

The Twelve Tribes Today

or

A Guide For God's Children Who Are Trying To Find Their Places In His Work.

Introduction : "What's in a Name?"

It is generally known that it has been the practice of some cultures, both ancient and modern, to assign children a name that in some way reflects the actual or hoped-for character of the child. Expectant parents often buy booklets containing lists of names, with their ancient meanings, hoping to find a name for their child that describes the character traits or accomplishments they hope their child to have. When God made man in Gen. 7:2, He formed him from "dust", possibly modeling clay, and named him "Adam", literally in Hebrew, "dirt". Not very imaginative we might think, but precisely accurate and applicable to all mankind.

Changed Names

Often, some years into a child's life, a nickname might be assigned if the given name seems to have been inaccurate, or if some major event seems to indicate a dominant trait of character. In this writer's case, my given name is Celtic for "Noble", but after wrecking my first car my friends thought the term "Crash" was more appropriate for several years. As the years have gone by it seems that both names are accurate, more or less.

In the Bible we find several instances where individual's names have been modified or permanently changed. We read that when they entered into a covenant relationship with God in Gen.17:5 & 15, He modified the names of Abram, "Exalted Father", and Sarai, "Dominative", or "Domineering", to Abraham, "Father of a Multitude" or "Father of Nations", and Sarah, "Princess" (still a dominant position). In Gen. 32:28 God completely renamed Jacob, meaning "Supplanter" or "Usurper", after he realized his own dependency on God, dubbing him "Israel", meaning "A Prince With God", having princely power with God and man. We read also that Moses altered the name "Oshea", meaning "to save" to "Jehoshua" or Joshua, meaning "Jehovah is salvation". Num. 13:2,16; 14:6, etc.

Jesus Himself also used the custom of nicknaming in reference to some of His disciples. James and his brother John He called "Boanerges"--"Sons of Thunder", in Mark 3:17. Simon, He permanently surnamed "Peter"__(Greek, "Petros") or literally, "A 'small' stone", while referring to Himself as "this Stone--(Greek, "Petra") or literally, "A gigantic boulder", and a certain Joses was nicknamed by the disciples "Barnabas", the "Son of Consolation" when he made a large monetary gift for the support of the early church (Acts 4:36-7).

In the pronunciation of the Alexandrian Jews, the word Jeshua, or Joshua (Neh. 8:17) was altered into Jesus. Hence 'Jesus' is read for Joshua in the Greek of the New Testament and retained in the King James Version in Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8 margin. Joshua, by his work and the meaning of his name, was a type of Jesus. Literal Israel was led into the land of promise,

not by Moses, whose name means "drawn from the water" (Ex. 2:10 margin), but by Joshua. Joshua encouraged Israel to possess the land saying, "Jehovah is with us" (Num. 14:9). So, spiritual Israel is led into the eternal Canaan by Jesus, "Jehovah Saviour".

Jesus

Jesus is also referred to by a number of symbolic names used throughout Scripture. For a few examples, He is the "Seed of the Woman" (Gen. 3:15); "Shiloh" or "Whose it Belongs" (Gen. 49:10); the "Branch of David" (Isa. 4:2); "Messiah, the Prince" (Dan. 9:25); "Michael--'One Like God', your Prince" (Dan.10:21); ["Christ" and "Messiah" are Greek and Hebrew words for the term, "Anointed One" (Mt. 1:16 margin)], the creative "Word" of God (John 1:1); "Son of Man" (Mt. 8:20); and as the "Stone" (Mt. 21:44) and "Cornerstone" (1 Pet. 2:6); or "Rock" (1 Cor. 10:4).

