that "Judah prevailed above his brothers and of him came the chief ruler." His now was the royal tribe. His standard in the wilderness journey bore a lion emblazoned on it. Numerically Judah was the largest tribe (Num. 2:9), and they were the first to set forth, marching before the ark in the wilderness. When Joshua died they were directed to be the leaders (Jud. 1:2). Significantly our Lord was to be described as "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5).

Jacob's blessing of his son accurately forecast the future of the tribe right up to the days of the Messiah. He declared that Judah's brothers should praise him, whose name was praise, and that his father's sons should bow down before him. Israel's united homage would be payable only to the one who was supreme ruler. In fact, David came from this tribe as did his dynasty. Of course, our Lord came of Judah and thus His title to the throne

was established.

Not only so, but he would be victorious over his enemies, his hand on the neck of his foes. Clearly this has not been completely fulfilled until David's greater Son will ride in triumph to victory.

The young lion, says Jacob, full of strength, had seized its prey and feasted on it, then it drags the remainder of the carcass up the mountain to its lair. Majestically, the full-grown lion, like Judah, bent his limbs to seek repose in his den. Like a fierce lioness, angered by a disturbance, Judah was dangerous to arouse. In thus selecting Judah as the ruler, Jacob must have been divinely guided.

He then foretold that the scepter would not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh came. The "scepter" belonged to the head of the family. It was passed down from father to son and became regarded as the symbol of authority (Amos 1:5). The symbolism still applies to the present, and is to be seen in the scepter of the monarch, or the baton of the field marshal.

The responsibility for rule and the teaching of the law resides with Judah until Shiloh comes. There has been some controversy regarding this clause. Some have argued that the reference was to the town of Shiloh, but this was in Ephraim and there is no historical indication that the people of Judah ever visited it, or that the inhabitants of Shiloh ever visited Judah. The word means "peaceful" or possibly "peacemaker" (Isa. 9:6). It was assumed by most Jewish writers to relate to the Messiah. Rabbi Solomon Yizchaki interpreted Shiloh as "King Messiah, whose is the kingdom." The Syriac version runs, "until he come, whose it is" (Ezek. 21:27; Gal. 3:19).

There can be little doubt that Jacob was referring to a person whom he described as Shiloh. And he disclosed that the peoples would render their homage to him. This prediction went far beyond Israel and implied

that the world would recognize the universal supremacy of this great ruler.

There can, of course, be no question as to the identity of the One so described. At the annunciation to Mary, she was told by Gabriel that the Lord God would give to her Babe "the throne of His father David" and that He would "reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Lk. 1:32-33). This was the One of whom the patriarch spoke. There is coming a day when a descendant of David, a member of the tribe of Judah, will once more occupy that throne.

When that One comes, Jacob declared picturesquely that He would bind His foal to the vine (*gephen*) and his ass' colt to the choice vine (*sorek*). The vine is not a tree to which an animal would normally be tethered, but in those days it is implied it will be so strong that it will be used for that purpose. The figure was especially appropriate to Judah, whose territory was noted for its vineyards. The choice vine, or vine of Sorek, related to one which produced purple, stoneless grapes which were very luscious and greatly valued. Even these would be so plentiful and the growth so great that they would be strong enough for animals to be tied to them.

Hyperbolically, Jacob declared that the One who was to come would wash His garments in wine and His clothes in the blood of grapes. Patently, this was not intended literally, but indicative of the abundance of the fruit in that coming day. It would be so plentiful that, symbolically, it would be used as freely as water for the most ordinary purposes.

Again, in typically Eastern language, he said that the eyes of the coming One would be red with wine and His teeth white with milk, the clear evidence of complete enjoyment and of the possession of the full vigor and health of manhood—again a picture of our perfect Lord.

It is interesting that, in addition to those who ruled the nation, the prophets Isaiah (probably) and Daniel were of the tribe of Judah, as were the faithful Caleb who had spied out the land of Canaan (Josh. 14: 7-14) and the gifted Bezaleel who was employed in the work of the tabernacle (Ex. 31:2-5).

In a future day, the One who is to come of Judah's line will be acknowledged universally as King, but the Christian already bows at His feet and confesses Him to be his Lord. This is not, of course, merely an academic recognition, but the practical submission to the One who is entitled to our all (Mk. 8:34-38).



BENJAMIN

Jacob and his family were journeying from Bethel to Ephrath or Bethlehem, when his beloved wife, Rachel, gave birth to her second son. She was greatly distressed in labor and died after giving birth to the child. To commemorate the suffering she had experienced in travail, she called the child Benoni, which means "the son of my sorrow." But Jacob, obviously not wishing to have a constant reminder of his wife's suffering and death, changed the name to Benjamin, which means "the son of my right hand," clearly hoping that his son would become a strength and comfort to him (Gen. 35:16-18). This was his twelfth son and the only one born in the Promised Land.

After the disappearance of Joseph, Jacob's affection apparently centered on his youngest son. It was only natural also that Joseph should have pressed his other half-brothers to bring Benjamin, his only full brother, with them if they returned to Egypt for more corn (Gen. 42:34). It is equally natural that Jacob proved extremely reluctant to allow Benjamin to accompany his brothers to Egypt (v. 38).

When the old father came to the blessing for his youngest son, he described with remarkable insight the character that Benjamin would develop. "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil" (Gen. 49:27). Benjamin indeed became the most warlike of all the tribes of Israel, and Jacob, with prophetic discernment, patently foresaw what would happen. He compared his son, who had been such a comfort to him in his declining years, to a ravening wolf, fierce and relentless, with no regard for any but the prey on which he had set his intentions. Like a wolf he would pursue and mercilessly drag down his prey, devouring it in the morning and dragging off the remains of the carcass to his lair to share with his progeny in the evening—dividing the spoil at night. Wild and turbulent, the tribe consistently demonstrated their boldness in conflict and their utter ruthlessness in pursuit of their purpose.

Deborah made mention of them after the defeat of Sisera (Jud. 5:14), in which they had evidently played their full part. Later they defied the whole of the tribes of Israel with an army one fifteenth the size of that of the remainder of the nation and slew 40,000 men, although subsequently themselves suf-

fering the loss of 25,000 (Jud. 20:14-35). Their ability was aptly described on that occasion—they had 700 lefthanded men who “could sling stones at a hairsbreadth and not miss.” These were warriors to be feared (1 Chron. 8:40; 2 Chron. 14:8).

King Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin but, in David’s hour of need, 3,000 of Saul’s kindred joined David at Hebron (1 Chron. 12:29). Earlier, when some had come to join him, David, doubtful of their object, met them with the query as to their intentions, and received the glowing reply, “Yours are we, David, and on your side, son of Jesse, Peace, peace be to you and peace to your helpers, for your God is with you” (1 Chron. 12:18). Many since that day have taken up the same cry to declare their unreserved allegiance to their Master and Lord.

Two of David’s chief men, Abiezer and Joash, were of this tribe, and they and some of their fellows were ambidextrous (1 Chron. 12:1-3), a valuable asset in warfare. It is interesting that Saul of Tarsus was of this tribe (Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5), as were also Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai (Est. 2:5).

One of the darkest periods in the history of the Benjaminites was that described in the closing chapters of the Book of Judges. A stranger, on his way home with his concubine, lodged the night in Gibeah, but hospitality was abused, for a crowd of men seized his concubine and raped her all night and left her dead on the doorstep. The tribes of Israel demanded that the Benjaminites should deliver up the criminals to be punished for their dastardly crime, but the tribe refused to do so or even apparently to disclose their identity. Their intention was clearly to cover up the incident in the hope that it would be forgotten. But the hosts of Israel had gathered to deal with the wrong and the Benjaminites went out to fight them. The ultimate outcome was that the males of Benjamin were slain, their cattle destroyed and their cities set on fire (Jud. 20:48). The whole tribe suffered for their attempt to protect a few of their number.

It is a fallacy to think that sin can be covered up and forgotten. The Saviour said, “There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known” (Mt. 10:26). Our God is holy and cannot tolerate sin. How many Christians are conscious of evil in their thoughts and lives; yet, instead of confessing the sin and seeking cleansing from Christ, they refuse to consider their condition and attempt

to cover it even from their own view. The Benjaminites paid a bitter price for doing so.

Jacob portrayed the rapacity and merciless ruthlessness which were later to become apparent in the character of his son’s descendants, but Moses gave an entirely different picture of the tribe. “Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long and he shall dwell between his shoulders” (Deut. 33:12).

Patently there must have been a change of character or of relationship to God. Moses portrayed Benjamin as the object of God’s delight and, therefore, under His special protection. He would dwell in safety in the presence of Jehovah and his security would be permanent. He who had tried to cover up crime and the criminal, would now be covered by Jehovah. He would be sheltered from trouble, storm and tempest, covered all the day long by the Eternal.

So intimate would be his relationship with God that his dwelling-place would be in the strength of the Almighty—between the shoulders of Jehovah. Although Moses used hyperbolic language, the lawgiver’s words were clear. For this tribe there was to be complete safety and security because they were beloved of God.

Cannot the Christian rejoice in the same fact? Because of his relationship with Christ, he is completely secure. The storms of life may assail him, but no one can disturb his security. He is sheltered between the shoulders of his Master.

It is perhaps significant that Bethel, where God appeared to Jacob (Gen. 28:19) was in Benjamin’s territory, although this was also a center of the calf worship in Jeroboam’s day (1 Ki. 12:32).

In the millennial age, the tribe of Benjamin will receive an allocation of the restored land equally with the other tribes (Ezek. 48:23), so that the tribe will be completely restored to divine favor. Even earlier God’s care for Benjamin will have been evidenced, for the tribe will be among those sealed for protection in the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:8).

The names given to this son have often been applied by expositors to our Lord Jesus. They certainly can be applied to Him. His mother, Mary, saw only as far as the cross and was pierced through with sorrow. But the Father saw beyond to the glory and has given Him the place of honor at His right hand (Heb. 1) until His enemies are conquered, every one!

U

Zebulun, Issachar, & Dan



זֶבֻּלֻן

When Leah gave birth to her sixth son, she felt that God had given her a great gift. All these sons would bind her husband's affection to her and he would continue to dwell with her, so she called the name of her son Zebulun—habitation (Gen. 30:20).

Jacob's prediction concerning Zebulun takes us back to this expression at his birth, for though a different word is used in the original for dwelling, the meaning is the same: "Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the seas, and he shall give shelter to ships."

It is difficult to determine Zebulun's exact boundaries, but Jacob's prediction certainly implies that his territory should reach to the seas. Josephus confirms this: "The tribe of Zebulun's lot included the land which lay as far as Gennesaret, and that which belonged to Carmel and the sea" (Ant. 5.1.22). How often must Zebulun have given shelter to the storm-tossed ships of the Galilee, perhaps on which were the apostles and our Lord.

Zebulun—a habitation, was the dwelling place of the prophet Jonah, who lived at Gath-hepher. He, too, in rebellion found his way to the sea—and then into it! In grace the Lord restored him and gave him another chance. But above all, it was the dwelling place of our Lord. It was to His home at Nazareth, in Zebulun, that the Lord Jesus took the two disciples who came to Him and asked, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?"

True to fact, Isaiah prophesied that in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali—the Galilee of the Gentiles—should arise the divine luminary and shed luster over that benighted district. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. 9:1-2; Mt. 4:14-16).

It was in Galilee that He appointed His disciples to meet Him after His resurrection. Many of the beautiful parables and illustrations were drawn from Nature round about Him in Galilee, as the seed falling on the ground, the drag net and fishes, etc. It was always His way to take the common things around and to impart new meaning to them, teaching spiritual lessons from them.

A striking fact about this prophecy is that the land of Zebulun and Naphtali is called

Galilee of the Gentiles, a name more applicable to it in the days of Christ than at

the time of the prediction. In the days of our Lord, a great many of the inhabitants of Galilee were Gentiles, Greek mercenaries, and Roman colonists. So to the prophet was given a vision of the actual conditions of the place as they were at the time Christ came.

In the blessing of Moses (Deut. 33:18-19), Zebulun is linked with Issachar. "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness, for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hidden in the sand."

Zebulun and Issachar were both bidden to rejoice, one being on the seacoast, and having the greater opportunities, was to rejoice in his going out, the other being placed on the land, was also to rejoice in abiding in his tents. Zebulun was evidently the more aggressive, while Issachar was more satisfied to continue his agricultural pursuit where he was placed. The Lord knew for what each of them was suited, and appointed them different positions according to their fitness. Both were to rejoice because they were in the will of God.

Our service for God may lie in different spheres, and among different people, but, fitted and equipped by God, let us joyfully exclaim, "Here am I, send me." Remember at the same time that the place of great privilege is the place of greater responsibility.

