

The Holy Grail and Judgment Day: gaming in Arthurian and Biblical traditions

by

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Introduction

Many roleplaying game systems are set in the real world, ranging from the prehistoric and ancient (e.g., GURPS Ice Age and Egypt, various source books on classical Greece and Rome) to the far future (e.g., Star Trek, GURPS Traveler, Rifts). One of the most enduring and powerful legends of our world is the Holy Grail. The Grail is important to many gaming worlds, the most obvious being Arthurian and medieval settings (e.g., Pendragon, GURPS Camelot, Ars Magica, AD&D Crusades). The Grail captivates modern audiences, and its allure can be incorporated into modern and near-modern scenarios (e.g., Call of Cthulu, the White Wolf line, Brave New World, Cyberpunk, Shadowrun). As "The Force" worked in Star Wars, the mysticism surrounding the Grail can also serve as a moral basis for campaigns than span history or involve "immortals" (e.g., Nephilim, In Nomine).

Perhaps the power of the Grail legend stems from its plasticity. The exact meaning of the Grail is ultimately up to the individual. The literature itself alternatively presents it as a platter (e.g., the 12th century *Perceval* by Chrétien de Troyes¹ and the 15th century *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory²), a stone (the 13th century *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach³), or a chalice (e.g., the 13th century *Perlesvaus*⁴). Its literary origin may lie in a Celtic cornucopia or cauldron of rejuvenation. One of its most enduring images is the very cup that Jesus used at the Last Supper and that with which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood from Jesus's wounds (e.g., the 13th century *Joseph of Arimathea* by Robert de Boron⁵). This is the interpretation that I adopt for this essay. I point out that I am not advocating the infusion of religious moralizing or sermonizing into roleplaying games. Rather, my intention is to illustrate how the Grail might fit into human history as depicted in the Bible. A rich, coherent story can be told by integrating Grail and Biblical traditions, going beyond the realm of King Arthur and affecting humankind throughout time and place.

For gaming purposes, the Grail quest is not confined to the time of Arthur. The quest existed before his reign, and continues into and beyond the present. Throughout history, selected individuals are called to search for the Grail. Those that succeed take their place in the Grail Company -- an elite fellowship descended from the Twelve Tribes of Israel (i.e., descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, grandson of Abraham). The Company, founded by Joseph of Arimathea, guards the Grail until Judgment Day, when it will serve as the vessel that dispenses the water of life to the righteous. By fitting the Grail into this larger cosmological setting, the motivations and actions of player characters surrounding the Grail become crystallized. If, for example, the Grail Company is composed of mortals, then new members must replace those that die. Thus, the Company must watch for new questers, possibly shielding them from the forces of evil and rooting out impostors. In turn, Grail questers must find the Company, possibly overcoming moral and spiritual tests. This dynamic is eternal, and is a fertile source of gaming material. To construct a framework for such epic roleplaying, this article fleshes out possible relationships between Judgment Day and the Grail, the Twelve Tribes and Arthurian figures, and the Grail Company and the Grail quest.

Judgment Day and the Grail

The Revelation to John, or the Apocalypse, is ideal to build a story around because of its vivid imagery, multi-layered symbolism, and linear narrative. The events in Revelation can be grouped into two main parts. The first is the opening of the Seven Seals, and the visitations of disasters upon the earth (Rev 4-11). The second, the Divine Drama, describes the rise and eventual defeat of the demonic beasts and the Devil, the day of Judgment, and the renewal of heaven and earth, including the descent of new Jerusalem from heaven (Rev 12-22).