Satan

In Rev. 12:7-9, besides Michael, the representative of God's authority, we find the names used to designate the great fallen foe, the opposer of God and man, Satan, the "Adversary" or "Enemy" (Zech.3:1 margin). Satan's heavenly name, "Lucifer" (Isaiah 14:12 margin), meant "Day Star" or "Light Bearer", or literally, "Lumens-Ferry". (Scientists use the term, "lumens" to describe the strength of a light source, and we all know what a "ferry"-boat is for.) The word "devil", means "Slanderer" or "Accuser" (Rev, 12:10-12), and the symbolic names "dragon" and "lion" (1 Pet. 5:8) suggest his ravenous desire to devour the saints of God. When designated as the "serpent" his cunning craftiness and deceptive powers are referred to.

God

All Hebrew names beginning or ending with "El" have meanings linking them with God. (Even the word, "God" in the Hebrew, "Eloim", is actually a plural word, and literally translates as "Gods" in the same way that several "strands" make one "rope".) For example, Elimelech "God is King"; Daniel "God is Judge"; Ezekiel "the Strength of God"; Immanuel "With Us is God"; and Elijah "God is Yahweh (or Jehovah)". Names beginning or ending with "iah" or "Jah" are also names of God: Isaiah, literally, "Jeshaiah" means "Jehovah has Saved", and Jeremiah "Jehovah Shall Arise" or "Jehovah casts forth".

Jerusalem

We are expecting someday to enter the New Jerusalem in heaven as our new and permanent home. The name, Jerusalem, is actually a plural word meaning "Foundations of Peace". The original name of the city was "Salem" (Gen. 14:18), similar to "Shalom", meaning "Peace". In Heb. 7:1-2 Paul makes a play upon the meanings of the names of Melchisedec and Salem: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem...first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace." Melchisedec is definitely stated in the Scriptures

to be a type of Jesus, having no beginning or end (also Ps. 110:4), and Jerusalem, the city of the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), is presented in the Revelation as the seat of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom, spiritual Israel--the Church, and also the capital of the eternal kingdom.

Throughout Scripture, Jerusalem, the city of peace, is presented as the center of the great controversy between the forces of good and evil--between the principles which are the foundation for everlasting peace and the principles which create strife, death, and destruction. The names written on the twelve gates of this city are "the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. 21:12), and like Melchisedec spiritual Israelites are said to be "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

The Twelve Tribes

God recorded details associated with the giving of the names of Jacob's sons, and pointed out why they were called by their respective names. Because these names are mentioned in the book of Revelation where the completion of the work of God on earth is brought to view--the sealing "of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev, 7:1-8)--these names and their meanings should be especially meaningful to the Remnant Church.

The order in which the names of the tribes of the children of Israel are given in Rev. 7 is also significant. They are not given in the order of their birth. Setting out the names in the order in which they are given in Rev. 7, we see that in this arrangement of the names, according to their meanings and not according to their order of birth, we have a sort of acrostic that reveals God's message of assurance to those who are to be finally and forever sealed among the tribes of Spiritual Israel.

(Read the meanings down as a connected sentence.)

Name Meaning

Judah....."Praise"

(All the gates of the New Jerusalem are primarily named "Praise", Isa. 60:18, Rev. 7:5)

Reuben....."Behold a son" (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17,etc.)

Gad....."A company" (Rev. 7:9; 19:1-6, etc.) of sons, redeemed and...

v.6 Aser....."Happy" (John 13:17; 16:33, etc.) after...

Napthali..."Wrestling" (Gen. 32:24-30, etc.) in prayer...

Manasses...."Forgetting" (Phil. 3:13; Isa. 65:17, etc.) self, and the past...

v.7 Simeon....."Hearing" (1 Sam. 3:10, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth") God's word, and...

Levi....."Joined" (John 15:1-7; Acts 2:47, etc.) to God and the Church as...

Issachar...."Hired Servant(s)" (Rom. 6:16-22, etc.) doing His will, and...

v.7 Zabulon....."Dwelling With" (Ps. 91:1; Isa. 33:14, etc.)

