

## ***The “Lost Tribes” of Israel***

### ***Doctrinal Study Paper***

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**T**he search for the lost sons of the biblical patriarch Jacob has long since entered the folklore of history. His name was changed to Israel and he had 12 sons, culminating in the 12 tribes of Israel—10 of whom virtually disappeared from the historical record some 700 years before the time of Christ.

Indeed the identity and whereabouts of the “lost 10 tribes of Israel” is one of the great mysteries of ancient world history. Where those Israelites went and who their descendants are today is shrouded in mystery and has stimulated great interest and periodic debate. The hope of tracing their movements and finding their present whereabouts has inspired many a curious searcher.

If there are lost tribes, then where are they today? From the Japanese to the American Indian to the Afghans and to other ethnic groups, almost every group of people outside the Middle East has at one time or another been so identified as the answer to the mystery by some enthusiastic seeker.

But the above peoples do not fulfill the biblical criteria, lacking many of the essential identification signs, and are not accorded serious consideration in our quest for the lost tribes. In true fact the peoples of northwestern Europe and the lands they colonized are the only legitimate contenders.

One key figure in the solution to this ancient mystery is the patriarch Joseph, whose story is told in the book of Genesis. He was one of the 12 sons of Jacob. Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted by their grandfather as his own and their names count very heavily in the mystery.

### ***Where are Joseph’s descendants today?***

As unbelievable as it may sound to modern ears, we believe that Joseph’s progeny are found in those areas of the globe which have been populated by the English-speaking or Anglo-Saxon peoples of modern times. We believe that they can be identified as the peoples of the former British Commonwealth of nations and the United States of America.

In one important respect the story of the meteoric rise of the Anglo-American countries is the incredible ascent of Joseph written large on the pages of 19th and 20th century history. But even more vital is its significance and meaning.

Just as Joseph was sold into slavery, the 10 tribes of Israel found themselves removed from the land of their inheritance in the 8th century B.C.E.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, these northern tribes disappeared from the view of history (2 Kings 17:18). The trail they left is a mysterious, uncertain one. Consistent, hard and irrefutable evidence of their long northwesterly journey appears almost impossible to find.

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<sup>1</sup>Before the Common Era (replaces B.C.)

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However, the tell-tale signs that do exist, combined with a right understanding of biblical history and prophecy, confirm that the various national groups descending from the tribes or nations of Israel will exist prior to God’s intervention at the close of this age.

It is the avowed purpose of this study paper to examine the historical and biblical evidence that will help us determine the location of the descendants of ancient Israel today, establishing why America and Britain became great, and finally showing how this essential knowledge affects the future.

## ***Chapter 1***

### ***“I Am Your Brother Joseph”***

“I am Joseph!” (Genesis 45:3).

Few statements could have made a more startling impact. The eleven middle-aged men already stood uncomfortably as mere merchant-traders—tenders of flocks and herds—before the most powerful prime minister in that ancient world. Now they were astonished and speechless. Could it be? What must have passed through the minds of these shocked and frightened listeners who were the very ones responsible for selling Joseph into captivity in the first place?

The last time they knowingly had seen their brother, Joseph, was an impetuous and outspoken 17-year-old. They had watched as he disappeared into the distance, no doubt vigorously protesting his sale into the hands of Midianite slave-traders (Genesis 37:12-28). How could those brothers have known the incredible adventures—the remarkable ups and downs through which their younger sibling had passed during the intervening two decades?

Certainly, Joseph’s experiences had been incredible: transported against his will to Egypt, the dominant power of that region of the world (Genesis 37:36); sold as a slave to a high-ranking Egyptian official and officer in the very court of Pharaoh (Genesis 39:1-6); gaining respectability and position in his newfound place in life, only to find himself falsely accused and whisked away to become an inmate in an Egyptian prison (Genesis 39:7-20).

Experiencing yet another unlikely rise in station in the midst of his incarceration to become the chief assistant of the prison warden (Genesis 39:21-23); moving literally from the prison to the palace, assuming the office of prime minister under the Pharaoh (Genesis 40-41); and now finally, dramatically revealing his true identity before the very brothers who had sold him into captivity more than 20 years before.

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#### ***Joseph in prophecy***

Joseph’s remarkable story became a forerunner of the precise experiences that his many descendants would undergo on a national scale over the millennia that were to follow. It is a saga that remains in progress. One purpose of this paper is to make that story plain.

Meanwhile back in the 18th century B.C.E. court of Pharaoh, until Joseph identified himself before his brothers, they knew nothing of the reality of his life after his enforced departure from home as the slave of a foreign people. For all they knew, he had long since died (see Genesis 44:28).

Even if he was still alive, what chance would there have been of escaping the dehumanizing experience of his enslavement—of removal from the comfort of his homeland, and being denied the role of his father’s favorite son. Instead he was treated as property to be bought and sold at the whim of his owner. Certainly, few things so remarkable have ever happened as Joseph’s ascent from slavery to becoming a leader of the most powerful kingdom of that region, if not the entire world.

But why does the Bible record the story of Joseph’s trials and tribulations followed by his ultimate rise to unbelievable heights?

The astonishing answer is multifaceted. In ancient Israel’s traditions and history, the story of Joseph provides a captivating account of an ancient people’s pedigree and lineage. At a different level—far more important to us today—the life of Joseph was an acting-out, thousands of years in advance, of one of the most distinctive and prominent threads of Western history.

Joseph’s intriguing story holds a vital key to locating the so-called “Lost 10 Tribes” of Israel—the descendants of his and nine of his 11 brothers. These Israelites disappeared from the record of popular history around the close of the 8th century B.C.E. when the Assyrian armies invaded and largely swept them from their homeland in Palestine.

More importantly, knowing the identity of the descendants of ancient Israel today equips us not only with crucial understanding of end-time biblical prophecies, but also knowledge about the moral and spiritual changes which God requires of the peoples of the United States, the United Kingdom, the key Commonwealth nations of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa as well as other nations in northwestern Europe.

#### ***The historic importance of Abraham***

This remarkable story begins even before the time of Joseph in ancient Mesopotamia with a covenant (agreement) made between the biblical patriarch Abraham and the Almighty God, probably some time in the mid-19th century B.C.E. It hinges on the most important and far-reaching promises and prophecies ever delivered by God to man.

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Even people only casually acquainted with the Bible are somewhat familiar with the monumental spiritual dimensions of God’s promise to Abraham.

God told this patriarch: “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:2-3).

This blessing to come on all nations, we later learn from the New Testament apostles, was the blessing of eternal life through the Messiah, the one Seed (Galatians 3:8, 16, 29). Thus from the virtual onset of the biblical record we can understand God’s intention to offer spiritual salvation to the whole of humanity.

The fulfillment of this great promise was reached at one level on the first New Testament Passover (31 C.E.) with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the consequent breaking down of the wall of partition separating humankind from God (Matthew 27:51; Ephesians 2:14).

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ made it possible for people of all the nations of the earth to enjoy a relationship with the God of Israel who until that time had dealt almost exclusively with the descendants of the patriarch Jacob, also called Israel.

But is the spiritual dimension of the promise to Abraham the entire story? What exactly did God mean by his promise in Genesis 12:2 to make of Abraham a “great nation”? A closer examination of God’s relationship and dealings with Abraham reveals one of the most important and least understood aspects of the biblical record.

From Genesis chapters 12 through 22, seven different passages describe God’s promises to Abraham. In the initial account (Genesis 12:1-3), God tells Abraham to leave his homeland and family—a condition preceding the promise. For God promised to bless him and make his name great. His progeny would become great. A few verses later, God miraculously appeared to Abraham, promising his descendants the land of Canaan (verse 7).

### ***Massive material blessings through Abraham***

In chapter 13, the Bible provides us even more details—knowledge implying a physical dimension tied directly to the promise to Abraham. Following the dramatic account of his willingness to give the fertile Jordan River plain to his nephew Lot (verses 5-13), we see that God in turn promised all of Canaan to Abraham forever (verses 14-17).

Moreover, He promised to make the still childless Abraham a father with descendants “as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered” (verse 16).

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About a decade later God again appeared to Abraham in a vision. Notwithstanding the fact that Abraham and Sarah remained childless, God reiterated His promise that an heir would “come from your own body,” that his descendants would be as large in number as the stars of the heavens (Genesis 15:4-5).

A few verses later, we see that God promised Abraham not only numberless descendants but specific territory stretching “from the river of Egypt [the Nile] to the great river, the River Euphrates” (verses 18-21)—a swath of territory including considerably more than the original commitment to turn the land of Canaan into the hands of Abraham’s progeny (Genesis 12:6-7; 17:8; 24:7).

The longest and most elaborate articulation of the Promise to Abraham appears in Genesis 17:1-22. As is the case from the earliest record of the promise itself, realization of God’s blessings remains conditional on Abraham’s obedience and living of a spiritually mature life. God admonished him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless” (Genesis 17:1; compare Matthew 5:48).

### ***Abraham—a progenitor of many nations***

Remember God promised to multiply Abraham’s descendants. This was a yet-to-be reality God emphasized by renaming this patriarch heretofore known as Abram—a name denoting “father of Aram,” the location of Abraham’s original Mesopotamian homeland. God told him, “No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham ...” His new name meant “father of a multitude” or “father of many nations” (Genesis 17:5).

The earliest record of the promise (Genesis 12:1) shows that the narrator of Genesis introduces the theme of nationhood—a matter of physical, material, and national concern. Indeed, verse 6 elaborates on this dimension of the promise, indicating what God intended to make Abraham: “exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you” (Genesis 17:6, see also verses 15-16).

The material nature of this aspect of the promise is further demonstrated in verses 8-9 which makes use of the plural pronoun “their.” God said, “Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God ... You shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.”

The Genesis 17 account establishes God’s agreement with Abraham as an “everlasting covenant” (verses 7, 13, 19), binding obligation requiring God to give the patriarch’s descendants the Land of Canaan in perpetuity (verse 8). It reinforces the notion that God’s commitment to Abraham included not only the Messianic promise of grace—unmerited pardon for sins committed—and spiritual salvation ... but a national inheritance complete with material possessions, power, and position.

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The sixth account of the Promise to Abraham appears in Genesis 18 in a setting immediately prior to the story of the destruction of the sin filled cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham’s guests (two angels and the “LORD,” YHWH, the Word, who became flesh, John 1:1)—messengers with news about the divine retribution to come on the cities of the plain—confirmed the soon-coming birth of a son to the 99 year old Abraham and Sarah, 10 years younger than her husband (verses 10-14).

With God promising that He would not “hide from Abraham” what He would do (Genesis 18:17; see also Amos 3:7), the angels visiting the aged patriarch reconfirmed that Abraham would “surely become a great and mighty nation”—a physical, material, national promise in scope and dimension. They also affirmed the spiritual promise that “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Genesis 18:18).

True to the promises of God, about a year after this encounter, Sarah gave birth to Isaac (Genesis 21:1-3). But there remained one great test awaiting Abraham.

### ***The supreme test***

The grand climax of these benchmark accounts comes in Genesis 22, one of the most interesting and significant events in all of the Bible. In this account we find the seventh and final elaboration of the promise to Abraham. As the story of Joseph is an acting-out in advance of the human history of the Israelite people, so the story of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac forecasts the opening phase of salvation history: the 1st century C.E.<sup>2</sup> sacrifice of God the Father’s only begotten Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Previous descriptions of the promises show that the blessings of the covenant (Abraham’s agreement with God) were dependent on Abraham’s actions and behavior (e.g., Genesis 12:1, 17:9). The events described in Genesis 22 transformed the Covenant, elevating it to an entirely new and different level.

This was with very good cause. Much to Abraham’s discomfort, God commanded him to take the son of promise and sacrifice him as a burnt offering atop of Mount Moriah (verse 2). Trusting in God’s wisdom, truth, and faithfulness, Abraham did as he was told, only to be miraculously stopped at the very moment he was about to slay his son (verses 9-11).

Abraham did not know that in advance. God’s words spoken shortly thereafter are powerful and revealing: “... now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (Genesis 22:12). In obedience to his God, the patriarch was willing to relinquish that which was most precious to him (verse 16; compare John 3:16).

His behavior demonstrated to the Creator that Abraham was truly a man fit for the role of “father of all those who believe” (Romans 4:11-22; Galatians 3:9; Hebrews 11:17-

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<sup>2</sup> Current Era (replaces A.D.)

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19)—that he was suitable as the progenitor of numberless descendants who would become the people of God (Genesis 18:19).

It is only at this point in the story of Abraham that the promises become unconditional. God’s assertion, “By Myself have I sworn” (Genesis 22:16) implies that Abraham is no longer obligated to act in order to receive the benefits of the promise. The language used in Genesis 22 implies that there are now no other parties to the contract other than God Himself.

The narrative concludes with a rehearsal of the central elements of those things promised: “blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore[compare Deuteronomy 29:13; Joshua 24:3-4; Acts 7:17]; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies [all promises of a physical, material, national nature—see Genesis 24:60]. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed [the spiritual blessing of Christ and making salvation available to the whole of humanity rather than any single people or nation], because you have obeyed My voice” (verses 17-18).

### ***Promises renewed from one generation to another***

God repeatedly renewed the promises to Abraham by passing the covenant (agreement) in succession from the patriarch’s son Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5) to his grandson Jacob (27:26-29; 28:1-4, 10-14; 35:9-12—in this last-named account, God changed Jacob’s name to “Israel” meaning “one who prevails with God”) ... and ultimately to the great-great-grandchildren Ephraim and Manasseh (48:1-22), the sons of Joseph through his wife from the ranks of Egyptian nobility (41:45).

As is the case with those promises described prior to Genesis 23, accounts of the passing of the blessing provides additional evidence that the Abrahamic Covenant included physical-material-national aspects as well as the more important spiritual ones.

The Genesis 26 account of Abraham’s passing of the promise to Isaac includes reference to the title and deed for large amounts of land. The double reference to “all these lands” (verses 3-4) implies an inheritance involving colossal material benefits.

As in previous repetitions of the promise from God to Abraham, we see his son Isaac guaranteed a progeny of almost limitless proportions, likened again to “the stars of heaven” (verse 4), reiterating this magnificent promise is repeated to Isaac.

By right of birth (the ancient law of primogeniture), the physical blessings passed down to Isaac should have gone to Esau, the firstborn son (Genesis 25:21-26). However, Jacob, the younger sibling induced his older brother to sell his Birthright for a meager bowl of lentil soup (verse 29-34).

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To insure the acquisition of the blessings that the Birthright entailed, later Jacob even tricked his blind and aged father into passing the preponderance of the family inheritance to him in place of his elder brother Esau (verse 18-27).

Isaac blessed Jacob saying: “Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!” (verses 28-29).

But in spite of Jacob’s trick to secure the birthright blessing for himself, God eventually confirmed the passing of the promises to him in a dream at Padanaram (Genesis 28). In the account describing this event, we learn that Jacob’s descendants would spread throughout the entire earth, “spread[ing] abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south” (verse 14). No wonder the apostle Paul later identifies Jacob’s grandfather Abraham as the “heir of the world” (Romans 4:13).

### ***Two national identities***

In Genesis 35 we first find an interesting and critically important new dimension to the physical-material-national aspect of the promise. This passage adds the novel element of “a nation and a company of nations” (verse 11), a concept essential to the understanding of where Israel’s descendants are found in modern times. From the Genesis 35 account we learn that Jacob’s descendants will one day comprise two separate and distinct national entities.

Finally, we see the promise passed by Jacob to Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48). The aged patriarch used this occasion to place his very name on his two grandsons (verse 16), implying that many references to “Jacob” or “Israel” in the prophetic writings of the Bible point primarily to the offspring of the Patriarch Joseph. Once again, the language of the biblical narrator reveals a clearly physical-material-national dimension to the promises transmitted to the fifth generation.

Jacob’s blessing on the two boys involved the giving of land “for an everlasting possession” and the expansion of their own descendants into “a multitude of people” (verse 4). Then for a second time, we see articulated the idea of a great nation and “a multitude of nations” (verse 19).

1 Chronicles 5 also contributes to our understanding of the promise to Abraham, particularly concerning the difference between its spiritual and physical dimensions. This chapter reminds us that the “chief ruler” would arise out of the house or tribe of Judah (verse 2, King James Version).

It confirms Jacob’s prediction that “the scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Genesis 49:10), a prophecy which points to both the House of David ruling over the



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Kingdom of Judah and Israel, and the role of Jesus Christ as Messiah and the One who would make salvation available to all of humankind (Hebrews 7:14; Revelation 5:5).

In contrast, the promise of physical, material, and national greatness went not to Judah but rather to Joseph, Jacob’s firstborn son by his wife Rachel. In an apt description of how this promise fell into Joseph’s hands, the chronicler writes: “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed [Genesis 35:22; 49:4], his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph’s” (1 Chronicles 5:1-2).

### ***Israel’s future destiny***

Perhaps the most revealing of all biblical passages is found, however, in Genesis 49 which describes Jacob’s blessings on and prophecies about all of his sons’ descendants “in the last days” (verse 1). The description of those things to befall the people of Joseph is monumental (verse 22-26).

Similar to the blessing pronounced by Isaac on Jacob (Genesis 27:28-29), they included favorable climate and weather conditions (the “blessings of heaven above,” Genesis 49:25); fertile tracts of land and agricultural abundance; abundant natural resources essential to insure national economic strength and world dominance (those “blessings of the deep that lies beneath,” Genesis 49:25); generally peaceful conditions in which they were to live and grow; and power and influence over the peoples of the world.

Jacob predicted that Joseph would become “a fruitful bough” (Genesis 49:22)—a people greatly benefited by the “blessings of the breasts and of the womb” (verse 25), indicating the sizeable population of Joseph’s seed at the end of the age.

The patriarch also forecast a time when Joseph’s “branches [would] run over the wall” (Genesis 49:22), implying a people broadcast by colonization and imperial expansion literally to all four corners of the earth (compare Genesis 28:14). Jacob represents Joseph’s descendants as a people imbued with military might, their “bow” abiding in “strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob” (Genesis 49:24).

Only a very few modern nations can lay claim to the prophetic promises relating to economic greatness and superpower status.

### **Sidebar: “Blessings of the Deep That Lies Beneath”**

That the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic peoples have inherited the richness of the earth is plain for all to see. Jacob prophesied of such nearly four millennia before these material blessings literally overtook the British and American people. A part of that

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prediction foretold that the children of Joseph would fall heir to the “blessings of the deep that lies beneath” (Genesis 49:25).

Many examples could be cited to illustrate how time and again during the modern period, Jacob’s words have been fulfilled. One of the most dramatic testimonies to the faithfulness of God’s word comes out of the British imperial sphere in South Africa. Not only did the southern region of the African continent provide the British with a treasure trove of diamond mines; it yielded the largest diamond ever found. In 1905, the superintendent of the Premier Diamond Mine made an unbelievable find.

This 2,601 carat diamond, named after Sir Thomas Cullinan who opened the Premier Mine, is the largest diamond ever found. The Transvaal government gave the “Cullinan Diamond” as a gift to King Edward VII who had it cut into several pieces. The largest, 530 carats, is found in the scepter of the British monarch. “Cullinan Two”, a 317 carat diamond, is a part of the Imperial State Crown. If the Cullinan Diamond is one of the most dramatic illustrations of Joseph’s inheritance of the natural resources of the earth, it is no less remarkable than the gold mines, oil fields, coal and iron deposits all found in great abundance from the British Isles to North America or from Australia to South Africa. These treasures lying deep beneath the earth bear witness to Joseph’s modern-day identity.

Bringing his prophecies to a rousing crescendo, Jacob concludes, “The blessings of your father Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers” (verse 26). In this final and emphatic pronouncement, we find yet another clue to locate the people of Israel in the latter days.

While this final phrase is clearly an allusion to the story of young Joseph’s separation from his human family at age 17, like so many other aspects of the Joseph stories, it is also highly prophetic.

We should look for the modern-day descendants of Joseph in a setting where they are a separated people... insulated from the progeny of the other Israelite tribes by some kind of physical or geographic barrier. And indeed, this has been the case with the descendants of Joseph during modern history.

## ***Chapter 2***

### ***The Intriguing Historical Origins***

Where did the concept that the British and American people are the “Lost 10 Tribes of Israel” originate? How did it become an understanding so readily embraced by the Church of God since the 1930s?

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We can enlarge our understanding and appreciation of how the belief fits in the context of recent Church history by an examination of the historical setting in which the concept known as British or Anglo-Israelism developed.

### ***The essential historical context***

Although the first truly sophisticated published version of the belief appeared in 1840 and pre-dates Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* (1859) by almost two decades, Anglo-Israelism was born and grew to maturity in an intellectual climate heavily tainted by erroneous ideas of evolution and racial superiority.

Twentieth century critics of British-Israelism often cite this intellectual milieu as evidence that the concept is simply one more expression of the racism around mid-century—one piece of the larger fabric of a flawed and prejudicial 19th century world view.

We must, however, evaluate the literature of any era in its historical context, remembering that most British-Israel material was written before Nazi race theories led to the so-called “Final Solution” of the Holocaust. In the 19th century, while Britain and America were on the ascendancy, the concept that the British and Americans were descendants of the “chosen people” was an attractive and quite plausible idea.

In fact, the concept itself is not inherently racist or prejudicial, any more than Jesus Christ was racist in his comments to the Samaritan woman beseeching Him to cast the demon out of her daughter (Matthew 15:24). It is interesting that Jesus’ response to this woman’s request for aid was: “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” As such, neither Christ’s ministry nor the premise of British-Israelism demand that we accept wrongheaded notions about inequality among the races of humankind.

So the idea of Anglo-Israelism is not inherently racist any more than Christianity is inherently violent. It depends on the behavior of its adherents. Neither are its implications, when properly understood, incompatible with New Testament teachings.

God was not racist in the selection of Abraham to initiate His plan for the salvation of all humankind (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8, 14). God’s choice did not mean He preferred Abraham’s race above all others, but He had chosen to begin His spiritual plan with just one man and his wife—and that man was Abraham.

### ***The geography of nations***

At the national level, Abraham’s descendants—the Israelites—received a similar opportunity. The earth “and its fullness” belong to God (Psalm 50:12). A passage in the Pentateuch suggests that God intended from the beginning of human history that various peoples should inhabit specific territories of the earth. “He set the boundaries of the

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peoples according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deuteronomy 32:8-9; compare Acts 17:26).

Israel’s selection was for the purpose of providing all the other peoples of the world with a national model of Godly behavior (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). God intended that people of every nation might imitate Israel’s positive example and also receive the benefits first given to Jacob (see Isaiah 20:23-24; Zechariah 8:23).

If popular ideas about race affected 19th and 20th century British-Israel literature, so did the expansion of British power throughout the world during the 19th century. By the beginning of World War I, English military power and economic influence had created the largest empire in recorded history.

Predictably, the success of British imperialism fueled the popularity of British-Israelism. In America, British-Israelism became a kind of a narrowly-focused or modified version of “Manifest Destiny”—the concept that God favored the territorial expansion of the United States, to facilitate the free development of democracy across the continent and the acquisition of new territory as an outlet for America’s remarkable population growth.

Those Americans who embraced British-Israelism carried the notion of “Manifest Destiny” one step farther, forging a literal link between the mid-19th century expansion of the U.S. to fill the North American continent and God’s unconditional Birthright conferred on the descendants of Joseph

Consequently, British-Israelism in both Britain and America has often become associated with the negative connotations of “imperialism.” Some 20th century critics even allege that those who embraced British-Israelism were seeking a salve for the conscience. This idea is out-of-date, projecting today’s political sensitivities on an audience that viewed the world far differently than most people do today.

To understand those who accepted British-Israelism, it is essential to consider the historical context in which these peoples lived. In fact, imperialism in mid-19th century Britain was not perceived negatively by the general public. As for justification of an empire, many British citizens saw themselves as extending the blessings that had made Britain great to less fortunate peoples around the globe.

Indeed, “missionary imperialism”—the duty to deliver what was believed to be a superior culture, system, and way of life to the backward peoples of the world—imbued many British subjects with a sense of both right and responsibility to help the less fortunate societies of the world to develop.

### ***The rise and fall of the British Empire***

At the turn of the 20th century, the British were a people splendidly confident in their ability to make the world over for the better and in their own *image*. The spirit of Rudyard Kipling’s *White Man’s Burden* composed “in 1898 at the height of the imperial

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endeavor,” prevailed over any pangs of conscience about interfering in the affairs of less technologically and (as was the popular 19th century perception) culturally advanced peoples (Christopher Bayly, *Atlas of the British Empire*, (p. 125).

The general public considered the “New Imperialism” which blossomed during the last quarter of the 19th century more a cause celebre—giving the masses at home “something to shout about”—than a stain to be expunged from the moral integrity of the British people.

Of course the British Empire ultimately began to fracture. But this did not begin to happen until the end of the 19th century. A general awareness of this process of disintegration did not develop until the early- to mid-20th century, well after the British-Israel movement had reached high pitch.

Comparing the American context and the mid-century spirit of “Manifest Destiny” American attitudes were similar to British ones across the Atlantic. Most Americans enthusiastically supported the overspreading of the United States across the length and breadth of the whole continent. The popular American mood was one of belligerent self-confidence.