Revelation's plot reveals an interesting condition that must be met before Judgment Day arrives. Upon the opening of the Fifth Seal, a host of martyrs calls to God "to judge and avenge our blood upon those who dwell upon the earth" (Rev 6:9-10). They are told to wait until the number of their fellow servants and brethren is completed. These servants and brethren appear to be members of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. After the opening of the Sixth Seal, an angel tells four others not to harm the earth until the "servants of our God" have been sealed upon their foreheads (Rev 7:3). The number of the sealed is then given -- 144,000 -- which is explicitly 12,000 from each of the Twelve Tribes (Rev 7:4-8). After this enumeration, the Seventh Seal is opened, and further calamities smite the earth. Later, the sealed 144,000 stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, to accompany him throughout the coming judgment (Rev 14:1-4). Eventually the martyrs' awaited vengeance arrives, as God avenges "the blood of his servants" on the great harlot of Babylon (Rev 19:2), who was previously "drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev 17:6).

Thus, the gathering of the 144,000 of the Twelve Tribes can be interpreted as a rate-determining step in the coming of divine judgment. This gathering can be a gradual process, spread out over centuries or millennia. The 144,000 can accumulate in a piecemeal fashion, through the successful quests of unique individuals over human history. Equating the 144,000 to the Grail Company, each individual's successful Grail quest may be finalized by the "sealing" of the forehead. Once the 144,000th quester has been sealed, the Seventh Seal is opened. The Arthurian theme of a "Perilous" seat fits into this scenario. In Robert de Boron's *Joseph of Arimathea*, Joseph of Arimathea's right-hand seat, the "Judas seat," is reserved for the grandson of Bron, the Grail King. This seat is not to be filled until Judgment Day. Perhaps Bron's grandson, identified as Perceval in other Arthurian stories, will be the 144,000th member of the Grail Company. For gaming worlds set after the time of Arthur, this 144,000th member could be a descendant of Perceval.

After God's judgment, new Jerusalem descends from Heaven, and the river of the water of life flows through the city (Rev 22:1-2, Zech 14:8, Ezek 47:1-10). Jesus -- the Lamb and the "Alpha and Omega" -- distributes this water to the conquering righteous (Rev 7:17, 21:6-7). Because the Grail dispenses this water, the primary responsibility of the Grail Company is to safeguard the Grail until its final use on Judgment Day.

The Grail Company and the Quest

The Company. The Grail Company is a fellowship of men and women that guard and serve the Grail. The Arthurian literature indicates that the Company's members are linked by virtuous character and genealogy. Several stories extol the virtues of humility, moderation, loyalty to God, and truthfulness. Chastity and purity are especially emphasized. In *Parzival*, only virgin maidens may carry the Grail, and men in the Company are to renounce the love of women. Similarly, the 144,000 in Revelation are described as chaste virgins (Rev 14:1-5). Conversely, motives such as greed, anger, and carnal lust are viewed as vices in the Grail literature.

Genealogy also plays an important role in one's eligibility for the Company. The wise hermit Trevrizent, uncle to Parzival, states that the Company receives beautiful children "of noble lineage" (*Parzival* IX:494). Trevrizent also explains the parentage of these children: men and women are sent from the Grail to have children who will return to enter the service of the Grail (*Parzival* IX:495). In a game setting, this could be a mechanism to perpetuate the descendants of Jacob as the Grail Company.

The Quest. An individual joins the Grail Company by undertaking a quest. The nature of one's Grail quest is as elusive and open to interpretation as the Grail itself. Certain themes, however, can be identified. The beginning of the quest seems involve an element of fate. The notion of being chosen or called to the quest underlies *Parzival*. Trevrizent explicitly states that the Grail selects its company (*Parzival* IX:493), and that the names and lineage of the children "called to the Grail" appear written on the Grail (*Parzival* IX:470). These children might also have a physical mark, such as a birthmark in the shape of a symbol from Christian or Arthurian tradition. Appropriate marks include sacred letters (e.g., "Alpha and Omega," Chi-Rho), crosses, and chalices.

The Grail quest may be viewed as a test, where the quester must confront and overcome personal vices and sins. Parzival's quest culminates in combat with his heathen half-brother Feirefiz, who was a glorious, renown knight (*Parzival* XV). This episode may represent an internal battle between the spiritual and secular sides of the quester. In gaming terms, each questing character will typically have flaws or vices. These may be determined by the game system, by membership in one of the Twelve Tribes, or by some other mechanism. The Devil's forces can attempt to exploit the character's vices to cause him or her to fall from the quest.

