

“ISRAEL MY GLORY”

Israel’s Mission, and Missions to Israel

by

John Wilkinson

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL: WHERE ARE THEY NOT? AND WHERE ARE THEY?

Some years ago I was led to write a pamphlet, controversial in character, entitled “*Englishmen not Israelites*,” which passed rapidly through two or three editions, and is now out of print. This has been superseded by another— “*The Ten Tribes: Where are they not? And where are they?*” The substance of the latter is given in this chapter. So much in recent times has been said and written on “the ten tribes” question, that no apology is necessary for giving, in a work on God’s revealed purpose in Israel, an entire chapter to this topic.

Our present purpose is not at all controversial, but simply to set forth the plain teachings of the Word of God, praying the Holy Spirit to use His own sword and His own hammer to cut away and to crush every whim and croquet, however plausible and palatable, which is unscriptural, and consequently mischievous.

We write for our fellow-Christians, whom we would earnestly urge to suspend their judgment till they have thoroughly examined the Word of God, and to be concerned only for truth at all cost; for even unpalatable truth, if less welcome, is more useful than palatable error. It is surely better to know that we have only a penny in the pocket, than, having but a penny, to think it is a pound; for sooner or later we shall be undeceived and disappointed.

First, then, let us notice, “*The ten tribes: where are they not?*”

They are not the Anglo-Saxons for the following Scriptural reasons:

1. **לֹא יִתְחַשְׁבּוּ לָא יְהוּדִים וְכֹהֲנֵיהֶם לְבַדְּדָם לְשֹׁכְנֵי אֲרָצוֹת אֲחֵרוֹת** “**Lo, the people alone shall dwell, and among the nations shall not reckon itself**” (Numbers 23:9).

We give the Hebrew with in order that it may be the more clearly seen that we wish to make sure our ground.

Now these words were spoken of the whole twelve tribes in the wilderness, and are true to-day of the Jewish people. But are they true of the Anglo-Saxons? Do the Anglo-Saxons dwell alone? Some say yes; and refer as proof to our insular position.

But in this sense the mark would not be distinctive, for the Irish, or the Maltese, or any other islanders misfit be meant. What about the second clause in the passage? “**shall not be reckoned among the nations.**” Does the English nation not reckon herself among the nations? Witness the various treaties—commercial and political—made and signed by the powers of Europe. This passage as closely fits the Jew as it misfits the Anglo-Saxon, and we may as well attempt to fit an ordinary dress coat to the back of an elephant as try to cover the Anglo-Saxons with this passage.

2. Our second point is founded upon Hosea 3:4, 5.

אחר ישובו בני ישראל כי ימים רבים ישבו בני ישראל אין מלך ואין שר ואין זבח ואין מצבה ואין אפוד ותרפים:
הימים: ובקשו את־יהוה אלהיהם ואת דוד מלכם ופחדו אל־יהוה ואל־שובו באחרית

“**For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince . . . Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.**”

Hosea was a prophet specially to the ten-tribed kingdom of Israel, and associates the term “**Children of Israel**” in this passage and in chapter 4:1, with *Ephraim* in 4:17.

We insist upon this the more because our opponents have endeavored to show that *Israel* in this passage must be read as *Judah*, but without the slightest manuscript authority for the change. If the Word of God is to be treated after this fashion, and thus made to mean anything to anybody, it will soon mean nothing to anybody.

What true Christians dare take the responsibility of reading their notions into Scripture by such a process? Is not this course as dangerous as adding to or taking from the Word of God? Please carefully notice the most striking features of this passage: “**Children of Israel;**” Many days without a king or prince; and without a true knowledge of their Messiah-ben-David. Now, are the Anglo-Saxons without civil rulers? Indeed, “**many days**” are rather likely to elapse before the Anglo-Saxons are short of princes.

Again, are the Anglo-Saxons without a true knowledge of God? But Israel is not only to remain in dispersion without civil rulers, but also without a true knowledge of God; and they are to seek the Lord their God on their return. This passage exactly suits the Jewish people; “**who are Israelites;**” but it does not in any way describe either the political or religious condition of the Anglo-Saxons.

Kimchi, the able Jewish commentator of the middle ages, remarks on this passage, “And these are the days of our present captivity, for we have neither king nor prince of Israel, but are under the rule of the nations, even under the rule of their kings and their princes.”