### ***The movement in America***

In America, the 1840s witnessed the final decade of the “Second Great Awakening,” a time of revivalism distinguished (especially in the South) by considerable religious enthusiasm and the birth of several new Christian denominations. Capitalizing on a growing interest in the Second Coming, a Baptist minister named William Miller rode the wave of this burgeoning interest in religion.

Miller and others effectively established the Adventist Movement. Based on his understanding of prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation, Miller predicted the imminent Second Coming in the early-1840s.

But the “Great Disappointment” of 1843 and again in 1844 came only a few years after the introduction of Anglo-Israel teachings in the British Isles. Miller’s focus on end-time prophecy and the return of Jesus Christ created a mentality receptive to ideas like British-Israelism.

It is undeniable that British-Israelism was a product of the times. Many who wrote about this concept were influenced to one extent or another by the theological interests and intellectual climate of the day. However, some writers presented their information more responsibly than others.

The unfortunate fact that numerous 19th century Anglo-Israelism writers incorporated racism into their beliefs brings discredit on them personally rather than on the essentially sound core of the concept they sought to spread. The central issue is not whether British-Israelism is racist, imperialist, or elitist; rather, it is whether the

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fundamental concept—that the descendants of the 10 tribes still exist today and are found among the Anglo-American nations—is true or false.

More than a few contributed to the basics, but we can only cover one or two names briefly in this paper.

### ***John Wilson’s remarkable contribution***

John Wilson, an Anglican layman from Cheltenham, published *Our Israelitish Origin* in 1840 only three years after the coronation of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). This was the first full-blown thesis connecting the Anglo-Saxon to ancient Israel.

Wilson drew on the best of contemporary scholarship and methodology. He made particular use of the work of Sharon Turner (1768-1847), a monumental figure in British historiography whose multi-volume work, *A History of the Anglo-Saxon Peoples* (1799-1805), traces the Anglo-Saxons back through Europe to the Balkan countries and ultimately to the Crimea and Caucasus Mountains.

This is just where we would expect based on the testimony of such biblical passages as 2 Kings 17:6 and 1 Chronicles 5:26. “In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”

Wilson also rigorously connected his arguments for British-Israelism to Scripture. His knowledge of the Bible was expansive. His impressive list of publications includes not only the foundational works on the identity of modern Israel, but a wide range of theological topics, particularly ones of interest to pre-millennialists—those who believe in the return of Christ prior to a Millennial reign. Wilson became a popular speaker and drew large audiences principally from the respectable Victorian British middle class.

Later one of the earliest British-Israel works to capture the popular imagination was *Forty-Seven Identifications of the British Nation with Lost Israel* (1871) by banker and life insurance office manager, Edward Hine. This man was probably the most significant of Wilson’s immediate successors. He lectured on British-Israelism before sizable audiences throughout the British Isles and in the United States during the late-19th century.

Hine claimed to have addressed some 5 million people during his lecture circuit career, speaking at venues as prestigious as Exeter Hall. His work represents a certain coming of age in British-Israel thinking. The fact that Hine’s work drew criticism from no less than the *Saturday Review*, as well as Canon George Rawlinson, a professor of history at Oxford University, illustrates the degree to which British-Israel ideas commanded the attention of the late-19th century British public.

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### ***The belief in the churches***

In both the U.S. and Britain, the idea of British-Israelism cut across denominational lines, although a preponderance of Anglo-Israelites in the British Isles very likely were Anglican.

Some of the major contributors to the literature illustrate the denominational diversity of the concept's believers: John Wilson was an Anglican from England; Joseph Wild was a Congregationalist minister from Toronto, Canada; John Harden Allen was a Methodist from the Pacific Northwest; and T. Rosling Howlett was a Baptist minister who had pastorates in New York City, Washington, D. C., and Philadelphia.

Believers typically were non-proselytizing. They usually tried to work within the framework of their own established churches.

However, the *British-Israel World Federation* was formed in the late-19th century to bring together many of the various believers into an organized body. Headquartered in Putney, England, it continues to exist today although its vigor and influence has declined sharply.

However, as the movement grew in strength during the last quarter of the 19th century, it also gathered some distinguished and respectable followers. These included Charles Piazzi Smyth (1819-1900), Royal Astronomer of Scotland and Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at Edinburgh University; Colonel John Cox Gawler (1830-1882), the Keeper of the Crown Jewels; First Sea Lord and Admiral Jacky Fisher (1841-1920), as well as several members of the British Royal family.

Even Queen Victoria was apparently intrigued, and one of her direct descendants was a patron of the movement until her death a few years ago.

For awhile British-Israelism made a significant impact in the British Isles. At one stage, up to 20 million British subjects were reputed to be active believers. In 1845 one of the leading Tractarians of the Oxford Movement, John Henry Newman, cited his “fear that the Church of England stood in danger of being taken over by the Christian Israel Identity movement” as one of his reasons for leaving the Anglican Church to embrace Roman Catholicism (Patience Strong, *Someone Had to Say*, pp. 85-86).

#### **Sidebar: “We Are the Lost 10 Tribes!”**

If many of those who have believed in British-Israelism have been criticized as simple-minded or uneducated, the idea has attracted its share of prominent people as well. In 1914, one of Britain's greatest admirals, Jacky Fisher wrote First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, offering advice on naval affairs.

American author William Manchester recounts how “the old salt had been bombarding Churchill with advice, sometimes on profound matters, sometimes on

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trivia: ‘Why is the standard of recruits raised 3 inches to 5 feet 6? ... What d—d folly to discard supreme enthusiasm because it’s under 5 feet 6. We are a wonderful nation! astounding how we muddle through! There is only one explanation—We are the lost 10 tribes!’ He was now seventy-four” (*The Last Lion*, vol. 2, p. 440).

An article in the June 1980 *National Message* attributes to Fisher these words when his nation was “at the peak of British sea-power... “The only hypothesis to explain why we win in spite of incredible blunders is that we are the lost 10 tribes of Israel” (cited in O. Michael Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 37, 45 [note 44]). Of such remarks, journalist-historian James Morris observes, “Admiral Fisher thought only half in jest that they [the British] were the Lost Tribes” (*Pax Britannica*, p. 502).

#### **Sidebar: Modern Archaeology & British-Israelism: Flinders Petrie & the Great Pyramid**

In 1865, Scottish Royal Astronomer Charles Piazzi Smyth wrote his classic work, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid*. It was this very book which launched the “father of modern scientific archaeology in Palestine,” Sir Flinders Petrie, on a prestigious career involving the excavation of more than 50 sites and the publication of 98 books on Middle Eastern archaeology.

Petrie grew up in a strict Presbyterian home that embraced literalism. Smyth was a friend of the Petrie family. At age 13, Petrie read his book. At age 27 in 1880, he went to Egypt with the intention of mathematically confirming Smyth’s theories that the dimensions of the pyramids held the secrets of prophecy for the descendants of Israel.

In fact, after two years of work, Petrie’s triangulation system disproved Smyth’s prophetic speculations. As the work of Petrie and many others who followed him have convincingly shown, the pyramids were principally tombs for Egyptian royalty.

The results of Petrie’s work appeared in his first book, *The Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh*. His experience at the pyramids induced Petrie to continue with his work in Egypt, laying the foundation for modern archaeological studies (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, November-December 1980, p. 46).

On the opposite side of the Atlantic, the list of Americans who published British-Israel books and articles is a lengthy one. Two of the more well researched and balanced presentations include *Israel Redivivus* by Canadian clergyman Frederick C. Danvers, a recognized authority on the Indian Office, the East India Company, and the rise and decline of the Portuguese empire in India; and *Judah’s Sceptre and Joseph’s Birthright* by Methodist clergyman J. H. Allen.



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### ***The United States and Britain in Prophecy***

Among this group of balanced and carefully-reasoned works is Herbert W. Armstrong’s *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (all quotations herein are from the 9th edition, revised, November 1986), first published in 1942 and reappearing in 10 editions over the next four and a half decades.

This original volume drew heavily from Allen’s research and publications. But whatever the source of inspiration, it was Herbert Armstrong’s work which made the association of ancient Israel with the modern day British and Americans a popular and widely accepted belief in the Church of God and beyond.

No human work is perfect in every detail. Some editions of this book include inaccuracies. Like the apostle Paul, Herbert Armstrong anticipated the end of the age and an imminent Second Coming based on the national and world conditions which prevailed during his own lifetime (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Inaccuracies and errant cosmetic details notwithstanding, in general terms his overall assessment, like the broad strokes of Christian doctrine canonized in the writings of Paul, remains valid and sound.

Some critics assail not so much Herbert Armstrong’s predictions or style, but the whole notion of British-Israelism. They consider it theologically and historically unsound. This has been especially true among the critics of British-Israelism at the close of the 20th century.

Much that in an earlier century might have been accepted as historical proof would today either be disregarded or at best considered circumstantial evidence. To date, the historical-critical method alone has not proved the Anglo-Saxon people are Israelite descent. We must be careful, however, not to extend inordinate respect to this specific methodology.

Biblical subjects that are accurate, valid, and true—including the resurrection from the dead, one of the fundamental convictions of Christianity itself—cannot be proven beyond a shadow of a scientific doubt. Clearly this world’s conventional academic methodology leaves much to be desired.

If a matter is controversial but nevertheless true, how should a Christian understand it in terms of Scripture? What are the rules that should govern our interpretive perspective, particularly on an issue relevant to biblical prophecy or the identity of the descendants of ancient Israel in modern times? These are the vital concerns we shall address in the following chapter.

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### ***Chapter 3***

#### ***Understanding the Weight of Proof and Evidence***

The criteria that Western society uses in this post-Enlightenment era stipulates that we should scientifically validate all that we consider truth or fact. Critics of Anglo-Israelism have fallen victim to this historical-critical method that mandates that only the scientifically proved should be believed.

Such a methodology effectively eliminates faith as a factor in the equation. By these standards—and reminiscent of the worldly Pontius Pilate’s musing, “What is truth?” (John 18:38)—absolutely certain truth is a rare commodity in the human sphere.

Anglican clergyman Lesslie Newbigin’s discussion of “reigning plausibility structures” is helpful in revealing how the criteria for defining truth in any age is actually an evolving set of standards (*The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 1-11, 16-39, 68-69, 112-113, 199). Newbigin effectively shows how any received opinion—that which is accepted in society as truth without having to bear the burden of proof—is eternally subject to its own peculiar flaws and weaknesses.

Every set of standards used to measure and evaluate truth is based on certain a priori assumptions that are themselves vulnerable to scientific probe and challenge. As standards, values, and attitudes evolve over the course of time, received opinion will always be something of a moving target.

This kind of subjectivity presents anyone seeking to locate the origins of the Anglo-Saxons with a very difficult if not impossible task. Any honest searcher quickly discovers that it is an enormously difficult task to search for and then establish clear, incontrovertible historical evidence to support many aspects of the Anglo-Israel position.

#### ***A missing millennium plus***

Clearly ancient Israel disappears as a national-political entity from the historical record in the 8th century B.C.E. Then the Anglo-Saxons appear from out of nowhere on the Northwestern European coastlands around the 5th century C.E. Nearly 1,200 years separate these two historical facts. The Anglo-Saxons were part of the Germanic tribes—a group of vigorous, ethnically similar, and largely illiterate people along the northeastern borders of the 4th-6th century C.E. Roman Empire. The Romans generally considered them as barbarians.

The Anglo-Saxons were among these peoples who migrated toward and eventually into Europe during the obscure period between the disappearance of Israel and the settlement of the Northwest European coastal regions ... but very little historical evidence has survived to document their movements.

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#### **Sidebar: A Curtain Across English History**

Scholars are hampered in answering questions about “who the Germans were because the Germans left no written records prior to their conversion to mainstream Christianity [generally dating from the conversion of Frankish king Clovis, c. 498]... Our knowledge of the Germans depends largely on information in records written in the sixth and seventh centuries and projected backward” (McKay, et. al., *History of Western Society*, 3rd ed., pp. 210, 212-214).

Significantly, authority on early-British history James Campbell entitles his chapter on the period C.E. 400-600 “The Lost Centuries.” Concerning the archaeological record of this era, he writes: “[I]f in some ways we know very much less of the fifth and sixth centuries than we do of later periods, in others we know more... [However,] those who wish for certainty in history and who like to feel the ground firmly under their feet are best advised to study some other period. For those who care to venture into a quagmire, the archaeological evidence, and the truly remarkable intellectual effort of archaeologists to make sense of it, are of basic importance” (The Anglo-Saxons, pp. 27, 29).

Thus it is that the period of Anglo-Saxon settlement truly constitutes the lost centuries of British history. Renowned historian, Lord Macaulay writes:

“[F]rom this communion [with comparatively cultured Western Continental kingdoms still in contact with the old Eastern or Byzantine Empire] Britain was cut off. Her shores were, to the polished race which dwelt by the Bosphorus, objects of mysterious horrors... Concerning all the other provinces of the Western Empire we have continuous information.

“It is only in Britain that an age of fable completely separates two ages of truth. Odoacer and Totila, Euric and Thrasimund, Clovis, Fredegunda and Brunchild, are historical men and women. But Hengist and Horsa, Vertigern and Rowena, Arthur and Mordred are mythical persons, whose very existence may be questioned, and whose adventures must be classed with those of Hercules and Romulus. At length the darkness begins to break; and the country which had been lost to view as Britain reappears as England” (*The History of England: From the Accession of James the Second*, vol. 1, pp. 6, 10-11).

Sir Frank Stenton observed in his volume about *Anglo-Saxon England*: “...There stretches a long period of which the history cannot be written. The men who played their parts in this obscurity are forgotten, or are little more than names with which the imagination of later centuries has dealt at will.”

The course of events may be indicative, but is certainly not revealed, by the isolated coincidental references to Britain made by writers of this or the following age. For the first time in five centuries Britain was out of touch with the Continent... Archaeological discoveries have shown that permanent English settlements were

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founded in Britain during, if not before, the last quarter of the fifth century [tradition places the Saxon arrival in Britain between C.E. 446-454].

But archaeological evidence is an unsatisfactory basis for absolute chronology, and even if the British traditions may be trusted, they do not indicate the rate at which events moved between the coming of the Saxons and the establishment of permanent Kingdoms... The early history of these nations [Saxons and Angles] is enveloped in the obscurity which overhangs all Germany in the age of national migration...

For the next two hundred years the Germanic nations were involved in a movement which carried them to distant seats, created new confederacies which caused the adoption of new racial names... It is only an imperfect story which can be recovered from these [fragmentary comments of Roman writers or poems], and there are irrecoverable passages of crucial importance in the early history of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. Of these nations the Saxons are the least obscure... [Ptolemy] places them on the neck of the Cimbric peninsula, in the modern Holstein” (pp. 12, 11).

Little wonder that Winston Churchill, in *Island Race*, concisely notes that in the 5th century C.E., a curtain is drawn again across English history. “Thereafter the darkness closes in” (p. 8). And so, the trail connecting the Israelites to the Anglo-Saxons is viewed as unreliable by some observers, and the information about migration of peoples from the Middle East into Europe quite sketchy.

### ***Archaeological evidence not conclusive***

To assertively maintain the British-Israel case based on archaeological evidence alone is very precarious. Moreover, such evidence provides us with a sword that cuts both ways. To present that evidence as though it provides an “open-and-shut” case for a particular point of view creates an illusion of certainty that is lacking in substance. The average layman may be easily bedazzled by unqualified assertions which insist that history unfolded in a certain way and archaeology “proves” it.

In fact, archaeology speaks with many voices. Indeed, it is one of the most subjective disciplines of all the social sciences. As an academic discipline it is, in its interpretive dimensions, far more artistic than scientific. A single find can overturn paradigms—interpretive perspectives—that have held the field for decades. As with all history of antiquity, the scarcity of records makes the interpretation of evidence particularly susceptible to revision.

Furious debates rage as to what many of the most significant finds of biblical archaeology really mean. This is little wonder given the incompleteness of the archaeological record. We would do well to realize that many of the scholars and archaeologists who would ridicule the idea of British-Israelism on archaeological grounds

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are the same individuals who use their craft to insist that there were no early patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob—that these were merely literary creations of an ancient world people in need of pedigree; that there were no 12 sons of Jacob, let alone an Israel in more modern times.

Further, many of today’s most celebrated liberal theologians and teachers of biblical studies believe that there was no Exodus out of Egypt (Exodus 12-15) or conquest of the promised land as described in the book of Joshua. Some on the extreme edge of the critical school even argue that there was not any historical Israel before the time of King David in the 11th century B.C.E.

### ***Where archaeology helps***

Nevertheless, archaeology does yield evidence that can be employed (on either side of the argument, of course). It is found in the Middle East, the British Isles, and somewhat tentatively at various points in-between. Some recent work presents a case that the Anglo-Saxons were not the wild-eyed savages they are traditionally portrayed to be. They seem to have had strong cultural links with the people who had inhabited Britain in Roman days.

Writing in *Blood of the British: From Ice Age to Norman Conquest* (1986), Catherine Hills shows continuity in the settlement of the British Isles, ranging from Megalithic to Norman times. She concludes: “Archaeology does provide a great deal of information about the past, and we do know more than we used to. But the answers aren’t always obvious, and we sometimes have to rid ourselves of preconceptions in order to arrive at them. One of those preconceptions is that all change equals invasion, or, conversely, that all invasions equal change...”

“Could some of the ‘Saxons’ really have been Britons? Or were there a lot of Britons still living in England who have left little or no traces? Neither of these ideas is unreasonable, but neither is easy to demonstrate.”

Such a proposition conforms markedly to the traditional Anglo-Israel hypothesis that more than a single wave of Israelitish people settled the British Isles over a lengthy span of time.

Nonetheless, based on known existing records, identification of the Anglo-Saxons as Israelites is impossible to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt. Were these difficulties not so formidable, some enterprising scholar, through use of the historical method, would have proven the identity of Israel and consequently made his career and reputation long ago. Indeed, even Scripture itself implies that God intended Israel to be lost from the view of man (2 Kings 17:18, 20).

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#### ***Weighing proof and evidence***

If we are to present the argument by modern scholarly standards, we must maintain a distinction between compelling proof and cogent evidence. In other words, we can make use of evidence—simply at different levels of credibility:

- Beyond reasonable doubt: No other conclusion can be considered likely.
- Preponderance of evidence: Such evidence as, when weighed against that opposed to it, has more convincing force and thus a greater probability of truth.
- Clear and convincing evidence: More than a preponderance but not proven beyond reasonable doubt.
- Tangible evidence: Material remains which are comparatively easy to interpret, e.g., archaeological finds like the Rosetta Stone, the Behistun Inscription, or Shalmaneser’s Black Obelisk.
- Circumstantial evidence: Proven facts that provide a basis of inference that other facts are true.

Given the limitations of the tangible historical evidence, the best we can hope for is a measure of credibility and acceptance in the world of scholarship.

But the ordinary person, with a fair measure of common sense, is more easily moved to apply faith in understanding what little perceived historical evidence comes to hand. Did not Christ say, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes”? (Matthew 11:25).

The identity of the post-captivity 10 tribes of Israel may lack the evidence to be conclusively proven (beyond the shadow of a doubt), but it can not be disproved by history, archaeology, or any other academic discipline. There is evidence in support of those who wish to believe and evidence to the contrary for those who do not.

#### ***Grasping the weight of biblical evidence***

While there are primary resources that buttress our case, the most significant primary resource is the Bible itself. Do the Scriptures support the idea that the Anglo-Saxon/Celtic peoples are descended from Israel? How strongly and what are the consequences?

In fact, without the Bible, there would be little basis or even need for this idea. If the identification of ancient Israel with today’s Anglo-American nations rest on a firm biblical framework, the historical evidence seen in proper perspective can be presented

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accordingly. Ultimately, our judgment on the matter will stand or fall according to the way we understand and apply Scripture.

We stand at the end of a millennia-long succession of generations, each striving to understand Bible prophecy in the context of the existing times. The British-Israel view is one way in which the indisputable facts of recent world history—a story about the extraordinary ascendancy and dominance of the Anglo-American people—can be arranged to make sense of our contemporary circumstance.

Such an arrangement adds a powerful dimension of relevance of the story of 19th and 20th century history. How do we justify this extraordinary interpretation of the Bible as applied to past events?

The crux of this issue is whether or not God inspires Christians to have an enlarged understanding of Scripture (e.g., Daniel 10-11; Luke 24:25-27) and His will (2 Samuel 7:1-17; Acts 8:29; 11:12); whether He continues, as He did in Old and New Testament accounts, to be involved in human affairs (compare Psalm 75:6-7; Daniel 4:25; 32; 2Corinthians 2:12); or whether the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures were all fulfilled by either ancient Israel or Jesus Christ.

Our point of departure must rest on a single, fundamental concept well-articulated in a booklet entitled *Introduction to Prophecy*: “The fact remains the historical record is at best sketchy and inconclusive. *But the tribes can be located—if we use the clues and signposts of the Bible itself.* What happened to the people of ancient Israel is one of the little understood aspects of history. It is vital to know who they are, if you want to make sense of the prophecies of the ‘latter days.’ There is some fragmentary evidence in history, but the *proof* [emphasis theirs] is in prophecy.”

We will find the answers we seek in the prophetic retrospect (studying the past) and prophetic prospect (inquiring about the future).

### ***Which nations best fulfill the Genesis prophecies?***

In retrospect as we question the past, we must ask a series of crucial questions:

- What do the prophecies given by the patriarch Jacob and recorded in Genesis 48 and 49 mean?
- Who among today’s nations best fulfills the incredible predictions relevant to the physical, national blessings and inheritance promised to Abraham’s descendants?
- If Israel still exists (compare Amos 9:9), what are we to make of the prophecies yet unfulfilled about a coming punishment on Israelitish people for their sins—and on a far more encouraging note, a re-

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gathering and reunion of the tribes in the land of promise? (e.g., Isaiah 11:1-12; 48:20-21; Jeremiah 16:14-15; 23:7-8; 31:7-11; 33:7).

Certainly these questions are important ones. The way they were answered in the past has raised serious challenges. Not the least of these comes from National Endowment for the Humanities award-winning American historian, Barbara Tuchman.

She describes the methodology of the Anglo-Israel movement as “a tortured interpretation of stray passages from the Bible [by which believers] have convinced themselves that the English are the true descendants of the 10 lost tribes of Israel” (*Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour*, p. 82).

Ironically, Tuchman’s own unique way of presenting Anglo-American and European history provides us with some of the most compelling evidence to suggest that God’s hand has been active in delivering the Abrahamic promises to the British and American people.

At issue, of course, are two matters far larger than Israel’s modern identity: (1) the nature of God’s calling (John 6:44, 65) and (2) divine revelation (Amos 3:7). Does God’s Holy Spirit open the human mind to prophetic insight?

Jesus Christ answers that when “the Spirit of truth” would come, it would “guide you into all truth” and “tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

Understanding the outcome of prophecy subsequently becomes more a matter of faith than mental capacity or intelligence quotient. Understanding and belief become products of something orchestrated by God in the individual human mind—a matter of the revelation of knowledge which, by ordinary physical human means, could not otherwise be fully grasped or comprehended.

### ***God reveals prophetic truth***

Are there times when God reveals future events to his earthly servants today? If we take the Bible at face value, this seems to be the case. Certainly God is able to foretell the future. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, He says: “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’”(46:9-10).

The prophet Daniel forecast a time when knowledge and the truth of God—including the meaning of many heretofore obscure or sealed prophecies—would increase (Daniel 12:1-2, 4, 10). As the end of the age approaches, this passage suggests that God will reveal various aspects of prophecy to His people. The communications revolution created by the opening of Internet and the worldwide web, not to mention the accompanying proliferation of home computers, gives us some inkling of how Daniel’s predictions might be fulfilled.



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The prophet Amos indicates that those called by God will have a special insight into how the future will unfold—“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Jesus Christ Himself declared “No longer do I call you [specifically His 1st century apostles, but by extension Christians through all times] servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

Nearly 3000 years later Herbert W. Armstrong elaborated on this general concept, writing: “He [God] foretold what would, through the years, happen to these cities and nations [of Middle Eastern antiquity]! In every instance the prophecies that were then to be fulfilled came to pass on Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Persia, Greece and Rome. There has not been a miss! Those prophecies were accurate.

“And now, in other prophecies, the same supreme God has foretold precisely what is going to happen to the United States, the British nations, Western Europe, the Middle East, the Soviet Union [sic]... . Great world powers of our time have been, and are, the United States, the Soviet Union [sic], Great Britain, Germany, France, and other Western European nations” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, p. ix, 2).

If the Hebrew prophets do not specifically mention most modern nations in their writings, details about modern events and today’s nation-states nevertheless may well be described in many Old and New Testament prophecies. This can clearly be the case when one understands and applies the interpretive principles of duality and forerunners.

Herbert Armstrong observed: “Few have realized it but a duality runs all the way through the plan of God [emphasis ours] in working out His purpose here below” (op. cit., p. 17). The apostle Paul writes of a first and second Adam—the physical human created in the Garden of Eden by God (Genesis 1:26, 2:7, 19) and Jesus Christ, the quickening spirit (1Corinthians 15:22, 45).

