



THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN  
& THE COMMONWEALTH  
*in Prophecy*



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# THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN & THE COMMONWEALTH *in Prophecy*

The English-speaking peoples have dominated the world scene for more than 200 years. Why did such rich blessings of wealth, resources and national power come to these nations?

The British Empire was dismantled in the 20th century, and many see American power weakening. A staggering turn in world events is coming, and it will directly involve the decline of these nations. In order to understand what's ahead, we must understand their biblical identity and prophesied future.

What does the future hold for these nations and our world?

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## INTRODUCTION



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# THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND THE COMMONWEALTH IN PROPHECY

"I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure'" (Isaiah 46:9-10).

**T**oday's world is teetering on the brink of chaos. Wars, nuclear weapons, ethnic conflict, terrorism, belligerent nations, religious and ideological divisions, financial meltdowns, disease epidemics and many other factors make our world extremely dangerous. Many worry about the future for their families.

Thousands of years ago, God inspired the writers of the Bible to foretell a future period called "the time of the end" (Daniel 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9)—a time of war, chaos, famine and disease. While directly affecting the entire world, it will particularly hit hard those living in the great Western nations—the United States, the Commonwealth, the nations of Western Europe and the Jewish nation of Israel.

The world order, as we know it today, will be shattered, producing the greatest time of warfare and suffering in the 6,000 years of recorded history. Many thinkers today see a crisis is coming simply by observing world events, but it is in Bible prophecies that we find *how* and *why* this future time will come.

In order to understand this frightful future, one must understand the reason for the world order that has existed for the last 200 years. Only by understanding the past and present can we understand the future.

For the past two centuries, any semblance of order has been maintained by primarily two nations—Great Britain and the

United States. When threats have arisen endangering humanity—tyrants and dangerous ideologies like militarism, Nazism, Fascism, Marxism and Islamic fundamentalism—it has generally been the Anglo-Saxon nations that have fought and defeated these forces and maintained global stability.

Why have these nations risen to such global prominence? And will they remain the world's most powerful nations, holding off the forces of destruction threatening the world?

In the Bible God claims that He possesses the ability to both see the future and direct the course of history. Foretelling the future is called *prophecy*, and prophecy, in fact, is one of the greatest themes of the Bible, comprising more than a quarter of its content!

God's claim of the authority to declare what will happen in the future—*before it happens*—lies in His exclusive ability and power to *make it happen* (Isaiah 46:10).

The Bible contains prophecies that have been or are being fulfilled, as well as prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled, all witnessing to the existence and power of the true God.

This booklet focuses on one of the most amazing examples of *fulfilled* prophecy in the Bible. It is a prophecy that has impacted the lives of millions of people, but is understood by very few. It is largely missed or ignored even by those who profess belief in God and His Word.

Yet a basic question must be answered: Could the Bible's prophecies have overlooked the great modern powers that have impacted our world so profoundly in the last 200 years—the British Empire (and Commonwealth) and the United States of America?

These great nations—the Anglo-Saxon peoples—have held immense national power, wealth and influence such as the world has never seen, in spite of many reasons why their rise to power should *never* have happened. Their history includes many stories of miraculous events that seem to show divine providence on their behalf. Was the rise of Great Britain and America merely good fortune—or is there more to the story?

This booklet presents the bold thesis that nearly 3,500 years ago the Bible predicted the rise of the British and American peoples to global dominance! Not all of the promises and prophecies about the descendants of the patriarch Abraham were fulfilled in the ancient nations of Israel and Judah—some were, in fact, *end-time* prophecies to be fulfilled in the time leading up to the second coming of Jesus Christ!

Understanding these ancient prophecies not only provides fascinating insight into the *whys* of history and the identity of modern nations, but it provides a key to understanding other biblical prophecies that are yet to be ful-



filled. This vital key of understanding unlocks many mysteries of history and prophecy and can strengthen your faith in God's existence and the Bible's reliability.

You will learn that the Bible truly is a living book, essential for understanding the world today, as well as the only authority for how we should live. You will learn that God is truly the *God of history*, the One who shapes events to fulfill His promises and accomplish His will (Daniel 2:21).

Keep reading to discover the incredible identity of the United States and British Commonwealth of Nations in Bible prophecy! Learn about the origins and future of these nations—a future that includes both trial and hope. In the process, you will also learn what God expects of these nations—and you—today!

The message of this booklet will change your life!

CHAPTER 1



# THE AMAZING STORY OF GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

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"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great" (Genesis 12:2).

**T**he Bible's beginning book, Genesis, includes foundational material essential to understanding everything that follows.

Genesis opens by revealing God as the creator of the entire universe, earth and all physical life (Genesis 1). We read of God creating humankind in His image (verse 26), the first humans quickly rejecting Him (Genesis 3) and the resulting widespread evil that led God to destroy the majority of mankind through a worldwide flood (Genesis 6-7). We then see humanity build a great civilization—Babel—and again openly defy God, leading Him to disperse people throughout the earth to form separate civilizations (Genesis 11).

Interspersed in this sweeping story, we see rare individuals standing out as faithful to God in the midst of evil and corrupt societies; people like Abel, Enoch and Noah.

Then Genesis 11 introduces us to one of the most influential men in history—one whose descendants continue to shape the world today.

That man was Abraham.

## **Abram's calling**

He wasn't always known as Abraham. When he's first presented, we see his name is Abram. Abram was from Ur of the

*Jacob crosses his arms, giving Ephraim the primary blessing with his right hand and Manasseh the secondary blessing with his left hand (artwork by Keith Larson).*

Chaldeans, a commercial city located in ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), but his way of living differed from those around him. God would eventually choose to begin through this godly man a unique family—a family that would grow into nations through which He would impact human history in many important ways.

God did not do this haphazardly. He used a series of *tests* to see whether Abram would faithfully obey Him. As Abram passed each of these tests, God revealed more details about his future descendants.

## The first test

We find Abram's faith first tested in Genesis 12:1: "Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.'"

Hebrews 11:8 tells us the test of faith lay in Abram's having no idea where he was going. God had, however, promised Abram that rewards came with obedience: "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3).

Among these key components of God's *promise* to Abram was the assurance that his descendants would attain national greatness. But this promise was *conditional* on Abram's obedience.

What was Abram's response? To delay? To ask for more information? To convince God to let him stay where he was?

No. "So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him" (Genesis 12:4).

Abram believed God and obeyed without question.

After Abram and his household arrived in the land of Canaan, God told him that this was the land He would give to Abram's descendants. Abram responded by building an altar to the LORD. Abram was growing in his relationship with God (verse 7) to the point that he would eventually be known as God's friend (2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23).

As we follow the story, we will see that God expanded on His promise, adding many more details about Abram's descendants becoming a *great nation*.

But a huge obstacle remained—Abram and his wife Sarai were childless. How could a great nation arise from a man with no offspring?

## The second test

So God appeared to Abram again, revealing that "one who will come from your own body shall be your heir" (Genesis 15:4) and telling him to

“look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them. ... So shall your descendants be” (verse 5).

On the surface, God’s promise of an heir and countless descendants through Sarai, who was old and well past her childbearing years, seemed *impossible!* But Abram was unfazed and passed this second test by trusting in God’s ability to do what was humanly impossible. He “believed in the LORD, and He [God] accounted it to him for righteousness” (verse 6).

Because of his monumental faith, God declared Abram as righteous. The Bible consistently ties the concept of [righteousness](#) to obedience to God (Psalm 119:172). Faith is belief, but that belief is verified by one’s actions (James 2:20).

After Abram so confidently demonstrated his faith, God formalized His promise as “a covenant” in which He bound Himself to fulfill His promise to make Abram a “great nation” and to give his descendants the land of Canaan as an inheritance (Genesis 15:18-21).

Though Abram and Sarai were faithful, they were not perfect. In Genesis 16, we find that Sarai could not see past the physical barrier of her age and infertility, so she proposed a [solution](#): use her personal maidservant Hagar as a surrogate mother (verse 2). Abram agreed and took Hagar as a second wife (verses 2-4). From this union came a child, [Ishmael](#), who would become the progenitor of some of the Arab peoples.

### The third test

Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, God appeared again to Abram. All this time, Abram had assumed that Ishmael would be his heir, the child through whom God would fulfill His promises. But God had other plans. His promise would not be fulfilled through human solutions—He was determined to fulfill His promise through a divine miracle!

God reaffirmed the covenant He had made years earlier (Genesis 17:1-2), then expanded the promise even further! “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of *many* nations” (verse 4, emphasis added throughout).

From Abram, God said, would come not just one nation, but *many* nations. Then, to impress on Abram the significance of this expanded promise, God changed his name from Abram (“exalted father”) to Abraham (“father of a multitude”). He also changed Sarai’s name (which means possibly “my princess” or “she that strives”) to Sarah (“princess”), for she would be “a mother of nations” and “kings” would come from her and Abraham (Genesis 17:5-6, 15-16).

God also added other new promises to His covenant with Abraham:

- “I will make you exceedingly fruitful.”
- “I will make nations of you.”
- “Kings shall come from you” (verse 6).

All of these promises described physical blessings to be fulfilled through Sarah, who now was 90 years old! “She shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her” (verse 16). This prospect seemed humanly implausible, but Abraham would soon understand how God is truly “the God who does wonders” (Psalm 77:14).

But again, these covenant blessings were conditional—Abraham would have to “walk before Me and be blameless” (Genesis 17:1). He would also have to fulfill a *third test*: He and his descendants would have to be circumcised (have the male foreskin surgically removed) as “a sign of the covenant” (verse 11).

Though the prospect of undergoing this procedure as an adult must have been very uncomfortable and unpleasant, Abraham, Ishmael and the other males of his household obeyed and were circumcised (verses 23-27). To learn more about circumcision, read “[The Sign of Circumcision](#)” on the Life, Hope & Truth website.

## The fourth test

With the covenant and promises sealed, all that was needed was an heir. Although the likelihood of a 90-year-old woman becoming pregnant seemed ludicrous, God reminded Abraham and Sarah, “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (Genesis 18:14).

Then, as promised, “the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age” (Genesis 21:1-2).

They named him *Isaac*, which means, “he laughs,” likely a reminder of Abraham and Sarah’s prior amusement at the idea of their having a child. But Isaac was indeed the son through whom the promises would be fulfilled—“in Isaac your seed shall be called,” God declared (verse 12). As we will see, the lost tribes of Israel would even be identified by terms derived from the name *Isaac*.

Abraham, now 100 years old, had experienced many trials, hardships and tests throughout his lifetime, yet now he finally held the son born from the wife of his youth, Sarah. The promises now seemed assured.

But God had one final test in store for Abraham—the hardest test of his life.

Some years later, God told him, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Genesis 22:2).

One can scarcely imagine Abraham's feelings as the God He had faithfully obeyed now gave him this command. But Abraham hadn't followed God this far only to reject Him now. He had seen God's miraculous power firsthand through Isaac's conception and birth, and had been assured that God would fulfill the promises through Isaac. So Abraham made his choice—he obeyed.

Hebrews 11:17-19 clearly explains his rationale: "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense."

As Abraham bound Isaac to the altar and lifted his knife, fully intent on obeying the command, "the Angel of the LORD" (which careful study shows was the One who became Jesus Christ; see our article "[The Angel of the LORD](#)") dramatically stopped him!

"Abraham, Abraham," said a powerful voice. "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Genesis 22:11-12).

Abraham had passed God's final test, proving his faithfulness in the ultimate trial. God then reinforced the promises as *unconditional* and added yet more key elements:

"By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (verses 16-18).

Note the two distinct components of this promise:

- **Material blessings for Abraham's physical descendants.** National greatness would come upon Abraham's physical descendants. Their population would grow, becoming practically innumerable, eventually possessing the gates (passages) controlling the economic and military movements of competing nations. How these *birthright blessings* were literally fulfilled is covered in greater detail later in this booklet.
- **Spiritual blessings for all people.** This second component hearkens back to God's original promise in Genesis 12:3, that in Abraham "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." In the New Testament God revealed He was pointing to the opportunity for humanity to receive salvation from sins through Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:8, 16). Peter quoted this in Acts 3, explaining its meaning in verse 26: "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turn-

ing away every one of you from your iniquities.” This was connected to the *scepter promise* through the royal line of David (Genesis 49:9-10; Luke 1:32; Revelation 5:5).

Jesus’ ministry was and continues to be one of reconciling sinners to God that we might be part of God’s eternal Kingdom (Colossians 1:13, 19-23). His death made it possible for *all* humans to be forgiven of their sins and receive eternal life (John 3:16). This great act of grace is freely given to all who repent of their sins, have faith in and follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, are baptized, receive God’s Holy Spirit and live as He commands. Those who do are called “Abraham’s seed,” regardless of their sex, race or nationality (Colossians 3:11; Galatians 3:28-29).

### **Birthright passed down to Isaac and Jacob**

At Abraham’s death, the unconditional birthright blessings were passed on to Isaac. Ishmael was Abraham’s firstborn, but he did not receive the birthright. Instead, God decreed that it be passed on to Isaac, the son born of the union between Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 25:11; 26:2-5).

Isaac and his wife Rebekah had twin boys, the firstborn named Esau, and the second Jacob (Genesis 25:25-26). Again, birth order would have given the birthright blessings to Esau and his descendants, but God intended the blessing to go to the younger Jacob (verse 23).

Notice that Isaac’s blessing of Jacob provides even more details about the physical birthright blessings:

“Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven [favorable weather conditions], of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine [agricultural prosperity]. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!” (Genesis 27:28-29).

These national blessings flowed from the blessing originally bestowed on Abraham (Genesis 28:4). As it passed to Isaac and then Jacob, more details were added.

One important event in Jacob’s life needs special focus. Shortly before he was reunited with Esau later in life, a mysterious individual met Jacob in the dark of the night. This “Man” (actually the One who later came to earth as Jesus Christ, Hosea 12:3-4) “wrestled with him [Jacob] until the breaking of day” (Genesis 32:24).

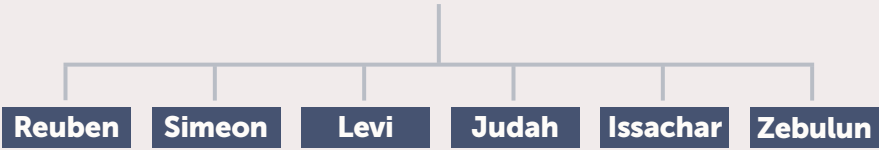
Though severely injured, Jacob persevered, insisting that the Man bless him. The blessing he received was a new name that acknowledged his growth in character. No longer would he be *Jacob*, meaning “supplanter,”



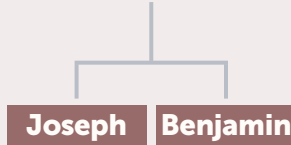
# THE 12 SONS OF ISRAEL (JACOB)

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## Leah

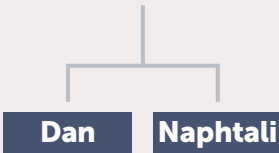


## Rachel



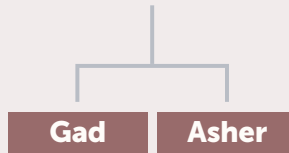
## Bilhah

Rachel's Handmaid



## Zilpah

Leah's Handmaid



but now he would be called *Israel*, meaning “prevailer” or “overcomer with God” (verse 28).

A few years later, God appeared to Israel (Jacob) and added another critically important detail to the birthright blessing: “God said to him: ‘I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body’” (Genesis 35:11).

This detail is vital to understanding the fulfillment of these blessings. Up to this point, we have seen the birthright blessing expand from “a nation”

(Genesis 12:2) to “nations” (Genesis 17:6), and now we see that eventually the birthright blessing would be fulfilled through a “nation” and a “company of nations.”

## **The sons of Jacob**

Jacob fathered 12 sons (Genesis 35:22-26), each of which had offspring who eventually grew into tribes that later developed into nations. Collectively, the descendants of Jacob’s 12 sons would be called the *children of Israel* or the *12 tribes of Israel*. Remember, Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. So, at this stage *Israel* meant the 12 sons of Jacob and their descendants.

By birth order, Jacob’s firstborn son was Reuben. Normally, it was the firstborn who would receive the birthright blessings. But God chose not to give Reuben the birthright blessings because of a particular sexual sin (Genesis 35:22; 1 Chronicles 5:1).

Instead, God chose Joseph, the firstborn son of Jacob’s marriage with Rachel.

We encourage you to read the fascinating account of Joseph’s trials and ultimate triumph in Genesis 39-45. Joseph’s story, which included betrayal by his brothers, years of trials and then eventual triumph in Egypt, foreshadows the story of his descendants in the end time.

Once again, the passing of the birthright blessings to the next generation happened in a unique manner. At that time Jacob was living in Egypt and nearing his death. So Joseph brought two of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to see their grandfather before he died, and it was at this visit that a remarkable series of events occurred.

## **Jacob adopts Joseph’s sons**

After recounting how God’s blessing had been passed down from Abraham (Genesis 48:4), Jacob said to Joseph, “And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine” (verse 5).

Jacob was *adopting* Joseph’s two sons *as his own* for the purpose of the birthright. Instead of simply being passed to Joseph, the birthright blessing was divided between his two sons. Ephraim and Manasseh would not just be considered the sons of Joseph—they would also be considered the sons of Israel, or Jacob (verse 16).

## **Jacob crosses his arms**

Joseph then brought the two boys to Jacob for the physical blessing. Generally a primary blessing would be bestowed by the right hand (which symbol-

# THE BIRTHRIGHT BLESSING

## God's Promises to Abraham and His Descendants

### A GREAT NATION

GENESIS 12:1-3

"Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

### LAND AND NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS

GENESIS 13:14-17

"And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: 'Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.'"

### MANY NATIONS AND KINGS

GENESIS 17:4, 16

"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."

"And I will bless her [Sarah] and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."

### THE GATE OF THEIR ENEMIES

GENESIS 22:16-18

"By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD ... blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

### AGRICULTURAL BLESSINGS AND GEOPOLITICAL DOMINANCE

GENESIS 27:28-29

"Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!"

### NATION AND A COMPANY OF NATIONS

GENESIS 35:11

"I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."

### EPHRAIM: A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS MANASSEH: A GREAT PEOPLE

GENESIS 48:19

"But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.'"

ized strength), so since Manasseh was the firstborn, Joseph situated him on Jacob's right side and Ephraim on his left.

But something unusual happened: "Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn" (verse 14). In essence, Jacob crossed his arms.

Jacob then formally passed on the birthright blessing with these words: "Bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" (verse 16).

Note these key things from Jacob's words:

- The name of Israel was specifically bestowed onto the sons of Joseph. The descendants of Joseph are often referred to as "Israel" in Bible prophecies.
- The sons of Joseph would also carry the name of Abraham and Isaac, signifying that they would be the primary recipients of the birthright blessings passed down among the patriarchs.
- Only the physical blessings of national greatness were bestowed upon Ephraim and Manasseh. The promise of spiritual blessings would later be given to Judah (Genesis 49:8-10).

## **A nation and a multitude of nations**

Joseph, assuming Jacob was confused, tried to move Jacob's crossed arms (Genesis 48:17), saying to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But Jacob knew full well what he was doing and replied, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.' So he blessed them that day, saying, 'By you Israel will bless, saying, "May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!"' And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh" (verses 18-20).

God inspired Jacob to reveal keys necessary to identify Joseph's descendants in the future:

- Manasseh's descendants, when they fully inherited the birthright blessings, would become *one single nation*. This single nation would be described as *great*.
- Ephraim's descendants would become a *multitude*, or *group of nations*, that would also be called *great*.

