

TRIBE OF REUBEN – PROPHETIC OF CATHOLIC CHURCH & STATE

INTRODUCTION

Numbers Chapter 2 describes a Desert Camp where twelve tribes were arranged in order around the tabernacle. Each Israelite tribe in the Camp corresponds to a world power at a time in history. The order of the Israelite tribes corresponds to the chronological order of the world powers in history. The desert tribes were marching to the 'promised land'. Secular history is leading towards the Millennium rule of Christ on Earth in Jerusalem.

We use prophetic passages in the Bible pertaining to each Israelite tribe to identify the world nation they represent. The tribal emblems and the chronological order also contribute to identifying the nation. The gematria¹ of the verses referring to that tribe in Numbers Chapter 2 is prophetic of events that take place in that nation at the time in history where it occurs in 'the march'.

The tribes are prophetic shadows of the world powers: the world powers are not the tribes. Because of the dispersion of Israelites among the nations and even descendants among their royalty, some believe the nations are Israelite tribes. Remnants of Israelite language and DNA may be present in a given society and culture. But Israel was a man to whom specific promises were made concerning the land of Canaan. His physical children became the tribes which occupied that land and then were dispersed. An Israelite lives in Palestine and worships God under the Mosaic covenant. No one else is an Israelite.

History shows the prophecies hidden in the Book of Numbers have been fulfilled. God being the only person who knows the future, this is strong evidence that God was the author of the Book of Numbers. The humble man Moses merely transcribed the words letter for letter as God dictated them.

SUMMARY

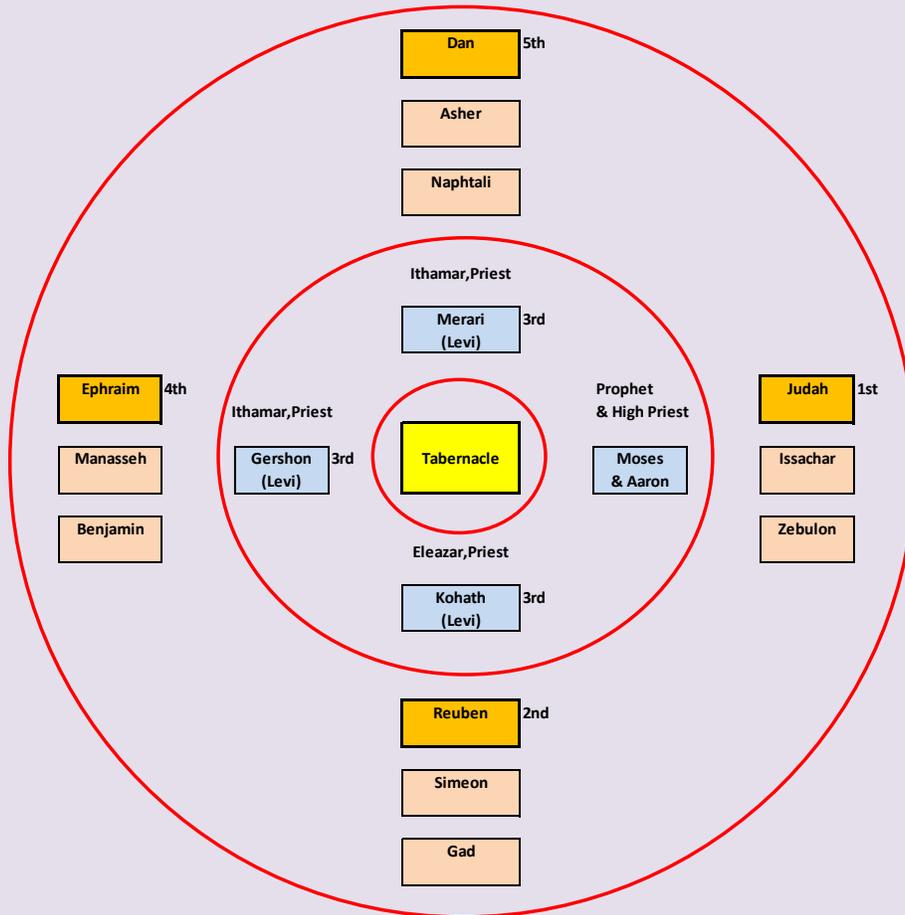
We propose the prophetic fulfillment of Reuben to be the Catholic Church and State [380-1776 AD]. Kings and nations loyal to the Pope may be seen as vassals of the Church.