The words “**and David their king**” are referred by the Targum and by the Rabbins to “*Messiah, the Son of David.*”

3. Our third point is founded upon Deuteronomy 4:26, 27; 28:62-66; Jeremiah 30:3, 4, 19; and Zechariah 8:13.

In the first two passages given from Deuteronomy, please to observe that the *whole twelve tribes* were addressed in the wilderness, before they had even entered the Promised Land; consequently, hundreds of years before the tribes were divided into two kingdoms. The threatenings of Deuteronomy were denounced in 1451 B.C., and the twelve tribes were broken into two kingdoms about 975 B.C. We ask special attention to these dates, because our opponents, finding these threatenings do not fit the Anglo-Saxons, have placed them to Judah's account exclusively, when Judah as a separate kingdom did not exist till several hundreds of years after.

With what chastisement were the twelve tribes threatened? Amongst other fearful chastisements, they were to be driven out of their country, scattered among the nations, and become *few in number*. Now, please to notice the passages in Jeremiah 30, written about the time of the Babylonish captivity. The third and fourth verses tell us plainly that the words spoken are “**the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah**”— the whole twelve tribes.

Now look at the 19th verse, “**I will multiply them, and they shall *not be few*.**” Now look at the fourth passage in Zechariah 8:13. “**It shall come to pass as ye have been a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing.**”

This eighth chapter of Zechariah evidently reaches down to millennial times, when the four fasts, referred to in the 19th verse (and which are still fasts), shall be converted into feast days;

- The entire nation at home and converted—verse 8;
- God in Christ in the midst of them, in verse 3;
- The Jews a nation of missionaries, according to verse 23.

What inferences do we draw from these plain passages, quoted from Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Zechariah? The following:

That the twelve tribes, being out of Palestine for national sins, are under national chastisement and curse—mark, not under curse as to individual, spiritual, and eternal interests; but only as to national and temporal interests. As long as they are out of Palestine and under national curse they are to be few in number. When the national curse is removed, by restoration to Palestine, then they are to be multiplied and no longer few.

The Anglo-Saxons are an innumerable host, and enjoying as much national prosperity and blessing as any nation on the face of the earth, and are still out of Palestine; so that if there be any nation on the face of the earth not Israelites, surely it must be the Anglo-Saxons.

To meet this formidable difficulty, some of our opponents, quite innocent of Hebrew, have tried to make out that *few in number* really means an innumerable host. It is true that the words in Deuteronomy 4:27, translated, “**few in number**,” are not exactly the same as those translated “**few in number**” in Deuteronomy 28:62; the former being כַּמְתֵי מֵעַט—*methay mispar*—men of number, or men easily numbered; or, as Gesenius translates, “*few men.*”

Jacob makes use of these same words as recorded in Genesis 34:30, as to the meaning of which there can be no doubt. The latter passage, Deuteronomy 28:62, has כַּמְתֵי מֵעַט—*methay me'aat*—few men. Here also there can be no ambiguity as to the meaning, especially when the next line confirms the meaning by contrast; “**Whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude.**”

The same word מַחֲאֵט—*mahaat* is used as a verb in the passage quoted from Jeremiah 30:19, “**they shall not be few**,” and its meaning is abundantly confirmed by the context preceding and following; standing at once in contrast with “**multiply**” and in harmony with “**they shall not be small.**” There are numbers of passages in the Old Testament confirmatory of the meaning “**few in number.**”

4. Our fourth point is founded upon Genesis 17:10, 14. “**Every man child among you shall be circumcised . . . And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.**”

Circumcision was the initiatory rite into the privileges of the national covenant, and is so still. The Anglo-Saxons, being an uncircumcised people, are excluded from all the privileges of the national covenant. A dwarf may as reasonably expect to enter the royal guards, where the condition is six feet in height, as an uncircumcised Anglo-Saxon to share blessings belonging exclusively to circumcised Israelites.

5. Our fifth point is of solemn importance. All Anglo-Saxons (even if Israelites) are either *believers* or *unbelievers*: if believers in Christ, they are detached from the national Israel, and consequently from the future temporal interests and destiny of the nation. Indeed they form part of an entirely new body—the Church, the Body of Christ, which will be with her Lord before the national Israel have full and peaceable possession of their earthly inheritance.

All believers in Christ—Jews and Gentiles—secure this higher calling of the Church—a heavenly calling—and will be married to the Lamb before Israel’s national conversion and mission to all nations. If *unbelievers* (even if Israelites), they are under the curse of a broken law (See Galatians 3:10).

