



Israel

Through the Ages



by Elder Jacob O. Meyer

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WHO ARE ISRAELITES?

Who are Israelites? This was a question which the Apostle Paul appeared to ask in Romans 9:4. This question has intrigued the people of this world for centuries as they have looked into the Bible and puzzled over the disappearance of a great people who once were ruling the Promised Land which was given to the nation of Israel by Almighty Yahweh. During the reign of King Solomon, the 12 tribes of Israel reached their greatest prominence as a unified nation. Their impact upon international politics was felt throughout the known world at that time. However, subsequent to the reign of Solomon, this affluent

nation broke into two parts by the secession of the 10 northern tribes from the union. Thereupon, they rejected the heirs of the royal house of David to be their rulers. With Jeroboam's introduction of false religion, the northern tribes (known as the House of Israel) deteriorated rapidly in power and prestige until they were finally conquered by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, and transported en masse to the Median cities of Halah and Habor by the Gozan River. Since that ancient time, Bible students have attempted to locate the tribes of Israel, and many different opinions have been ventured as to their identity today.

These 10 tribes which comprised the northern kingdom, known as the House of Israel, were only a portion of the Kingdom of Israel under Saul, David, and Solomon. The two southern tribes, who had remained faithful to King Rehoboam of the Davidic dynasty, never lost their identity as Israelites. Why did this disparity occur, that the identity of the 10 northern tribes should be lost, but the two southern tribes remain? The House of Judah continued the use of the Name of the true Mighty One of Israel, Yahweh, and they continued to observe His holy days, which are a sign between Yahweh and His people (Exodus 31:13-17), thereby



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retaining their true identity down through the ages. The 10 northern tribes did not continue to observe the scriptural Sabbaths, and they began to use the common names of idols in worship; consequently, they lost their true identity. If you desire truly to come to a scriptural understanding of the two nations of Israelites existing side by side, the one calling itself the House of Israel and the other nation being called Judah, often making war against each other, read the books of Kings and Chronicles in the Bible. This basic study will certainly be very enlightening to you.

Could a once great nation such as the 10 northern tribes of Israel have merely dropped from sight and disappeared, as though swallowed up by the earth? Conceivably, this could have happened; however, there is a voluminous amount of historical and scriptural evidence that reveals just the opposite to be true. Through the faithfulness of Abraham, Almighty Yahweh had promised to bless the descendents of Isaac and Jacob, causing them to multiply rapidly and become as the sand of the sea and as the stars of heaven for innumerable multitude, Genesis 13:16 and 22:17-18. The nation of Israel, even while all 12 tribes were united, could still not entirely have fulfilled this Abrahamic prophecy, as you will notice from the Scriptures.

This article is intended to lay some firm foundations for the research into this intriguing subject. Additionally, as so many of the prophecies which our Heavenly Father has written in His Word, it is modeled to show the end from the beginning. This “end from the beginning” motif of prophecy throughout the Bible clearly identifies the hand of the true and genuine Mighty One—Yahweh Elohim, as

the speaker.

Did you know that your Bible indicates that no nation but Israel has ever really known or understood the Will of Almighty Yahweh? It was to the fleshly nation of Israel in Old Testament times that Almighty Yahweh delivered His Laws. Please turn to Psalm 147:19-20 where we read, **“He shows his word to Jacob, His statutes and his ordinances to Israel. HE HAS NOT DEALT SO WITH ANY NATION: And as for his ordinances, they have not known them. HalleluYah!”** A study of the sacred Scriptures will yield the fact that the Almighty has, down through history, worked through families. Upon the murder of Abel and the rejection of Cain, Almighty Yahweh chose Seth as the head of the family from whom He would bring the seed of the woman (the Messiah) to crush the head of the serpent. Then, subsequent to the Great Deluge in Noah’s time, Almighty Yahweh chose the family of Noah’s son Shem, through whom came Abraham. Finally, Yahweh chose the descendents of Abraham and called them out of Egypt to bring them into the Promised Land where He could use them as a model nation for a witness to the world. Having failed to live up to Yahweh’s standards, both Israel and Judah were sent into corrective captivity as punishment for their waywardness. Some of the people of Judah returned after 70 years captivity in Babylon, but the 10 northern tribes, who were known as the House of Israel, to this day, never returned from their Assyrian captivity.

The prophet Hosea sets forth a most absorbing message concerning the House of Israel. We shall be using quite a large portion of his

prophecy in this study; however, in this article we shall concentrate on the first chapter. Hosea is instructed by Yahweh to take to himself a wife of immorality, to present to Israel into a graphic portrayal of their own spiritual misconduct as a nation. Israel had been betrothed as the symbolic wife of Yahweh, but had been rejected for her spiritual adultery and fornication. The husband-wife motif symbolizes the King and His nation of subjects in prophecy. The names of the children of the prophet were to foretell predictions which Yahweh was making concerning Israel. The first child was *Jezreel*, which means, in the Hebrew, *Yahweh will sow*. Yahweh Elohim explains how He will sow Israel in the earth as we proceed further into the chapter. The powerful armies of Israel would be broken in a yet future war subsequent to the time of Hosea’s prophecy.

The prophet’s wife, Gomer, again bears a child, a girl, who was named *Lo-ruhamah*. This name means, in the Hebrew, *not compassioned, not beloved, or not having obtained mercy*. Yahweh informs Israel through His prophet that they would lose the war into which they would fall and that He would take away the kingdom which belongs to them. He would not have mercy upon Israel, but mercy would be extended to Judah and that He, Yahweh, would fight the battle against the Assyrian army to protect Judah, since they had remained obedient to His Laws. Please consider also Nahum 1: 15.

Finally Gomer was delivered of another child and Yahweh instructed that his name should be called *Lo-ammi*. This name means, in the Hebrew, *not My people*. In verse 9, Almighty Yahweh explains, **“Call his name Loammi; for you are not my people, and I will not be**



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your Elohim.”

In verse 10 we receive a very startling prophecy! ***“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living El.”***

Do you truly grasp this amazing prophecy? Although the House of Israel was to be taken captive and removed from their homeland, their population would continue to increase as the fulfillment of the blessing from Yahweh to Abraham and Jacob so that they would be like the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven. Moses once declared that Israel had become as the stars of heaven for multitude, in Deuteronomy 1:10, 10:22, and 28:62. However, this prophecy of Hosea indicates that the second half of the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled during their captivity, as we saw earlier in Genesis 13:16 (dust of the earth) and 22:17-18 (sand of the sea). Let us consider Yahweh’s promise to Jacob. ***“And, behold, Yahweh stood above it, and said, I am Yahweh, the Elohim of Abraham your father; and the Elohim of Isaac: the land on which you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed; And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you again into this land; for I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.”*** (Genesis

28:13-15). Almighty Yahweh has promised them that in the place where it was said unto them, ***“... You are not my people, it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living El.”*** Compare Deuteronomy 14:1. In these last days this identity message is once more being proclaimed to the descendents of the lost tribes of Israel. Although it has long been believed that their identity has been lost, we may once more locate them if we use the Bible and delve into ancient history to build our scriptural foundation of interpretation.