Joseph....."Added", or "Accumulating" (2 Pet. 1:2,5-7) sanctification, and fruitfulness in bringing more...

Benjamin...."Son(s) of the right hand" into fellowship to make up the number of the 144,000. No longer "sons of sorrow" without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12).

My Tribe

All Christians are in a sense "behavioral scientists" in that we are constantly seeking to present the truths of God and His Word in such a way as to have the greatest influence upon the minds of others so as to lead them into the path leading to eternal life. As we consider the characteristics of each of the twelve tribes, it is likely that we may find either our own selves or our children portrayed therein.

This can be valuable knowledge to us now in this preparation time, because as we become more and more able to clearly identify our strengths and weaknesses we will be more able to discern the devil approaching us through those weak points and guard them more carefully. We will also be able to emphasize our strong points most aggressively and efficiently for the glory of the Lord. There is very great personal satisfaction and joy in the knowledge that we are being useful to our Lord, the King, in a concrete way. As it turns out, the very names of the twelve tribes say something about the character of those people and of the God they serve. Scripture also often indicates that these character traits manifest themselves differently depending on one's converted or unconverted condition.

Personality and Temperament

Most of what is commonly known among laymen these days about personality and temperament comes from the writings of medieval Greek and Latin physiologists who believed that the conditions of the body and mind, described as sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric (or bilious), and melancholic, were produced by an excess of one of the four corresponding bodily humors; blood, phlegm, bile, and lymph. These body fluids were formerly considered responsible for one's health and disposition. Surely you have heard of someone being described as being in good or bad "humor", and we say that a witty or cheerful person is "humorous". An excess of blood

(Latin-'sangre') made sanguines red-faced and jolly (notwithstanding the possible effects of indulgence in alcohol).

An excess of thick phlegm certainly must have been the reason phlegmatics were so slow, and in the King James Version in Dan. 8:7 the he-goat "was moved with choler (anger) against" the ram. Evidently he had an excess of bile, or was "bilious" and that was what made him so angry. And of course, melancholics had an excess of clear lymph fluid, which caused them to shed so many tears all the time. Whether they were happy or sad, they were always crying.

As of late, some would-be Christian (even SDA) behavioral scientist-therapists have tacked some new names onto these old medieval theories. Instead of being characterized as sanguine, one might be described as a "spring" or "bright colors" person, or as an "otter" personality. Instead of phlegmatic, you might be a "summer", or "soft colors" person, or a "Golden Retriever" personality. Rather than choleric, you could be characterized as an "autumn", or "earth colors" person, or as a "lion" personality, and instead of a melancholy attitude, one is described as (of course) a "winter" person (naturally, its the only other season left), or "contrast colors" person, or as a precise, perfectionistic, engineering "beaver" personality.

Jesus' Temperament

It seems that the intent of these modern-day teachers is at least to inspire us to celebrate our own individuality instead of feeling sorry for our shortcomings, while avoiding conflict with those of other emotional make-ups. This is a worthy motive, but the more useful of these teachers will point out that Jesus manifested all of the four temperaments in an appropriate manner, at the appropriate times. This shows a higher conception of our purpose and responsibility to reflect the image of Jesus fully during our time on this earth, but these conceptions, as useful as they may be, still fall far short of the breadth of diversity that God has ordained should exist among humankind, "...we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Cor. 4:9).

Actually, it really takes more than only four temperaments, or personalities, among humans, to reveal the true and complete character of God to the on-looking universe.

To worldly observers, and those who are under their limiting influence, it appears that the four types of temperament, as they are traditionally understood, are sufficient to explain all the ins-and-outs of human nature and behavior, and an attempt to use a more complex line of reasoning to stratify and classify behavior might seem redundant, and involve a considerable amount of overlapping behavioral characteristics. However, God sees not as man sees, and upon investigation of the Eternal Word, man can be enabled to understand God's perspective on mankind and even begin to think His thoughts after Him.