As there was a Babylon in ancient times—the capital of the Nebuchadnezzar’s world ruling empire (Daniel 2:1, 31, 37)—so there is a spiritual Babylon prophesied in the Book of Revelation (17:1-6; 18:1-4). In similar fashion, the congregation of ancient Israel in the wilderness was a physical type of spiritual Israel or the New Testament Church of God (Romans 2:29).

### ***God’s Holy Day plan***

One facet of the insight brought by the principle of duality relates to the Church’s unique understanding of the meaning of God’s holy days described in Leviticus chapter 23 and other passages in the Pentateuch. Those special days provide us with a blueprint of the “master plan” of God. Christians better understand Christ’s role as the sacrificial Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:8) by examining the ceremonies tied to the sacrifice of Passover lambs among the ancient Israelites (Exodus 12:1-14).

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The painstaking removal of physical leavening from the home each spring (Exodus 12:8-39) dramatically underscores the Christian’s need to forsake sin (1Corinthians 5:7-8). The wave sheaf offering and harvest at Pentecost enlarges our understanding about the founding of the New Testament Church (Acts 2) and the concept of firstfruits (e.g., Romans 8:23; 11:16).

The Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25) illuminates prophecies about end time war, tribulation, the resurrection of the just and the ultimate return of Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15:52-54; 1Thessalonians 4:16-17). The two goats of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-28) reveal aspects of the story of the Christ-sacrifice and the binding of Satan just prior to Christ’s thousand-year reign (Revelation 20:2-3, 7).

The Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34-43) gives us a glimpse into the Millennial reign of Christ on earth (Revelation 20:4, 6), and the Last Great Day (Leviticus 23:36, 39) resolves the dilemma of how God will eventually extend salvation to the billions never called in the age between Adam’s sin and the Second Coming (e.g., Matthew 12:41-42; Revelation 20:11-12).

Each respective festival season and holy day portrays something special in the master plan of God.

If the principle of duality magnifies our appreciation of God’s Holy Days, it also shows how predictions, written by prophets of antiquity for people of old, can have a double and quite modern application. It gives us the confidence that God will act today as He has acted in the past.

Indeed, many prophecies, as well as biblical stories like those of Abraham or Joseph, foreshadow the future. Thus, the principle of duality makes possible a variety of complimentary interpretive frameworks (or legitimate ways of understanding and applying Scripture).

### ***When fulfilled?***

This principle can also diffuse some of the concerns often raised about the physical, national promises inherited by the descendants of Abraham. Some critics of British-Israelism challenge the idea that these promises were not fulfilled until modern times.

They often explain that Scripture abounds with references in the promises to Abraham that the patriarch’s descendants would become as the dust of the earth (Genesis 13:16), the sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17; 28:14), and the stars of the heavens (Genesis 15:5; 22:17—compare Deuteronomy 10:22; 28:62).

Many modern commentators vigorously contend that these very promises were fulfilled in Old Testament times. Numerous verses appear to buttress their argument. In Moses’ departing message to Israel about to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 1), the leader of the Exodus declared: “The Lord your God has

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multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude” (Deuteronomy 1:10).

Commenting on the conditions prevailing in Solomon’s Israel, the narrator of 1 Kings wrote: “Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing” (1 Kings 4:20). King Solomon himself added to these assertions: “Now, O Lord God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude” (2 Chronicles 1:9).

These passages appear to undermine the idea that the promise to Abraham of a multitude of descendants remained unfulfilled throughout ancient times. There are ways, however, to resolve these apparent difficulties through the use of Scripture itself.

But we have to remember the basic biblical principle of understanding a passage in its proper context. One needs only to continue reading the passage in Deuteronomy 1. Moses continued his thought with the prophetic charge, “May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you” (verse 11). There is double and even triple entendre in the bequeathing of blessings from God and the fulfillment of many prophecies found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

### ***History forecasts things to come***

The Bible abounds with forerunners which cast a revealing shadow of events yet to come. At one level, the Birthright blessing was inherited by those Israelites who crossed over the Jordan River and occupied the Promised Land. Hebrews 4:3-11 is rich in illustrating that both the Sabbath day and ancient Israel’s occupation of Canaan under Joshua are forerunners of a future establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Passages like Deuteronomy 1:10-11 demonstrate how this kind of duality—the successive unfolding of one antetype after another—operates as well. It would be nearly four centuries after Joshua’s initial late-15th century B.C.E. occupation of the Promised Land (Joshua 10:40; 11:23) that Israel would finally fill and dominate Canaan (note Joshua 13:1).

It took no less than David’s personal and political *savoir faire* to bring unity to these Israelites (2 Samuel 2:4, 5:1-5) who had battled the centrifugal forces of tribalism off and on since Moses had led Israel to Canaan’s borders.

However, the unity that David brought to the whole nation of Israel was a picture of something far greater yet to come. The rule of David and Solomon in the 11th-10th centuries B.C.E. was a forerunner or antetype of Christ’s thousand year reign over all the earth (Revelation 20:4, 6). Consider how King Solomon’s reign is summed up in the Bible. “And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:25).

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Prophecy reveals that the Millennium will be the time of the quintessential reunion of the 12 tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 37:19, 22)—a prophetic event forecast during the Davidic-Solomonic era (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 59, 93, 122, 184). At that future point in history, all the Israelite tribes will flourish as never before (e.g., Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 37:24-25). The epoch of the 11th-10th century B C. United Monarchy was but an imperfect forerunner.

Biblical scholar Eugene Merrill describes the fragility of the 12-tribed union even under David’s adroit political leadership: “Once a modicum of unity had been achieved, David was able to centralize government in Jerusalem without sacrificing local tribal distinctions and interests. At best, however, this was a loose federation, for up till the last years of his life David had to struggle with the tendency toward fragmentation, especially between Judah and the north...”

“The success of his early wars... attests to his ability to organize the nation, at least on a temporary basis... By the time of David’s death... the old tribal distinctions still existed, but with David there had come at least a sense of national unity in both secular and spiritual affairs.

“The United Monarchy disintegrated within one generation following David’s death. That breakup testifies to the tentative character of this union” (*Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 1987, pp. 281-284—see also the Soncino commentary on “Samuel,” pp. x-xi).

### ***The important principle of duality***

The success achieved during Israel’s Golden Age under David and Solomon is itself a forerunner of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Promise to Israel. It is not, however, the greatest fulfillment. One of the most convincing testimonies to this fact is found in 2 Samuel 7:10 and 1 Chronicles 17:9—“... I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more.”

Concerning this prediction, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote: “The prophecy was for [1] David’s own time, for [2] the ultimate fulfillment in the time of the Millennium to come, and also [3] for a different time in a different land where these scattered Israelites were to gather, after being removed from the Holy Land, and while that land was lying idle and in possession of the Gentiles.”

The Millennial fulfillment to which he refers will see “an era that will far surpass (in grandeur and magnificence) even the reign of King Solomon” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 59, 93, 122, 184).

To expand somewhat on this quotation, a fulfillment of the promise of Abraham’s inheritance came around 2,520 years after the inhabitants of Israel’s northern kingdom went into Assyrian captivity (see Chapter 6). The ultimate fulfillment will, of course, be realized during the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ. All fulfillments of the promises to

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Abraham that precede the Second Coming are antetypes or forerunners which show us the pattern we can expect to see under the rule of Christ (Isaiah 11:9).

Since the Millennial realization of the promise is the grandest fulfillment, our concerns in this paper focus on a lesser yet important fulfillment—probably the penultimate one—between the days of Solomon and the return of Jesus Christ.

To fully explore that story, we must address the issue of the “Lost 10 Tribes” in more detail.

## ***Chapter 4***

### ***Were the 10 Tribes Really Lost?***

Author A.S. Geysler reminds us that “even in the course of the Exile itself the prophets started to proclaim the return of the people and the restoration of the destroyed 12 Tribe Kingdom” (“*Some Salient New Testament Passages*,” p. 305). Indeed, a belief in the continuing existence of the descendants of these deportees of the Northern Kingdom is evidenced especially in the history of the Jewish people.

Simon Wiesenthal convincingly argues that part of the impetus of Columbus’ search for the East Indies was an interest in locating the Lost Tribes (*Sails of Hope*). In the mid-17th century C.E., Dutch Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (inspired by the stories of world traveler Antonio Montezinos) even wrote a treatise—*The Hope of Israel* (1650-1652)—on the subject. These are but some of the many examples which could be cited.

However, many 20th century historians and theologians have seriously challenged the idea that there even was such a phenomenon. Were the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom ever really lost?

### ***Growth of ancient Israel into a nation***

Before addressing that question, it is essential to understand the basic contours of Israelite history. The people of Israel descended from the 12 sons of the biblical patriarch Jacob. At some time probably in the 17th century B.C.E., severe famine throughout the Fertile Crescent drove Jacob and his family to seek refuge in Egypt where Jacob’s favorite son, Joseph, had been sold into slavery about two and a half decades before.

Thanks to the remarkable events in Joseph’s life—his unlikely ascent from a domestic servant to an Egyptian leader—he was in a key position to benefit the entire family (Genesis 45:4-7) during this time of trial and famine throughout the entire Levant (41:28-32; 53:42:2; 43:1-2). Jacob and his family took up residence in the fertile alluvial plain of Goshen (45:10-11; 47:1-4) where the children of Israel remained and grew into a people (Exodus 1:7) over the following two centuries.

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The establishment of Egypt’s XVIIIth dynasty bode ill for the Israelite colony in the northeast corner of the Egyptian kingdom. Founded by Ahmose I (ca. 1570-1546), this dynasty very likely introduced the change in Egyptian policy that laid the groundwork for turning Israel into a slave people under harsh Egyptian taskmasters (Exodus 1:8-14).

The anti-Israelite character of Ahmose’s program was probably part of a larger nationalist reaction against varying degrees of Hyksos domination of Egypt running from Dynasties XIII through XVII (ca. 1780-1560). The Hyksos were an Eastern people ethnically related to the Hebrews. Their dominance in Egypt during the life of Joseph may help to account for his acceptability as a central figure in Egyptian government.

### ***The Pharaoh “who knew not Joseph”***

The cryptic biblical reference—“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8)—may summarize this very pivotal period of Egyptian history. If the XVIIIth Dynasty is indeed the period being described, Ahmenhotep I (1551-1524 B.C.E.) probably followed his predecessor’s lead by instituting the repressive policies which reduced the Israelite population to slave labor.

Thutmose I (ca. 1524-1518 B.C.E.) was likely the pharaoh who ordered Hebrew babies thrown into the Nile (Exodus 1:15-22). And the famous Thutmose III (ca. 1504-1450 B.C.E.), remembered today as the “Napoleon of Egypt,” became pharaoh around the time of Moses’ flight into the wilderness of Midian (Exodus 2:15).

Whenever these events may have occurred, some 40 years after Moses left Egypt, he returned, only this time to lead Israel on an Exodus out of Egypt (ca. 1443 B.C.E.) and eventually back to Canaan where father Abraham had spent the final days of his life.

After crossing the Jordan River and entering the land of promise (ca. 1403 B.C.E.), the Israelites spent nearly the next four hundred years attempting to establish themselves as the dominant national presence in the Land of Canaan. This did not occur until the establishment in about 1004 B.C.E. of a combined Judahite-Israelite monarchy (2 Samuel 2:4, 5:1-4) under the remarkably charismatic and talented David ben-Jesse.

Only then did Israel finally become the dominant power of the area known as the Holy Land. After Solomon’s rule, the Israelite kingdom split with the 10 northern tribes existing as an independent nation for the next two centuries.

### **Sidebar: Egypt in American Heraldry**

The Israelite experience in Egypt was a formative one. Indeed, Egypt was the location where the 12 sons of Jacob and their families grew into a vast multitude (Exodus 1:7). From these people, God would eventually form His own special nation (19:5). Should we be surprised, then, to find Egyptian symbolism in American heraldry.

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Perhaps the most conspicuous example is the official Seal of the United States, which appears on the back of the American one-dollar bill. Under the motto *Annuit Coeptis*—“He hath prospered our undertakings”—we find the Great Pyramid of Gizeh. This choice of imagery is interesting in several respects.

The name “Joseph” derives from Hebrew *yosafe*—“let him add”—implying “prosperity” (compare Genesis 39:2-3, 23). As for the Pyramid of Gizeh, it rests in Egyptian territory almost precisely at the center of the earth along the 30th parallel in longitude and on the 31st meridian east of Greenwich. As it appears on the Seal, the Pyramid consists of 13 layers of stone—an allusion to Manasseh’s national number—and is missing the cornerstone at the top (compare Psalm 118:22; Luke 20:17).

The motto beneath the Pyramid reads *Novus Ordo Seclorum*—“New Order of the Ages.” Such a choice is interesting considering that the establishment of the new American nation contributed to the Anglo-American ascendancy—an ascent which is a type of Israel as God’s supreme and model nation during the Millennial rule of Jesus Christ.

Egyptian imagery was on the mind of many of those who contributed to the creation of the new United States of America. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams comprised the original committee for creating an official national seal.

Benjamin Franklin’s design for the U.S. seal showed Moses lifting his rod and dividing the Red Sea while in the background Pharaoh’s host was overwhelmed. Although Franklin’s design was not adopted, the rays emanating from the pillar of fire in his design survived to find expression in the seal that was ultimately selected.

Thomas Jefferson originally proposed that the obverse side of the seal portray the liberated children of Israel in the wilderness, led through divine guidance by a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night. The motto encircling Jefferson’s own personal seal read “Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God”—words taken from Oliver Cromwell and the epitaph of John Bradshaw, both among the regicides of Charles I (1625-1649).

It is apparent that the founding American fathers saw a parallel between the Israelite experience of Egyptian bondage and their own perceived colonial bondage and mistreatment under the “tyranny” of an English king. There was far more to the similarities than they ever imagined in the imagery which they selected for the United States of America.

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#### ***Israel’s golden age***

If David laid the foundation for a united Israelite monarchy, it was his successor and son Solomon who brought Israel to new pinnacle of power and glory (cf. 1 Kings 3:11-13; 2 Chronicles 1:11-12). Although many of today’s archaeologists and theologians erroneously dispute the accuracy of the biblical account, Scripture represents the Solomonic era as a “golden age” when “the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland” (1 Kings 10:27).

The language used by the biblical narrator to describe Solomon’s splendor and magnificence is the same employed later by the prophets to represent the coming millennial age when the Kingdom of God will govern the earth under the rulership of Jesus Christ Himself (e.g., 1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4).

The biblical account of Solomon’s reign abounds with Millennial types, patterns, and forerunners. As many biblical commentaries will attest, Solomon—whose name derives from the Hebrew root word shelomoh meaning “peaceful” or “peaceable”—is often representative of no less than the quintessential Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), Jesus Christ.

Indeed, the Solomonic age of glory is a biblical forerunner of even greater fulfillments of the physical, material, and national promises made to the descendants of Abraham. Like all forerunners or imperfect “types,” Solomon’s golden age was a shadow of the reality it forecast. But unlike the yet future Millennial age, it bore within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

#### ***The divided kingdom***

If Solomon’s Israel bore the form of greater things to come, his methodologies for kingdom building were not always Christ-like. Indeed, by the conclusion of his reign, the Kingdom’s religious life had grossly deteriorated (1 Kings 11:4-8). Also dissatisfaction over his high rate of taxation, enforced labor policies, and insensitivity to concerns regarding respect for the territorial integrity of the tribes north of Jerusalem had all reached dangerous proportions.

When Solomon’s son and successor, Rehoboam, met with northern leaders at Shechem for the purpose of renewing the Davidic covenant of rulership over the northern tribes (1 Kings 12:1), he very likely found himself confronted by a disillusioned group of men intent on having their grievances promptly and effectively addressed (verses 2-5). The young new king took three days to consider the northern appeal for tax reform and labor reform, only to mistakenly accept the advice of his younger contemporaries over older, wiser heads (verses 6-13).



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Rehoboam responded to northern requests with sharp rebuke and a foreboding promise: “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” (verse 14).

His wrongheaded, youthful presumptuousness had a predictable outcome. Heeding the cry, “To your tents, O Israel” (verse 16), the northern tribes rallied under the leadership of their chief spokesman, Jeroboam (verse 2-3, 20) declaring “What share have we in David?” (verses 15-16).

From that momentous separation between Israel and Judah, the Bible bears witness to a two century-long progression of 10 different dynasties, presided over by no less than 19 monarchs reigning over what became commonly known as the “Northern Kingdom.”

This new political entity, completely separate from the Kingdom of Judah, essentially was comprised of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (descendants of the two sons of Joseph), Dan, Gad, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali. From the establishment of this independent Israelite monarchy, national leadership invariably took the northern tribes away from God.

Starting with King Jeroboam I (ca. 931-910 B.C.E.), the religious life of the kingdom atrophied. Jeroboam clearly mistrusted God’s forthright and awesome assertion that could have launched the Northern Kingdom to remarkable achievement and success.

Through the prophet Ahijah, God had promised Jeroboam: “So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you” (1 Kings 11:37-38).

### ***The crucial sins of Jeroboam***

Unhappily, Jeroboam failed to take advantage of this remarkable opportunity. He succumbed to the fear that his northern subjects would return to the House of David (1 Kings 12:26). In particular, he was anxious that Israelite religious unity eventually might prompt a restoration of political oneness among the 12 tribes.

To subvert any such development, Jeroboam actually seriously polluted the religious life of his people by erecting golden calves as idols in both Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-30). Believing that the common observance of God’s annual festivals (Leviticus 23) would rekindle a desire for national unification, he changed the date of the great fall festival (Leviticus 23:23-44) from the seventh to the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar (1 Kings 12:32-33).

Finally, he summarily dismissed the legitimate priesthood (verse 31; 1 Kings 14:33), a group of men set apart by God’s own decree (e.g., Exodus 40:15) for the purpose

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of maintaining the integrity of the religious life of the nation. To Jeroboam, the Levitical priesthood represented a threatening independent power base within his kingdom. They inherited their office, owed the king nothing, and were largely outside his control.

In place of the Levites, Jeroboam created new ecclesiastical hierarchy of “the lowest” and least experienced people (1 Kings 12:31; 14:33), a group of men who owed all that they had and were to the king. Such a caste would have to cater to royal favor to retain position. By dismissing the Levitical priests of the north, the king gained royal control of the priesthood.

So Jeroboam willfully changed the national form of worshipping the true God for blatant political reasons. God wants us to worship Him in His way on His days—not ours (Deuteronomy 12:30-32).

Thus the first king of the new Israelite dynasty established an unfortunate, erroneous pattern in religious life which ultimately led to the destruction of the Northern Kingdom. So important was the impact of the religious changes Jeroboam introduced that his reign became the standard against which future evil in Israel would be measured.

For the most part, Israel’s political and ecclesiastical leadership persisted in the sins of Jeroboam (e.g., 1 Kings 13:34; 15:30; 16:2-3, etc.) virtually from the foundation to the collapse of the Israelite state.

In the final analysis, God withdrew His protection and blessing, leaving the northern kingdom to fall victim, like most of other small, independent kingdoms across the 8th century B.C.E. Fertile Crescent to a new and powerful military presence on the ascendancy from about the mid-9th century. The coming of the Assyrians spelled doom for Israel.

### ***The 10 tribes go into Assyrian captivity***

The landmark 19th century C.E. discoveries of British archaeologist Austen Henry Layard dispelled any doubts that the Assyrian kingdom was a formidable force which ferociously dominated the entire ancient Near East off and on from the 9th through the 7th centuries B.C.E. It is indisputable that the Assyrians invaded and conquered the Northern Kingdom as part of that domination. What remains beyond our historical grasp are the precise, complete, and irrefutably accurate facts and figures involved.

Some argue that only a small number of leading people—the northern intelligentsia—were actually taken captive by the Assyrians. The rest either fled as refugees, or assimilated into the alien populations transplanted in the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:24). Others believe that the enslavement and removal of Israelites involved almost the entire northern population. How are we to know who is correct? How many Israelites were actually deported?

### **Sidebar: Egypt, Assyria, and the British Museum**

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For any enthusiast of ancient world history, a pilgrimage to the British Museum is an antiquarian’s delight. Inside its richly filled halls, the visitor discovers many of the most important archaeological remains of the greatest civilizations and kingdoms of the ancient world. In particular, one finds an abundance of treasures which document the histories of the Egyptian and Assyrian kingdoms.

From Egypt we find among many other things, the Rosetta Stone—the key to unlocking one understanding of Egyptian hieroglyphics; the huge granite head of Amenhotep III from Karnak; and an impressive assemblage of mummies and various papyri. The Assyrian collection of the British Museum occupies a full seven rooms.

Included in these treasures are Shalmaneser’s Black Obelisk; the Taylor Prism; the colossal human headed bulls and lions; and the reliefs of the Lachish siege, royal lion hunts, and reliefs from various palace walls. Those who stroll through its corridors leave with a distinct sense of what it might have been like to have lived during the heyday of Nimrud, Nineveh, and other major Assyrian cities.

There is a certain appropriateness that such a large concentration of Egyptian and Assyrian records, monuments, and archaeological artifacts reside in Britain’s national museum. For ancient Israel, the two kingdoms of Egypt and Assyria were intimately involved in Israel’s beginnings and endings.

As the Bible reveals, the tribes migrated to Canaan out of an extended sojourn in Egypt, eventually settling in that area and establishing themselves in the 11th and 10th centuries B.C.E. as the dominant regional power. After Solomon’s rule, the Israelite kingdom split with the 10 northern tribes existing as an independent polity for the next two centuries.

The descendants of 10 of the Israelite tribes eventually fell victim to the aggressive expansion of the Assyrian Empire. Many of the most interesting pieces in the museum’s collection provide the best extra-biblical documentation of the Bible’s account of the extinction of the northern kingdom.

Assyrian court records provide specific numbers. The Emperor Sargon II claims to have taken 27,290 captive from Samaria (Sargon’s Annals, 10-18). This number seems decidedly small against a population that some authorities estimate to have been around 500,000. However, if Sargon’s testimony is a primary resource, it is also considered suspect by most modern-day historians of the period.

The chroniclers of Sargon’s reign did not produce the record of Israel’s fall until several years after the collapse of Samaria. More importantly, Sargon may have even fabricated a role for himself in the whole matter of Israel’s conquest. Many scholars and historians point out other considerations that reduce to Sargon’s credibility. “He probably had no right to that claim [of taking Samaria], at least not as king. He may have been Shalmaneser’s army commander” (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 130-131,154).

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#### ***The Assyrian kings***

The immediate chain of events leading to Israel’s ultimate fall and subsequent massive deportation actually began with Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian ruler who implemented the Galilean Captivity (734-732 B.C.E.) taking large segments of the Reubenite, Gaddite, and the Trans-Jordan Manassite population into the upper Mesopotamian river valley. In fact, Shalmaneser V was the Assyrian monarch responsible for the 722/721-718 B.C.E. campaign into the Northern Kingdom.

Another observer reminds us that Shalmaneser “was deposed soon afterwards by another king, Sargon II, whose very name, ‘True King,’ betrays the suspect nature of his claim to the throne. Sargon moved the Assyrian capital to his own foundation of Khorsabad, built in imitation of Nimrud... In three campaigns, 734-732 B.C.E., Tiglath-pileser overwhelmed the area.”

“Damascus and part of Israel became Assyrian provinces, and many of the inhabitants were deported. By 718 B.C.E. Israel, which had proven a troublesome vassal state, was finally eliminated and Samaria became capital of an Assyrian province. The Assyrian king at this time was Shalmaneser V, but he did not have time to commemorate his achievements in stone, and it was his successor, Sargon II, who claimed credit for his victory” (Julian Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, pp. 33, 45-46).

Finally, conservative biblical scholar Eugene Merrill observes that Shalmaneser V “took Samaria in his last year... . Sargon, who probably was not the son of Tiglath-pileser, as some claim, but a usurper, reigned over the vast Assyrian Empire from 722 to 705. One of Assyria’s most militant rulers, he claims to have undertaken significant campaigns in every one of his seventeen years. In the annals of his first year he takes credit for Samaria’s fall.

“In actual fact the biblical assertion that Shalmaneser V was responsible is correct; as several scholars have shown, Sargon claimed this major conquest for his own reign so that the record of his first year would not be blank” (*Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 408-409).

Even if Merrill is incorrect, might it be possible that Sargon’s low figures regarding deportees reflect a mopping up operation—that the numbers he lists do not include those already taken by his predecessors Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser V?

#### ***The important biblical account***

For those who believe in the inerrancy (absolute reliability) of Scripture (John 17:17), there is another and far more reliable source: the biblical record. God warned through Moses that He would “scatter them [Israel] into corners” and “make the remembrance of them to cease from among men” (Deuteronomy 32:26, KJV).

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The report of 2 Kings is probably the most essential biblical testimony: “Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone... the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight..

“For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day” (2 Kings 17:18-23).

Granted, there is biblical proof and indirect archaeological evidence that there were representatives from the northern tribes among the people of Judah well after Israel’s fall. Undoubtedly, some northerners moved to the south in protest of the unlawful practices introduced by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:25-33, 13:33, 2 Chronicles 11:13-16) and many of his successors, most notably Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 16:28-33, 18:3-4, 18). Such men and women did so in an effort to find an unpolluted religious environment in which to worship the true God.

