

# Tribes in Deborah?

I am reading The Oxford History of the Biblical World.

A few interesting points. There are parallel stories. One of the most surprising is that from the Song of Deborah you count 10 tribes, not 12. Of which 2 are not considered tribes generally.

From Judges 5:14

<sup>14</sup> From **Ephraim** they set out<sup>[e]</sup> into the valley,<sup>[f]</sup>  
following you, **Benjamin**, with your kin;  
from **Machir** marched down the commanders,  
and from **Zebulun** those who bear the marshal's staff;

<sup>15</sup> the chiefs of **Issachar** came with Deborah,  
and Issachar faithful to Barak;  
into the valley they rushed out at his heels.

Among the clans of **Reuben**  
there were great searchings of heart.

<sup>16</sup> Why did you tarry among the sheepfolds,  
to hear the piping for the flocks?

Among the clans of Reuben  
there were great searchings of heart.

<sup>17</sup> **Gilead** stayed beyond the Jordan;  
and **Dan**, why did he abide with the ships?  
**Asher** sat still at the coast of the sea,  
settling down by his landings.

<sup>18</sup> Zebulun is a people that scorned death;  
**Naphtali** too, on the heights of the field.

So that gives

1. Ephraim
2. Benjamin
3. *Machir*

4. Zebulun
5. Issachar
6. Reuben
7. *Gilead*
8. Dan
9. Asher
10. Naphtali

Gilead and Machir are not usually considered tribes, and this list is missing:

Manasseh  
Judah  
Gad  
Simeon

And Levi, though Levi is not usually considered one of the twelve. So is this an older list from further back?

Some interesting points the book make that argue for true memory in these stories is the fact that none of the ancient names – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc have YHWH in them. This is much more common later. Also that many of these characters do things later banned by the law – Abraham planting a Tamarisk tree (Gen 21.33), later banned in Deut 16:21 and Jacob marrying sisters (Gen 29:16-30), later banned in Lev 18:18.

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## **What do we learn of Paul's Journeys from his letters?**

I recently went through Tom Wright's book Paul: A Biography.

It made me think about what we would learn about Paul's

background and comings and goings if we did not have the book of Acts. The results were quite surprising to me. It turns out we learn a lot.

I am going through Paul's letters in the order of the New Testament.

## Romans

From Romans we learn Paul is an Apostle sent to the Gentiles. That immediately tells us he was not operating around Jerusalem. We learn he has not yet been to Rome, but hopes to visit them – implying a future visit to Rome. Paul talks about the message being accompanied by signs and wonders.

He also hopes to go on to Spain after seeing them. Implying he is to the East of them currently.

Paul Mentions Macedonia and Achaia being pleased to give financial help to the saints in Jerusalem, and his concern about being handled badly by the Jews of Jerusalem, implying he is going to go to Jerusalem shortly. Also that he has been in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia before.

He mentions being in prison with his relatives Andronicus and Junia.

So from a quick look at Romans we learn Paul was an Apostle who travelled widely, with great ambitions in getting around. Having already travelled around Greece and planning to go to Jerusalem, then Rome and after that Spain.

“so that from Jerusalem and as far around as **Illyricum** I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ” Rom 15:9

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illyricum\\_\(Roman\\_province\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illyricum_(Roman_province))

## 1 Corinthians

Paul appeared to them in fear and trembling. Implying a very difficult situation beforehand.

There is a lot about Paul and Apollos. So we learn that Paul first preached in Corinth (sowed the seed) and that later Apollos took the church on further (watered it).

We learn that Paul has seen Jesus. He quotes Jesus' sayings at the Last Supper. He also quotes Jesus on the subject of divorce. 1 Cor 7:10.

We also learn that he has seen Jesus (Ch 9) and that earlier in his life he persecuted the church.

Paul tells us that he has been in Ephesus for a while and a door is open there. He has fought with wild beasts there (had a lot of trouble).

## **2 Corinthians**

Paul had trouble in Asia, and thought that he might die there. He plans to go to Macedonia and see the Corinthians on the way.

Paul has had two visits to them. The last one was a painful visit.

He came to them via Troas looking for Titus.

Paul sent the Church a letter which made them sorry.