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¹ Gematria is the numerical value of the Hebrew letters in the Old Testament. The numerical values of Hebrew letters are well accepted. Ancient Hebrews did not have a separate Arabic numeral system - they used letters in words and also as numbers. We take the spiritual meanings of the numbers from the 'Bible Numbers for Life' website¹ since the meanings of numbers provided there has been validated many different ways.

MAP OF THE DESERT CAMP



ORDER OF BREAKING CAMP	TRIBAL EMBLEM	PROPHETIC OF WORLD POWERS	ERA OF HISTORY	SPAN (YRS)	
1st	JUDAH ISSACHAR ZEBULON	Lion/Scepter Ass/Two Flocks Haven for Ships	Babylon Media / Persia Greece / Rome	604 - 539 BC 539 - 331 BC 331 BC - 380 AD	66 208 712
2nd	REUBEN SIMEON GAD	Man/Water Sword Troop Tramples	Catholic Church and State Kings of Europe / Crusaders Colonial Empires	380 - 1776 AD 799 - 1534 AD 1492 - 1776 AD	1396 735 284
3rd	LEVI	Sword	Inner Circle	ALL	
4th	EPHRAIM MANASSEH BENJAMIN	Fruitful Vine/Arrows Fruitful Vine/Arrows Wolf/Eats Spoil	United States of America United Kingdom Modern State of Israel	1776 - Present 1534 - 1947 AD 1947 - Present	? 243 ?
5th	DAN ASHER NAPHTALI	Biting Viper Food of Royalty Hind Let Loose	False Prophet World Commercial System Man of Lawlessness	Last Days Last Days Last Days	7 7 7

THE PROCESS OF MATCHING TRIBES TO WORLD POWERS IN HISTORY

The Bible says “**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see**” (Heb. 11:1). For reasons known to God, he is greatly pleased when we exercise faith. In the same spirit, we cannot offer to you proof that a certain Israelite tribe is prophetic of a certain world power in history. However, we can offer you Scriptural evidence, including: the written text, numbers quoted in the written text, and the numbers implicit in the letters of the written text. Like a trial before a judge, the objective is to test the evidence to see if it supports the assertion.

To evaluate this evidence it is necessary to read Scripture figuratively as well as literally. We know from Galatians Chapter 4:21-31 that Paul used the historical characters of Hagar and Sarah to signify two groups of people: religious Jews and believing Christians respectively. Hagar and Sarah were real people who lived long ago. However, their story in Scripture is a type and a shadow of people and events many centuries later. We believe that allegories, types, and shadows exist in most if not all Bible stories. Therefore, we will base some of our evidence on matching Israelite tribes to world powers on the same principle, to wit, that God intended us to understand that these true historical accounts also prophetically signify times and events far into the future.

PROPHECIES IN SCRIPTURE - RELATED TO REUBEN

Reuben was the first son of Jacob. There are prophetic parallels between Reuben and Catholicism:

BRIEF HISTORY – THE LIFE OF REUBEN

1. Leah named her first son Reuben because “**The Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now**” (Gen. 29:32)². Leah was unloved by Jacob. In turn, Reuben did not love or respect his father.
2. He gathered mandrakes for his mother Leah, which she used to bribe Rachel to sleep with Jacob. (Gen. 30:14)
3. Reuben allowed either his passion or hatred of his father³ to overtake him when he slept with Bilhah his father’s concubine and mother of his brothers Dan and Naphtali (Gen.35:22)⁴ Jacob was sorely grieved that he had fathered such a wicked son. In addition to being the son of an unloved mother, Reuben became a pariah within his family as well.
4. Like the rest of his brothers Reuben hated Joseph because Jacob lavished his love and attention on Joseph (Gen.37:4)
5. But Reuben showed virtue and leadership by preventing the other brothers from killing Joseph and made plans to return him to his father (Gen.37:21-22)
6. Reuben became a liar when he and the other brothers told Jacob that Joseph was killed by wild beasts. (Gen.37:33)

² First reference to Reuben in Scripture is in Chapter 29 Verse 32. The spiritual number 29 means “**Holy Life**”, and the spiritual number 32 means “**Believer’s Fellowship**”.