Similar to the initiation of the Grail quest, one's progress seems to be influenced by fate. In *Parzival*, Parzival cannot force the course of the quest; the quest is to happen as it may. Sigune, niece of the Grail King, says: "He who diligently *seeks* it [Munsalvaesche, the Grail castle] will not find it He who shall see the castle must chance upon it unawares" (V:250). Indeed, once Parzival let his horse's reins fall to go "whichever way God chooses," he came upon the wise hermit Trevrizent (IX:452). Trevrizent teaches that "no man can ever win the Grail unless he is known in heaven and he be called by

name to the Grail" (IX:468). Later, Parzival repeats this lesson: "no one could ever fight his way to the Grail 'unless he has been summoned to it by God'" (XV:786).

Successful progress on the quest eventually brings the individual to the Grail Company. The quest may end once the quester beholds the Grail or eats at the Grail table, perhaps on Good Friday, Easter, or Pentecost. In the Perceval stories, the final test is to ask "the question" -- what ails the maimed Grail King and, implicitly, how he can be healed. Perceval's initial failure to ask the question brought spiritual shame. This is vividly described in *Parzival*. Sigune brands him as "faint of heart," without pity, and "dead to happiness" (V:255). Trevrizent concurs, saying, "Since his [Parzival's] stupidity bade him *not* to ask, he lost, being slow, great happiness" (IX:484). Cundrie, a grotesque seer, pours scorn on Parzival, calling him the "curse of bliss," "sick in knightly virtue," and "death of joy and bestowal of grief" (VI:316). Thus, despite the apparent importance of fate in the initiation and progress of the quest, the final test is arguably a call to action, an enactment of free will by the individual.

The successful quester may then be "sealed" as described in Revelation. Specifically, the Lamb's name and his Father's name are written on the forehead (Rev 14:1). Completion of the quest does not imply a life of static bliss in the Grail Company. Potential questers are to be looked after, tested, and possibly protected. Impostors are to be weeded out, and the Grail kept secure. Those that fail the quest may gain wisdom, but are not necessarily condemned spiritually. Indeed, the vast majority of humanity will not be called to the quest, but Heaven is not denied to them. Failed questers may return to the mundane world embittered and reclusive, or they may help the next quester succeed.

The Twelve Tribes and the Round Table

The Tribe to which a player character might belong should be a reflection of the character's personality and ambitions. To aid the GM and players, I present information on the nature of the Twelve Tribes as well as the "Biblical" ancestry of Arthurian figures.

The Twelve Tribes. Jacob, who earned the name Israel as a young man, had twelve sons, from each of which descended a tribe. Jacob's sons were a cantankerous bunch, and were not immune to internecine strife. The most dramatic example of this conflict was the selling of Jacob's favorite, Joseph, by the other sons into slavery. This foreshadowed the tribes' future interactions. Following the flight from Egypt, Joshua triumphantly lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. Roughly three hundred years later (c. 950 BC), the Israelites split into two kingdoms after the reign of King Solomon: the Southern Kingdom ("Judah"), composed of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the Northern Kingdom ("Israel"), composed of the other ten tribes. The northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians around 730 BC, while the southern kingdom lasted until the Babylonian conquest of c. 600 BC.

On his death bed, Jacob addressed each of his sons, extolling their virtues and vices (Gen 49:3-27). Assuming that questing player characters are descendants of the Twelve Tribes, these virtues and vices can be used as character attributes. The player characters may have to overcome their vices on

their quests. To be general, I assign the Seven Cardinal Virtues and Deadly Sins to Jacob's sons. My suggestions can be easily converted into specific gaming attributes, such as Traits in Pendragon and Ads/Disads in GURPS. The twelve sons, their attributes, and notable descendants are listed in Table 1. It should be noted that Manasseh, Jacob's grandson through Joseph, is given as one of the Twelve Tribes instead of Dan in Revelation (Rev 7:6).

