

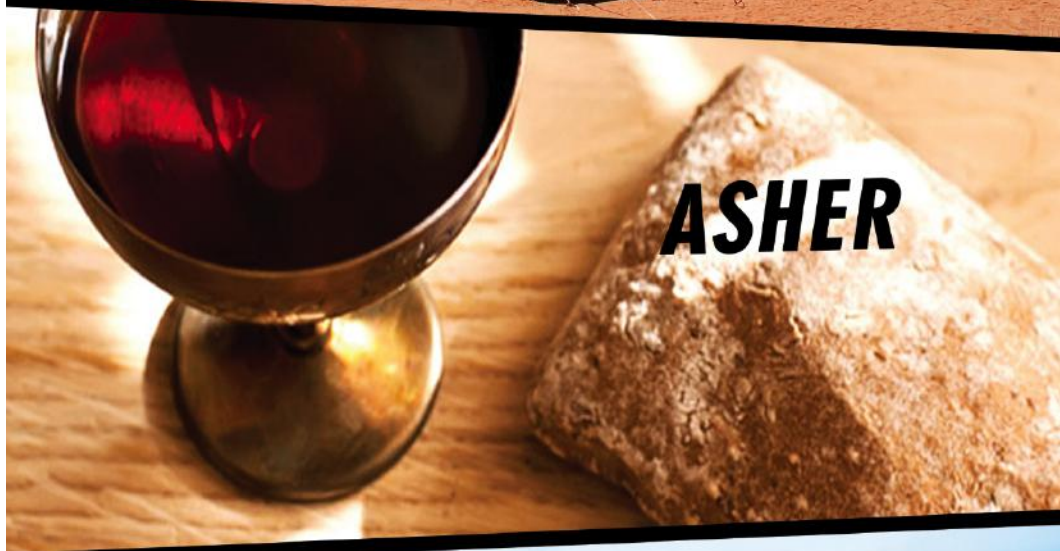


BETHEL AG CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE

THE TRIBE OF **GAD**



ASHER



NAPHTALI



TRIBES OF GAD, ASHER AND NAPHTALI

	Gad	Asher	Naphtali
Meaning of Name:	Troop / warrior	Happy	Struggle
Family:	7th son of Jacob, born to Leah's handmaiden, Zilpah	8th son of Jacob, born to Leah's handmaiden, Zilpah	6th son of Jacob, born to Rachel's handmaiden, Bilhah
Jacob's Blessings:	Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last (Gen.49:19)	Out of Asher his bread shall be fat and he shall yield royal dainties (Gen.49:20)	Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth beautiful words (Gen.49:21)
Moses' Blessings:	Gad is commended for carrying "out the Lord's righteous will, and his judgments concerning Israel" (Deut.33:21)	Let (Asher) be favoured by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in oil" (Deut.33:24)	Naphtali is "full of blessing" (Deut.33:23)
Notable men:	Warrior men	Prophetess Anna	Barak & other warrior men

JACOB			
Leah	Zilpah (Rachel's Handmaid)	Rachel	Bilhah (Leah's Handmaid)
Reuben (1) Simeon (2) *Levi (3) Judah (4) Issachar (9) Zebulun (10)	Gad (7) Asher (8)	**Joseph (11) Benjamin (12)	Dan (5) Naphtali (6)

*Levi became the priestly tribe and was not considered as one among the 12 tribes.

**Joseph's sons – Ephraim and Manasseh became two tribes instead of one tribe of Joseph.

A small math to understand the 12 tribes:

12 sons – 1 (Levi) – 1 (Joseph) + 1 (Ephraim) + 1 (Manasseh) = 12 tribes

Tribe of Gad

Leah gave birth to 4 sons, but after became unfruitful. She saw how Rachel was using her maid Bilhah as a surrogate and decided to follow suit. Leah sent her handmaiden, Zilpah, to Jacob to conceive on her behalf. Zilpah had 2 sons for Leah. She named them Gad which means “troop” and Asher which means “happy” (**Gen. 30:9-11**).

What was the Jacob’s prophecy over the Tribe of Gad and its meaning?