³ The case of David’s rebellious son Absalom violating his father’s concubine(s) shows it is not necessarily a mark of lust but can be an act of contempt for his authority born of abiding disrespect (2 Sam 16:21-23)

⁴ There is a possibility Bilhah did not consent. This would be an even worse mark on Reuben’s character.

7. Reuben showed he had a conscience when he reasoned the trouble in Egypt was God's judgment for "sinning against the boy" (Gen.42:22)

PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

This paper takes the view that women in the Genesis account represent groups of believers⁵ and men in the Genesis account represent nations or spiritual leaders among the believers (in particular their wives). This is a key principle of Bible interpretation upon which lies the argument presented here as to what Reuben prophetically represents.

1. Reuben will ever be remembered for "climbing into his father's bed" (Gen. 48:4). We propose that Reuben represents the Catholic Church and State [300AD – 1700 AD] which appropriated for itself rights and privileges which rightfully belong to the Father in heaven:
 - The Pope claims to speak inerrant words with divine authority
 - The Pope and his ministers claim the power to forgive sins
 - The Pope and his ministers are addressed as "Father" or "Holy Father"
 - The Pope and his ministers claim the power to bless and to curse, to communicate or to ex-communicate
 - The Pope claims to have authority over all believers everywhere
 - The Pope and his ministers reserve the sole privilege of public ministry
2. Reuben was the first born son. It is a common weakness of first born sons to think of themselves as better than the rest of the brothers. Since they are first in line to accept the mantle of the family name and a double share of the family inheritance, they feel more entitled to respect and deference. Although Christ taught his followers to "call no one Father" for our Father is in heaven, this is not the attitude of Catholic clergy, who see themselves in the same role as Aaronic priests. In their thinking lay believers are unable to approach God without their ministry. They believe the Pope is the high priest of the church.
3. Often first born sons are more ready to take leadership and responsibility for the rest of the family. The Roman Catholics see all of Christendom as their flock and have appropriated to themselves sole ownership and responsibility for all. (See Appendix A – What is a Catholic?)
4. Reuben did not love his father Jacob. The Catholics do not love God either. We know this for an indisputable fact because if they loved God they would obey his commandments (1 John 2:3-4) and submit to the Lordship of Christ and the merit of his atoning sacrifice. As it is the Catholic clergy would rather have men submit to their authority. They negate the saving power of Christ's atoning sacrifice by teaching Christ must be crucified anew at each communion, much in the same way as Old Testament priests sacrificed animals. By this they reduce Christ to the status of an animal, and his death of the same value as animal's blood.
5. Reuben collected mandrakes to present to his mother. The mandrake was thought to stimulate sexual desires therefore it ought to be considered very odd for a son to present these to his mother who at that time was not sleeping with any man. Reuben demonstrated the extent of his lust by sleeping with Bilhah, who belonged to his father. Did he have

⁵ Galatians 4:21-31 supports this interpretation. Paul likens Hagar to Jews and Rachel to Christians.