“**For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**”

There is no possibility of escape from this curse and its consequences but by a saving interest in the work of our Divine Substitute; then we may say, “**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us**” (Galatians 3:13).

All Israelites, therefore, who are truly converted, are detached from the nation and secure the higher calling of the Church; and all who are unconverted are under the curse of a broken law, and suffering national chastisement to this day.

This scriptural view accords with the national condition of the Jews exactly to this day: but it scarcely accords with the circumstances and condition of the Anglo-Saxons.

Let us repeat these five points.

1st. The people shall dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations. This is true of the Jews, but not true of the Anglo-Saxons.

2nd. Israel is to remain many days without king or prince, and without a true knowledge of God. The Anglo-Saxons are not in these circumstances.

3rd. The twelve tribes, out of Palestine, are to be *few* in number, under national curse, and multiplied and *no longer few* when restored. But the Anglo-Saxons, though out of Palestine, are enjoying national blessing, and are not few in number.

4th. The penalty of uncircumcision is excision. The Anglo-Saxons are uncircumcised.

5th. Anglo-Saxons are either saints or sinners; if saints, then detached (though Israelites) from the nation, and incorporated with the Church; if sinners, then under the curse of law. So that it will not do to urge the plea, that, because the Anglo-Saxons are nominally Christian, therefore they have escaped the curse of the law: for they can only escape that curse by true conversion, which detaches them from the nation and secures to them a heavenly calling and a heavenly inheritance.

These five points based on plain passages of Scripture seem fairly and unanswerably to prove that if any people on the face of the earth are not Israelites, the Anglo-Saxons are not Israelites.

If, then, the Anglo-Saxons are not Israelites, *Where are they?*

We now address ourselves to this question. Let us take a rapid glance at the nation's history.

About 1740 B.C., Jacob, a grandson of Abraham, was named *Israel*, and his children were naturally called Israelites. The descendants of Judah, who was a son of Jacob or Israel, are as really Israelites as are the descendants of any other of Israel's sons.

In 975 B.C., ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam, who became their first king; established the seat of government at Shechem, afterwards at Tirzah, till Omri in 925 B.C. bought from Shemer the hill of Samaria, which remained the seat of government till the captivity in 721 B.C. This ten-tribed kingdom, being in the majority, took the honored name Israel. The two tribes—Judah and Benjamin, with Levi—had their seat of government at Jerusalem, and their kingdom was called the kingdom of Judah from the name of its leading tribe.

In 721 B.C., in the 6th year of Hezekiah and 9th of Hoshea, Samaria was taken by Shalmaneser (II Kings 18:9-11).

In 606 to 588 B.C., the kingdom of Judah was destroyed and the people carried to Babylon. In 536 B.C., about 50,000 were restored.

Now let us retrace our steps over this period of Israel's history, from 975 B.C., when the twelve tribes were divided into two kingdoms, down to 536 B.C., when the restoration from Babylon took place; and we shall find in the Word of God a large amount of interesting and useful information. Be it observed that the ten tribes, though afterwards apostatizing religiously to secure the permanence of the breach made, in the first instance revolted only on political grounds; so that large numbers of the ten-tribed kingdom of Israel would be likely to fall away to Judah on *religious* grounds. And such we find to have been the case.

Let us look at the commencement of the history of the divided kingdoms, 975 B.C. (See II Chronicles 11:14, 16, 17).

“For the Levites left their suburbs and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem . . . and after them, *out of all the tribes of Israel*, such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers; so they strengthened the kingdom of Judah.”

Here we see that portions of all the ten tribes fell away to Judah on religious grounds, and strengthened Judah.

Now come down to 941 B.C., when Asa, the grandson of Rehoboam, was on the throne of Judah, and see II Chronicles 15:9, **“And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon, for they fell to him *out of Israel in abundance*, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.”** Here we see numbers falling to Judah from the ten-tribed kingdom.

See again in 896 B.C., in the reign of Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, how positions of honour and responsibility were occupied in Judah by **“the chief of the fathers of Israel.”** (II Chronicles 19:8).

“Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of *the chief of the fathers of Israel*, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies.”

Also in 877 B.C., in the reign of Joash, great-grandson of Jehoshaphat, **“they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and *the chief of the fathers of Israel*, and they came to Jerusalem”** (II Chronicles 23:2).

