

12 Tribes of Israel

Responsibilities, blessings and biblical associations

A family reference chart. The Bible does not give every tribe a fixed job. Read the passage beside each summary to distinguish duties from blessings, land allotments and descriptions of particular people.

Tribe	Role or biblical association	Read in the Bible
Reuben	Firstborn, but lost prominence because of wrongdoing.	Genesis 49:3-4
Simeon	Received towns within Judah's larger allotment.	Joshua 19:1-9
Levi	Tabernacle service and teaching; Aaron's family held the priestly office.	Numbers 3:5-10; Deuteronomy 33:8-10
Judah	Royal leadership in Jacob's blessing; David came from Judah.	Genesis 49:8-10; 1 Samuel 17:12
Dan	Judging his people in Jacob's blessing.	Genesis 49:16
Naphtali	A doe in Jacob's imagery; favor and blessing in Moses' words.	Genesis 49:21; Deuteronomy 33:23
Gad	Skilled warriors from Gad joined David.	1 Chronicles 12:8
Asher	Rich food and oil in the blessings.	Genesis 49:20; Deuteronomy 33:24
Issachar	Leaders supporting David understood what Israel should do.	1 Chronicles 12:32
Zebulun	Ships, journeys and the sea in the blessings.	Genesis 49:13; Deuteronomy 33:18-19
Joseph	His sons Ephraim and Manasseh appear in land-allotment lists.	Genesis 48:5; Joshua 14:3-4
Benjamin	Warrior imagery in Jacob's blessing.	Genesis 49:27

Why are some lists different?

This chart follows Jacob's twelve sons and includes Levi and Joseph. Land-allotment lists count Joseph through Ephraim and Manasseh; Levi received towns rather than a separate tribal territory (Joshua 14:3-4).

Read together: Which row describes an assigned duty? Which rows describe a blessing or a particular group of people?