- desires to sleep with his mother also? This is not an idle question since according to legend Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, is reputed to have slept with his mother Semaramis. Some commentators compare the Babylonian mystery religion, which worships both Nimrod and his mother Semaramis, to the Catholic worship of both Jesus and Mary. Catholics call Mary the “mother of God” and pray for blessing from her just as a Christian would pray to Jesus. They also believe she was born without sin. For these reasons many from other faiths perceive Christians to worship more than one god and in this fashion the reputation of God the Father and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is tarnished even further. The idolatrous worship of Mary and her images may be likened to Reuben making ‘offerings’ to his mother.
6. Reuben had a conscience which he demonstrated trying to save Joseph from his brothers. The Catholic Faith preaches morality and it recognizes sin. Just as Reuben could not save Joseph so the Catholic faith is also not able to save even one of its members from eternal judgment. Recognizing sin and confessing sin are good things, but confession must be made to God, not priests. Without the power of the blood of Jesus on the cross, sin against God cannot be forgiven. Neither does the spurious extra-Biblical invention of a Purgatory permit any sinning person the opportunity to work off sins in the after-life.
 7. Joseph represents the spiritual man, the one who is loved by the Father in heaven. Unlike Reuben, Joseph loved his father and experienced love in return. Just as Reuben hated Joseph the Catholics hate Protestants and all others who claim the spiritual blessing that comes from faith in God through personal appropriation of the sacrifice of Christ.
 8. Joseph was thrown into a pit, and so Protestants have been violently suppressed by Catholics.
 9. In fairness, Reuben said “Don’t shed any blood”. Yet the Catholics never let blood shedding stop them from exerting their authority. At times Protestants have responded likewise towards Catholics. Joseph showed us the spiritual way to handle hatred between brothers: although he was grievously mistreated by his brothers he never attempted to exact revenge or take their lives. Instead, he offered them his forgiveness and restored them to fellowship. Recent Popes of the Catholic Church have attempted to intervene in world affairs as peace-makers. But the time in history that Reuben is prophetic of has passed.

Importantly, there are a number of passages related to Reuben that are explicitly prophetic:

BLESSING OF JACOB TO REUBEN (Genesis Chapter 49)

(v.3) “Reuben, you are my firstborn. My_might and the beginning of my strength

The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.”

(v.4) “Unstable as water, you shall not excel,

Because you went up to your father’s bed;

Then you defiled it – he went up to my couch”

INTERPRETATION

Reuben is portrayed as a nation being:

- Unstable (morally)
- Under-achieving his potential (not excelling)
- Usurping authority (disrespectful to his father)

The Roman Catholic faith has usurped spiritual authority from the Father in Heaven (as discussed in the previous section). It cannot reach any spiritual potential because it has disconnected itself from the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, by claiming that honor for its leader. In terms of worldly possessions, impressive buildings, millions of adherents, and influence on world affairs it has had much impact. However, in the eyes of the Father in Heaven it is completely dishonorable and receives no blessing whatsoever.

BLESSING OF MOSES TO REUBEN (Deuteronomy 32)

“Let Reuben live and not die. Nor let his men be few.” (v.6)

INTERPRETATION

The Bible says God’s mercy is everlasting and his faithfulness is new every morning. God is able to show longsuffering and patience with even to those who defy him to his face. In spite of all the crooked faith and practice of the clergy, deeply spiritual believers have somehow made their home in the Roman Catholic faith through the ages. (This would not include those who are merely deeply religious, but those who are pious for Christ’s sake).

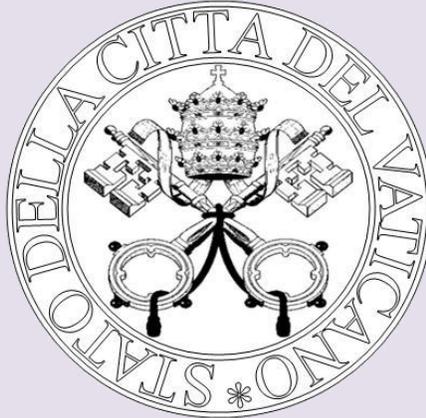
TRIBAL EMBLEMS & NATIONAL SYMBOLS

In Numbers Chapter 2 it says **“Every one of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father’s house”** (Numbers 2:2). We thus conclude that each tribe of Israel had emblems, or tribal symbols. The tribal symbols of Reuben would likely have been:

- Symbol of a Water
- Symbol of Man

The constellation AQUARIUS pictures a servant man pouring out water from a vessel or jar on his shoulder. This picture would square with the lowly status of Reuben among the tribes. For more on the link between the star sign Aquarius and the Roman Catholic Church, please see section 7.0 STARS of the Bible Numbers For Life website where there is a document addressing God’s Truth in Aquarius.

The seal for the Vatican City is displayed below:



6

The seal features a crossed set of keys bound together by a knotted rope. Above the keys is a royal crown with a cross at the top. Our interpretation of the STATE symbol:

- The knotted rope – a symbol of BONDAGE and SLAVERY
- The keys – a symbol of POWER or AUTHORITY to BIND and UNBIND
- The crown – a symbol of SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY such as those worn by Jewish priests

Ironically, there are TWO keys. The spiritual number 2 means “DIVISION”, so although the Catholic Church claims the power to bind and unbind (i.e. open and close the door for an adherent to go to heaven), in fact the power it claims to have is DIVIDED – in other words the Catholic Church is spiritually POWERLESS.