Finally, in verse 11 of Hosea chapter 1, we find another fascinating prophecy. The **Moffatt** translation reads, ***“Then shall the Judahites and the Israelites be gathered into one, and THEY SHALL CHOOSE a single chief for themselves, and SPREAD OUT FAR BEYOND THEIR LAND: for the day of Jezreel shall be a great day.”***

Let us concentrate on this word *Jezreel* for just a moment. It means, as stated previously, *Yahweh will sow*. When you return back into the history of the ancient House of Israel, you will find that it was because of the incident of the murder of Naboth at Jezreel that Yahweh destroyed the dynasty of Ahab. (Ahab was a type of the anti-messiah of 2 Thessalonians 2, a type of false government in opposition to Yahweh, 1 Kings chapter 21 and Daniel chapter 7.) It was at Jezreel, also, that Yahweh destroyed false religion which was personified in Queen Jezebel, a Canaanite princess, who had introduced Baal worship into Israel upon marrying King Ahab, 1 Kings 16:31-33 and 2 Kings 9.

As a consequence, we can be assured that Hosea 1:11 comprises a prophecy for these last days. Yahweh will indeed sow Israel and

the time of this prophetic fulfillment may be found in Ezekiel 20:38 and Zechariah 13:8-9. Those Israelites who are not killed in the impending battles which are predicted in the book of Revelation and planted in graves in the earth, will be planted by Yahweh in the Holy Land to furnish seed to renew Israel as a nation of fleshly people who will live during the millennium, Isaiah 11.

Let us return again to Romans 9 and resume with the question which Paul asks: “Who are Israelites?” Can it be that only the descendents of fleshly Israel will be ultimately saved? To quote the context of verse 4-5, ***“Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of Elohim, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is the Messiah as concerning the flesh, who is over all, Yahweh blessed forever. Amen.”***

These questions are answered subsequently, in verses 6-8. ***“But it is not as though the word of Yahweh has come to nothing. For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham’s seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are the children of Yahweh; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.”***

How enlightening! If you are staking all of your hopes for everlasting salvation upon the fact that you may be a descendent of the lost tribes of Israel, then you should have an immediate change of heart! It is the spiritual people of Yahweh who will be accepted as the true Israelites in the final analysis. They are the people who have had their hearts circumcised to serve Yahweh and will be given the



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blessing of being called “the Israel of Yahweh,” Galatians 6:15-16. See also Deuteronomy 30:6. These Israelites, recognized by Yahweh, Israel after the Spirit, will come from all nations, as we can see from a study of Isaiah 56. Almighty Yahweh calls His Temple, “the house of prayer for all people.”

Notice also Revelation 7:9-10, 13-17, ***“After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number; out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation to our Elohim who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. ... And one of the elders answered, saying to me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and where are they from? And I say to him, My master, you know. And he said to me, these are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of Yahweh; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more,***

neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the middle of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to fountains of waters of life: and Yahweh shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

“And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he says with a great voice, Fear Yahweh, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment has come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.” (Revelation 14:6-7).

To receive the recognition of Almighty Yahweh, we must bring forth spiritual fruits worthy of repentance and not at all rely upon our ancestral heritage, Matthew 3:8-9. The name *Israel* intrinsically means *a prevailer; an overcomer; a ruler with El*. Any good Hebrew dictionary will yield this definition. Now, what kind of a man will it take to rule with the Almighty? Do you suppose that your present life would be equal to sitting down in the very throne of Almighty Yahweh and ruling the world with Him? If not, then you should be losing no

time in perfecting it!

Furthermore, a new nation of spiritual people will be delivered from sin in the last days. Notice 1 Peter 2:8-10. ***“And A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: to which also they were appointed. But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for Yahweh’s own possession, that you may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of Elohim: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”*** When we enter the waters of baptism, we die to our former life and ethnic background, to be raised up and be given the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, from whom every [spiritual] family in heaven and earth is named, Ephesians 3:14-17. ***“For this cause I bow my knees to the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love.”***

ISRAEL IN HISTORY

Israel has a tremendously absorbing history as a nation. Their heritage can be traced directly from Adam via Noah and his son

Shem. The word *Shem*, in the Hebrew, means *name*. Here, an enlightening fact emerges, that it has been one special family

down through history to whom the Name of the Heavenly Father has been revealed and who have promulgated this sacred Name



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across the face of this globe. We find mention of this family first in Genesis chapter 10, where the line of descent is traced from their progenitor, Noah. A more complete genealogy is to be found in I Chronicles 1, where the writer traces various branches which sprang from the family tree.

Almighty Yahweh chose one particular family through which to work after the flood. He found Abraham living in Babylon (Ur of the Chaldees), Genesis 12:1-4. Abraham (known as a *Hebrew*—meaning *one who has crossed over*, Genesis 12:1-6, 14:13), followed the call of Yahweh, portraying in type what each one of us must do in making an exit from false worship in every age, Revelation 18:4. Abraham and his household entered the land of Canaan (who was a descendent of Ham, the brother of Shem) and began a nomadic life there. The tribe of Canaan was becoming more wicked through their immoral conduct and idolatrous worship so that Yahweh was planning to evict them from their possession and to replace them with a righteous nation who would be a model for the remainder of the world to follow. When a famine appeared in the land, Abraham migrated to Egypt and sustained a traumatic experience in which he almost lost his wife, Genesis 12:10-20.

Returning from Egypt, Abraham began to establish the worship of Yahweh in Palestine (building altars to Yahweh). He established himself as a prominent citizen of the country and grew wealthy in material goods. Abraham had a number of personal contacts with Yahweh (for instance, Genesis 18). In one of these visits by Yahweh (Genesis 15), Abraham was informed that his descendents would become ensnared

in a captive bondage in Egypt, but that they would be delivered after 430 years, in the fourth generation. They would be delivered and given all of the land from the Euphrates River to the Nile, Genesis 15:18. In addition, Abraham is promised a rich blessing in learning that his descendents, through Isaac's lineage, would be multiplied in numbers becoming as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore, Genesis 15:5. Yahweh promised that Abraham's descendents would possess the gates of their enemies and that in his progeny all the nations of the earth would be blessed, Genesis 22:15-18.

Here we must not fail to comprehend a vital point in our historical study of Israel. There were many different family branches that emerged from the trunk of Abraham's family tree. Given enough time, each one of these families could conceivably have become a nation. However, none of the other families of the lineage of Shem were promised this blessing of great growth, except the family of Abraham. It is a simple matter for the Almighty to withhold the progenitive blessing, or fulfill it. By way of illustration, allow me to use one of the families from which I am personally descended. My forefathers were among the early settlers of this country. One genealogy in my possession lists me as being the 9th generation descendent in this country. There are over 250 pages listing the descendents of the first, original, pioneer immigrant contained in this book! However, should a family not prove worthy to receive the protective blessing from Yahweh, they could fall prey to early death through disease, or be denied increase through sterility, or any number of natural causes. Life is truly hanging by a thread

and family increase can only be a product of the protectorship of Yahweh.

The promise of providential blessings to his family was renewed by Yahweh to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-5). Isaac passed this blessing along to his son Jacob, who supplanted his brother Esau, with the assistance of crafty scheming by his mother Rebekah, Genesis 27:28-29 and 28:3-4. Almighty Yahweh confirmed His blessing, which had been given through Isaac, by appearing in a dream to Jacob. Yahweh informed Jacob that, like his grandfather Abraham, his progeny would become as innumerable as the dust of the earth and that all the families of the earth would be blessed in him, Genesis 28:13-15. This promise was made by Yahweh as Jacob encamped for the night at Bethel (which means *the house of Elohim*).