Does Moses, "the man of God," envisage here the apostles of these tribes going forth joyously from Galilee with the glad tidings of salvation, calling the Gentiles to worship God, as it were, on the mountain? "Nations shall they invite to the mountain; there shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness." To what mountain does Moses refer here? It can only be Mount Moriah, where the temple

stood at the southern flank and Calvary at its northern end, outside the city wall. Moses gives no name to the mountain, and this is what he does right through Deuteronomy, where he refers to the temple without saying where it was to be situated, only as the place (*hammakom*) that the Lord will choose.

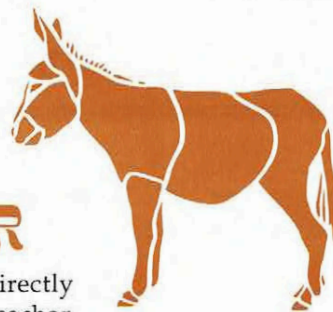
In 2 Chronicles 3:1, the inspired writer brings together in one verse a number of Scriptures that reveal God's purpose regarding the mountain. "Then Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, where Jehovah appeared unto David, his father, which he made ready in the place that David had appointed in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." This first step takes us back to Genesis 22, where we read that Abraham was sent up all the way from Beersheba, in the extreme south of the land to Mount Moriah to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. It is called one of the mountains (v. 2), Abraham calls it Jehovah jireh; that is, "as it is said unto this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (or provided, v. 14). Four times over it is also spoken of as "the place."

David was divinely led to purchase that parcel of ground from Ornan the Jebusite, in order to erect an altar and offer up burnt offerings to God. This did not happen by chance, indeed we are informed that it was the angel of Jehovah who bade Gad the seer to tell David to do so. And God graciously indicated His approval by sending fire from heaven to consume the burnt and peace offerings, and the plague was stayed (1 Chron. 21:18-21). This, then, was the place on which Solomon built the temple.

No wonder the people of Zebulun were bidden to rejoice as their representatives went forth on their apostolic errand. We are assured that the time is coming when all nations shall flow to that mountain. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3).

Until the shadows flee away, let us come to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense and worship our Lord.

ISSACHAR



No stress is laid directly on the meaning of Issachar in Jacob's prophecy, as in the case of most other tribes, but it expresses a great truth. *Sachar* means "to hire for payment," hence "reward." In its Hebrew spelling we find the name *Yeshsachas* in Jeremiah 31:16, where it is translated, "There is a reward."

This was recognized by the apostle as a divine principle, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). "Behold," cries the prophet, "The LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him and His work before Him" (Isa. 62:11). Salvation not as an abstract idea merely, but a person with a reward to bestow and a work to accomplish.

In harmony with this verse the Lord Jesus assured His disciples: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of the Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Mt. 16:27). Also in His resurrection power and glory He sealed the visions of the Apocalypse in Patmos, with these words, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). Our Lord is the Salvation, who also gives the reward.

This, of course, does not contradict the doctrine of grace. So far as our salvation is concerned, we rest entirely on the finished work of Christ. Nothing that we can do will save us (Eph. 2:8). But forgiveness of sins is not all that God has for His children, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." Truly in His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Ps. 16:11). Salvation from sin is the portal, but only the portal through which we enter into a more blessed and glorious life.

Happy is the man who will one day be privileged to hear the blessed words falling from the Master's lips: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Mt. 25:21).

Moses links Zebulun and Issachar together, but is in complete harmony with Jacob about them. Jacob depicts Issachar as couching between the sheepfolds, enjoying a comfortable rest and a pleasant land;

Moses speaks of him as rejoicing in his tents. Genesis makes Zebulun a maritime people, having to do with ships and a harbor, and Issachar with agriculture, as a successful worker in the ground; Deuteronomy also connects them both with the sea and sand.

Issachar is compared to a strong-boned ass. In our western lands, the ass is a despised animal, but not so in the East where it is looked on as a useful, patient, and hardy animal. There is, therefore, nothing derogatory to Issachar in this comparison. It rather describes his endurance and capacity for work.

Josephus says that Issachar's portion of land extended in length from Mount Carmel to the Jordan, and in breadth to Mount Tabor. This comprises most of the plain of Esdraelon, a very fertile piece of land. The rabbis compare Bethshan to the gate of Paradise.

The expression, "a servant," or better, "a worker unto tribute," is specially applied to Issachar because his portion of the land was very fertile and produced much to supply the king with his required provision which in the case of Solomon was very large.

Solomon was able to give Hiram, king of Tyre, 20,000 measures of wheat (1 Ki. 5:11). The Hebrew word *mas* here translated "tribute," does not necessarily mean a gift to a foreign power, it is also used for a contribution to one's own ruler (see 1 Ki. 4:7). The fertile districts of Taanach and Megiddo, which also provided for King Solomon's needs (1 Ki. 4:12), though ceded to Manasseh, were really in the country of Issachar (Josh. 17:11).

On the journey through the wilderness, Issachar marched foremost with Judah and Zebulun, making the strongest triplet. On leaving Egypt, Issachar was 54,400 strong, and while some of the tribes decreased in numbers during the wilderness journey, Issachar increased by 9,900 men, and numbered at the second census 64,300 (Num. 26:25).

On David's accession to the throne, Issachar supplied 87,000 warriors for his army (1 Chron. 7:5). In those days they must have had a good deal of influence among the other tribes, for in 1 Chronicles 12:32, we are told that they were "men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." Good would it have been for the spiritual and national welfare of the Jews in the days of Christ, if they had had an understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do, but, alas! our Lord had to rebuke them because they knew how to discern the face of the heavens, but could not discern

the signs of the times (Mt. 16:3). On another occasion, the Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, declared, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Lk. 19:42).

One of the judges who defended Israel was a man of Issachar, named Tola, the son of Puah; he ruled 23 years; later on Baasha, a man of this tribe, was the instrument of carrying out the sentence of punishment against the house of Jeroboam, pronounced by Ahijah the Shilonite, and became king in his place.

Baasha reigned 24 years, but, alas! he walked in the footsteps of Jeroboam, whose household he was the instrument of destroying. He did not learn the lesson which Jeroboam's end should have taught him. He continued the worship of the calves, so that to him was meted out a similar punishment. His son, Elah, was killed by his servant, Zimri, after a short reign of two years, and his entire household was slain, according to the prophecy of Jehu, the son of Hanani (1 Ki. 16:1-13).