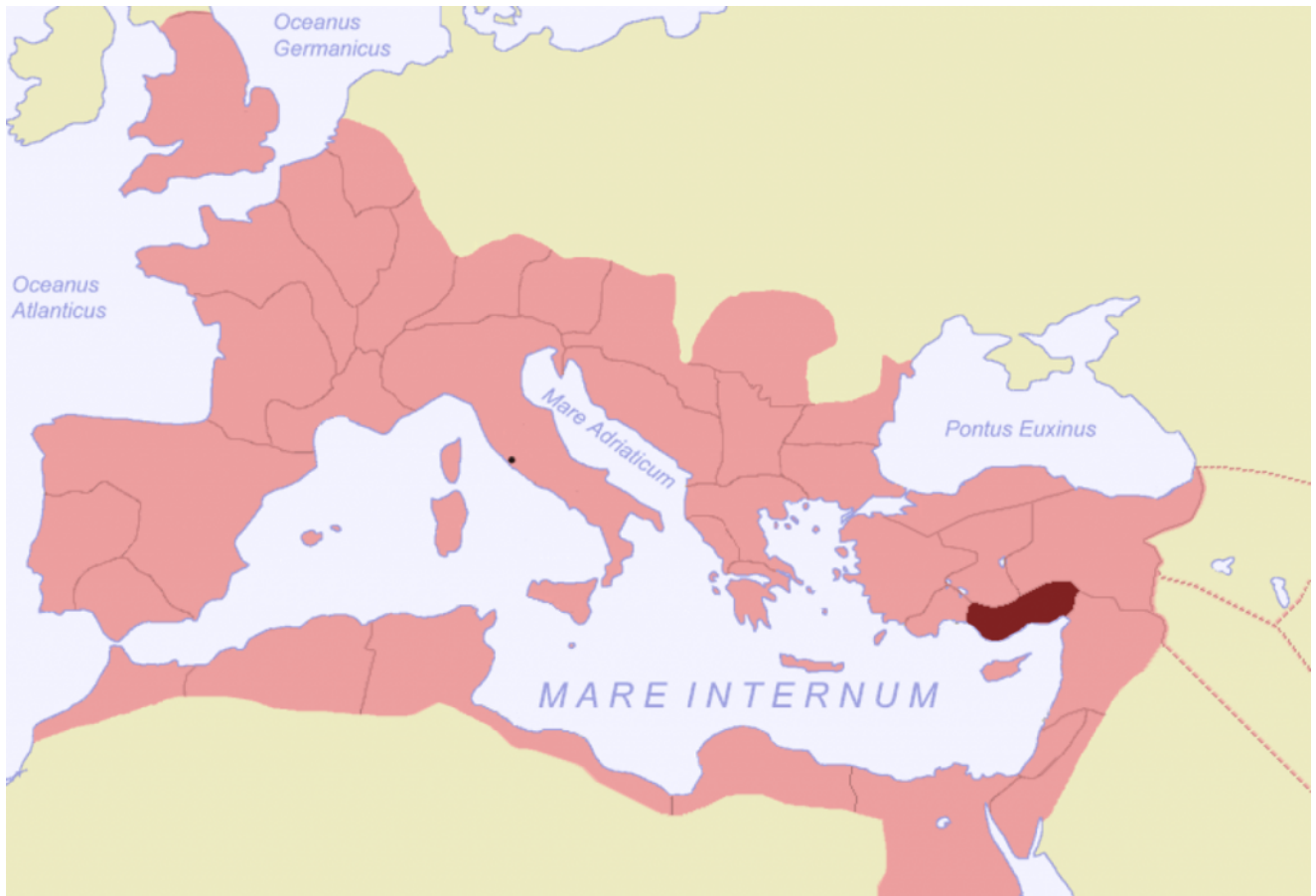
He is going to pick up a gift that they had promised. When Paul was in Corinth, his needs were met by believers from Macedonia. He boasts about his sufferings and weaknesses. That gives a long list of the difficulties he has been through stoning, shipwreck, lashes from Jews, beaten with rods etc.

## **Galatians**

We learn Paul was advancing in Judaism beyond his peers when young and was very zealous (persecuting the church). Jesus revealed himself to him. He went immediately into Arabia, then Damascus. 3 Years later to Jerusalem to meet Cephas and James

(in response to a revelation). Then he was in Syria & Cilicia. 14 years later he goes to Jerusalem again. He talks about a confrontation with Peter in Antioch.

Map below shows Cilicia.



## **Ephesians**

Very few details here. He is a prisoner, has received a revelation and a commission.

## **Philippians**

Paul is in prison but that has served to help the gospel. He was circumcised on the 8th day, a Benjamin, Hebrew, Pharisee. Zeal in persecuting the church. Zeal and violence mentioned together here like Phineas.

He left Macedonia. They gave him help, they sent a gift to him in Thessaloniki.