Now let us come down to the time of King Hezekiah, to 726 B.C., about five years before the captivity of the ten tribes (See II Chronicles 30:1, 5, 10, 11, 18, 25).

“Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel . . . so they established a decree to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem . . . so the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun; but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them; nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem . . . for a multitude of people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover . . . And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and *all the congregation that came out of Israel*, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that *dwelt in Judah* rejoiced.” See also II Chronicles 31:6, where we read of the **“children of *Israel* and Judah, that *dwelt* in the cities of Judah.”**

We have now traced the history of the ten-tribed kingdom of Israel from the time of its separation from Judah in 975 B.C., down to the period of its destruction as a kingdom by Shalmaneser, 721 B.C. And during that period of 254 years, in which the kingdoms of Judah and Israel existed side by side in Palestine, large numbers out of the ten tribes fell away to Judah on religious grounds, and thus proved their detestation of idolatry and their loyalty to the God of Israel.

So far we have found the Israelites in **“abundance”** amongst their brethren of Judah. This is authentic history, clear fact, inspired information; let us note it carefully. Now let us seek information from another stage of history, from 721 B.C. to the period subsequent to the return from Babylon in 536 B.C.; and we shall find the facts as interesting as they are instructive and authentic.

We wish now to show from Scripture that the two countries, Assyria and Babylon, were at this period virtually one, the latter being subject to the former (See II Kings 17:24).

When Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, reigned over Nineveh and Babylon, 677 B.C., **“The King of Assyria brought men from Babylon . . . and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel.”** See also II Chronicles 33:11: **“Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the King of Assyria, who took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.”**

Now let us take the period of the reign of Josiah, the great-grandson of Hezekiah, 625 B.C., or about ninety-six years after the ten tribes had been taken captive, and about twenty years before the captivity of Judah.

Saracus was now King of Assyria. Nabopolassar, his general, was sent to oppose Cyaxares and his Medes in their advances on Nineveh. The general became a traitor to Saracus, and went over to the Median, who gave his daughter Amyitis to the general's son, Nebuchadnezzar. Cyaxares and Nabopolassar shared the Assyrian Empire; the former took the North and Eastern portions, and the latter the valley of the Euphrates and Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine.

Have we any information respecting any of the ten tribes at this period, about one hundred years after their captivity? See II Chronicles 34:9 and 35:17, 18:

“And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of *Manasseh and Ephraim*, and of all the remnant of Israel; and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem . . . And the *children of Israel* that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and Levites, and *all Judah and Israel* that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Here it appears that great numbers of the poor and the pious of the ten tribes remained in the land and united themselves with Judah in the celebration of their national festivals and in the general worship of God; and that they also contributed liberally of their substance, for money was taken **“of the hand of *Manasseh and Ephraim*, and of *all the remnant of Israel*.”**

Now take the date 606 B.C., when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar and the people taken captive to Babylon; and there can be no reasonable doubt that numbers of Israelites, mingled with Judah, accompanied Judah to Babylon.

So far our way seems perfectly clear.

We may now ask, have we reason for supposing that any considerable number of Israel returned with Judah on restoration from Babylon in 536 B.C.?

Let us see. It must be observed that the Assyrian empire is now merged in the kingdom of Babylon, and

- The *King* of Babylon is called the *King of Assyria* (See II Kings 23:29).
- The *country* of Babylon is called *Assyria* (See Jeremiah 2:18).

“What hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river.” (מִי נַהַר: *may nahar*, “the waters of the river”—Euphrates). And the *people* of Babylon are called *Assyrians*? (See Lamentations 5:6).

“We have given the hand to the Egyptians and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.”

Thus the king, country, and people of Babylon are identified with the king, country, and people of Assyria, at the time of the Babylonish Captivity. It is important to notice this carefully.

Let us now briefly examine the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which bring us down to the restoration from Babylon, 536 B.C.; and here we shall find, not only that Assyria and Babylon are identical, but also that *Persia*, *Assyria*, and *Babylon* are one.

- See Ezra 4:5, where Cyrus is called *King of Persia*, and in 5:13 is called *King of Babylon*.
- Then again, in 4:5, Darius is called “**King of Persia**” and in 6:22 is called “**King of Assyria**.”
- Again in Ezra 4:7, Artaxerxes is called *King of Persia*, but in Nehemiah 13:6 he is called “**King of Babylon**.”