The younger Ephraim was set before the older Manasseh, signifying that he was receiving the greater blessing. Ephraim would not only inherit more territory than Manasseh, but would receive the birthright blessings first.

# GENESIS 49: A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING ISRAEL'S END-TIME IDENTITY

"Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days" (Genesis 49:1).

**S**hortly after bestowing the birthright blessings on Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob gathered his 12 sons together. He was nearing death (Genesis 48:1-2, 21) and wanted to address them as a family.

This was no ordinary farewell speech. Jacob must have grabbed their attention when he said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days" (Genesis 49:1). In biblical prophetic language, the "last days" refers to the era preceding Jesus Christ's second coming (Deuteronomy 4:30; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3-4).

This "last days" setting of the Genesis 49 prophecy about each of the 12 sons of Israel has compelled many history and prophecy students to examine these characteristics to try to find parallels in modern nations today.

Space does not permit us to examine in detail the prophecies directed to each of Jacob's sons. For our purposes here, we are most concerned with the prophecies to Joseph and Judah. However, using the characteristics provided in Genesis 49 and the migration patterns we will look at later in this booklet, we believe that the descendants of the other brothers can be traced to northwest European nations such as Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

## **The scepter promise**

Before examining the characteristics of Joseph's descendants, let's consider Jacob's prophecy to Judah, since it is crucial to understanding how God's promises to Abraham were fulfilled:

"Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise. ... Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a

lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people” (Genesis 49:8-10).

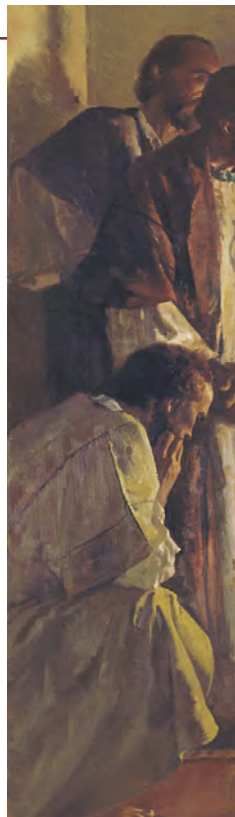
Remember, the birthright blessing was separate from the spiritual blessing. Here, in what is known as the scepter promise, Jacob foretold that through Judah’s line would come “Shiloh”—widely recognized as referring to the Messiah. Sure enough, Jesus was born of the lineage of King David, who was a descendant of Judah through Judah’s son Perez (Genesis 38:29; Ruth 4:18-22).

It is by the Messiah coming through the lineage of Judah and eventually receiving this scepter that the promise that “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” would ultimately be fulfilled (Genesis 26:4, also compare Genesis 12:3). So the spiritual blessing was conferred on Judah and fulfilled through a royal line made up of Judah’s descendants!

This landmark prophecy shows the descendants of Judah have an important role in bringing salvation to the entire world (John 4:22; Romans 1:16). We recommend you read our Life, Hope & Truth article “[All Blessed Through Abraham](#)” to understand more about how Jesus Christ fulfilled this promise.

Though Christ is the primary fulfillment of the scepter promise, prophecies also show that a line of kings, beginning with David, would continue unbroken on earth until the return of Jesus Christ (2 Samuel 7:13; Psalm 89:20, 28-29, 34-36; Jeremiah 33:17; Luke 1:32). See “David’s Throne in Prophecy” on page 46.

The descendants of Judah are easily identified today, since they still bear a form of their ancestor’s name—*Jews* (a nickname for *Judah*). However, it is of utmost importance to understand the distinction between “Jews” and “Israelites.” Most people mistakenly assume the term *Jews* refers to all Israel, when in reality it primarily refers only to the descendants of the tribe of Judah, and others of the house of Judah,



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*Jacob blesses his 12 sons  
by Harry Anderson.*

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including Benjamin and Levi. The tribe of Judah (the Jews) was not given the birthright blessings. We later elaborate on the importance of this distinction.

### **Details of Joseph's birthright blessings**

Genesis 49:22-26 provides a detailed description of the physical birthright blessings to be given to Joseph's descendants, providing many keys to help identify the fulfillment of these promises over time, even to this day. However, one should note that even though Jacob had earlier divided Joseph's birthright blessing between his two sons, in this prophecy he still refers to Joseph, not Ephraim and Manasseh, thus keeping them unified under their father's name. This is a clue that Ephraim's and Manasseh's descendants would be linked in many ways (including culturally and linguistically), yet still be distinct national entities.

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Notice the details of Joseph's blessings:

### **An expansionist people**

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall" (verse 22).

As a healthy bough (or vine) rapidly spreads, Joseph's descendants would be characterized by their expansion and would successfully colonize many lands.

### **Many geopolitical enemies**

"The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob" (verses 23-24).

However, Joseph's descendants would face many enemies who would try to destroy them—perhaps partially out of jealousy for the high standard of living the birthright blessings would bring to them. But the prophecy tells us to watch for clear acts of providence preserving Joseph from these attacks.

### **Material fruitfulness**

"By the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb" (verse 25).

Joseph's descendants would possess vast material blessings, such as land in ideal climates for agricultural production and access to natural resources beneath the earth's surface—both of which would be key factors allowing these nations to support large populations at a high standard of living.

### **Separate from the other brothers**

"The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was *separate from his brothers*" (verse 26).

The blessings given to Joseph's descendants would exceed those of the other brothers (Genesis 48:22), and Ephraim and Manasseh would literally be separate from their brother nations.



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In chapter 4 we will revisit these and other specific elements of the birthright blessings to identify the descendants of Joseph in modern times.

### **All tribes blessed**

The Genesis 49 prophecy closes with this summary statement: “All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing” (verse 28).

Each son was given a blessing and, in essence, all 12 shared the original promise made to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3. But within that promise were two important and distinct elements—a *scepter blessing* (bestowing a dynasty through which salvation would ultimately be offered to the world) and a *birthright blessing* (bestowing superior national material blessings). Centuries later the author of 1 Chronicles confirmed that these two elements were given to Judah and Joseph: “Yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph’s” (1 Chronicles 5:2).

So, as each of Jacob’s sons’ families developed into tribes and eventually into nations, we must understand how these two elements were fulfilled. It is key to understanding the Bible, other prophecies and our world today.

In the next chapter, as we cover the rise and fall of ancient Israel, we will see that the ancient nation of Israel was a *partial* fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, but that the birthright and scepter elements of the promise were not totally fulfilled in ancient times.

## CHAPTER 2



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# THE RISE AND FALL OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

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“For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods” (2 Kings 17:7).

**I**n chapter 1 we covered key portions of the history of the family of Jacob in Egypt. Early in His relationship with Abraham, God had declared to him, “Your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years” (Genesis 15:13). That foreign land was Egypt, to which Jacob’s family had fled to survive a famine in their homeland of Canaan. Joseph, through divine providence, had risen to high political office in Egypt’s government and was able to feed and shelter his father and brothers and their families from the years of famine.

*Ancient Israel reached the peak of its power under King Solomon. This artist’s image shows the queen of Sheba visiting Solomon’s court (oil painting by Edward Poynter).*

At that point, Jacob’s descendants comprised nothing larger than a *family* of about 70 people (Genesis 46:27; Exodus 1:5). But God had promised that Abraham’s descendants would become a nation (Genesis 12:2). Now, given a choice portion of Egypt in which to live (Genesis 47:6), “the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them” (Exodus 1:7).

Their exploding population threatened the Egyptians, who proceeded to enslave the Israelites. By allowing this to happen, God demonstrated to Israel that they could only rise through *His power and faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham*—not because of any abilities of their own (Deuteronomy 7:7; 10:22).

## Moses leads Israel out of Egypt

In order for the Israelites to become a sovereign nation as prophesied, God first had to free them from Egyptian slavery, which He accomplished through Moses.

Through a series of remarkable miracles, God prepared Moses to be Israel's deliverer. When he was a baby, his mother placed him in a basket and set it in the Nile River, hoping to save his life from an Egyptian edict to kill all male Israelite infants (Exodus 2:1-4). An Egyptian princess drew Moses from the water, and he was adopted into the Egyptian royal family as a prince (verses 5-10). Despite rising to prominence as an Egyptian, Moses came to identify with the suffering of his people, and when one day he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite, he killed the Egyptian and was forced to flee to the wilderness (verses 11-15).

Moses survived in the wilderness for 40 long years, until God one day spoke to him from a burning bush and appointed him to return to Egypt to lead Israel out of slavery. Though it took 10 devastating plagues to convince Pharaoh to [release the Israelite slaves](#), God prevailed.

The small family that totaled about 70 when they entered Egypt, left as a nation of some estimated 2 million (Exodus 12:37)!

Moses led the children of Israel to Mount Sinai where a momentous event occurred—God and the people of Israel entered into a covenant, a separate covenant from the unconditional Abrahamic covenant.

Known as the Old Covenant, this agreement between God and the burgeoning nation of Israel included God's essential moral law—the [10 Commandments](#) (Exodus 20). It promised physical blessings for continued obedience and curses for disobedience (Leviticus 26). Though the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham was assured, within this covenant God decreed that if the physical nation of Israel refused to obey His law, they would be punished, including losing their land temporarily (verses 18, 33-35).

## The Sabbath sign

An important element of God's covenant with Israel was the [seventh-day Sabbath](#), which God designated as *holy time* on the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:1-3). It was now codified as the fourth of the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11).

God ended His instructions with a strong statement to Israel: "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a *sign between Me and you* throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you'" (Exodus 31:13).

God clearly declared that keeping the Sabbath would be a distinctive, iden-

tifying *sign* for Israel. The Hebrew word translated “sign” is *oth* and means “a distinguishing mark” or a “banner” (*Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*). Just as a flag or seal identifies modern nations, the people of Israel were to be identified by their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath!

In fact, God elevated this to a distinct covenant *within* the covenant (verse 16). Even if they disobeyed God, they would still understand who they were as long as they kept the Sabbath. If they stopped keeping the Sabbath, they would not only be punished but also lose their identity as Israel.

As we will see, the Sabbath day is one reason a portion of Israel (Judah, or the Jews) has retained its identity and another portion (the 10 tribes) has lost it.

## **Israel takes its place among the nations**

After consenting to the covenant on Mount Sinai, the people of Israel quickly forgot it and slipped into a cycle of sin, disbelief and unfaithfulness. They found themselves consigned to wandering in the wilderness for 40 years before they could inherit the Promised Land (Numbers 32:13).

Finally, under Joshua’s leadership, God allowed them to enter the land of Canaan. But even after being miraculously helped by God time and again to take possession of the land, Israel continually disobeyed Him. Over the next 300 years, a series of judges arose to deliver Israel from specific crises, but overall they remained weak, disorganized and prone to sin (Judges 21:25). They were far from being a unified nation.

Eventually, frustrated with this situation, the people asked Samuel to give them a king. They failed to see they were rejecting God, but nevertheless He gave them their king (1 Samuel 8:7, 21-22). However, He told them that Israel’s monarchy had to be different from those of the surrounding nations. Israel’s king was to be subject to God’s law—just like everyone else in the nation (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). This principle of *the rule of law* would later be an identifying characteristic of the modern nations of Israel.

As previously mentioned, Israel’s first king, Saul, began his reign in humility, but over time he drifted away from and disobeyed God (1 Samuel 9:2; 15:11). God then removed Saul from the throne and gave it to a young man named David, just a shepherd boy when he was anointed to be king (1 Samuel 16:11-13). Though David lacked Saul’s impressiveness, God isn’t swayed by physical stature. He said, “For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (verse 7). God saw David’s attitude, character and potential.

David developed into a great king—and one of the most important figures in history. And with God’s blessing he molded the 12 tribes into one powerful

nation called *Israel* (2 Samuel 5:1-3; 1 Chronicles 12:23, 38), establishing Jerusalem as the capital and skillfully guiding the nation into its eventual position of prominence (2 Samuel 5:6-10; Psalm 78:70-72).

With King David's reign, certain prophecies began to be fulfilled:

- Establishing Israel as a kingdom initiated the fulfillment of God's Genesis 12:2 promise to make Abraham's descendants a "great nation."
- Since David was a descendent of Judah, establishing his dynasty began to fulfill the prophecy that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah" (Genesis 49:10; Psalm 78:67-72).

Remember, early in his reign God made a special covenant with David, promising "your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). David's dynasty was to last forever because of his godly character (Psalm 78:72; Acts 13:22).

God's covenant did not guarantee, however, that David's descendants would rule without problems. God determined that if the kings from David's line rebelled against Him, they would be punished (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 89:30-32). As we will see, the unified kingdom would be taken from David's descendants—and his monarchy replanted elsewhere. But the covenant specifically promised that David's throne would continue perpetually (1 Kings 2:4; 8:25; 9:5; Psalm 89:33-37).

To understand this in greater detail, read our inset chapter "David's Throne in Prophecy."

## Solomon and Israel's "golden age"

"By the time of David's death, then, a carefully devised political and religious apparatus was in place. The old tribal distinctions still existed, but with David there had come at last a sense of national unity in both secular and spiritual affairs. Israel was now a full-fledged nation among the nations of the world. All the constituent elements associated with nationhood—army, political bureaucracy, and central cult—were well established" (Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 1996, p. 284).

After David's death "the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kings 2:46).

Many refer to King Solomon's 40-year reign as ancient Israel's "golden age" when, unified as one nation, it quickly ascended to great heights marked by distinctive characteristics such as:

- **Territory.** Israel reached its territorial peak with Solomon having "dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphshah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him" (1 Kings 4:24; see also 2 Chronicles

9:26). This vast territory extended to the Euphrates River in the north and to Ezion Geber (on the Gulf of Aqaba) and the border of Egypt in the south.

- **Economic prosperity.** “Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing” (1 Kings 4:20). Israel partnered with the Phoenicians and their maritime trading networks (1 Kings 10:21, 27; 2 Chronicles 9:27), which brought in an abundance of precious metals, and also gleaned revenue from small nations that paid annual tribute to Israel (1 Kings 10:15).
- **Peace.** David fought many wars to secure Israel’s borders (1 Kings 5:3-4), and Solomon enjoyed the results, with no major wars fought during his reign. In fact, from his position of strength, he negotiated peace treaties with major nations such as Egypt (1 Kings 3:1) and Tyre (1 Kings 5:12).
- **Public works projects.** Free from heavy military expenses, Solomon raised a huge labor force to build a permanent temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:13) as well as other building projects that reinforced the kingdom’s infrastructure (1 Kings 9:15).
- **International maritime trade.** Solomon developed an extensive trade partnership with the Phoenician city-state of Tyre through his personal friendship with King Hiram. His ties with Tyre gave him access to the prized timber from Lebanon used in building the temple (1 Kings 5:8-10).

Israel’s maritime strength was impressive. Solomon “had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, apes, and monkeys” (1 Kings 10:22). They were technologically advanced enough to manufacture vessels that could withstand long ocean voyages. Israel’s and Tyre’s trade expeditions, the Bible tells us, reached all the way to Tarshish—located in modern-day Spain (2 Chronicles 9:21)—and Ophir—likely a location on the Indian subcontinent (1 Kings 9:28; 10:11). Solomon could reach Ophir by having a port at Ezion Geber (1 Kings 9:26) on the Gulf of Aqaba, providing access to India via the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea.

As an interesting side note, the most prominent seafaring group within Israel was the tribe of Dan (Judges 5:17). The Danites were likely among the Israelites who embarked with the Phoenicians on these long trips, possibly establishing colonies and trading outposts in Cyprus, Greece and as far away as Ireland.

Danites had a proclivity to name geographic locations after themselves (Joshua 19:47; Judges 18:12, 29). As we will see in the next chapter, their descendants left a trail of place names that include “Dan” as they migrated throughout Europe to their present-day home in Ireland.

Solomon's 40-year rule truly was the peak of Israel's existence as a nation. But, behind the economic prosperity and peace, major problems were brewing that would soon dramatically impact the nation.

First, toward the end of Solomon's reign, adversaries began to seriously challenge Israel's domination of the region (1 Kings 11:14-25). Within a few short years, Israel lost control of the territory that extended to the Euphrates River and other surrounding areas, such as Edom.

Second, Solomon's massive bureaucracy and taxation system created civil discontent, with his citizens burdened by the increasing levies imposed to support his building projects and governmental costs (2 Chronicles 10:4).

Third, and most important, Solomon compromised his relationship with God. The principle was clear: Israel's kings were not above God's law (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). Regardless, Solomon took to marrying many women from foreign nations, a practice God expressly forbade, and in an incredible exploitation of power, he accumulated 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). Eventually, undoubtedly in an attempt to appease many of them, Solomon integrated pagan religious worship into Israel (verses 4-8).

### **Israel divides into two nations**

Solomon's sins, especially his infidelity and compromise with paganism, brought dire consequences on Israel. God had already decreed during David's time that if his sons were unfaithful, the Davidic dynasty would be punished (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 89:30-32).

*The united kingdom of Israel at its peak under Solomon's reign.*

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# DID ANCIENT ISRAEL RECEIVE ALL THAT WAS PROMISED TO ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS?

**M**any assume that all the promises and prophecies about Israel found in Genesis (covered in chapter 1) were fulfilled in the ancient kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon.

While ancient Israel saw the fulfillment of some of the promises made to Abraham's descendants, does this mean that by the end of Solomon's kingdom these prophecies were totally fulfilled? An honest look at all the promises found in Genesis and the description of Israel at its height (1 Kings 4:20-34) shows some major elements missing.

- Abraham was to be the "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5). Israel was *one* nation, which later divided into two nations. Today, a portion of the Jews constitutes the modern state of Israel. But these can hardly be described as "many nations" or, literally, a *multitude of nations*. Ancient Israel could never legitimately be called a *multitude of nations*.
- God told Abraham that his descendants would be "as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore" (Genesis 22:17). Some point to the use of this phrase to describe Israel under Solomon (1 Kings 4:20) as evidence that its only fulfillment was in ancient times. But Solomon's kingdom was only a small type of what would be fulfilled in the future. Moses prophesied that God would cause Israel to grow "a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised" (Deuteronomy 1:11). Hosea (prophesying nearly two centuries after the death of Solomon) spoke of a future time when Israel "shall be as the sand of the sea" (Hosea 1:10). These passages are examples of duality in prophecy.
- Abraham's descendants were to "possess the gate of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17)—strategic passageways that allow a nation to control the movement

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of other nations. Neither the Bible nor secular history shows the ancient nation of Israel possessing this kind of strategic geopolitical power over enemy nations. In fact, throughout most of its history, Israel was weak and was an open gate to its enemies (Nahum 3:13).

- Jacob’s descendants were to become “a nation and a company of nations” (Genesis 35:11). Later this promise was given specifically to Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 48:19). Ephraim and Manasseh never fulfilled these prophecies in ancient times.
- The prophecies in Genesis 49:22-26 describe Joseph’s descendants as far surpassing the rest of the tribes of Israel in power and physical blessings. Yet the time of Israel’s greatest power was under the rule of Solomon (a descendant of Judah). During ancient Israel’s pinnacle of power, Ephraim and Manasseh were merely tribes under the authority of the Davidic throne ruling from Jerusalem. Even after the northern 10 tribes revolted, their history was mostly a record of national decline and moral decay, and they are never described as having the grand blessings promised to the descendants of Joseph.

If these prophecies and promises were not fulfilled in the time of ancient Israel, there are really only two possible explanations:

Option 1: God was simply using grand hyperbolic language to describe the birthright blessings and never intended for these promises to be fulfilled literally. The problem with this idea is that it contradicts many scriptures that show God always *means what He says* and *He fulfills His word* (Numbers 23:19-20; Isaiah 46:11; Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:16).