Although Reuben was Jacob's first-born, he was denied preeminence because he defiled his father's bed by lying with the concubine Bilhah. Jacob reserves his praise for his fourth son Judah, passing over the violent and cruel Simeon and Levi. Judah is to be master of his brothers. Significant to the Grail story, he is uniquely prophecized to wash "his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes" (Gen 49:11). Indeed, Judah becomes an illustrious tribe, including the celebrated kings David and Solomon and both human parents of Jesus among its members. Although the Bible does not give Mary's ancestry, the apocryphal *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*⁶ says that she was of the "royal stock and family of David," her father being Joachim and her mother Anna. Jesus's cousin, Symeon son of Clopas (Clopas was Joseph's brother), was the second bishop of Jerusalem (Eusebius of Caesarea⁷, *Church History* III:11,32). Awareness of the lineage of David persisted into Roman times. Eusebius, writing in the 4th Century, relates that the emperor Domitian spared the grandchildren of Judas, the brother of Jesus (*Church History* III:20).

The genealogies of many Biblical notables are uncertain. Virtually no clues are provided for the prophet Isaiah. The prophet Elijah is given as "the Tishbite of Gilead" (1 King 17:1); Gilead was inhabited by the tribes of Joseph, Reuben, and Gad (Numb 26:29, 32:29-33). John the Baptist, given as the son of Zechariah the priest, suggests descent from Levi (Luke 1:5). Zechariah, however, was "of the division of Abijah," and the name Abijah occurs multiply in the Old Testament, as a descendant of Judah and Benjamin (1 Chron 3:10, 7:8; 2 Chron 11:20) as well as Levi (Exod 4:14; 1 Chron 6:28, 24:1-18).

The New Testament is silent about the ancestries of several important figures: Mary Magdalene, the Disciples, and most of the early saints. Although the ancestry of Peter is not given, Eusebius relates that he had children (*Church History* III:30). The genealogy of the most explicit link between the Bible and the Grail legend, Joseph of Arimathea, is one of the most difficult to document. Popular mythology has him as the uncle of Jesus, thereby being of Judah, but this relationship is not found in the Arthurian stories.

The Round Table. The Grail Kings can typically trace their ancestry through Joseph of Arimathea. Most directly, Joseph's son Josephé keeps the Grail in the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal*⁸. In Robert de Boron's *Joseph of Arimathea*, Bron (formally Hebron) weds Enygeus, sister of Joseph of Arimathea. Bron succeeds Joseph as the keeper of the Grail, becoming the "Rich Fisherman." Bron's son Alan is selected as the master of Bron's other eleven sons and becomes the next Grail keeper. Besides the marriage to Joseph's sister and the fathering of twelve sons, the name "Hebron" itself is

deeply rooted in Biblical tradition. On Mount Hebron, Abraham settled and built an altar to God (Gen 13:18), and David was anointed king (2 Sam 5:3). Perhaps most intriguing for the Grail legend, Moses charged the Hebronites and their kin with the maintenance of the ark and sacred "vessels" (Num 3:27-32). Other Grail Kings peripherally descend from Joseph of Arimathea. In the 13th century *Perlesvaus*, the King Fisherman of the Grail Castle is Joseph's nephew. King Pelles of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* was "cousin nigh unto Joseph of Aramathie" (XI:2). In *Parzival*, however, the genealogy of the Grail King Anfortas does not extend beyond his nebulous grandfather Titurel. *Parzival* retains a connection to the Old Testament in the person of the scholar Flegetanis, a descendent of Solomon who originally wrote the adventure of the Grail (IX:453).