You will notice, also, that after Jacob had lived quite a number of years in Haran, had raised a family, had acquired great material wealth, and was returning to the land from which he had fled from his brother Esau, he received a special blessing after wrestling with the angel of Yahweh. This angel of Yahweh conferred upon Jacob a new name, *Israel* (*overcomer; one who rules with El*). Israel has, thereupon, been utilized in the sacred Scriptures as the name for Israel's descendents also. Then, we find in Genesis chapter 35 that Jacob was called back to Bethel, where he built and dedicated an altar to El-Bethel (the Almighty of Bethel), and where he received the special blessing that his descendents would become a nation and a company of nations, Genesis 35:7-15. The Hebrew here means *a nation and a gathering or congregation of nations*.

Interestingly, the Hebrew word



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kahal (company) is used in a religious sense for the congregation of Israel in the wilderness. Another enlightening fact which emerges here is that the word which has been translated (and properly so) *a nation*, in the Hebrew is *goy* and the plural *goyim*. This word has been translated *gentile* in other places.

Israel continued to enlarge his personal possessions. His family was now complete with 12 sons and 1 daughter. One of these sons, Joseph, was despised by his jealous brothers because they could detect that Yahweh had selected him to be over them. In their desire to be rid of him they plotted his death; but, at the last moment, Judah prevailed in convincing his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery (which reveals a trend in the character of his descendents).

The Midianite merchants took their caravan of wares into Egypt; finding a ready market, they sold Joseph into slavery. However, the industriousness and reliability of this stalwart young man soon obtained for him a position of great responsibility in the household of his master. Wishing to avoid the curse of sin, Joseph did not submit to the immoral advances of his mistress. This conviction brought him immediate imprisonment on a trumped-up charge. Finally, you will recall how Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and he was elevated to the prominent government position of Prime Minister over all of Egypt at the young age of 30 years.

Even though the brothers of Joseph, in their jealousy, had determined to destroy their sibling, the spirit of Yahweh selected Joseph for a special purpose in sending him into Egypt. Joseph prepared an abundance of food and stored it against the time of

a severe famine. This, in effect, saved the lives of the sons of Israel, since they, at the order of their father Jacob, journeyed to the only country in which food was available. They bowed before their brother, just as prophecy had predicted. At Joseph's insistence, all of the families of Israel migrated into Egypt and, at the time when they established their residence, Israel numbered exactly 70 persons, Genesis 46:2-7.

This was seemingly a most inauspicious beginning if the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to be fulfilled. However, living in the land of Goshen and receiving the blessings from Yahweh produced a strong, vital nation of people who were growing so rapidly in numbers that the government soon imposed a regulated, compulsory, birth-control program. The Egyptians, who feared that they would be outnumbered and imminently conquered, implemented it to halt the growth of a foreign people within their borders. Is it astonishing that today we find a similar sadistic and criminal method of birth control gaining a foothold in our land? There is nothing new under the sun! Surely the only thing which stands between a total parallel of contemporary society and historical Israel is that today birth control is not enforced as it probably will be a few years from now.

Israel soon found themselves in a state of abject poverty, slavery, and degradation, as they became oppressed by the form of taxation then customarily in use, which was, of course, manual labor. They had entered Egypt under conditions which appeared innocent enough, in search of food and a good livelihood. Now they found themselves in bondage, forced to toil long hours

to construct status symbols for their ruler! In their increasing agony they cried out to the Almighty, and He heard their cries. He sent them a leader in the form of Moses, who first proclaimed the Sacred Name of the Heavenly Father Yahweh, who would release them from bondage (Exodus 3:13-15), and, then, Moses instructed Israel to obey Him (Exodus 4:31).

Finally, after Yahweh devastated the land of Egypt with 10 plagues, Israel was released by Pharaoh, and the nation started back toward the Land of Promise. From those original 70 people who had entered Egypt, there now marched in the caravan over 600,000 men of military age, besides women, children, and a large mixed multitude of camp followers, Exodus 12:38. Commentators take these numbers and arrive at a total of possibly two million (or more) people who had made their exit from Egypt. These Israelites were determined to be free. They were determined to set up a new type of theocratic government in which Almighty Yahweh Elohim would be King.

This government is described in the Covenant recorded in Exodus chapters 20, 21, 22, and 23. The Israelites agreed, to a man, to ratify this agreement with Yahweh. However, as happens when men remain unconverted, these carnal (fleshly) Israelites soon deviated, because they did not have the Holy Spirit of Yahweh. They fell prey to their own carnal desires and, as a consequence, they were held for a 40-year period of education in the wilderness, until Yahweh could raise up a group of people who would be totally committed and dedicated to Him. Then Yahweh brought them into the Promised Land and established these people



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as His own possessions under the great general Yahshua. They eventually subdued the land of Palestine under David. Finally the kingdom was to reach its apex under Solomon, David's son, who built Jerusalem with its magnificent Temple and palaces. This was the sparkling era when the queen of Sheba made her pilgrimage to Jerusalem to see for herself just what made this tiny nation of Israel so great.

Why should the Land of Promise, the Land of Canaan, have been such a desired place for Almighty Yahweh to situate His people? We must recognize this site as a GREAT LAND BRIDGE connecting three continents of the globe. Here Yahweh wanted to have a witness located to demonstrate His way of life and government to people who would travel the ancient and modern trade, military, and diplomatic routes that connected this major land mass of three continents. It is entirely plausible to conclude that, at one time following the creation, until after the great flood, the single continent on the globe provided the home for the human family. Then, in the days of Peleg, the earth was divided (into the continents we know presently from geography). Please notice Genesis 10:25 and 1 Chronicles 1:19. By allowing a land bridge to exist between the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe, Almighty Yahweh would have had a great witness, if Israel, living on the land bridge that connected these continents, would have remained faithful to Him. When Israel fell into idolatry, they could no longer serve Yahweh, because then they were no better than the worldly nations.

One of the most important points which should be recognized in this

study of Israel is that the Israelites were always rebels against authority. Moses was able to form them into a union during the days of his administration. Yahshua kept them together in their advance to conquer the Land of Promise, since they realized that their only chance for overpowering the nations living in Canaan would be by submitting to a cohesive military order.

During the days of the Judges, it seemed that this tight organization deteriorated and every man did what was right in his own eyes, Judges 21:25. This humiliating era saw a fragmented Israel suffering from enslavement as stronger native tribes imposed severe taxation. Finally, the twelve tribes of Israel (who were now families grown large) accepted Saul as a human king. Since this man was not outstanding leadership timber, Yahweh set up David, a man after His own heart, to rule Israel. This young man reigned first over his own tribe of Judah for seven years and six months, until he was recognized as king by all Israel, over whom he reigned for 33 years. The secret of his greatness was that he always was able to acknowledge error and correct himself when it was pointed out to him. When he sinned against Yahweh and his people, he immediately acknowledged the sin and repented, rather than attempting to justify himself.

Solomon, King David's son, had a good beginning. Riding the crest of paternal success as he was, he succeeded in building Israel into a great nation. However, we find that lust for self-gratification led to his downfall. He acquired multitudes of women to be his wives and concubines. Many of these women were foreigners who turned this aging monarch toward worship of their

mighty ones. Presumably they did this subtly. Theology holds many deceptions, as the Scriptures are explained through human interpretation rather than allowing the Bible to explain itself. Popular thought and secularly educated teaching can be very alluring to the inquiring person and King Solomon fell into the trap of attempting to make True Worship palatable for the entire educated world, rather than allowing the chips to fall where they may. Perhaps the influence toward philosophically interpreting all religion as good fell upon the shoulders of the idolatrous priests that directed the pagan shrines that King Solomon built for his many women. Please see 1 Kings 11:1-13.