Option 2: The ancient kingdom of Israel did not fulfill these promises in totality. Instead, God intended to fulfill these promises in modern times—years after the rise and fall of ancient Israel. Genesis indicates that these promises would *not* be fulfilled in ancient times, but “in the last days” (Genesis 49:1)—a biblical term for the era preceding the return of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3).

The purpose of this booklet is to show that God *did* fulfill these prophecies in modern times, primarily through the United States and the nations of the British Commonwealth.

“So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel. ... Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen’” (1 Kings 11:9, 11-13).

When Solomon died around 928 B.C., his son Rehoboam became king. Early in his reign, a delegation from the northern 10 tribes led by a man named Jeroboam (who had been prophesied in 1 Kings 11:31-35 to lead a secession), asked Rehoboam to lighten the taxation and service burdens Solomon had levied on them (1 Kings 12:4). Rehoboam, foolishly ignoring the elders’ advice, harshly responded that he would *increase* these burdens (verse 14).

His despotic response led the northern 10 tribes to rebel. “What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse,” they declared. “To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!” (verse 16).

They quickly installed Jeroboam as their new king, declared themselves independent from the Davidic dynasty (verse 20), and thus formed a new nation—the kingdom of Israel. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Rehoboam and the Davidic dynasty, which now became known as the kingdom of Judah.

This was a crucial point in the history of Abraham’s descendants.

At this point, the previously unified Israel divided into two entirely separate nations. From this point forward, the term *Israel* would primarily refer to the northern 10 tribes. The term *Judah* would refer to the two southern tribes—Judah and Benjamin (plus many Levites)—who stayed loyal to the Davidic dynasty.

Many people to this day are confused on this important detail, assuming the terms *Jew* and *Israelite* are synonymous! One of the modern contributing factors to this confusion is that in 1948 the Jews called their new nation *Israel*, so in the minds of many they are one and the same. But in the Bible, *Jew* refers to an inhabitant of Judah (thus, a *Jew* could be a descendant of Judah, Benjamin or Levi who lived in Judah). In fact, the first time the term *Jews* is mentioned in the King James Version of the Bible, it’s describing the Jews (the nation of Judah) being at war with Israel (2 Kings 16:5-6).

This distinction is vitally important to remember: All Jews are Israelites (since they are all descendants of Jacob), but not all Israelites are Jews (since Judah is only one of the 12 tribes).



*After the northern 10 tribes seceded, Israel and Judah became two separate kingdoms.*

## Northern kingdom descends into apostasy

Israel—the northern 10 tribes—quickly fell into a pattern of dynastic instability. “Between the reigns of Jeroboam ben Nebat and Hoshea ben Elah, the throne of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was seized by usurpers nine times within two centuries” (Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 1977, p. 171).

Under Jeroboam, who quickly proved to be more concerned with consolidating his power than pleasing God, it didn’t take long for Israel to abandon God and His laws. Jeroboam feared that Israelites traveling to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God on the appointed feast days would become nostalgic and want to reunify with the Davidic dynasty (1 Kings 12:27).

To prevent that, he instituted a counterfeit religious system in Israel, setting up two calves of gold, and saying to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt” (verse 28).

His new religious system included decentralized worship, a priesthood not derived from Levi, the tribe chosen of God, and a substitute Feast of Tabernacles held one month later than the time God commanded (verses 31-33). Jeroboam’s version of religion imitated, but perverted, the system God had instituted through Moses.

Because of his apostasy, many Levites and a small number of Israelites who were also determined to remain faithful to God migrated to Judah (2 Chronicles 11:13-17). Many of these individuals assimilated into the Jewish nation, while some maintained their tribal identity (Luke 2:36).

The northern kingdom of Israel would only last for a little over 200 years after its secession from Judah, and would not recover from this apostasy. Eighteen more kings followed Jeroboam, all of them described as essentially wicked and idolaters. Two were noted specifically for directly worshipping Baal, a prominent false god of the Canaanites (1 Kings 16:31; 22:53).

God knew this tendency toward paganism would continue to plague Israel and decreed during Jeroboam's reign that He would "strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images" (1 Kings 14:15).

Thus we have another key to identifying Israel's descendants later in history—because they abandoned the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and His laws), they essentially became a pagan people during the centuries when they became lost to history.

God sent many prophets to the northern kingdom to warn that their national sins would bring the curses promised for these sins (Leviticus 26:14-45). The most prominent of those prophets were Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea. Throughout two centuries and multiple kings, they implored Israel to repent of its idolatry and Sabbath-breaking (Hosea 2:11; 8:2-6; Amos 8:5). Through the prophet Hosea, God summed up Israel's core spiritual problem: "They have ceased obeying the LORD" (Hosea 4:10).

## **Assyria's rise and Israel's fall**

During the period shortly after Israel and Judah split, a new world power was rising to the north—Assyria (centered in modern-day northern Iraq). Assyrian King Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.) invaded and controlled the Aramaean states north of Israel, bringing them into the growing Assyrian Empire, strikingly close to Israel and Judah during the kingship of northern Israel's King Omri (885-874 B.C.).

Omri reigned for 12 years over the northern kingdom and had many accomplishments, including establishing the strategic Samaria as Israel's capital, conquering Moab and making peace with Judah. Archaeologists and historians have found more written in extrabiblical historical sources about Omri than any other Israelite king. For instance, the Mesha Stele (a stone with detailed historical inscriptions by King Mesha of Moab) prominently mentions King Omri as oppressing and ruling over the Moabite kingdom.



*The Mesha Stele provides details about Omri's reign not mentioned in the Bible; the Black Obelisk depicts Israel's King Jehu bowing before King Shalmaneser III; a close-up of the Black Obelisk shows King Jehu bowing before King Shalmaneser III.*

Wikimedia Commons; The British Museum/CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

His reign was so notable that surrounding nations began referring to the northern kingdom of Israel by his name. His “international significance is to be seen in the fact that Assyria, throughout its history even a century after Omri’s death, referred to Israel as *Bit Humri* or *Bit Humria* (House of Omri) and referred to her kings as *Mar Huumrii* (Son of Omri)” (Jack P. Lewis, *Historical Backgrounds of Bible History*, 1971, p. 94).

This fact is significant. First, it shows that the northern 10 tribes were not always known simply by the name *Israel*. Secular history often identifies

Israelites by names given to them by other nations. Second, the name *Bit Humri* (house of Omri) has linguistic ties to other names that help identify where Israel migrated—specifically *Cimmerians* and *Gimmiri*. We will cover this in the next chapter.

Omri's son Ahab followed him and became one of the most infamous kings in the northern kingdom's history because of his evil ways (1 Kings 16:30). Married to the equally infamous and wicked Queen Jezebel, he reigned throughout the time of God's prophet Elijah.

Assyria's shadow loomed over the region until finally, in 841 B.C., Shalmaneser III invaded Israel during the reign of King Jehu and made it a vassal state. Though not recorded in the Bible, this is clearly recorded on the Black Obelisk (housed in the British Museum). It shows an image of King Jehu bowing before Shalmaneser III and lists the tribute Jehu had brought to Assyria. This Assyrian artifact identifies Jehu as "son of Omri." Since Jehu was not of Omri's line, this shows that Israel's enemies continued to identify Israel by Omri's name.

During the reign of King Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.), the northern kingdom gained some reprieve from the encroachment of the Assyrian Empire. Though Jeroboam II was an evil king, he reigned for 41 years and temporarily increased Israel's territory (2 Kings 14:23-28) due to a short period of Assyrian weakness.

The books of Amos and Hosea were written during the reign of Jeroboam II, and in their prophecies they warned that despite the relative peace of the day, Israel's serious national sins were about to bring on God's punishment (Amos 3:2). These prophecies revealed Israel's impending punishment—national defeat and captivity (Hosea 13:16; Amos 4:2; 5:27).

These two prophetic books also give important clues we will examine in the next chapter to identify Israel after their experience in captivity.

After Jeroboam II died in 753 B.C., Israel went into a tailspin. The northern kingdom would exist for 24 more years "of continued degeneration of the social structure and unstable leadership" (Henry Jackson Flanders, et al., *People of the Covenant*, 1988, p. 289). These last two decades would see six different kings rule Israel, three of whom would be assassinated.

As Israel's civil government was coming apart, Assyria was regaining its strength and imperial ambitions in the region, with the goal of controlling Syria (north of Israel), the Holy Land and Egypt.

During King Menahem's reign, the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) threatened Israel once again and was appeased only by Menahem paying tribute to stave off invasion (2 Kings 15:19-20).



## The first wave of Israel's captivity

The Assyrian threat intensified during King Pekah's reign (740-732 B.C.), as Tiglath-Pileser III invaded the northern portion of Israel and took the Israelite inhabitants captive to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chronicles 5:26). This is called the *first wave* of the Assyrian captivity of Israel.

Cuneiform records verify these events from the Assyrian perspective: "Bet-Omri [Israel] all of whose cities I had added to my territories on my former campaigns, and had left out only the city of Samaria. ... The whole of Naphtali I took for Assyria. ... The land of Bet-Omri, all its people their possessions I took away to Assyria" (quoted by Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*, 1980, p. 244). Thousands of Israelites from the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of Manasseh fell captive at this time (1 Chronicles 5:26).

Note that the northern kingdom was called "Bet-Omri" (sons of Omri)—not Israel!

Hoshea assassinated King Pekah in 732 B.C. (2 Kings 15:30) and, according to Assyrian records, became a vassal king under Assyria. Hoshea would become the last king over the northern kingdom, which by this time was extremely weakened.

Hoshea made a strategic error that would ultimately lead to the fall of the northern kingdom and the fulfillment of Amos' and Hosea's prophecies. Roughly six years into his reign, he tried to free Israel from the Assyrian yoke by forming an alliance with Egypt against Assyria (2 Kings 17:4). Hoshea ceased paying the required tribute to Assyria. Assyria would not tolerate this rebellion.

## The final fall of the northern kingdom

Now under Shalmaneser V, Assyria again invaded Israel beginning around 724 B.C. (2 Kings 17:5). During the three-year siege of the city of Samaria, King Hoshea was captured and imprisoned (verse 4). In the late summer or early fall of 721 B.C. Assyria breached Samaria's walls and the last stronghold of the northern kingdom of Israel fell.

"In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17:6). "So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day" (verse 23).

Thus the northern kingdom of Israel tragically ended, with Samaria's population now joining the thousands of Israelites already taken captive in the first wave of Assyrian captivity.

*The Annals of Sargon* record: "I besieged and occupied the town of Samaria, and took 27,280 of its inhabitants captive" (*Records of the Past*, Vol. IX, 1873, p.

*After falling to Assyria, the inhabitants of Israel were taken into captivity and placed in different regions of the Assyrian Empire.*

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5). This number does not represent the totality of Israelite captives taken out of the land. It strictly applied to the inhabitants of the city of Samaria. Also, often ancient records only counted adult males, excluding females and children. The first wave of Assyrian captivity had included hundreds of thousands of Israelites from northeastern Israel.

Israel's captivity came as a result of its national sins and rejection of God (2 Kings 17:7-23; Leviticus 26:17, 25, 33).



The biblical record is very clear that Assyria took captive *all* of the northern Israelite tribes: “The LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was *none left* but the tribe of Judah alone” (2 Kings 17:18).

### Israel in captivity

Assyria had an interesting practice of shuffling its captives. They would

remove the entire population of a nation and resettle them in another distant location, while replacing them with conquered peoples from other lands.

This is exactly what happened in Israel. The northern 10 tribes were moved to Assyrian territory northeast of their former homeland and the Assyrians then transplanted conquered peoples from Babylon into the area of Samaria (2 Kings 17:24). The new inhabitants of the land introduced their own forms of pagan worship into the area, which later became syncretized with the religion of Israel (verses 29-33). These people became known as *Samaritans*, who were despised by the Jews living in Judah (John 4:9).

What became of the people of the northern 10 tribes, now captives of the mighty Assyrian Empire, living in foreign cities surrounded by strangers?

The Assyrian Empire lasted only another 109 years before being destroyed by the rising Babylonian Empire in 612 B.C. In the chaos and confusion of Assyria's downfall, the Israelite captives disappeared from history—becoming known as the “*lost*” 10 tribes of Israel. They never returned to their homeland in Israel. They seemingly vanished.

But how do scores of thousands of people simply disappear in a roughly 100-year period? Secular historians assume that the Israelites were assimilated into the Assyrian Empire and ceased to exist. Why? Simply because historical records do not show any group in the area calling itself “Israel.”

But this assumption is incorrect. The northern 10 tribes did not become absorbed into the peoples they were surrounded by. God specifically stated this would not happen: “Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,” says the LORD. “For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground” (Amos 9:8-9)!

We will take a closer look at this remarkable prophecy in the next chapter. Instead of disappearing, Hosea prophesied, “My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17). It would be easy for these itinerants to appear as pagans because they embraced non-Israelite religions and didn't observe the weekly or annual Sabbaths (1 Kings 12:32-33).

After the northern tribes went into captivity, the Bible turns its focus to Judah, which Babylon would take captive more than a hundred years later. The Jews, however, would retain their identity, primarily because they maintained the seventh-day Sabbath. God had decreed that the Sabbath would be an identifying sign of His people (Exodus 31:13). Because the Jews maintained a basic knowledge of the Sabbath (and still do to this day), they continue to understand their identity as a tribe of Israel.

Though the Bible does not focus on the northern tribes after their captivity, it does not forget them. If Israel was absorbed into the nations where they were carried captive and ceased to exist as a people, why did God continue to inspire prophets with messages specifically for Israel centuries later?

But in order to trace the tribes and their eventual resettlement in a new land to inherit the unfulfilled birthright blessings, from this point we must turn to secular history. Using clues found in both the Bible and secular history, we can trace the general migrations and modern identity of the lost 10 tribes of Israel today.

The next chapter shows why Israel wasn't merely assimilated into Assyria, and tells the incredible story of *where* they went, *who* they became and *how* they can be identified!

## DAVID'S THRONE IN PROPHECY

"And she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her" (Genesis 17:16).

**C**hapter 1 describes how the promises to the sons of Jacob were divided into two major parts: the birthright blessings (material blessings to the descendants of Joseph) and the scepter promise (kingly blessings to the descendants of Judah). Genesis 49:10 contains a key promise: "The scepter [symbol of kingship] shall not depart from Judah."

The promise of this kingly line would not be fulfilled until more than 600 years later. After God led Israel out of Egyptian captivity through Moses, He governed Israel as a theocracy. In other words, God ruled the people directly through His law and revelation to His servants (Moses, Joshua, the judges and Samuel). But this period came to an end when the people of Israel demanded a king like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8:5), fulfilling God's prediction centuries earlier (Deuteronomy 17:14).

A man named Saul became Israel's first king, but he did not fulfill the scepter promise. Rather, through his rebellion against God and his misrule, Saul demonstrated that neither he nor his descendants were qualified to rule Israel (1 Samuel 13:13-14; 15:26-28). He typified, as God foretold, the destructive results of a king not being subject to God and His law (Deuteronomy 17:15-20).

### **God chooses David**

God then led Samuel the prophet to the small village of Bethlehem and revealed the man He had chosen as the new king of Israel—David (1 Samuel 16:1-13). A descendant of Judah through Perez (Genesis 38:29; Matthew 1:2-6), David fulfilled the scepter promise that kings would descend from Abraham through the line of Judah (Genesis 17:16; 49:10).

David differed greatly from Saul. Even though he sinned at times, God declared that David was "a man after My own heart, who will do all My will" (Acts 13:22). It took some time, but David eventually became the ruler over all 12 tribes of Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-5).

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## The Davidic covenant established

After David established his kingship over all Israel and demonstrated his faithfulness, God entered into a covenant with David, an agreement that stands separately from the other covenants we have read about so far. Known as the “Davidic covenant,” it states:

“When your [David’s] days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and *I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. *But My mercy shall not depart from him*, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. *Your throne shall be established forever*” (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

Essentially, God said that:

- David’s dynasty would continue through his son Solomon (1 Kings 1:30, 37-39; 1 Chronicles 28:5).
- The dynasty, God emphasized three times, would last *forever*.
- If kings who descended from David rebelled, they would be punished, but the dynasty would not permanently end.

God reaffirmed this covenant in 1 Kings 2:4 and 1 Chronicles 22:10, and in Psalm 89:4 we read, “Your [David’s] seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to *all generations*.” In other words, monarchs descended from David would continue to exist in every generation—and on into eternity! The New Testament reveals this throne will be in existence when Christ returns to earth to rule and occupy it (Luke 1:31-33).

As chapter 2 shows, Solomon led Israel to its pinnacle of national greatness as a united kingdom, but because of his disobedience, God restricted the rule of the Davidic dynasty to only a few of the tribes of Israel (1 Kings 11:9-13).

After Jeroboam led the northern 10 tribes to form a new nation called “Israel,” David and Solomon’s descendants continued to reign over the kingdom of Judah. Composed primarily of the tribe of Judah but also with some from the tribe of Benjamin and Levi (1 Kings 12:21), the kingdom of Judah lasted for more than 340 years, until Babylon destroyed it in 586 B.C. The last king of the Davidic dynasty to rule over Judah was Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17-18). When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, invaded and destroyed Judah, Zedekiah was captured

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by Babylonian forces and imprisoned until the day he died (2 Kings 25:4-7; Jeremiah 52:11).

Nebuchadnezzar wanted not only to kill King Zedekiah, but intended to destroy the Jewish monarchy completely. To that end, he gathered all of Zedekiah's sons (the princes of Judah) and executed them in front their father (2 Kings 25:7; Jeremiah 52:10).

With all the male heirs to the throne dead, it seemed like the Davidic dynasty had ended when Zedekiah died years later.

But what about God's promises to preserve David's dynasty, that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah" (Genesis 49:10) and that David's throne would "be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16)?

Were these promises and covenants broken?

### **Jeremiah's mysterious commission**

During Judah's downfall a prophet named Jeremiah rose to prominence. God inspired him to record many prophecies and the history of Judah's demise in the book bearing his name.

As the nation of Judah began unraveling and before the impending murder of all the male heirs to the throne, God repeated the Davidic covenant: "David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel. ... Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne'" (Jeremiah 33:17, 20-21).

But how could God fulfill His promises to both Judah and David if the heirs were all to be destroyed by the Babylonians—something that did indeed occur?

The book of Jeremiah provides a fascinating clue!

After Jerusalem fell, Nebuchadnezzar appointed a man named Gedaliah to govern the Jews who were not taken captive to Babylon. Gedaliah, however, was assassinated by a man named Ishmael, who took captive the people who had been subject to Gedaliah. Within this record is something that can easily be overlooked. Notice: "Then Ishmael carried away captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, *the king's daughters* and all the people who remained" (Jeremiah 41:10).





*Top, King Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons in front of him, to ensure the end of the Davidic monarchy. Bottom, the Coronation Chair on which the British monarchs have been crowned since King Edward I.*

Though all the male heirs to David's throne were eventually killed, Zedekiah had daughters who survived the Babylonian invasion! Not only that, but we will see they were close to Jeremiah himself.

Eventually, this group was rescued from Ishmael's control by a man named Johanan (verse 16) who, fearing that Babylon would retaliate against the remnant of Judah, decided to flee with this group to Egypt despite Jeremiah's warning that this was not God's will (Jeremiah 42:11-16).

Notice Jeremiah's description of the group that fled to Egypt: "But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all nations where they had been driven—men, women, children, *the king's daughters*, and ... Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah" (Jeremiah 43:5-6).

The book of Jeremiah mysteriously ends with him, his assistant Baruch, and King Zedekiah's daughters in Egypt. But what happened to them?