It may be quite surprising to discover that the characters of the twelve tribes really don't overlap very much at all! It is the earnest hope of this writer that the simple analysis presented here will aid many of God's people to accurately identify the gifts, or "tools for ministry" that God has given them so that they will be able to feel confident and assured in the possession of precious and valuable talents which they may use to trade with for the Master's glory. Consider how these various characters, personalities, or temperaments might manifest themselves in your local church congregation.

1. Reuben: "See, a son". Should have been a manly and noble example of self-control and leadership. When unconverted, Reubenites are wishy-washy, lacking in firmness and resolution and easily influenced to act contrary to their own conscience. They often make promises that aren't carried out, and takes the path of least resistance. They are indecisive, lukewarm, and complacent. But on the positive side: a Reubenite is kindly, accommodating, and has many good intentions. They tend to soften whoever they come in contact with, like water usually does, which could be good or bad depending on circumstances.

These people need the external pressure of a serious crisis to lead them to examine themselves, and clearly understand their sinful self-complacency and weakness. If they turn to God in their distress, He will give them a new character; firm resolution and strength of decision, especially to be able to refuse temptations to evil that they used to fall for so easily. They are "watery" until a "fire" is turned on under them, which converts them into powerful "steam engines" for doing good. E.G. White uses more negative terms to describe this tribe than any other, but when (or if) the turnaround occurs, it is also the most dramatic of any other tribe. (Judges 5:16 describes such an incident.)

2. Simeon: "hearing". When unconverted, Simeonites have strong passions and are fearless, but also are sensual and self-indulgent. The greatest single identifying characteristic of this tribe seems to be their great physical energy, which could be bad or good, once again, depending on circumstances. Though the name means "hearing" they seem to have a hard time listening to anybody. Have you ever met someone like that? Whatever it is, they want to do it now, immediately-if-not-sooner! These "irresistible force" people, though unstoppable, however, can be rather easily "deflected" or "steered." But if not governed in some way, they can get into big trouble! Jacob's son was guilty of mass-murder at Shechem, and the tribe was guilty of lust and sensuality at Baal-Peor. Jacob's "blessing" of the tribe in Genesis 49 was certainly nothing to covet after, and Moses in Deuteronomy 33 omitted mention of them at all! The blessing was given to one of Joseph's sons instead. With all of this negative "karma" against them one wonders how any of them could ever be accepted in through the gates of the Holy City of God. Nothing positive is said about the tribe as such in all of Scripture.

This problem of the Simeonite's getting into the Kingdom was a real "stumper" until it was discovered that the Greek term for "hearing" is pronounced "Simon" or "Simeon" (Acts 15:14). Perhaps the connection between the impetuous, self-assertive Simon Peter and the tribe of

Simeon can be seen. He was quick with both his mouth and his sword before he was converted. But after his conversion experience, Peter was able to control his strong passions and be humble, and was called to strengthen his brethren and feed the lambs.

Proper feeding strengthens the young.

In the Apocrypha, Judith, a Simeonite, fearlessly delivered Israel. The aged Simeon in the temple fearlessly interrupted the "astonished" priest (The Desire of Ages, p.55) to prophesy concerning Christ, mentioning a sword, and humbly accepted God's will for his own death, as did Peter himself many years later.

3. Levi: "joining". When joined with Simeon, Levi manifested evil cruelty and a callous disregard for life while thinking it was his duty (Judges 19). But when the tribe saw their duty to join with Moses on God's side they did some good (Ex. 32), not being afraid to do callousing and unpleasant work if it was a duty for God. As teachers, the Levites were to "join" Israel to their God. Their duty was to assist the priests and act as missionary-teachers. Barnabas, a Levite (Acts 4:36), sold his earthly property to become a missionary. His sense of duty made him stand firm in a crisis situation (against the apostle Paul) about teaching young John Mark how to be a missionary. As Levite leaders, Moses was God's firm administrator faithful to his duty (Hebrews 3:5), and Aaron, after failing to understand one duty, later firmly restrained his grief at the loss of his two sons in order to help teach God's lesson to Israel. Miriam was also a teacher-leader in singing God's praises. Faithfulness to perceived duty seems to be a hallmark here. (How necessary for young people to be taught about faithfulness to duty for God now!)