Coming down now to the book of Esther, 521 B.C., fifteen years after the restoration from Babylon, we find the Medo-Persian Empire extending over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia, including in its range the ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon. From these considerations it is perfectly clear that Israel was as free to return to Palestine as was Judah. The way was as wide open to the one as to the other.

It would seem therefore as likely that the Israelites of the ten tribes should return, as that many of the Israelites of Judah and Benjamin—called Jews—should voluntarily remain behind. It is a singular fact, that, while great numbers of Israelites remained in Persia after the restoration from Babylonish captivity—witness the book of Esther—they are uniformly called Jews; the word Israel never occurring once throughout the book, whilst the words *Jew* and *Jews* occur between *forty* and *fifty* times. On the other hand, the term *Israel* is of frequent occurrence in both Ezra and Nehemiah as referring to those restored, “**all Israel in their cities**” (Ezra 2:70).

Then Ezra tells us that when he went up to Jerusalem, he “**gathered together out of Israel chief men**” (Chap. 7:28) to accompany him.

Then we have the very striking evidence furnished by the fact that sacrifices were offered for the whole twelve tribes (See Ezra 6:16, 17; 8:35).

“And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy; and offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs: and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel . . . The children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel” &c.

The entire congregation of restored captives—people, priests, and Levites— consisted only of 42,360; in addition to these there were 7,337 men-servants and maid-servants, and 245 singing men and singing women (Nehemiah 7:66, 67) making a total of 49,942, a few short of fifty thousand.

Numbers of Jews remained behind, as the book of Esther testifies, and established influential schools and colleges which gave birth to the Babylonian Talmud, which is really “The Talmud;” the Jerusalem Talmud, though having the same Mishna, and associated with the Holy City, possessing but little influence in comparison with the Babylonian.

As those who remained behind were called Jews and not Israel, and as those who were restored were called, not only Jews, but Israel, and sacrifices were offered for the whole twelve tribes, it is a just and natural inference that a considerable proportion of those who returned represented the ten tribes of Israel.

Now what is our general inference from these wanderings. Bible in hand, after the ten tribes from 975 B.C. to 521 B.C.? Simply this—that sufficient numbers of the ten tribes of Israel while in the land fell away to Judah on religious grounds; and a sufficient number returned from Babylon on political and religious grounds, to render the restored captives properly representative of the entire nation; so that should no other people in the world ever present a reasonable claim to Israelitish descent, the people known as Jews may be regarded as fairly entitled to be representative of the interests and destiny of the whole twelve tribes.

But it may be asked, and not without reason, Does this cover the entire question of the ten tribes? Have all the Israelites of the ten tribes been absorbed by the Israelites of the two tribes?

It may be frankly confessed that certain plain predictions of the Word of God seem to necessitate the restoration to Palestine, in the *future*, of a people known as descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, and designated “**the outcasts of Israel,**” in contradistinction from the “**dispersed of Judah**” (Isaiah 11).

The same conclusion would be arrived at by a careful examination of Ezekiel 37.

After a long period of national death, the constituent elements of the nation—the people—represented by the “**dry bones,**” are brought together, national life restored, and Palestine again possessed by the whole twelve tribes: the union of Israel and Judah represented by the union of two sticks, followed by the declaration of Israel’s God, “**I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.**”

From these passages and others of similar import yet unfulfilled the search for the ten tribes amongst some portion of the world’s present population should be thought neither useless nor hopeless.

It is a singular, though rather humiliating circumstance, that the ten tribes have been sought in almost every other country but the one into which they were taken captive. Some Welsh people have told us that they must be the ten tribes because some Welsh words are like some Hebrew words.

Some Irish people have told us the Irish are the ten tribes because they have never persecuted the Jews, and it would be unnatural to persecute their brethren; forgetting that they have had few if any Jews to persecute; and forgetting, also, that Irish Romanists have sometimes persecuted their Protestant brethren, and that a brother offended is hard to be won.

Another has found some Israelitish features and customs amongst the North-American Indians, and has therefore concluded them to be the ten tribes. It would be strange, indeed, while possessing a common human nature, if they had no features or customs in common.

Others have thought they are to be found in the Chinese, and others in the Afghans, though there is no satisfactory evidence in either case.

It is, nevertheless, not only possible, but probable, that some of the descendants of the ten tribes may be found among the Afghans, and others among the Chinese, such as the small colony of Israelites at Kai-fung-foo, in the province of Honun.

