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Asher's Bread Will Be With Oil; He Will Provide Delicacies Fit for a King 49: 20

Asher's bread will be with oil; he will provide delicacies fit for a king DIG: What did Asher's name mean and how did his name become a reality? Where was his territory located and what was it like? What did he and his tribe do with their blessing? What are the three important words in Jacob's prophecy and what do they mean? What was Asher's undoing? How do we know they changed? Is Asher one of the "lost tribes" of Isra'el? How do we know? Where in the bible do we see the tribe of Asher in the future Messianic Kingdom?

REFLECT: What do you think your name means to those who come into contact with you? What evidence is there of that name? What has been your undoing? What evidence is there of your change? What happens when we become one with the world (James 4:4)? You don't have to give one of your kidney's to be a blessing, but what could you do instead?



Asher's bread will be with oil; he will provide delicacies fit for a king (49:20).

Asher was Jacob's eighth son. His mother was Leah's maidservant, Zilpah, and he was her second and last child with Ya'akov. When Asher was born, Leah said:

How happy am I. The women will call me happy (Genesis 30:13). Therefore, **Asher’s** name means *happy* or *blessed* and **Jacob’s** prophecy for **the tribe of Asher** certainly comes true when **they** settled along the rich slopes of the Galilean coastland north of Mount Carmel (**Joshua 19:24-31**). **Asher’s** territory was known as one of the most fertile parts of Canaan, abounding in wheat and olive **oil**.

Ya’akov prophesied that **Asher’s bread** would be *shmeinah*, or **rich**; saying: **he will provide delicacies fit for a king (49:20)**. The Hebrew word for **rich**, or **oil** here is *shmeinah*, which literally means *fat* or *oily*. Moses also used this same word when he said: **Most blessed of sons of Asher; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in shmeinah, or in oil (Deuteronomy 33:24a)**. This particular word is found one hundred and ninety times in the TaNaKh and it is *always*, without exception, used of **olive oil**. This points out that the territory **he** had was suitable to grow **olive** trees, and in **Joshua 19:24-31**, we learn that **Asher** received land along the Mediterranean coast. **His** land was north of Manasseh, northwest of Zebulun, and west of Naphtali. To this day the territory along the coastline is rich with **olive** trees.

So even though **Asher** would be **blessed**, **he** would share **his** blessing with **his brothers**, and as you read **his** story you will find out that **he** lived up to **Jacob’s** prophesy pretty well. Not perfect – but pretty well. **He** is an example of someone who is **blessed** and wants to share those **blessings**. There are **three important words** in **49:20** the prophesy of **Ya’akov** that illustrate this.

1. Asher’s bread (49:20a): The first important word is *lechem* or **bread** – meaning *the basic sustenance of life*. That is why Jews say *ha-motzi* at the beginning of a meal. Because no matter what it is you are eating there is probably some form of **bread** on the table. So it is a general blessing for thanking **ADONAI** for all that **He** provides: Blessed are You, Lord, our **God**, King of the universe, *Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Melekh ha-olam* – who brings forth **bread** from the earth, *Ha-motzi lechem* min ha’aretz (*Amein*).

It is also interesting to note that *beth-lechem* means *house of bread*, and **Bethlehem** was the place where **Jesus** was born (see the prophesy in **Micah 5:2**). **Yeshua** said: **I AM the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty (John 6:35)**; therefore, the place where **He** was born is known as *the house of bread*.

2. Will be with oil (49:20b): The second important word used is *shmeinah*, or

his bread will be with *shmeinah*, which should be translated olive **oil** because of the context. **Asher** settled in the area known as Haifa in northern Isra’el. It is still a beautiful coastline with fertile grounds and olive trees all around. Olive **oil** from the heart of olive country. In biblical times, the abundant olive **oil** was used for cooking, but it also had several other uses like for light and medicine. Thus, of all the tribes, **Asher** will be the one with a lot of *shmeinah*, and **he** shared it with all the other tribes. Moses would later prophesy: **May Asher be most blessed of sons, may he bathe his feet in *shmeinah* (Deuteronomy 33:24)**. Meaning, that olive **oil** would be so plentiful that **the Asherites** could **bathe their** feet in it.

3. He will provide delicacies fit for a king (49:20c): The third important word is ***ma’adan*** translated here as **delicacies**, as in **First Samuel 15:32; Lamentations 4:5**, or **delight** in **Proverbs 29:17**. *Gan ‘Edhen* is translated the garden of Eden. But it was also called *gan adan*. . . the garden of paradise . . . the garden of feasting (**Genesis 2-3**). All that is captured in this Hebrew word ***ma’adan***. So **Asher** will have **bread**, made with olive **oil**, yet **he** will share these royal **delicacies** of paradise with **his** brothers.

