

## GUARANTEED INHERITANCE

### A Devotional Meditation on Matot (Tribes) and Masei (Stages)

Numbers 30:2-36:13; Jeremiah 2:4-28, 3:4, 30:10-11, 31:31-34;  
Romans 8:26-30, 11:25-32; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 8:8-12

Albert J. McCarn  
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It would have been helpful in my high school years if I had known that Paul was a Jewish scholar who based his writings on Messiah Yeshua's living example of what Moses and the Prophets taught. We didn't learn that in my Presbyterian school, nor in my Southern Baptist church. Instead, we learned soundbites from Paul, such as the verse that says all things work together for good for God's people.



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There's nothing confusing about that unless we want to find out why things work together for good. That's when we read the context of the verse, and we find this:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:26-30 ESV

So does God give us free choice, or has he predetermined everything from the beginning? Whatever the answer is, Jesus must be at the center of it, because Paul says so here:

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20 ESV

We know about the promises of new life in Christ, eternal salvation, and peace that passes understanding, so having Messiah's death and resurrection as the guarantee of these things is comforting. It's when we try to make sense of Paul's references to Israel's prophets that we get confused. After all, Christ made all things new, starting with a brand new covenant. So why do Paul and the other New Testament writers spend so much time quoting Moses and the Prophets and telling us about Israel?

It's because the New Covenant is all about Israel. The New Covenant is spelled out in Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8. In Jeremiah 30, which sets up the New Covenant passage, we find this:

Then fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the LORD,  
nor be dismayed, O Israel;  
for behold, I will save you from far away,  
and your offspring from the land of their captivity.  
Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease,  
and none shall make him afraid.  
For I am with you to save you,  
declares the LORD;  
I will make a full end of all the nations  
among whom I scattered you,  
but of you I will not make a full end.  
I will discipline you in just measure,  
and I will by no means leave you unpunished.

Jeremiah 30:10-11 ESV

This is why Israel is so important – not just to native-born Jewish people, but all people everywhere. God intends to have his Covenant world order, which is Messiah's Kingdom. He decided long ago that he would establish that Kingdom by and through Israel. All other tribes and peoples and nations and tongues eventually come under it, which is why Israel will be the only nation still standing in the end. That's why Israel's Messiah opened the way for us all to be adopted into the family of Abraham, along with the native-born.

Another way to look at this is through inheritance. Israel's tribes were to receive their inheritance after liberating God's covenant land, which was called Canaan at the time. Before the tribes entered Canaan, Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh asked to receive land on the east side of the Jordan River, which was ideal for their flocks and herds. I surmise that God allowed that since that territory also had been promised to Abraham. However, there was a condition:

So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel. And Moses said to them, "If the people of Gad and the people of Reuben, every man who is armed to battle before the LORD, will pass with you over the Jordan and the land shall be subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession. However, if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

Numbers 32:28-30 ESV

That was a reasonable condition, and the tribes carried out their promise. But notice that, even if they hadn't, they still would have inherited land. God had predetermined that Canaan, the core of his holy territory, would be settled by Israel. The only question was who would settle where. The people would make that choice. Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh chose to inherit on the east side of Jordan and help their kin secure their inheritance on the other side. Yet even if they hadn't helped their brothers, everyone would still have inherited something. Whether that included every individual is another matter, because individuals could remove themselves from the equation by refusing to

participate. The nation, however, and the foreigners who joined them, did receive an inheritance, just as they and we will receive an inheritance when Messiah's Kingdom is established in Zion.

The question for us is the same as the question for the tribes long ago: do we want to help our brethren gain their inheritance, or will we sit at home while God comes through for them? All Israel will be saved in the end, but it's better if we work together.