It is also quite probable that many northerners headed south permanently to escape the Assyrian onslaught of the 8th century B.C.E. It is indisputable that the population of Jerusalem expanded greatly during that very time. Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi estimates that the population of Jerusalem swelled from about 7,500 to 24,000 as the 8th century drew to a close.

Not all this increase is attributable to a burgeoning birthrate. Certainly some pious northerners responded to Hezekiah’s religious reformation (2 Chronicles 30:1-18, 31:1) but most probably acted out of fear of the oncoming Assyrian invasion.

Perhaps the greatest archaeological find relevant to the issue of northerners relocating in the south is Hezekiah’s “broad wall”—20-23 feet wide and located on the city’s western ridge. Nahaman Avigad discovered this structure in 1970 (compare 2 Chronicles 32:5; Isaiah 22:9-11).

Indirectly related is “Hezekiah’s Tunnel”—a subterranean channel beneath the city of Jerusalem to guarantee the city’s water supply in time of siege. This archaeological feature attests to the anxieties which the Assyrian invasion (2 Kings 18:9-19:37; Isaiah, chapters 36-37) of the late-8th century must have created.

### ***Evidence of Israel’s presence in Judea***

Other frequently cited biblical passages regarding an Israelite presence in Judea pertain to Asa’s reign over Judah (2 Chronicles 15:8-9) and King Josiah’s reformation period (34:3, 6, 9; 35:17-18; 2 Kings 23:19-20). Of less certainty are the claims that all Israel was restored in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, or Nehemiah.

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Many critics of British-Israelism vigorously maintain that the 6th century B.C.E. Restoration under Zerubbabel constituted a return of all 12 tribes (compare mention of “all Israel” in Ezra 2:70; 7:28); not Judah only.

Much is made of the sacrificing of “twelve bulls for all Israel” (Ezra 8:35—see also 6:16-17) or references to “Israelites” (Nehemiah 11:3-4) or Zechariah’s admonitions to both houses (Zechariah 8:13). To bring balance to this debate, we must remember that the resettlement process was into areas from which the émigrés’ predecessors had formally lived. The names of the returnees accompanying Ezra (e.g., Ezra 1:5; 8:1-15) are Jewish—not names from northern tribesmen.

Moreover, the Bible mentions only a few locations of the area resettled which are not decidedly part of Judah’s territorial inheritance (Jericho, Bethel, and possibly Ono, and Neballat—Nehemiah 7:32, 36-37; 11:31-35). Those sites that were in the north are located in the far south along the border of the territory of the Kingdom of Judah.

We are likely looking at areas which were peopled by the southernmost inhabitants of the northern kingdom—ones who escaped the net of the 8th century B.C.E. Assyrian captivity—or quite possibly Jews who eventually drifted north to occupy the land vacated by Assyrian deportation. Ezra 1:5 implies that the leaders and organizers of the return were Jewish rather than Israelite.

### ***The 12 tribes in the New Testament***

The New Testament includes numerous references to “the twelve tribes.” Luke 2:36 mentions Anna the prophetess who was from the tribe of Asher. In Acts 3:12, we see Peter addressing his audience as “men of Israel.” Some critics employ Acts 9:15 to argue that Paul fulfilled his missionary work to Israel by preaching to the Jews. Others cite Acts 26:2-8 and 22-23 to argue that all 12 tribes worshipped God in the 1st century C.E. Romans 11:1 and Philippians 3:5 identify Paul not as a Jew, but a Benjamite.

James 1:1 addresses “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.” Finally, some commentators argue that the salutation in 1 Peter 1:1—“to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”—is addressed to non-Jewish Israelites.

Again, A. S. Geysler convincingly challenges those who appropriate these New Testament verses in this fashion. He writes:

“In parables and debates he [Jesus] taught them [the 12] its [the Kingdom’s] nature and the signs of its coming, and to pray for it daily. The ‘12’ (eleven) asked him after the resurrection, ‘Are you now going to establish the Kingdom for Israel?’ (Acts 1:6). James perceived their presence, the latent 12 tribes, in the Jewish dispersion in and around Antioch around 46 A.D..

“Paul pronounces a beracha on the Israel of God in the Galatian diaspora, is convinced that all Israel will be saved and pleads before Agrippa his hope that according to

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the divine promises the 12 Tribe Kingdom will be restored [Galatians 6:16, Romans 11:26, Acts 26:6-7].

“The 12 [apostles] to whom Jesus delegated his power and authority to exemplify the ingathering in Galilee, and who for that occasion quite rightly his, not the church’s, apostoloi, are literally fundamental to the 12 Tribe Kingdom’s restoration as apocalyptically symbolized in the ‘New Jerusalem’” (“Some Salient New Testament Passages,” p. 310).

In simple terms, there were Israelites as part of a long-term diaspora. In addition to the dispersed tribes of Israel to areas outside Palestine, there were Israelites who had settled within the boundaries of Judah. Neither the biblical nor secular records support the idea that every last man, woman, and child of the Northern Kingdom went into captivity “in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11—compare Hosea 13:16).

Obviously, there were Israelites from the Northern Kingdom who relocated and assimilated into the Jewish Kingdom. The issue is how many were taken captive and deported by the Assyrian rulers Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II.

### ***A mass deportation policy***

It is significant that Assyrian ruler Tiglath-pileser instituted a novel policy concerning the treatment of conquered populations. Roman Catholic scholar and theologian Lawrence Boadt tells us that the practice of mass deportations “became the standard Assyrian policy from that time on... There is good evidence that conditions were not as bad under the Babylonians as under the earlier Assyrians, who had begun the practice of mass deportations of conquered people back in the eighth century.”

Boadt amplifies his description of Tiglath-pileser noting that he would hold “entire cities responsible if they did not surrender the rebelling king to him. He would often wipe out a whole population or deport them to far-off lands and replace them with peoples conquered in still other parts of his empire” (Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 43, 383-384).

Was this a pattern applied by the successors of Tiglath-pileser? Historians McKay and Buckler note that sometimes the Assyrians deported only a portion of a kingdom or nation. “In other cases they deported whole populations, wrenching them from their homelands and resettling them in strange territories” (*History of Western Society*, 3rd ed., p. 50). If these secular historians argue thus, the Bible seems to indicate it all the more.

We must ask whether the biblical assertion that “there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone” (2 Kings 17:18) should be taken at face value. If one accepts the scriptures as a valid primary resource, the biblical evidence suggests it is wiser to err on the side of literal interpretation.

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In predicting the Assyrian overrunning of the Northern Kingdom, the Hebrew seer Amos prophetically described the “remnant” that would be left behind: “Thus says the Lord: ‘As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out who dwell in Samaria ...’” (Amos 3:12). In such a fashion, Amos poetically represents the paltry population of the Northern Kingdom after the Assyrian conquest.

Finally, Jewish tradition, which anticipates an eventual reunion of the physical 12 tribes as part of its Messianic eschatology (see the Soncino Commentary on Isaiah 43:12-21, Jeremiah 23:6-8, Ezekiel 37:19; note also Jeremiah 33:7 and Geyer’s “Some Salient New Testament Passages,” pp. 305-310), also strongly supports the notion of lost tribes.

With the exception of the testimony of an Assyrian king, whose Annals themselves are suspect, there is no specific number assigned biblically or otherwise to the northerners deported. Neither is there record of the number involved in any resettlement in or return to the region of Judea. And so... we are still left with the crucial question: Where then did the Israelites go?

## ***Chapter 5***

### ***The Migrations of the 10 Tribes***

If Assyria carried the majority of the Northern Kingdom’s population into captivity, where then did those Israelites ultimately go? They were last seen heading Northeast—captives of one of the most feared and war-like people in the ancient Near East. From that point forward in time, these Israelites essentially vanish from recorded history.

Can we find the ten-tribe nation of Israel today? If so, where are we to look for the evidence?

The best place to begin is the Bible itself. The prediction of the prophet Amos expands our understanding of the record in 2 Kings 17:18-23, a passage which indicates that the Eternal removed Israel “out of His sight” with the result that “there was none left but the tribe of Judah only” in the land of the Israelite kingdoms.

This prophet from Tekoa in northern Judea tells us that “the remnant of Joseph” (Amos 5:15) would be scattered, but ultimately not lost entirely from God’s view: “Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom [Israel as a political entity], and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,” says the Lord. ‘For surely I will command, and will sift the house [family] of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground’” (Amos 9:8-9).



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With these passages in mind, we might expect that the migrations of the tribes can be traced by hints in Scripture and biblical prophecies. Such is exactly the case.

### ***Where did the “lost tribes” go?***

The Scriptures cited above imply that Israel would be sifted—that they would be participants in a major migratory movement along with scores of other ethnic groups—and then be divinely led to and planted in a permanent home. This being the case, we can deduce from other passages that Israel’s new land would be located to the north and west of the Promised Land.

The most frequently used verse in this regard is found in the Book of Isaiah: “Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, and these from the land of Sinim” (Isaiah 49:12; compare verse 20).

Since there was no expression in the Hebrew language corresponding to the English “northwest,” it does no violence to the meaning of Isaiah’s predictions to understand this passage to mean that Israel would migrate in a northwesterly direction.

But there are other biblical clues. Other sections of Scripture often cited include Hosea 12:1. “Ephraim feeds on the wind, and pursues the east wind” [i.e., an expression which implies moving to the west].

Jeremiah provides an interesting clue as well: “Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: ‘Return, backsliding Israel’” (Jeremiah 3:11-12).

Still different passages suggest that Israel will ultimately be found in an island setting. “I will set his hand over the sea, and his right hand over the rivers” (Psalm 89:25) and “Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar” (Isaiah 49:1).

Also, “They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock” (Jeremiah 31:9-10).

Other miscellaneous references to an island location include Jeremiah 31:1-3, 9-10; Isaiah 24:15; 41:1, 5; 51:5; 66:19; and also Psalm 89:25. In addition, Isaiah 23:3 implies that Israel will be a maritime people (compare Ezekiel 17:4-5).

Collectively, all the passages cited above can be used to make the case that the captive Israelites eventually moved from Mesopotamia, ultimately settling in Northwestern Europe.

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#### ***To the British Isles***

The implication is that the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, on whom the patriarch Jacob or Israel had specifically named his name (Genesis 48:16), finally settled in the British Isles.

If this use of Scripture seems contrived, there are other no less unusual and surprising applications of God’s Word which were made by Jesus and still later the apostles themselves. Even Roman Catholic theologian Paul Knitter who probes the “scandal of particularity”—the claim that Jesus Christ represents something thoroughly surprising, exceptional and unique in human history—concedes the following: “Both critical Christians and skeptical humanists must be open to the possibility that what they [the Evangelical Christians] are saying may be true” (*No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, pp. 45, 49).

In principle, Knitter’s concession applies similarly to the matter of the identity of Israel in modern times. If the ten-tribes still exists and can be found today among the Anglo-Saxon/Celtic peoples of the world, no amount of eloquent or persuasive theological reasoning to the contrary can confute or alter the plan and purpose of God. If our Biblical reasoning—in scholarly language our hermeneutic—is sound thus far, the historical evidence begins to bear a greater burden of proof.

#### ***But how did the Israelites get to Europe?***

One of the most conspicuously obscure periods of history lies between Israel’s 8th century B.C.E. deportation and the appearance—seemingly from out of nowhere—of Hengist, Horsa, and their Anglo-Saxons compatriots. These people arrived on the Thanet off England’s southeast coast in around 449 C.E. Finding Israel in the post-8th century B.C.E. ancient world is, of course, no mean task. It approximates the proverbial looking for a needle in a haystack. The Anglo-Saxons leave us no record of their past lineage.

Like all other inquiries of this nature, the results are restricted by the subjectivity of interpreting the very incomplete historical record of antiquity.

Since records from the distant past are so partial—limited by the ravages of time, war, and the elements, not to mention the intractable difficulty of reconstructing the histories of the largely non-literate populations—a single find in archaeology can literally overturn a whole interpretive paradigm (or specific method of viewing the historical record) in a matter of years.

Because of this factor, the reconstruction of ancient world history is—and until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9) will remain—subject to criticism and radically different interpretations of the same basic evidence. Such limitations make the search for Israel’s trail particularly challenging.

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How then did the lost 10 tribes get from Mesopotamia in the Middle East to Northwestern Europe and the British Isles? This scenario seems unlikely—a unique interpretation of both historical facts and the Word of God. The former leaves us very little to go on—only shards of historical evidence. However, if there is a paucity of primary resource material, the broad contours of the story can be reconstructed from the fragments of history we possess so far.

#### **Sidebar: Post-Captivity Israel and the Extra-biblical Record**

The two principal extra-biblical references to post-captivity Israel come from 1st century C.E. Jewish historian, Josephus, and the apocryphal work we know as II Esdras (ca. C.E. 70-135).

In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus writes that “the entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country [to which the Assyrians deported them]; wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the 10 tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers” (Book 11, Chapter V, Section 2).

It is not known where Josephus got his information.

The account of Esdras reads:

“Then you saw him collecting a different company, a peaceful one. They are the 10 tribes which were taken off into exile in the time of King Hoshea, whom Shalmaneser king of Assyria took prisoner. He deported them beyond the [Euphrates] River, and they were taken away into a strange country. But then they resolved to leave the country populated by the Gentiles and go to a distant land never inhabited by man [2 Samuel 7:10], and there at last to be obedient to their laws, which in their own country they had failed to keep [Leviticus 26:18-21].

“As they passed through the narrow passages of the Euphrates, the Most High performed miracles for them, stopping up the channels of the river until they had crossed over [compare the Israelite crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16, 21-22) and later the Jordan River (Joshua 3:13)].

“Their journey through that region, which is called Arzareth, was long, and took a year and a half. They have lived there ever since, until this final age. Now they are on their way back, and once more the Most High will stop the channels of the river [Isaiah 27:6, 12-13] to let them cross” (2 Esdras 13:39-47, from the Apocrypha).

While the records of neither Josephus nor Esdras merit the credibility of inspired and canonized Scripture, there is very likely a core of truth in the accounts that both writers have preserved for us. After all, they wrote about a period less than 700 years earlier.

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With particular reference to Esdras’ record, one of the most creative (if subjective) explanations of how Israel’s trek can be demonstrated is found in an article by John Hulley (a.k.a., *Yochanan Hevroni Ben David*) “Did Any of the Lost Tribes Go North? Is the ‘Sambatyon’ the Bosphorus?,” published in *B’Or Ha’Torah*, No. 6 (in English), 1987 (pp. 127-133).

The author explores the tradition that indicates that the lost tribes are located beyond the “Sambatyon,” a river which is said to have rested—ceased its flow—on the Sabbath day (compare Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 65B; Jerusalem Talmud Sanhedrin 10:6; Lamentations Rabba 2:9; Genesis Rabba 11:5 and 73:6; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Exodus 34:10; also Nachmanides on Deuteronomy 32:36).

### ***Through the Bosphorus***

Hulley demonstrates that the narrow strait of the Bosphorus, through which pass the waters of the Black Sea into the Aegean, is likely the “river” about which tradition speaks. “There the current does slow down drastically, stop or even reverse on average about once a week” (p. 128). He offers an explanation of the physical process which produces this unusual phenomenon. The Bosphorus would have been a likely area through which some of the migrating Israelites would have passed on their journey out of Assyrian captivity and on to the European Continent.

Hulley concludes his article with a refreshingly balanced approach by writing, “these pieces of evidence are circumstantial, and the identification can therefore only be conjectural. On the other hand, they are unique, and their combination is exceptional.”

There are many other interesting and plausible theories about how Israel made the trek from the Middle East to Northwestern Europe. One such treatment is W. E. Filmer’s article, “*Our Scythian Ancestors*,” which proposes an Israelite migration well east of the route suggested by Hulley above, and through the Dariel Pass in the Caucasus Mountains.

Filmer argues that a network of Scythian tombs dating from the early 6th century B.C.E. through the mid-4th century B.C.E. exists to the northwest of the area and documents the course of Israelite migrations. He believes that these travelers filled the expanse between the Sea of Azov and the Carpathian Mountains.

Based on evidence derived from some similarities in burial practices, Filmer attempts to connect the Israelites/Scythians with the Germanic population which arrived along the coasts of the southern Baltic Sea several centuries later. His argument, as interesting as it may be, falls somewhat short in making an indisputable connection between Israel and the Scythian tombs (see also Raymond F. McNair, “Hard, Physical Evidence,” *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 42).

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### ***Evidence of a route through Assyria?***

Finally, one of the richest and most detailed descriptions of Israel’s departure from Assyrian territory comes from Major Bertram De W. Weldon (*The Origin of the English*, 2nd ed., Revelation, 1919, pp. 48-52).

Bringing his military experience to bear, he equates the freeing of the Israelites with the defeat of the Assyrians at the hands of Nabopolassar (626-605 B.C.E.) of Babylon in a sequence of engagements: initially in 612 B.C.E. with the fall of Nineveh; at the first Battle of Carchemish in 609 B.C.E.; and the final knock out blow several years later, again at Carchemish, site of the last remaining Assyrian stronghold (605 B.C.E.).

Drawing from the apocryphal Book of Tobit (ca. 250-175 B.C.E.), Weldon suggests that Tobit, both a leader in the Israelite community and an Assyrian official, believed a return to Palestine would be impractical. Hostile armies blocked the route back home and Egyptian garrisons occupied Judah. Weldon opines:

“Between the country of the Carducci and the armies of the Medes a narrow gap lay open. This was the route through the Caucasus... With some dim traditions of their former Exodus to hearten them, with the encouragement given by the more recent prophetic messages that had reached them [allegedly from Jeremiah—p. 48], the tribes left their starting point (probably in the region of Ecbatana), crossed the upper waters of the Euphrates, where their enemies very nearly cut them off [compare II Esdras 13:43-44], and swung North through the Caucasus into Scythia.

“In the Caucasus one of the important passes bears the name of the ‘gates of Israel’ to this day... The flight of Israel, which may be dated 608 B.C.E, the year of the battle of Carchemish [sic.], would bring the tribes across the upper Euphrates, through the passes of the Caucasus, into the vast and barren plains of the Scythian steppes.”

The booklet *America and Britain in Prophecy* (1996) does a commendable job in presenting the historical evidence documenting Israel’s location and movements in ancient history (see Raymond McNair, “Anglo-American Ethnic Roots,” pp. 28-44). His work is especially interesting concerning the connections between Israel and the ancient world people known to us as the Celts, Cimmerians, and Scythians.

Mr. McNair’s booklet makes these associations with good cause. Scandinavian scholar Anne Katrine Gade Kristensen includes an argument in favor of identifying the Cimmerians as Israelite in her volume, *Who Were the Cimmerians, and Where Did They Come From? Sargon II, the Cimmerians, and Rusa I* (see especially chapter 3, pp. 118-122).

It is significant that other historians have argued that the successive waves of “Germanic” migrants—the Volkeswanderung—into Southeastern and central Europe were essentially comprised of the same ethnic group. The movement itself is a complicated one.

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### ***The enigma of Germanic origins***

Many twentieth-century historians and sociologists have tried to explain who the Germans were and why they emigrated, but scholars have not had much success at answering these questions. The surviving evidence is primarily archaeological, scanty, and not yet adequately explored.

Why did the Germans emigrate? We do not know. “The cause and nature of the *Volkeswanderung* challenge the inquirer as much as ever. Scholars are hampered in answering these questions [about who the Germans were] because the Germans, like other wandering tribes, could not write and thus kept no written records before their conversion to Christianity” [generally considered when Frankish King Clovis became Christian in C.E. 498].

Our knowledge of the Germans depends largely on information in records written in the sixth and seventh centuries and projected backward (McKay, et. al., *History of Western Society*, 3rd ed., pp. 210, 212-214).

Undoubtedly, the groups of Israelites that departed from Mesopotamia, as part of this general movement, left the land of their captivity in sizable but distinct and separate groups. Various respective parties probably followed different routes. Moreover, as implied by the prophecy of Amos 9:9—that Israel would be sifted “among all nations, like corn is sifted in a sieve”—intermixed with the many other peoples moving northward to escape from harm’s way from the invading armies coming out of the lower Tigris-Euphrates river valley.

With this in mind, we must be careful not to generalize. Not all Scythians, Cimmerians, or Celts were Israelites. Indeed, the term “Scythian” appears to be more a generic name for tribal peoples rather than for a specific ethnic group. Of course, some Israelites no doubt were included among those so designated after the close of the 7th century B.C.E. Scripture itself may include a backhanded allusion to this very fact.

Note in Colossians 3:11 the interesting biblical use of the term “Scythian” in juxtaposition to “Barbarian.” This passage legitimately can be understood to imply Israelite versus non-Israelite, just as the similar phraseology “neither Jew nor Greek” in Galatians 3:28 suggests.

If all of these various arguments hold a certain appeal, they fall short of being absolutely conclusive. The trail of Israel out of the upper Mesopotamian river valley is less conspicuous than we would like it to be. Nevertheless, it is not that difficult to deduce how groups of Israelites must have moved slowly and inexorably in a northwesterly direction. British-Israelite literature—with varying degrees of support from historical documentation—typically includes some of the following threads in its rendition of how this migration occurred.

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#### ***Some interesting possibilities***

Some members of Israelitish clans left Israel well before the 8th century B.C.E. deportation began. In particular, a number of Danites departed Israel shortly after the 15th century B.C.E. Exodus from Egypt, going first to Greece but eventually settling in Ireland. During the reign of Solomon and other subsequent kings, it is possible that Israelite colonists left Israel for Britain, Ireland, and northwestern European coastlands.

The Bible tells us that Solomon had a navy which he operated with the Phoenicians (1 Kings 9:26-28; 2 Chronicles 8:18; 9:21). We know the Phoenicians established colonies in North Africa, Spain, and Ireland. At a minimum, some Israelites would have been aware of Phoenician activity in Europe. It is a reasonable possibility that the Israelites also may have been involved in commercial or colonial activity in these same areas.

#### **Sidebar: The Red Hand of Ulster**

One of the most fascinating legends in Irish history explains the origin of Ulster’s heraldic symbol, the Red Hand. Although accounts may differ from one source to another, there is general agreement that the symbol is tied to a family named O’Neill. According to legend, there was a boat race between the chieftains of the O’Neill and McDonnell families to determine ownership of the Ulster area. Whoever’s hand reached shore first was to receive the land.

As both boats neared the shoreline, the O’Neill chieftain saw he was going to lose the race. To reverse that outcome, he cut off his right hand and flung it to the shore where it touched dry land before McDonnell could arrive. As a result, O’Neill became the Prince of Ulster. Still today, in memory of this episode of Irish history, the Province of Ulster bears as its symbol the renowned Red Hand. (Note the red lion on the British Royal Standard.)

Those who believe that the throne of David resided in Ireland from the 6th century B.C.E. through 9th century C.E. often make an interesting and quite different connection between the Red Hand of Ulster and the biblical account, about the birth of Judah’s twin sons, Pharez and Zarah (Genesis 38:28-30).

The Bible places a special focus on this story and rightly so. As the time of birth drew near, Zarah extended his hand out of his mother’s womb. The attending midwife, wanting to insure that the family knew which child was firstborn, tied a scarlet thread around the baby’s wrist. To everyone’s surprise, the babies repositioned themselves, and Pharez became the first to emerge from Tamar’s body. Thus deprived of primogeniture, Zarah’s descendants eventually sought a better future by migrating to Europe.

Some suggest that Calcol, Zarah’s grandson led the family of Zarah on a migration west temporarily settling in Spain. Calcol finally continued his travels, founding the Kingdom of Ulster near the end of the 17th century B.C.E. The Zaharite presence

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in the Emerald Isle, British-Israelites would argue, is the real origin of Ulster’s Red Hand.

Whatever one may conclude concerning the historicity of the migrations of Zarah, it is a curious fact of history that until 1920, the official Arms of Northern Ireland included a scarlet thread encircling the heraldic Red Hand.

For additional information, see W. Howard Bennett’s *Symbols of Our Celto-Saxon Heritage*.

The majority of Israelites, however, remained geographically stationary until the 8th century B.C.E. At that point, the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser began taking the Israelites into captivity as early as the 730s, with the final and great deportation from Samaria commencing in 721. The beginning of the end for the Assyrian Empire came in 612 B.C.E. with the destruction of Nineveh.

The final demise came at the Battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.E.) when the Babylonians, Persians, and their Scythian allies dealt Assyria a knockout blow. After that point and perhaps even shortly before, some of the Israelite tribes in captivity south of the Caspian Sea undoubtedly began to free themselves and migrate towards Europe. This migratory process moved in fits and starts, extending over several centuries.

The first wave of Israelite people (very likely the Cimmerian or Celtic people) migrated from Assyria through the Caucasus mountains and then into Western Europe. Those people became known to the Greek writers by the name “Celts” (Kelts) but were called Gauls by the Romans. The second wave of Israelites (probably the Scythians) migrated around the eastern side of the Caspian Sea before turning westward. They passed through what is now south Russia into northern Poland and Germany.

They were pressed from the rear by the Samaritians, better known today as the Slavs. The Scythians overspread much of Northwest Europe and Scandinavia, eventually taking on names such as Normans, Danes, Swedes, Franks, Lombards, Scots, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and other less familiar appellations of the various Germanic tribes.