Others, again, have maintained against the clearest Scripture testimony that the Anglo-Saxons constitute the lost ten tribes, wresting, garbling, twisting, and misapplying Scripture texts in a manner most distressing to the devout lover of the Word of the Living God.

If, then, the Anglo-Saxons are not the ten tribes, *who are? and where are they?*

We answer at once—The Nestorians in the mountains of Kurdistan, and by the Lake Oroomiah, in Persia, as shown in a most interesting book written by the late Dr. Asahel Grant, for many years a self-denying and successful medical missionary, sent out by the American Board to that people in 1835. In his researches the principle adopted is the most simple and natural, viz., “*Search for a thing where it was lost.*” Confiding ourselves to the guidance of Dr. Grant, we submit a brief summary of the overwhelming evidence he adduces in favor of the Nestorians being the lost tribes of Israel.

1st. Let us notice what we would term *the sacred historical evidence.*

In the Scripture account of the deportation, Pul and Tiglath-Pileser first carried away the trans-Jordanic Israelites, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and next, about nineteen years later, Shalmaneser carried away the remaining seven and a half tribes of the cis-Jordanic Israelites. The whole ten, however, were placed in the same district of Assyria proper, and the adjoining country of Media. The region, then, into which the ten tribes were carried was that which the Greeks commonly called Adiabene. It lies N.E. of Nineveh; S.E. of Lake Van; W. of the Lake Oroomiah; and answers to the original Assyria proper, as contradistinguished from the more widely extended Assyrian empire (George Stanley Faber’s “*Sacred Calendar of Prophecy,*” in Appendix).

Sennacherib’s boast was that the Assyrian kings had destroyed the inhabitants of this region; thus, the country being partially depopulated, was ready for the captive Israelites.

Now notice the evidence of *prophecy.*

Prophecy says, “**The LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria . . . He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth . . . and there shall be a highway for the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt**” (Isaiah 11:11, 12, 16).

Please to notice that in the eleventh verse Assyria is the first place mentioned; prominence is also given to Assyria in the last verse; and then observe that in the twelfth verse “**the outcasts of Israel**” are named before “**the dispersed of Judah,**” which seems to indicate that “Assyria” and “outcasts of Israel” were intended to be associated.

Who then are to come from Assyria if not the outcasts of Israel? And whence are to come the outcasts of Israel if not from Assyria? History says the ten tribes were taken into Assyria; prophecy says they are to be brought out of Assyria. The plain inference is *they are there*.

Now let us take the evidence of *secular history*. Josephus (Ant, b. xi., c. v., § 2) having given an account of the friendly relations of Xerxes, the son of Darius, towards the Jews, and having expressed those intentions in a letter to Ezra, says,

“So he (Ezra) read the epistle at Babylon to those Jews that were there; but he kept the epistle itself, and sent a copy of it to all those of his own nation that were in Media; and when these Jews had understood what piety the king had towards God, and what kindness he had for Ezra, they were all greatly pleased; nay, many of them took their effects with them, and came to Babylon, as very desirous of going down to Jerusalem; but then the entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country; wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers.”

Again, in Josephus (Wars, b. ii, c. xvi., § 4) we have the magnificent speech of Agrippa, in which he sets forth the overwhelming power of Rome in order to discourage Jewish resistance to that power. Agrippa is represented as addressing the Jews thus:

“Where then are those people whom you are to have for your auxiliaries? Must they come from the parts of the world that are uninhabited? for all that are in the habitable earth are (under the) Romans; unless any of you extend his hopes as far as beyond the Euphrates, and suppose that those of your own nation that dwell in Adiabene will come to your assistance; but certainly these will not embarrass themselves with an unjustifiable war, nor, if they should follow such ill advice, will the Parthians permit them so to do.”

It is plainly evident from secular history that down to the first century of the Christian era the ten tribes were considered to be still in the same district into which they were first taken.

Now let us come down to the fifth century, in which Jerome, the author of the Vulgate, in his notes on Hosea, says: “Unto this day the ten tribes are subject to the kings of the Persians, nor has their captivity ever been loosed” (tom. vi., p. 7). And again he says: “The ten tribes inhabit at this day the cities and mountains of the Medes” (tom. vi., p. 80).

Thus we have historic evidence down to the fifth century, that the ten tribes, apart from those portions not already mixed with Judah, were still in the place into which they were first taken.