Also, King Solomon inaugurated a system of taxation to support his extravagant desires. This system of taxation brought in 666 talents of gold in one year, 1 Kings 10:14-16. It was designed originally to be imposed upon only those people who remained of the native inhabitants which Israel had found upon their entry into the Promised Land, 1 Kings 10:20-23. However, it was ultimately expanded to include the entire nation of Israel, 1 Kings 11:28, 1 Kings 12:3-4, and 2 Chronicles 10:3-4.

As happens when there is a tyrant in power who is exploiting his subjects, the Israelite people felt frustrated and embittered by the servitude. Why should they live in poverty while they are supplying their leader with luxury? This pent-up frustration caused Israel, upon the death of King Solomon, to bring their frustrations to the attention of the new king, Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who was to be coronated upon the death of his father. Rehoboam refused to yield to the advice of the elders to relieve the taxation, but even promised additional taxes. This



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was too much to swallow on the part of freedom-loving Israel! The 10 northern tribes revolted against the leadership of the house of David, 1 Kings 12:19 and 1 Chronicles 10:19. They chose Jeroboam to be their king and the 10 tribes seceded from the union of Israel. It was only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with some of the Levites, who remained faithful to the dynasty of David under King Rehoboam, 2 Chronicles 11:1, 13-17.

When we read the books of Kings and Chronicles, we find that from that point there were two nations existing side by side. The 10 northern tribes were known as the House of Israel. The two southern tribes were known as the House of Judah, taking the name from their principal tribe adjacent to their capital city, Jerusalem. Jerusalem was situated in Benjamite territory. Jeroboam became the king over the House of Israel and established his capital, first at Shechem and, later, after a civil war, at Penuel. The same words in the Hebrew in 1 Kings 12:25 which have been translated *went out from there*, are used of the civil war between David and Absalom in 2 Samuel 15:16-17. In addition, Jeroboam, probably having been taught or raised in the school of the prophets in Bethel, designed a plan to alter slightly the religion of his people so that they would not return to worship at Jerusalem and, consequently, lose them to the influence of King Rehoboam and the priesthood faithful to him. He built shrines at Bethel in the south and Dan in the north, ostensibly to relieve them of the long journey to sacrifice in Jerusalem. Josephus records his speech at the dedication of the shrine and the golden calf at Bethel, when Jeroboam said, *"It was a man that built the temple: I*

have also made two golden heifers, dedicated to the same [Elohim]; and the one of them I have consecrated in the city Bethel, and the other in Dan, to the end that those of you that dwell nearest those cities may go to them, and worship [Elohim] there; and I will ordain for you certain priests and Levites from among yourselves, that you may have no want of the tribe of Levi, or of the sons of Aaron; but let him that is desirous among you of being a priest, bring to [Elohim] a bullock and a ram, which they say Aaron the first priest brought also." Please read this account in Josephus' **Antiquities of the Jews**, Book 8, Chapter 8, Section 5. Furthermore, Jeroboam also changed the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles from the seventh to the eighth month of the scriptural year. Have you ever received a straight answer as to why the American Thanksgiving is held in November?

Now two separate nations were situated in the Land of Israel, both supposedly serving Yahweh. Subsequent to the death of Jeroboam, the 10 northern tribes (called the House of Israel) went through a transitional period in which the government, in rapid succession, changed hands among some of the leading military figures. Finally, the family of Omri was established as the monarchs. From this family came Ahab, who allowed the worship of Baal to be introduced through his foreign wife, Jezebel (virgin of Baal). He built Samaria and moved the capital of the northern tribes to this new metropolis. Afterward, many biblical prophecies were directed against the capital of the nation, just as we today may say Washington, when in fact we mean the governing power which

is concentrated there.

Judah continued along down through the subsequent years serving the descendents of the Davidic dynasty as their rulers. Basically, they maintained the religion of their forefathers, with the exception of several deviations when the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth was introduced. However, several of the Davidic kings, notably Hezekiah and Josiah, were renowned for their policy of reformation.

When you read the books of Kings and Chronicles it will become crystal clear that the 10 northern tribes were called "The House of Israel," while the 2 southern tribes were called "The House of Judah." Since Judah was also of Israelite origin, they accepted the name of "Israel"; however, the 10 northern tribes are exclusively called "The House of Israel," or a few times known by the name of their monarchs.

One interesting facet which this study will yield is the fact that, at one time, Israel and Judah were allied against the town of Ramoth-Gilead (2 Chronicles 18). At another time Israel was fighting Judah (2 Chronicles 16:1).

Descending ever closer to the brink of the abyss of moral decay through idolatry, Israel was finally conquered by the powerful Assyrian Empire. They were carried away as slaves and settled in the cities of the Medes. You may read of this infamous culmination of the once mighty House of Israel in 2 Kings chapter 17. Into the cities of Israel, Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king, transplanted people from various territories which he had conquered. The Samaritans of the days of Yahshua the Messiah (as they are today) are not the descendents of Israel, with few exceptions.

"For he grew up before him



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as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he has no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.” Isaiah 53:2-3.

Could it be that the Messiah's true Body of believers on this earth

today would be bearing identical characteristics which their leader bore while on this earth? Could it be that they would be few in number, despised and rejected of men, having no popular image to project to the world, but who, in the final analysis, will be preaching the same identical doctrines which the Messiah taught and lived while here on this earth? Yahshua the Messiah knew that the preaching of strong, sound doctrine would not

win many friends or produce many members. Possibly this is why He said, “The road that leads to life is both narrow and close, and there are few who will find it.” Let us all be diligent so that we can find that Narrow Way to life everlasting!

ISRAEL

IN THE SIEVE

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth.” Amos 9:9 (Rotherham Version).

Have you ever meditated upon the number of people to whom you may be kindred across the length and breadth of this earth? Some students of genealogy have estimated that everyone living is related to each other no more distantly than 32nd or 64th cousin. Here, in eastern Pennsylvania where we live, I can drive down the road and, almost every mile, come upon the home of some relative, distantly related though we may be.

Almighty Yahweh has said that He would sift Israel as grain is sifted in a sieve, scattering them and bringing them through all of the nations of the earth. Almighty Yahweh said of the 10 northern tribes, in Amos 9:8, *“Behold, the eyes of the Sovereign Yahweh*

are upon the sinful kingdom [the government in the holy land], *and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth* [the government]; *save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob* [evidently the physical descendents of Jacob would continue to exist somewhere], *says Yahweh.”* From this passage, we learn that Yahweh would allow the 10 northern tribes of Israel to be conquered and almost annihilated in the siege, but that, as a people, they would not be totally destroyed.

Shalmaneser, the King of Assyria (2 Kings 17:3), attacked Israel and died in the war, whether by wound of the enemy or assassination, in B.C.E. 722. The throne was taken by Sargon, the commanding general of the army who won the war soon afterward (721 B.C.E.). Sargon's own victory inscription states that he took captive 27,290 Israelites (but this figure could be inaccurate). These people were moved *en masse* into the cities of the Medes, from whence they disappeared

completely from sight and are no longer heard from in history. This is quite a large group of people to disappear completely from sight; however, some of the Bible prophecies concerning Israel have been misunderstood in the past, but, in these last days, knowledge has been prophesied to be increased, Daniel 12:4.