4. Judah: "Praise." This son of Jacob, and his tribe in general valued honesty, fidelity, strict integrity, righteousness, and loyalty to God. In the home life he could be counted on and trusted in with confidence during times of perplexity. God dealt with unrighteousness in two of Judah's sons with severity, and when outwitted by his daughter-in-law, Tamar, he noted the superior quality of her righteousness (Genesis 38:26). Interestingly, this story of Judah's lapse is placed in the midst of the story of Joseph, just before he successfully resists Potiphar's wife... a strong rebuke to Judah. Judites known for their righteousness are Caleb, David and other faithful kings; Daniel and his three friends, and of course, Jesus "the lion of the tribe of Judah." The term, "Jew", came into use during the period of the captivity in Babylon as a shortened form of "Judah", meaning the southern kingdom of the divided Israel as a whole.

5. Naphtali: "wrestling". Jacob's blessing of this tribe compared them to a loosed female deer (Genesis 49:21). These people seem to be continually wrestling between self-preservation and self-sacrifice, reflecting the contention and competition between the two motives. These ones are naturally somewhat timid, nervous, sensitive, retiring, fearful and wary of danger (which is not all bad). But on the positive side, the Naphtalite's wary nature helps them to discern spirits readily (1 Cor. 12:10).

They are generous, able to give a "goodly word", to be a comforter, a counselor, and a loyal friend and helper. Their carefree, happy-go-lucky, sometimes even comical attitude lightens the burdens of those with whom they associate. However, they don't usually bear heavy responsibilities well themselves. No one would attempt to strap a donkey's burden on a deer!

However again, they are willing to do dirty work if duty (especially to God) requires it, and to be persevering, determined, and self-sacrificing. Moses, in Deuteronomy 33, observed that these seek for, and are content with, favor and approval from God (and man) rather than fame (Judges 4:9), or riches (Judges 5:19). They also love nature and nature's God, and love music and the praises of God.

Barak, the only prominent leader of this tribe, seemed to be a rather dependent sort himself, not being too proud to let a woman lead, recognizing and honoring Deborah's office as God's chosen spokeswoman (a position quite similar to that of Mrs. Ellen G. White today).

6. Gad: "a troop". The character of the tribe was throughout fierce and warlike. Fearless, steadfast, firm, unwavering, each one was as courageous as a "troop" collectively, all by himself! Distinguished Gadites were Barzillai, a friend of King David who was a warrior-king, and Jephthah, the leader of a marauding band, who, when called to God's service showed an intimate knowledge of the history of God's dealings with Israel and the surrounding nations, and he had great zeal for God's glory, and firmness about keeping his word. Elijah, probably the best known Gadite, was ready and unafraid at God's command to walk in on and confront the apostate wicked king Ahab, oppose the whole nation alone, and slay by his own hand eight hundred and fifty prophets and priests of Baal. He also rebuked King Ahaziah, (2 Kings 1) prophesying his death.

Chosen as God's unflinching spokesman to pronounce judgment upon kings, and to singlehandedly manage the worst national crisis up to that time, it is indeed profound to consider that Elijah's spirit and power will be manifested by the entire last generation of the faithful who are to carry God's last-day, judgment-hour message to the whole world!

7. Asher: "happy". Here is a tribe of people of a considerably more amiable disposition. Not very aggressive, but firmly founded in trust in God and strength from God. These are able to appear to easily step over, or pass smoothly through, rough difficulties. Possessing divine fortitude and inner strength, they are able to bear heavy trials without complaining. They are also able to encourage others in trials and manifest more than ordinary humility and reverence for God. Asherites bore mocking and insult from friends in order to reconsecrate themselves to God (2 Chronicles 30:10-11), and Anna, the prophetess, served God devotedly in the temple with fastings and prayers (Luke 2:36-38).