Had they ever migrated from these countries the native histories must have mentioned an event of such importance. But history, observes Dr. Grant, is silent upon the subject. The native histories, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, which are numerous, say nothing of the removal of the captive Israelites from this country, and tradition is equally silent upon the subject.

Buchanan in his “*Researches*” very truly observes:

“The Jews have a never-ceasing communication with each other in the East; so that, when anything interesting to the nation of the Jews takes place, the rumor will spread rapidly throughout all Asia.”

Had the ten tribes moved, it is incredible that the Jews should have known nothing of it, and they are silent on the subject.

So much for the testimony of *prophecy*, and of *sacred* and *secular history*.

The ten tribes were taken into Assyria in 721 B.C. History down to the fifth century of the Christian era says they are still there. Since that time no history or tradition at all reliable gives any account of their removal. And unfulfilled prophecy says they are to be restored from Assyria. The plain inference is—*They are still there*.

Lingual evidence—

Language is another kind of evidence of the Israelitish origin of the Nestorians of Kurdistan. They speak at this day a dialect of the Syriac, which can scarcely be accounted for on any other theory than that of their Israelitish origin. The ten-tribed kingdom, bordering on Syria, and subject to incursions from the Syrians, naturally learned the Syriac tongue, and took the knowledge of that tongue with them into the fastnesses of Kurdistan.

It may not be out of place to give here a little personal experience.

About the year 1860 or '61, my morning daily paper announced the arrival in London of two representatives of this ancient people, and that they were located at the Home for Asiatics at Limehouse.

My wife and I immediately went over to see them. We saw them. I made myself understood through the Hebrew of which the Syriac is a cognate as well as the Chaldee. We invited them to our house to meet some friends, and to spend an evening with us. They told us there is no doubt of their Israelitish origin amongst themselves. A most interesting evening was closed by these strangers with reading and prayer. I fetched from my study two copies of the Peshito version of the New Testament in Syriac; the elder one read a chapter and prayed, and afterwards sent me several slips of paper with his autograph in Syriac for the friends he had met. Anyone looking the elder in the face would have no difficulty in perceiving at once the Jewish features.

Amongst these Nestorians, who are nominal Christians, there are nominal Israelites, called Jews. Both the one and the other trace their origin to the ten tribes. The Nestorians are charged by the Jews with having apostatized from the religion of their fathers. They are not called Nestorians because converted by Nestorius, but because they sympathized with some views held by Nestorius, and for which he was considered a heretic by the Greek Church at Constantinople. The Christianized portion claim to have been brought to the Christian faith by Apostles sent to them from the Church at Jerusalem.

Their traditions state that their forefathers went up to Jerusalem to keep the “**feast of weeks**” (*Shevuoth*)— Pentecost, on the opening of the present dispensation; that they caught Pentecostal fire, carried it back to their people, and that the Church at Jerusalem, recognizing the special claim of these their brethren, sent out Thomas, Thaddeus, and Bartholomew—names still honored amongst them—as their first missionaries.

Now let us turn to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and we shall find gathered at this national festival “**Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians.**” So there were Israelites—“**Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia**”—from these very districts into which the ten tribes were first taken captive.

How wonderfully tradition, history, and Scripture agree on this interesting question! In the light of such facts how full of meaning become such expressions as “**to the strangers scattered,**” “**to the dispersed among the Gentiles,**” and, “**to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.**”

Again, “*Benai Israel*”—Children of Israel—is used generally to designate the lineal origin of the Nestorians. Jewish names are also very common amongst them, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Elijah, &c. Jewish features are also strongly marked in the faces of this people.

They have also amongst them many modified observances of the Mosaic ritual; as peace offerings; vows; first fruits and tithes; forbidden food; ceremonial impurities; and separation of women.

Dr. Grant also gives abundant evidence that their social and domestic customs; their forms of salutation; their hospitality; their regard for the poor; their entertainments; dress; ornaments; espousals; marriages; and occupations; are, with various slight modifications, the same as those of the ancient Israelites. This chapter would however soon grow to a volume, if we were to give details of all these interesting points. To those who wish to pursue this subject further in this direction, we must say, read Dr. Grant’s “*Nestorians, or Lost Tribes.*”

We do not, by any means, consider it necessary to believe that these Nestorians and Jews in Oroomiah and Kurdistan constitute the totality of ten-tribed Israelites, over and above those mingled with Judah; but we firmly believe that the evidence in favor of their being at least the nucleus of the ten tribes is perfectly satisfactory. The Yezidees may be another portion. The Malabar Jews— black and white—may be another portion. The few in Kae-fung-foo may be another. The 10,000 families discovered in Daghestan on the Caspian Sea may be another. And the quarter of a million of Falashas in Abyssinia may very likely be another portion. But there are the very strongest reasons for doubting the Israelitish origin of the Anglo-Saxons.