In 2 Kings 18:11 we find a repetition of what we have read in 2 Kings 17:6. It was customary for ancient victors to move their conquered people into distant lands, because such a move would unbalance them. Since much hardship was endured by the migrating people, there would be little time available to plot a rebellion. Now, notice carefully that the conquered Israelites were taken into the cities of the Medes. Simultaneously, various other subjugated nationalities were moved from different areas of the Assyrian Empire to occupy the vacated territory of Israel. These people brought with them their own personal mighty ones (elohim),



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and, as a consequence for their sins, Yahweh allowed them to be attacked by wild beasts—in particular, lions.

Subsequently, when the King of Assyria learned of this state of affairs, he sent back to the land of Israel one of the priests to teach these migrant settlers the worship of the land. It is interesting to note that there were five different nationalities placed in the conquered land of Israel, each one bringing along their own mighty ones (elohim). In John 4:18, Yahshua the Messiah accuses the Samaritan woman at the well at Sychar of having had five husbands, while her present consort was not her husband. (At that time, Zeus was worshipped by the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim as Zeus the Hospitable, because they did not resist the introduction of idol worship as did the Judeans, 2 Maccabees 6:2. **Goodspeed** translation.) As a consequence, it is obvious that the Samaritans of the time of the Messiah were not true Israelites, but a mixture of ethnic blood. This is why the Jews of that time had no dealings with the Samaritans.

The multitude of vanquished Israelites were taken to the cities of the Medes, as we saw earlier. They were located by the river Habor (which is spelled Chebar in Ezekiel 1:1). In Sargon's inscription, this river is called *Nar Kabari*. Interestingly we come across mention of a people called *Kabiri* in various segments of history. In 1913, an Italian named DeNuncio wrote a play called, *The Founding of Venice*, in which he claimed that Venice was founded by the *Kabiri*. If this is true, then it is no coincidence that the name for Italy, *Italia*, means *land of the dew of Yah*, **Jewish Encyclopedia**, volume 7, pg. 1, article *Italy*. According to the Phoenician historian named

Sanchoniathin, who was a priest of Baal, the *Kabiri* were sons of Zadok, of the High Priestly family, 2 Samuel 8:17. Since some of the priests of the tribe of Levi did accompany Israel in their captivity, these sons of Zadok became the leaders of the people who took the name *Kabiri* from their new habitat in the land of the Medes. In fact, Ezekiel was a priest, and he was sent to prophesy to Israel, the so-called 10 lost tribes. Possibly his own children, who would have followed him into the priesthood, were responsible for the *Kabiri* references in history.

I hope that here you can catch a fleeting glimpse of how the Bible becomes smaller all the time as we study and research. A true understanding of the biblical message reveals exactly how tightly each book is inter-related with the other books. Each word in the book was given for a definite purpose. Not one word is superfluous, nor is there anything lacking where the way to salvation is concerned. Almighty Yahweh is the author, and His infinite mind has written the Bible. So many of the books are tied together harmoniously, which you will perceive in the future as we publish articles on this subject. Such knowledge as this should build your faith, since this is the reason why so many accounts of the lives of the characters are recorded. Read 2 Peter 1:1-18. Verse 16: ***“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables [fabrications]....”***

As has been stated on previous occasions, it is important that we follow Israel into their destination as far as the Scriptures record their wanderings after they were taken into Assyrian captivity. Israel was resettled in the cities of the Medes. The entire book of Isaiah was written with Israel's history in mind.

The early chapters, ending with chapter 37, correlate the history of Israel falling into sin, the reasons for this degeneracy, and what happened to Israel. Also, since Yahweh is pronouncing judgment, He shows the end from the beginning by such passages as Isaiah 2:1-5 and chapter 11.

Another crucial landmark, guiding us in our study of Israel through the ages, is that the events which were recorded and prophesied by Isaiah were intended to be taken in context. Please notice that in Isaiah chapters 9-14 there appears a continuous story thread (with the exception of chapter 11, which shows the end from the beginning). Here we encounter a prophecy of the 10 northern tribes being taken into Assyrian captivity. Chapter 10 shows that Assyria would not be satisfied with merely taking the House of Israel captive, but would determine to conquer Judah also. This was not in Yahweh's Will, since Judah would be taken into Babylonian captivity after about another hundred years had gone by. Judah would be spared by their obedience in faithfully keeping the feasts, Nahum 1:15 and Isaiah 37:30. Yahweh pronounces judgment upon Assyria for taking advantage of the situation. Yahweh explains that He would punish the invading Assyrian army upon His own land, and upon His mountains He would tread him underfoot, Isaiah 14:24-27. Notice that this was the intent of Yahweh purposed UPON THE WHOLE EARTH, verse 26.

This prophecy was fulfilled, as recorded in Isaiah chapters 36 and 37, where, through a mighty miracle, Almighty Yahweh destroyed the pride of the Assyrian army: 185,000 soldiers. Judah did tread the Assyrian underfoot upon the mountains of Yahweh, since they



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buried the army there before the walls of Jerusalem. In order to fulfill Israelite prophecies in other parts of the Bible, this event had to take place. Since the major portion of the Assyrian army was now dead, this released the people of Israel from their captivity and slavery in the cities of the Medes. Again, you can observe another narrowing in Bible understanding. Cyrus the Persian, mentioned in Isaiah 44:28 where he is called *His anointed* (messiah), was apparently descended from those Israelites transported into the cities of the Medes. According to Appendix 57 of the **Companion Bible**, his father Astyages, called Darius the Mede in Daniel 5:31, was married to Queen Esther. Consequently, you can note another link between books and characters of the Bible and see the reason for another book, the Book of Esther, finding a place in the sacred Scriptures. Cyrus would have been considered to be a Jew as the son of a Jewish mother. Evidently, this is the reason why King Cyrus, knowing his ancestry, could hand down the Edict of Cyrus. ***“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, In this manner says Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth has Yahweh, the Elohim of heaven, given me; and he has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, his Elohim be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel,***

(he is Elohim,) which is in Jerusalem. And whoever is left, in any place where he sojourns, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will-offering for the house of Elohim which is in Jerusalem.

“Then rose up the heads of fathers’ houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit Elohim had stirred to go up to build the house of Yahweh which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were around them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Yahweh, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put in the house of his elohim; even those Cyrus king of Persia brought forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty platters of gold, a thousand platters of silver, twenty-nine knives, thirty bowls of gold, silver bowls of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar brought up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1-11).

Israel is still technically in Assyrian captivity. Although they were released when the Assyrians had to pull their army of occupation out of Media and Persia to replace the decimated army which

died before the gates of Jerusalem, history does not record that any of the Israelites ever returned to their homeland. The prophecies of Israel returning from Assyrian captivity are still to be fulfilled in the time of the Messiah when Yahshua returns. Therefore, Israel remains in Assyrian captivity (a diaspora) through the worship of pagan Assyrian mighty ones, especially “G-d.” (The etymology of the term G-d is from the Old English, “[ME. < OE., akin to G. gott, Goth. guth, prob. <IE. base *ghau-, to call out to, invoke, when Sans, havate, (he) calls upon] **1.** any of various beings conceived of as supernatura, immortal, and having special powers over the lives and affairs of people and the course of nature; deity, esp. a male deity **2.** an image that is worshiped; idol **3.** a person or thing deified or excessively honored and admired—[G-] in monotheistic religions, the creator and ruler of the universe, regarded as eternal, infinite, all-powerful, all-knowing; Supreme Being; Almighty Often used in exclamations [good G-d! G-d almighty! my G-d!].”)

