

This chapter is reminiscent of the blessings given by the dying patriarch Jacob in Genesis 49. Those blessings were connected personally to Jacob's sons and to the tribes that would arise from them. The blessings here also look at the particular territory each tribe will inhabit, as shown by the map on the right. That may explain why Simeon is not included. The Simeonites never received their own territory but were dispersed around the land of Judah.

The map also shows the territory first assigned to Dan between Ephraim and Judah. The Danites later conquered the city of Laish in the northwest, near Sidon. This northern outpost led to the saying "from Dan to Beersheba," meaning all Israel.

Questions:

1. What is the tone of these last words spoken by Moses to the people?
2. Read 1 Samuel 8. What does it tell us about verse 5 of this chapter?



3. For each of the tribes in this blessing, how does its history help explain the prophecy? Reference passages are given in some cases.

Reuben (Genesis 35:22, 49:4)

Judah (Genesis 49:8-12)

Levi (Exodus 32:26-29)

Benjamin

Joseph (Genesis 48, 49:22-26)

Zebulun and Issachar (Genesis 49:13-15)

Gad (1 Chronicles 12:8, 14)

Dan

Naphtali (what is the lake?)

Asher

4. What is the final promise of the Lord that is delivered through Moses? How and when is it fulfilled in the scriptural record?