## **Colossians**

We learn again about Paul's sufferings. Also that he is in prison. He is working hard for them and those in Laodicea.

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## **The early Christians and circumcision?**

### **How did the early Christians come to believe that gentiles did not need to be circumcised?**

For us today it seems obvious but in those times they believed that the Law was given by God and it was a clear requirement of the law. We still believe that.

Circumcision, along with food laws and Sabbath, were special kind of markers that marked out who God's people were. Circumcision is talked of as a sign of the covenant.

Early on, for example with Cornelius, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in him and his household after they heard the message, believed and were baptised.

Now if God's Spirit dwells in someone how can it be said that they are not part of God's family. They must be.

If they are part of God's family without circumcision, there is no need for them to be circumcised. The Spirit is already a marker of their position. To have them circumcised as well implies that circumcision is a more important marker than the Spirit of God. To say that is actually approaching the

blasphemous.

This makes sense as God's long term plan was to bring the nations to follow him. Abraham, and then his family, is often seen as God's plan B after Adam failed.

What does that mean about the law. Jesus as the Messiah, the King, represents his people. What is true of him is true of his people. When David fought Goliath he represented Israel. His victory meant a victory for Israel.

Now when Jesus died and rose again in a sense his people have died and risen again and they now dwell in a new age.

If Jesus death is linked to the exodus. Then the appropriate accompanying law must be linked to Pentecost and the giving of the Spirit. Thus the guidance for this new age is the Holy Spirit and also what the apostles, teachers and prophets wrote early on, guided by the Holy Spirit.

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## **Notes from Son of God no Amazon Prime**

I learned a few interesting nuggets of information watching Son of God from Amazon Prime.

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Jesus-Son-God-Luke-Waldock/dp/B01IRRNX5G/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1535386946&sr=1-3&keywords=son+of+god](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Jesus-Son-God-Luke-Waldock/dp/B01IRRNX5G/ref=sr_1_3?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1535386946&sr=1-3&keywords=son+of+god)

The references from Ignatious were interesting. I looked them up in the book, Early Christian Writings. Penguin, translated by Maxwell Staniforth. 1987 version.

Ignatious – in his letters to various churches talks about

Jesus as our God.

Ignatious to Polycarp (end of the letter) – Farewell always in our God Jesus Christ.

Ignatious's Epistle to the Ephesians (beginning of the letter) – ... by the will of the Father and Jesus Christ our God.

later on in that letter – ... Jesus Christ our God was conceived by Mary of the seed of David and of the Spirit of God

Ignatious to the Romans (beginning of the letter) – All perfect happiness in Jesus Christ our God...

Ignatious to the Smyrnaeans (beginning of the letter) – Glory be to Jesus Christ, the Divine one.

These letters are all written approximately 110AD.

Also the reference from Pliny.

Pliny – talks about Christians singing to Christ as to a God. This is in a letter to the Emperor Trajan. Text can be found here. <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/texts/pliny.html>

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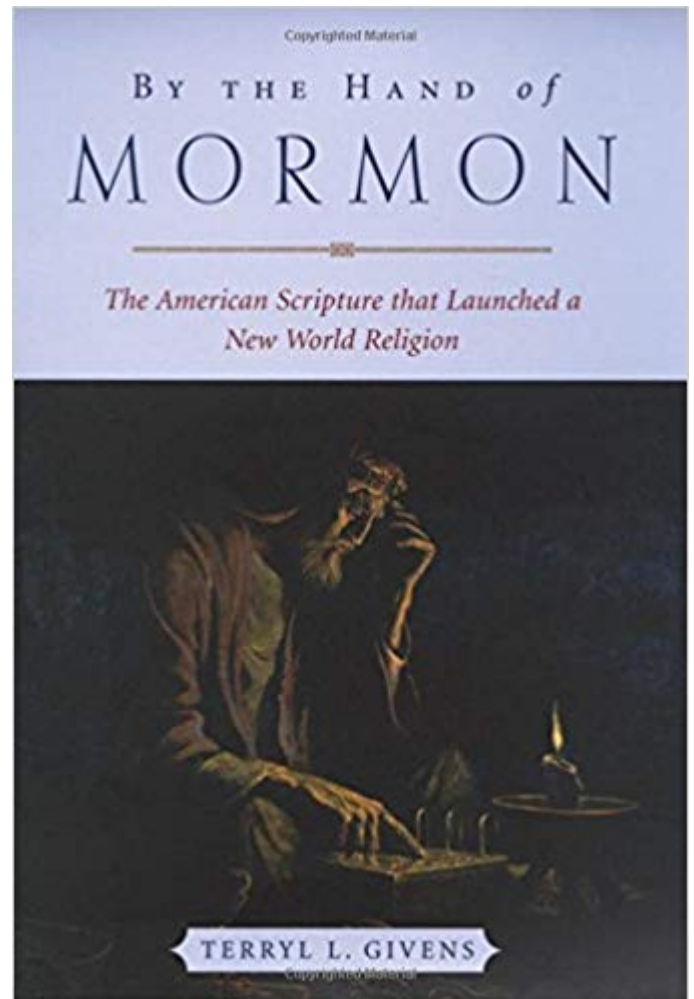
## By the Hand of Mormon