One of the prime reasons why Israel lost their identity was because they departed from the worship of Yahweh (Ezekiel 20:39) and forgot the keeping of the identifying mark, the scriptural seventh-day Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17).

We anxiously await the day when Hosea 6:1 will be fulfilled! ***“Come, and let us return to Yahweh; for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck, and he will bind us up.”*** Will you be one of the people who will come out of bondage and into Truth, to become a complete Israelite?

WHO ARE THE JEWS?

In reading literature, which is oriented toward the religious spectrum, it becomes obvious that a wide range of opinion exists to answer the question which has been posed above. The normally accepted answer to the question is that they are the Israelite nation which was founded by the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, today embodying the entire 12 tribes of Israel. Other opinions range from the fringe extreme of stating that the Jews of today are not descended from Israel at all, but are a mongrel people who have merely taken the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel, to the declaration that they are descended from the Canaanites. Since the world has historically been basically anti-semitic, due primarily to the teaching of Roman Catholicism and Islam, for many centuries, that the Jews are guilty of *deicide* (murdering a Mighty One) for killing the Messiah, such concepts could be understandable. However, what is the Truth from the sacred Scriptures?

Today we should concern ourselves with tangibles rather than opinions or ideas. With the increase in knowledge in our modern times, we are able to demolish superstition and tear down fallacious strongholds, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. Our sourcebook for understanding the origins of nations must rest upon the inspired sacred Scriptures. Too often the Bible is neglected when it would open to us a vast new understanding which would enlighten the depressing

darkness which has accumulated in the world over the many centuries since the days of Messiah. Nor can we, who have been begotten by the Word and the Holy Spirit of Almighty Yahweh, continue to harbor animosity against any of our fellow men, as has been the case with the vituperative attacks which have been launched against the Jews by various religious and political groups (especially Holocaust deniers) over the years. Even if the people known as the Jews might (for example) be traced to some Australian aboriginal tribe, they would still be our human blood relatives, each person on earth is traceable by genealogical blood to Adam. Almighty Yahweh has not, in any way, rejected the least one of His human creation, but He has selected Israel to be His witnesses, the light to the world, Isaiah 49:5-6 and Acts 13:47. Such a commission from Almighty Yahweh should not inflate the egos of Israelites, but it should humble them with the knowledge that greater dedication is expected of them than of the nations of the world.

The Origin of the Name "Jew"

The name *Jew* actually comprises a nickname. As happens occasionally, nicknames may eventually be incorporated as the primary name of an ethnic group. We might cite, for example, such names as Pennsylvania Dutch, Indians, or Yankees. In the Hebrew language the proper name

for the people of the tribe of Judah was *Yahudi* or *Judahite*. Another variation is *Judean*, meaning a resident of Judah or Judea. Over the years, the word *Yahudi* was corrupted and shortened to *Jew*. Remember that there is no "J" sound in the Hebrew language; the *yod* should be pronounced as a "Y."

You will notice that the word *Jew* is always connected with the people of the nation or tribe of Judah. This segment of the nation of Israel only constituted 1/12th of the complete nation, since each individual tribe was founded by one of the sons of Jacob (or, as in Joseph's case, one of his two sons—Ephraim or Manasseh) and continued to bear their progenitor's name down through history. When the 10 tribes seceded from the government of the dynasty of King David following the death of King Solomon, the tribe of Benjamin remained subject to King Rehoboam, Solomon's son, 1 Kings 11:26-40 and 1 Kings 12:21-24. Since the political capital of Israel was in Jerusalem, with the national religious worship of Yahweh headquartered there, the priests and the Levites, who were descended from the tribe of Levi, continued to return there to perform their religious duties in the Temple, 2 Chronicles 11:13-15. Eventually we find that many of these priests and Levites moved to the city of Jerusalem to be near their employment and to ensure that they would be able to perform their duties unhindered. In addi-



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tion, there were Israelites from the 10 northern tribes who were not in agreement with the secession of Jeroboam and their tribal leaders, prompting them to move their families to the land of Judah and Benjamin. The Scriptures explain that they strengthened the Kingdom of Judah, 2 Chronicles 11:16-17. Such a move into the territory of Judah forced them to relinquish their previous tribal citizenship and take up the identity of their adopted tribe. Please read Numbers 36.

Is There a Pure Race?

It has been rightly stated that there could not be a pure race on the face of the earth today. Before there was not as much travel as occurs today, it was possible to keep people isolated much more effectively. However, there has always been a drifting to and fro of the ethnic multitudes of this earth, so that Almighty Yahweh has compared the people to the sea (note Isaiah 17:12-13 and Isaiah 57:20-21). Israel, especially, was a nomadic people who had a great tendency to mix with the natives of the lands in which they sojourned.

Tracing the Family of Judah

The patriarch Jacob was the father of 12 sons. To each one of these sons was born children, and, ultimately, these families became nations. Judah was the fourth son of Jacob, born to his first wife, Leah, Genesis 29:35. The name *Judah* in the Hebrew means *praise to Yahweh*, since he was named from Leah's exclamation upon giving birth to her fourth son. ***“And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said,***

This time will I praise Yahweh: therefore she called his name Judah; and she left off bearing.” (Genesis 29:35). Jacob's prophecy to the families of his sons, in Genesis 49:8, recognizes the meaning of praise. Concerning Judah he says, ***“Judah, you shall your brethren praise....”***

The first mention of an incident involving Judah can be found in Genesis 37. This is the account of Joseph and how the resentment and jealousy of his brothers were raised because Jacob seemed to prefer this young son to the older brothers. Joseph was given a “coat of many colors.” Since this coat would have had long sleeves, as the Hebrew indicates, it would have been worn only by a tribal chief and his heir. Dr. Lamsa translated Genesis 37:3 from the Aramaic: *“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his other sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a rich robe with long sleeves.”*

No wonder that the older brothers were irritated and began to conceive homicidal plots to avert a situation certainly developing as their father placed the young Joseph ahead of them in importance. The fragmentation in the family deteriorated further when Jacob began to use Joseph in a supervisory capacity at the young age of 17, probably because his brothers had been neglecting the flocks, and Joseph had dutifully reported their negligence. Furthermore, Joseph began to report having dreams which supported his father's raising him to such an exalted position, and this demonstration of aggrandizement caused an even greater rift between the brethren.

Finally, one day, the elderly patriarch Jacob again sent his son to inspect the condition of his

flocks. As Joseph was approaching the pastoral encampment of his brothers, they happened to see him a long way off and immediately conspired to make this the last inspection which Joseph would make to spy on their work. In fact, those unconverted sons of Israel determined to kill their brother! They even planned how they would inform their father of the tragedy of Joseph's death by implying to Jacob that a wild beast had devoured Joseph. Ironically, it was Reuben who called a halt to the plots, and who made the decision not to kill the young man. Although, if Joseph's dreams had not come true, Reuben, as the first born, would have been recognized as the legal heir. So, the brothers threw Joseph into a pit until they could decide what to do with their problem, since they had now tipped their hand and couldn't very well simply release him. They knew that he would immediately report to their father this evil conduct of his brothers. As they were eating their lunch, they happened to observe a caravan of Ishmaelites passing by, transporting a valuable cargo of trading goods consigned to Egypt. “Why not sell Joseph as a slave, and so be rid of him?” suggested Judah. “What PROFIT would it be if he died?” Already a peculiar characteristic had manifested itself which would follow Judah's descendants down through history! Consequently, it happened that Joseph was sold into slavery for 20 pieces of silver to a Midianite caravan that followed the Ishmaelites. Paradoxically, it was another Judah (*Ish Kerioth*, Iscariot) who sold Israel's Messiah into judgment and death for 30 pieces of silver.