Invariably, British-Israelite literature places the tribe of Joseph in the British Isles. From here the story is not only beyond dispute but relatively clear since no one questions whether the British are Celtic and Anglo-Saxon or that the United States was initially settled by people of that same ethnicity.

In subsequent sections of this paper we will explore in greater depth the historical evidence connecting the tribe of Joseph to the Anglo-American peoples. Before we do so, we should examine a different but related tribes-people. If Joseph’s descendants settled finally in the British Isles, what then of his brothers?



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#### ***Other tribal identities***

How can we know where each respective tribe eventually settled? If this question is less important than the story of modern-day Joseph, its answer is quite significant in magnifying our appreciation of how the bequeathing of the birthright blessings eventually occurred in the late-18th and early-19th centuries (the timing of which will be explained in Chapter 6).

An interesting dimension of the question of modern tribal identities relates to a titanic “struggle for the Birthright” (Genesis 25:22) which continued beyond the biblical record. This story, recorded in modern history, provides convincing if subjective evidence of the identity of both modern-day Joseph and his brothers.

As early as the 17th century, we see periodic bids by the Northwestern European and Scandinavian nation-states to dominate the European Continent. Are we witnessing in these struggles for power a picture of sibling rivalry writ large as the expiration of a withholding of the Birthright blessing inexorably drew near? If so, one brother after another—the Swedes, the Dutch, and finally the French—fell short in herculean efforts to usurp the promises made to Joseph and his two sons.

The description of the passing on of the promise to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 48:22 reveals that the descendants of Joseph would have “one portion above his brethren” (compare Deuteronomy 21:15-17, Ezekiel 47:13). We should expect then by implication to find considerable wealth in the hands of the modern-day descendants of the remaining tribes. Such is undeniably the case today among the people of Northwestern Europe and Scandinavia.

Much research has been done by French, Dutch and Scandinavian adherents of the Anglo-Israel movement to link their nations with one or another of the tribes. If such identifications remain somewhat conjectural, there is good circumstantial evidence which gives us confidence in making specific connections, particularly with three of those tribes. Herbert W. Armstrong also explored the question of tribal identities other than Ephraim and Manasseh but largely in a general way. He writes:

“But what about the other tribes of the so-called ‘lost 10 tribes?’ ... The other eight tribes of Israel [excluding Judah, Joseph, Levi, and Benjamin] were also God’s chosen people. They, too, have been blessed with a good measure of material prosperity—but not the dominance of the birthright... The countries of Europe [are] prosperous compared to the teeming illiterate masses [of the world]...

“Suffice it to say here that there is evidence that these other eight tribes, along with elements of the tribe of Benjamin, which were swept up in the Assyrian conquest of most of the biblical land of Israel, have descended into such Northwestern European nations as Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, northern France, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Finland. The political boundaries of Europe, as they exist today, do not

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necessarily show lines of division between descendants of these original tribes of Israel” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 104-105, 152-153).

In the case of one tribe outside of Joseph, Herbert Armstrong made a specific and important connection. He believed it possible to locate the descendants of Reuben. He writes, “The tribe of Reuben settled in the country that is France today. They had lost their national identity. But the French have the very characteristics of their ancestor Reuben [Genesis 49:3-4]” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 146— compare pp. 40, 42, 104-105, 148-149, 152-153). This identification is an important one which the historical record and logical deduction does much to affirm

Seen from the British-Israel perspective, the long-term Anglo-French rivalry through Western history—an enmity which reached crescendo around the very decades when we would expect Joseph’s sons to be positioning themselves to inherit the Birthright blessings—was in fact a struggle between Jacob’s two firstborns over the colossal inheritance about to be extended.

Remember, once Reuben had illicit relations with Bilhah (Genesis 35:22), the birthright passed directly from Reuben to Joseph.

1 Chronicles 5:1-2 clearly supports this view. Joseph becomes Jacob’s “second firstborn”—indeed the firstborn of the woman he had intended to marry as his first (presumably his only?) wife (Genesis 29:20-30).

### ***The Louisiana Purchase—its crucial importance!***

Viewed from this perspective, the history of the turn of the 19th century takes on added importance and significance. The Louisiana Purchase (1803)—Napoleon’s sale of the Louisiana territory on behalf of France to the U.S.A.—becomes a type of the handing of the Birthright from Reuben to Joseph. This grand transition illustrates another interesting feature which is a type of the character of Reuben as described in scripture.

The sons of Jacob chafed under the preferential treatment given by the father to his favorite son (Genesis 37:2-4). Their anger slowly simmered over Joseph’s open sharing of his self-flattering dreams (verses 5-10).

Although Reuben liked these circumstances no better than his other brothers (verse 4), his sense of responsibility as the firstborn would not allow him to consent to his younger brother’s death at the hands of his jealous and resentful siblings (verse 21). Indeed, Reuben’s subtle ultimate aim when the hostile brothers expressed their murderous intentions was to “deliver him [Joseph] out of their hands” (verse 22).

On discovering that the other brothers had sold Joseph into slavery, Reuben grieved and tore his clothes (verse 29-30), something which he angrily reminded his brothers about when standing uncomfortably in the presence of the Egyptian prime minister some two

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decades later (Genesis 42:22). Reuben’s ambivalence toward Joseph is reflected in the story of Anglo-French relationship.

The sale of the Louisiana Territory at the ridiculously low price of five cents an acre (the total sale price amounted to about \$15 million for 8.28 million square miles of the world’s richest and most fertile land) prompted Napoleon’s now famous remark, “this accession of territory affirms forever the power of the United States and I have just given England a maritime rival that sooner or later will lay low her pride.”

With one hand France extended untold treasures to one branch of Joseph’s family, and with the other, she reduced in relative but very real material terms the power of the other branch. Napoleon’s intent was to use some of the proceeds of the sale price to prepare for renewed conflict with his adversary across the English Channel

Was the ambivalent relationship between descendants of Reuben and Joseph inevitable? Certainly Reuben forfeited with great reluctance the premier position to his younger half-brother. Jacob’s words as recorded in Genesis 48:5 implies that Ephraim and Manasseh took the place of Reuben and Simeon, the first two sons born by Leah.

This understanding helps us appreciate yet another issue, this one concerning the modern-day identity of Joseph. Where today do we find his sons Ephraim and Manasseh?

## ***Chapter 6***

### ***The Incredible Story of Ephraim and Manasseh***

Historically the Church of God has located modern Ephraim in the British Isles and Commonwealth countries, and Manasseh in the United States of America.

There are some studies, however, which identify Ephraim as the U.S. and Manasseh as Britain—an attempt like Joseph’s to reverse the hands of the aged patriarch Jacob (Genesis 48:17-19—compare Hebrews 11:21). This argument inverts the traditional British-Israel identifications of Ephraim and Manasseh and raises several interesting points.

#### ***Considering the argument***

The argument for the United States being descended from Ephraim instead of Manasseh uses the following logic:

- The United States has become the greater of the two powers; no nation—not even Britain at the height of her strength—has ever had in real terms the material and economic power as has America in the 20th century.

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- The U.S. is far greater blessed than Britain in having the most land.
- The U.S. is approximately four times the size of Britain in population; this fact of present-day demographics finds expressions in Deuteronomy 33:17 (Deuteronomy 33 is a parallel passage to Genesis 49 assigning the various blessings of Jacob to the 12 tribes of Israel) which ascribes “ten thousands” to Ephraim and “thousands” to Manasseh. The concept of “company of nations” applies not to Britain’s imperial edifice but rather to the legal autonomy accorded the American states and the division between state and federal government.
- The number 13—a figure recurring regularly in the early history of the U.S.A.—should be associated with Ephraim as the 13th of Jacob’s children.
- As Manasseh preceded Ephraim in birth, so England established a presence in North America before the American colonials established their own independent but “second born” nation—in both cases, there was a time when there was a Manasseh but no Ephraim.
- The appellation “Great” preceding “Britain” is predictable considering Jacob’s affirmation that Manasseh “also shall be great” (Genesis 48:21).

If the above ideas have a certain intellectual appeal, they also have several inherent weaknesses. In the schema making Ephraim America, the two grandchildren replace Joseph, with Manasseh becoming son number 12 and Ephraim son number 13. Is this the correct view of the matter?

### ***Thirteen tribes—thirteen colonies***

As a result of Jacob’s placing his name on Joseph’s two sons (Genesis 48:46), both Ephraim and Manasseh became sons of Jacob by adoption. Herbert Armstrong notes “there were 12 original tribes. Joseph was one of these 12. But when Joseph divided into two tribes and Manasseh separated into an independent nation, it became a thirteenth tribe. Could it be mere coincidence that it started, as a nation, with thirteen colonies” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 104).

An equally convincing and far more thoroughly developed case of associating the number 13 with Manasseh has been made by J. H. Allen in his volume, *The National Number and Heraldry of the United States of America* (a book coincidentally written in Pasadena, California in 1919 from 591 El Molino Avenue). Allen draws heavily from the heraldry of the United States to make his case.

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#### **Sidebar: Jacob’s Crossed Arms**

The moment was charged with electricity. Joseph guided his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, before the frail and aged patriarch Jacob. Summoning what little strength he had, he sat on his bed and rehearsed the story of his relationship with God over the past one hundred years.

Reminding these two particular grandsons of God’s promises to make him fruitful—a multitude of people—and to give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, Jacob then adopted the boys as his own sons. They became a replacement for his two disinherited firstborns, Reuben (Genesis 35:22) and Levi (34:25-27), borne from his marriage to Leah.

Before pronouncing his blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh, the aged patriarch laid his hand on each one. Much to Joseph’s distress, Jacob crossed his arms, placing his right hand on the head of the younger offspring. Knowing that the right hand connoted receipt of the greater blessing, Joseph attempted to reverse his father’s hands. “Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his [Manasseh’s] head” (Genesis 48:18).

But Jacob held steady, replying “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he [Manasseh] also shall be great; but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations” (verse 19).

Some British-Israel writers find an interesting parallel to the crossed arms of Jacob in the British Union Flag or as it is more popularly known, the “Union Jack.” It is interesting that the name “Jack” points us back to the patriarch Jacob.

The flag itself is a combination of three crosses. The first is the St. George cross—a red cross on a white field—an emblem believed to have been introduced by Richard I Lionheart in 1194. By 1277, Englishmen generally considered this flag as a national emblem. To the St. George cross, the newly ascended English King James I added a second symbol: the cross of St. Andrew. This blue diagonal cross was that of Scotland’s later patron saint.

The combination of crosses appropriately represented the joining of the English and Scottish kingdoms, a union enacted when James added the English crown to the Scottish one he already possessed.

Although the unique design and pattern of the Union Flag may be nothing more than a reflection of the unique historical events which created the United Kingdom, for those who see in Genesis 48 a prophecy of the unique blessings passed on to Ephraim’s descendants, it is a perpetual reminder of the heritage promised and received as a part of the promise to Abraham.

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Indeed, British and American heraldic symbols—subjective evidence that they may be—make a stronger case for associating Ephraim with the British and Manasseh with the Americans.

The facts of history also argue in favor of the Church of God’s traditional association. By the late-18th century, English settlement of North America existed in the form of thirteen separate colonies, each with its own governmental apparatus and laws.

A certain measure of state independence continues to exist today, with each respective state empowered to make its own laws. However, the tendency toward a dominant federal government was apparent as early as the administration of Andrew Jackson (1829-1836), sometimes derisively called “King Andrew” by his political enemies.

Jackson was a staunch supporter of the Union over States Rights, an issue which intermittently troubled American political life from the time of Jackson through the presidency of Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865), whose presidential career coincided with the American Civil War (1861-1865).

The war between the states ended in 1865. Along with slavery, the issue of States Rights was a central consideration igniting this conflict. Perhaps the greatest immediate outcome of that war was that this president named “Abraham” successfully held the Union together, thus preserving a concentration of the resources of North America under the umbrella of a single, unified nation-state.

### ***Ascension to national greatness***

One popular university textbook puts forward this opinion: “The United States was on its way to becoming a true nation-state with an effective central government... . The wartime achievements added up to a decisive shift in the relationship between the federal government and private enterprise. The Republicans took a limited government that did little more than seek to protect the marketplace from the threat of monopoly and changed it into an activist state that promoted and subsidized the efforts of the economically industrious. The most pervasive effect of the war on northern society was to encourage an ‘organizational revolution.’

“[The North’s] victory meant that the nation as a whole would now be ready to embrace the conception of progress that the North had affirmed in its war effort—not only advances in science and technology, but also in bringing together and managing large numbers of men and women for economic and social goals.

“The Civil War was thus a catalyst for the great transformation of American society from an individualistic society of small producers into the more highly organized that “incorporated” America of the late nineteenth century” (Robert A. Divine, et. al., *America: Past and Present*, pp. 455-458).

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The victory of the Union effectively guaranteed the survival of the United States and the supremacy of the federal government. The centralized structure of the American government is a far more cohesive and structured political framework than the exceptionally diverse imperial edifice of the British Empire.

### ***British imperial systems***

Britain’s imperial framework included a wide-ranging array of governmental systems. During the late-19th century, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa existed as virtual nation-states, enjoying “Dominion” status with autonomy in virtually every arena except the formulation of foreign policy, enactment of constitutional changes, and determining of issues relevant to defense and trade. At the opposite end of the continuum were imperial territories like India.

The subcontinent of Asia was the linchpin of the Empire and as such the British were scrupulously attentive to retaining absolute control of the region. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the British directly governed India with the kind of ubiquitous control which eventually helped to inspire the creation of the independence-minded Indian Nationalist Congress Party under the leadership of Mahatma Ghandi. Britain’s imperial structure seems a far more suitable candidate for the description “a company of nations” (Genesis 35:11; 48:19) than does the American relationship between the states and the federal government.

The Empire itself is an example of the fallacy in arguing that the United States is far larger in terms of territory and population than the British Isles. Canada alone is larger than the U.S. Australia is almost the same size as the contiguous 48 states. Moreover, Queen Victoria was “Empress of India” (see text box “Maestro of Empire,” Chapter VII). There was a time when the United Kingdom ruled over populations which far exceed that of the present-day United States.

The reversal of the prophetic identities of Ephraim and Manasseh can also be challenged on a more intuitive level. The Bible includes some hints that one feature of the Manassite character is resistance to monarchy as a political institution. The 13th century B.C.E. Manassite deliverer and judge Gideon singularly rejected the offer of his people to found an Israelite dynasty (Judges 8:22-23).

### **Sidebar: The First American Inauguration**

With over 200 years hindsight, we appreciate what a momentous occasion it was when, under the newly adopted United States Constitution, George Washington became the first American president under a governmental system which has provided for the peaceful transition of power for more than two centuries. There is a fascinating dimension to the inauguration ceremony which brought Washington to the presidency.

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After becoming the only unanimously elected president in American history, Washington traveled to New York City for the inauguration. A tremendous and joyful crowd greeted him as a special barge transported him to Wall Street. As has become tradition, the president took his oath of office with his hand placed on an open Bible. Through the years, different presidents have selected various passages on which to place their hands. Washington’s hand rested on a Bible opened to Genesis 49-50.

### ***The whereabouts of Manasseh***

Is the tribe of Manasseh to be found in England or America? Support for either position depends largely on when we examine the respective histories of the British and American people. People who identify the Americans as Ephraimite often consider the classical identification of Manasseh with America as a product of early-20th century world conditions.

They argue that British-Israel writers came to a logical conclusion given the world dominance of the British and the relative insignificance of the United States in world affairs prior to the mid-20th century. They rightly maintain that if the U.S.A. has become the greatest and most powerful nation in all world history, this development has reached full maturity since World War II.

But the determining factor is not which nation in world history has accumulated the greatest volume of real wealth, power, and glory. Rather, it is who in relative terms has been the greatest nation through time. Robert Briffault, viewing British greatness essentially from an economic perspective, captures the essence of the matter writing:

“The world control of industrial and wave-ruling England did not become fully evident to the world until the middle of the [19th] century. The year of the Great Exhibition of 1851 may be regarded as marking the proclamation and recognition of that matchless power and influence... That power and influence rested almost exclusively on the fact that England was first in the field of new economic conditions which transformed the world and displaced all other sources of wealth and economic control... The chief cause of their [the English’s] ‘muddling through’ was that they had more money” (*The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 5, 7-8, 12-13).

### ***Evidence of the birthright blessing***

Another prestigious academic observer, historian A. J. Hobsbawm, amplifies Briffault’s commentary, noting that for a brief period the Industrial Revolution “coincided with the history of a single country, Great Britain. An entire world economy was thus built on, or rather around, Britain, and this country therefore temporarily rose to a position of global influence and power unparalleled by any state of its relative size before or since, and unlikely to be paralleled by any state in the foreseeable future.



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“There was a moment in world history when Britain can be described, if we are not too pedantic, as its only workshop, its only massive importer and exporter, its only carrier, its only imperialist, almost its only foreign investor; and for that reason its only naval power and the only one which had a genuine world policy” (*Industry and Empire*, p. 13)—For further evidence on Britain’s overwhelming world dominance, see also James Morris, *Pax Britannica*, pp. 126-127; *Farewell the Trumpets*, pp. 338-362; and *Heaven’s Command*, pp. 195-196).

Hobsbawm also offers convincing evidence relevant to the importance of the rather unique character of English entrepreneurship to the industrialization process (*The Age of Revolutions*, pp. 30-32).

Regarding the role of the Industrial Revolution as an aspect of Joseph’s Birthright blessing, the record of history dramatically illustrates another example of Joseph supplanting Reuben. The academic community marvels over how the British were in many respects more poorly positioned and less endowed than the French in many of the human and material resources necessary for industrial take-off.

Nevertheless, it was the English who burst ahead of their rivals across the English Channel as the 18th century drew to a close (on this subject, see R. M. Hartwell, ed., *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England* noting in particular the essay by F. Crouzet, “England and France in the Eighteenth century: A Comparative Analysis of Two Economic Growths,” pp. 155-156, 160-161, 167, 169, 173-174.)

William McNeill demonstrates the critical impact of the French Wars (1792-1815) in propelling the economy of Britain to undisputed supremacy over France and every other nation-state of the world (*The Ecumene*, pp. 528-529). This rather unexpected outcome is especially ironic considering these conflicts very likely represent Reuben’s last frenetic effort to retrieve the Birthright from Joseph that it had forfeited some three and a half millennia before.

In light of all the above considerations, the Church of God’s traditional understanding of the modern-day identity of Ephraim and Manasseh is quite appropriate. In point of fact, England’s greatness in relative terms has outstripped anything that the world has ever seen.

At the turn of the 19th century, England burst ahead of her fellow nation-states in virtually every category of human economic, military, and political endeavor. By mid-century, the British were so far ahead in economic and industrial development they could scarcely see who was in second place.

If such facts are easily established, historians have been less successful in comprehending why these developments happened where and when they did. Little wonder since the historian’s craft is restricted to what can be determined, perceived, and understood by the critical-historical method, with all its rules, regulations, and attendant limitations.

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It is only through the inspired understanding brought by a special and revelatory insight into Scripture that our historical understanding can be enlarged. It is to such an examination that we will turn to in a later chapter.

But first we must address the significance of the throne of King David and his covenant with God in connection with the whereabouts of the descendants of ancient Israel today.

## ***Chapter 7***

### ***The Throne of David***

One central theme in British-Israel thought concerns the Throne of David. Many British-Israelite writers believe that throne continued to exist even after the early-6th century B.C.E. when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar apparently terminated permanently the Davidic dynasty. Those who accept this notion base their conviction on Scriptures which describe the special covenant (agreement) made between God and Israel’s King David.

The Bible certainly says that God made a covenant with David guaranteeing his throne in perpetuity. A host of scriptures support the case: “The word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, ‘Go and tell my servant David ... When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom ... I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever’” (2 Samuel 7:4, 12-13).

This promise was not conditional based on the heir’s behavior: “If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (verses 14-16).

This surely cannot be interpreted as a reference to Christ who never sinned. Note also: “Should you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt [a symbol of permanence]?” (2 Chronicles 13:5).

Psalms 89 adds weight to the case: “If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, if they break My statutes and do not keep My commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail.

“My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever,

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and his throne as the sun before Me; it shall be established forever like the moon, Even like the faithful witness in the sky” (verses 30-37).

### ***The testimony of the prophet Jeremiah***

In this regard, Jeremiah 33 adds: “Behold, the days are coming ... that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ... David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel [emphasis ours]” (verses 14-17).

Shortly before ancient Israel split into two separate kingdoms, God told Jeroboam I, the northern Kingdom’s first monarch: “... Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel)...

“However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand and give it to you—ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there” (1 Kings 11:31-33, 34-37).

Based on these biblical passages, it is easy to conclude that someone, somewhere—one who can trace a lineage back to David—will be sitting, or eligible to sit on the Davidic throne until Christ returns to claim it for Himself. It is evident, of course, from the Gospel of Luke that Christ is the ultimate claimant: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David” (Luke 1:32).

But Jeremiah suggests that the prophecy cannot be fulfilled with Christ as the only claimant: “In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely [hardly true of Jesus’ time] ... For thus says the Lord: ‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel ... If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers...

“If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them”” (Jeremiah 33:16-17, 20-21, 25-26).

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If there remains a perpetual Davidic throne, how has God fulfilled His promise?

British-Israelites usually insist that the Throne of David is to be found in the British Isles, occupied today by the royal family of the House of Windsor. The claim is made that from this family we find a descendant of David ruling over the modern-day House of Israel.

But how could this be? The last reigning king of David’s line mentioned in scripture was Zedekiah. The Babylonians killed his sons before his eyes, after which he was blinded. The Bible records his own death in Babylon: “Then he [Nebuchadnezzar] put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death” (Jeremiah 52:11).

### ***The Jeremiah tradition***

Those who believe that David’s throne exists today appeal to the Bible as well as long and persistent set of traditions, and legends which form the backbone of the story of the prophet Jeremiah’s precarious trek from Jerusalem to Egypt (Jeremiah 43:1-7) to Europe. Remember, what is absolutely factual is found in the book of Jeremiah; the rest is considered legend and tradition (which doesn’t mean it isn’t true).

Legends indicate Jeremiah went first to Spain and eventually—around 580 B.C.E.—to the area of Carrickfergus, Ireland near present-day Belfast.

According to the accounts, Jeremiah’s company included one Tea-Tephi, the daughter of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 41:10; 43:5-7) through whom the Davidic lineage was to be preserved. Also in the party was Baruch (Jeremiah 32:12-13; 36:4-8, etc.), Jeremiah’s personal scribe. Eventually arriving in Ireland, the party found a colony of Zarahite Jews descended from people who had emigrated from the Middle East. Some British-Israel theorists date their departure around the 10th century B.C.E. and attribute their relocation to dissatisfaction with the establishment of a Davidic monarchy springing out of Judah’s Pharez line.

Herremon, the ruler of this Jewish colony, married the daughter of Zedekiah—the last “Pharez” ruler over the kingdom of Judah. According to the story, this marital union represented far more than a serendipitous turn of fate. Rather it was the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy involving the reunion of descendants of the twin sons of Judah, Pharez and Zarah.

### ***The breach between Zarah and Pharez***

The Genesis account of the births of these scions of Judah is pregnant with meaning. It reads: “Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in [Tamar’s] womb. And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, ‘This one

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came out first.’ Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, ‘How did you break through? This breach be on you!’ Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah” (Genesis 38:27-30).

Why was this story recorded? Might it be because the “breach” would at some future point be healed? In other words Pharez, who forced himself into the firstborn position, would eventually be reconciled with Zarah. David, Zedekiah, and—through His human descent—Jesus Christ, all were of the Pharez line.

It is suggested that several scriptures found in the Book of Ezekiel (chapter 17 and 21:18-26), foretell of God’s healing the breach. In British-Israel writings, part of the commission which God gave to Jeremiah at the very beginning of his prophetic ministry was to insure a marriage between a ruler of the Zarah branch of Judah and the daughters of King Zedekiah. It is the responsibility alluded to in Jeremiah 1:9: “Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.’”

Some see in Ezekiel 21 a three-fold transference of the Davidic throne. This passage forecasts: “Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity shall end, thus says the Lord God: ‘Remove the turban, and take off the crown; nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted. Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him” (Ezekiel 21:25-27).

In Ireland, Jeremiah “planted” the throne through the marriage of one of Zedekiah’s daughters to an heir of the other branch of Judah’s “scepter” family (Genesis 49:10; 1 Chronicles 5:2). Then, through two more “overturns,” the throne migrated from Ireland to Scotland and eventually to England.

### ***The Coronation Stone***

A frequently included element in this story associates the British Coronation Stone, until recently housed in Westminster Abbey, with the pillar stone of Jacob (Genesis 28:11, 18).

According to this story, Jeremiah traveled to Ireland with not only the Pharez princesses but also Jacob’s Pillar Stone which had become a physical symbol of the covenants. A still later tradition relates that Fergus I MacErc transported the Stone from Tara in Ireland to the Scottish island of Ionia in around 530 C.E. There the stone remained for over 300 years.

