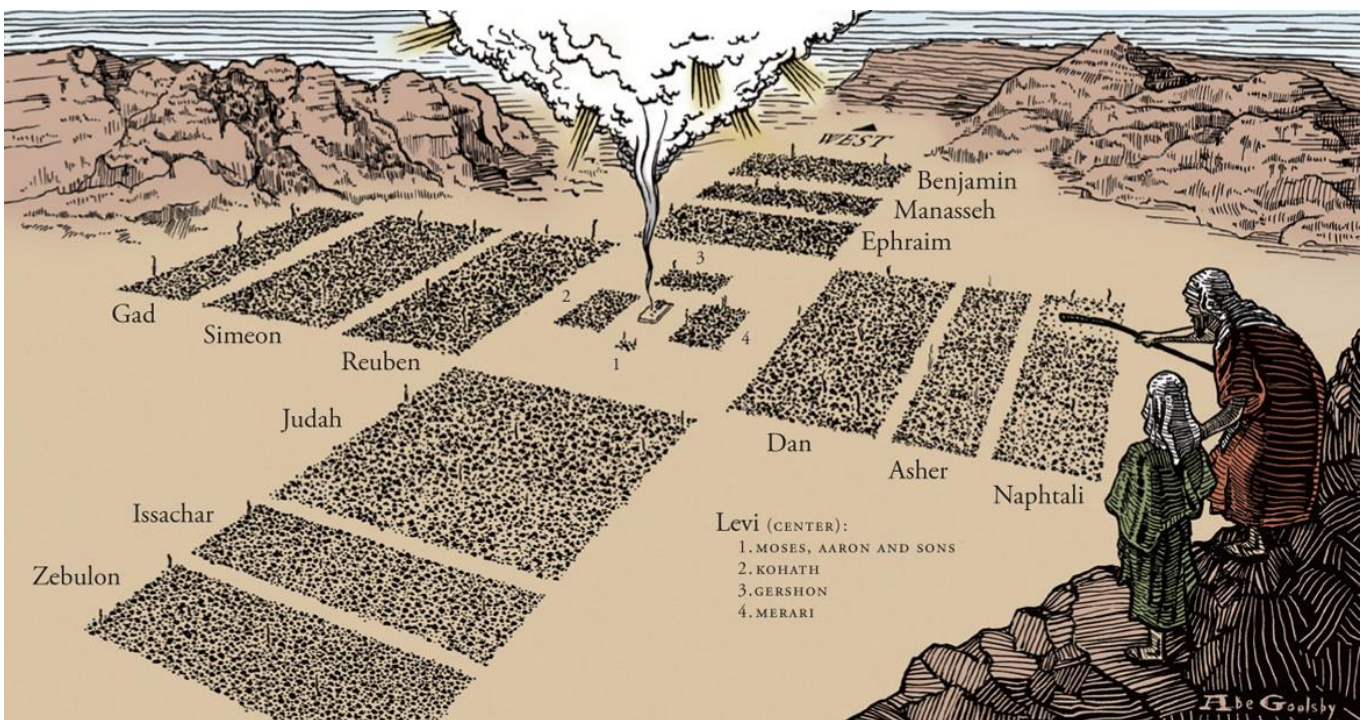


## THE BANNERS OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

The banners of the tribes of Israel point to the real banner of God, Jesus Christ. In Exodus 17:15, Moses built an altar and called its name Jehovah-nissi-The-Lord-Is-My-Banner" after the battle between Amalek and Israel. Moses stood on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand (Psalm 23:4 says "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For You are with me. Your rod and staff, they comfort me.") They were fighting a battle. They were in the valley of the shadow of death. They didn't fear evil b/c the Lord was with them. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, but when he let down his hand, Malek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy, so they took a stone and put in under him (the stone represents Jesus. Matt 21:22-24 says "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."), and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur supported his hands, so Joshua defeated Amalek with the edge of the sword.

Psalm 20:5 says "May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners! May the Lord fulfill all your petitions!"

Is 31:8-9 says "Then Assyria shall fall by a sword not of man, and a sword not of mankind shall devour him. But he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become forced labor. He shall cross over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the banner' says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem." The banner is Jesus. The Hebrew word for banner is "nes". It means something lifted up, standard, signal, signal pole, ensign, banner, sign sail. Jesus said "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." Jesus is the banner. He was lifted up on the cross.



