

Exodus 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

Analysis

Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher—The sons of the handmaids (Bilhah and Zilpah) complete the twelve. Though born of secondary status, these tribes receive equal inheritance in God's covenant economy. **Dan** (דָּן, "judge") would provide judges for Israel (Judges 13-16). **Naphtali** (נַפְתָּלִי, "my wrestling") recalls Rachel's struggle. **Gad** (גָּד, "fortune") and **Asher** (אָשֶׁר, "happy") represent blessing despite difficult origins. This inclusivity demonstrates that God's covenant extends beyond natural privilege to all He sovereignly chooses.

Historical Context

These four tribes, though from concubines, occupied strategic territories in Canaan—Dan in the north, Naphtali in Galilee (where Jesus later ministered, Matthew 4:13-15), Gad east of Jordan, and Asher along the Mediterranean coast. Their inclusion validates all Israelites as covenant children.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's equal treatment of all twelve sons challenge worldly notions of status and privilege?
2. In what ways does this passage affirm that spiritual heritage transcends social origins?

Interlinear Text

דָּן	וְנַפְתָּלִי	גָּד	וְאַשֶׁר:
Dan	and Naphtali	Gad	and Asher
H1835	H5321	H1410	H836

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