Issachar's portion, being an extensive plain where large armies could easily manoeuvre, formed the chief battleground of Israel. There Barak with only 10,000 men discomfited Sisera's hosts with their 900 iron chariots, and thus called forth Deborah's historic song of praise (Jud. 5). There Gideon delivered Israel from the Midianites and Amalakites (Jud. 7:12-23). There, too, on the slopes of Gilboa, the Israelites met with the terrible catastrophe when Saul and his sons were defeated by the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:1-6). There, also King Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necho, causing a great national lament (2 Chron. 35:23-25).

This important battleground, and all the wars carried on there, foreshadowed Armageddon, the decisive and final battle of this age, when our Lord, on His return will destroy the anti-Christian army who will gather there (Rev. 16:16). Armageddon is simply the Greek pronunciation of the Hebrew Har-Megiddon—the hill of Megiddo, the ancient town on the plain of Jezreel close to Mount Carmel which Solomon fortified.

It was on that side of Carmel, overlooking the land of Issachar, that Elijah called together Ahab and Israel, with their 850 false prophets, and by his indomitable courage and faithful testimony of the Lord, was made the instrument of bringing Israel back to God, as in answer to his prayer fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice on the altar, the

wood and the stones, and licked up the water in the trench, so that when the people saw it they fell on their faces, and cried, "Jehovah, He is the Elohim." This incident will have its counterpart when, at the coming of our Lord, through the witness of Elijah, Israel will be reconciled to Him, and will be brought back into covenant relationship with Jehovah and the heart of the fathers, together with that of the children, shall turn to Him (Ps. 118:27-28; Mal. 4:5-6).

Another important incident in Issachar is that connected with the prophet Elisha, and the great woman of Shunem who showed kindness to the prophet by setting apart a room for his use. As a reward for this a son was given to her. When the boy, several years later, fell ill and died, his mother at once ran for help to the prophet, who was made God's instrument to restore the child to life again.

This reminds us of another touching incident of a similar nature that took place in the days of our Lord near the same spot. In the city of Nain, a Jewish funeral procession wends its way out of the city. An only son has died. His poor, brokenhearted mother follows weeping.

Then the Lord Jesus comes, and being moved with compassion, speaks words of comfort to her. He touches the bier and addresses the corpse, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And he that was dead sits up and begins to speak. The people marvel, and glorify God, saying, "A great prophet is risen up among us, God hath visited His people" (Lk. 7:11-16).

A glance at the map will show that Nain was quite near to the old township of Shunem, where Elisha, whose name means "God is Saviour," prefiguring the Lord Jesus, brought the lad from Issachar from death to life again, but the act of Christ at the gate of Nain is, in itself, a pledge and a prophecy that "the hour is coming...when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live (Jn. 5:25).

Issachar and Zebulun, Leah's fifth and sixth sons, are coupled together in the blessing of Moses. They travelled together in the wilderness journey; were mentioned together with approval in Deborah's song; were neighbors in the land as divided by Joshua. Ezekiel also places Issachar next to Zebulun in the fresh division of the land for the Millennium, and in the inscription of their names on the gates of the new city (Ezek. 48:25-26, 33).

DAN



Jacob puts similar play on the name of Dan as did Rachel at his birth. She felt that God had judged her favorably, answered her prayer and, through her maid, Bilhah, had given her a son whom she received as her own and called his name Dan, "Judge." This is not, of course, in harmony with the higher standard of Christ in the New Testament, but God in His grace overruled it.

Jacob makes Dan's name a prophecy of the future of the tribe. "[The judge] shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel." As Dan was the first son borne to him of the bondwoman, the patriarch by this declaration concerning him gives him a place with equal rights among the sons borne by Rachel and Leah; while prophetically he appoints him a position in restored Israel. Dan fell early into idolatry, and for some time was little heard of; yet, at the end he is predicted to play a part among the other tribes.

Dan apparently had only one son, named Hushim, when the family left Canaan (Gen. 46:23), but the tribe increased rapidly, so that at the Exodus the males of Dan over 20 years numbered 62,700, next in strength to Judah, and during the wilderness trip they further increased to 64,400. Their position while camping was to the north of the tabernacle, and they formed the chief tribe of the three bringing up the rear, with Asher and Naphtali.

Jacob likens Dan to a horned serpent in the path that bites the horse's heels so that its rider falls backwards. The Hebrew, *Shephiphon*, is generally understood to be the cerastes, a vicious serpent with two little horns on its head, that hides in the sand or in some crevice of the path and suddenly attacks the passerby. Moses likens Dan to a young lion leaping from Bashan. In both cases the likeness is to an animal suddenly springing on its prey, like Samson in his attacks on the Philistines.

Samson, a Danite, judged Israel twenty years. His parents were godly people (see Jud. 13:8), to whom the Angel of Jehovah appeared and foretold the birth of the child. As to who this angel was, we get a clue from Judges 13:18 where we learn that His Name is Wonderful (*pele*), the same as in Isaiah 9:6, where it is distinctly a title of Christ. As was His Name, so were His acts. In verse 19 we are told that He did wondrously. While He would not partake of any

food Manoah offered Him, He approved of a burnt offering, and as the flame of the sacrifice rose heavenward, the Angel of Jehovah ascended with it, while Manoah and his wife looked on, wondering. What a picture this is of the Lord Jesus identifying Himself with the offering that typified His acceptance with the Father.

It was at Ajalon in the territory of Dan that God graciously interposed for His people when, in answer to Joshua's prayer, the day was prolonged to enable the Israelites to obtain a decisive victory over the combined forces of the southern confederacy.

Dan's territory lay between that of Judah on the south, Ephraim and Benjamin on the east and north, with part of their western boundary at Joppa by the sea. But this piece of land was quite small. The tribe was also hard pressed by the Amorites, and afterwards by the Philistines, for they failed to cast out their enemies as God intended them to do, and finding the land insufficient, a number of them went to the far north, conquered the inhabitants of Laish, as it was called, and settled there, calling the place Dan. The ancient city of Dan is now identified with Tel el Kady, one of the sources of the Jordan.

When Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, began to reign over the ten tribes, he made that city one of the centers of calf worship; that being the northern extremity of his kingdom, as Bethel was the southern (1 Ki. 12:28-30). Jeroboam was not likely to meet with any resistance to his scheme from the Danites, as they themselves were similarly inclined.