8. Issachar: "hire". These people are great burden bearers! Their meek and quiet spirits enjoy patient, self-sacrificing toil in the service of others. They are willing to work hard now to

enjoy a more complete rest later, especially if the rest provided is more for the benefit of others. These ones are very hardy and laborious, enjoying to do the "dirty work", and delighting to bear what others consider heavy responsibilities.

Issacharites are able to discern what kind of work needs to be done in order to accomplish a certain goal, and they are very good at planning and executing that work. They are persistent toward the goal, and will be determined to move steadily forward in the face of opposition or difficulties. They may not move things along quickly, but they are unstoppable and undeflectable, keeping the goal, and the rest for others that lies beyond it clearly in focus.

The "great woman of Shunem" (2 Kings 4:8) worked hard in order to provide rest to God's servants. Tola (Judges 10:1), gave Israel rest under his rule. Issacharites are in fact so willing to serve others that they can easily be made to serve the cause of evil! But when converted, they will begin to serve God immediately, even though some things still need to be worked out.

9. Zebulun: "Dwelling". Literally, "being with," or "united," but not quite in the same sense as Levi's "joined." These people seem to be blessed with above average intelligence and may be good at business, arts, or literature. They are the quiet thinker type; hospitable, cordial, maybe a little formal, but able to meet strangers easily and build friendships. They have a love of system, order, and uniformity while allowing for "artistically systematized" variety. They are loyal, dutiful, and pay careful attention to detail, and are generally retiring and keep a low profile, unless a crisis arises, then they are willing to risk all, even overkill preparations (1 Chronicles 12:33), in order to insure a complete victory beyond all possibility of defeat, and to restore harmony and unity. Similar to Naphtali, they prefer to be part of a group and have a determined "victory or death" attitude in an emergency (Judges 5:18).

10. Joseph: "Adding". He has the well-earned privilege of having the name of one of his sons added above a gate on the New Jerusalem in addition to his own. Similar to his brother Judah, Joseph valued strict integrity, honesty, and sincerity. Being raised as his father's "pet" though, he was in danger of becoming prideful and arrogant, but humility came as an acquired attribute as he became able to discern God's hand in his trials and adverse situations. Then he exhibited a noble self-discipline based on zeal for God's honor. Joseph harbored no resentment toward his brothers for the evil treatment he received from them, and other members of this tribe will also, by means of Godly faith and trust (more than by rigorous Levitical self-discipline), be able to keep cool when opposed or oppressed.

11. Benjamin: "Son of the right hand," was originally named Ben-o-ni by his mother, which means "Son of my sorrow", which aptly describes the unconverted Benjamite nature. The tribe was famous for being ambidextrous and left-handed, and had notable eye-hand coordination. (Judges 20:16). When unconverted, the tribe was compared to a ravaging wolf, a fierce predator that is most efficient at causing sorrow when it runs in a "pack." Right or wrong (usually), the Benjamites stuck together. Similar to Gad and Dan, they were self-willed,

arrogant, proud, rapacious, warlike, revengeful, sullen, petulant, quick-tempered, and deceptive. They were almost exterminated in a civil war that they themselves caused (Judges 20), and probably the most outstanding example of wolflike behavior was that of king Saul in his relentless pursuit and cruelty toward David.

All this looks pretty bad for Benjamites today, but when converted, the same forcefulness of character is used to benefit, help, aid, and particularly, to shield and protect others. The "pack attack" attitude is also replaced by an independent humility. Examples: Ehud (Judges 3) who delivered and judged Israel. Mordecai (in the book of Esther), became the king's "man of my right-hand", as he shielded and protected Esther, the king, and all of the Jewish nation from a universal death decree.