To answer this question, we must



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examine the beginning of Jeremiah's prophetic work. In the first chapter of Jeremiah, God gave him multiple commissions—he was not called simply to preach God's words to Judah (Jeremiah 1:9); he was also given a commission that transcended that nation: "See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, *to build and to plant*" (verse 10).

This is a critically important statement! Jeremiah prophesied not only of the destruction of Judah, but other nations, and was told furthermore that he was "to build and to plant" *nations* (plural) and *kingdoms* (plural)!

The prophet Isaiah had actually prophesied this years earlier: "And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (Isaiah 37:31).

And in Ezekiel 17 God used a "riddle" or "parable"—a simple story that represented a deeper message—directed to "the house of Israel" to describe what would happen (verse 2). This style of writing, also called allegory, requires interpretation, and scholars have offered various explanations as to what God was indicating. What seems clear to most is that the riddle describes the rebuilding of a nation. What doesn't seem as clear is when and how it was fulfilled.

We believe this account explains how God used Jeremiah to fulfill the commission to build nations and fulfill His promise that David's throne would continue. We further believe that the allegory of a twig cropped off and planted elsewhere indicates a new Israelite nation being built.

Here is the riddle with the apparent meanings in brackets:

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will take also one of the highest branches [King Zedekiah] of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one [one of Zedekiah's daughters; the Hebrew word used here has a feminine connotation; see Deuteronomy 28:56], and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain [nation]. On the mountain height of Israel [an Israelite nation, but not the tribe of Judah] I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar [representing growth and prosperity]. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done it" (Ezekiel 17:22-24).

Comparing this imagery to the description in Genesis 49:22 leads us to conclude that Zedekiah's daughter would be planted in the land that would be

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given to one of the sons of Joseph—the primary tribe bearing the name “Israel” (Genesis 48:16).

Putting everything together, we see *how* God maintained His perpetual, unconditional covenant with David. God used Jeremiah to transplant one of King Zedekiah’s daughters to a new land (one ruled by Israelites) where she would be “planted” (established) and where her descendants would grow, rule and prosper—continuing the Davidic throne. God’s law for Israel decreed that if a man didn’t have a son, his inheritance would pass on to the daughters (Numbers 27:8). Through God’s miraculous intervention, Zedekiah’s daughters were spared—and through one of them God would maintain David’s ruling lineage!

### **Extrabiblical clues**

The book of Jeremiah closes with Jeremiah, Zedekiah’s daughters and Baruch in Egypt. It’s likely that Jeremiah completed his book before departing from Egypt to fulfill the last part of his commission “to build and to plant” (Jeremiah 1:10), and we are not provided the details of how Jeremiah “planted” a daughter of Zedekiah into an Israelite nation.

Remember that Egypt was a coastal trading nation on the Mediterranean Sea. The Phoenicians had strong trade connections with Egypt and operated ships throughout the Mediterranean, with far western ports, such as Carthage and the Gates of Hercules (Gibraltar). Jeremiah and his party could have easily boarded a Phoenician trading ship and headed westward, making their way to Celtic Spain and even eventually Celtic Ireland.

Though we have no details of their journey, some speculate that Jeremiah could be identified in Irish legends as Ollam Fodhla—a seer and legislator. It is interesting that *Ollam* and *Fodhla* are similar to Hebrew words *olam* (meaning “antiquity” or “old”) and *pala* (meaning “extraordinary” or “wonderful”). Legends connect this man with another named Simon Brach (linguistically similar to the Hebrew name *Baruch*) and a young princess named Tea or Tara (female name that means “palm tree” in Hebrew). The meaning of this name is interesting when we compare it to the Ezekiel 17:22 prophecy of the *tender twig*.

Other interesting clues also link the modern-day British monarchy to the Israelite throne of David:

- The Stone of Destiny (also called the “Lia Fáil”) has been used in the coronation ceremonies of Irish, Scottish and English kings for centuries. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* summarizes its origin according to one Celtic legend: “The stone was once the pillow upon which the patriarch Jacob rested at Bethel when he beheld the visions of angels [see Genesis 28:10-22]. From the Holy Land it purportedly traveled to Egypt, Sicily, and Spain and reached Ireland

The coat of arms of the British monarchy bears many symbols that connect it with the throne of David.



Wikimedia Commons

about 700 [B.C.] to be set upon the hills of Tara, where the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned. Thence it was taken by the Celtic Scots who invaded and occupied Scotland” (“*Stone of Scone*”). There are other theories regarding the origin of the stone, but, if this legend is true, it seems that Jeremiah and Baruch could have transported the pillar stone from Judah.

- The coat of arms of the British royal family is filled with symbols strongly connecting it with the Davidic monarchy. The coat of arms features multiple lions; Judah’s tribal symbol was a lion (Genesis 49:9; Revelation 5:5). The coat of arms prominently features a harp, a symbol strongly associated with King David (1 Samuel 16:23; 1 Chronicles 13:8). The harp is also a national symbol of Ireland, which is logical since it appears David’s throne was “planted” there after it was “uprooted” from Judah.
- The coronation ceremony of English kings is based on the coronation ceremonies for King David and King Solomon. The coronation ritual consists of anointing with oil (unction), prayers based on the virtues of Old Testament kings and the recitation of *Unxerunt Solomonem*—the words spoken at Solomon’s coronation recorded in 1 Kings 1:39-40. English monarchs have been installed with this basic coronation formula for over a thousand years (Roy Strong, *Coronation*, 2005, p. 5).

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- The British monarchy was one of the few major monarchies to survive the upheavals of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, which saw the fall of many of the royal families of Europe. It continues to endure today through the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Though some in the United Kingdom oppose the monarchy, the majority of citizens continue to strongly support it. A 2013 poll showed that 66 percent of Britons support the monarchy (“[Confidence in British Monarchy at All-Time High, Poll Shows](#),” *The Telegraph*, July 27, 2013). The Bible declares that the throne of David will last for “all generations” (Psalm 89:4).

When Jesus Christ returns, He will be given “the throne of His father David” (Luke 1:32). That throne will exist somewhere on earth when He returns. The weight of evidence supports the throne’s existence today in Great Britain—where the British monarchy (descendants of King David through a daughter of Zedekiah) currently reigns over the Israelite nation of Ephraim.

The preservation of the Davidic line through the British monarchy is a big subject, one we can only scratch the surface of in this booklet. For further study into this topic, consult: *The Lineage of the Scarlet Thread* by Charles F. Lawter; *The Royal House of Britain: An Enduring Dynasty* by W.M.H. Milner; *Judah’s Sceptre and Joseph’s Birthright* by J.H. Allen; and *Jacob’s Pillar: Stone of Destiny* by E. Raymond Capt. Though these publications contain helpful information, Life, Hope & Truth does not endorse all their content.

## CHAPTER 3



Photo by dynamosquito/CC BY-SA 2.0

# THE MIGRATION OF THE “LOST” ISRAELITES

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“For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground” (Amos 9:9).

**T**he Bible does not mention the immediate fate of the thousands of captive Israelites after their Assyrian conquerors fell to the Babylonians. They never returned to their former homeland, nor do they appear in secular historical records under the name *Israel*. To many, it seems that they simply vanished.

But a lack of documents from this time is not surprising. Ancient empires rarely kept detailed records of their own collapse and its impact on captive minorities, especially in a time when records were chiseled into stone or recorded on clay tablets. In fact, very few Assyrian records exist from this time.

But that doesn’t mean it’s impossible to trace the “lost” Israelites. Though the Bible doesn’t track them, it does provide clues that help identify them in history.

## Biblical clues to tracking the tribes

Consider these major biblical clues that help us track Israel’s post-captivity identity:

- **A pagan people.** When looking for the “lost” tribes of Israel, we are *not* looking for people worshipping the biblical God of Abraham. After seceding from Judah, the northern kingdom quickly abandoned the true God and His holy days (1 Kings 12:26-33). This descent into idolatrous pagan-

*On the Behistun Rock in Iran, the last captive (with the pointed cap) is identified as “Skunkha, the Scythian.”*

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ism continued throughout their history as a sovereign nation—causing God to declare that they had “rejected knowledge,” “forgotten the law of your God” and “ceased obeying the LORD” (Hosea 4:6, 10). Even before their captivity, God testified they had “begotten pagan children” (Hosea 5:7)—meaning they were raising the next generation in paganism. And 2 Kings 17:15 shows that Israel “followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them.”

- **A people ignorant of their identity.** As a result of abandoning the seventh-day Sabbath, Israel lost the identifying sign God had given that He said would distinguish them as His people (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12-13).
- **A people labeled by their captors with names derived from “Bit Humri.”** Israel was primarily known by other nations as “Bit Humri” (house of Omri). When on the historical trail searching for the Israelites, derivatives of “Bit Humri” and other such names with connections to their identity as Israel become very important.
- **A migrating people.** Instead of immediately organizing and establishing nations, the “lost” Israelites would become “wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17). God also said He would “sow them among the peoples” (Zechariah 10:9), and that He would “sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground” (Amos 9:9). This indicates they would migrate through different ethnic groups and locations before emerging to fulfill the prophecies made about them. In addition, in Isaiah 49:12; Jeremiah 3:11-12; and 31:7-10 we find statements telling us that the Israelites would wander in a generally northwestern direction from the Middle East, ultimately settling in faraway lands surrounded by water.
- **Prophetic descriptions of modern Israel.** By identifying the modern nations that fit the Genesis 49 prophecies, we can trace their history backwards to see where these people came from.

## The emergence of the Cimmerians and Scythians

The Bible tells us the Israelite captives were taken to at least two different parts of the Assyrian Empire: the north-central region below the Black Sea (Halah, Habor and the Gozan River) and the far eastern area southwest of the Caspian Sea, the cities of the Medes (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11; 1 Chronicles 5:26).

Surveying this historical location within roughly 100 years after their captivity, we find pagan tribes emerging to the west and north of Assyria, near the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Historians broadly label them as Scythians and Cimmerians.



Scythians first appear in historical records as nomadic tribes and clans in the eighth century B.C.—the same century in which the northern 10 tribes of Israel became captive and disappeared—and they allied with other groups in the region to fight and weaken Assyria. Historians offer various theories about how the Scythian tribes originated, but the biblical clues above help us understand that many of these tribes were actually the “lost” Israelites emerging from captivity.

The eighth century also saw the rise of another mysterious tribal group—the Cimmerians—who first appear in Assyrian records in 714 B.C. in the area now known as Turkey (adjacent to Assyria to the north and west). They appear in Assyrian records as joining “a coalition against the Assyrians” (K. Jettmar, *Art of the Steppes*, 1967, p. 24).

How interesting! In looking for the Israelite tribes in the historical record, we find these two groups who are antagonistic toward the Assyrians (as they naturally would be as a result of their brutal deportation and captivity), appearing at exactly the right time (eighth century B.C.), and in a logical location (adjacent to the Assyria Empire).

In their cuneiform tablets, the Assyrians referred to the Cimmerians as the *Gamira* (or *Gamiri*), which is linguistically similar to their word for Israel—*Khumri* (house of Omri). Since ancient languages were primarily preserved orally, how the sounds were recorded in stone and cuneiform inscriptions often varied. It appears the Assyrian word *Khumri* evolved into several variants that included *Humri*, *Humriya*, *Gimirraja* and *Ghomri*.

Danish historian Anne Kristensen’s research on the Cimmerians led her to this conclusion: “There is scarcely reason, any longer, to doubt the exciting and verily astonishing assertion propounded by the students of the Ten Tribes that the Israelites deported from Bit Humria, of the House of ’Omri, are identical with the Gimirraja of the Assyrian sources. Everything indicates that Israelite deportees did not vanish from the picture but that, abroad, under new conditions, they continued to leave their mark on history” (*Who Were the Cimmerians, and Where Did They Come From? Sargon II, the Cimmerians, and Rusa I*, translated by Jørgen Læssøe, the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, No. 57, 1988, pp. 126-127).

History also shows the Cimmerians were closely related to the Scythians. The Behistun Rock is a Persian historical inscription of King Darius I’s conquests, written in the Persian, Babylonian and Median languages. The inscription transliterates the Persian word *Scythia* (*Saka*) into the Babylonian word *Gimiri* (*Cimmerians*), showing that the Persians viewed the Scythians and Cimmerians as related people. The Cimmerians and Scythians were likely “two tribal confederations that formed within one and the same people” (Jettmar, p. 38).

The *Encyclopaedia Iranica* backs up the assertion that the Cimmerians and Scythians were a homogeneous people: “As the Cimmerians cannot be differentiated archeologically from the Scythians, it is possible to speculate about their Iranian origins. In the Neo-Babylonian texts (according to D’yakonov, including at least some of the Assyrian texts in Babylonian dialect) *Gimirri* and similar forms designate the Scythians and Central Asian Saka, reflecting the perception among inhabitants of Mesopotamia that Cimmerians and Scythians represented a single cultural and economic group” (“Cimmerians”).

Though the Cimmerians and the Scythians were related, history records the two peoples at war and the Scythians driving the Cimmerians around the Black Sea, forcing them into a generally westward migration.

As the Cimmerians disappear from recorded history, groups called *Keltoi* (by the Greeks) and *Celtae* (by the Romans) begin to appear migrating westward through Europe. “The earliest reference to the existence of a specifically Celtic people in documented history originates from a sixth-century B.C. sea journey” (Kevin Duffy, *Who Were the Celts?* 1996, p. 4). The emergence of the Celts closely aligns with the disappearance of the Cimmerians from the Black Sea region, and many historians trace the Celts’ origins to the Cimmerian and Scythian peoples of that area.

For example, they identify Scythian/Celtic connections such as advanced horse-riding skills, craftsmanship and artistic work, and even their clothing styles. They trace the Celts’ northwestern migration through the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures found in Europe, from southern Europe north through modern-day France and Germany and into the British Isles and Ireland.

As they wandered throughout Europe, various Celtic tribes settled in areas where their descendants remain today: the Celtic *Gauls* (France), the Celtic *Belgae* (Belgium), the Celtic *Helvetians* (Switzerland) and the Celtic *Pritani* (Ireland and Britain).

These Celtic tribes were actually distinct Israelite tribes, settling in lands that would eventually fulfill the promises made to them in Genesis 49.

## **A closer look at the Scythians**

The name *Scythians* provides other linguistic links to the Israelites. *Scythian* was a general term given to wandering tribes who migrated from Central Asia (around modern-day Iraq, Iran and Turkey) through the Caucasus Mountains and settled north of the Black Sea. One of the prominent Scythian groups was the *Saka*, or *Sacae*, who appear in the records of Persian King Darius I, Assyrian tablets and in the writings of Greek historian Herodotus.

*Saka* or *Sacae* is also linguistically linked to the Israelites. Israel was prophesied to bear the name of the patriarch Isaac (Genesis 21:12; Amos 7:16). Since



*Images of Scythian males on gold artwork reveal they were “wholly Europoid” in appearance (Jettmar, p. 24).*

Alamy.com; Wikimedia Commons

ancient languages, such as Hebrew, contained no written vowels, words were written only with consonants. The name *Isaac* would include the combination *Sk* or *Sc*. Students of the lost 10 tribes have long noticed the linguistic similarity between the hard *SK* (or *SC*) sound of *Saka* or *Sacae* and the name *Isaac*. The word *Scythians* (a derivative of *Sacae*) also contains the consonants *SC*. Tribal groups would later emerge from the Scythian tribes with names that would also have the consonants *SC*, such as Saxons, Scolotoi and Scots. The modern nations of Scotland and Scandinavia still include these consonants today.

In the Declaration of Arbroath (1320), the Scots trace their origin to the Scythians: “They [the Scots] journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the

# SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE ISRAELITES AND SCYTHIANS

## ISRAELITES

## SCYTHIANS

Disappear from history in the eighth century B.C.

Appear in history in the late eighth century B.C.

Disappear within the region of the ancient Assyrian Empire; particularly the "cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17:6) in modern Iran.

Appear in history adjacent to the Assyrian Empire. Many first appear in history in modern Iran.

Abandon the religion of Israel and embrace pagan worship (2 Kings 17:15).

Are pagan peoples who worship nature and have elaborate rituals for the dead, including self-mutilation.

Have extensive experience with horses. King Solomon employed 12,000 Israelite horsemen in his army (2 Chronicles 1:14).

Are known as horsemen of the steppes for their extensive use and domestication of the horse.

Were prophesied to be "wanderers among the nations" (Hosea 9:17).

Are distinguished as nomadic wanderers who did not build established civilizations or cities.

Are made up of multiple tribes, each having internal clans and families, but sharing a similar culture and origin (1 Chronicles 4-8).

Are "different groups, but they had the same way of life and similar burial customs" ("Masters of Gold," *National Geographic*, June 2003).

Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain.”

Much earlier in time, the Scythian tribes allied with the Medes to defeat the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C. After Assyria fell and the Babylonian Empire dominated the region, the Medes and Scythians did not remain allies for long. Around the beginning of the sixth century, the Medes drove the Scythians out of western Asia (the land of their captivity), causing them to migrate northwest and settle north of the Black Sea in the Eurasian steppes. For roughly the next 400 years the Scythians lived in this region, occupying the land from generally the Carpathian Mountains in the west to the Don River in the east (primarily modern-day Ukraine and southwestern Russia).

In the summer of 2015, archaeologists discovered a seal engraved in Hebrew on the shores of the Black Sea in the Russian city Rostov-on-Don—the area occupied by the Scythians before they were pushed westward. When we understand that the Scythians were the wandering, “lost” Israelites, this discovery should not surprise us. To learn more, read [“Ancient Hebrew Artifact Found in Russia May Confirm Biblical Prophecy.”](#)

The Scythians never formed a nation state throughout this period, but remained nomadic, horse-riding tribes unified by a single culture. Hermann Parzinger, a historian of the Scythians, provides this insight: “From ancient sources we know the names of several tribes, and they seem to be Iranian names. They were different groups, but they had the same way of life and similar burial customs” (quoted by Mike Edwards, “Masters of Gold,” *National Geographic*, June 2003). Remember, a large portion of the Israelites were held captive in “the land of the Medes,” which is modern-day Iran.

The Scythians mainly herded sheep, horses and cattle. “The livestock provided not only their food but also leather and wool for the clothes on their backs” (Frank Trippett, *The First Horsemen*, 1974, p. 14). They lived in relative peace on the edges of the great Mediterranean empires that would rise and fall throughout this time—Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. We know very little about their everyday lives because they left behind no writing or historical records, which leads historians to believe they were an illiterate society. Most of what we know about them comes from their burial mounds and artistic creations.

The Scythians remained a footnote in history for nearly 1,500 years until Russian archaeologists began excavating artifacts in the 20th century. British historian Tamara Talbot Rice has compiled the findings of the Russian archaeologists and early historians, particularly Herodotus, in her definitive book, *The Scythians*.

She documents their artistry with gold, which was beyond anything



*The Danube  
River runs  
through  
Budapest,  
Hungary.*

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## TRACING THE TRIBE OF DAN

Though not the main subject of this work, the descendants of Jacob's son Dan warrant special attention. As we already saw, the descendants of Dan had a proclivity for naming places after their forefather Dan (Joshua 19:47; Judges 18:11-12, 29). The descendants of Dan can often be traced since they named landmarks with the consonants *Dn*.

Geography reveals an amazingly large number of rivers, towns and even nations with the *Dn* signature. These include: The Dnieper, Dniester, Danube and Don Rivers; and the nations of Denmark and Sweden.

The majority of Dan's descendants apparently settled in Ireland, which includes the towns of Dunshaughlin, Dunleer, Donegal and Dungloe. Study a map, and you will find dozens of other places in Ireland that are marked with the consonants *Dn*. One of the most common clan names in Ireland was Dunne or Dunn.