However, Joseph's fate was all in Yahweh's plan as He had



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informed Abraham way back in Genesis 15:13-16! It was Joseph who was inspired of Yahweh to interpret Pharaoh's dream correctly and store away the food which saved his family. Similarly, today, the tribes of Joseph continue to serve as the breadbasket of the world, supplying their brethren as we have done over past years, even to the point of completely depleting our own grain reserves.

The next incident relating to Judah is found in Genesis 38. We find that Judah had married the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. The name *Canaan* in the Hebrew means *low or humiliated*. Canaan was the son of Ham, which means *hot or black*. As a consequence, we learn that the Canaanites were dark-skinned or black people. This knowledge is vital to recognizing the various differing physical characteristics of the descendants of Judah.

To this racial intermarriage was born three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. Judah arranged the marriage of a bride named Tamar for his oldest son, but Er was a wicked man, and Yahweh killed him. Since the Scriptures direct that a childless widow must be taken by the next oldest son in the family to raise up a name to his brother (Deuteronomy 25:5-9), Judah then gave Tamar to Onan, his next oldest son. However, this young man was also a wicked person and did not wish to obey Yahweh; therefore, he too died. Now Judah feared that his last son would die also if he would marry Shelah to Tamar; therefore, he told his daughter-in-law to remain a widow in her father's house.

In the course of time, Judah's wife died. One day, as he went to supervise his sheepshearers, he

encountered his daughter-in-law sitting by the road, seductively dressed. Since Tamar had covered her face with a heavy veil, he did not recognize her. Judah gave Tamar his signet ring, bracelets, and staff for a moment of passion. Tamar held these in trust until she knew that she was pregnant and, then, confronted Judah with the evidence. From this union was born twins: Pharez (whose line brought forth the Messiah) and Zarah (whose genetic line brought forth Achan, Joshua 7, and, additionally, it is believed, many of the royal families of Europe).

The Line of Shelah

However, there was no end to the line of Shelah. As you can notice from Numbers 26:20 and 1 Chronicles 4:21-23, he also had a family. Having been born of a mixed marriage, he would have been carrying some of the characteristics of both sides of the family, dark skin and black hair. Here, then, is scriptural evidence that brings to light some of the varied physical features of the Jews of our time. Some of them have dark hair and skin, while others are light-skinned and fair-haired. The lineage of the Messiah is traced through Pharez, who was born of a union with Tamar, who was evidently of Semitic stock. Consequently, the Messiah is described as a man with brown hair, in one of the historical accounts.

Later Intermarriage of the Jews

Bible historians inform us that the Jews have always been a chameleon-like people. They seem to blend in with their surrounding neighbors. Solomon married

an Egyptian princess and had liaisons with other women, 1 Kings 11:1. Apparently, during the times when they were captured by neighboring nations, the tribe of Judah intermarried with people of the nations in which they were living. Such was the case in the time of the Babylonian captivity. We can read the account of how Ezra the Scribe preached a very powerful, convicting sermon to the returned Judeans who had married people of the land, against the commandments of Yahweh, Deuteronomy 7:1-5. Please turn to Ezra and read chapters 9 and 10. Ezra ordered the people of Judah and Benjamin to separate from their foreign wives. They were obedient to the commandments of Yahweh and did separate from their wives; but, undoubtedly, some of the racially mixed children remained within Judaism. Here, again, we can note that the Jewish people were racially intermixed. In addition, the book of Esther shows that there was intermarriage during that time. The Persian Emperor married the beautiful Jewish girl, who was then to be the mother of the celebrated Cyrus. Additionally, a Jewish spy, Salmon, married Rahab the Canaanitess, who appears in the genealogy of Yahshua the Messiah, Matthew 1:5.

Babylonian Jews

Many of the Judeans who were taken into the Babylonian captivity never returned to the land of Israel, Palestine. These Jews remained in Babylon and founded a viable ethnic community there which continued for centuries. These people continued to consider themselves as Jews, but they seemed to recognize no restrictions against



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intermarriage between themselves and people of their locality. In addition, history tells us that many proselytes were made. Finally, the struggle for Jewish religious supremacy became so heated that the Judean Judaism and the Babylonian Judaism disfellowshipped each other. Each segment of Judaism developed its own version of the Talmud, or oral traditional law.

Palestine Under Arab and Roman Rule

During the latter years of the Second Commonwealth, the Judeans were ruled successively by the Idumean or Nabatean family of Antipater, from whom came the family of Herod, and, then, by Rome. Although this royal family had embraced Judaism as a religion, they were Arabs, most likely from the family of Esau. Here, again, we can detect a mixing of races as proselytes were admitted to fellowship among the Judeans.

The Diaspora

The next great event in Judaism occurred with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. Although multitudes of Jews died in defense of their national religious heritage, many were exiled into the various nations of the Roman Empire. They usually established themselves along the lucrative trade routes and many had, at one time, settled in Rome, until they were evicted by the Emperor Claudius, 49-52 C.E. Among those uprooted Jews were Aquila and his wife Priscilla, Acts 18:1.

A map of the Roman Empire in the first century shows a million Jews in Asia Minor (Ephesus to Antioch), another million in Mesopotamia (Babylon), a hun-

dred thousand in Italy, another hundred thousand in Ethiopia, a million in Egypt, and two and-a-half million in Judea. This reveals the wide range of Jewish dispersion. The Palestinian dispersion became complete with the Roman suppression of the Bar Kochba rebellion in the year 135 C.E., as slave markets in the Roman Empire became glutted with Jewish captives.

What About the Khazars?

Because of the prominence of Asiatic features among some of the Jews of Eastern Europe, some anti-semitic sects have declared that all of the Jews are descendents of a Mongolian kingdom which existed around the year 600 C.E. in southwestern Russia. It is interesting to read the account of this ethnic block being converted to Judaism. Since Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan merchants visited the area, the king of the Khazar nation became interested in religion. After studying into each one of these religions, the royal family became intrigued with Judaism and accepted its doctrines, becoming proselytes to the Jewish faith. Many of their countrymen also accepted this religion, although some turned to the Christian and Mohammedan religions. The nation later declined until it was conquered by the Tartars in 1240, although a good many of the people remained Jews. Dr. Solomon Graysel in his book, **A History of the Jews**, stated that, possibly, some of the Cossack clans in the Ukraine were descended from these people and continued to observe THE SAB-BATH until the 18th century.

The Russian Orthodox Church was committed to stamping out this practice, and, eventually, many of these people converted to Christianity.

We might inquire as to the primitive origins of the Khazars, but history is silent on this score. Etymologically we know that terms for King, such as *Kaiser* and *Czar*, are derived from *Caesar*. It is just too obvious that *Khazar* and *Czar* are virtually identical. I have come to the conclusion that the Khazars were some of the displaced original Romans who were driven out by invading Israelites. These displaced Romans took up residence in the unpopulated sections of Russia. Since they retained their Roman form of government, they became known as *Khazar*, *Czars*, or *Caesars*. However, it would be totally irresponsible historically to state that all of the Jews of today are descended exclusively from the Khazar nation or from any Mongolian people, for that matter.

