

Joseph(6)

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I plan to do a study on Moses, who led Israel out of Egypt, but here is some interesting information about Israel's sojourn in Egypt and some more about Joseph's descendants.

Israel in Egypt

- The Lord God told Abraham that his descendants (Israel) would go to a foreign land (Egypt) to serve and be afflicted for (about) 400 years (Genesis 15:13). Israel lived in Egypt for 430 years to the day, apparently referring to the day the family of Jacob arrived in Egypt (Exodus 12:40-42; Genesis 46:1-7).
- The Lord would judge that nation (Egypt), and his people would leave with great possessions (Genesis 15:14). God did judge Egypt as we'll see in the Moses study. The Israelites left Egypt with all of their own possessions including their livestock. Furthermore, the Lord *caused* the Egyptians to *give* the Israelites gold, silver, clothing, and everything they needed—the Israelites didn't steal anything (Exodus 12:31-36). Because of their poor treatment of the people of Israel, Egypt was plundered through the working of God.
- The descendants of Abraham (the family of Jacob) had to leave their land (Canaan¹) because the iniquity of the Amorite people, who also lived in that land, was not yet complete. In the fourth generation,² Abraham's people would return to their land (Genesis 15:16). Jacob and his family settled in Egypt at the invitation of Joseph and the Pharaoh, but the underlying reason, perhaps unknown to Jacob, was because of the Lord's word to Abraham regarding the Amorites. When Israel entered their promised land after escaping Egypt and residing in the wilderness (the region between Egypt and Canaan) for 40 years, the Lord destroyed the Amorites by miraculous means and through the Israelite army (Joshua 10:1-11; 11:1-9).

Joseph's Descendants

When Israel entered their promised land, the land was divided amongst the tribes (descendants) of the sons of Jacob (Numbers 34; Joshua 13 – 19).³ Instead of a portion of land being given to the tribe of Joseph, the descendants of his sons Manasseh and Ephraim each received their own portions (Numbers 34:23-24; Joshua 16 – 17). This was in fulfillment of Jacob's blessing on them (Genesis 48:8-22).

The city of Samaria was located in the land of Manasseh, and would later become the capital and central place of worship for the tribes that were separated from Judah (I Kings 11:9-13, 31-35; 12:16-20; 16:29). This was in disobedience to God as He had established Jerusalem as the capital and place of His temple

¹ Israel of today exists in a portion of the former land of Canaan.

² Remember that the people of God (though not the people of the Gentile nations) in the early days as recorded in the first part of Genesis lived exceedingly long lives, so at the time of God's promises to Abraham a generation apparently was about 100 years (because Israel was in Egypt for more than 400 years). The generations in the lineage of Christ were much shorter since the time of Genesis and may have been similar to today's average generation of 20-30 years.

³ The tribe of Levi didn't have an allotment of land because they were the tribe of priests who would serve the spiritual needs of Israel. Instead, they were allotted cities within the land of each tribe (Numbers 35:1-8; Joshua 14:4).

for His nation (I Kings 11:13, 32).⁴ This land would become known as both *Samaria* and *Israel* (as distinct from *Judah*) in the Old Testament, and as *Samaria* (as distinct from *Judea* and *Israel*) in the New Testament (Samaria was not referred to as *Israel* in the New Testament). The lineage of the kings of both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel are provided in the Old Testament (I & II Kings). Although they were related as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the people of Judah were not to associate with the people of Samaria (Matthew 10:5-6; John 4:9). Sometime after the rapture and before the tribulation judgments, God will restore the people of Israel to their promised land and will reunite Judah and Samaria back into the one nation of Israel with Jerusalem as its capital (Ezekiel 37:15-28).⁵

A Note on the 144,000 Men in the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation speaks of 144,000 sealed virgin men in the prophetic last days (Revelation 7:4-8; 14:1-5). I believe that it will be these men, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who will fulfill the commands of the so-called *Great Commission* during the time of great tribulation (Matthew 24:14).⁶ These men will be chosen from the following tribes of Israel (12,000 each): Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. Manasseh is added and Dan is missing from the original twelve tribes (see Genesis 35:23-26).

The original allotment of land after the nation of Israel entered its promised land (known as Canaan at the time) included portions for Ephraim and Manasseh as discussed above, who were the sons of Joseph and who were claimed by Jacob as his own sons (Genesis 48:3-6). The sons (descendants) of Ephraim are later referred to as the sons of Joseph in Numbers 1:32-33, so the original tribe of Joseph is accounted for in Revelation as Joseph and Manasseh. Scripture doesn't say why the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in Revelation, but it had a particularly bad history of idol worship (I Kings 12:25-33) and is not mentioned as one of the twelve tribes in I Chronicles 4 – 7. The tribe of Dan may have ceased to exist by the time the book of I Chronicles was written, but this is conjecture; however, it appears that it no longer had an inheritance by that time.

⁴ Jerusalem was in the land referred to as *Judah* (which later consisted of both the tribes Judah and Benjamin) in the Old Testament and as *Judea* and *Israel* in the New Testament. This can be a bit confusing but can be understood based on the context in which these names are used.

⁵ The prophetic last days and their fulfillment are addressed in my studies **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** and **Our Lord Jesus Christ**.

⁶ The name or title *Great Commission* does not appear in the Bible but is often used by Christians to describe the last commands of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples before He ascended into heaven (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:1-8). The commands apply to Israel and its promised kingdom, and were not intended to be obeyed by us—members of the body of Christ—in this dispensation of the grace of God. Therefore, it is not up to us to try to fulfill the *Great Commission*. Those commands are discussed and compared to our instructions as part of the gospel of grace in my study **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ**.