Irish traditions include stories of an ancient and mystical tribe called the Tuatha de Dannan, which can literally be translated as "the tribe of Dan" or "the children of Danu."

expected of nomadic tribes often described as “barbarians” by the Greeks and Romans. However, the ancient Israelites had achieved a high level of cultural sophistication and were renowned for their craftsmanship, including gold and silver, especially in the times of David and Solomon (1 Kings 10; 1 Chronicles 29:1-5).

One of the most significant points in Ms. Rice’s work concerns the artistic similarities between the Scythians, the Celts and the English. Noting the “turnout” of horse mounts, she states that both the Scythians and English placed great importance on the elaborate and sophisticated horse equipment. “Can the inhabitants of England have inherited this outlook together with the decorative elements which affected ‘Celtic’ art?” she asks (p. 74). Ms. Rice observes other examples of similarities:

- Scythian artwork often contained images of large-beaked birds. Remarkably, the Anglo-Saxon Sutton Hoo treasure found in Suffolk, England (dating to A.D. 655-656) contains almost identical artwork (p. 191).
- Stone slabs found in England show a carved image of a stag of “wholly Scythian character.” She wrote, “The man who carved this stone must have felt the wind blowing westward from southern Russia across Scandinavia, wafting a last flicker of inspiration from a long-dead Scythian source” (p. 192).

These connections raise an important question: Are they mere coincidence, or do they show a link between the Anglo-Saxons and the Scythians?

Further research of Scythian burial sites has shown evidence that they had an aristocratic social structure, with wealthy regional chieftains dominating particular areas (similar to the European feudal system of the Middle Ages). They also employed a ritualistic form of paganism where mourners for the dead “cut off parts of their ears, slashed their arms, and pierced their left hands with arrows” (Mike Edwards, “Searching for the Scythians,” *National Geographic*, September 1996, p. 74). This is important, because God had warned the Israelites about these pagan rituals long before (Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1), but they nevertheless practiced almost identical customs before they went into captivity (1 Kings 18:28).

Historians can only offer theories as to why the Scythian domination of the steppes began to weaken in the mid-fourth century B.C. Some believe Sarmatian tribes (followed by other Asiatic tribes) began to cross the Don River, pushing the Scythians out of the Black Sea region. Others theorize climate changes killed the abundant grasslands of the steppes, forcing the Scythians to look elsewhere for fertile grazing land. Over the next 200 years, the Scythians further weakened, suffered defeat and ultimately, around A.D. 200, “vanished from the pages of history as abruptly as they had entered” (Rice, p. 178).

This map shows the general migration routes taken by the descendants of the “lost” 10 tribes after their captivity in Assyria.

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But, like their Israelite ancestors, the Scythians did not simply vanish. Throughout the 200-year period of their decline, Scythian tribes were pushed out of the Black Sea area and migrated west—where they entered central Europe and reappeared in history among the Germanic tribes on the outskirts of the Roman Empire.

(Note: The term *Scythian* eventually took on a broader definition. Sometimes the term referred to any tribe or group of tribes that occupied the land formerly inhabited by the Scythians—which became known as Scythia. The term was also used as a general term like *barbarian*, describing those outside of Greco-Roman culture who didn't speak Greek. So not every group labeled as Scythians throughout history was actually descended from Israel.)





## The Scythians in the first century

Though weakened, the Scythians were still a recognizable entity at the time of the first century. The apostle Paul wrote: “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all” (Colossians 3:11). The context of Paul’s use of *Scythian* is contrasting gentile peoples with Israelites—making the point that Christ unites all Christians, regardless of nationality. It is possible that Paul was actually contrasting “barbarians” (the Roman name for tribes outside of the rule of Rome) with “Scythians”—understanding that Scythians were descendants of the 10 tribes of Israel.

In fact, the possibility is given more weight by strong New Testament evi-

dence that the locations of the 10 tribes of Israel were known to Jesus Christ and the 12 apostles.

In Matthew 10:6, Jesus commissioned His disciples to go “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” As we have already explained, the Jews were just one part of the 12 tribes of Israel. There is evidence that the original 12 apostles traveled widely and preached the gospel to places inhabited by descendants of Israel—possibly Ireland, Britain and other parts of northwest and central Europe.

The apostle James made an even more direct statement that implies the apostles knew where the tribes were located. James addressed his letter: “To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1).

The epistle of James is known as one of the General Epistles because it is not written to just one area, but was to be distributed to a wide general audience. It appears that James knew where the 10 tribes were and intended his epistle to reach them!

The apostle John, in Revelation 7, was given a vision about a future time when 144,000 descendants of the tribes of Israel would be “sealed” (receive God’s Holy Spirit). He even lists the 12 tribes by name (verses 5-8). Not only does this prove that the 12 tribes of Israel will exist in the end times, but that John (living in the first century) understood they still existed and were identifiable.

The Jewish historian Josephus, in *Antiquities of the Jews*, completed around A.D. 93, provides evidence that the Jewish community of the first century knew the 10 tribes still existed and were identifiable as a people. He wrote: “The ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers” (*The Works of Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews* 11:5:2, 1987, p. 294).

God inspired these New Testament scriptures to show us that the 10 tribes continued to exist as a distinct people in the first century. The quote from Josephus is further historical evidence to provide backing to the words of Scripture.

## **The migrations continue**

An important theme to notice when studying the migrations of the “lost” 10 tribes of Israel is that when they seemingly vanish from the historical record, other groups mysteriously appear close by. The Scythians disappear from the historical record around A.D. 200. Where did they go?

Interestingly, around A.D. 300, a period began in central Europe that German historians call the “Völkerwanderung” (“wandering of the peoples”). It was a time of mass migration of people generally known as the *Germanic* tribes, a general term the Romans gave to regions outside of their empire.

(*German*, in this context, does not strictly refer to the people who make up the modern-day German nation.)

The encroaching Sarmatians (modern-day Slavs), Huns (from the Far East) and climate change had begun pushing these tribes—which included the Goths, Vandals, Jutes, Franks, Angles, Saxons and Lombards—westward, bringing them into conflict with the Roman Empire. Consequently, as the Huns moved “across Europe from east to west, they slowly drove out the Celts from Germany and the central plains, and took possession of the whole district between the Alps, the Rhine, and the Baltic” (Grant Allen, *Anglo Saxon Britain*, 2014, Kindle edition, pp. 6-7).

Historian John Ridpath traces the origins of the Germanic tribes to the area of the Black Sea: “The course of migration which brought the Germanic race into Europe was out of Armenia, around the Black sea, to the north-west” (*Great Races of Mankind*, Vol. IV, 1893, p. 623). Of course, as we have already seen, the people migrating northwest out of the Black Sea region were primarily the Scythian tribes. Along the way, many of these tribes fought the Romans along their borders, which led to the weakening of the Roman Empire.

As the Western Roman Empire crumbled and fell in the late fifth century (coming to an end in A.D. 476), the Romans retreated from Britannia, the isles northwest of continental Europe, which they had ruled since A.D. 43. These islands were primarily inhabited by Celts who had migrated to the islands before the Romans arrived. As the Romans retreated, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes launched a series of invasions and gradually gained control of the British Isles. By the early seventh century, the main island was nearly completely dominated by seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms known as the Heptarchy. Our modern word *England* comes from Old English words that literally meant “the land of the Angles.”

## **Who were the Anglo-Saxons?**

Historians differ over the origins of the Anglo-Saxons, but we know that at the same time the Scythians were seemingly vanishing from the Black Sea region, the Saxon tribes suddenly appear in northern Europe. They do not become a historical certainty until the late third century, but, “From 286 A.D. onwards we find them [Saxons] perpetually mentioned by the Roman historians as pirates infesting the North Sea” (Charles Oman, *A History of England Before the Norman Conquest*, 1994, p. 215).

British historian Sharon Turner (1768-1847) wrote one of the definitive chronicles of these people, concluding they were descendants of the Scythians. “The Saxons were a German or Teutonic, that is, a Gothic or Scythian tribe,”

he wrote. “And of the various Scythian nations which have been recorded, the Sakai, or Sacae, are the people from whom the descent of the Saxons may be inferred, with the least violation of probability. Sakai-suna, or the sons of the Sakai, abbreviated into Saksun, which is the same sound as Saxon, seems a reasonable etymology of the word Saxon. The Sakai, who in Latin are called Sacae, were an important branch of the Scythian nation” (*History of the Anglo-Saxons From the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest*, Vol. 1, 1840, p. 59).

And, as shown earlier, a linguistic link exists between *Sacae* and the patriarch Isaac. If the *Sc* sound of Isaac truly is the origin of the *Sacae*, and Saxon is a derivative of this word, then the name can reasonably be interpreted as “Isaac’s sons” or the “sons of Isaac.” God promised Abraham that his descendants would carry the name of Isaac—“in Isaac your seed shall be called” (Genesis 21:12). And, like English, the Scythians’ language “undoubtedly belongs to that of the Indo-Germanic family” (George C. Swayne, *Herodotus*, 1870, p. 87).

## Summary

God’s prophecy that the northern 10 tribes of Israel would go into Assyrian captivity as punishment for their sins came to pass. Though many today believe the Israelites were assimilated into the lands of their captors, God also prophesied that they would survive their captivity but lose their identity, becoming “wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17). The Bible also provides clues that they would migrate northwest (Isaiah 49:6, 12; Jeremiah 16:14-15) and eventually resettle in a new land.

This is exactly what happened. Because they lost their former tribal names, the migrating tribes of Israel are difficult to trace in history and identify today. But by a careful study of the Bible’s clues and secular history, we can reconstruct the northwesterly migration of the 10 tribes of Israel through the record of various nomadic tribes.

The Cimmerians, Scythians and Saka appeared on the fringes of the Assyrian Empire as it dissolved in the 600s B.C. The Cimmerians became the Celts and spread far and wide throughout Europe, while the Scythians settled north of the Black Sea. Eventually, the Sarmatians and Huns began marauding across the steppes, driving the Scythians out of the area. Shortly after the Scythians disappear, the Anglo-Saxons tribes appeared and the migration period commenced throughout northwest Europe. Then, as the Romans abandoned the British Isles, the Anglo-Saxons invaded and settled these islands.

Though it took more than a thousand years of wandering, by the fifth century the descendants of Joseph were settled in their new home—the islands

that would become known as Great Britain. Later, a portion of their descendants would form the United States of America.

The next chapter explains the amazing story of how the promised birth-right blessings (covered in chapter 1) were fulfilled through these two peoples.

CHAPTER 4



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# BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES INHERIT THE BIRTHRIGHT BLESSINGS

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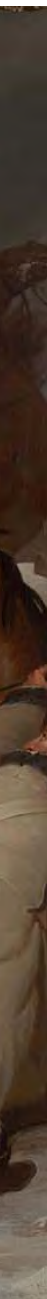
“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well” (Genesis 49:22).

**A**s we have seen, detailed prophecies were given regarding the descendants of Joseph in Genesis 48 and 49, but those prophecies were not fulfilled during the time of the ancient kingdom of Israel. The tribes springing from Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—were merely two tribes within the greater kingdom of Israel. During those ancient times, Ephraim never became the prophesied “multitude of nations,” nor did Manasseh become the “great” nation (Genesis 48:19).

Does that mean, then, that the promises about Joseph’s descendants failed? Absolutely not—God’s promises never fail (Isaiah 46:10-11)!

Remember Jacob’s key statement at the beginning of Genesis 49—these prophecies were to be fulfilled “in the last days” (Genesis 49:1). They were to be fulfilled in modern times—*not* ancient times.

As the 10 tribes of Israel became “wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17)—identified by different names (Scythians, Cimmerians, Celts, Anglo-Saxons, etc.)—God was still going to fulfill the birthright blessings He had promised. By looking at modern history, we can learn *how* God fulfilled those promises—primarily to the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh.



*George Washington’s famous passage of the Delaware River on Dec. 25, 1776 (painting by Thomas Sully).*

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## Geographical clues

We find in the Bible two primary clues revealing where the Israelites would ultimately settle:

- To the *northwest* of their former homeland in the Middle East (Isaiah 49:12).
- On islands and areas with coastlands (Isaiah 41:1, 5; 51:5; Jeremiah 31:9-10).

These geographical locations are exactly where the wandering tribes migrated—the areas of northwest Europe and the British Isles.

## Anglo-Saxons settle in the British Isles

Among the Anglo-Saxons who entered and dominated the British Isles beginning in the late fourth century were the descendants of Joseph. Here they would settle, grow and begin to receive the birthright blessings of Genesis.

King Alfred the Great was instrumental in consolidating the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms into one English kingdom.

Later, the Hundred Years' War between England and France from 1337 to 1453, resulted in England developing a national identity separate from Europe and freeing it from the French influence existing since William the Conqueror had invaded and ruled England in 1066. England thus began to disengage from continental Europe and focus on overseas colonial expansion.

## British imperialism and prophecy

British exploration and colonization began in the 15th century, when the Tudor dynasty took control of the English crown. Under the rule of Queen Elizabeth I, Protestant Britain began competing with Catholic Spain for colonial domination of the New World. Their growing competition, combined with religious tensions, led King Philip II to launch the Spanish Armada to invade Britain. But a series of miraculous events led to the Armada's defeat, and England maintained its independence from continental Europe.

In 1707 the parliaments of England and Scotland agreed to form the Kingdom of Great Britain. Shortly afterward the British began looking for resources outside their relatively small island and continued to build their naval power to protect against security threats from continental Europe.

Throughout the 18th century the British and French competed over sections of North America and Asia, with Great Britain ultimately prevailing and becoming the world's dominant imperial power. France lost both the French and Indian War in 1763 and the Battle of Plassey in 1757, giving Britain dominance over both North America and the Indian subcontinent. After the French and Indian War, Great Britain's empire was already larger than the Roman Empire, and it had still not reached its peak!



France tried once again to become the world's dominant power under Napoleon. His growing threat actually spurred Britain to develop a more powerful army and industrialize its economy, which led to cementing its place as the global hegemon in the landmark event of 1815: "Napoleon's final defeat at the battle of Waterloo left Great Britain the undisputed master of its universe" (Walter Mead, *God and Gold: Britain, America, and the Making of the Modern World*, 2007, p. 96).

Not only did Napoleon's wars weaken continental Europe—propelling Great Britain past the rest of Europe in industrial production, colonial power and military power—but his sale of the Louisiana territory to the United States made possible another giant step toward fulfilling the birthright blessings (more on this later in this chapter).

By checking Spain's and France's international power and by developing the most powerful navy the earth had ever seen, Great Britain built "the largest Empire in the history of the world" (*Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire*, 1998, p. 3). Ironically, the British Empire did not reach its zenith until after it had lost the American colonies in the American Revolution (1775-1783). As we will see, the break between Great Britain and the North American colonies was necessary for prophecy to be fulfilled.

## **The greatness of the British Empire**

The British Empire that emerged after the American Revolution is known historically as "the Second British Empire" and fulfilled the promise that the descendants of Ephraim would become a great "company of nations" (Genesis 35:11; see also 48:19).

Based on "limited government and the rule of law, its empire increasingly relied on trade rather than dominion" (*To Rule the Waves*, p. xviii). It also emerged as the world's "international policeman" (*ibid.*, p. xix), using its powerful navy to maintain international order, open sea lanes, defend human rights and even abolish the international slave trade.

Historians call this era of peace and security Britain brought to the world *Pax Britannica*—British peace—recalling the *Pax Romana*. (Of course, this is not to say that British colonialism was always perfect—it wasn't!)

Let's look closer at how the British peoples fulfilled the prophecies given to Joseph.

## **The birthright blessings to Ephraim**

**"His descendants shall become a multitude of nations" and a "fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall" (Genesis 48:19; 49:22).**

This prophecy stands as one of the greatest proofs that the birthright bless-

## JOSEPH'S BIRTHRIGHT WITHHELD 2,520 YEARS

Leviticus 26 is an important chapter revealing a series of blessings and curses for Israel. The first 13 verses show the incredible blessings of prosperity and protection Israel would receive as a result of obeying God, but verses 14-45 show the curses that would come for disobedience.

One of the curses actually reveals the timing of Israel's rise after their fall in 721 B.C. Notice verse 18: "If you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins." God repeats this declaration three more times (verses 21, 24, 28). "Seven times" refers to the intensity and duration of punishment.

In the Bible a time often refers to a year (Daniel 4:32; Revelation 12:14). A prophetic year consisted of 360 days. Also, in Bible prophecy, punishment is often given using the principle of a day symbolizing a year. For instance, Israel was punished with 40 years of wandering in the wilderness because of their rebellion. God decreed the 40-year punishment based on the 40 days of the spying expedition (Numbers 14:34). Years later, Ezekiel was told to lie on his side for 390 days to represent 390 years of Judah's sinfulness: "I have laid on you a day for each year" (Ezekiel 4:6).

Now back to the "seven times" punishment of Leviticus 26. Since a prophetic year is 360 days, using the day for a year principle, multiplying 360 times 7 gives us 2,520:  $360 \times 7 = 2,520$ .

Israel went into Assyrian captivity in 721 B.C. By adding 2,520 years, we come to right at the beginning of the 1800s. Chapter 4 shows that this is the time period when the British Empire was growing and the United States was making territorial purchases that would result in it emerging as a great nation.

It seems the fullness of the birthright blessings prophesied in Genesis 48:19 were withheld, because of Israel's sin, for 2,520 years. By aligning this prophecy with history, we see that the emergence of the descendants of Joseph to national prominence was right on schedule!



Wikimedia Commons

*The British Royal Navy's victory in the Battle of Trafalgar ended Napoleon's plans to invade England and affirmed British naval supremacy. In this battle, 27 British ships defeated 33 French and Spanish ships.*

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ings were not fulfilled in ancient Israel. The tribe of Ephraim never fulfilled this prophecy in ancient times. It was a “last days” prophecy (49:1) fulfilled in the British Empire and the Commonwealth that followed it.

Ephraim was to be not just one powerful nation, but a strong group of nations. This is exactly what happened. The British Empire was called “the empire on which the sun never sets” because its inhabitants were spread around the globe. In addition to controlling over 200 smaller colonies, at its peak the Empire included England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, South Africa, India, Australia and New Zealand. Within its realm were “more than fifty distinct governments of various kinds” (*A Survey of the British Empire, Historical, Geographical and Commercial*, 1904, p. 13).

The British Empire ruled over a quarter of the world’s land (over 13,000,000 square miles) and a quarter of the world’s population (over 500 million people). It was “three times as large as the whole continent of Europe, and more than a hundred times as extensive as the whole of the British Islands” (*ibid.*, p. 17).

The Genesis 49:22 prophecy likened Joseph’s descendants to a “fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall.” This describes expansion of trade (fruitful) and territory (run over the wall). Although only a small island nation, Britain’s “branches” (or influence) extended throughout the globe.

In order to connect the many lands that made up the British Empire, the British had to control the seas and, in fact, “at no other time in history has one power so completely dominated the world’s oceans as Britain did in the mid-nineteenth century” (Niall Ferguson, *Empire*, 2002, p. 139).

It accomplished this by developing the strongest navy on earth and through the “control of key chokepoints around the world ocean [which] helped assure access to far-flung colonial possessions and dominate maritime commerce” (Michael A. Morris, *The Strait of Magellan*, 1989, p. 23). This fulfilled the promise that Abraham’s descendants would control “the gate of their enemies” (Genesis 22:17). See the chart “Strategic Sea Gates” on pages 78-79 .

Today, the descendants of Ephraim continue to be a “multitude of nations” spread throughout the world, but primarily living in the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

**“Blessings of heaven above ... of the deep ... of the breasts and of the womb” (Genesis 49:25).**

Joseph’s descendants were to be given great physical blessings, including ideal climates for food production, natural resources and high fertility rates. In fact, these three promises are closely linked together as abundant agricultural production (resulting from ideal weather conditions) and natural resources are necessary factors for a nation to sustain population growth.