Perceval, the ultimate Grail King in several stories, is often given as a descendent of Joseph of Arimathea. Robert de Boron writes that Alan's son will be the final Grail keeper in *Joseph of Arimathea*. He does not name Alan's son, but Perceval is given as the son of Alan son of Bron in Robert de Boron's *Merlin*⁹ and the 13th century *Didot Perceval*¹⁰. In *Perlesvaus*, Alain le Gros sires Perceval through Yglais, a niece of Joseph of Arimathea. In Gilbert de Montreuil's 13th century continuation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*¹, Perceval's mother is a disciple of Joseph of Arimathea. Malory names Perceval's father as Pellinore, a brother of Pelles and therefore cousin of Joseph. *Parzival*'s maternal ancestry stems from Titurel, and his paternal from the equally obscure Mazadan.

Galahad supplants Perceval as the premier Grail knight in the Vulgate Cycle and Malory. Malory describes Galahad as nine generations from Jesus; the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal* describes him as a descendant of King David and Joseph of Arimathea. In the *Estoire del Saint Graal*⁹, Galahad's mother Helayne descended from the sister of Joseph of Arimathea. In Malory, Elaine was daughter of Pelles, cousin of Joseph. On his father Lancelot's side, Galahad stems from Nascien, an early believer in Jesus Christ. In the *Queste* and *Estoire*, Nascien was converted by Joseph of Arimathea and changed his name from Seraph upon baptism.

Descent from Joseph of Arimathea can be attributed to King Arthur himself. In the medieval Welsh genealogies, Arthur's parents, Uther and Igraine, both descend from Karadoc, son of Bran "the Blessed" (Bartrum 1966)¹¹. If Bran can be equated to Bron/Hebron, then Arthur would descend from Joseph. More explicitly, John of Glastonbury, writing in the early 15th century, traced Igraine's lineage back to Helaius, a nephew or grandson of Joseph of Arimathea (Bartrum 1966).

Gaming ideas

Grail Company's mission. A gamer's perceptions of the duties and activities of the Grail Company create one of many possible gaming scenarios. On the one hand, a GM may depict the Company as an altruistic, humanitarian fellowship, enacting Jesus's commands of "Love your neighbor" (Matt 22:39) and "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). The Company's focus can be works of charity, such as providing for the poor and defending the weak. The Company may even play a larger role in secular

affairs. In *Parzival*, for example, a land that loses its lord can request the Company to supply a new lord (IX:494). On the other hand, the GM may play the Grail Company as a repressive moral police. The Company may abide by a strict code of ethics, and zealously punish transgressions by its members and lay persons.

The Company's composition of the Twelve Tribes suggests interesting political dynamics. The twelve components of the Company may be disunited and competitive, reflecting the traditional interactions between the Tribes. Factions within the Company may vie with each other for the office of the Grail King. The Kingship may involve great glory and the coveted privilege of procreation; custom may dictate that only the Grail King can marry and sire offspring. Competition within the Company need not involve overt combat, but possibly a "war" of deeds. Depending on the Company's nature, its various factions may strive to outdo each other in acts of charity or punishment. Amid this possible infighting, there may arise a unique Grail quester who brings the promise of uniting the Company. The identification and quest of this messianic figure can be an underlying theme in a GM's games.

Regardless of the degree of harmony that may exist within the Grail Company, each tribe may lay claim to a certain office or occupation (Table 1). Members of Judah, for example, may claim the Grail Kingship by virtue of their descent from David and Solomon. Levites may monopolize the priesthood and religious positions. Together with Simeon, Levi may also be the executioner or avenger. Precedence for this role could stem from these brothers' destruction of a city whose prince defiled their sister (Gen 34). Dan may be traditional judges. Benjamin, as the "ravenous wolf," and Gad, as the raider and raided, may assume more militant roles, such as scouts and warriors, that defend the Company and aggressively confront the Company's enemies. Benjamin may also demand the kingship because Saul was the Israelites' first king. Additionally, Joseph may be a tribe of diviners, Issachar a tribe of laborers, Asher a tribe of farmers, and Naphtali a tribe of herders.

