

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

GOD's Marvelous Revelations Concerning Sin and Death
and
The Divinely Provided Way of Salvation

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL

We have now come to the consideration of a very significant element in the Divine Revelation. In Chapter 12 we were impressed with the fact that when the High Priest of Israel went into the presence of GOD in the Holy of Holies, he bore upon his shoulders and upon his breast the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, engraved upon precious stones. These names appeared in the order of the birth of these twelve sons of Jacob. Comparatively few have ever realized that the meaning of these names present the Divine order and operation of GOD's plan of Salvation, as revealed subsequently in the Word of GOD.

Please read Revelation 7:4-8 and then read Revelation 21:12 and marvel at the wisdom and foreknowledge of GOD. Thousands of years have intervened since Aaron first bore these names into the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle; but here we find them recorded by John the Revelator, hundreds of years later. It is now nearly nineteen hundred years since John penned his prophecies by Divine inspiration, and we are only beginning to see the preparation for the beginning of the fulfillment of Revelation 7:4-8; while the fulfillment of Revelation 21:12 awaits the passing of at least another thousand years.

At this moment we watch developments in the Near East and in Palestine and in other Bible lands which, when fully developed, will bring swiftly to consummation events of supreme prophetic importance, which thousands of supposedly erudite theologues deem to have no possible religious or political significance. Yet it is a fact that the future of the whole world will be changed when these events, now impending, begin to take on their prophetic meaning.

TO YOUR BIBLES!

We cannot take time to read the scripture passages from which we present these interpretations. Hence we urge each reader to study each passage as cited. Please turn to Genesis 29:32-33 and follow along as we proceed. In these verses we have described the circumstances under which Jacob's first son was born, and the name which was given to him.

As these christenings occur, one after the other, as Jacob's sons are borne by four different women, to the number of twelve, we shall be astonished by the cumulative meaning and force of these scriptures.

Jacob's first son was Reuben. It means, "**Behold a son.**" Leah said, "**Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction.**" Next Simeon was born. He was named Simeon; as Leah said; "**Because the Lord hath HEARD that I was hated.**" Simeon means "**to HEAR.**" Leah's third son was named Levi "**Because I have born him three sons.**" Levi means "**joined,**" or to be joined to. Then Leah bore a fourth son, and called his name Judah; because, she said, "**Now will I praise the Lord.**" Judah means "**Praise**".

Next Bilhah, Rachel's maid bore Jacob a son. And Rachel said, "**God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice.**" Please notice that Rachel named Bilhah's son, as though he were her own child. She named this son, Dan. Dan means "**Judging!**" And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, bore another son, and Rachel named him, Naphtali, which means "**wrestling.**" For, said she, "**With great wrestlings have I wrestled... and I have prevailed.**"

Then Zilpah, Leah's maid, gave Jacob a son, and Leah named him Gad; "**A troop cometh.**" And Leah named Zilpah's second son Asher, "**Happy am I,**" she said "**For the daughters will call me blessed.**" Please do not miss that. So she called this son "**BLESSED.**"

A thoughtful perusal of verses 14-18 will disclose the jealous rivalry between Jacob's wives, and Leah's desperation because she was being neglected. Her joy is expressed because of GOD's favor, for when another son was born, she cried, "**God hath given me my hire,**" and she called this son's name Issachar, which means "**wages**" or "**hire.**" Leah called her sixth son's name, Zebulon. Because, she said, "**I have born him six sons.**" Zebulon means "**to dwell.**"

Then GOD heard Rachel's prayers, and she bore a son in her later years, and she called his name Joseph; saying, "**The Lord shall add to me another son.**" Joseph means "**to add to.**" Rachel bore Jacob a second son. She called his name Benjamin, which means "**son of my right hand.**"

At first sight, ordinarily, one is not likely to see anything of particular significance about these names of Jacob's sons, taken in the order of their birth. But let us consider them with the Divine plan of Salvation in mind, and see what happens. In doing so, we are following the interpretation and exposition of these passages of Scriptures, as given by some of the most spiritual and discerning writers on Bible subjects the Church has produced. Such revelations can come only under the full illumination of the HOLY SPIRIT.