The British population exploded during the time the promises to Ephraim were beginning to be fulfilled. “From 1770 the English annual growth rates began to rise powerfully and pulled well away from both France and Sweden over the period 1770 to 1815” (E.A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871*, 1989, p. 215).

The fulfillment of the other two blessings played a notable role in this population explosion. “Agricultural productivity, proto-industrialisation, the growth of manufacturing and new mineral technologies, along with the arrival of factories, had helped the economy to industrialise” (Kenneth Morgan, “Symbiosis: Trade and the British Empire,” BBC, Feb. 17, 2011). This led to Great Britain becoming the world’s greatest manufacturing nation, exporter of capital and protector of trade markets.

**“By the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you” (Genesis 49:25).**

One fascinating aspect about the history of the British Empire was their belief that by divine providence the Judeo-Christian God had granted them their dominion. In *The Expansion of England*, John Robert Seeley wrote this about the unlikely nature of his small island nation coming to control the largest empire in history in an apparently unplanned way: “We seem, as it were, to

have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind” (1883, p. 8).

But when we understand the Genesis prophecies, we see that the British didn’t build their empire by happenstance or accident—it resulted from the unconditional promises God made to Abraham and his descendants.

### **“Separate from his brothers” (Genesis 49:26).**

Joseph’s descendants were to be separate from the descendants of the other tribes of Israel. Being an island detached from continental Europe gave the British easier access to the sea, protected them from foreign invasion and allowed them to develop a culture distinct from that of continental Europe.

“Unlike every other European power, the United Kingdom had the good fortune never to suffer foreign occupation or permanent defeat,” writes Norman Davies. “In this, the British experience was much closer to that of the Americans” (*The Isles: A History*, p. 899).

## **The end of the British Empire**

For over 200 years the British Empire, the largest in world history, dominated the globe. But with the coming of the 20th century, it would begin to see its end—though the core nations of the empire would remain together in another configuration.

Germany twice challenged the British Empire, and though Germany ultimately failed, the strain of fighting two bloody and costly world wars proved to be a major factor in the empire’s unraveling.

With the help of the other Allied powers, Great Britain emerged from World War I victorious and larger, expanding the empire to its peak after the war by adding over 1 million square miles of territory in the Middle East and over 13 million subjects. Its expansion, however, sowed the seeds of its fall:

- The empire’s immense size proved to be expensive and ungovernable.
- The enormous debt Britain incurred to fight the war and the financial burden of supporting and defending its immense empire weighed down the economy.
- British citizens grew weary of the costs of the empire.
- Many of its finest leaders died in battle.

While Germany’s second attempt also failed, the convulsions and repercussions of World War II proved to be the eventual undoing of the British Empire.

The British fought bravely and valiantly against Hitler’s Axis alliance from 1939 to 1941, but after nearly two years of fighting, it was obvious that by itself the empire could not defeat the remilitarized Germany. Nor could it do so with the aid of the Soviet Union, which joined the war in 1941.

# STRATEGIC SEA GATES

One of the birthright blessings promised to Abraham's descendants was the possession of "the gate of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17; see also Genesis 24:60). On the national level, a gate is a strategic location that allows passage for military and economic movement. The British became "the master of the seas, controlling its lanes and pathways" (Fareed Zakaria, "The Future of American Power," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2008).



## HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

1893-present

The U.S. originally annexed the island string of Hawaii as a gateway between the U.S. and Asian markets. It became a strategic naval base during the Spanish-American War and World War II.



## STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR

1704-present

The peninsula at the point of connection between the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea allows Britain to essentially control entry and exit from the Mediterranean. During World War II, the British were able to keep German and Italian ships in the Mediterranean from accessing the Atlantic Ocean.



## PUERTO RICO

1899-present

The United States received this island at the end of the Spanish-American War, and the excellent port of San Juan Bay provides a strategic naval base helping the U.S. defend and control the Caribbean.



## PANAMA CANAL

1914-1999

This strategic canal links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and saves the roughly 7,000-mile trip around the tip of South America. Roughly 14,000 ships use the canal each year. Today, the Panama Canal is controlled by Panama and administered by a Chinese company (Hutchison-Whampoa).



## CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

1795-1931

The southern tip of Africa connects the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and this passage controlled European access to India and Asia through the Atlantic Ocean. The port at Cape Town was a strategic stopping point for British ships en route to India and Australia.



## PORT OF DOVER

British control of this port played a vital strategic role during both World Wars, limiting German access to the Atlantic Ocean via the English Channel.



## HONG KONG

1842-1997

This former British colony allowed access to Chinese goods as Hong Kong became the center of British trade and finance in Asia. It was also of strategic value to both the British and Americans during the Cold War.



## OTHER STRATEGIC POINTS:

Alexandria, Egypt; Zanzibar; Falkland Islands; Strait of Hormuz; Solomon Islands; Cyprus; Malta; and Ceylon.



## GUAM

1898-present

The United States received this island after the Spanish-American War. Guam provided the U.S. a naval base in the Pacific Ocean. Guam was captured by Japan during World War II, but was taken back and remains a U.S. territory hosting multiple military bases.



## SUEZ CANAL

1875-1956

Connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, this canal created a shorter passageway between Europe and south Asia (bypassing the 4,300-mile trip around Africa via the Cape of Good Hope). It also gave Britain easy access to oil from the Persian Gulf. During World War II, the Allies were able to keep Germany and Italy from Middle East oil and access to Japan and the Eastern Front.



## STRAIT OF MALACCA

1867-1957

This strait between Malaysia and Indonesia is the main channel linking the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Strategically, this passageway allows goods from Pacific Asia (e.g., Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and China) to reach India and Europe. Under British rule the port of Singapore became one of the busiest and most important ports in the world.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill understood that the world could only be spared from Hitler's Third Reich through the help of the United States of America. As 1941 drew to a close and Britain fought for survival, Hitler's troops were moving farther south into the Mediterranean and Africa, aiming to penetrate the "gates"—the Suez Canal (and the Middle Eastern nations controlled by Britain) and the Strait of Gibraltar—that kept Germany from connecting with its allies outside of Europe.

Had these fallen to Hitler, Germany would have gained control of the Mediterranean with easy access to the Atlantic Ocean and direct supply lines with Japan. Not only would this have destroyed the British, but it would have virtually assured Germany of victory and global supremacy in place of Great Britain.

But history changed on Dec. 7, 1941, when Japan attacked the American military base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States' immediate entry into the war shifted the balance of power to the Allies, leading to the ultimate destruction of the Axis alliance in 1945.

World War II was an important turning point in history. It marked the beginning of the end of Ephraim's (Britain's) world dominance and the transition to Manasseh's (America's) inheritance of its full portion of the birthright blessing. The British Empire emerged from the war a shadow of its former glory—having lost over 400,000 of its population in the war, needing to rebuild its bombed-out cities, with its trade networks running at a third of its prewar level and having lost a quarter of its national wealth (David Dimbleby and David Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart*, 1988, p. 176).

It could no longer afford to support its possessions around the globe but, more important, the British people lost their will to maintain the empire. As they turned inward, so began the dismantling of the greatest empire the world had ever seen.

The first obvious crack appeared in 1947 when Britain gave India, the "crown jewel" of the empire, its independence. In the ensuing decades Britain withdrew from many of its former possessions or transferred protection of those lands to the United States. "At its height it had covered a quarter of the world's land surface and governed around the same proportion of its population. It took just three decades to dismantle, leaving only a few scattered islands" (Ferguson, p. 301).

Though the British Empire had many flaws, it brought many blessings to the world, including defending human rights, protecting the world from tyranny, keeping sea lanes open and free to peaceful nations, and establishing parliamentary democracy and liberal capitalism in many nations.

"Britain has arguably been the most successful exporter of its culture in human history," wrote Fareed Zakaria ("The Future of American Power,"



*Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2008). “Before the American dream, there was an ‘English way of life’—one that was watched, admired, and copied throughout the world. And also thanks to the British Empire, English spread as a global language, spoken from the Caribbean to Cape Town to Calcutta.”

Simply put, no people have ever influenced the world culturally and linguistically on a scale like the British-descended peoples.

## **Transition to the Commonwealth**

Though the British Empire ended shortly after World War II, the “company of nations” that Ephraim was to become has not disappeared. The nations descended from Ephraim are still connected in a unique institution known as the Commonwealth of Nations.

Formed in 1949 to give former members of the British Empire the option to maintain a formal relationship while still being given self-rule, the Commonwealth of Nations is, in fact, one of the strangest anomalies of history. Not only were the former colonies given independence in a relatively peaceful manner, but the majority *voluntarily* chose to remain aligned with Britain in this institution. One of the unifying factors of the Commonwealth is Queen Elizabeth II, who serves as the ceremonial head of state of a number of Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth currently consists of 53 member states, representing about one-third of the world’s population.

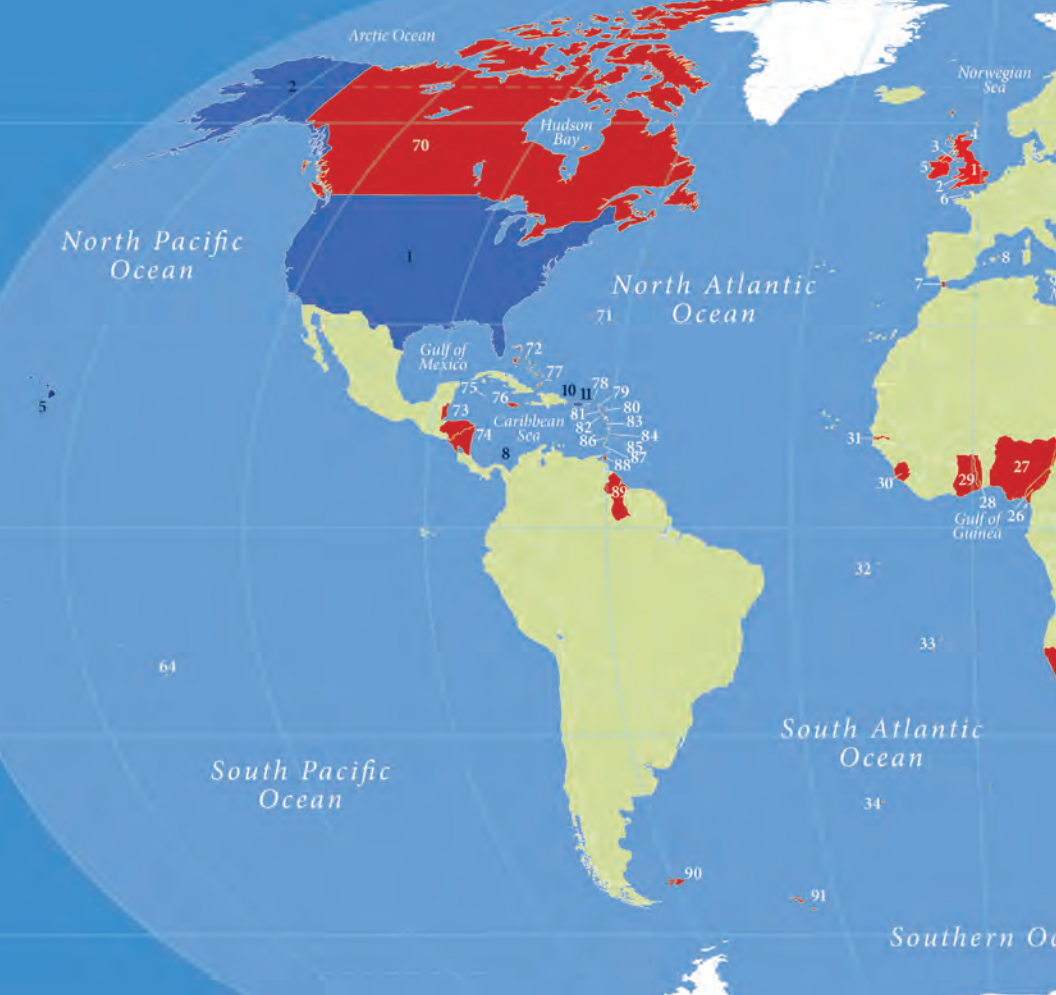
Today’s most prominent members of the Commonwealth include the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, nations that continue to hold the diminishing birthright blessings given to Ephraim. When we read the end-time prophecies about Ephraim, these are the nations we look to.

But what about the other half of the birthright blessing—the promise that Joseph’s firstborn son Manasseh would become a “great” nation?

## **Promises to Manasseh fulfilled in the United States**

When Israel bestowed his blessing upon his grandsons, he broke tradition by crossing his hands and “set Ephraim before Manasseh” (Genesis 48:20). Only later, when the British Empire rose to prominence chronologically before the United States, could we see how this prophetically symbolic move was fulfilled. The empire also became *greater* in terms of territory and global dominance.

Manasseh, however, was prophesied to become “a people” and “great” (verse 19). In other words, his descendants would not rule the globe through colonial expansion, but would become a great single nation.



**UNITED STATES**

- 1. Continental United States
- 2. Alaska
- 3. American Samoa
- 4. Guam
- 5. Hawaii
- 6. Midway
- 7. Northern Mariana Islands
- 8. Panama Canal Zone
- 9. Philippines
- 10. Puerto Rico
- 11. U.S. Virgin Islands

**BRITISH EMPIRE**

*British Isles*

- 1. England
- 2. Wales
- 3. Isle of Man
- 4. Scotland

- 5. Ireland
- 6. Channel Islands

*Europe*

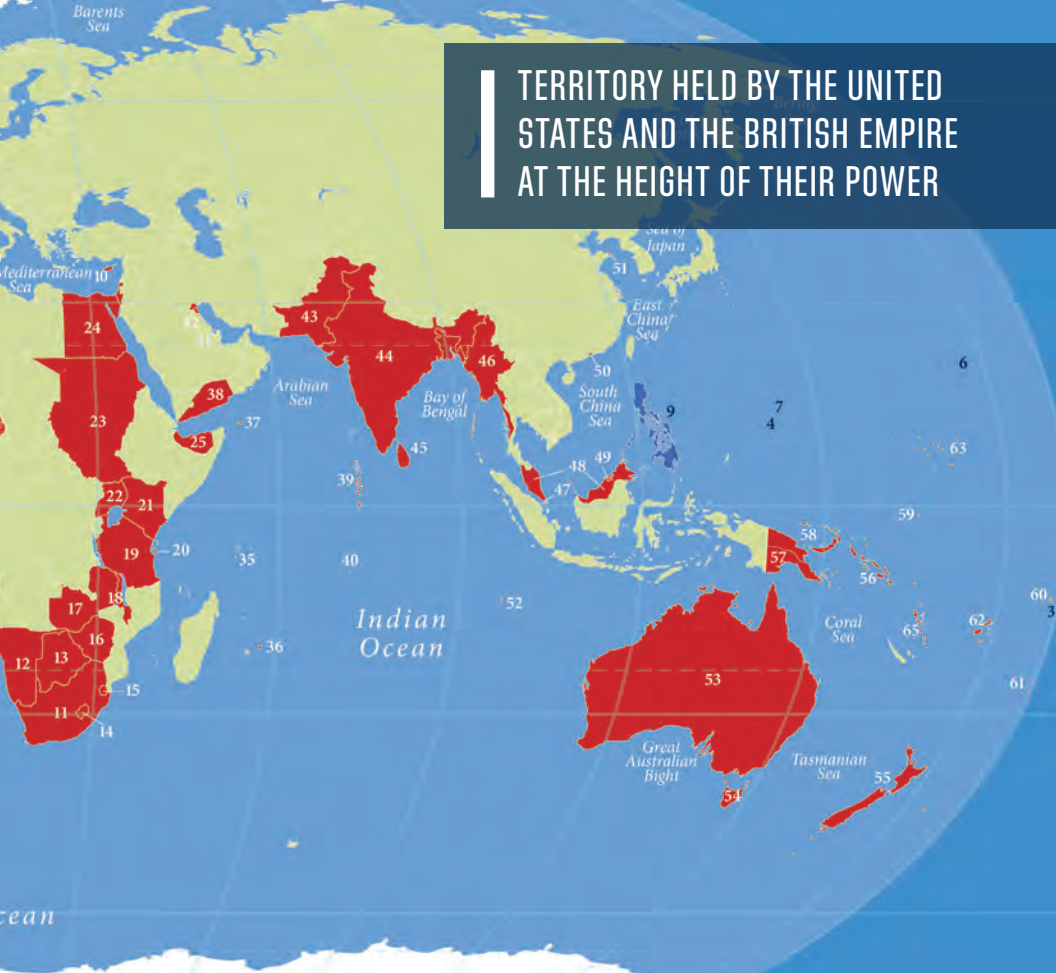
- 7. Gibraltar
- 8. Minorca
- 9. Malta
- 10. Cyprus

*Africa*

- 11. Union of South Africa
- 12. South West Africa
- 13. Bechuanaland (Botswana)
- 14. Basutoland (Lesotho)
- 15. Swaziland
- 16. Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)
- 17. Northern Rhodesia (Zambia)
- 18. Nyasaland (Malawi)
- 19. Tanganyika (Tanzania)

- 20. Zanzibar
- 21. Kenya
- 22. Uganda
- 23. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (Sudan)
- 24. Egypt
- 25. British Somaliland
- 26. British Cameroons (Nigeria and Cameroon)
- 27. Nigeria
- 28. Togoland (Togo)
- 29. Gold Coast (Ghana)
- 30. Sierra Leone
- 31. Gambia
- 32. Ascension Island
- 33. Saint Helena
- 34. Tristan da Cunha
- 35. Seychelles
- 36. Mauritius
- 37. Socotra

# TERRITORY HELD BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT THE HEIGHT OF THEIR POWER



## Asia

- 38. Aden
- 39. Maldives
- 40. Diego Garcia
- 41. Kuwait
- 42. Bahrain
- 43. Pakistan
- 44. India
- 45. Ceylon (Sri Lanka)
- 46. Burma (Myanmar)
- 47. Singapore
- 48. Malaya (Malaysia)
- 49. Brunei
- 50. Hong Kong
- 51. Weihai

## Australasia/Oceania

- 52. Cocos Islands
- 53. Australia
- 54. Tasmania

## North America

- 55. New Zealand
- 56. Solomon Islands
- 57. Territory of Papua
- 58. New Guinea
- 59. Nauru
- 60. Western Samoa (Samoa)
- 61. Tonga
- 62. Fiji
- 63. Gilbert and Ellice Islands
- 64. Pitcairn Islands
- 65. New Hebrides (Vanuatu)

## Central America/South America/Caribbean

- 70. Canada
- 71. Bermuda
- 72. Bahamas
- 73. British Honduras (Belize)
- 74. Mosquito Coast

## (Nicaragua and Honduras)

- 75. Cayman Islands
- 76. Jamaica
- 77. Turks and Caicos Islands
- 78. British Virgin Islands
- 79. Anguilla
- 80. Antigua
- 81. St. Christopher and Nevis (Saint Kitts)
- 82. Montserrat
- 83. Dominica
- 84. St. Lucia
- 85. Barbados
- 86. St. Vincent
- 87. Grenada
- 88. Trinidad and Tobago
- 89. British Guiana (Guyana)
- 90. Falkland Islands
- 91. South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

The British laid the foundations for the rise of the United States in 1607 by establishing the Jamestown colony. They actually lagged behind their rivals—the Spanish, French and Dutch—all of whom established colonies before the British.