The word ‘RELIGION’ comes from Latin words which mean BIND – AGAIN. The Catholic faith is a religion – it traps or binds adherents into pledging their loyalty and obedience to itself, not to God. A Christian who receives forgiveness of sins is released from the FIRST BONDAGE, bondage to sin. Should that believer become a member of the Catholic Church they are entering the SECOND BONDAGE.

As Paul wrote in the Book of Galatians:

“But now after you have known God – or rather are known by God – how is that your TURN AGAIN to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire AGAIN to be in BONDAGE. You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” (Galatians 4:9-11)

See also Galatians 2:21, 3:1-5, and 5:1.

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Seal_of_the_State_of_Vatican_City.png

GEMATRIA ANALYSIS – NUMBERS CHAPTER 2 VERSE 10 AND 11

The gematria of the word ‘Reuben’ is 259, which means: **The End (7)** of **The Chosen Servant (37)**. The apostle Paul and the apostle Peter both died in Rome. When they died there was no further apostolic succession and there were no further apostles in Rome. Specifically: there were no men who had seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:21) and who wrote Scripture. The claim of Popes to utter inerrant words is fanciful. The confusion their words brought into the community of believers have served only to undermine the faith and negate the Word of God.

There are two verses in Chapter 2 of Numbers regarding Reuben.

Verse 10

shall be the standard	דגל	37		
On the south side	מחנה	103		
of Reuben	ראובן	259	X1	1,467 Spirit (9) of Word Hid in Heart (163)
of the camp	תימנה	505		
according to their armies:	לצבאתם	563	Y1=X1+X2	3,095 Weakness (5) of Old Testament Restored (114)
and the captain	ונשיא	367		
of the children	לבני	92		
of Reuben	ראובן	259	X2	1,628 Chosen Servant (37) Bloody Murderers (44)
shall be Elizur	אליצור	337		
the son	בן	52		
of Shedeur.	שדיאור	521		

INTERPRETATION

Gematria analysis begins at the lowest level of parts of phrases (X1 to X4), then to sums of verses (e.g. Y1=X1+X2), then to sums of multiple verses (e.g. Z1 = X1+X2+X3+X4).

The spiritual meaning of the number 10 is “**Testimony**” and in Bible interpretation refers to a group of believers assembling together to present truth to the world.

The first phrase in Verse 10 (X1) has the gematria 1,467 which means **Spirit (9)** of **Word Hid in Heart (163)**.⁷ The roots of the Roman Catholic Church begin in Rome with the massacre of Christians by Roman Emperors hostile to the faith. Christians were forced to worship underground in the catacombs in Rome and in other cities. This continues today as believers in Jesus who accept the authority of Scripture over any decree of man and who chose to remain members of the Roman Catholic Church must practice their faith privately and share their faith secretly or risk severe punishments up to and including ex-communication. Believers have existed in the Roman Catholic Church since its beginning, but they have existed in that movement with fear and trembling.

The second phrase of Verse 10 (X2) has the gematria of 1,628 which means **Chosen Servant (37)** is a **Bloody Murderer (44)**. The Chosen Servant in the context of the Roman Catholic Church is of course the Pope, who is chosen from among the Cardinals. Regretfully, history informs us that Popes authorized the use of torture and death to punish dissenters, not only within the boundaries of the church but

⁷ The number 1,467 = 9 x 163. Spiritual meaning of a number always relates to the meaning of its sub-factors.

within the boundaries of the lands of nations whose kings pledged allegiance to the Pope. Furthermore Popes have urged these same loyal kings to send expeditions against other nations in Europe and beyond and to use brutal military force against peoples and nations not loyal to the Pope. The number and duration of wars that resulted is staggering. The Crusades are one example of misuse of religious authority. Another example is the Inquisition. The two other Israelite tribes in Reuben’s Camp were Simeon (**European Kings / Crusades**) and Gad (**Colonial Empires**). [See the other papers on those tribes]

