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The Two Houses of Israel

An Introduction to Bible Prophecy

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An important key to understanding Israel in prophecy is that after the time of Solomon, God's people were split into two nations, the House of Israel (ten tribes) and the House of Judah (two tribes), as related in 1 Kings *ch.12*. This division continued, for God speaks of the 'two families' whom He had chosen — Israel and Judah — and declares: *'Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob [Israel], and David my servant, [Judah] ...'* Jeremiah *ch.33 vv.25-26*.

They were the 'two sons' of Christ's parables, indicating their continuing separateness in His day. In fact, the first Scriptural mention of the Jews is in 2 Kings *ch.16 v.6* where they were at war with Israel. Letters were written by the chief rabbis of the British Empire in 1918 and 1950, explaining that this division continued to the present day, and that the Jewish people descend only from the house of Judah. The House of Israel, sometimes called Ephraim after its leading tribe, instead was conquered by Assyria in the 8th century BC, and scattered through the nations of the world: *'In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes ... So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.'* (2 Kings *ch.17 vv.6 & 23*).

The parable of the two sticks in Ezekiel *ch.37 vv.15-30* reveals that the coming reunion of the two houses will occur only at the end of the present age, just before the last great battle described in chapter 38. Similarly, it is when, *'... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea ...'* that *'... the outcasts of Israel ...'* and *'... the dispersed of Judah ...'* are gathered together *'... from the four corners of the*

earth.' (Isaiah *ch.11 vv. 9 & 12*)

Some say that they were reunited in the land of Assyria shortly after their captivity began. If so, how can the separate sets of latter day promises be fulfilled to Judah and Israel if they were reunited two thousand seven hundred years ago? Instead, we are told that they would be rejoined when they had 'One Shepherd', David's Greater Son, the Messiah (Ezekiel *ch.37 v.24 & John ch.11 vv.51-52*), which awaits the full conversion of Judah to Jesus Christ. Given this future time frame, the reunion could not yet have fully occurred. The Bible presents much additional evidence that the Houses of Israel and Judah are still separate nations and peoples in our world today, and clearly identifies the *'lost sheep of the house of Israel'* (Matthew *ch. 10 v.6 & ch.15 v.24*).

Identifying Signs

Indeed, there are many clues to the identity of lost Israel from both the Bible and history. The Apocrypha tells us that they were conquered by Assyria and dispersed to an uninhabited land, *'where never mankind dwelt'* (2 Esdras *ch.13 vv.40-48*); a good description of uninhabited Europe of that day. Isaiah *ch.62 v.2* says that they would become *'a company of nations'*, (Genesis *ch.35 v.11*), *'many nations'* (Genesis *ch.17 v.5*). They would have *'a new name'* and would take the gospel *'unto the end of the earth'* (Isaiah *ch.49 v.6*). In fact, Ezekiel tells us that the dispersion of the House of Israel was God's way of purifying this people: *'And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee.'* (Ezekiel *ch.22 v.15*).

They would have a new land, a new heart, a new Spirit, and a New Covenant: *'Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that*

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they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime,... (2 Samuel ch.7 v.10). *'For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.'* (Ezekiel ch.36 vv.24-26). *'Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.'* Jeremiah ch.31 v.31).

The result would be that God would use them to set right the earth: *'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.'* (Isaiah ch.42 vv.3-7).

Israel Today

Who could this people be in our modern world? The Bible gives many clues, including heraldic emblems associated with each of the tribes of Israel in Genesis ch.49 and Deuteronomy ch.33. A picture [Apologies - this picture is not available] helps to tell the story of these 'lost sheep' in our world today. The soldier in the foreground wears brightly coloured clothing, which was favoured by the people popularly called Scythian, the Greek form of the Medo-Persian word, Saka. A later form of the word is 'Saxon', from the Medo-Persian, 'Saca-Suni', or 'Sons of the Saca'. In his book, *The Story Of Celto-Saxon Israel*, W.H. Bennett provides scholarly evidence of the origin of the words, Scythian, Saka, or Saxon in the word, 'Isaac'. The soldier's colourful clothing reminds us of the Patriarch Joseph's famous 'coat of many colours' referred to in Genesis ch.37 v.3, 23, & 32. The origin and inspiration of the famous Scottish Tartan patterns may also date back to Joseph. Indeed, the word, 'tartan', itself was a Semitic term for a military official or captain of a host. (See 2 Kings ch.18 v.17 & Isaiah ch.20 v.1).

Soldiers carried battle axes, an identifying mark of Israel, the nation called in Scripture, 'God's battle axe': *'Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;...'* (Jeremiah ch.51 v.20).