Judges 18 gives an account of the 600 Danites, who, on their establishing themselves at Laish, set up image worship, having Jonathan, the son of Gershom, for their priest.

The exclamation with which Jacob ends his prophecy concerning Dan is significant. "For Thy salvation have I waited, O Jehovah." This expresses both Dan's helplessness and God's deliverance. Was the patriarch viewing Dan's lapse into sin and its consequences that made him cast himself thus on God's mercy? The Targummim, or the Chaldaic paraphrases, which date back to the days of Christ, very strikingly put it, "Our Father, Jacob, said, Not for the salvation of Gideon, the son of Joash, does my soul look out, for that is only temporary, and not for the salvation of Samson, for that is only transient, but for the salvation promised in Thy Word for Thy people, the sons of Israel; for that salvation does my

soul look out" (Jerusalem Targum *in loc*). Another edition has it, "But for the salvation of Messiah the Son of David, who will save Israel and deliver them from exile; for that Salvation does my soul wait." The Lord Jesus is the Salvation hoped for, His name in Hebrew, Joshua, or in full, Jehoshua, means "Jehovah is salvation."

In full agreement with this expression of hope, we are assured of Dan's final restoration in the Scriptures, for while their name is left out in Revelation 7 from among the tribes that are sealed for protection from earthly suffering, Ezekiel gives them a permanent position among the other tribes in the restored land, placing them at the most northerly portion of it (Ezek. 48:1). Dan's name is also inscribed on one of the twelve gates of the Holy City, by the side of Joseph and Benjamin (Ezek. 48:32).

What marvellous grace is here displayed before us by our God! In spite of their rebellion, apostasy and idolatry, God's love will reach even to them, and His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and His promises through Moses and the prophets, can never fail for any of the tribes of Israel. There is efficacy in the precious blood of Christ to cleanse every penitent who sees His salvation. And when God pours upon that people the spirit of grace and supplication, and they look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, the fountain is opened to them for sin and uncleanness, Jacob's expectation will be fulfilled and "all Israel shall be saved."

Bezaleel's companion in constructing the tabernacle was Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan. Hiram, the chief workman in building the temple, was also the son of a Danite woman, who was married to a man of Tyre. Half Jew, half Gentile, working with "Jewish stones" and "Gentile timbers," Hiram foreshadowed the building of that spiritual temple composed of living stones out of all nationalities, of whom the prophet speaks. "They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord" (Zech. 6:15).

"Now in Christ Jesus," writes Paul, "ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ...Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:13, 19-21).

U

Are the Ten Tribes Lost?

The most superficial reader of the Old Testament knows the origin and cause of the unfortunate schism which took place in the history of the elect nation after the death of Solomon. But this evil was to last only for a limited time.

A separate kingdom from that which the Lord established in Jerusalem, comprising ten of the twelve tribes, was set up under Jeroboam in BC 975 and its whole history of 250 years is one long, dark tale, unrelieved by the occasional gracious visitations of national revival which light up the annals of Judah. After many warnings the northern kingdom was overthrown in BC 721, when Samaria was destroyed, and the bulk of the people carried captive by the Assyrians. But please notice:

1. The kingdom of Judah after the schism consisted not only of Judah and Benjamin, but also of the Levites who remained faithful to the House of David and the theocratic center. Even those in the northern cities forsook all in order to come to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 11:14).

2. Apart from Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, there were in the southern kingdom after the schism many out of the other ten tribes whose hearts clung to Jehovah. We read that "after them" (following the example of the Levites) "out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 11:16).

As well, numbers of the more spiritual of the Ten Tribes must have joined Judah, especially during the revivals in the south. For instance, we read of Asa, that "he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, with the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon for they fell to him out of all Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him" (2 Chron. 15:9-15).

3. When the final overthrow of the northern kingdom took place in BC 721, we are not to understand that the land was cleared of all the people. There were, no doubt, many of the people left in the land; even as was the case after the overthrow of the southern kingdom by the Babylonians later (2 Ki. 25:12). About a century after the fall of Samaria, we find in the reign of Josiah some of Manasseh and Ephraim, "and a remnant of all Israel," in the land, who contributed to the collection

made for the repair of the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem was finally taken in BC 588 by Nebuchadnezzar. Meanwhile the Babylonian empire succeeded the Assyrian. The exact location of the exiles of the southern kingdom we are not told, beyond the statements that those carried off by Nebuchadnezzar were taken "to Babylon" (2 Ki. 24 & 25; Dan. 1).

Now Babylon stands for the whole land in which the Assyrian Empire and the colonies of exiles from the northern kingdom of Israel were included. Thus, for instance, we find Ezekiel, one of the exiles carried off by Nebuchadnezzar, by the river Chebar in the district of Gozan—one of the very parts where the exiles of the Ten Tribes were settled by the Assyrians more than a century before.

With the captivity the rivalry between Judah and Israel ended, and all the tribes who looked for a national future were conscious not only of a common destiny, but that that destiny was bound up with the promises to the House of David, with Jerusalem as center.

The most striking prophecy in relation to this subject is Ezekiel 37: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land...so shall they be My people, and I will be their God."

These prophecies set forth not one single event, but a process which commencing with the prophet's own time, extends into the distant future, and ends in the final goal of the blessed condition of Israel under Messiah's reign in the millennial period.

Daniel also, towards the end of the seventy years' captivity, includes not only the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem in his intercessory prayer, but "all Israel that are near, or far off, from all the countries whither Thou hast driven them."

Now let us go a step farther. Just seventy years after the first captives were carried away to Babylon in BC 606, Cyrus, king of Per-

sia, issued a proclamation to rebuild "a house at Jerusalem." This proclamation, in reference to all the people "of the Lord God of heaven," was promulgated "throughout all his kingdom," the same as that over which Nebuchadnezzar and his successors reigned before him. Indeed, Cyrus and Darius I are called indifferently by the sacred historians by the title of "King of Persia" (Ezra 4:5), "King of Babylon" (Ezra 5:13), and "King of Assyria" (Ezra 6:22).

The first response to this proclamation was a caravan of more than 42,000. They are no longer counted after their tribe, but after the cities to which they originally belonged, which, for the most part, are not easy to identify; hence it is difficult to say how many belonged to "Judah," and how many to "Israel." But that there were a good many who belonged to the northern kingdom is incidentally brought out by the mention of 223 men of Ai and Bethel. Bethel was the very center of the rival idolatrous worship instituted by Jeroboam, and belonged to Ephraim.