The Devil and his minions. Both sides of Revelation's Divine Drama may know that the gathering of the 144,000 is a necessary prerequisite to the coming of God's judgment. Thus, for the righteous, there is a sense of urgency to the completion of the Grail Company. Not only is divine judgment in waiting, but, according to medieval theology (e.g., Thomas Aquinas⁷, *Summa Theologica* Supp. 69:2,88:1, *Summa Contra Gentiles* Part 1 4:84,4:96), the souls of the righteous will only be joined with their resurrected bodies once Judgment Day arrives. Conversely, the wicked and the agents of evil -- the Devil, the seven-headed beast, and their worshippers -- strive to prevent the complete Grail Company from gathering. According to Revelation, these forces wield global secular power until the 144,000 stand assembled on Mount Zion with the Lamb.

To stall the arrival of Judgment Day, the Devil's forces attempt to keep Grail questers from succeeding. For gaming purposes, simple brute force, such as the kidnapping and murder of questers, may backfire. The slain questers, for example, may become angels that aid and protect future questers. More effective tactics for the Devil include exploiting the questers' flaws and vices, such as temptations

of fame, wealth, and hedonistic pleasure. The Devil's minions can also spread confusion concerning the quest and the Grail, such as promoting false "Grails." One cup that may become confused with the Grail is Joseph's (son of Jacob) cup of divination. Joseph was loved the most by Jacob (Gen 37:3), and Jacob's other sons grew jealous and sold Joseph into slavery (Gen 37:12-28). As a slave in Egypt, Joseph interpreted the pharaoh's dreams, and advised him about preparations for an upcoming famine. In gratitude, the pharaoh appointed Joseph ruler of Egypt, calling him Zaphenathpaneah (Gen 41:25-45). Joseph had a silver drinking cup that he used for divination (Gen 44:2,5). The forces of evil may set up a false "Company" around this cup in order to lead Grail questers astray. Perhaps this cup is what secular societies guard or hold sacred.

Joseph's cup may be identified by hieroglyphs that spell "Zaphenathpaneah." More generally, certain tests can distinguish the true Grail from imitations. In Robert de Boron's *Joseph of Arimathea*, the Grail fills the faithful with grace, and only the faithful can take seats at the Grail's table. Sinners cannot be seated, because the Grail "does not love sinners and will not tolerate their presence" (*Joseph of Arimathea*, Chapter III). There may be deceivers within the Company itself. In *Joseph of Arimathea*, one sinner named Moses remained in Joseph of Arimathea's company with plans to deceive them. According to this story, Alan's son, Perceval, will eventually find this impostor.

Postscript: an apocryphal history of the Grail

The Grail's existence leads one to ponder its origins, of how it came into this world. A succinct explanation is that Jesus "just so happened" to have the Grail handy at the Last Supper. A more thoughtful and elaborate explanation, however, seems worthy of the Grail. The fiction presented below depicts the Grail as an ancient heirloom, a spiritual companion to humankind, that was successively handed down from Noah through the line of Judah to Jesus.

This history begins with Noah, the first tiller of soil and planter of vineyards (Gen 9:20). Noah was no stranger to fermentation (Gen 9:21), and he celebrated his first vintage by fashioning a beautiful silver chalice, which was to become the Grail. Noah bequeathed the Grail to Shem, his blessed son (Gen 9:26). The prized wine cup was successively passed from father to son, touching the lips of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jacob inherited the vessel through his brother Esau's forfeiture of birthright (Gen 25:31-33). Jacob made a significant addition to the Grail, affixing a 12-sided base that bore a name of each of his twelve sons on each side. Although Jacob loved his son Joseph the most, Judah claimed ownership of the Grail because of the unique reference to wine in his blessing from Jacob. The cup accompanied the descendants of Jacob during their sojourn from Egypt. Once in the Promised Land, the Grail figured prominently in Passover celebrations. The patriarchs of Judah's line drank from the chalice during these festivities: David, Solomon, and the pious kings Hezekiah and Josiah. Solomon's hubris led him to alter the very appearance of the Grail. He insisted that he was to drink only from golden cups (1 King

10:21), and had four scenes wrapped in gold leaf around the Grail: the Creation, Exodus, the Ten Commandments, and the building of the Temple.

