

## God-Sanctioned Divisions of the Tribes of Israel Listed at 1st Census

Last Updated 08-02-2012 (British Calendar System)

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Numbers 1

Tribes of Israel listed and numbered in first census under Moses following their departure out of Egypt:

1. Reuben
2. Simeon
3. Gad
4. Judah
5. Issachar
6. Zebulun
7. Joseph
  - A. Ephraim
  - B. Manasseh
8. Benjamin
9. Dan
10. Asher
11. Naphtali
12. (Levites not numbered by command of the Lord)

v. 52-54a

"The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, everyone by his own camp, everyone by his own standard, according to their armies; but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony. Thus the children of Israel did..."

The word for "standard" here can also be translated "flag" or "banner".

What a great verse dealing with differing denominations! Not only was Israel commanded to "pitch their tents" (i.e. set up camp) "by his own camp, everyone by his own standard (or flag or banner), according to their armies", but we are told that they did it! Ordered and orderly diversity in unity, according to the plan of God! So, just because you're an Israelite, doesn't mean you're necessarily of the tribe of Dan, for example. But, if you're from the tribe of Dan (or any of the tribes) you're still an Israelite! So just because you're a Christian, doesn't mean you're of the tribe of (pick a tribe - Methodists, for example, etc.). But, if you're a Jesus believing Baptist, Anglican, Pentecostal, etc. you ARE a Christian! Too many denominations in the Church fail to recognize the others because they (mistakenly) think that *they* are the only Christians (or Israelites, to continue using the metaphor)!

The common bond was that they were all delivered (saved) by the hand of the Lord from Egypt (representative of sin), were under the direction and protection of God (by His initiation and their reception of and submission to it), and were a part of the same universal covenant that involved obedience to His laws. They were all also, for good or for ill, related. They were the "children of Israel". We (who are a part of Christ's Church) are "children of God". We are family. They were all also under the direction and leadership of Moses, who was himself submitted to God. We in turn (again, those a part of Christ's Church) are all under the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ sent in His Name. "Now if any one does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." Romans 8:9

We have submitted our lives to the Lordship of Christ (Who is Himself submitted to God [our Father]), and have come under the authority of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ sent to earth in His place (or stead, or Name).

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