In BC 458, Ezra, responding to the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus, organized another caravan of those willing to return; and as a result, "Ezra went up from Babylon...and there went up of the children of Israel...unto Jerusalem" (Ezra 7:7). This consisted of about 1,800 families from all parts of "Babylon," or Assyria, now under the Medo-Persians.

There is not the least doubt that many of the settlements of the Diaspora in the time of our Lord were made up of those who had never returned to the land of their fathers since the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, and who were of all the *twelve tribes scattered abroad* (Jas. 1:1).

In the last words of the last of the post-exilic prophets we have the expression "all Israel" addressed to the people in the land; and then the long period of silence sets in, lasting about four centuries, during parts of which Jewish national history is lost somewhat in obscurity. When the threads of that history are taken up again in the New Testament, what do we find? Is there one hint to an Israel apart from "that nation" of the "Jews," to whom, and of whom, the Lord and His apostles speak? There is, indeed, mention of "the dispersed among the Gentiles" (Jn. 7:35), but wherever they were, they are all interchangeably called "Jews," or "Israelites," who regarded Jerusalem, with which they were in constant communication, as the center.

But let me give you a few definite passages from

the New Testament in justification of my statement that the Lord Jesus and the apostles regarded the "Jews" as representatives of "all Israel."

In Matthew 10 we have the record of the first commission given to the apostles. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather *to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" This journey of the twelve did not extend beyond the limits of Palestine but the "Jews" dwelling in it are regarded as the house of Israel.

In this charge of the Lord to the apostles, we see also, by the way, in what sense Israel is regarded as "lost." The ten tribes, like the other two, were, in the time of Christ, even as they still are, "lost"; not because they have forgotten their *national* or tribal identity, but because they "all like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way."

On the day of Pentecost, Peter addressed the great multitude as "Ye men of Israel," and wound up his powerful speech with the words: "*Let all the house of Israel, therefore, know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom ye crucified*" (Acts 2:14, 36; see also Acts 3:12).

From Acts 13 onward we find Paul among the "Jews" in the Dispersion; and how does he address them? "*Men of Israel...the God of this people Israel chose our fathers*" (Acts 13:16-17); and when he was at last brought to Rome "and gathered the chief of the Jews" in that city, he assured them that he had neither done anything "against the people, or the customs of our fathers," but "because of the *hope of Israel* am I bound by this chain," namely, "the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers...unto which our *twelve tribes*, earnestly serving God night and day hope to attain" (Acts 28:17-20; 26:6-7).

As it is in the Gospels and in the Acts, so also in the Epistles. It would be easy to multiply passages, but I have given you a summary of the true history of the tribes, which I trust may prove helpful to you in the study of God's Word—and the conclusion at which you and every unbiased person must arrive on a careful examination of the facts is, that the whole supposition of "lost tribes" is a fancy which originated in ignorance; and that "the Jews" are the whole and only national Israel, representing not two, but all twelve tribes who were "scattered abroad."

This article was excerpted from David Baron's helpful book, The History of the Ten "Lost" Tribes.



The Son of Jacob (Gen. 49 & Deut. 23)

Two men pronounced prophetic blessings on the twelve sons of Israel. From Jacob's death to Moses' demise 275 years may have elapsed. Simeon is omitted in the blessing of Moses, and Joseph received special mention in both passages. Otherwise Jacob assigned to Judah five verses of blessing, and Moses allotted four verses to Levi. Let us ponder these two prophecies in some detail.

Judah typifies Christ as king; Levi foreshadows the Lord as priest. No one in Israel could function as both king and priest. The Pharaohs professed that they were sons of Ra, the chief god. Augustus Caesar became the chief priest of Rome. One king of Judah, Uzziah, aspiring to burn incense in the Holy Place, was punished instantly by God. Only Melchizedek, a contemporary of Abraham (therefore a Gentile), was acknowledged by God as both king and priest.

JUDAH: Judah connotes praise, and it was prophesied that his brothers would honor him (Gen. 49:8). So our Lord Jesus will be glorified by His brethren (Ps. 118:26; Mt. 23:39). Judah would vanquish all his opponents; Christ would bruise the serpent's head (Rev. 20:10). Israel shall bow before Him (Zech. 12:10), and all nations also (Ps. 22:27). Judah is like a lion, the strongest of animals (Prov. 30:30); he can conserve his conquest and relax satisfied. So the Lion of Judah can rest after His victory and take care of what He has gained (Isa. 53:11-12).

The scepter (Gen. 49:10), an emblem of royal authority, will remain in Judah until Shiloh comes. Apart from a town by that name, this word is used only here, where it means a person. Many teachers connect it with Ezekiel 21:27, where the words, "whose right it is," are almost identical with "Shiloh." Heathen empires ruled over Israel: Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, in Bible times. God will overturn all Gentile rulers in favor of Christ.

Messiah's scepter, we know, is righteous (Ps. 45:6). The same word is rendered as rod; with it He will protect His sheep (Ps. 23:4), and scatter His broken enemies (Ps. 2:9). God will then gather His own people to the Lord Jesus (Mt. 13:30; 24:31; Jn. 11:52). He will find them more than willing to obey their King.

The prophecy next becomes highly poetical (Gen. 49:11-12), promising prosperity to Judah. Thinking of the greater Son of Jacob, we can search the Scripture for other uses of

this word. The judges of Israel rode on donkeys (Jud. 10:4; 12:14) and Zechariah foretold that the righteous King would come in humility, riding on a donkey and its colt.

Isaiah asked the Coming One why His garments were red as if He had been treading out the grapes. The righteous Speaker replied that He had in fact trodden the winepress of God's fury alone (Isa. 63:2-3). (Notice in Rev. 19:13-14 that Faithful and True has blood on His clothing, but the loyal armies who follow Him are clothed in linen white and clean. He treads the winepress alone.)

His eyes are darker than wine, and His teeth whiter than milk (Gen. 49:12). Both eyes and teeth were components of beauty portrayed in the Song of Solomon. Of Jesus it was said that there was no beauty that we should desire Him. But we *shall* see the King in His great beauty, surpassing all (Ps. 45:2; Isa. 33:17; Zech. 9:17). What a prospect! And soon!