Having shown, we believe successfully, where the ten tribes of Israel *are not*, and also where they *are*, we now propose briefly to show the mischievous character of this modern theory—that the Anglo-Saxons are the lost tribes of Israel.

What harm, it is asked, can come out of the theory of our Israelitish origin?

We answer, it diverts attention from the elect nation destined in the revealed purpose of God to be the channel of blessing to the world.

Satan is no doubt a deep student of the Word of God. And why? To ascertain God's way of taking the world out of his grasp and destroying his power. When our blessed Lord answered Satan's temptations by "**it is written,**" "**it is written,**" we do not find Satan inquiring anything about the nature and authority of the documents referred to; it is implied he knew all about them, and that he reads and studies the Scriptures in order to use all his skill in thwarting the Lord's revealed purpose.

The power of Satan is amazing and appalling, but it is limited in degree and in duration, though it will be effectually crushed only on the return of the Lord Jesus, when he will be chained for a thousand years. Surely Satan must know that all the families of the earth are to be blessed in Abraham's seed; and that God has declared, "**This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise.**"

Thus Satan succeeded in persuading the Christian Church, in early times, that she was a spiritual Israel, to whom all blessings promised to the national Israel exclusively belonged; and that to the literal and national Israel belonged only the curses, literally understood.

This doctrine has been embodied in commentaries, and proclaimed from most of the pulpits of Christendom, and is still largely held and preached at this day. What has been the result of this doctrine? *The "Dark Ages "for the Church; and cruelty at worst, and indifference at best towards the Jew.*

The promises given to the Church, and the curses given to the Jew, any kind of conduct on the part of Christendom, however cruel, was considered as rather pleasing than otherwise to God.

This was a grand masterstroke of Satan, by which he at once secured a corrupt, ignorant, persecuting, dead Church; intensified unbelief amongst Israel; and a world asleep in the arms of the Wicked One.

Within the last half-century, however, another principle has been largely adopted in the reading and exposition of truth about the Jews, viz., that of allowing the blessings and the curses to bear a *literal* meaning to the *literal* Israel.

An intelligent and devout body of Christians, called "Brethren," as well as many in the Episcopal Church distinguished for piety and learning, have taught the Church of Christ a lesson she is slow to learn:

- 1st, That the book we call the Bible most certainly means something;
- 2nd, It probably means what it says.

In other words, instead of making the Scriptures, by far-fetched and fanciful interpretations, mean anything but what they say, they substitute the sound and simple principle applicable to all literature —sacred and secular—

*“If the plain and obvious sense
make good sense,
seek no other sense.”*

Ah! says Satan, but this will never do. This will land the Church in the doctrine and hope of the premillennial advent, and tend to produce unworldliness: this won't do. Again, with the unworldliness and increased power of the Church, will come an earnest desire to know and do the revealed will of God. The natural and national Israel will then take a prominent place in the Church's prayer and effort, in order that through Israel the original and unchanged purpose of the Lord may be realized in the world's blessing. Don't you see the device of Satan? Anyhow he must keep the real Israel under the power of unbelief, or he will soon lose his power over the nations.

So now we have another masterpiece of Satan; a determined struggle to get the Anglo-Saxons to believe, without the slightest evidence, and, indeed, against the clearest Scripture testimony, that they are the natural Israel to whom all the promises are made, and promises *only*; and then by a hard and arbitrary line drawn between Judah and Israel, as though Jews were not Israelites, to hand over all the curses, and curses only, to the Jews. This we believe to be the nature of the mischief of this modern theory, and it is one of the leading latter-day errors of these “**perilous times.**”

Cost what it may, we faithfully, solemnly, yet affectionately, warn the Christian Church against this latter-day error, as mischievous and dangerous, as it is flattering, fascinating, and unscriptural.

“Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you” (Zechariah 8:23).

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book; If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away out of the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18, 19).

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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