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Lessons from Jacob's Blessing of Asher

By Jerry Collins

As for Asher, his food shall be rich, and he will yield royal dainties (Genesis 49:20).

Verse 20—*As for Asher*—Jacob's oracle predicted that Asher would be fertile and productive, so much so that this tribe would provide delicacies to royalty.

—***his food shall be rich, and he will yield royal dainties***—The second phrase describes what Asher would do with his abundant produce—deliver it to the court ***and he will yield royal dainties***. The term *dainties* signify that the produce was delightful or pleasurable. It is probably not ordinary food but delicacies that kings could afford. So Asher will enjoy the rich products of a fertile land, teeming with those things which contribute to the sustenance of life, and also will, from the ample produce, supply those tasty morsels to royal house of Israel.

PT—During Solomon's reign, each of the 12 tribes in turn provided the royal provisions for one month each year. *Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, who provided for the king and his household; each man had to provide for a month in the year* (1 Kings 4:7). Receiving Asher's share of the monthly supply would ensure delicacies and morsels fit for royalty. These were excellent gourmet delights.

A Review of the History of the Tribe of Asher



- Evidently, Asher sacrificed any military capability for his agricultural fame. According to Judges 1:31-32, the tribe never dislodged the Canaanite/Phoenician inhabitants of the northwestern coast of Israel. *Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob. So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.*

- Moses' blessing of Asher mentioned "*More blessed than sons is Asher; May he be favored by his brothers, and may he dip his foot in oil*" (Deuteronomy 33:24). To *dip his foot in oil* is a metaphor for prosperity, one especially apt in light of the abundance of olive groves in the area settled by

Asher. The lesson of the prophecy is that Asher will be blessed with an abundance which he will then share with others.

- The most famous Asherite in the Bible was Anna, the prophetess who greeted the infant Jesus in the Temple, *and there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years* (Luke 2:36). This brief reference is evidence that Jews of our Lord's time still maintained their tribal identity and the northern tribes were never lost. Anna provides evidence that representatives of the 10 northern tribes still existed over 700 years after the Assyrian captivity. So, the 10 tribes were never lost but originally assimilated into the Southern Kingdom as refugees from the north.

An Application—Our Christian life and witness should display *contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality* (Romans 12:13). The writer of Hebrews says *do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it* (Hebrews 13:2). Asher had abundance, and we often do, too. The concept is from a derivative of *phileo*—brotherly love. Benevolent giving appropriate to the need. As believers in Jesus Christ, we should practice generous and benevolent hospitality, not hoarding.



* Learn more by checking out our 12 tribes of Israel material at relationalconcepts.org
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