The tribes of Israel were divided into 4 groups of 3. The tribes were positioned around the Tabernacle, facing 4 directions: to the East, Judah. To the West, Ephraim. To the South, Reuben. To the North, Dan, while in the midst was the Tabernacle containing the Shekinah symbol of the Divine Presence. The banner of the tribe at the head of each division signified the tribe was united under one standard. The four faces and the four colors on the banners speak of Jesus. He is our standard. These banners also point us to the messages of the four Gospels that represent Jesus. Every

tribe carried a standard and image, but Judah, Issachar as well as Zebulun were to move about the standard of Judah. Judah's standard was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Reuben's was a man. Ephraim's was the ox. Dan, the eagle.

### **1. The East entrance to the Tabernacle was the encampment of Zebulun, Judah, and Issachar. Moses, Aaron, and His sons had their encampment there also.**

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the Tent of Meeting (tabernacle), but at a distance. Those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall lead the sons of Judah, and his army as numbered totaled 74,600. Next to Judah [on the east side] the tribe of Issachar shall encamp; and Nethanel the son of Zuar shall lead the sons of Issachar, and his army as numbered totaled 54,400. Then [also on the east side] the tribe of Zebulun; and Eliab the son of Helon shall lead the sons of Zebulun, and his army as numbered totaled 57,400. The total of the numbered men [in the three tribes on the east side] in the camp of Judah was 186,400, by their armies. They shall move out first [on the march]. - [Numbers 2:1-9](#) Scriptural references are: Genesis 49:1-2, 8-12 and Balaam's blessing in Numbers 24:9.

Moses consecrated and anointed the priests. The oldest son of Aaron, Eleazar, became the chief of the Levites. He was put in charge of the workings of the Tabernacle. The banner was a scarlet background with a gold lion. The lion is the mightiest of wild animals. The lion represents Jesus as King. A lion excels in strength and boldness. It represents His leadership and power. Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (according to Jacob's prophecy of that tribe in Gen 49:9), and in His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, He will rule as King of Kings over all the EARTH.

The Gospel of Matthew's original readers was Jews. He represents Jesus as the Messiah, the promised King, and the loyalty of Jesus. It is closely linked to the Old Testament and to the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. Matthew's central theme is promise and fulfillment, God's promises in the Hebrew Scriptures to bring salvation to His people Israel and to the whole world. He is the Son of David, the King. He is Emmanuel, God with us. He is portrayed as the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures.

### **2. The encampment of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh faced Westward.**

On the south will be the divisions of the camp of Reuben under their standard. The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. 11 His division numbers 46,500. The tribe of Simeon will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. His division numbers 59,300. The tribe of Gad will be next. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel. His division numbers 45,650. All the men assigned to the camp of Reuben, according to their divisions, number 151,450. They will set out second. They had charge of the fabrics of the Tabernacle—the curtains, veils, and tent hangings. The banner was gold background with a black ox. The ox is the strongest of domesticated animals. It is the animal of service and submission, yet strong and able to bear a load. It represents His strength and determination. Jesus backed up His words with action. The ox represents Jesus' submission to God and service to man. Jesus came to minister according to His Father's will, and He alone was strong enough to bear the weight of man's sin. An ox excels in diligence and patience. It represents Jesus as diligent in pursuit, working devoted. He was patient with His disciples and with people.

the Hebrew name Benjamin (בְּנִימִן) is a Hebrew compound which literally translates as: "*son of the right hand.*"

The Gospel of Mark's original readers were Gentiles and Romans. He represents Jesus as the suffering servant, the servant of God. (Isaiah 53) Jesus was not here to conquer the Roman legions but to suffer and die as an atoning sacrifice for sins. Mark plunges right into the public ministry of Jesus. Victory comes through sacrifice, suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus achieved victory over Satan, sin, and death.

### **3. The encampment of Simeon, Reuben, and Gad faced Southward.**

On the west will be the divisions of the camp of Ephraim under their standard. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. 19 His division numbers 40,500. The tribe of Manasseh will be next to them. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. His division numbers 32,200. The tribe of Benjamin will be next. The