By 843 C.E., Kenneth MacAlpin had united the Picts and the Scots under his own rule. For his coronation, MacAlpin moved the stone to Scone in eastern Scotland near

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Perth where it remained for over four centuries as the site for crowning of newly ascended Scottish kings.

In 1296, Edward I (1272-1307), king of England removed the Stone from Scone and “took it to Westminster Abbey, London, to form part of Edward the Confessor’s chair, used in English coronation ceremonies” (Treasures of Britain, p. 426; see also Edward Jenks, *Edward Plantagenet*, pp. 267-268). It should be noted that the coronation chair in the Abbey belongs to the time of Edward I, not Edward the Confessor, whose coronation chair no longer survives.

If British-Israelites are correct in their assumptions, the actual ascension of a Judahite monarch of the House of David over the English did not take place until 1603. In that year on the death of Elizabeth I, Scottish King James VI became James I, King of England.

For those who wish to explore these matters further, one of the best reconstructed lineages from king David to Elizabeth II, is found in W. M. H. Milner’s, *Royal House of Britain An Enduring Dynasty*.

If the Jeremiah tradition is impossible to verify through hard historical evidence, might it like so many other ancient legends have at its center a core of truth? If it does, the story becomes an important signpost in pointing us to the location of the House of Israel in modern times.

#### **Sidebar: Modern Britain and Ancient Israel-- Linked by Tradition**

As the increasingly threatening clouds of World War II were gathering momentum, the British government buried for safekeeping a 300-lb. Stone under the floor of Westminster Abbey in London, with the plans of the exact location sent to the prime minister of Canada.

The wooden inscription, marked “Jacob’s Pillar Stone” was removed. Some old photographs of the stone still carry the inscription, traditionally linking it to the first Israelite in history. Jacob consecrated the stone with oil to commemorate God appearing to him in vision while he rested on this pillar.

But why would the coronation stone used in the crowning of British kings and queens be connected with an event in the Holy Land almost 4,000 years ago and some 2,000 miles from the British Isles? Why the association between London, England and Bethel in ancient Israel?

Consider next the name Britain itself? Hebrew scholars inform us the stem of the word *brit* is Hebrew, meaning union in the sense of a covenant or pact. The British flag is commonly called the Union Jack to this day, short for Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. (The name James is equally a derivative of Jacob.) Why did

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the early settlers in Britain, long before the time of Christ, identify themselves with this Hebrew word?

When purchasing a definitive postage stamp in Northern Ireland, you’ll quickly notice the six pointed “star of David” on the stamp. This Hebrew emblem is superimposed on the hand of Ulster and was used as an identifying symbol long before the invention of stamps. Why?

A visit to Westminster Abbey, the only church on earth where kings and queens are still consecrated with sacred oil, chrism, is equally revealing. On entering the coronation church of the British monarchs, one cannot fail but notice the large West Window of stained glass identifying every one of the 12 sons of Jacob by name.

Moses holding the Ten Commandments and Aaron as the high priest alongside the other Israelites had the intention of impressing on society the importance of God’s Law (codified at Mount Sinai) as the foundation of morality and the need to maintain a spiritual dimension among the people.

No wonder Elizabeth I was described by her contemporaries as the “Deborah of Israel.” Not surprising, the Tudor Queen, on a 22-yard-long illustrated scroll made in 1559 (now at Hatfield House north of London) is identified with great leaders of the distant past. King David of Israel is among others mentioned by name.

A letter this writer received from the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, dated 16 of February, 1990, states: “Genealogical tables purporting to trace the descent of the British Royal Family from the House of David have been published from time to time, but there is no such table here. Nor is there any documentary material in the Royal Archives which might serve either to confirm or deny the validity of such tables...”

There is certainly no conclusive contemporary historical evidence that the House of Windsor can be equated with the ancient House of Judah. But charts making that connection exist. Traditions to that effect linger on. No other nation on earth has them. No such claims are registered by any other people. Why are the British Isles alone singled out as the place where, according to traditions, descendants of the 10 tribes have found a new home, ruled over by a royal descendant of the Davidic line, one whose coat of arms is depicted by a lion, symbol of the ancient tribe of Judah?

The early Britons wrote no records that have survived, nor did the early Anglo-Saxons see the need to highlight their origin. Tradition maintains that during past periods of economic and political upheavals, Israelites began to leave the Middle East and made their way to the British Isles—centuries before the time of Christ.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that the Messiah’s ultimate inheritance will be the throne of King David of Israel (Isaiah 9:5-6). Surely, the validity of this prophecy shows

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us that the throne of David must exist somewhere. Why not in Shakespeare’s “Sceptred Isle” whose very identifying name, *Brit*, reveals its Hebrew origin.

## ***Chapter 8***

### ***How Joseph’s Greatness Was Attained***

#### ***“God is an Englishman”***

Or so it was said by many people outside of the British Isles in the 19th century. What accounts for this startling expression of speech from the previous century? If England’s status in the world today is a shadow of what it was one hundred years ago, you would have had a difficult time convincing anyone who lived in the 1800s that God was not somehow divinely prospering the politicians, statesmen, diplomats, explorers, generals, admirals, soldiers, architects, engineers, scientists, inventors, bankers, businessmen, shopkeepers, and entrepreneurs of the British Isles.

#### ***The prosperity of Joseph***

Perhaps it is significant that the name “Joseph” in the Hebrew—Yowceph—literally means, “let him add,” implying prosperity. Certainly as the descendants of Joseph, the people of Great Britain enjoyed a prosperity that no other people in the record of human history had ever achieved. To many observers both in and out of Britain, it appeared that success came to the British people whether or not they even pursued it—whether or not they made wise or foolish choices.

It was as though certain unconditional blessings were overtaking them (Deuteronomy 28:2). It was this very kind of “inevitable” success which inspired Cambridge professor of modern history (1834-1895) and author of *The Expansion of England* (1884), John Robert Seeley’s well-known observation that England acquired her globe-girdling Empire “in a fit of absence of mind.”

The 19th became Britain’s century. The British—specialists it seems in “muddling through”—seemed unable to do anything wrong. To their own astonishment, they found themselves ruling about a quarter of the world’s population and a fifth of its landmass. British rule extended over not just any locations but the choicest and most fertile territories on earth.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the United States’ fortunes were about to bloom as well. This was the time that a 2,520-year withholding of the birthright to the descendants of Israel drew to a close. It is hardly surprising that educated people of the day saw the hand of God in the process. It was hard to miss.



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One example of many comes from Lord Rosebery, a former British Foreign Secretary (1886, 1892-1894) and Prime Minister (1894-1895). He spoke in November 1900 to the students of Glasgow University about the British Empire: “How marvelous it all is! Built not by saints and angels, but by the work of men’s hands; cemented with men’s honest blood and with a world of tears, welded by the best brains of centuries past; not without the taint and reproach incidental to all human work, but constructed on the whole with pure and splendid purpose. Human, and yet not wholly human, for the most heedless and the most cynical must see the finger of the Divine.

“Growing as trees grow, while others slept; fed by the faults of others as well as the character of our fathers; reaching with a ripple of a restless tide over tracts, and islands and continents, until our little Britain woke up to find herself the foster-mother of nations and the source of united empires. Do we not hail in this less the energy and fortune of a race than the supreme direction of the Almighty?”

In those more biblically literate times, people like Lord Rosebery saw some parallel between their own remarkable circumstance and that of the chosen people of ancient Israel. Was not God blessing them as he had promised to bless those same ancient people? It did not seem unreasonable to see the British Empire as the Kingdom of God on earth and the British people as the “chosen of God.”

### ***The British Empire***

Many of the builders of the empire aspired to construct a peaceful, happy, unified domain with a quarter of the world’s population living under British rule. To their great credit, British administrators sent to colonial and imperial territories throughout the globe did an admirable job in establishing and extending law and order. In many regions, the British presence stimulated economic development and brought Western technological advances.

The Pax Britannica enforced peaceful conditions in many regions of the world formerly troubled by war. Men like William Wilberforce (1759-1833) were instrumental in the abolition of the slave trade. And British missionaries became the bearers of Christianity to people from one end of the globe to the other.

However, for all the good that the empire may have accomplished, it fell far short of the realities that the Kingdom of God will bring. Christ’s kingdom will be worldwide (Psalm 47:1-9). If the British brought with them their own laws, Christ will bring and enforce the law of God (Isaiah 2:3; 11:2-5).

British prosperity was transient and accompanied by all the attendant social evils that are so often found in industrial civilizations. The economic stability brought by Jesus Christ to humanity will be pure, equitable, and enduring (Isaiah 65:22-23; Amos 9:13; Micah 4:4).

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The peace of the British Empire was a human creation—something dependent on control of strategic passageways, overwhelming military might, and technological superiority. Moreover, in places the Empire itself was a perpetual battlefield, troubled by numberless imperial wars. There was even conflict between the British government and the various English, Celtic, and Dutch populations in Ireland and South Africa.

The peace of Christ (Isaiah 9:6) will be based on a remarkable change in human behavior induced by the writing of the law of God on the hearts of the men and women of the world (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Matthew 11:28-30). The hopes of Englishmen to Christianize the world fell far short of expectations. Jesus Christ will succeed where all who have gone before Him have failed (Jeremiah 31:34). Inevitable tendencies toward ambition and self-interest limited even the best British intentions. In contrast, Christ will rule with fairness and equity (Matthew 20:20-28).

If the British Empire had its various flaws, shortcomings, and weaknesses, it nevertheless provides us with a pattern pointing to the fulfillment of some of the most important and exciting prophecies in all the Bible. But first let's understand a little bit of its history.

### ***The historic importance of the 19th century***

Britain was not always “great.” Indeed, the real rise of both Britain and America came after 1800. Herbert Armstrong wrote: “It may not be generally realized—but neither Britain nor the United States became great world powers until the nineteenth century. Suddenly, in the very beginning of the nineteenth century, these two—until then small, relatively unimportant countries—suddenly spurted to national power and greatness among nations, as no nations had ever grown and multiplied in wealth, resources and power before...

“Never did any people or nation spread out and grow so suddenly and rapidly into such magnitude of national power... And nearly all this wealth came to us after A.D. 1800!” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 9, 11, 155, 161).

Only a couple of centuries before becoming the premier power of the world, England stood “in the margin of European economy and culture.” On the eve of those 16th century events that would initiate a slow but rarely interrupted ascension in England's power and influence, the Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V aptly characterized the relative place of England in the comity of European nations. He is said to have remarked “I speak Latin to God, Italian to musicians, Spanish to ladies, French at court, German to servants, and English to my horses” (Eugene Weber, *Modern History of Europe*, p. 130).

How did such a reversal of fortunes occur over the following two hundred years? More importantly, why did it occur when it did? Historians have revealed much about the process of England's rise to power, but they remain largely as powerless as ever in

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explaining the timing of it all. That dimension of the story requires an insight accessible only through an understanding of the mind and plan of God.

The industrial and economic growth of the Anglo-American world began to crescendo in the mid- to late-18th century. Economic historians argue furiously about the point at which the industrialization process reached critical mass. Generally speaking, the earliest dates suggested are the 1750s and the latest near the turn of the 19th century.

In any case, the proximity of these dates to the issuing of the Birthright to Joseph’s seed helps to make sense of the failure of so many previous kingdoms and empires to develop an industrial economic base, a fact that has long puzzled historians. Why did industrial “take-off” not occur before it did? The answer is simple. It was not according to the master plan and timetable of Almighty God (Isaiah 46:9-10).

One of the best assessments of the timing of industrialization comes from conservative historian, Charles Wilson, who writes in *England’s Apprenticeship*: “As yet [ca. 1763] ‘industry’ did not mean industrialization as a later age was to understand it. The manufacturing part of the economy was like the components of a watch ready for assembly but not interacting with each other.”

There were already urban industries (like brewing, soap boiling, sugar refining, etc.) but industry as a whole was far from urbanized. The greater part of the expanding export trade was sustained by rural and semi-rural industries organized on a domestic basis. “Factories there were, but few of them were mechanized on a [large] scale” (chapter 14 summary, p. 312).

In other words, as the 19th century approached the stage was set for the industrial take-off.

### ***Britain’s industrial revolution***

The true catalyst for the industrial process, the steam engine, was a replacement for the Newcomen engine, an atmospheric pump created in 1712 to lift water from mines. Newcomen’s machine was in no small way a product of the late-17th century wood shortage in Britain.

With little wood available for fuel, the English found an alternate source for heat: coal. And coal mines required removal of water from mines that began to become increasingly deep. During the late-18th and early-20th century French Wars, the need to extract metals for the war effort required deeper mining than ever before. Thus arose another incentive to improve pumping capacity. In 1768, James Watt, the “father of the Industrial Revolution,” built his first working model of the steam engine. He patented it in 1769.

The year 1776 was a landmark one (see Marshall B. Davidson, *The Horizon History of the World in 1776*). By that date, the steam engine was in practical use and

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within another decade—just a few years prior to the French Revolution of 1789 which significantly slowed industrial development in France—it became a commercial success.

Interestingly, the same year the steam engine became a practical tool in England, American colonists declared their independence initiating the separation of Ephraim and Manasseh prophetically forecast in Genesis 48:16, 19. A Scottish University of Glasgow professor of moral philosophy, Adam Smith, published *Wealth of Nations*, which became the intellectual and philosophical support structure for England’s developing capitalist economy.

That economic system propelled the Western world in general and the British economy in particular to unprecedented heights. The gospel of laissez-faire articulated by Smith gave the rising commercial, industrial, and entrepreneurial classes of the British Isles the moral sanction they needed to implement “the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world recorded in written documents” (Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, p. 13).

For England, industrial supremacy was an important factor in the successful neutralization of the threat posed by Napoleon. It placed in the hands of Englishmen a kind of Promethean fire which made possible the eventual broadcasting of British imperial power around the globe—the somewhat haphazard, ill-planned construction of an empire on which the 19th century sun would never set.

If British diplomats and statesmen lacked a grand design and blueprint for the construction of that imperial edifice, it nevertheless became the largest and most beneficent empire in all of world history.

There is little wonder that historians often describe the 19th century as the “British century.”

### ***The significance of 2,520 Years***

However historians or theologians may interpret these astonishing developments, it is undeniable that this flowering of Anglo-Saxon power came some 2,520 years after Israel’s demise and disappearance as a result of the invasion of the Assyrians.

What happened around that time among the British and American people bears witness to the fulfillment of the prophecies recorded in Genesis 48 and 49. The developments forecast in these prophecies were most dramatically fulfilled in the Anglo-American setting between about 1660 and 1820 C.E.

The former was the year of the restoration of Charles II and the Stuart monarchy by the “Convention” Parliament. By the latter date, the dust from the Napoleonic Wars had settled and England began to lapse into the Splendid Isolation which allowed her to concentrate on the development that made her the foremost nation-state in the 19th century world.

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It was between these years that the stage was set for the Anglo-American ascendancy of the two most recent centuries of human history. Is this historical happenstance or part of the unfolding of the greater purpose, plan, and design of Almighty God?

To answer this question, we must realize that God often places conditions on the blessings which He promises (e.g., Genesis 17:1). The promise to the generation of Israelites who left Egypt was conditional. The Israelites almost immediately disqualified themselves (Numbers 13:17-14:39; Hebrews 3:8-19).

Those very Israelites never entered the Promised Land. They failed to keep their side of the bargain struck at the foot of Matthew Sinai. God promised Israel: “... If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people...” (Exodus 19:5-8). The assertion “If you will indeed obey My voice” (verse 5) is better understood when considered against the “blessings and curses” specified in Leviticus, chapter 26 and Deuteronomy, chapter 28.

God suspended the inheritance of the Promised Land for one generation after the Israelites rebelled in faithlessness and unbelief. On a larger scale, He employed the same type of principle in withholding the blessings promised to Joseph, only extending it over several dozen generations after the chosen people were taken into their in the 8th century B.C.E. captivity. The duration of that withholding was 2,520 years.

Without a doubt 2,520 is an unusual and remarkable figure. *The Companion Bible* observes: “The four perfect numbers, 3, 7, 10, and 12, have for their product the remarkable number 2,520. It is the Least Common Multiple of the 10 digits governing all numeration; and can, therefore, be divided by each of the nine digits without remainder. It is the number of chronological perfection (7 x 360)” (Appendix 10, “The Spiritual Significance of Numbers,” p. 14).

The number 2,520 is also important in respect to an understanding of biblical prophecy. This is especially true concerning a passage in Leviticus 26:18-21.

### ***The “seven times” punishment***

“And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze [a kind of temporary rescinding of the blessings promised to Joseph in Genesis 49:25—“and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb”]:

“And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins” (Leviticus 26:18-21).

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Reference is made in this passage to “seven times” punishment that will fall on Israel for disobedience to God. In context and based on the Hebrew grammatical structure, the “seven times” spoken of in verse 18 is in fact a measurement of “prophetic times” equaling 2,520 years. Conversely in context the “seven times” of verse 21 is referring to intensity.

In withholding the land of Canaan from ancient Israel, God required that the Israelites remain in the wilderness one year for every day that the faithless Israelites scouts spied out the Promised Land (Numbers 14:34). In the language of prophecy, a “time” represents the length of a year (360 days-- 12 months of 30 days).

Using this principle of a “day for a year” (cf. Ezekiel 4:4-6, and Daniel 4:32), it can be calculated that “seven times”=7 x 360 days (the ancient Israelites considered 30 days the length of a month) = 2,520 days or prophetic years. Two thousand five hundred and twenty years from Israel’s captivity brings us to about 1800 C.E. This is when God began to restore the Birthright to the modern descendants of Israel. In fact, God was honor bound to extend these blessings.

As we saw in Chapter 1, after the events described in Genesis 22 regarding the sacrifice of Isaac, the Abrahamic Covenant became unconditional. The northern kingdom was invaded and became the Lost 10 Tribes, but God remained responsible to fulfill the unconditional promises to Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 22:12, 16).

God restored the Birthright promises to the progeny of those 8th century B.C.E. Israelites taken into captivity. He undoubtedly was involved as well in the setting of the stage for propelling the Anglo-Saxon people to unparalleled national greatness. This was a process that extended at least back to the mid-17th century. The next chapter will enlarge our understanding of this little known process.

## ***Chapter 9***

### ***Prophetic Historical Parallels***

To appreciate the process of how America and Britain became great, and have an enlarged understanding about the 2,520-year withholding of the Birthright, we should consider the broader sweep of Assyrian-Israelite contacts. Roman Catholic theologian Lawrence Boadt describes that relationship writing:

“The two hundred years from 922, when Jeroboam [I] began to rule, down to 722, when the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians, were mostly taken up by war: either battles against Assyria, border disputes with Judah, revolt by subject peoples such as Moab, or the struggle against the growing power of the new Aramean state of Damascus in Syria...

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“But it was above all the age of the rise of Assyria, the great Mesopotamian power. Assyrian ambition was to conquer all the Western lands, and it slowly but surely moved against its neighbors in the two centuries after Solomon’s death...

“By the end of the ninth century... [Assyria] placed enough pressure on all the others to force an end to the fighting between northern Israel and Damascus... Under a series of strong kings in the ninth century B.C.E., Assyria began a program of systematic conquest and empire-building that spread in all four directions, especially toward the south to control Babylon, and toward the west to gain access to the forests of Syria and Lebanon which would insure a steady wood supply for the largely treeless homeland” (*Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 294, 309).

Another authority, Julian Reade writes: “The first time, so far as we know, that the Assyrians became directly involved with one of the main biblical kingdoms was in 853 B.C.E. Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.E.) was then advancing through Syria towards Lebanon and Palestine” (*Assyrian Sculpture*, p. 44).

And so it was that relations between Israel and Assyria began to sour as early as the mid-ninth century B.C.E. when Ahab (874-853 B.C.E.), second monarch of the Omri dynasty, took military precautions in anticipation of confronting Assyria’s imperialist-minded Shalmaneser III.

Ahab furnished 10,000 soldiers and 2,000 chariots as his contributions to an Israelite-Syrian alliance designed to forestall Assyrian advances to the southwest. Three generations of Israelite kings later, Jehu (841-814 B.C.E.) felt the brunt of Assyrian pressure to the extent that he became a tributary of Shalmaneser III.

#### **Sidebar: Shalmaneser’s Black Obelisk**

Relations between the Israelites of the northern kingdom and the Assyrians began to sour as early as the mid-ninth century B.C.E. when Ahab (874-853 B.C.E.), second monarch of the Omri dynasty, took military precautions in anticipation of confronting Assyria’s imperialist-minded Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.E.).

As subsequent history demonstrated, Ahab’s anxieties were with good cause. Three generations of Israelite kings later, Jehu (841-814 B.C.E.) felt the brunt of Assyrian pressure to the extent that he became a tributary of Shalmaneser III.

Shortly after the mid-9th century B.C.E., “Jehu voluntarily became a vassal of the Assyrian monarch Shalmaneser III. He began paying tribute to Assyria as soon as he ascended the throne... Jehu evidently considered it prudent to reverse Israel’s policy toward Assyria, which had been one of hostility, in order to secure Assyrian help against Israel’s chief enemy, Hazael of Syria” (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 125-126).

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This Assyrian ruler immortalized Jehu’s subservience in stone on the renowned Black Obelisk that prominently resides today in the British Museum. Austen Henry Layard discovered Shalmaneser’s Black Obelisk in 1846 at Nimrud. It bears the earliest known depiction of an Israelite in any type of artistic form.

#### ***A warning message***

In national Israel’s story, we see a physical precursor to its spiritual counterpart, the Church of God. Not surprisingly, Jesus described His people as a “little flock” (Luke 12:32). Paul shows us that the Christian is typically drawn from the weak and foolish of the world (1Corinthians 1:26-28). And Christ Himself said: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (Matthew 11:25).

How ever small or lacking in influence that Church may truly be, it is charged with a monumental responsibility to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness to all the world (Matthew 24:14). A part of that message involves warning the physical, national people of God about the coming judgments on them (Matthew 10:6, 23)—a theme that will be explored in greater depth in the final chapter of this paper.

If such a message of coming doom must be delivered in an apparently prosperous and thriving context, it is not the first time that servants of God have had to do so. Micah 5:8 predicts a time when “the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver.”

Such has been the character of Anglo-American world dominance over the last two centuries. So it largely remains for the United States today. But it is in just such a time—when the hand of Jacob will “be lifted against your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off”—that God “will cut off your horses from your midst And destroy your chariots. I will cut off the cities of your land And throw down all your strongholds” (verses 9-11).

If the Assyrian captivity of Israel is a forerunner of an end time punishment on Abraham’s modern-day descendants, the implications for the Church at the end of the age are overwhelming. God expects His people to deliver a warning message even if it is in a setting where the outward signs of military and economic decay are absent. Dramatic parallels do exist, however, between the social and moral malaise in 8th century B.C.E. and the 20th century C.E. Israel. As God expects His servants today to condemn such decadence, so He did in ancient times.

It was in a benign setting of physical and material Israelite prosperity, and just before Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B.C.E.) disturbed that peace, that the prophets Amos and Hosea appeared. These men initiated in Israel the age of “Classical Prophecy.” Until this juncture, we read primarily biblical narratives about the prophets themselves.



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After their coming, Scripture richly preserves the actual words of the prophets. Amos broke new ground, indicting not only national leadership but the whole people as responsible for the sins of “Samaria,” a biblical term for the northern kingdom. “Sparing neither king nor priest, nobility nor common people, Amos castigated them all in simple but sharp messages of reproof and denunciation... Amos warned that only complete repentance by king and people, and a turning again to Yahweh, whom they had forsaken, could avert the approaching catastrophe” (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 127).

Both Amos and Hosea inveighed against the evils of the day which included oppression of the poor, perversion of judgment, unbridled greed, selfish luxury among the aristocratic classes (particularly its women), and superficial religiosity which found expression in irreverence toward the Sabbath, faithlessness toward the covenant, and worship of foreign gods. Unsuccessfully, these two prophets called for national repentance.

Boadt summarizes the fidelity of Amos’ message writing, “God does not stand idly by and watch evil go on. The political moves of Assyria and its fearful military victories are not accidents of history but permitted and directed by God to punish Israel” (*Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 304, 317-318). Ultimately, the Assyrians proved to be “the rod of God’s anger” about which Isaiah wrote (Isaiah 10:5-6).

Amos’ younger counterpart, Hosea, probably lived to witness the awful fulfillment of his own predictions. He no doubt saw one king after another change loyalties for and against Assyria, saw the violence of assassination destroy the inner spirit of the country, and watched as little by little the Assyrians conquered and deported parts of the kingdom until the capital itself went down in flames” (Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 323-324).

### ***The end comes for the northern kingdom***

Very shortly after the death of Jeroboam II (753 B.C.E.), the northern kingdom plunged into political chaos. “Civil wars, assassinations and internal fighting between groups which supported Assyrian policies or opposed any capitulation to them racked the northern state... The deaths of Jeroboam and Uzziah... came at the very moment when Assyria regained her power and renewed her push to the west” (ibid. pp. 311-312—see also Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 128).

In the midst of their own domestic and internal difficulties, Israelite policy-makers also had to consider the intrusions of Assyria into their affairs. By the time of Tiglath-pileser III, king Menahem (752-742 B.C.E.) was forthcoming with “enormous sums of tribute” intended to induce the Assyrian monarch to leave him and his people in peace (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 129-130).