LEVI: Jacob linked Levi and Simeon together and seems to say no good about them. These two had killed the men of Shechem to avenge their sister, Dinah. Jacob's prophecy sounds totally negative, but it was a blessing (Gen. 49:28). He did say one good thing—that they would be separated. In the Promised Land, Simeon received a portion within the boundaries of Judah (Josh. 19:1). But Levi received no land except the 48 cities and their suburbs (Josh. 13:114; 21:41).

Before the people reached Canaan, the men of Levi exonerated themselves. Moses and Aaron were Levites, but Aaron led Israel into idolatry while Moses was meeting with God (Ex. 32:2-4). When he came down from the mount, Moses called for those who were on the Lord's side and all the Levites responded. They were God's agents in destroying 3,000 of the sinners that day and Moses promised them a blessing (Ex. 32:29).

So we come to Deuteronomy 33:29. The Urim and Thummim, (Lights and Perfections), are found seven times in the Old Testament. The first letters of these two words are

The Son of Jacob

the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, just as Alpha and Omega are of the Greek alphabet. God gave guidance in making decisions by means of these (Num. 27:21; Ezra 2:63). So Christ is the Light of this world and the Perfecter of His saints (Eph. 5:27), providing the basis for all right decisions.

Moses prayed that these Lights and Perfections would be with God's holy one. Levi was the object of God's grace (Deut. 33:8); but greater grace was to come. This word "holy one" is used of Messiah in His death and resurrection (Ps. 16:10). Levi at Masah and Meribah proved faithful; how much more our blessed Saviour, also tested in the wilderness.

The men of Levi were loyal to God even against their tribal relations. So Christ did not seek human approval; His own received Him not. Yet His excellence shines from every page of the Gospels.

The priests were to teach God's laws to the people. The Lord Jesus did this in the form of parables, sermons, and instruction to His disciples. The Levites also brought the holy incense before Jehovah, which the high priest burned on the gold altar (Ex. 30:7-8; Lk. 1:9). The Levitical priests also offered burnt sacrifices on the bronze altar (Lev. 1:8-9). Christ was Himself a sacrifice of a sweet odor to God (Eph. 5:2). We and our gifts should be the same (Phil. 4:18). The Lord Jesus replaced and outshone all the offerings of the Old Testament (Heb. 10:8-9); He now leads the praise of His brethren (Heb. 2:12).

Moses asked the Lord to bless what Levi owned (Deut. 33:11), and accept what he did. He also prayed that Levi would have victory over all his enemies. God has certainly blessed all who belong to Christ. He accepted His Son's work by raising Him from death. The final victory belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is revealed as Priest in the book of Hebrews. Like Aaron, He is merciful and faithful, and has made propitiation for sins (2:17). A real yet perfect Man, He can empathize with us in our weaknesses (4:15). He, too, was called of God for this ministry (5:5).

There were essential differences between Aaron's priesthood and Christ's, however. Christ entered the heavenlies, a Priest forever of a different order (Heb. 4:14; 6:20; 7:21). Much more than Aaron or any of his descendants, Christ was holy, harmless, separate from sinners

(7:26). Those priests brought animal sacrifices (8:3; 10:11), some of which were burned outside the camp (13:11). But the Saviour offered Himself (7:27), and this sacrifice needed to be offered only once (9:28).

Melchizedek was a more complete type of our Saviour, both King and Priest. His sacrifice completed, Christ sat down on His Father's throne (Heb. 8:1). He is the true Son of Judah and the Son of Levi, the Royal Priest, ruling forever, interceding always.

It is marvelous to know also that He calls us royal priests (1 Pet. 2:9). Priests today, we can worship, bring sacrifices, and intercede for others; and we will worship forever. In the future, we are named kings with Him (Rev. 1:6; 20:6), and even now are called to show forth His praises in this dark world. This is our portion; may it be our practice.

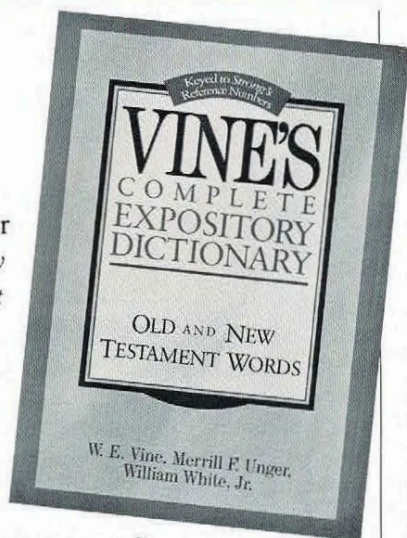


FALL SPECIALS FROM GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS

VINE'S COMPLETE EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WORDS

Need we say more? For decades, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* has been the choice of Bible students and teachers serious about mining the hidden riches of Scripture's original languages. This new volume now includes key words from the Old Testament as well, making it an even greater asset to the library of any Bible student. Cloth. 755 pages.

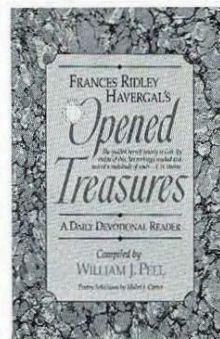
LIMITED TIME OFFER: Regular price \$24.95 – **NOW \$21.95!**
 CDN regular price \$34.95 – **NOW \$29.95!**



OPENED TREASURES

by Frances R. Havergal

Opened Treasures is a classic collection of meditations and poems by the famous hymn-writer, Frances Ridley Havergal. Her works are saturated with the Word of God. Arranged in a daily devotional format with one meditation for each day, this book is perfect to begin your quiet time or family devotions. "Her ministry in poetry and prose is continually being used by the Spirit of God to teach, comfort, exhort, and convict." *From the Foreword.* Paper. 256 pages.



Regular price \$8.95 – **NOW \$4.95!**
 CDN regular price \$11.95 – **NOW \$5.95!**

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF W. E. Vine IN FIVE VOLUMES

The name W. E. Vine is familiar to serious Bible students and scholars everywhere. His best-selling *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* has become a true classic in the field of Bible reference works. But this was not his only work—Vine was also the author of timeless theological studies. Now, all of Vine's known writings on biblical studies and theology have been gathered together in one five-volume edition, *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*. Some of the topics covered include: Writings on The Scriptures and How to Use Them, The Person and Work of Christ, The Whole Gospel, The Church, Missions and Christian Service, The Second Coming and the Last Days, Spiritism Unmasked, and numerous commentaries. Also included is his self-study Greek Grammar, a valuable tool for the student who wants to study the New Testament books in their original language. This new set represents the fruit of his lifetime labors and is a must for any serious Bible student. Hard cover binding. Each volume 592 pages, set of 5 total 2960 pages. ISBN 0-7852-1159-4 Boxed set of 5.