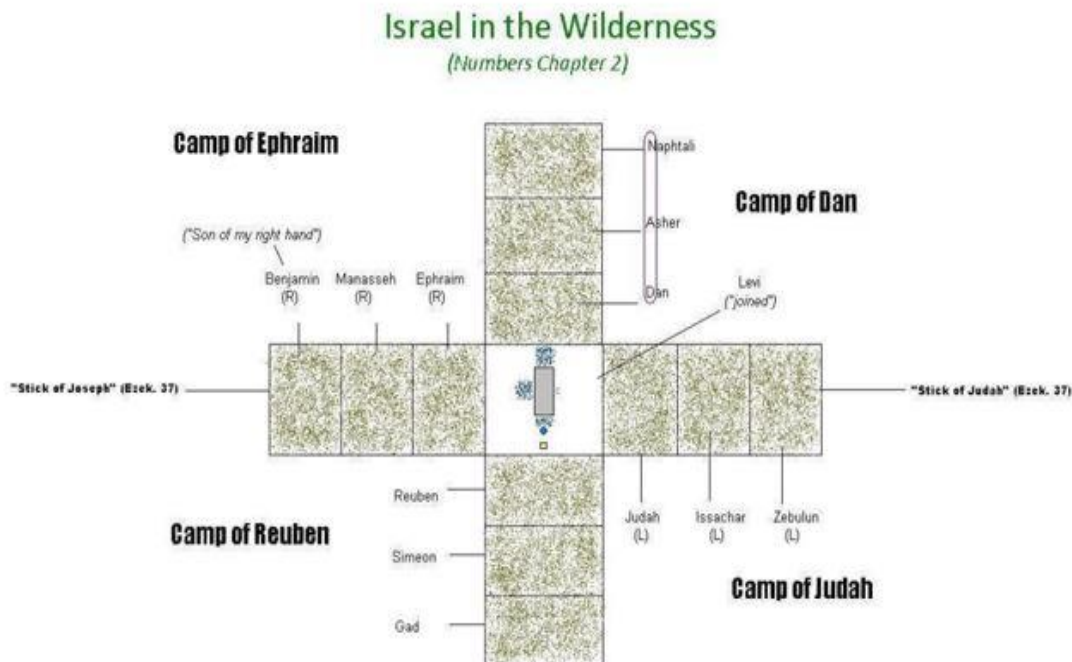
leader of the people of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni. His division numbers 35,400. All the men assigned to the camp of Ephraim, according to their divisions, number 108,100. They will set out third. They had charge of the most holy portions of the vessels, including the ark, the Menorah, the Table of shewbread, the altars, the candle stick and utensils. The banner was a gold background with a man. Man is the highest of all creation. It represents Jesus' humanity. Jesus took on flesh and lived a human life on earth.

The Gospel of Luke's original readers were Greeks. He represents Jesus as fully human, the Son of Man, a humble man, and sympathetic. He had a special concern for the needy, the deprived, and the religious outsiders. He is inclusive. He appealed to both men and women, rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles. According to Jesus, those who hear and believe the message about the Kingdom of God will include people from all over the world, not just the pious, proper few, but those who are in deep need and those who are shut out by the normal religious rules.

#### 4. The encampment of Dan, Asher, and Nephtali faced Northward.

They had charge of the chords, court, tools connected with setting them up. They carried the heavier portion of the Tabernacle-the boards, bars, sockets, pillars, etc. The banner was a blue background with an eagle of gold. The eagle is the king of all birds. The eagle represents swift judgement, Jesus' soaring majesty, the Son of God. An eagle excels in quickness, piercing sight, and soaring high. Jesus' ministry excelled in 3 years.

John represents Jesus as fully divine, Jesus' soaring majesty, the Son of God. He represents the principles of Jesus' teaching, and that belief in Jesus is required for salvation. Jesus' mission was described in terms of the miracles that he performed, his kindly attitude toward the poor and the oppressed, His power to cast out demons and to heal the sick, and His instructions concerning the way people should live in view of the imminence of the coming Kingdom. John writes to provoke faith in Jesus, resulting in eternal life.