Other Biblical prophets echo this: *'... and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors'* (Isaiah ch.14 v.2). *'Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains [large nations], and beat them small, and shalt make the hills [small nations] as chaff.'* (Isaiah ch.41 v.15). *'Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: ...'* (Micah ch. 4 v.13).

The battle axe — a symbol of Israel — also symbolised their descendants, the 'Saka', or 'Saxons', exactly as the prophets foretold. Remarkably, it was only during the time of Israel's defeat and dispersion by the Assyrians and Babylonians, when the future looked darkest, that these prophecies of victorious military conquests were given by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah! Clearly, the story of Ephraim-Israel did not end with the 8th century BC destruction of the Northern Kingdom and its capital, Samaria, but prophecy was fulfilled in succeeding centuries in the form of 'Scythian' tribal victories in Asia and Europe.

Mountains, in prophecy signify large nations, and hills are small nations. Is there evidence that these Hebrew Saka-Scythians overthrew large kingdoms? The *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia* (v.1:566-567), tells of Assyria's last days:

'In 1923 the British Museum published a newly discovered Babylonian chronicle giving a detailed description of the events which transpired ... [in] Assyria's last days. We learn from it that ... the Chaldeans were combined with the Medes and with the Scythians, [who were] an important factor in the weakening of Assyria; that ... in 612 ... proud Nineveh fell before an assault of the Medes, who were aided by Nabopolassar and a contingent of Scythians ...'

Yes, the **Saka**-Scythians, or House of Isaac, played a prominent part in the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, and other kingdoms as well.

Despite such conquests, they found themselves moving ever westward through the centuries, for God foretold that He would, *'... let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph... his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends*

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of the earth: ... (Deuteronomy *ch.33 vv.16-17*)

Joseph is an important tribe of the House of Israel whose heraldry is now found in Britain, and the '*ends of the earth*' is a fitting symbol for Western Europe at the bounds of the Atlantic Ocean.

The famous and respected Bible scholar, Dr James Augustus Strong, compiler of *Strong's Concordance* and other works, made this statement,

'The larger proportion of the Ten Tribes ... were, in a state more or less pure, propagated to distant regions by the great national migrations proceeding from Central Asia.' McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia*, X:545

These great national migrations were from Asia westward, and included the Mongols, Huns, Slavs, and other tribes who pushed, or were pushed by, the lost tribes of Israel into Europe. Dr Strong's comments indicate that the House of Israel fled from Assyria northward through the Caucasus Mountains, where they were caught up in the westward migration of peoples and settled in Europe.

Origins

Memories of their former homeland in the Mid-East were not entirely forgotten, for the famous Roman geographer and historian, Pliny (*Natural History*, book 4) recorded the Saka-Scythian statement that they were 'descended from slaves'. The Israelites, of course, were slaves in Egypt, and captives in the land of Assyria, as well. If these Saka were not Israelites, then to what ancestral captivity were they referring? As these tribes migrated across Europe to the Baltic Sea, Pliny records that in their language, 'the name for it is Morimarusa, that is, [the] Dead Sea'. [*ibid*] The Baltic Sea, being connected with the Atlantic Ocean, is very salty like the Dead Sea of Palestine; but it is teeming with life and far from dead. They obviously carried with them knowledge of an ancestral dwelling near a salty body of water called the Dead. On the soldier's head is a distinctive high-peaked hat that *Harper's Bible Dictionary* ('dress' p.227) depicts as an important part of the 'Hebrew royal attire'. It is called a 'mitre', and was worn by the Israelite high priests (Exodus *ch.28 v.37*). Herodotus recorded in his *History* (7:64) that,

'The Sacae, who are Scythians, have high caps tapering to a point and stiffly upright...'

This style hat is found on the Behistun Rock, where Scythian king Skunka is depicted wearing it.

'We furthermore have some stories about Jewish officials bearing Parthian names, Arda,

Arta, and Pyl-y Barish, who had a mounted retinue of troops and wore high hats.' (*The Cambridge History Of Iran*, [vol.3:2:913]

In Europe of later centuries, it became known as a 'Wizard's Cap', often with the depiction of a crescent-moon, the symbol of Mohammedanism. Far from being of Muslim origin, the moon symbol apparently denotes the eastern origin of this ancestral clothing.

Other distinctive dress of the early European Scythian tribes included 'polychrome' enamelled jewellery, which is known to have originated in Medo-Persia where the Israelite lost tribes were resettled by Assyria. Russian archaeologist, Michael Rostovtzeff said,

'The style as such develops in the East, in Iranian lands, as we see from the Oxus and Susa treasures'. *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, pp. 173

A book on Persian art shows an ancient Persian breast pin, displaying the intricate interloped pattern that has come to be associated with the Celtic peoples. The horses depicted are of a strong, stocky short-legged breed that is now extinct, except for some mixed descendants that are found today in Spain. These horses were multi-use, for although they had some oxen, they also used horses in a variety of capacities. In fact, according to Hebrew scholar, Dr Isaac E. Mozeson, our English word, horse, itself comes from the Hebrew word, Horesh, meaning to plough [*Radio interview* on 'Southwest Radio Church' broadcast]. These horses were well adapted for the rough and mountainous terrain that was the scene of their travels.