Jews Still Intermarrying

One of the prime concerns among Jewish leaders of our time is their continual proclivity toward intermarriage. In recent publications, Jewish leaders have voiced great alarm at the current rate of intermarriage, and they have deplored the fact that many of the children of such unions are not being raised as Jews. By researching family trees, it will emerge that noted families in all nations have some Jewish blood in their veins. At one time, in Germany, there was little distinction made between the religions of so-called Christianity and Judaism, the various families intermarrying freely and accepting the religion which most appealed to them.



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This is one of the reasons why some people have thought that Hitler, himself, had some Jewish blood in his veins, since his family name was Schicklgruber, which has a peculiarly Jewish ring to it.

A Form of Worship

It is a truism to state that the Jews have made a form, or ritual, out of their worship. Contemporary Judaism, as a religion, is not the True Worship which was presented to Israel from Mt. Sinai. Judaism is the worship which our Savior, Yahshua the Messiah, came to correct and restore to right direction. The rabbinical Judaism of today, based upon the Talmud, is a modern extension of the religious philosophy of the Pharisees from the days of the Messiah. The meaning and intent of the Law of Yahweh has been nullified by the traditions of men. ***“And you have made void the word of Yahweh because of your tradition.”*** Matthew 15:6. The Talmud preserves the Jewish traditional interpretations that the Rabbis taught concerning the Hebrew Scriptures.

A perfect aphorism has been coined by Dr. Solomon Zeitlin when he remarked: *“The Greeks made law a philosophy. The Romans made law a science. The Jews made law a religion.”*

Nevertheless, by keeping the scriptural Sabbath and the various other commandments of the Scriptures, the Jews have continued to be a witness for the Almighty down through history. They have acknowledged His government and preserved His Words to the human race, Romans 3:2. The Jews have also preserved the genuine Name of the Almighty, although they take great pains not to use

it. By this heritage they have acknowledged their ancient ancestry, and they have been recognized by the world as the people of the Almighty. It would be unthinkable to suppose that a people who had no blood ties to the family of the Scriptures would suffer the severe persecution which has haunted the Jews.

They Who Say They Are Jews, But Are Not

Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 are terribly misunderstood by some people today simply because they do not understand the Hebrew language. The word *Jews*, in both instances, should be *Yahudim* and means *those who are praising Yahweh*. Those people described in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 say they are praising Yahweh, but they are not. They are being taught by the synagogue and the synagogue says that you should not use the Name Yahweh in reference to the Almighty. “Use only Adonai,” they are taught by the Rabbis. These verses are speaking about infiltrators into the True Worship bringing the doctrine of the synagogue with them, not about Jewish people. Do you see how an understanding of the Hebrew language makes a difference?

Furthermore, the name *Judah*, in the Hebrew, comprises a very significant term. This name simultaneously contains both the root letters of the Tetragrammaton and the word for praise (both יהה and יהי—thankfulness, praise, and Yahweh). What a glorious name! Caleb, David, Solomon, and Yahshua our Messiah were all from the tribe of Judah.

Children of the Flesh

When the Messiah ascended to the heavens to sit at the right hand of the Heavenly Father, He left a Body of disciples who were predominantly Judean. For almost a hundred years after the Messiah, this situation remained constant, as the Apostles took the message to the Jew first. A great number of the priests were obedient to the Faith, Acts 6:7. But, then, the situation changed! The leaders of the political parties, called the Sadducees and the Pharisees, began to resist the new Messianic Faith. They introduced the oral traditional law as a method of uniting the remaining elements of Judaism, chaining them to the unscriptural traditions of the elders. Judaism has no claim to the Holy Spirit of Yahweh today, since they have never accepted the Messiah. Judaism is a form of worship, making a religion out of keeping the Law without demanding a change (circumcision) of the heart in repentance and conversion.

Paul asks the question in Romans 9:4, “Who are Israelites?” That question has been heard down through the annals of time over the intervening centuries. This question has been debated constantly. David Ben Gurion once stated that a Jew is anyone who says he is one. We might attach the same answer to Paul’s question, but it would be scripturally incorrect.

Paul answers his question in this way: ***“... For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham’s seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.”*** Romans



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9:6-7. How perfectly clear and plain! Not everyone who claims to be an Israelite is a part of the Israel of Yahweh, only those who are begotten again by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh and have had their hearts circumcised are the true Israel. Please see also Galatians 6:15-16. Unless we have repented, have been baptized in water, have received the Holy Spirit, and are living in humble obedience to the commandments of Yahweh (see Acts 5:32), we will not be the Israel whom Yahweh desired to create. The true Israel comprises the complete, fulfilled Israelites, made complete by the Holy Spirit.

Paul continues, ***“That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are the children of Yahweh; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.”*** Even if you can trace your lineage back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or think that you can, unless you REPENT, become baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, you will remain merely a fleshly person and will not be counted as having entered into the Covenant with Yahweh. We find in Romans 11:17-24 that the natural branches of the family tree of Israel were broken off, and the wild olive branches were grafted in, contrary to nature. Paul comments that after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, the natural branches will once again be restored to their former state on the stock of Israel.

The Origin of Anti-semitism

Anti-semitism (as has been aforementioned) has been taught by the Roman Catholic Church, who

accused the Jews of *deicide*. During the Dark Ages, the Catholics caused a great emotional hatred for the Jews by accusing them of killing a Christian child and drinking his blood for the Passover service. Hitler capitalized on this animosity between the Christians and the Jews, as have previous worldly governments, such as the Spanish royal family of Ferdinand and Isabella, who declared all Jews in Spain to be aliens and deported any who would not convert to Christianity.

Possibly this is the reason why Almighty Yahweh declares through His prophet Isaiah that all of this suspicion and animosity will be eliminated when Yahshua the Messiah returns to take over the rule of this earth. Isaiah 11:13, ***“The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”*** We find further in Zechariah 8:23, ***“In this manner says Yahweh of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that Elohim is with you.”***

Yahshua our Messiah was born from the lineage of Pharez of the tribe of Judah, Hebrews 7:14. He will gather His people Israel back to the Holy Land at His return and will rule over them as the model for the rest of the world. This will be the time when the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph will be rejoined, Ezekiel 37:15-28. These two sticks mean the branches of the family tree of both the families of Israel will be reunited into one nation, Jeremiah 11:16-17. Please read this passage and you

can observe that this thought is substantiated.

The Meaning of Esther

All of the books of the Bible appear in the book for a reason, and they are tied together by a discernible thread when they are researched. The Book of Esther was placed in the scriptural canon by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh to reveal the final end of those people who harbor hate in their hearts for the Jewish people. The Book of Esther may be one of the most neglected books of the Bible, as it would be a great deterrent to anti-semitism if its message would be heeded. At your earliest convenience, refresh your mind with the message of this book. Indeed, we can learn a great lesson from this scriptural work!

Who is a Jew? The New Testament Messianic Jew is described as the person who has circumcised his heart to serve Yahweh (see Romans chapter 2), rather than relying on the circumcision of the flesh. He will receive a circumcision of praise directly from Yahweh and the Savior Yahshua the Messiah when the Second Coming of the Messiah occurs. Then he will have the praise of Yahweh, not of men. He will glory in the tree of Messiah Yahshua and His atonement, keeping the Law of Yahweh spiritually, and will not glory in the flesh. A spiritual Jew will serve Almighty Yahweh forever in the Kingdom and will be one of His people. Will you be one of these blessed of Yahweh? □