The total gematria of Verse 10 and Verse 11 which pertain to the Tribe of Reuben is 5,252 which has the meaning **Rebellion Destroyed (101)** by **Gospel Work (52)**. As truly frightening as Verse 10 is, there is a balance that comes in Verse 11 which is the Reformation. The Catholic Church and State did so much damage to the reputation of Christ we are still suffering today with Moslems that perceive Christians as barbaric crusaders and athiests in our own lands who confuse the Catholic religion with the genuine spirituality offered by the Lord. The construction of a religious system with a hierarchy of elitist professional clergy with a One Church Ruler and Potentate at the pinnacle was never the will of God. The heresies regarding the merits of Christ’s blood and other misconceptions regarding salvation and the life hereafter was in contradiction to the plain truth of Scripture all along. The whole mess is rebellion against God and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God knew it and so it was destined not to prosper (per the prophecy of Jacob to Reuben) but to be surpassed by the brave believers who at the risk of their lives pioneered the Reformation.

Verse 11

Bible Phrase	Hebrew	Gematria		Meaning of the Spiritual Numbers
And his host,	וצבאו	105	X3	311 Division (2) of Fellowship (32)
and those that were numl	ופקדיו	206		
and six	ששה	605		Y2=X3+X4 2,157 Strength (3) of Blessed Ones (128)
thereof, were forty	וארבעים	329		
thousand	אלף	111	X4	1,846 Prophet (71) of Gospel (26)
and five	וחמש	354		
hundred.	מאות	447		

In verse 11 Reuben is credited with having **46,500** fighting men. The spiritual meaning of 46,500 is **Weakness (5)** of **Might of God (93)**.⁸ The application to the Catholic Church and State is that its actions demonstrated a belief God was weak, because time after time when faced with perceived danger or threat, it resorted to the use of force as the solution. Looking at it another way, the Catholic Church and State with its perverse anti-Biblical doctrines had no strength to perform any spiritual service for God in enlightening the hearts of men. The Catholic Church and State was bequeathed a spiritual inheritance straight from the lips of the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter. It turned that pure spiritual legacy into a vain religion, an empire of intrigue, a spirit of fear of man, and ungodly alliances with nations.

⁸ In spiritual numbers the zeros at the end of the number neither add nor take away from its meaning. So 46,500 has the same spiritual meaning as 465 which equals 5 x 93.

INTERPRETATION

The gematria of the first phrase of verse 18 (X3) is **311** which is the **64th** prime number. The number **64** means "**Division**" (**2**) of "**Believers' Fellowship**" (**32**). God judged the Catholic Church and State and it was divided by the Reformation. Jesus taught us that believers ought to be united in one heart and one mind because there is one baptism, one bread, and one body. It is his heart's desire that we show the world not contention and strife, but unity that comes out of truth and love. However, when cancer grow it is necessary to cut it out or risk dying. And so the Catholic Church and State was cut out of the plans of God and replaced by a new vehicle for his will: Protestants who honored his Word.

The gematria of the second phrase of verse 18 (X4) is **1,846** which means: "**Prophet**" (**71**) of "**Gospel**" (**26**). The Gospel is the good news of how anyone can be saved by confessing their sins to God, repenting, and accepting the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the payment for their sin. It is good news indeed because it guarantees once and for all forgiveness of sins and a warm welcome into heaven. Although this truth is simple, it was kept hidden from seekers by the doctrines of the Catholic Church and State. The Reformation changed that. Like prophets of old, God raised up men who were unafraid to denounce those false tenets and proclaim the true Gospel: Reformation leaders like **Martin Luther**, **John Wesley**, and others. Praise be to God, the people heard their cry in the wilderness and turned away from the Catholic Church and State and turned to God.