WHAT WONDERFUL SIGNIFICANCE!

Now let us take these names of the sons of Jacob in order and meaning, and make an astonishing discovery.

The name Reuben, "**Behold, A Son,**" gives to us the first Christian message, "**Behold, the Lamb of God** (or Son of GOD) **which taketh away the sin of the world.**" That was GOD's first word to His people, Israel, and to you and to me, as we seek salvation.

Next comes Simeon which means "**HEAR.**" "**Behold, the Lamb of God!**" On the Mount of Transfiguration, from Heaven, GOD spoke, "**HEAR YE HIM!**" First, the Word, then the hearing of the Word. "**This is my beloved Son.**"

Next comes Levi, which means "**to be joined.**" Joined to the Lamb of GOD. Joined to the company of the redeemed. A union accomplished and sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT. This is a blessed experience to everyone who believeth.

How significant that Judah comes next. His name means "**Praise.**" How often have we seen the new-born child of GOD, joined to the Lord and to His saints, break out into PRAISE of His holy name.

Following Judah, comes Dan. His name means "**Judgment**"; judgment by which we believers, in the light of GOD's mercy and grace, judge ourselves and the world about us, which rejects our Saviour, and walk in separation with our Saviour and Lord. Like Paul we cry, "**I am crucified with CHRIST: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**"

Next in order comes Naphtali, which means "**to wrestle.**" This speaks of temptations and trials, and earnest prayers and intercessions, the most precious privilege and practice on the part of a born-again child of GOD. Nothing is more Christ-like than with tears to intercede for the lost and dying children of men, especially in such a world as is ours today.

Then came Gad, which means "**A troop cometh.**" Ah, after wrestling with GOD for the souls of men, how blessed it is to see them come trooping to the altar, seeking salvation. Too many preachers and their people today know little of the experience of prevailing intercessions, which bring lost men and women by the hundreds into the fold of GOD, giving their hearts and lives and service for the glory of CHRIST. GOD forgive us!

After this what could we expect the next name to mean? It is Asher, and Asher means "**HAPPY.**" Oh what joy and happiness, when souls come flocking into the Kingdom of GOD! Joy in hearts and homes, and in the Church, and before the throne of GOD in the courts of Heaven. There is nothing else on earth that can compare with it; when a troop, a great company turns home to GOD. That, indeed, is a REVIVAL.

Certainly, Issachar comes next. Issachar means "**hire.**" It is in such ingatherings of precious souls, that the laborers in CHRIST's harvest-fields receive their hire. These are not the rewards of earthly service, which are soon gone. The wages of such service are as treasures laid up in Heaven. How sweet and precious are CHRIST's eternal rewards to His servants and harvesters, who are diligent and faithful.

Zebulon means "**dwelling.**" Dwelling in Beulah land, in sweet and happy fellowship with CHRIST and the Heavenly Father. (John 14.23).

Then comes Joseph, which means "**adding.**" Read Acts 2:42-47 for an account of the first great revival following the outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT on the Day of Pentecost. "**And the Lord**

ADDED to the Church daily such as should be saved." That is CHRIST's purpose and desire for His Church everywhere, and all the time. That would be the constant condition in the Church, if the experiences symbolized by these names were truly the experiences of GOD's people today.

How sad it is that such is so seldom the case. Hence so many churches are barren and fruitless. For only as GOD's Israel travails in prayer, does she bring forth children. Only thus can GOD give wonderful outpourings of His grace and love, which rightly we call REVIVALS, or renewals of DIVINE LIFE AND POWER.

Last of all comes Benjamin, "**The Son Of My Right Hand.**" How wonderful! For here is the destiny of the Redeemer and of the redeemed, who have known all these other experiences. They go to be with the Son at GOD's right hand. And here we hear again the wonderful promise of our Lord to those who love and serve Him.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, EVEN AS I ALSO OVERCAME, AND AM SET DOWN WITH MY FATHER IN HIS THRONE. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR."

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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