I have had very little to do with Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons till this year. I recently help set up a website for a local evangelist who engages with them.

<http://www.cults-investigated.com>



I went to my local library and found this book "By the Hand of Mormon" by Terry L Givens (Oxford University Press, 2002). So I got it out.



There is so much about Mormonism that I did not know.

Before learning new things, I find it useful to spell out what I already know. Regarding Mormonism, all I knew was

- It was very American
- Young American Male Mormons go on two year missions, often abroad
- There was a large march to Salt Lake City, to escape persecution
- The founder claims to have been visited by an Angel
- They have a religious book unique to them called The Book of Mormon

So below is what I have learned. The founder was called Joseph Smith. Born 1805 and dies 1844. The Book of Mormon was published in 1830. He did not have an educated background. He lived in an era when folk spirituality was a big part of

Christianity and prophecy and visions were very popular.

As a young boy, there was a lot of interest in finding gold or treasure. Joseph Smith used 'seer stones' in helping to look for treasure but was unsuccessful.

At the age of 14 or 15 he has a vision of God and Jesus. God says to him 'this is my beloved Son'.

At one point, he asks God which church to join. Then God the Father and Jesus the Son of God appear and tell him that all the churches are corrupt and he shouldn't join any of them.

The book of James is very important to Joseph – especially the verse about asking for wisdom. Apparently Joseph asked for wisdom before his visions. Many later Mormon testimonies say something similar – they asked for wisdom, read the Book of Mormon, and had some special feelings.

The angel Moroni tells him about a Golden Bible which he finds at Cumorah a drumlin in Manchester, New York, United States. It was in a buried stone box. It is on Golden plates and the writing is in reformed Egyptian.

Joseph Smith translates this Bible using the Urim and Thumin. His first translation however is lost.

He does another translation using a Seer Stone and that one is the current Book of Mormon.

Very few people actually see the Golden Bible. Though there are about 8 that testify to having visions. These testimonies were included in the Book of Mormon, at the front and back.

The Book of Mormon itself says that Jews emigrated to America at the time of the Tower of Babel and around 600BC, and they had quite advanced civilisations. At first the belief was that the Native Indians were descendants of those Jews. I'm not sure if that is still the case. When many amazing archaeological finds were happening in South and Central

America, the Mormons believed this was proof of the Book of Mormon.

## Books from the Book of Mormon

1 Nephi

2 Nephi

Jacob

Enos

Jarom

Omni

Words of Mormon

Mosiah

Alma

Helaman

3 Nephi

4 Nephi

Mormon

Ether

Moroni

An interesting literary device found in the book of Mormon is the Chiasmus. Basically the stanzas are constructed so that the first is in parallel with the last, the second in parallel with the penultimate and so on. Devices like this are said to have been unlikely to have been made up by Joseph Smith.

Biblical passages with a chiastic structure:

Gospel of John (including 6:36–40; 15:7–17; 16:16–31; 18:28–19:16a; 19:16b–42).<sup>45</sup> and Matthew 27:62–28:20.<sup>46</sup>

The Chiasmus of John 1:1–1850

A The Word with God the Father (1:1–2)

B The Word's role in creation (1:3)

C God's Grace to mankind (1:4–5)

D Witness of John the Baptist (1:6–8)

E The Incarnation of the Word (1:9–11)

X Saving Faith in the Incarnate Word (1:12–13)

E' The Incarnation of the Word (1:14)

D' Witness of John the Baptist (1:15)

C' God's Grace to mankind (1:16)

B' The Word's role in re-creation (1:17)

A' The Word with God the Father (1:18)

[http://www.onthewing.org/user/BS\\_Chiasmus%20-%20McCoy.pdf](http://www.onthewing.org/user/BS_Chiasmus%20-%20McCoy.pdf)