NEAREST LEVITE FAMILY IN THE DESERT CAMP

In the Desert Camp each side was assigned a family of the tribe of Levites who carried a portion of the tabernacle. The family on the South side of the Camp nearest Reuben were the **Kohathites**:

“The families of the children of Kohath were to camp on the South side of the tabernacle...Their duty included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work related to them.” (Numbers 3:29-31)

The duty of the Kohathites was to be strictly porters. They were servants of the priests of Aaron and they carried the furniture in the desert. They performed no ministry with the holy things. In fact they were not even allowed to touch or to see the holy things:

“When the Camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the testimony with it... [Then cover all the other articles of furniture]... And when Aaron and his sons are finished covering the sanctuary, when the Camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, but they shall not touch any holy thing lest they die...they shall not watch the holy things being covered lest they die.” (Numbers 4:4-33)

The sons of Korah, of the family of Kohath, and others became resentful of their role as slaves and beasts of burden to serve the priests. Moses said “the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you close to himself [i.e. the tabernacle]...Are you seeking the priesthood

also?" (Numbers 16) The earth opened up and the sons of Korah and the other dissenters were swallowed. Their rebellion was short lived and the authority of the Aaronic priesthood was preserved.

The proximity of each family of Levites to the sides of the Camps offers insight into God's dealings during the period in history when the nation corresponding to the tribes is a world power.

The teaching of the Bible regarding Christians is Jesus Christ is our High Priest (Hebrews 8) and he is also the King of Kings (Rev. 19:16). Likewise every saint of the Lord is both a priest and a royal prince under Christ (1 Peter 2:9). The Roman Catholic Church imposes on the body of Christ the Old Testament order, where there is a division between Aaronic priests (Catholic priests) and everyone else (Laity or servants of the priests).

In the typology of world powers Reuben is the Roman Catholic Church and State but spiritually they are the Kohathites not the true priests, which are the genuine born again believers in Jesus. As such the Roman Catholic Church and State have no spiritual eyes (cannot see the holy furniture), no spiritual ministry (just haul the furniture around), and they make everyone who joins with them a religious slave just as they are. See Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-15).

Final note: It is a fact of history that the holy furniture of Herod's temple were taken to Rome when the X Legion of Titus sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD. O the depths of the wisdom of the Word of God! That roughly 1,500 years before it happened God predicted it in the gematria of Numbers Chapter 2.

The capture of the Temple Menora is featured on the Arch of Titus in Rome:



⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arch_of_Titus_Menorah.png

HISTORY OF TRIBE OF REUBEN

In the Desert Camp the host of Reuben were about average size (46,500 fighting men). That number declined by 2,770 to 43,730 after the second census. The second census was taken after Moab seduced the children of Israel into committing sexual immorality. The tribes who committed sexual immorality were the ones whose populations declined after the second census.

Moses conquered the Eastern side of the Jordan River and bequeathed the best of that land to a half of the tribe of Manasseh and the worst of the land to the tribe of Reuben. The tribe of Reuben continued to fight alongside his brothers in the conquest of the Promised Land and only enjoyed his inheritance after all the Promised Land was divided among the rest of the tribes.

Based on the number of fighting men the tribe of Reuben made an average contribution to the effort to occupy the Promised Land. In spite of this, Reuben received a relatively small parcel of some of the poorest land as his inheritance. The ongoing indignity of being the first born and seeing other tribes enjoying greater success and blessing, the tribe of Reuben continued to be estranged from the rest of his brothers within Israel.

The ill will of Reuben led to the incident of the Altar by the Jordan (Joshua 22). The Altar was seen as a sign of division and ill will. Altars were customarily built at the border of unrelated nations and often hostile nations (Jacob and Laban for example built an altar at their border signifying guilt if either party should cross that border). The other tribes mistook the Altar as an altar to another god and a heated discussion ensued. It appears there was a realisation Reuben received a poor allotment because the comment was made **“If the Land you possess is defiled, come over to the Lord’s land...and share the land with us.”** (Joshua 22:19) Such an offer was in fact worthless because the allotments had been decided and there was no way to reverse them without relinquishing one’s status as a tribe of Israel.

As for the rest of Reuben’s history little is mentioned in Scripture. The tribe did not feature in the leadership of Israel during the period of the Judges, nor significantly in any of the battles to rescue Israel from under the oppression of heathen nations around Israel.