However, **their** prosperity seemed to be **their** undoing. **They** failed to drive out the **Canaanites** in the region of Tyre and Sidon, and **because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land (Judges 1:31-32)**. In the time of Deborah and Barak, **Asher remained on the coast and stayed in its coves** rather than join the fight against Jabin, a Canaanite king (**Judges 5:17**). The reason for **their** decline is unclear, although it could have been for **their** love of, and proximity to, the luxury of the Phoenicians.⁷⁸⁸ So although **Asher** was richly blessed, **they** did not behave admirably for a time in **their** history; when the time for action came, **they** failed to trust in **God** and honor **His** plan. By the time of King David, **they** had faded into insignificance. We lose our witness in the world when we become one with **the world**. **Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4)**.

Later in **Judges**, **Asher** does respond to Gideon’s call to repel the Midianites, Amalekites, and others from the East (**Judges 6:35**). In another important gesture, **Asher** accepts Hezekiah’s invitation to the tribes from the northern kingdom of Isra’el to join the Passover celebration in Jerusalem (**Second Chronicles 30:11**). This was considered an act of humility, proof of a contrite heart before **God**.

After the Babylonian captivity and even the dispersion after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the tribe of **Asher** did not lose its identity. There are no “lost tribes,” and



there will always be a believing remnant. As an example, the **prophetess Anna** was from the tribe of **Asher** and **she** gave **thanks to God** for the birth of **Jesus** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Au](#) - Jesus Presented in the Temple**).

Have you had some blessings lately? Family, friends, job, or your health? But it is one thing to be blessed, and it is quite another to be willing to share those blessings (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ II - The Rich Young Ruler**).

Yeshua said: **Freely you have received - freely give (Matthew 10:8)**. We need to have a light touch on the things of this world. The richness of **the Lord** means sharing our blessings with others around us - especially if those blessings have nothing to do with money.

Kevin Jordan was a terrific high school baseball player. But during the 2010 season, he had trouble shaking the flu as a high school senior in Columbus, Georgia, and lost 20 pounds. But he still played well enough to receive a baseball scholarship to Wake Forest University from baseball coach Tom Walter. After many tests, the doctors at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta discovered his kidney was functioning at only 15 to 20 percent. That same year he was diagnosed with ANCA vasculitis, a type of autoimmune swelling disorder caused by abnormal antibodies. When those abnormalities show up in the kidneys, they can cause blood and protein to leak into the urine and could result in kidney failure.

After his diagnosis, Kevin was doing everything he could to fight the disease. He was taking thirty-five pills a day and went on dialysis three times a week - then daily, took steroids and went on chemotherapy, but his kidney function fell to less than 10 percent. The treatments were not working. Coach Walter assured Kevin's parents that Wake Forest would still honor his scholarship. But when Kevin visited Wake Forrest in the fall of 2011 he had lost forty pounds and was going downhill fast. Coach Walter barely recognized him.

Kevin had been placed on the national organ donor list that has a 4 to 5 year waiting period. Family members were tested to see if any were a possible match for a transplant, and Coach Walter was tested that December after it was determined that his relatives weren't compatible. Tom Walter said he wasn't going to just sit around and watch Kevin die even though he hadn't played one inning for the Wake Forest baseball team. By that time Kevin was so sick he couldn't hold down any food. This wasn't about baseball anymore.

Six weeks after his battery of tests, on January 28th, 2011, Coach Walter found out during Wake Forrest’s first practice of the spring semester that he was a match. Three days later he told the team and said the players greeted the news with “stunned silence followed by a round of applause.” Dr. Kenneth Newell, the lead surgeon on the team that removed Walter’s kidney, said that the recovery time for both the 42-year-old Walter and Jordan was expected to be several months. It took two months before Walter was back to normal. Keith Jordan says his son began swinging a bat again in about 6-8 weeks. Kevin then enrolled in summer school that June and prepared for the 2012 fall semester.

“For us, it’s almost like it’s been divine intervention,” Jordan’s father Keith told The Associated Press in a telephone from Atlanta.

In February 2012 Kevin Jordan’s parents sat in the stands for their son’s first baseball game at college. He had regained much of the 40 pounds of muscle he had lost. But he struck out his first three at bats – once looking. In his last at bat for the day, he took two quick strikes and third base coach Walter called time out to talk to his young player . He said, “Listen, just relax. It’s a long season and a lot more games. Stop pressing.” With that, Kevin lined the next pitch to right field for a solid single. But his biggest hit was off the field. Like **Asher**, Tom Walter had shared his blessing with Kevin Jordan and his family.

In the **far eschatological future** during the messianic Kingdom, **Asher will have one portion; it will border the territory of Dan from east to west (Ezeki’el 48:2)**. Thus, descendants of **Asher** will live up to **their** forbearer’s name of *blessed*.⁷⁸⁹

How blessed are those who reject the advice of the wicked, don’t stand in the way of sinners or sit where scoffers sit. Their delight is in ADONAI’s Torah; on His Torah they meditate day and night (Psalm 1:1-2 CJB). We need to remember that *blessedness is intended for service and not for luxury*. The most fundamental meaning of Scripture is this: **Blessed is the one who blesses** because **God** is a **God** of blessing.⁷⁹⁰

As **Jacob** looked at those around **him**, **he** turned to **his** next **son Naphtali**, whose mother was **Bilhah**, maidservant of **Rachel**.