

### Why Are The Tribes Different In Revelation?

| Mother        | Genesis 49:1-28 | Description                  | In Promised Land (Joshua 13-21)   | Sealed In Revelation 7:4-8 | Quick Notes |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Leah</b>   | Reuben          | First Born / Unruly.         | Southeast corner.                 | 12,000*                    | Continuous. |
|               | Simeon          | Will be scattered.           | In the middle of Judah.           | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
|               | Levi            | Will be scattered.           | None given. Priesthood.           | 12,000                     |             |
|               | Judah           | Will rule.                   | Southwest corner.                 | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
|               | Issachar        | Will work hard.              | Below Zebulun and Naphtali.       | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
|               | Zebulun         | Will be sailors.             | Between/below Asher and Naphtali. | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
| <b>Rachel</b> | Joseph          | Prince among brothers.       | None given. See below.            | 12,000                     |             |
|               | Benjamin        | Overwhelms his enemies.      | Above Judah on the right.         | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
| <b>Bilhah</b> | Dan             | Will govern / judge.         | Above Judah on the left.          | None                       |             |
|               | Naphtali        | Gentle like a doe.           | Top row, middle.                  | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
| <b>Zilpah</b> | Gad             | Will attack and be attacked. | Right above Reuben.               | 12,000                     | Continuous. |
|               | Asher           | Will be rich.                | Northwest corner.                 | 12,000                     | Continuous. |

These are the twelve true sons of Jacob (Israel).

\*Notice that Judah now takes prominence over the first-born Reuben in the end times (order is switched).

|                |          |                           |                                   |             |             |
|----------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Asenath</b> | Manasseh | Adopted by Jacob as sons. | Northeast corner AND west center. | 12,000      | Continuous. |
|                | Ephraim  |                           | North of Dan and Benjamin.        | None Listed |             |

These are the twelve “tribes” that split the land. Manasseh and Ephraim are given a portion because they are adopted by Jacob in Genesis 48. Because of this, Joseph is NOT given a portion of the land. The Levites, as God's priests, are also not given land. (They are given cities, however.) By subtracting Joseph and Levi and adding Manasseh and Ephraim, Israel is split into twelve tribes when they take the Promised Land.

From this, we see that there are shifts in the lives of four tribes. Levi is not given an inheritance in the land – God is their inheritance – but has people from their tribe sealed in the end. Joseph has his inheritance split between his sons, but only one (Manasseh) is mentioned as being sealed in the end times. Dan is given land and leadership as part of his blessing, but no one from his tribe is sealed at the end. Finally, Ephraim is given land, but none of his descendants are listed in the Book of Revelation.

Now, the Bible does NOT tell us anywhere why these changes take place. We can infer things, but we need to be careful and recognize that these are, at best, simply guesses about what took place and why. With that said, here are some of the notes that I found in other sources.

The first problem is going from Ephraim to Joseph:

**Theory One – Ephraim is “Joseph”.**

If we read the name Ephraim as “Joseph”, then both of the sons of Joseph are included; they are just named differently. This one is logical, but not many people accept it as factual since there is no tradition of referring to Ephraim as Joseph.

**Theory Two – The allotment for Ephraim is taken away and given back to Joseph because of their continued rebellion.**

Hosea 7:8-13 tells us that Ephraim rebels against God, turns to Israel's enemies, intermarries with them and never seeks to return to their true faith. In the end, they are dispersed. (See also Jeremiah 31:19 and Psalm 78.) This seems to be the most logical one and certainly fits with what the Bible says about the behavior of Ephraim.

The second disconnect is going from Dan to Levi:

**Theory One – Levi receives their inheritance.**

After their years of working in God's temple, 12,000 of the tribe are sealed to honor their service. This seems very plausible. But it leaves unanswered the question of, “What happened to Dan?”

**Theory Two – Dan is punished for wrongdoing.**

We are told in Judges 18 that Dan does a lot of things wrong in setting up their tribe. They act in violence, steal from a man, and then set up idols to worship. Not a good start... Then we find out that King Jeroboam made golden calves and put them in both Bethel and Dan and encouraged the people to worship them as their “gods”. (Finally, people read the fact that Jacob refers to him as a serpent, however not all snakes in the Bible were bad, and so we can't base our opinion on them because of it.)

**Theory Three – Dan is appointed as a judge and therefore cannot be a witness.**

The word for “govern” is also “judge”. It's possible that if Dan was called to Judge his people, we would not be able to have representatives who are “witnesses” since this would violate Jewish Law. This one is a stretch...

The third option for both situations is:

**Theory One – Scribal errors changed the list of tribes.**

This says that the early copyists made mistakes when they duplicated this letter. The problem with this theory is that it's two very distinctive changes that take place; does that mean the Book of Revelation has other mistakes, as well?

**Theory Two – Scribal errors translated the words incorrectly.**

If the Apostle John wrote the Greek word “Dan”, it's conceivable that a scribe could have accidentally translated it as a shortening of the word “Manasseh”. If that's the case, then the tribes DO line up since Joseph is both Manasseh and Ephraim and Dan was supposed to be included in the list.

**Theory Three – These are not literally referring to the Jews and, as such, don't have to follow the order of tribes.**

This directly contradicts Revelation 7:4, so I'm not sure how viable this is. It also doesn't explain WHY the names are switched or omitted; it simply says that it doesn't really matter because it's not to be taken literally.

**In Conclusion**

In my opinion – and it's only my opinion – I think it's most likely that since Dan and Ephraim chose to walk away from God, He let them walk away. If God allows us to not choose Him today; and, if His character never changes; then I think it's logical that He would not force tribes to stay with Him if they didn't want to. Both Dan and Ephraim were noted for their idolatry more than any other tribe, so it would make sense. Because of that, the “portion” that belonged to them are given to Joseph and the Levites because of their faith.

It should also be noted that in the book of Ezekiel, both Dan and Ephraim are restored, given land, and have a gate named after them. This means that their rebellion is temporary and that they will turn back to God one day and He will honor the promises that He made. (See Ezekiel 48.)