Being a territory on the border Reuben would have suffered whenever the nations to the East attacked Israel, which includes the Moabites and the Amalekites. The first foreign invasion came from the North from the king of Aram but he was defeated by Othniel the nephew of Caleb. The next foreign invasion came from the East, from Eglon king of Moab who suppressed Israel for 18 years and took possession of the City of Palms, that is Jericho. In order to do that, the king of Moab would have had to have taken possession of all of Reuben’s land. We can therefore say Reuben’s land was the first part of the Promised Land to be lost to foreign invaders.

APPENDIX A – WHAT IS A CATHOLIC?¹⁰

Church history is worth studying. The development of Catholic theology and ecclesiology [the theory of the church] are have unfolded through Christian councils. The Christian Councils, comprised of bishops of local churches, not surprisingly upheld the centrality and authority of bishops in the life of the church. The concept of a clergy / laity division eventually led to the concept of higher clergy / lower clergy divisions. And from that we ended up with most high clergy (Pope) / highest clergy (Cardinals) / higher clergy (Bishops) / lower clergy (Priests) / laity (everyone else). The more is the pity since the Bible clearly teaches all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:9) and Jesus is our high priest (Hebrews 8:1). There are different gifts in the body, and different ministries in the body, but all believers have access to God and none of us need of a priest to intercede for them.

Around 107AD, the concept of pre-eminence of bishops began with a letter of Ignatius of Antioch wrote to Christians in Smyrna. He wrote: "Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church."

The early church spread throughout the Roman Empire and over time developed a regional structure. Communion of saints centered around the five major Roman districts: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. The bishop of each of these cities had authority over bishops in the towns and cities within its district.

In 325 AD at the First Council of Nicaea the authority of three sees: Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch were recognized. At this Council the 'metropolitan' bishops were granted certain rights. So called 'suffragan' bishops of other cities must submit to the 'metropolitan' bishop. The church was molding itself to the architecture of Roman administration. Note: The Nicene Creed was also established at this Council.

In 313 AD by decree of Emperor Constantine I in the Edict of Milan, Christians were permitted freedom of assembly and worship. Confiscated church property was returned. Not only Christianity but all religions were permitted of worship.

In 380 AD, Emperor Theodosius I enacted a law stating that Nicene Christianity was the state church of Rome.

In 381 AD, Emperor Theodosius I called the First Council of Constantinople where he divided the Eastern Church into five "dioceses": Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Pontus, and Thrace. The Council decreed "The bishops are not to go beyond their dioceses to churches lying outside of their bounds, nor bring confusion on the churches; but let the Bishop of Alexandria, according to the canons, alone administer the affairs of Egypt; and let the bishops of the East manage the East alone, the privileges of the Church in Antioch, which are mentioned in the canons of Nice, being preserved; and let the bishops of the Asian

¹⁰ Sources of this research is Wikipedia: 'Catholicism', 'East-West Schism', 'Pentarchy', 'Constantine I', and 'Christianity'.

Diocese administer the Asian affairs only; and the Pontic bishops only Pontic matters; and the Thracian bishops only Thracian affairs.”

Over time at subsequent Councils the authority of the bishops of the ‘metropolitan’ sees waxed and waned with administrative and ecclesiastical authority shifting and merging. The trend became clear: wherever Roman authority over civil affairs was the most concentrated, the bishop of that city gained the greatest authority.

In 446 AD Pope Leo I expressly claimed the authority of the Roman See in all affairs of the church: "The care of the universal Church should converge towards Peter's one seat, and nothing anywhere should be separated from its Head.”

In 661 AD the Moslems conquered all of Egypt, Palestine, and as far North as Antioch.

In 680 AD Emperor Constantine IV called together the Third Council of Constantinople and five of the ‘patriarchs’ or bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch attended. The Council was declared to be ‘ecumenical’ since it represented all districts of Christendom. This division of church government did not last. The pattern of ecclesiastical authority molding after Roman administrative authority continued and the battle for church supremacy became focussed between Constantinople and Rome.

By 1054 AD a delegation was sent to Constantinople requesting submission of the Eastern Church to Rome. This was rejected. The Church of Rome excommunicated the Church of Constantinople, and vice versa. To heighten the divide, The Western Pope suppressed use of Greek in the church, and the Eastern Pope suppressed the use of Latin in the church. This was known as ‘The Great Schism’.