Regular price \$124.95 – **INTRODUCTORY PRICE \$79.95!** \$111.95 (CDN)
 Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Regular price \$24.95 each – **PROMOTION \$19.95!** \$27.95 (CDN)

Ordering Information: ORDER BY PHONE OR BY MAIL

US Customers: Add 6% for shipping charges (min. \$2.50). Add 6% if you live in Michigan for sales tax.
Canadian Customers: Add 7% GST and 10% for shipping charges (min. \$4.50).



GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS, P. O. Box 2041, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

1-800-952-2382

1-616-456-9166

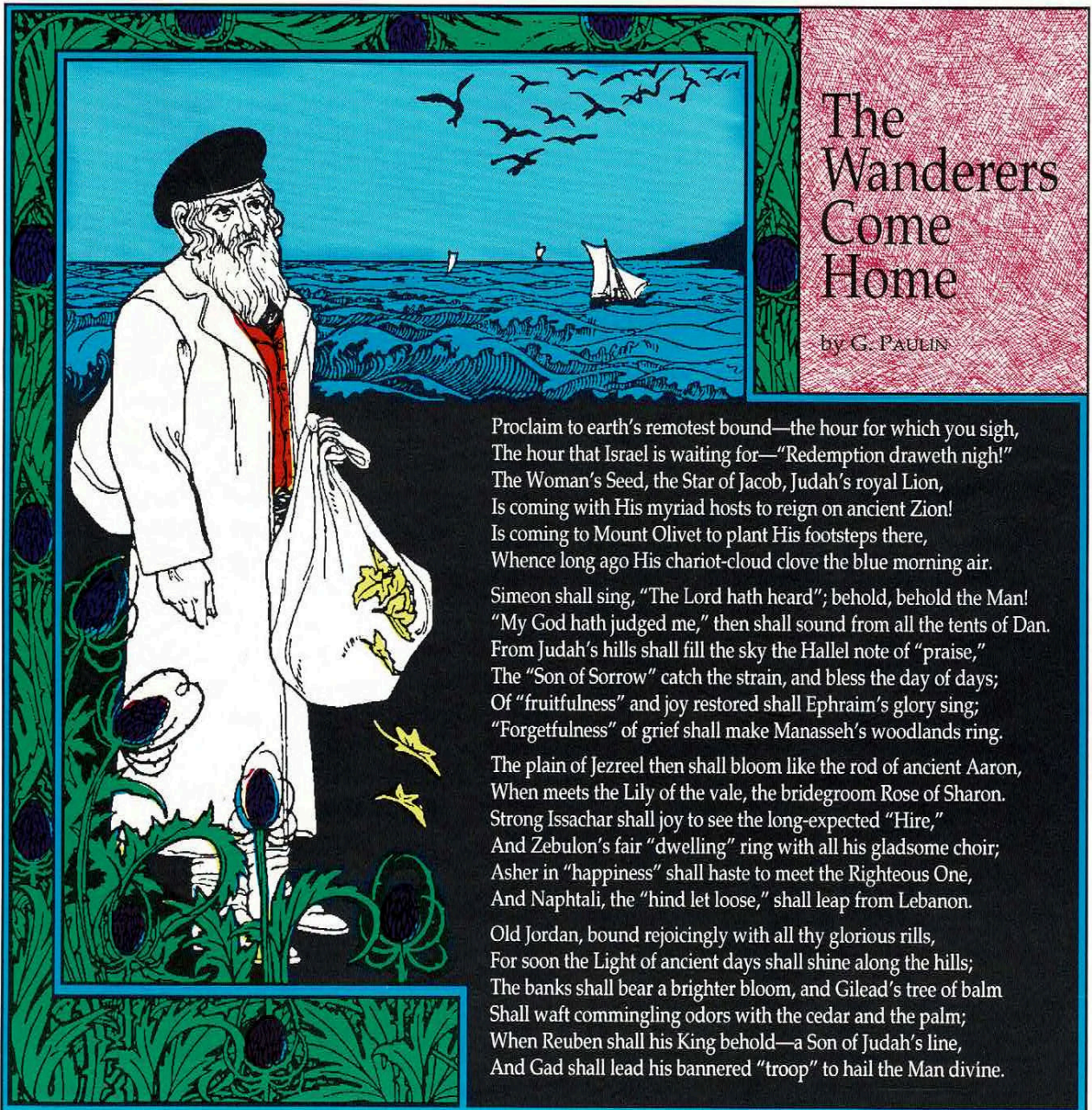
Fax 1-616-456-5522

UPLOOK

(USPS 620-640)

P. O. Box 2041

Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041



The Wanderers Come Home

by G. PAULIN

Proclaim to earth's remotest bound—the hour for which you sigh,
The hour that Israel is waiting for—"Redemption draweth nigh!"
The Woman's Seed, the Star of Jacob, Judah's royal Lion,
Is coming with His myriad hosts to reign on ancient Zion!
Is coming to Mount Olivet to plant His footsteps there,
Whence long ago His chariot-cloud clove the blue morning air.

Simeon shall sing, "The Lord hath heard"; behold, behold the Man!
"My God hath judged me," then shall sound from all the tents of Dan.
From Judah's hills shall fill the sky the Hallel note of "praise,"
The "Son of Sorrow" catch the strain, and bless the day of days;
Of "fruitfulness" and joy restored shall Ephraim's glory sing;
"Forgetfulness" of grief shall make Manasseh's woodlands ring.

The plain of Jezreel then shall bloom like the rod of ancient Aaron,
When meets the Lily of the vale, the bridegroom Rose of Sharon.
Strong Issachar shall joy to see the long-expected "Hire,"
And Zebulon's fair "dwelling" ring with all his gladsome choir;
Asher in "happiness" shall haste to meet the Righteous One,
And Naphtali, the "hind let loose," shall leap from Lebanon.

Old Jordan, bound rejoicingly with all thy glorious rills,
For soon the Light of ancient days shall shine along the hills;
The banks shall bear a brighter bloom, and Gilead's tree of balm
Shall waft commingling odors with the cedar and the palm;
When Reuben shall his King behold—a Son of Judah's line,
And Gad shall lead his bannered "troop" to hail the Man divine.