As we've already pointed out, the history of Joseph's descendants contains many mysterious successes that defy logic, among which is the rise of the British in dominating North America. England was a weak island nation in the 16th and 17th centuries—much less powerful than the Spanish, Portuguese and French—and any unbiased observer during the 1500s would have predicted that North America would be dominated by Spain or Portugal.

But through divine providence, the British gained control of the continent. They gained their foothold first by establishing 13 colonies along the Atlantic coastline during the 17th and 18th centuries.

### **Ephraim and Manasseh separate**

As we've seen, Ephraim's and Manasseh's descendants were to grow into two distinct peoples. In order for that prophecy to be fulfilled, the American colonies couldn't remain subjects of the British Empire, and that's why one of the most unlikely insurrections in world history—the American Revolution—occurred in the late 1700s.

Historians look back at this world-changing event and ponder how it ever happened. Few of the common factors for a revolution existed. Consider:

- The American colonists strongly identified with Britain. They considered themselves Englishmen and wanted political rights equal to those in Great Britain. In fact, after the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, “an immense surge of British patriotism spread throughout the American colonies” (David Goldfield, et al., 2008, *The American Journey*, p. 114).
- The revolution took place shortly after the French and Indian War (1754-1763), when Great Britain intervened to *defend* the American colonies against French intrusion.
- By standards of the time, Britain was one of the world's most progressive nations, “with a minimalist government and a tradition of freedom of speech, assembly, the press, and (to some extent) worship” (Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People*, p. 125). The colonists enjoyed freedoms rarely held by the subjects of empires throughout history.
- The colonists prospered under British rule, and were not victims of economic oppression.

But, against all odds, the American Revolution happened anyway. After the French and Indian War, British leadership decided the colonists should bear some of the financial burden of the war and the British defense of North

# BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO BRITISH AND AMERICAN SUCCESS

The British and American peoples share a common origin, a similar history, one language and a majority religion (Protestant Christianity). They are also united by their practice of certain principles that have contributed to their national success.

Many of these attributes have their origins in the Bible and the ancient nation of Israel. Here are three of those principles:

## **RULE OF LAW**

Kings of Israel were not to govern on whim or for their own self-aggrandizement, but were to govern within the confines of God's law (Deuteronomy 17:16-20). This was a revolutionary concept in world history, as the majority of history's kings, emperors and dictators have ruled above any law. The principles of constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democracy and representative democracy in the Anglo-Saxon nations are based on this ancient biblical principle that human government is to operate under law, not above it. The governments of the ancient Israelites were expected to serve the people, administer justice and avoid corruption (Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 1 Kings 3:28; 10:9; Proverbs 29:4; Isaiah 10:1-2). In other words, they were to operate within the confines of law.

The Magna Carta, British Common Law and the U.S. Constitution uphold this principle.

## **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

The principle of protecting private property has strong roots in the Bible. The protection of property was enshrined in the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:15, 17). When the Israelites entered Canaan, each tribe was given land that was to be divided among families and protected (Numbers 26:53-56; 34:1-29).

## **INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY**

The Bible teaches that people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and are to be treated with respect. Governmental leaders were to rule with justice and fairness, and not abuse the people under their rule. The protection of private property and the freedom to make economic decisions are two ways biblical law protected individual liberty.

These principles helped the descendants of Joseph develop strong economies, free societies and a high standard of living. Spreading these principles throughout the world has resulted in blessings to other nations (Genesis 12:3). Though neither ancient Israel nor these modern nations have followed these principles faithfully, when they have, they have reaped the blessings.

America. They began imposing new taxes and more closely regulated the colonial economies to benefit Great Britain.

These regulations (though hardly repressive by the standards of other world empires) coincided with an era known as the Enlightenment. The philosophers promoting new ideas of personal liberty, economic freedom and the rights of individuals greatly influenced many American colonialists, who used their ideas to make the case that they were being economically oppressed by Great Britain.

This led to another example of divine providence in history. As Paul Johnson described it, “The generation that emerged to lead the colonies into independence was one of the most remarkable groups of men in history” (ibid., p. 127). Without these men, the American Revolution would likely have never even begun.

Interestingly, as many great American leaders emerged, Great Britain suffered from poor leadership, as King George III, the British Parliament and the colonial governors all contributed to mismanaging the American protests.

If the beginning of the American Revolution was unlikely, the idea that the American colonies would actually win was even more unlikely. The colonists were mainly merchants and farmers with no trained standing army—only localized militias. The Continental Army never exceeded 20,000 and faced the most powerful empire on earth, the well-trained and disciplined British force consisting of about 50,000 troops helped by over 30,000 Hessian mercenaries. The Revolutionary War should have been an easy British victory.

But a number of factors and providential miracles led to the unthinkable.

For example, early in the war it seemed that the British stood to easily defeat George Washington’s poorly supplied and trained Continental Army. When the British invaded New York in August 1776 and quickly drove Washington back into New Jersey, he retreated with only 3,000 of his original 18,000 troops.

But instead of pursuing and destroying the struggling Continental Army, the British wavered, and Washington’s army survived to fight another day. Historian Joseph Ellis points out that “if the British commanders had prosecuted the war more vigorously in its earliest stages, the Continental Army might very well have been destroyed at the start and the movement for American independence nipped in the bud” (*Founding Brothers*, 2000, p. 5).

On Sept. 11, 1776, British Admiral Lord Richard Howe offered to pardon all the revolutionary leaders of treason if the colonists would retract the Declaration of Independence. The American representatives refused, despite the poor military and financial condition that made victory over the British extremely unlikely, and the war continued on.

But in what we consider another act of divine providence, Washington maintained the morale among the depleted and destitute American troops and in his famous crossing of the Delaware River on the night of Dec. 25, 1776, led them in a surprise attack on the Hessian mercenaries. They scored a strategic morale-boosting victory and a week later, at the Battle of Trenton, again defeated the British.

These victories “at Trenton and Princeton boosted morale and saved the American cause” (*The American Journey*, p. 155).

On Oct. 17, 1777, the Americans defeated British forces descending from Canada at the Battle of Saratoga, preventing them from linking up with the British army in New York City. The ensuing brutal winter of 1777 proved harsh and trying for the Continental Army camped at Valley Forge, but they endured and gained much needed training and discipline.

The American victory at Saratoga, though far from ensuring total victory, gave the French confidence to support the American cause. The French had little interest in the colonists’ independence, but were motivated by what they saw as an opportunity to weaken Great Britain. The Spanish later joined the cause, hoping to regain the Strait of Gibraltar from British control. The Americans now had allies to provide financial and naval support.

These extraordinary developments demonstrate how God can use nations to fulfill His promises. While France and Spain were trying to take elements of the birthright away from the descendants of Ephraim, they were inadvertently helping the Americans to fulfill the birthright blessing promised to Manasseh.

The French support and American resilience proved to be key factors that ultimately led to the American victory, with the British surrendering on Oct. 19, 1781. Paul Johnson summarized it this way: “So the British, who had begun the war with an enormous superiority in trained men and guns and with complete control of the sea, ended it outnumbered, out-gunned, and with the French ruling the waves” (*A History of the American People*, p. 165).

The Preliminary Articles of Peace, signed in Paris, on Nov. 30, 1782, officially ended the war and gave the United States of America full independence. The treaty promised the British withdrawal of all forces from the United States while Canada remained a part of the British Empire.

Its signing completed the prophesied separation between Ephraim and Manasseh, and set the stage for the fulfillment of the Genesis 48:19 prophecy: America was independent and prepared to emerge as a great people, while Great Britain was now poised to become a multitude of nations through the Second British Empire.

*“From sea to shining sea.” This map shows how the Americans came to possess the land that would make up the “great nation” promised to Joseph’s son Manasseh.*

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## The amazing story of American expansion

The United States did not receive the full physical birthright blessings immediately after the Revolution. In fact, those blessings would slowly mature over the next 150 years. While Britain rose to its pinnacle as a prophesied empire throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, America was slowly building the *great nation* that would fully realize its physical blessings in the mid-20th century.

After the Revolution, the United States remained relatively weak. Many believed a republic could not work in a nation as large and diverse as the United States. Indeed, its competing regional interests—mainly the commercial north and the agrarian south—immediately threatened the fledgling nation, and the issue of slavery would increasingly polarize it and ultimately lead to civil war.





Added to those internal political and economic issues, the United States' territory was still essentially restricted to the Atlantic Coast, while the British, Spanish and French controlled the remainder of the continent. Jay's Treaty (signed Nov. 19, 1794, between the U.S. and Great Britain) unlocked the first key to western expansion. Though very controversial at the time, the historical ramifications of the treaty were immense as the British agreed to evacuate all northwest forts east of the Mississippi River. The treaty also gave "most favored nation" status to the U.S. in British trade and allowed America to trade in the West Indies. Not only did this impact the economic development of America, it opened up the Ohio Valley for American expansion.

Shortly after Jay's Treaty, the U.S. signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo (Oct. 27, 1795), whereby Spain recognized the land east of the Mississippi as American territory. This essentially opened the gate to unhindered American expansion.

Napoleon Bonaparte (right) hoped to build a “New France” in North America. But instead Thomas Jefferson was able to purchase the land from Napoleon on behalf of the United States. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the young nation and gave it possession of some of the richest farmland in the world.



Wikimedia Commons

sion into Trans-Appalachia (land east of the Mississippi River and south of the Ohio Valley). This treaty also gave the U.S. free access to the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans.

### **The Louisiana Purchase: America miraculously doubles in size**

But Spain still controlled the strategic Mississippi River and owned the entire territory referred to as Louisiana—beginning at the port of New Orleans and extending northwestward into the Great Plains all the way to the Canadian border (see illustration). That changed on Oct. 1, 1800, when Spain secretly ceded Louisiana to France (under Napoleon Bonaparte) in the Treaty of San Ildefonso.

Napoleon wanted to create a “New France” in the Louisiana territory as part of his grand plan to build a French empire rivaling the British.

President Thomas Jefferson acutely understood the threat of French control of Louisiana. He noted the strategic importance in an 1802 letter to Robert Livingston (the U.S. minister to France): “The cession of Louisiana ... by Spain to France, works most sorely on the United States. ... There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce, and contain more than half of our inhabitants. France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance. ... The day that France takes possession of New Orleans ... we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation” (quoted in *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*, p. 59).

But two factors—a bloody uprising in Saint-Domingue (modern Haiti) and the fear of an impending war with Great Britain—thwarted Napoleon’s plans.

Jefferson was determined to regain access to the Mississippi and New Orleans, which had been closed off by Spain on Oct. 16, 1802. He instructed Livingston and James Monroe to try to negotiate a deal with Napoleon to either purchase the Mississippi River and port of New Orleans or at least to broker an agreement for Americans to have guaranteed access to the strategic port and river. Congress authorized Monroe to offer up to \$2 million to France.

But both Livingston and Monroe were shocked when Napoleon offered to sell the entire 530,000,000 acres of the Louisiana territory for \$15 million!

All parties quickly agreed to the deal and on July 4, 1803, President Jefferson announced to the nation that the United States had purchased the entire Louisiana Territory.

Immediate benefits came from total control of the Mississippi River and New Orleans, allowing free and unhindered flow of trade throughout the country. But the greater benefit lay in the potential the young nation had instantly gained in doubling its size!

This now guaranteed westward expansion of the American people, and ultimately, 14 additional states would form from the Louisiana Purchase. Within this territory would lie some of the most productive farmland and natural resources that were promised to the descendants of Joseph (Genesis 49:25).

Over the next 50 years, the United States would gain possession of the remainder of the land that makes up the 48 connecting states. This expansion was guided by a popular belief called *Manifest Destiny*—the conviction that God destined America to expand westward and become a nation “from sea to shining sea.” Just like the British expansion around the globe during the period of the Second British Empire, the American expansion across the continent was unprecedented. Many of those involved in it sensed God’s hand in bringing it about.

*Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion* provides this summary of the nation’s historically unparalleled growth: “When the United States began its recognized existence as an independent country in 1783, it had fewer than four million people spread over less than 900,000 square miles. . . . Between then and 1854, the density doubled, the area tripled, and the population exploded eight or nine times over” (p. 221).

## **The Civil War: the great threat to Manasseh’s blessing**

While Great Britain enjoyed its pinnacle of power in the 19th century, the

United States found itself dealing not only with exciting development opportunities, but crucial domestic affairs that would ultimately determine its future.

One of the greatest issues it faced was that of slavery. Great Britain was ahead of the United States, banning slave trade throughout the British Empire in 1807 and prohibiting all slavery in 1834.

In the United States, though, the issue grew intensely divisive as the founders and leaders of the nation continually made compromises that forced future generations to deal with the issue. Those issues came to a head when Abraham Lincoln became president in 1860. Because of his stand against the expansion of slavery, within months all the slave states of the lower south seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America.

This rebellion directly threatened the fulfillment of the birthright blessings to Manasseh. Had this rebellion succeeded and the South permanently formed a separate nation, the promise of Manasseh becoming a *great single nation* would have failed.

Despite the South's early military successes in the Civil War, ultimately they could not withstand the superior industrial power of the North and the devastating war ended in April 1865. Work was immediately begun to reintegrate the South into the Union. The promises to Manasseh would stand, and it could now fulfill its birthright blessing free of the stain of slavery (which the U.S. abolished through the 13th Amendment on Jan. 31, 1865).

## **America becomes an industrial power**

The triumph of the North set the nation on the course to become a major industrial power. Over the next three decades the industrial output of the United States consistently increased. Between 1865 and 1914, the U.S. gross national product grew remarkably by over 4 percent a year. By the beginning of the 20th century, "the United States had the largest and most modern industrial economy on earth, one characterized by giant corporations undreamed of in 1865" (John Steele Gordon, *An Empire of Wealth*, 2004, p. 205).

Did this great industrial progress occur as a direct result of the birthright blessings promised to Joseph? Remember God's promise in Genesis 49:25: Joseph's descendants would receive "blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath" (natural resources) and "blessings of the breast and of the womb" (population growth). Consider:

- **Natural resources.** The abundant natural resources controlled by the United States made industrial expansion possible. Within the American borders lie vast amounts of resources such as iron ore, timber, oil, coal

and waterpower. Not only did the large iron ore deposits allow the United States to become the world's leading producer of steel, but the energy sources (coal and oil) provided the power that spurred American industry. For instance, American steel and coal powered the booming railroad industry in the post-Civil War era, which impacted many other industries by providing efficient, quick and cheap transportation of raw materials and goods.

- **Population growth.** In the 40 years following the Civil War the U.S. population exploded. At war's end the population stood at 39,818,449, but within a short 15 years it grew 25 percent to 50 million! By 1890 it had grown another 25 percent to 62.9 million, and by the turn of the century, the U.S. had over 75 million people.

Three major factors fueled this explosive growth: falling infant mortality rates, higher life expectancy and mass immigration. Could either Ephraim (Great Britain) or Manasseh (United States) have experienced such growth without the immense richness of these vast natural resources, blessings given to Joseph?

This rise of industry and population propelled the United States to the pinnacle of the birthright blessings promised to Manasseh.

## **From depression to world superpower**

Despite the explosive economic, industrial and population growth after the Civil War, the U.S. economy grew prone to “boom and bust” cycles, times of great economic growth frequently followed by times of recession. The most extreme example of economic growth came with the “Roaring Twenties,” followed by the economic crash and Great Depression of the 1930s. Nevertheless, over time the United States became the world's wealthiest nation.

Except for its late and brief entry into World War I, the U.S. distanced itself politically, maintaining a strong isolationist mind-set and weak military, relying on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans for its defense.

Events in Europe, however, would soon force the U.S. into actions that would change the global balance of power and propel it to superpower status. The single most important catalyst for this shift came with World War II.

The United States at first resisted joining the Allied fight against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan, putting its focus first on rebuilding and stabilizing its economy. In fact, 80 percent of Americans preferred neutrality.

But everything—including the course of human history—changed on Dec. 7, 1941, when Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. President Franklin Roosevelt declared it a “date which will live in infamy.”

The Pearl Harbor attack pushed the United States to enter World War II,

aligned with the Allied powers of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. By then France had fallen, and Britain's forces had been practically run out of continental Europe (its army of over 300,000 amazingly spared of a far worse defeat by the Dunkirk evacuation, which Winston Churchill hailed as a "miracle of deliverance"). Though the English withstood Germany's air assault (successfully thwarting Hitler's plan to invade and destroy Great Britain), Britain and the Soviet Union alone could not defeat the Nazi war machine.

The U.S. entry into World War II had two colossal effects on history:

### **1. The scales tipped in the Allies' favor, leading to the ultimate fall of the Axis powers.**

The rapid mobilization of the American economy and military proved the greatest physical factor in defeating Nazi Germany. The U.S. contributed over 16 million military personnel, 296,000 planes, 102,000 tanks and 88,000 naval ships from 1942-1945. It also produced the atomic bomb and effectively ended the war when it destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. God had foretold, "The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob" (Genesis 49:23-24). Were not the sons of Joseph, fighting together in this most destructive war in history, fulfilling the prophecy that their descendants would be blessed with military superiority?

### **2. The United States ascended to economic and superpower status.**

The marshalling of the United States' three greatest assets—industry, natural resources and population—not only outproduced and defeated the Axis powers, but catapulted America out of the Great Depression. It emerged as the world's military superpower, and its financial resurgence is one of history's greatest economic success stories.

In six short years between 1939 and 1945, the U.S. gross national product rose astoundingly from \$88.6 billion to \$135 billion, with industrial production growing over 15 percent a year (Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, pp. 357-358).

"The war acted as an immense bull market," Paul Johnson wrote, "encouraging American entrepreneurial skills to fling the country's seemingly inexhaustible resources of materials and manpower into a bottomless pool of consumption" (*A History of the American People*, p. 780).

But the post-World War II era also marked a key transition in history as the birthright blessing promised to Ephraim (Great Britain) began to decline and the blessings to Manasseh (United States) reached their zenith. Just as the 19th century belonged to the British, the 20th would be the American century.

## **The American century: Pinnacle of Manasseh’s birthright blessings**

Until the mid-20th century, the United States was truly a nation of unrealized potential. It only reached its potential as it emerged from World War II as the world’s most powerful nation by almost every measure—militarily, economically and industrially.

Let’s look closer at the prophecies to Manasseh and how they were fulfilled in the United States.

### **“He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great” (Genesis 48:19).**

Manasseh’s descendants differed from Ephraim’s in one major way: Whereas Ephraim would become a colonizing people inhabiting multiple nations around the world, Manasseh would become *one single great nation*. The United States put its attention on westward expansion across the North American frontier—joining this land “from sea to shining sea” as a single nation—and had little involvement in global politics.

Even after World War II, when it enjoyed superpower status, “the United States did not create a new colonial empire for itself on the British model” (*God and Gold*, p. 112). Instead, the U.S. supported the nations it defeated in rebuilding and creating a global order based on free trade and democracy. Even when it had the power to colonize and subjugate peoples, the U.S. historically has been uncomfortable with the idea of imperialism.

### **“Joseph is a fruitful bough ... his branches run over the wall” (Genesis 49:22).**

Being rooted on a large continent containing abundant natural resources meant that the U.S. could build its base of wealth by expansion, rather than global colonization.

In the post-World War II era, though, America began spreading its *branches* throughout the world as an informal empire, creating alliances and global trade networks to maintain world order and economic ties that further benefited it.

Notice this insight from historian Niall Ferguson: “The American empire is limited in its extent. It conspicuously lacks the voracious appetite for territorial expansion overseas that characterized the empires of the West European seaboard. It prefers the idea that foreigners will Americanize themselves without the need for formal rule. Even when it conquers, it resists annexation—another reason why the duration of its offshore imperial undertakings has tended to be ... relatively short” (*Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, 2004, p. 13).