Benjamin's relationship to Jesus as a type of Christ's human experience is marked. Both were born in Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16-19), originally as "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3), and afterward to sit "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb.8:1). Thus both names given to Benjamin--the "son of sorrow", and the "son of the right hand"-- apply to Jesus.

The apostle Paul, undeniably God's "right-hand-man" during the first century of the Christian Church, turned from a fierce persecutor of the Church to an aggressive ambassador for Christ to the Gentile world, ready and willing to endure all manner of persecutions and privations that others may hear of the good news of God's shielding and protecting power against eternal death. Incidentally, he caught some of his converts with "craft" and "guile" (2 Cor. 12:16).

12. Manasseh: "Forgetting", in the sense of forgetting the troubles of the past. Usually meek, mild-mannered, flexible, humble, conciliatory, and unobtrusive, Manassites do not seem very intellectual, calculating, or far-sighted regarding cause/effect relationships. Perhaps this is the reason they do not generally seek leadership roles, however, they are quite zealous for God's cause and if the needs of the cause clearly require it they will readily come out of the shadows of their traditional supporting roles and aggressively prosecute the work. The most notable character in Scripture from this tribe was Gideon (Judges 6), who although seemed to need quite a bit of coaxing in order to get him going, when finally convinced that God was right there with him to hold him up, plunged boldly ahead to fulfill God's will.

The Lost Tribes

Both tribes were powerful and numerous, but even though they were living in the same environment as the other tribes, they failed to perfect a Christian character.

Ephraim: "fruitful". This tribe bore plenty of fruit, but unfortunately, it wasn't good. They had a great desire for fame, wealth, and pleasure, and were lacking in faith that God's cause would be victorious. They were sensitive, suspicious, envious, and jealous when others seemed to be

given preferential treatment, or had more blessings or possessions. They often felt slighted, ignored, unrecognized, and unhonored. They were haughty, arrogant, covetous, and idolatrous (same thing, Eph. 5:5). They did not really appreciate the things of God or the companionship of God's people, and they allowed themselves to become mixed with worldly people and interests, became diluted in their religious experience, and finally were characterized as "a cake not turned" (Hosea 7:8), or "half-baked", so to speak.

As a tribe, the name of Ephraim will not appear above one of the gates of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, but fortunately we are not saved in groups and there are recorded in the Scripture records some Ephraimites who were a blessing to others, namely Joshua, Samuel, and a certain unnamed benevolent Ephraimite in Judges 19:16-19.

Dan: "judging". This lost tribe was articulate, artistic, intellectual, and discerning, which fitted them for their calling as God's judges for the nation, but sadly, they were also attracted toward wealth, self-indulgence, and idolatry (Judges 18:31). They used their discerning powers for faultfinding rather than looking for the good in others. They were sly, backbiting, and cruel (Judges 17 & 18). Wise as a serpent, and just as deadly, they were characterized as a young lion leaping out from an unseen hiding place upon his victim. (Genesis 49:16-17; Deuteronomy 33:22).

The only noted (or notorious) Danite in the Scriptures is Samson. Chosen as God's judge and deliverer of his nation, his violent, uncontrolled passions and lusts only got him in a lot of trouble, and eventually cost him his life (Judges 13-16).

Conclusion

The name which God will give to each of the redeemed will convey to each person God's knowledge of his character, "...a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). Also, all the redeemed will bear names which will designate them as belonging exclusively to God. "Him that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem...and I will write upon him My new name." (Rev. 3:12).

These character names were "written in the book of life from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 17:8). Each one must permit God to fit him to obtain the character expressed in the meaning of the "new name." God does not predestinate persons, but He does predestinate Character. The privilege that each of us has is to co-operate with God in obtaining the character which He has predestinated to measure up to the meaning of the name written for us in the book of life from the beginning of the world. Amen!