

# Revelation 7

## One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand From “All The Tribes of the Children of Israel” (Rev. 7:4)

### Why is Dan Not Mentioned? Etc.

Israel's Twelve Tribes (Genesis 49)	Tribes Mentioned in Revelation 7
Reuben	Reuben (v.5)
Simeon	Simeon (v.7)
Levi	Levi (v. 7)
Judah	Judah (v.5)
Zebulun	Zebulun (v.8)
Issachar	Issachar (v.7)
Dan	
Gad	Gad (v.5)
Asher	Asher (v. 6)
Naphtali	Naphtali (v. 6)
Joseph (father of Ephraim & Manasseh)	Joseph (v.8)
	Manasseh (v.6)
Benjamin	Benjamin (v.8)

Notice that Dan is not mentioned in Revelation 7. Revelation 7 adds the name Manasseh, one of Joseph's two sons. There were twelve thousand from Manasseh's descendants and probably 12,000 from Ephraim's descendants, as Joseph's name (Ephraim's father) is

substituted for Ephraim. These 12,000 were Ephraim's descendants but also Joseph's descendants. There is the absence of the tribe of Dan and Joseph is given a double portion.

From the outset, it should be noted that we are not told why Dan is omitted from the listing in Revelation 7. Any answer we try to give is speculation because God is silent.

Many think the reason Dan was omitted was because of the horrible history of idolatry that this tribe was guilty of. The following, by Robert L. Thomas, is found in his commentary on Revelation (Vol. 1, p. 481):

Being the only tribe that failed to conquer its territory (Judg. 1:34), [Dan] turned to idolatry as an alternative to obeying God (Judg. 18:14-31). Idolatry in particular was the blight upon Dan. Deuteronomy 29:18-21 required the blotting out of the name of anyone who introduces idolatry into Israel (cf. also Deut. 29:24-26). The Scripture gives regular notice of this tribe's offensiveness in this regard (Judg. 18:2,30,31; 1 Kings 11:26; 12:28-30). The only narrative in the OT in which Dan played a part is the one related to the worship of idols in Judg. 18:1-31. Idolaters will be excluded from the new Jerusalem (Rev. 22:15). Though Dan is included in the future distribution of the land (Ezekiel 48), it appears that this branch of the family will be excluded from the protective sealing prior to the trumpet judgments because of the blot upon Dan's history caused by idolatry. The other tribes were guilty of the same sin, but Dan was the leader in idolatrous practices.

William Newell, in his commentary on Revelation (p. 112), says this:

Dan, Bilhah's first son, is left out altogether here [in Rev. 7]. He was ever a cherisher of idolatry. Yet Dan is mentioned first, when the land is divided in Ezekiel 48, for the 1,000 year kingdom: which shows God's grace! And that Dan should be preserved through The Tribulation, though not publicly sealed, is greater grace still!

There are some, such as L. M. Grant, who believe that the False Prophet will come from the tribe of Dan and this is the reason Dan's tribe is omitted. They base this on the prophecy of Dan given in Genesis 49:16-18. Others believe the Beast (Antichrist) will come from Dan based on this passage. William MacDonald, in his *Believers' Bible Commentary*, suggests the possibility of this view in his comments under Genesis 49:16-18 and Revelation 7:5-8.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum does not see the removal of Dan as something caused by Dan's idolatry but as something that was done simply for the sake of symmetry to have 12 tribes and not 13 (since Joseph has two tribes). Here is what he writes in *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, p. 223:

The actual reason [Dan is left out] is simply to maintain the symmetry of twelve. When all tribal names are actually listed, the total comes to thirteen and not twelve because Joseph produced two tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh. In order to maintain the symmetry of twelve, one name must always be dropped. This is not the only place this happens. For example, in Deuteronomy 33, Moses presents his twelve tribal blessings, as Jacob did in Genesis 49. But to maintain the symmetry of twelve, Moses also had to drop one tribe, and that was the Tribe of Simeon. In Ezekiel 47-48, in describing the tribal settlement in the Messianic Kingdom, to maintain the symmetry of twelve, Ezekiel drops the Tribe of Levi, putting this tribe in a separate place and category. Just as there was no sinister reason for dropping Simeon, there is no sinister reason for dropping Dan. In all cases, it was merely to retain the symmetry of twelve.

However, Fruchtenbaum's view gives no reason why Dan's tribe was dropped. If it were merely done for symmetry, then this would mean that God could have chosen any one of the tribes to be dropped. It makes God's decision quite arbitrary.

***The reasons for Dan's omission in Revelation 7 are all theories and since God has not revealed the reason for the omission, we can view these suggestions as possibilities but we cannot be dogmatic.***