The ancient Greek historian, Herodotus (*Bk 4*), tells us that the Scythians travelled with their wives, children, and belongings in covered wagons, perhaps presenting a picture reminiscent of the early American pioneers in their famous 'Conestoga Wagons' on the Western frontier. The second picture depicts, in the far distance, a Scythian wagon train which is dwarfed beneath the towering Caucasus Mountains. These mountains soared thousands of feet above sea level, causing some historians to suppose that they were impassable. To the contrary, these peaks were traversed many times by both Scythian and Persian. A 'Daryal Pass' valley route sometimes called, 'the Pass of Israel', is clearly marked out in red in the *Cambridge History Of Iran*, (vol. 3:I:522); it was a favourite passageway to Europe from the Mid-East.

'... There are many evidences of Hebrews in the Caucasus. '... the Caucasus Jews claim to be

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descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel ... the Georgians are equally certain of their descent from the Israelites who were taken from Palestine by Shalmanesar [726-722 BC].’ The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* [III:628]

Do we have any proof that Hebrews were in the Caucasus and that they were in fact lost tribes of the House of Israel? A fascinating article documenting the early presence of Hebrews in the Caucasus Mountains states this:

‘The first immigration of [Israelites] into the Trans-Caucasus (supposed... to have taken place in the 7th century, BCE, during the reign of the Assyrian kings) is recounted in ancient Armenian and Georgian chronicles. According to these chronicles, [Israel] arrived in these regions as early as the beginning of the 6th century, BCE The first arrivals were probably free merchants, while the latter partly came as captives ...’ [The *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia* [VIII:26].

What Israelites were in captivity in the 6th and 7th centuries, BC? These were the Lost Ten Tribes of the House of Israel, found in the Caucasus Mountains of Eastern Europe a few short years after their dispersion, according to the ancient Armenian and Georgian Chronicles. It is also significant that the Caucasus Mountain nation we call, ‘Georgia’, is known to its inhabitants by its native name of ‘Sakartvelo’, and another early town there is called, ‘Sachkhere’, perhaps revealing the presence of the ‘Saka’ in that region in early times:

‘... tombstones were discovered, dating from the 4th to 5th centuries, one of them bearing an inscription in Aramaic. [The *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia* VIII:26]

Aramaic was the language of the region of Halah and Habor, where Assyria settled many of the captive Israelites. Several of these tombstones, from a Hebrew graveyard in the Crimea, north of the Caucasus, were translated in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* in 1874 of which one read as follows:

‘This is the tombstone of **Buki**, the son of Isaac the priest; may his rest be in Eden, at the time of the salvation of Israel. In the year 702 of the years of our exile.’

This tombstone dates from AD 6, during the time of Christ. Many of the House of Judah were captured, along with the ten tribes of the House of Israel, at the time of the Assyrian conquest.

‘Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.’ (2 Kings ch.18 v.13)

This conquest included major cities of Judah such as Lachish (2 Chronicles ch.32 v.9). Only Jerusalem and Libnah (2 Kings ch.19 v.10) were spared the Assyrian conquest, so members of both houses of Israel and Judah were taken into captivity. Is it coincidence that the royal banner of England shows two symbols, the lion and the stag (or unicorn), the emblems of both of these houses? Yet a significant number of Judah were spared Assyrian conquest, to be used of God as His Sanctuary (Psalm 114 v.2) and be reunited completely with their brethren of the ten tribes at the end of the age. Until that day arrives, we have God’s sure Promise,

‘For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;’. (Jeremiah ch.33 v.17).

Somewhere in the world, David’s descendants have reigned in an unbroken succession throughout subsequent centuries. The land of Canaan in Palestine became a virtually uninhabited wasteland after the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, so it is certain that this prophecy was not fulfilled there. Instead, we saw that many of the tribe of Judah were exiled with the House of Israel, so David’s descendants may indeed have reigned with the ten tribes in new homelands. The poor rocky soil of the Caucasus would have caused most of them to continue north into lands beyond. Where could David’s descendants have reigned over the House of Israel, except in Europe? The real question therefore is not whether Hebrew tribes migrated to early Europe (the evidence indicates that they did), but instead, what percentage of Europeans are of Hebrew descent? The evidence gathered shows it to be significant in many parts of Europe.

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