In 738 B.C.E., king Pekah (752-732 B.C.E.) rebelled against Assyria, only to surrender later and pay a huge ransom in order to retain his throne (2 Kings 15:19-20). Typical of the Assyrian policy of the time, Pekah’s disloyalty set in motion the usual Assyrian response of converting the offending kingdom into a vassal state.

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This re-defining of Israelite-Assyrian relations was the first in a sequence of three levels of response which were automatically and successively introduced as a matter of Assyrian imperial policy in dealing with unruly subject peoples.

Second time offenders forfeited their political control and were replaced by a vassal-king whom the Assyrian government believed would be loyal. In stage two, the Assyrians also reduced the amount of territory that the new vassal controlled. The Assyrian monarch took direct rule over at least some of the original kingdom. The new vassal king was less independent than his predecessor was. As an additional dimension of punishment, the Assyrians deported limited segments of the population.

Finding themselves among strangers whose language they did not understand (Jeremiah 5:15) and whose culture was unfamiliar, the deportees had little hope of successfully revolting against their Assyrian masters. Even if they did, they were hundreds of miles from their original homeland and unlikely to find their way successfully back to it.

Tiglath-pileser initiated this second stage of punishment on Israel in response to Pekah’s alliance with Damascus and a second attempt at revolt in 734 B.C.E. The first deportation of Israelites (734-732 B.C.E.), sometimes referred to as the “Galilean Captivity,” took part of the population—principally that drawn from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the portion of Manasseh living east of the Jordan River—to northern Syria as well as northern and northwestern Mesopotamia (2 Kings 16:5-9; 15:27-29).

Tiglath-pileser III also occupied the greater part of Galilee and Gilead and divided Israelite territory itself into four new provinces: Magidu, Duru, Gilead, and Samaria.

### ***The final straw***

The third and final official Assyrian response in dealing with rebellious subjects was extinction of the people as a nation. This action usually included wholesale removal of almost the entire population. The Assyrians scattered deportees throughout their empire and repopulated the vacated territories with other people from distant and far-flung regions.

The pro-Assyrian but unreliable Israelite vassal, King Hoshea (732-722 B.C.E.), set in motion the events which brought the final deluge. Hoping to receive critical aid from Egypt to the south, Hoshea betrayed Assyrian trust in around 725 B.C.E. (2 Kings 18:9-10). Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.E.) eventually responded with a three year siege (722/1-718 B.C.E.) which resulted in the fall of the kingdom’s capital city, Samaria. At that point, the Northern Kingdom ceased to exist.

There is an important postscript to the fall of Samaria in 718 B.C.E. For Judah, the deterioration continued beyond Shalmaneser V’s major military campaign of 721-718 B.C.E. Hezekiah’s kingdom experienced part of a final denouement in failed Israelite-Assyrian relations.

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In 701 B.C.E. Simeon, the final tribe outside of Judah proper, was taken captive by the army of Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.E.) in part of the general Assyrian campaign described in 2 Kings 18, 2 Chronicles 31, and Isaiah 36.

#### **Sidebar: Sennacherib’s western campaign**

Just before the end of the 8th century B.C.E., Assyrian monarch Sennacherib launched a highly destructive assault through the edge of the desert in that territory of the Kingdom of Judah known as the Shephelah. He considered his siege of Lachish, located south of Judah and between Gerar and Beer-sheba, the crowning achievement of this campaign.

Sennacherib immortalized the siege in his limestone bas-reliefs, originally paneling for the walls of his palace in Nineveh. These reliefs now grace several of the walls in the Assyrian rooms of London’s British Museum (on the Lachish reliefs, see Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, pp. 60-64; and Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, pp. 47-52).

The story of Sennacherib’s western campaign of 701 B.C.E. is related in the little hexagonal Taylor Prism which also can be found today in the British Museum. “The best known passage in this description states that because [king of Judah] Hezekiah had not submitted to the Assyrian ‘yoke,’ Sennacherib laid siege to forty-six fortified Judean cities, deported 200,150 people, and invested Hezekiah in Jerusalem” (T. C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, p. 59).

The Assyrian monarch claims to have trapped Hezekiah in his capital city “like a bird in a cage.” But what Sennacherib’s account does not say is as important as what it does.

Placed alongside of the biblical accounts of 2 Kings 18:17-19:36 and Isaiah 36:1-37:37, we find much more to the story. These passages tell how God delivered Jerusalem by striking the Assyrian army under Rabshakeh with a devastating plague while they were encamped about the environs of the city (2 Kings 19:32-35). The Hebrew tradition places this dramatic rescue of Hezekiah’s Jerusalem on the Passover.

The *Soncino* commentary on Isaiah 36 observes, “Traditionally Hezekiah’s illness occurred three days before Sennacherib’s fall. On the third day Hezekiah went up to the Temple to offer his prayer; and on the same day, which was the first day of Passover, Sennacherib’s armies were miraculously destroyed while he himself fled to Nineveh.”

Working from the assumption that Assyrian-Israelite relations were generally troubled from the reign of Shalmaneser III through the final campaign of Sennacherib, the period between 1660-1820 C.E. becomes particularly significant.

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As Assyrian intrusions into Israelite affairs inexorably increased and the impending catastrophe of massive deportation became inevitable, might it be logical to assume that we would find a corresponding crescendo of modern Israelitish power across a century and a half leading to the expiration of the withholding of the Birthright? Indeed, as we shall see in the following chapter, this is precisely what history demonstrates.

## ***Chapter 10***

### ***Understanding the Historic Past and the Prophetic Future***

It is a fact of history that about 2,520 years after ancient Israel ceased to be an independent kingdom, the Anglo-Saxon people were on the verge of exercising unparalleled influence.

It is also a matter of clear, unquestionable historical record that during the century and a half from 1660 to 1820, developments in Britain and the United States laid the foundation for the Anglo-American economic, political, and military dominance of the last two centuries. Is this mere coincidence—or is it precisely what we should expect based on the Bible prophecies foretelling the near-unbelievable greatness of Abraham’s heirs “in the last days”? (Genesis 49:1).

### ***Three sets of prophecies***

In fact, there are three sets of prophecies, all of which provide some of the most convincing evidence available about the modern-day identity of the descendants of Israel. The first arises from those astonishing predictions about the double-portion of the Abrahamic blessing to fall on the people of Joseph (Genesis 48:21-22; 49:22-26; Deuteronomy 33:13-17; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2).

The second relates to Jacob’s prediction of an eventual separation between Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:1-20)—his forecast that descendants of the two boys would grow together into a great people; that eventually they would experience a parting of the ways with each group enjoying continuing prosperity and blessings in their own right. We can locate the people of Joseph in history by looking backward in time, identifying the modern-day peoples who have fulfilled the predictions at the time and in the way that prophecy leads us to expect.

The third set of prophecies, scattered liberally throughout the writings of both Major and Minor Prophets, foretells of monumental end time events yet to overtake the Israelitish peoples. They are of value to us not only in demonstrating that a physical, national people of Israel exists today; they give us an enlarged understanding of the very job of the Church of God as humanity moves inexorably toward the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Millennial rule over the all the earth.

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In this chapter, we will examine in order each of these three sets of prophecies, how they have been fulfilled, and what remains ahead for Israel.

#### ***The incredible prosperity of Joseph***

The words of Jacob predict marvelous and wonderful things for Joseph’s end time descendants: “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), by the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers” (Genesis 49:22-26).

Moses reiterated these words in his farewell address to the Israelites about to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land.

“And of Joseph he said: ‘Blessed of the Lord is his land, with the precious things of heaven, with the dew, and the deep lying beneath, with the precious fruits of the sun, with the precious produce of the months, with the best things of the ancient mountains, with the precious things of the everlasting hills, with the precious things of the earth and its fullness, and the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.

‘Let the blessing come on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers. His glory is like a firstborn bull, and his horns like the horns of the wild ox; together with them He shall push the peoples to the ends of the earth; they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (Deuteronomy 33:13-17).

The word Hebrew word used here for “separate” means “consecrated” which means “set apart” (*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*, # 5139). Other translations use the term “set apart from” (*New Revised Standard*) and “the one distinguished among his brothers” (*New American Standard*) in place of “separate.” This seems to be the primary intent, but one can also make the case for a physical separation. Joseph was sold into slavery. And there is even a modern correlation to the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. They have been separated (and also distinguished) from their brothers by geography and prosperity.

#### ***Joseph separate from his brethren***

These prophecies have been fulfilled in the stories of the British and American peoples. Like Joseph, the son of Jacob, the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh have been physically separated from the descendants of the other tribes. Throughout European

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history, the English Channel has served as a beneficent buffer separating the Celts, the Angles, and the Saxons from their fellow-Israelite tribespeople living on the northwestern portion of the Continent. This separation has had numerous beneficial effects. The first relates to colonization.

Those adventuresome Ephraimites, who had wanderlust, trekked to distant parts such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The Manassite branch of the family traveled as well, ultimately building a nation insulated from not only Ephraim but the other brothers as well by the Atlantic Ocean. The colonization and settlement process in which these people participated was a dramatic fulfillment of Joseph’s branches running “over the wall” (Genesis 49:22).

Separation has also allowed the British and American people to live in peaceful isolation (verse 26). It has often has done much to spared them of the grief and losses caused by war. If the British people have been participants in many of the European wars of modern times, they also have often had the decided advantage of picking and choosing how, when, and at times even whether they would be involved.

Through much of British history, the insulation afforded by the English Channel spared the British the draining costs of maintaining a standing army and watching the cream of its manhood fall victim to enemy swords, arrows, bullets, and bombs. On many occasions, the British even determined the outcome of Continental conflicts, watching safely from a distance, serving as “Paymaster of the Allies,” and pursuing her typical 19th century policy of “Splendid Isolation.”

If the English Channel made England a relatively peaceful place by Continental standards, the Atlantic Ocean gave the United States of America one of the most unprecedented opportunities in recorded human history. From the birth of the country in 1776, the founding fathers aspired to create a new and noble nation. They wished to build a unique nation-state, unencumbered by aristocratic traditions and foreign entanglements that afflicted the Old World out of which the American colonists had come.

The advantage of geographic isolation on a new and largely unpopulated continent gave Americans to create what which has become the strongest and most powerful nation in today’s world.

### ***American nationhood flowers***

U.S. involvement in world affairs began to crescendo around the time of the Spanish-American War (1898). America’s first naive, idealistic, full-scale plunge into international relations came in 1917 with her entry into World War I. Disillusionment over the peace process led to a temporary lapse into isolationism, but by the late-1930s, the world had become “too small” for the United States to stand aloof much longer. American involvement in World War II began a sustained participation by the United States in world affairs. Today, America is the recognized leader among the nations of the world.

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Along with brother Ephraim, the descendants of Manasseh have had the power to “push the people together to the ends of the earth” (Deuteronomy 33:17). Little wonder that the prophecies inform us that Joseph’s “bow abode in strength” (verse 24).

If the luck of geography made possible Anglo-American dominance of the past two hundred years, much of that strength sprang as well from favorable climate and a seemingly endless supply of natural resources. The “blessings of heaven above” (Genesis 49:25—compare Deuteronomy 33:13-14) have come to both peoples whose territories lie squarely within the temperate zones. Auspicious climate has enabled both the British and Americans to capitalize agriculturally on the abundant supply of rich and fertile soil of their territories (Deuteronomy 8:9; 28:3-5).

A dependable food supply has yielded the steady population growth in British regions of the world and the United States from the 18th through much of the 20th centuries. Certainly in terms of population growth, the descendants of Joseph have been a “fruitful bough” (Genesis 49:22, 25; Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 6:3; 7:13-14; 28:4) providing both the labor force and human ingenuity which helped to make possible the industrialization which changed the face of the world.

In addition to favorable climate, weather, agricultural production and a large population base, the British and American peoples fell heir to a treasure trove of natural resources. What the British lacked within their own isles, they drew from an empire encircling the globe.

The Americans found everything necessary for national economic greatness—fertile top soil; iron ore and coal deposits; reserves of gold, silver, diamonds; and petroleum—within the confines of the continental U.S. Both peoples possessed “the chief things of the ancient mountains”—the “precious things of the lasting hills” and “the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof” within the territories they exclusively controlled (cf. Deuteronomy 8:9, 28:1, 6, 8, 13).

### ***Forty decisive years***

All of the things promised in the prophecies about Joseph “in the last days” (Genesis 49:1) began to converge near the end of the 18th century C.E. It is worth examining what happened to the descendants of both Ephraim and Manasseh during this period. We find England and France locked in a life-and-death struggle over European—and by extension world—hegemony. The outcome of that struggle determined who would dominate the world during the following two centuries. The final results were not entirely clear until the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1804-1815).

Napoleon’s defeat brought closure to what is arguably the most decisive 40 year period in modern history: 1775-1815. The Bible makes repeated use of the number 40 as symbolic of judgment or as a unified block of time denoting stages of life or regal periods (compare Exodus 2:1-10, 15; Numbers 14:34; Joshua 3:14-17; Judges 3:11; 2 Samuel 5:4; 1 Kings 11:42; 1 Chronicles 29:27; 2 Chronicles 9:30; Acts 13:21). The events unfolding

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during these four decades confirmed the Anglo-American character of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Genesis, chapter 48 addresses the separation of Ephraim from Manasseh and the foundation of two separate independent polities. Jacob predicted that Manasseh “also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations” (verse 19).

The first part of this grand prophecy was fulfilled in the setting of the American Revolution (1775-1783) and the War of 1812 (1812-1815). The American Revolution severed the political connection of the American colonists to England. The wars between France and England on the European Continent had an indirect influence as well.

The Louisiana Purchase was the product of Napoleon’s need for ready cash to pay for the costs of impending war with England. The acquisition of the Louisiana Territory (1803) insured world power status for the United States. The War of 1812 confirmed the separation of the U.S. from Britain.

And finally, the death of Tecumseh (October 4, 1813) effected a subduing of the Indian threat which opened the way for relatively unhindered westward expansion—a development which gathered increasing momentum and reached a kind of climax with the growth of the spirit of “Manifest Destiny” and the Mexican War (1846-1848).

### ***A Commonwealth of Nations***

The second aspect of Jacob’s prediction—that Ephraim would become “a multitude of nations” (verse 19)—also began slowly but inexorably to be fulfilled as a result of the French defeat in 1815. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Royal Navy ruled the world’s oceans. The British economy, greatly stimulated by the conflict, had been propelled to unparalleled world supremacy (William H. McNeill, *The Ecumene: The Story of Humanity*, p. 528-529; see also the F. Crouzet essay, “England and France in the Eighteenth century: A Comparative Analysis of Two Economic Growths,” pp. 167, 173-174, in *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England* edited by R. M. Hartwell; and *Age of Aristocracy*, pp. 217, 277-278).

The French bid for world hegemony—more-or-less continuous since the days of Louis XIV (1643-1715) and the opening rounds of the “Second Hundred Years War”—had decisively failed.

Britain found herself free and in possession of the necessary political, economic, and military power to build an empire that extended around the globe. As brother Manasseh moved forward to construct a nation that would extend from “sea to shining sea,” Ephraim fell heir to the world.

The British built an empire on which the sun never set. This imperial structure was almost infinite in its diversity, comprised as it was of people from virtually every known



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ethnic group and governed by means a centralized as the Raj in India or the British Agent-General’s Office in Egypt... or as independent as the dominion status granted to the territories of settlement in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

Genesis, chapter 49 relates the details of Joseph’s inheritance—not Reuben’s (1 Chronicles 5:1-2)—of the double portion of the Birthright passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob.

Napoleon’s fall was an essential prelude to Britain’s ascension and the fulfillment of this prophecy. After 1815, Anglo-French tensions remained, particularly in the sphere of colonial and imperial rivalries (the most dramatic example of which is the Fashoda Crisis of 1898), but even in that arena, there are novel examples of attempts at Anglo-French cooperation (e.g., the Anglo-French Commission which managed Egyptian economic affairs from 1876-1881 or the dividing of the Middle East into spheres of influence by the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1917).

From 1815, there generally ensued a decrescendo of tensions which culminated in the Entente Cordiale of 1904 and the joint Anglo-French resistance to the Triple Alliance and later the Central Powers against whom both French and English fought during World War I.

#### **Sidebar: The Coronation of James I, King of England (1603)**

No doubt breathless after his furious and unauthorized Pony Express-style 300 mile dash up the Great North Road from London to Edinburgh, a young courtier named Robert Carey stood inside Holyrood Palace.

In spite of his more than 30 hours in transit—and the fact that he had taken one bad fall along the way—he was delighted to be the man to inform Scottish King James VI that, on the death of English monarch Elizabeth I, James had become James I, king of England. Carey delivered these momentous tidings at the end of the day of March 26, 1603.

If the Throne of David went from Jerusalem to Ireland to Scotland, then the succession of the Stuart king, James I, at the death of Elizabeth I constitutes the final planting of the Davidic throne in England. The possibility that the Scottish line of kings represents the Davidic family is particularly interesting. This is especially true in light of Nathan’s prophecy of the fate to befall David’s family in the aftermath of the Bathsheba-Uriah the Hittite debacle (2 Samuel 11:1-27). The prophet inveighed, “Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house ... I will raise up adversity against you from your own house” (2 Samuel 12:10-11).

This prophecy finds a fascinating echo in the observations of Prince Michael of Greece: “Scotland, whose very ancient historical beginnings remain obscure, made her first appearance as a coherent kingdom in the ninth century under Kenneth I McAlpin. The descendants of his dynasty include such famous historical figures as

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Duncan and Macbeth. Dominated by wars with England, the history of Scotland is a romantic tapestry of acts of great heroism and great brutality. The Stuarts came to the throne with Robert II in the fourteenth century.”

## ***Chapter 11***

### ***The “Gate of His Enemies”—A Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecies***

The promise to Abraham included one unique and unusual provision which some have understood to apply to control of important and strategic passageways around the world. This idea is drawn from Genesis 22:17, which promises, “and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.” This promise is repeated to Rebekah, mother of Isaac, in Genesis 24:60.

It is a fact of history that the British and Americans have controlled the majority of both land and sea gates which have been critical to the economic and military dominance enjoyed by Britain and America in the 19th and 20th centuries.

#### ***Three vital sea gates***

The acquisition of the three of the most important sea gates occurred in the context of God’s holy day seasons. The first example took place as a result of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). This conflict began as the result of a decision made in a Spring holy day setting. Over the last three decades of his reign, Spanish King Charles II (1661-1700) had “been a walking medical exhibit of half a dozen fatal diseases” (Joseph R. Strayer, et. al., *Mainstream of Civilization*, p. 451).

Since Charles II had no children the absence of a royal heir led to a controversy over succession to the Spanish throne. For a time, it appeared that the matter could be peaceably resolved. However, when Charles designated Philippe d’Anjou, the grandson of French King Louis XIV, as his lawful successor, he destabilized the European balance of power. That decision occurred on October 2, 1700—the fifth Day of Unleavened Bread.

Charles’ decision confirmed the worst fears of fellow-European statesmen concerning French intentions. At Versailles, the Spanish Ambassador, kneeling before the new king—now Philip V of Spain—was heard to murmur, “Il n’y pas de Pyrenees”—there are no more Pyrenees. He implied that the king’s ascension amounted to the union of France and Spain.

By 1701, the Grand Alliance constructed by English King William III was at war with France. William hoped to restore a favorable balance of power. In the end, the French bid to dominate the Continent failed. In fact, England emerged from the conflict with the largest European navy and her status as a world power confirmed.

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As a result of the war, England acquired Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the Hudson Bay territory, Minorca, and most importantly, Gibraltar which controlled entry and exit to the Mediterranean Sea. These terms of settlement—the Peace of Utrecht among others, were reached on April 11, 1713.

### ***England gains Suez***

Over a century and a half later, the British gained direct control of another critical sea gate at the other end of the Mediterranean. Since 1875, Britain had owned controlling interest in the Suez Canal. A short time later, Britain became more directly involved in Egyptian affairs along with the French, as part of the so-called “Anglo-French Condominium” (1876-1882).

Financial mismanagement on the part of the Egyptian government led to the establishment of a joint Anglo-French commission and “Dual Paramountcy” to restore Egyptian economic stability. But Egyptian political problems persisted.

The continuing difficulties of the Egyptian government led Ismail, the Khedive of Egypt on May 28, 1882, to recall Colonel Ahmed Arabi Pasha and other nationalists. This turn of event set the stage for the British occupation of Egypt from 1882 until 1956. Soon thereafter, Arabi eventually led a nationalist rebellion.

Strongly influenced by the popular anti-colonialism in France during the early-1880s, the French government refused to get involved. On the other side of the English Channel, Arabi’s actions prompted a different response. The British dispatched an expeditionary army of 40,560 men to quell the rebellion.

Commanding officer General Garnet Wolseley’s bout with illness delayed any actual military engagements. When action came, it was overwhelmingly successful for the British. On September 13, 1882, Wolseley defeated Egyptian rebels under Arabi at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir about 50 miles northeast of Cairo. On the following day Wolseley’s triumphant army marched into Cairo.

Under the rulership of the “Veiled Protectorate,” Britain stood supreme in Egypt—in sole control over Egyptian affairs while the French found themselves on the outside looking in. The British remained there for nearly three-quarters of a century.

### ***America acquires the Panama Canal***

The third great sea gate acquired by Joseph’s seed was the Panama Canal. Like Thomas Jefferson’s purchase of the Louisiana territory or Benjamin Disraeli’s acquisition of Suez Canal stock, American President Theodore Roosevelt’s actions to secure Panama were taken with bold decisiveness but questionable legality. About his presumption, Theodore Roosevelt remarked, “I took the Isthmus, started the Canal, and then left Congress—not to debate the Canal, but to debate me” (*The American Past*, p. 323).

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Certainly Teddy Roosevelt was one of America’s most decisive leaders. Moreover, the circumstances of his rise to the presidency were rather unique. The assassination of President William McKinley brought Roosevelt into that office on September 14, 1901.

Notwithstanding Roosevelt’s various human faults and foibles, his administration was distinguished by justice. His “Square Deal” and “reputation as an honest and competent reformer” bears witness to this aspect of the fairness of his administrative style.

Roosevelt played a critical role in the fulfilling of the Abrahamic promise relevant to Israel’s possession of important sea gates (Genesis 22:17, 26:40). He was the central actor in the American construction and acquisition of the Panama Canal.

On September 22, 1902, French engineer Philippe Jean Bunau-Varilla from Panama arrived in New York City to set in motion events which would lead to U.S. to accomplish what the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocianique and renowned engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps had failed to do between 1881-1889.

On October 10 Bunau-Varilla met with President Roosevelt and predicted a revolution against the ruling Columbian government by those living on the Isthmus. Roosevelt was reported to have remarked in private: “I took Panama because Bunau-Varilla brought it to me on a silver platter” (David McCullough, *Path Between the Seas*, p. 384). Again, we see a historical example of Reuben’s passing of the Birthright to Joseph (1 Chronicles 5:1-2).

Working in cooperation with Panama’s Dr. Manuel Amador, Bunau-Varilla moved to receive the canal project under different auspices. On October 13, Bunau-Varilla held a meeting at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in which the Panama Republic was born. Thereafter events moved quickly making possible American success in the canal zone region. (See David McCullough, *Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914*, pp. 342-343, 347-350, 356, 384, 392-393, 401.)

#### **Sidebar: Benjamin Disraeli: Maestro of Empire**

What is in a name? God often names things what they are. When the light-bringing cherub Lucifer rebelled against the authority of God (Isaiah 14:12-16; Ezekiel 28:14-19). He renamed him “adversary” or Satan. Adam’s name literally meant “red earth,” the substance from which the first man was formed and shaped (Genesis 2:7).

Abram received a name—Abraham (Genesis 17:5)—which connoted his very fatherhood—“father of a multitude” (Genesis 17:4-6). Solomon, whose name derives from the Hebrew root word for “peace,” presided over one of the most pacific periods in all Israelite history (1 Kings 4:24).

Is it so strange that God might still provide us similar signposts along the way through human history (cf. Hebrews 13:8)? One possible example of this is found

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in the story of growth and development of the British Empire. One of the most remarkable figures in English political history was Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881).

This son of a Jewish family which had converted to Christianity rose to the pinnacle of British political life and served twice as Prime Minister (1868, 1874-1880). He is sometimes described as the “Maestro of Empire,” the British statesman who gave the late-19th century British Empire a new emotional force. Historian Walter P. Hall and R. G. Albion observe, “Disraeli, it has been said, was the first modern statesman to pursue a frankly imperialistic policy” (*History of the British Empire*, pp. 705-706).

During Disraeli’s second administration, England underwent a revival of interest in empire and territorial expansion. Acting boldly and with remarkable independence, Disraeli paid nearly four million pounds—money borrowed from the Bank of Rothschild with “the British government” as security—for the purchase of 44% of the shares of stock controlling the recently constructed Suez Canal. It was the engineering masterpiece of Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps.

German Iron Chancellor Otto von Bismarck aptly described this passageway as the spinal cord of the British Empire. Indeed the construction of the Suez Canal had dramatically altered the balance of power in the Middle East. It necessitated British presence, or, better still, direct control of the region. The canal became Britain’s “lifeline” to India.