After speaking words that prophetically foresaw his son Dan causing people’s downfall with his serpent-like qualities, Jacob next addressed Gad, the first son born to Zilpah, Leah’s maidservant: *“Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels”*. **Gen. 49:19**

The words of Jacob were promising words indeed! Gad would put his attackers to flight. Basically, it says that Gad was going to be constantly oppressed and under attack, but in the end, Gad would overcome.

Are there any notable events with the tribe of Gad?

Gad, along with Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh (based on their personal request) was allotted a portion of the land on the east side of the Jordan River (**Joshua 13:24-28**). This portion of land was bordered by Ammonites and Moabites who always attacked Gad (Gilead - **Judges 5:17**). With the constant exposure to hostile enemies, Gad developed a reputation of being fierce warriors, who were constantly ready to defend their land (**Judges 10:8**).

The Gadites were a great help to their fellow Israelites, to fight their enemies and to take possession of their land. Also, during the times of great threats, people from other tribes came to them for refuge. During the time of King Saul, when Philistines attacked the Israelites, many of the Israelites came to the land of the Gadites and were safe there (**1 Samuel 13:5-7**). The Gadites stood out as a selfless people who did not hesitate to help their brothers.

In David’s days, as a fugitive from Saul, the Gadite warriors who joined David at Ziklag were described in the following way: *“And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the strong hold in the wilderness, men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were as swift as the roes upon the mountains”* (**1 Chron. 12:8**; also **1 Chron. 5:18-20**). Moses’ blessing on Gad describes his ferocity in Deuteronomy 33:20 that they are like lions.

The most famous Gadite mentioned in the Old Testament was Jair who *“judged Israel twenty and two years”* (**Judges 10:3-5**). Some have considered Jephthah, the “mighty man of valor,” to be of this tribe since he is called a “Gileadite” (**Judges 11:1**). In Jewish tradition, Elijah the prophet is also considered to be from this tribe.

Practical Application from the tribe of Gad:

1. The tribe of Gad was in a perpetual state of war as is a child of God.

A Believer is in a constant spiritual warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 John 2:15-17). Apostle Peter reminds us: *"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

In this world, we have to fight through trials, temptations, and sufferings but remember, God never commands His children to fight alone because He says *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matt. 28:20). Apostle Paul teaches all Believers to be always with the armor that God has provided lest we get caught off guard by one of Satan's fiery darts (Ephesians 6:10-17). Though the victory is already ours in this present world, we are called to enforce the victory of Christ.

2. The promise to Gad to be an overcomer is a promise for all Believers.

The seven churches in Revelation each received a promise to the overcomers (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21) – rewards are for the overcomers.

Revelation 12:11 says, *"And they have conquered him (Satan the accuser) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."*

Romans 8:37, *"in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"*.

Tribe of Asher

Asher was the eighth of Jacob's sons, the second born to Leah's handmaid Zilpah, and the full brother to Gad (Gen.35:26). At his birth Leah exclaimed, *"Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher (i.e., happy)"* (Gen.30:13). This foreshadowing of good fortune for Asher is repeated in Jacob's blessing.

What was the Jacob's prophecy over the Tribe of Asher and its meaning?

"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat and he shall yield royal dainties." (Gen. 49:20)

Jacob's blessing over Asher was that he and his tribe would enjoy the rich products of a fertile land, and from their ample produce they would supply those tasty morsels which graced the tables of kings. Later, Moses blessed the tribe, saying, *"Most blessed of the sons is Asher; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in oil. The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, and your strength will equal your days"* (Deuteronomy 33:24).

Washing one's feet in oil was a sign of prosperity, and Jacob's reference to Asher's food being "rich" indicated that Asher would possess fertile lands.

In Joshua 19:24-31, we learn that Asher received land along the Mediterranean coast, which is fertile to cultivate olive plants. The territory of Asher has always been known for its vast olive groves. The lesson of the prophecy is that Asher would be blessed with abundance which he would share with others.

Are there any notable events with the tribe of Asher?

No significant or notable events are mentioned in the Bible about the tribe of Asher, except for the richness of their food. Despite all the blessings, the tribe of Asher failed to drive out the Canaanites, and *“because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land” (Judges 1:31-32)*. In the time of war that was led by Deborah and Barak, *“Asher remained on the coast and stayed in its coves”* rather than join the fight against Jabin, a Canaanite king (**Judges 5:17**). This failure to aid their fellow tribes could indicate a lack of reliance on God, a lack of effort, a fear of the enemy, or reluctance to upset those with whom they did business.