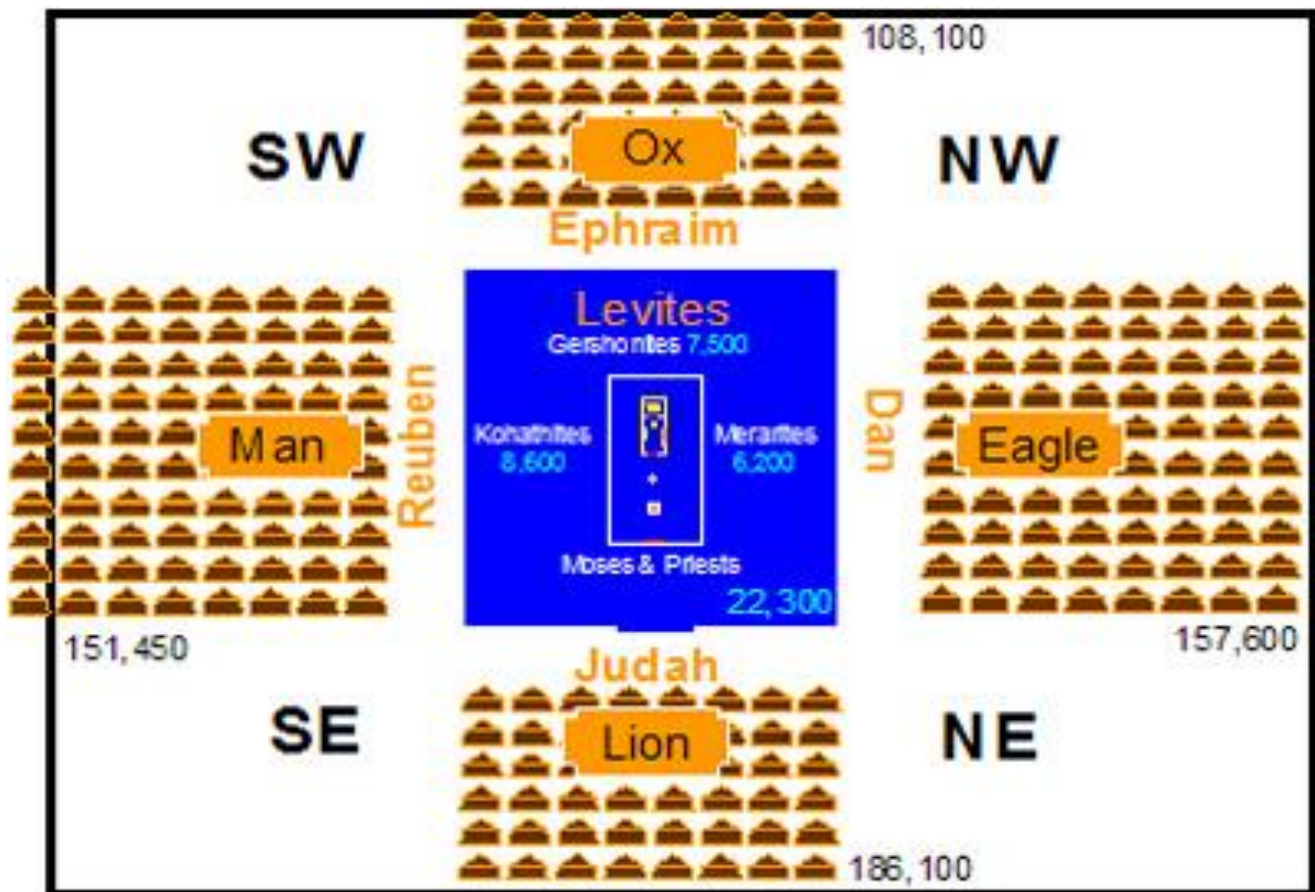
Ephraim and Judah will come together as 'One New Man' (Ephesians 2:15) Amos 9:11 ' In that day I will restore David's fallen tent.... I will bring back my exiled people Israel... I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them.'

Read Hebrews 8:1-6 with the information about the camps of Israel in mind. The tribes in the New Jerusalem: In Ezekiel's Temple in Ezekiel 48, the names of the tribes were written on each gate. The same gates are mentioned in Rev 21:12-13, "... (The city) had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them,

which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east; three gates on the north; three gates on the south; and three gates on the west."

**Ezekiel had a vision of the living creatures around the throne in Ezekiel 1:5-9.** "Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a **man**. Each one had four faces and each one had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a **man**; each of the four had the face of a **lion** on the right side, each of the four had the face of an **ox** on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an **eagle**. Thus were their faces. **These are the faces of Jesus represented on the banners of Israel surrounding the Tabernacle!**

**John had a vision in Rev 4:6-8 of the four living creatures around the throne also.** "In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a **lion**, the second was like an **ox**, the third had a face like a **man**, the fourth was like a flying **eagle**. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings." This is the exact order of the tribes of Israel and the 4 Gospels! The four living creatures surrounded the throne, and the four faces of Jesus surrounded the Tabernacle, and the Shekina glory, the Divine Presence was in the midst of the Temple, the Most Holy Place!



Rev. 21:10-14 says:<sup>1</sup>"And he carried me away in *the* Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... and names **were written on the gates, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.** **There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.**" Now when you read Hebrews 1-10, do you have a better understanding of the tabernacle and the 12 tribes?

The twelve tribes continue to play a very important role in God's redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation. The existence and distinction of the tribes is upheld in the new covenant.