The next and perhaps most grandiose expression of Disraeli’s imperial policies was in connection with the linchpin of Empire, India itself. On May 1, 1876 Disraeli saw that the Royal Titles Bill made Queen Victoria “Empress of India.”

In January of the following year in Delhi, India, with great fanfare and ceremony the Viceroy of India pronounced Victoria Empress as a grand celebration in her honor. Later that same year, Disraeli annexed the mineral-rich Transvaal in South Africa. Three years later, at the Congress of Berlin, he acquired the strategic outpost of Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea.

It is a remarkable coincidence that one of the chief architects of the British Empire literally bears the name of “Israel.” Or is it? Given what we know about the identity of Jacob’s modern-day descendants and the timing of the issuance of the physical, material, national promises to Abraham, the name Disraeli reads more like a providential signpost.

### ***Anglo-American dominance to continue?***

And so, the 19th and 20th centuries have seen the domination of world history by the Anglo-American peoples. As we rapidly move toward the 21st century, will this pattern continue? British world dominance is already a thing of the past.

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The two great world wars of the 20th century took a terrible toll on Britain and her people. These conflicts robbed her of much of her manpower. They drained her economically. By the end of World War II, the British found themselves with neither the resources nor the will to preserve their empire.

From the realization of Indian independence (1947), the dissolution of Britain’s imperial edifice occurred with dizzying speed. British superiority has given place to American dominance during the final half of the 20th century.

If American military, economic, and technical power remains supreme, the moral decay of the United States does not bode well for the future. The biblically based values on which the founding fathers and American people built the U.S.A. have given place to the same kind of selfish, self-serving materialistic orientation which led to the collapse of the Roman Empire of antiquity. Without a change in direction and emphasis, will the outcome for America be any different?

It is both interesting and important that Bible prophecy depicts God’s people Israel in dire straits—even captivity (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:27-28; Jeremiah 29:14; Amos 9:14)—at the time of Jesus Christ’s return. Israel will be punished for her departure from the ways, truths, and laws of God—a theme that we shall explore in the final chapter of this booklet.

Happily, prophecy also reveals that God will not abandon Israel forever. There is coming a great exodus and restoration, which will form a bridge into the new Millennial age, established by Christ at His Second Coming.

### ***A future exodus and final restoration?***

Is there unfinished business in Bible prophecy? There is good news and bad news. Numerous Bible prophecies portray a repentant Israel, turning at last to God and obedient to His laws. Herbert W. Armstrong frequently reminded us, that punishment was effected with a positive end—a “glorious purpose”—in mind:

“God is going to keep multiplying chastening—correction—on our peoples until they do turn from their evil ways—until they turn to the ways that cause peace, happiness, prosperity, all the good things! ... The prophecies record also the RESULT of that intensified punishment. The result will be a corrected people. The result will be an eye-opening realization of what we have done to ourselves. The supreme punishment will teach us, at last, our lesson! The punishment will break our spirit of rebellion” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 167-168, 170).

Not only will this generation of Israelites repent; they will receive deliverance at the Hand of the returned Jesus Christ.

The time is just before the resurrection of the just, at Christ’s coming. As Moses delivered the ancient Israelites from Egyptian slavery, so Jesus Christ is coming to deliver

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modern Britain and America from the now-impending Babylonish slavery (See Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 7:37; Jeremiah 23:5-8) (Ibid., p. 177).

This deliverance entails the fulfillment of some of the most exciting and encouraging prophecies in the entire Bible. These predictions foretell a second exodus of unparalleled magnitude—one which will literally dwarf the experience of Moses and the Israelites: “Therefore behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that it shall no more be said, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.’ For I will bring them back into their land, which I gave to their fathers” (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

### ***Further prophetic testimony***

Isaiah writes about the same unprecedented re-gathering of Israel: “It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left ... He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:11-12).

Moses forecast this event as well. “And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress [compare Matthew 24:21-22], and all these things come on you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice” (Deuteronomy 4:27-30; 28:68).

The prophet Amos wrote of a time when God promised to “bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them” (Amos 9:14).

Those prophecies about an end time restoration of Israel give us much to anticipate. Inspired by these passages, Herbert Armstrong wrote:

“The house of Israel is yet to return, at Christ’s coming, to their original homeland—yet to plant grapes in Samaria, their original country... . At the future exodus, at Christ’s coming, they are to return to the Holy Land out of the land of the NORTH! [Hosea 11:8, 10]... This prophecy is for consideration in the ‘latter days’ (Jeremiah 30:24; 31:1), and is addressed to ‘Israel’ (verses 2, 4, 9), to ‘Ephraim’ (verses 6, 9), and ‘Samaria’ (verse 5).”

Here is added another hinge—“the coasts of the earth” (verse 8)—evidencing that they are dominant at sea and indicating they have spread abroad widely by colonization.

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Referring to the house of ISRAEL, not Judah (Isaiah 49:3, 6), God says: “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the NORTH and from the WEST; and these from the land of Sinim” (Isaiah 49:12) (Ibid., p. 95. Compare Psalm 107:3-7; Isaiah 48:20-21).

### ***The restoration of Israel***

These predictions tell about a bringing of the descendants of physical, national Israel together to Palestine from all four corners of the earth at the return of Christ. “And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will thresh, from the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown [compare Leviticus 25:8-10]; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Isaiah 27:12-13).

The prophecies of Ezekiel point to a dramatic reunion of “lost Israel” with brother Judah. “As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.’ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand... .

“And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all... [and] David My servant shall be king over them ..” (Ezekiel 37:16-17, 22,).

“For the first time in some three thousand years, for the first time since the days of Solomon, the house of Israel (the 10 Tribes) will be reunited with the house of Judah. They will become one 12-tribed nation!” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 184).

### ***Twelve tribes to be reunited***

The fact that the restoration prophecies have physical as well as spiritual fulfillment demands that Israel have a post-captivity existence. In fact, the notion of a restoration and reunion of the 12 tribes is as old as the Assyrian captivity itself:

“The belief in the restoration of the 12 Tribe Kingdom of Israel survived every storm which subsequently broke over its remnants... Even in the course of the Exile itself the prophets started to proclaim the return of the people and the restoration of the destroyed 12 Tribe Kingdom. It crystallized as a central conviction in late Jewish eschatology and apocalyptic literature... The author of the Letter of Aristeas presupposes this restoration in his story of the seventy two scholars, six from each of the 12 tribes, who produced the Septuagint” (A. S. Geysler, “Some Salient New Testament Passages,” pp. 305-306).

The expectation of a reunion of the tribes was alive and well in the days of Jesus and the 1st century Church. “In parables and debates he [Jesus] taught them [the 12] is



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nature and the signs of its coming, and to pray for it daily. The ‘12’ (eleven) asked him after the resurrection, ‘Are you now going to establish the Kingdom for Israel?’ (Acts 1:6)” (ibid., p. 310).

From that time to this, the restoration of Israel has been a periodic focus of theological interest among the Christian clergy and the religiously sensitive laity. American historian Barbara Tuchman describes how around mid-century well-meaning men like Lord Shaftesbury actually nurtured the formation of government policy designed to promote “an Anglican Israel [by which he meant the Jews] restored by Protestant England, at one stroke confounding popery, fulfilling prophecy, redeeming mankind” (*Bible and Sword*, pp. 175-207, excerpt).

In a spirit which is admirable, Shaftesbury and many others have aspired to do their part. But what exactly should that be? And as we now reflect on the prophecies about Israel’s punishment, repentance, and restoration, what is our responsibility?

Is this message about Israel’s modern identity a part of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God? And if it is, how should this understanding affect and influence our personal behavior? We will examine these questions in the final chapter.

## ***Chapter 12***

### ***The Gospel’s Crucial Relationship to the Modern Nations of Israel***

Given that the British and American peoples of the late-20th century are indeed the descendants of the ancient Israelites of the Bible, what effect should such knowledge have in our lives today? In an essay about the history of the British-Israel movement, one scholar summarized the practical impact of the 19th century understanding of Israel’s modern-day identity. He wrote:

“British-Israelism could be accepted in greater or lesser degree as an entertaining, perhaps titillating, set of speculations. The audiences need feel neither committed to it, nor incensed by it: it was offered, certainly by one [John Wilson, the author of *Our Israelitish Origins*, 1840] who believed it, but without obligation to decide finally about it, and without all the persuasions and antagonism with which it would have been inevitably associated had it been the creed of a particular sect or denomination” (John Wilson, “*British Israelism: The Ideological Restraints on Sect Organization*” in *Patterns of Sectarianism*, pp. 354, 359).

But is that all there is to the matter? Or are there dimensions to this understanding which have important—in fact—crucial implications for the Church and the preaching of its Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness to all nations on whom the end of the age is come (Matthew 24:14)?

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#### ***What is the gospel?***

Most people today might think that an understanding of Israel’s modern-day identity is irrelevant to the Gospel message. Certainly it is subordinate to the spiritual aspects of the promises to Abraham, something which Church of God has always understood, appreciated, and highly valued.

The Bible teaches that regardless of race (Acts 10:34-38; Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:26-29), salvation is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ and bring themselves under His beneficent rule.

There nevertheless remains a physical, material, and national aspect of God’s covenant with Abraham. An awareness of these physical promises is useful to our understanding of prophecy. Since Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of the Gospel message, we must remember that Christ came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15)—not solely a message about His personal role in the opening phase of God’s master plan. The Gospel message has several different facets and aspects. In fact, it is three-dimensional.

The Gospel has a past, present, and future dimension. Each dimension is reflected in the sequence and symbolism of the holy days of Leviticus, chapter 23. The past dimension is the best known aspect of the Christian message. It deals with the life, crucifixion, and death of Jesus Christ—with redemption available to those who would repent of sin and accept Christ as personal Savior.

The present dimension of the Gospel relates to the establishment of the Church of God, an event which occurred on the day of Pentecost about 50 days after the crucifixion of Jesus. From that time forward, the Kingdom of God in embryonic form has existed on earth as the “little flock” of God’s spiritual Israel.

Although the Church is not the Kingdom in full blown form, its members enjoy a foretaste of what it will be like to live under the laws, judgments, statutes, and principles of Jesus Christ’s benevolent government (Matthew 11:28-30). Christians from the 1st century C.E. until now have been writing the Gospel story as part of the “living Book of Acts.” They will continue to do so until Jesus Christ ushers in the new and globe-girdling Millennial age.

Not only will the lost tribes of Israel be able to visit the land of their forefathers, but all people from all racial backgrounds will look on Jerusalem as the Headquarters of the King of Kings—Jesus Christ. Notice Micah 4:2: “Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord ... He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’”

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#### **Sidebar: “Thy Kingdom Come”**

Establishment Christianity’s shift away from an emphasis on the future dimension of the Gospel has led some to the misguided idea that the Kingdom in its fullness exists on earth today. That perception has inspired many Christians to become aggressively active in attempting to solve many of the world’s difficulties and problems.

While this has produced some good fruit, in many cases, members have become involved in futile programs or personal quests to rid the world of evils which are systemic and so deeply rooted in society’s structure and fabric that nothing less than the establishment of Christ’s rule on earth will effect the necessary changes. For now, we continue to live in a world fraught with evil, war, murder, dishonesty, immorality, and all the other human vices which living within the boundaries of the laws of God would remedy.

The historical record is filled with accounts of well-intentioned attempts to bring the Kingdom of God to earth in its fullness before God intends it to arrive. One such example is the concerted 17th century Puritan attempt to change humankind, in this case, through strictly legislated morality. Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, and his associates sought to “inaugurate a new millennium...”

Cromwell’s failure was the tragedy of all men of good will who recognize evil but find it difficult to describe the right. As a “soldier-saint” he took on the “responsibility of forging a New Jerusalem” but “was eventually destroyed by the means forced on him to attain his ends. The kingdom of God belongs to heaven, the city of man to earth, and not even a Cromwell could unite the two” (Lacy Baldwin Smith, *This Realm of England*, pp. 266, 275-277).

An awareness of the timetable of God’s plan as revealed in the annual Holy Days helps us to understand why so many attempts to reform society have failed. Unorthodox Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung put his finger on just the problem in his reflections about the near universal failure of revolutionary movements throughout human history. He writes:

“[E]ven if revolution succeeds, there is often no more than a change of rulers, while the problems and the oppression remain unchanged... They have had only a partial success in changing man inwardly, in his innermost core, in changing his ‘heart,’ with the aid of environment technology or psychoanalysis or even political revolution... With all the many reforms are we not merely painting over the surface and not getting at the cause of evil? We seem to be engaged less in necessary radical reform than in bustling, flustered reformism which in various spheres of life (university, industry, Church, education, state legislation) has produced a great deal of change and little improvement.

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“At any rate there has been no change in man himself, no different basic attitude, no new humanity... Liberal reformers and disappointed revolutionaries meet one another at the grave of their expectations” (*On Being A Christian*, pp. 55-56, 554, 569-570).

True Christians have made the change of heart about which Kung speaks (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Hebrews 8:8-10). The majority of humanity has not. All men and women will have the opportunity to do so, but only after the return of Jesus Christ.

It is the return of Jesus Christ and all those events surrounding the literal establishment of His thousand year rule on earth that are portrayed in the Fall festival season—those holy days beginning with the Feast of Trumpets and running through the Feast of Tabernacles. A critical element in that story pertains to the future for the physical, national people of Israel. One of the many things that Christ will do on His return to the earth is to deliver an enslaved Israel out of the lands of their captivity.

This future dimension of the Gospel message deals with events leading to the end of this age and Second Coming. That message includes Israel’s impending punishment, repentance, and restoration. Those elements of the story are equally a part of the Gospel.

How, then, do we locate the yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecies about Israel in Scripture?

### ***Israel and prophecies for our day***

In many Bible prophecies, the use of the word “Israel” points us exclusively to the descendants of the tribes of the northern kingdom—decidedly not Judah.

Herbert Armstrong writes: “Wherever you see the name ‘house of Israel,’ or ‘Samaria,’ or ‘Ephraim’ used in prophecy, remember this: IT REFERS TO THE NORTHERN TRIBES of Israel, who composed the nation... Thus it is that many of the prophecies about ‘Israel’ or ‘Jacob’ do not refer primarily to Jews or to any of the nations that are today the descendants of the other tribes of Israel” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 43, 64—see also pp. 60-62, 65-66, 70-71, 88, 107, 122).

Unfortunately, in many cases the biblical use of the name “Israel” is far more ambiguous than we might like it to be. It is often difficult to know for certain whether the biblical narrator or prophet intends it to describe Israel, Judah, Israel and Judah, a portion of Judah, or a portion of Israel. The difficulty is illustrated in several passages from the Book of Jeremiah (2:4, 9, 26-28; 5:1, 20, 29; 11:9-12, 17; 18:6-11; 31:31-33).

Many of these Scriptures show that this prophet addressed not only Judah, but Israel as well, even though the northern kingdom’s captivity had come well over a century before Babylon intruded into the affairs of the Judean kingdom. A similar point can be made from the writings of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:4, 7, 11, 15; 8:3-11; 9:6-7; 11:1-2).

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Some commentators argue that these warnings were only to those northerners who, through the centuries, had relocated within the confines of Judah’s territory—in other words, the Israelites who lived in Jerusalem.

Were the Israelites mentioned by them only that “remnant” (e.g., Jeremiah 31:7, Ezekiel 11:13; Micah 2:12; 5:7-8) of the northern kingdom which had taken refuge in Jerusalem from the 9th century B.C.E. “religious” reforms of Jeroboam I or the 8th century B.C.E. Assyrian onslaught of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II?

If there were northerners among the Jewish community—and there absolutely were—we have to ask the question, “How many?” and “What percentage of the total community did they comprise?”

The population of Judea and Jerusalem was overwhelmingly Jewish in its tribal makeup. Moreover, by definition, the word “remnant” means a small number. A case in point is the 6th century B.C.E. restoration of Judah to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (note the use of the term “remnant” in the context of Zechariah 8:6, 9-13).

The startling thing that is often overlooked is the paltry number of Jews who chose to leave the comforts of their Babylonian “captivity”—a state which Bible historians generally believe to be quite benign and hospitable (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 470-471, 473, 483; Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 156-158, 160, 162; Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, p. 436).

Relatively few Jews—only 42,360 by the biblical reckoning (Ezra 2, Nehemiah 7:6, 66)—were prepared to take on the challenge of rebuilding the nation in a setting which still bore the scars of the havoc wreaked by Nebuchadnezzar’s army in the late-7th and early-6th centuries.

### ***The awesome message of the Hebrew prophets***

Were prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many others writing for only the people of their own time, or do their prophecies have dual application? The warnings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, like those of Daniel (12:9), are written as messages for a future generation as well as people living in the times of the prophets themselves.

In Jeremiah’s case, the duality extends both into the past and the future. For example, he asserts: “... The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers ... Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them [both houses] which they will not be able to escape...” (Jeremiah 11:9-12, 17).

Could not this allude backward in time to Israel’s Assyrian captivity, forward in time to the coming Babylonian invasion, and still further ahead to an end time punishment to overtake Israel at the end of the age? There is nothing in Jeremiah’s references to both Israel and Judah (e.g., Jeremiah 5:11, 20) that confirms the location of the former house.

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Neither do Jeremiah’s prophecies require that both houses reside in the same place at the time of the writing. Considering the highly personal way in which God dealt with and revealed information to Jeremiah (e.g., 1:4-10), it seems altogether likely that he possessed some inkling that his prophecies had implications for a time beyond his own.

Certainly, the Israelites of old and today were a people without regard for the laws of God. From idolatry to adultery to Sabbath-breaking, historically many Israelites have had great difficulty obeying God. In fact, Sabbath-breaking is literally linked to Israel’s disappearance from the record of history. Israel’s abandonment of the fourth commandment transformed northerners into the “lost 10 tribes.” Why? Because the Sabbath was the sign by which Israel could be identified among the nations of the world.

The Sabbath was not solely an aspect of the Old Covenant sealed at Sinai (Exodus 24:6-8) but part of a separate, independent covenant (see *United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 133-134, 141-142) received by Israel subsequent to the giving of the Law. This special “Sabbath Covenant” is described in Exodus 31:14-17.

Since the seventh day Sabbath is included in the Ten Commandments received by Israel at Sinai, it was important enough for God to reinforce its importance, making Sabbath observance the identifying sign of God’s human, physical people. “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: `Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you”(Exodus 31:13).

Indeed, the Jews have retained their ethnic identity through history because the majority of them continued to keep the Sabbath through their long and troubled history.

It is significant that Ezekiel, chapters 20 and 22 are excoriating indictments for Sabbath-breaking. From passages like these, we learn that in ancient times Sabbath-breaking was a significant reason for God’s punishment on the House of Israel. Will this be the case again?

### ***Coming national punishments***

If God was honor-bound by His unconditional promise to pass the Birthright to the descendants of Abraham, He is today no longer obligated by His promise to continue our undeserving peoples in world prestige, wealth and greatness.

Herbert Armstrong predicted that God would even “strip entirely from them [the modern Israelites] this colossal, unprecedented national blessing—returning them to captivity and slavery... At the very time their power reaches its zenith, He suddenly will break it, cutting off their implements of war and destroying their cities” (*United States and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 10, 163, 166).

If such dire predictions are true, we may draw again from Leviticus 26, and the reference to “seven times” in verse 21. In this case the reference is to “intensity” rather

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than “duration” of punishment. Mention of breaking “pride of your power” in verse 19 could be nothing other than the Great Tribulation forecast by Jeremiah (30:5-7), Daniel (12:1), and Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:21-22).

In the words of Jesus, “It will be a time of great distress, such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again. If that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive...” (Revised English Bible). This “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7) shows the descendants of ancient Israel in dire straits at the time of Jesus Christ’s return.

### ***The Church’s crucial mission***

As this horrendous time approaches, what is the Church of God to do? It has a sobering responsibility to perform. The Church—the “royal priesthood” and “holy nation” of the New Covenant (1 Peter 2:9, compare Exodus 19:5-6;)—has to shoulder the spiritual responsibility of preaching the true gospel (Matthew 24:14).

One of those duties was to sound, when necessary, a prophetic warning. God chose Hebrew prophets to make just these kinds of pronouncements. We read them today as a permanent part of the Hebrew Scriptures. Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 remind us that God does not change.

It is logical that God would use his Church—spiritual Israel or “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) as a prophetic voice in the New Testament dispensation at such times when a prophetic warning should be delivered. That Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Ephesians 2:19-21).

The Church is described in the Book of Acts as having had prophets in a limited sense (e. g., Acts 21:10-11). There are New Testament prophecies (e.g., 2 Timothy 1:6). Is it not the job of the “holy nation”—the Church of God—to witness as did the prophets of ancient Israel and Judah? This is the principle of duality.

Amos implies God does not intervene in human affairs in a major way without first giving fair warning through “His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). In a dual sense we should expect God’s Church to increasingly perform this role as the end of the age approaches.

### ***The principle of duality***

If the principle of duality magnifies our appreciation of God’s Holy Days and other aspects of the Word of God, it also shows how predictions, written by prophets of antiquity for people of old, often have a double and quite modern application. It gives us the confidence that God will act today as He has acted in the past.

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Indeed, many prophecies, as well as biblical stories like that of Abraham or Joseph, foreshadow the future or have multiple fulfillments. Thus, the principle of duality makes a variety of complimentary interpretations possible.

For example, the Church of God has traditionally connected Christ’s charge to go “to the lost sheep of Israel” (Matthew 10:6, 15:24, 18:4-14, Luke 19:9) to the responsibility not only of preaching a Gospel about Jesus Christ, but delivering the message of Christ’s coming millennial reign on earth.

Of course, the majority of Christians through history have not had an understanding of Israel’s post-captivity identity, nor have they necessarily needed it for salvation. But if it is the job of an end time Church to warn Israel of a coming Tribulation, then this information takes on critical significance. A. S. Geysler’s exegesis on Matthew 15:24 throws the seriousness of this issue into high relief.

“According to Matthew’s record, Jesus Christ countered the appeal of a Syrophenician woman with a harsh, ‘I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’... Apart from lending support to the authenticity of Matthew 10:5 and 6, the passage conveys that the gathering-in of the lost sheep of the house of Israel was Jesus’s own task. When he appointed and commissioned the 12 to it, he was in fact delegating His personal task and authority to them” (“Some Salient New Testament Passages,” p. 308).

This charge to the apostles is the forerunner of an end-time work of God. We are dealing with a commission which Jesus Christ Himself expects His Church at the end of the age to fulfill.

### ***The significance of biblical prophecy***

Since the founding of the Church, some leaders of God’s Work have taken on the task of preaching the Gospel with a strong sense of urgency. But their belief in the soon-coming return of Christ turned out to be pre-mature as was also the case in the days of Zerubbabel.

Stirred by the prophets of his own time—Haggai and Zechariah—Zerubbabel’s acute sense of imminent 6th century B.C.E. Messianic Expectation revived the work of God in his day (Ezra 5:1-2; Haggai 1:1-14). More importantly, it led to a great accomplishment: the completion of the Temple of God (Ezra 4:24; 5:1-2, 14-15).

In similar fashion, a strong and sincere enthusiasm for the Second Coming today can fuel the construction of the spiritual Temple of the Church (2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-21).

The teaching about Israel’s modern-day identity has been an important aspect of that gospel in recent times, attracting a following to Jesus Christ by revealing a new and often unknown historical and prophetic dimension. For those living in Britain, the Commonwealth nations, and the United States, this aspect of God’s Word applies to their



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lives in the here and now. It adds a facet of immediacy and personal significance to the Gospel message.

Awareness of this terrible time to come on the Israelite people and the world in general should inspire a repentant spirit and a willingness to change. For those who hear and do repent, there is a loving God who will forgive, restore, protect, and prosper (compare Jonah 3:2-10). Scripture even suggests in places that the Church will receive protection from the holocaust to come (Revelation 12:9-17; Psalm 91:1-16).

We are, however, overly optimistic if we think that today’s messengers of God are more persuasive than Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, or Isaiah (Jeremiah 38:6—compare Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 35). “Neither Hosea’s ministry nor Amos’s warnings seem to have made a lasting impression on the nation; the people did not change their lifestyle” (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 127).

Conditions are much the same today. The message of the coming Kingdom of God is no more palatable now than it was to many in Jesus Christ’s 1st century C.E. audiences. It threatens to overturn principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12), to upset the political, social, and economic systems in which we all to one degree or another have a stake.

### ***The necessity of this vital prophetic message***

In some quarters, the message about ancient Israel’s modern identity is more likely to attract sharp criticism than new converts. The understanding about Israel’s modern identity has always had its share of opponents. If God’s warnings to Israel in the writings of the prophets went unheeded, can we expect wide acceptance of a similar warning message today? Even if the answer is “no,” the message nevertheless must be preached.

“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). The principle is there. Certainly a prophetic message is an integral part of publishing the Gospel of God’s Kingdom.

The Bible has a promise regarding the physical heirs of Abraham’s Birthright as the end of the age approaches. Modern Israel must be made aware of its heritage and its destiny.

As Malachi predicts: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6).

Like the sons of Jacob standing in the ancient court of Pharaoh may today’s descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh be able to read with understanding and conclude: “I am Joseph!”