The Grail remained in Jerusalem throughout the life of the kingdom of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar, upon his conquest of Judah, razed the Temple and carried off the riches and citizens of Jerusalem (2 Chron 26:18-21), including the Grail. The chalice sat in Babylon until the Persians overtook the Babylonians. King Cyrus allowed a band of Jewish exiles to return the treasures to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple around 540 BC. Zerubbabel, great-grandson of Josiah (Ezra 3:2; Matt 1:11-12), carried the Grail back into Jerusalem and drank from it to celebrate Passover in the city (Ezra 7:19). Through careful guardianship did the descendants of David keep the Grail from the subsequent Greek and Roman overlords. The chalice eventually came to rest with Joseph, father of Jesus. Joseph, realizing the gravity of Jesus's final journey to Jerusalem, entrusted the Grail to Jesus. The cup rode with Jesus into Jerusalem and provided wine for the Disciples at the Last Supper.

The story of the Grail now slips into Arthurian legend. According to Robert de Boron's *Joseph of Arimathea*, the chalice was secured by a Jewish citizen who gave it to Pilate after the sentencing of Jesus. While Jesus was on the cross, Pilate handed the vessel to Joseph of Arimathea. As Joseph prepared the body of Jesus for burial, blood began to flow from Jesus's wounds, and Joseph caught the blood in the Grail. The legend continues that the city officials put Joseph into prison, where God delivered the Grail to him. Upon his eventual liberation, Joseph founded the Grail Company.

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11. Bartrum, P.C. 1966. *Early Welsh genealogical tracts*. University of Wales Press; Cardiff.

Table 1. Attributes and descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob (i.e., the Twelve Tribes of Israel).
 Entries under "Attributes" are taken from Gen 49:3-27. Translations of the sons' names occur in Gen 29, 30, 35 and are given in parenthesis.

<u>Son</u>	<u>Attributes</u>	<u>Virtue</u>	<u>Vice</u>	<u>Notable descendants</u>
1. Reuben ("see, a son")	Strong, proud, powerful; "unstable as water."	Hope	Envy	None.
2. Simeon ("heard")	Violent, cruel, full of anger.	Hope	Anger	None.
3. Levi ("joined")	Violent, cruel, full of anger.	Justice	Anger	Priests and religious officials; Moses (1 Chron 6:3,33-38); probably the great priest Samuel (1 Sam 1:1,20), the prophet Ezekiel (Eze 1:3), and the high priests Caiaphas and Annas (Heb 7:5). Possibly the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 1:1; 1 Chron :1-13,45).
4. Judah ("praise")	Conquerer, ruler; "the scepter shall not depart from Judah."	Charity	Pride	Kings David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah (1 Chron 2, 3); Jesus (as son of Joseph, Luke 3:23-33).
5. Zebulun ("honor")	Coastal haven.	Temperance	Gluttony	None.
6. Issachar ("hire")	"Strong ass"; "slave at forced labor."	Fortitude	Envy	Possibly King Ahab (1 King 16:28; 1 Chron 27:18).
7. Dan ("he judged")	Judge; back-biting viper.	Justice	Sloth	Samson (Judg 13:2,24).
8. Gad ("fortune")	Raider and the raided.	Fortitude	Lust	None.
9. Asher ("happy")	Eat rich food and yield "royal dainties."	Prudence	Gluttony	None.

10. Naphtali ("wrestled")	"A hind ... that bears comely fawns."	Temperance	Lust	None.
11. Joseph ("he adds")	"Fruitful bough", wealthy; most loved by Jacob; resolute in face of adversity. Power of prophecy and divination.	Prudence	Sloth	Early military leaders Joshua and Gideon (1 Chron 7:27; Gen 41:52; Josh 17:2; Jud 6:11).
12. Benjamin ("son of the right hand/ South")	Youngest son; "ravenous wolf."	Faith	Avarice	First king Saul (1 Chron 8:33); Paul (Philip 3:5); presumably Esther (Esther 2:5-7).