Even though Asher was richly blessed, they did not behave admirably; when the time for action came, they failed to trust in God and honor His plans. Asher produced no judges, no leader, or military heroes. The only significant person in scripture from the tribe of Asher is an eighty-four years old Anna the Prophetess who was led by the Holy Spirit to bless baby Jesus in the temple. (**Luke 2:36-38**).

Practical Application from the tribe of Asher:

1. God loves to prosper His children, but we are only stewards of God’s riches.

According to Lord Jesus, wealth can be accumulated by ignoring opportunities to invest in God’s kingdom. Such wealth is real poverty in God’s kingdom (Read **Luke 12:16-21**).

2. The fruitfulness of Asher is associated with oil, which is often a scriptural symbol of the Holy Spirit. In a similar way, Believers today are to bear fruit – the fruit of the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Tribe of Naphtali

Naphtali is the sixth son of Jacob born to Rachel’s handmaid Bilhah and a full brother to Dan (**Gen. 30:7-8**). Very little is recorded of Naphtali himself, however his descendants and the tribe of Naphtali, are well-known in the Bible History.

What was Jacob’s prophecy over the Tribe of Naphtali and its meaning?

“Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth beautiful words.” (Genesis 49:21) Hind is a female deer, or doe, and Jacob compares him to a doe. Naphtali would not be as aggressive as a lion, like his brother Judah. He would not be as lazy as a donkey lying between the saddlebags, like his brother Issachar. Nor would be as crafty as a viper, like Dan. Rather, Naphtali would be swift like a doe who enjoys its freedom. In Jewish tradition, the son Naphtali was a swift runner and carrier of beautiful words.

Whatever the circumstances, all does not seem lost for Naphtali, the last of the handmaidens’ sons to receive his blessing from Jacob. Later, the prophet Isaiah asserted that a glorious future awaited those from the tribe of Naphtali, along with those from Zebulun. One day the Messiah Himself would arise in their land and spend much of His time ministering among them (**Isa. 9:1-2; Matt. 4:12-16**).

Are there any notable events with the tribe of Naphtali?

It is interesting to note that Barak was from the tribe of Naphtali (**Judges 4:6**), and the tribe is singled out in the song because of its special bravery. *“Zebulun and Naphtali were a people who jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.”* (**Judges 5:18**). While tribes like Reuben, Dan, and Asher refused to send their men for the battle, tribes like Naphtali were swift to rush their troops to battle. Likewise, when Gideon called for men - for battle, the men of Naphtali were quick to respond and pursue the enemy (**Judges 7:23**). Also, many Naphtalites joined David as trained warriors (**1 Chronicles 12:34**).

Moses credits the tribe as being **“satisfied with favour, and full of the blessings of the Lord”** (**Deut.33:23**). Also, there is another special fulfilment of the prophecy for the tribe of Naphtali. Lord Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry began in the land near Galilee, which is a part of tribal portions of Naphtali.

Lord Jesus left Nazareth his hometown and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali. **Matthew 4:15-16** says, *“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles – the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”* Galilee, the portion of Naphtali, was specially privileged and favored in the days of our Lord, who performed His miracles and proclaimed the message of salvation. Jewish tradition believes that majority of Jesus’ disciples came from the tribe of Naphtali.

Practical Application from the tribe of Naphtali:

1. We must be carriers of good news symbolic of “beautiful words”.

Proverbs 18:21 says, *“The tongue has the power of life and death.”* What are the words you speak? **Luke 6:45** says, *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”* When our inner being is filled with Christ, words of grace, life, and encouragement is released to build others.

Romans 10:15 commends those who preach the Gospel: *“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”*

2. Are our feet swift to tell someone about the Gospel? The church grew and spread in great numbers because the early disciples of Lord Jesus carried the *“beautiful words”* of the Gospel swiftly as hinds that were “let loose”. Are we swift enough with beautiful words of life, grace, and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, or do we postpone sharing the love of Jesus to others?

Conclusion

Lesson from Gad: Be an overcomer.

Lesson from Asher: Be a steward of God’s riches.

Lesson from Naphtali: Be a carrier of the Good News.