

AWAITING THE FULL INHERITANCE

A Devotional Meditation on V'zot Habracha (This Is the Blessing)

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12; Joshua 1:1-18; Psalm 2:1-12; Isaiah 49:5-6;
Ezekiel 47:13-23; Romans 11:11-15; Revelation 5:11-14, 21:9-27

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It was in graduate school that I realized genealogies can be very complicated. The context was the early years of the Virginia colony, founded at Jamestown in 1607 by 104 men and boys who had made the expeditionary voyage from England. By 1624, the population had increased to 1,033, and a decade later was about 5,000. However, the only way the colony survived was through the arrival of new colonists. Disease, malnutrition, and wars with the indigenous Powhatan Confederacy contributed to an extremely high mortality rate. That meant people could expect to be married and widowed multiple



The Coronation of Powhatan, John Gadsby Chapman, c. 1835, Greenville Museum of Art, Greenville, South Carolina, [via Wikimedia Commons](#).

times, and children who survived to adulthood could expect to be raised in more than one family by multiple stepparents. Under such circumstances, inheritances and lineages became hopelessly muddled. What was retained was a sense of being English, as opposed to Indian or African, or some other European nationality – at least until 1776, when English Americans became Americans of the United States.

There were no easy answers to this identity problem in Virginia, either for the English or for the Natives and Africans. The Virginia story is the same story of all humanity. War, disease, intermarriage, sexual indiscretion or exploitation, and many other factors have ensured that we are all of mixed race. That's why identity is as much a matter of choice and faith as it is of bloodlines.

And yet, bloodlines do matter. That's why many Native American peoples are now reclaiming their names, languages, lands, and heritage. An official of the Upper Mattaponi tribe of Virginia explained that to me and my friends a few months ago when we visited their tribal headquarters. His people are among the first contact nations of the Powhatan Confederacy. After four hundred years of continuous struggle, they are still there on their original land. It would have been very easy for the Natives to blend completely with the larger European and African populations around them. Many have done so, and most pass easily across cultures as necessary. Yet they are undeniably Native, just as my

people are undeniably Scottish, even though we have been sundered from the mother country for nearly three centuries, and have intermarried with other peoples.*

What I conclude from this is that God created nations for a reason, and He intends that they remain intact so they might offer Him continuous praise in eternity. The resurgence of Native identity in North America and elsewhere, as well as in the interest in genealogy and ancestral roots, at least in America, indicates the enduring nature of God's creation of nations. If it's a miracle that the Upper Mattaponi and other indigenous tribes and nations have come back into corporate existence, and if it's a wonder that people like me can claim affinity to a mother country after so many centuries, why, then, should we doubt that the God of Israel would do such miracles and wonders for His Covenant People?

This is a point we from the nations too often overlook. Our Redeemer had to begin somewhere in His process of restoring His creation. That's why He started with Abraham and Sarah, making them the parents of His Covenant Nation of Israel. We forget that Israel must first be saved and restored, and then the nations. That progression is evident in the words of Isaiah:

So now says *ADONAI*, who formed Me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, to gather Israel back to Him. For I am honored in the eyes of *ADONAI* and My God has become my strength. So He says, "It is too trifling a thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved ones of Israel. So I will give You as a light for the nations, that You should be My salvation to the end of the earth."

Isaiah 49:5-6 TLV

Isaiah presents a different perspective of something revealed earlier in the Psalms:

I will declare the decree of *ADONAI*.
He said to me: "You are My Son—
today I have become Your Father.
Ask Me, and I will give the nations as Your inheritance,
and the far reaches of the earth as Your possession.
You shall break the nations with an iron scepter.
You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's jar."
So now, O kings, be wise,
take warning, O judges of the earth!
Serve *ADONAI* with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest He become angry,
and you perish along your way—
since His wrath may flare up suddenly.
Happy is everyone taking refuge in Him!

Psalms 2:7-12 TLV

Moses explains the uniqueness of Israel in his teachings, such as in the blessing he pronounces on Israel's tribes:

* For more information about the Upper Mattaponi, visit the official website: <https://umitribe.org/>

ADONAI came from Sinai
and dawned on *Bnei-Yisrael* [Children of Israel] from Seir.
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
and He came from the holy myriads—
blazing fire for them from His right hand.
Indeed, a lover of peoples is He—
all His *kedoshim* [holy ones] are in His hand.
They followed in Your steps, each receiving Your words. . .
Happy are you, O Israel!
Who is like you, a people saved by *ADONAI*,
the Shield of your help
and the Sword of your triumph?
Your enemies will cower before you,
and you will trample on their backs.

Deuteronomy 33:2-3, 29 TLV

There is a peculiar point here, however. Moses omits the tribe of Simeon in this blessing. It's not the only time a tribe is omitted from a list; John omits the tribe of Dan when he tells of the 144,000 people of Israel sealed for a special purpose at the end of this age. We can guess that Simeon's role in the idolatrous rebellion instigated by Balaam may have had something to do with the tribe's absence from Moses' blessing. For a time, Simeon was absorbed into Judah, but redemption happened, or will happen, somehow. That's what happened to Benjamin. The tribe named for Israel's youngest son was nearly annihilated in a civil war during the era of the Judges, yet a generation later, Benjamin furnished Israel it's first king. So, then, the omission of Dan in John's list does not mean the tribe has ceased to exist. The Danites get a territorial inheritance in Messiah's Kingdom, according to Ezekiel, so they must also have a gate named for them in the New Jerusalem, along with the other tribes.

But what does this have to do with us from the nations? Everything. If Israel's Twelve Tribes, plus the priestly tribe of Levi, are not restored as tribes, then God's promises remain unfulfilled, and His redemption process remains incomplete. It's true that the restoration of Israel has progressed a long way, but where are the tribes? Are the Jewish people the totality of the Twelve Tribes? Probably not, although remnants of all the tribes are among them. It seems likely that the majority of the tribes are still among the nations, and that, while they will one day be reconstituted as Hebrews, they might not become Jewish.

This may be a hard thing to comprehend, just as it was a hard thing to comprehend not so long ago that the Upper Mattaponi and other Native American tribes could be restored. Yet it is happening with them, so why can't it happen with the rest of Israel? In fact, could it be that we who have proclaimed allegiance to Israel's Messiah might one day become part of those restored tribes?

Could this be so? And could it be so without harming the inheritance of the Jewish people, who remain the core of Israel? Let's ask the God of Israel about this, and as we wait on His answer, let's continue to pray for and work toward the restoration of the Jewish nation to the full inheritance God promised Abraham.