Is this not exactly what we would expect of Manasseh’s form of imperialism based on Jacob’s prophesied distinction between Ephraim and Manasseh?

**“The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong” (Genesis 49:23-24).**

God was clear—enemies would lie at Joseph’s gates, but his descendants would be militarily strong and victorious during the height of their blessings. Many aggressor nations have opposed the United States throughout its history—Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the Soviet Union and other communist nations during the Cold War, and, more recently, radical Islamic terrorist organizations.

To this point, the U.S. has been able to defeat and subdue most of these aggressors through superior military strength. In fact, it inherited Great Britain’s former role of “world policeman” after World War II.

**“Blessings of heaven above, ... of the deep, ... of the breasts and of the womb” (Genesis 49:25).**

History has rarely seen a nation grow so speedily in attaining such a high level of affluence and wealth as the United States. But never has a nation come into such a vast land teeming with such abundant natural resources of coal, copper, lead, uranium, gold, iron, nickel, silver, natural gas and petroleum.

American industry exploded after World War II, using these resources to meet the consumption demands of a growing nation. Historians label the post-war population spike “the Baby Boom,” as GIs returned from the war and found stable jobs and began building families. The sustained fertility rates between 1946 and 1964 were staggering, with annual births consistently tallying over 4 million. This not only dramatically impacted the U.S. population, but also coincided with an enormous increase in the middle class, raising the American living standard and fueling a huge boom in economic growth driven by consumer consumption.

### **Continued Anglo-American world dominance?**

History clearly chronicles the British and American dominance over the world throughout the last 200 years by nearly every measurement—economic, political, cultural and military. This did not *just happen*. The power and prosperity experienced by these peoples grew from the fulfillment of blessings and prophecies made thousands of years earlier.

Though the era of British geopolitical dominance ended in the 20th century, Ephraim’s descendants continue to enjoy high standards of living and remain moderately powerful on the world stage.

The United States continues to stand as the world’s mightiest nation—but it is also a nation in decline by multiple measurements. Manasseh’s descen-



dants no longer dominate the world as they did in the post-World War II era, and they are continually challenged on many fronts—by Islamic extremism, a growing China, a belligerent Russia and a feisty Europe that no longer blindly follows America’s lead.

Bible prophecy reveals that the blessings given to the United States and British-descended nations will not continue forever. In fact, many prophecies reveal that because of their sins, these nations will go through a horrible time of national punishment before the return of Jesus Christ.

Read the concluding chapter to see what prophecy says about the future of these nations. Whether or not you live in one of these nations, the prophesied events will greatly impact your life.

# GOD'S INTERVENTION IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN HISTORY

In Genesis 49:23-24 Jacob prophesied that Joseph's descendants would be hated and attacked by many enemies. God promised their "bow" (symbolic of military power) would remain "in strength, and the arms of his [Joseph's] hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob. ... By the God of your father who will help you" (verses 24-25). In other words, even though frequently attacked, God would help them prevail. This prophecy has come to pass many times in the history of the British and American peoples as both nations have faced many enemies who have tried to destroy them. Here are a few examples of God's clear intervention on behalf of Ephraim and Manasseh.

## **Defeat of the Spanish Armada**

In May 1588 King Philip of Spain dispatched his country's famed armada of ships to conquer England, intending to secure Spain's supremacy of Europe and restore Catholicism to the British Isles (at this time under the rule of the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I).

On July 19, 1588, the English fleet spotted the Spanish Armada and gave chase. As historian John Richard Green explained, "In numbers the two forces were strangely unequal; the English fleet counted only 80 vessels against the 130 which composed the Armada. In size of ships the disproportion was even greater. Fifty of the English vessels, including the squadron of Lord Howard and the craft of the volunteers, were little bigger than yachts of the present day. ...

"Small, however, as the English ships were, they were in perfect trim; they sailed two feet for the Spaniards' one. ... Closing in or drawing off as they would, the lightly-handled English vessels, which fired four shots to the Spaniard's one, hung boldly on the rear of the great fleet as it moved along the Channel ... till the Armada dropped anchor in Calais roads" (*A Short History of the English People*, 1874 edition, pp. 410-411).

Neither side lost ships in the first week of fighting, but on July 28 at midnight the



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*King Philip II of Spain hoped to defeat England, remove Queen Elizabeth I from the throne and establish Spain as the world's dominant colonial power. Spain's fleet of 130 ships were defeated by 80 English ships.*

English sent eight fire ships toward the Spanish vessels, causing many of them to cut their anchors and scatter in confusion. As the Spanish tried to regroup, the English expended all of their remaining gunpowder firing their cannons upon their enemy.

W.B. Grant summarized what then inexplicably happened: "Three great galleons had sunk, three had drifted helplessly on to the Flemish coast; but the bulk of the Spanish vessels remained. The work of destruction, however, had been left to a mightier foe than Drake.

"Supplies fell short and the English vessels were obliged to give up the chase but the Spanish were quite unable to re-form, their last chance to do so being destroyed by a gale. The wind was so violently against them that they were forced to steer in a circuit around the British Isles, and on this journey to their home port many of the already damaged and battered vessels were driven ashore on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland" (*We Have a Guardian*, 1972, p. 4).

Historians recount that the Spanish lost more ships and sailors to the stormy weather than to combat. Only about half of the Spanish vessels returned to Spain, and approximately 5,000 Spaniards died. The English lost fewer than 100 men and no ships.

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Had Philip's plan worked, it would have been Spain, not England, achieving global naval dominance and colonizing North America. Had that happened, the United States of America would never have existed. But as a result of the amazing English victory, Spain fell into permanent decline as a naval power while England further developed the navy that would eventually rule the seas.

### **The miracle of Dunkirk**

Sometimes a miracle occurs following a major defeat. Such was the case for the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) at Dunkirk, France, during World War II.

By all accounts, the British effort to help defend Europe, which had begun only months earlier in 1939, was an abject failure. Not understanding how to successfully fight the Germans, the British forces retreated to the town of Dunkirk (on the French coast). By May 24, the Germans had surrounded Calais, located just a short distance from Dunkirk, and the British, Belgian and French troops were in grave danger. Great Britain faced the terrifying reality that their entire mainland force could be killed or captured—leaving the British Isles extremely vulnerable.

Then came a most surprising turn of events. The German commander ordered a halt to the advance, which Hitler later approved. In hindsight, historians consider the order to halt one of the greatest mistakes the Germans made in the entire war and one of the greatest breaks for the Allies.

The British quickly devised "Operation Dynamo," a plan to evacuate 338,226 British, Belgian and French troops from Dunkirk between May 27 and June 4, 1940.

Completely unforeseen by both sides, two surprising weather systems developed that greatly aided the evacuation. As C.B. Mortlock reported in *The Daily Telegraph* on June 8, 1940: "As the story is told, two great wonders stand forth; and on them have turned the fortune of the troops. ... The first was the great storm which broke over Flanders on Tuesday, 28 May. The second was the great calm which settled on the English Channel during the days following."

The storm allowed soldiers to march to Dunkirk from 8 to 12 miles away without having to worry about German aircraft grounded by the bad weather. The calm waters on the English Channel allowed many smaller English vessels, needed to evacuate soldiers from the beach to larger transport ships, to cross the channel and assist in the operation.



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*With German troops closing in on them and with their backs to the English Channel, over 330,000 Allied troops were saved in what became known as “the miracle at Dunkirk.”*



In the words of Winston Churchill to the House of Commons, the experience was a “miracle of deliverance” following a “colossal military disaster.”

In an article titled “Dunkirk: The Miracle of Deliverance,” *The Telegraph* stated: “The evacuation from Dunkirk was undoubtedly the final phase in a defeat. But, had this culminated in the BEF’s surrender and capture, it is inconceivable that Britain would have fought on. The Germans might not have invaded our Island, but instead, as Hitler always hoped, Britain would have been forced to agree [to] peace terms. The escape of the BEF followed by the failure of the Luftwaffe to win the Battle of Britain bought a precious commodity: time, allowing the British to absorb the lessons of the campaign in France and Flanders, to re-equip and retrain her Army.”

“In 1939, the United States Army was ranked 17th in size in the world after Romania. It is therefore out of the question that America could have played any part in stopping the expansion of Germany had Britain capitulated. Without Britain, and her Empire and Commonwealth, continuing to resist, Hitler could have won the war, even after the invasion of Russia. The evacuation of the BEF at Dunkirk truly was a retreat to ultimate victory over Nazi Germany.”

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Again, were the Allied troops who were evacuated from Dunkirk just lucky? Or did God influence the Germans to halt their advance short of Dunkirk, and did He bring the weather that facilitated this large-scale operation?

### **The miracle of D-Day**

Weather also contributed mightily to the Allies' success at the critical turning point of the war on the Western front—D-Day. This invasion of Normandy, which began June 6, 1944, was the largest amphibious invasion in military history.

Those planning the invasion determined that only a few days each month met the criteria for the conditions necessary for the invasion. General Dwight Eisenhower had selected June 5 as the operation date, but high winds, heavy seas and low clouds on June 4 required that the operation be delayed.

After British meteorologists predicted that the weather would improve sufficiently to launch the operation on June 6, General Eisenhower discussed the situation with other senior personnel and gave the command to begin. While the planners of D-Day saw their window of opportunity in the weather, the Axis powers had a different picture.

The meteorological station in Paris providing weather information for the German military operations indicated several weeks of bad weather. As a result, many German commanders, confident that no invasion could take place under these conditions, took temporary leave of their posts and gave their soldiers time off.

Commenting on the amazingly cooperative weather for the Allied forces, *The Times* reported on Sept. 2, 1944: "On the morning of the assault the wind had moderated, and the cloud was not only well broken, but its base was at least 4,000 feet high, ideally suited for the large-scale airborne operations. In the hour preceding the landings, when perfect conditions for pinpoint bombing were so essential, there were large areas of temporarily clear sky, and throughout the critical time medium and light bombers were unhampered."

Even though the D-Day invasion caught the Axis powers by surprise, the operation was costly. By the day's end, more than 9,000 Allied soldiers lay killed or wounded. Even so, the losses were less than Eisenhower had anticipated. Most importantly, a front had been established that allowed more than 100,000 soldiers to enter continental Europe and ultimately defeat Nazi Germany.



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*Men of the 16th  
Infantry Regiment,  
U.S. 1st Infantry  
Division land on  
Omaha Beach on  
the morning of  
June 6, 1944.*

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The Allied planners and participants considered D-Day a miracle. It seems that God once again intervened in the weather on behalf of the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh.

### **Coincidence or providence?**

Some may consider the British and American peoples to have been simply lucky at key junctures in military history and successful because of their resources and their enemies' mistakes. But viewed within the context of God's promise to protect Joseph's descendants, these events serve as a testimony to the identity of the recipients of the birthright blessings given to Joseph. God not only has the power to direct historical events, but also has control of the weather (Isaiah 46:9-10; Leviticus 26:3-4).

However, despite His past intervention on behalf of these nations, the Bible also reveals a time is coming when God will remove His divine protection and blessings from the British and American peoples.

## CHAPTER 5



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# WHAT'S AHEAD AND WHAT SHOULD YOU DO ABOUT IT?

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"Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 18:31).

**A**s we have shown, God has been *faithful* to the promises He made to Abraham over 3,500 years ago.

He divided those promises into two basic parts: the birthright blessing (the material blessings of national greatness) and the spiritual blessing that would apply to all nations through Abraham's Seed—Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). The opportunity to respond to God is not based on one's race, gender or ethnicity (Galatians 3:28).

Many people today recognize the fulfillment of the promise of grace through Jesus Christ. But how God fulfilled the material and national blessings to Abraham's descendants in the "last days"—the time just before Christ's return—has largely remained a mystery (Genesis 49:1). Most assume these promises were fulfilled in the ancient nation of Israel, but, clearly, ancient Israel never received these blessings in their fullness.

Yet God declares that He is faithful to the promises He makes—He does not lie or exaggerate (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18).

The 10 tribes of Israel went into captivity and lost their identity because of their national sins. But God knows who they are today and gives us clues to identify their descendants in modern times—and the biblical, historical and archaeological evidence



*Protesters burn American and British flags outside the American Embassy, in Grosvenor Square, on Sept. 11, 2010, in London, England.*

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points to the modern descendants of Jacob existing today in the United States, Britain and the Commonwealth nations, and other nations of northwest Europe.

These nations enjoy their prosperity and physical blessings not because they are physically superior to any other people, but solely because of the faithfulness of their progenitor, Abraham, and the other patriarchs. In fact, the Israelites ancient and modern have been far from perfect. They were punished for their sinfulness in the past and will face a similar punishment in the future.

We now come to two very important questions. What is the significance of all this information? And how should you respond?

### **Significance of identification**

Does the identity of the Israelite nations carry any significance today? Some dismiss it as merely historical fascination that has no relevance. Others label it as racist because misguided people have ignorantly used similar ideas to promote racism.

We reiterate and emphasize that these blessings were not due to any sort of genetic or physical superiority—in fact, God emphatically called Israel “the least of all peoples” (Deuteronomy 7:7).

Again, what is the significance of knowing the identity of the modern descendants of Israel today?

The answer is that this knowledge helps us understand the messages of the prophets and the future of these nations before Jesus Christ’s return. Identifying the descendants of modern Israel is an essential *key* to understanding many Bible prophecies.

What are some of the significant prophecies God gave regarding these descendants of Abraham?

### **Future prophecies**

By understanding the modern identity of Israel, one can understand where these nations are addressed in Bible prophecy. Instead of using their modern names in prophecies, God addressed them by their ancient names.

Numerous Bible prophecies yet to be fulfilled refer to the nations or families of “Manasseh,” “Ephraim,” “Joseph,” “Jacob” and “Israel.” Understanding that the United States, Britain and the nations of the Commonwealth are the modern descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim, the grandsons of Jacob (Israel), helps us know where to look for those prophecies to unfold.

Before moving forward, we need to remember that the modern nation called Israel (located in the Middle East) is the homeland of many Jews, descendants chiefly of Judah, one of Jacob’s 12 sons (Genesis 49:8-12). As we

# THREE KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

It's important to understand three basic applications of prophecy when studying the Old Testament. The correct application is determined by studying the context and time frame in which the prophecies were written. Prophecies can have:

- 1. A historical application**, usually a warning to people of impending punishment for their sins and a call to repent. Isaiah 1:1-16, for example, shows the prophet urging Judah's kings and people to repent of their evil doings.
- 2. A dual application** to both the ancient Israelites and their modern descendants today. The blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience to God's law recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are examples of dual application. What applied to the ancient Israelites still applies today.
- 3. A future application**. Sometimes God's messages through His prophets came after their respective nations had already fallen, and the context of the passage shows that the prophecy was for the descendants of Israel in the end times (Genesis 49:1; Daniel 11:40).

For more keys to understanding the Bible's prophecies, read the articles in the "[Prophecy](#)" section on [LifeHopeandTruth.com](#).

have explained, this nation does not represent all the other sons of Jacob. When we read future prophecies of Jacob and Israel, they are usually not referring specifically to the Jewish state of Israel. The more accurate biblical identification for this state is Judah.

## Increasing national sin

In the past, the British and American peoples had a reputation for at least a show of morality. When the British would colonize an area, missionaries spreading Bibles and Judeo-Christian teaching always followed. The founders of America often hearkened back to biblical principles—belief in God and Christian tenets played instrumental roles in the founding and ongoing suc-

cess of the nation. In fact, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin suggested that the “Great Seal of the United States” include a picture of Israelites and Moses following the pillar of fire.

For a large portion of their history, many biblical values were the standard in Anglo-Saxon nations. People commonly acknowledged God as their source of blessings, sexual immorality was generally taboo, and the 10 Commandments served as the basis for morality.

But over the course of the 20th century, these nations gradually discarded the foundation of biblical morality and increasingly embraced secular and antibiblical morality. A careful comparison of God’s commands to the modern nations of Israel today shows that these nations are brazenly rejecting God and His ways on a national and individual level.

Moral standards continue to slide in these nations, paralleling the increasing skepticism about God and the Bible and the outright rejection of His 10 Commandments as a standard of morality. Blatant examples of breaking of God’s commandments include trampling on the seventh-day Sabbath, idolatry of many sorts, sexual immorality and the breakdown of the traditional family.

Much of this moral breakdown is traceable to the 1960s sexual revolution. Cohabitation before marriage is now generally accepted, abortion is legal and used as a method to escape the consequences of illicit sex, and homosexual marriage is now legal in nearly all nations of Israelite descent.

Instead of setting an example of morality and goodness, it’s sadly ironic that even as many of these nations lead the world in terms of technology and innovation, they also produce a large percentage of the world’s pornography, exporting sin as entertainment. For more information on these problems, read “[Why Is God Angry With America?](#)” on [LifeHopeandTruth.com](#).

Instead of worshipping the true God, the modern Israelite nations practice idolatry by putting many things before God, including rampant materialism, false religion and elevating freedom of choice over biblical principles of morality.

Because of their increasing sins, which are really a slap in the face of the God who has given these blessings, He has already foretold that He is going to severely, and justly, punish the nations of modern Israel to bring them to their senses.

Let’s now focus on prophecies directed to Israel today.

### **Jacob’s trouble: A time of national punishment**

Jeremiah 30 holds a sobering prophecy of the future for the modern descendants of Jacob. First, note the setting for this message—it’s *after* both

the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah had fallen that God told Jeremiah to record His words for the future.

In verses 3-4 we read, “‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people *Israel and Judah*,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’ Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning *Israel and Judah*.”

Note that God spoke of bringing both “Israel and Judah” back to the Holy Land. But only the Jews, representing the tribe of Judah, returned to this land after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. The other tribes of Israel never returned! So this has yet to occur, but when?

God then explained that prior to their coming back they would see a time of “fear, and not of peace” when people’s faces will turn pale (verses 5-6). “Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of *Jacob’s trouble*, but he shall be saved out of it” (verse 7).

This prophecy was not for ancient Israel and Judah—they had already experienced their time of punishment—but for a future time of trouble on the modern nations of Israel and Judah.

This “time of Jacob’s trouble” will be an unprecedented time of difficulty for the Israelite nations prior to Jesus Christ’s return to earth. God will bring this punishment because the sins of Jacob’s descendants will have “increased” (verse 15)—something we are seeing occur before our eyes.

In addition to his prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, the prophet Ezekiel also recorded many prophecies (long after the fall of ancient Israel) of a future punishment on these people. He prophesied “toward the mountains of Israel” of end-time punishment for their sins (Ezekiel 6:2). In the Bible, “mountains” typically represent *governments* or *nations*—so this prophecy is directed to the modern nations of Israel.

He declared that God will “bring a sword [representing military force] against you, and I will destroy your high places” (verse 3). Part of this defeat will be the destruction of cities (verse 6). With today’s widespread nuclear capabilities it’s no longer inconceivable that major cities—such as London, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto, Sydney, etc.—could be suddenly destroyed.

Famine and pestilence—often the byproduct of war (verses 11-12)—will come as well. Ezekiel 7 prophesies that modern Israel will experience total military defeat (verses 14, 21, 24), widespread terror and suffering (verses 16-18) and economic collapse (verse 19).

That’s not all. The book of Revelation describes a European power (called “the beast”) that will economically and militarily dominate during the end

times (Revelation 13:11-18; 17:12-18), replacing the United States, Britain and the Commonwealth nations as the world power before Christ's return—and will be responsible for the fall and captivity of the modern Israelite nations. Yes, as hard as it may be to imagine, the United States and other nations descended from Britain will fall during the coming Great Tribulation (Jeremiah 30:8).

Read through Leviticus 26, which describes the horrifying curses to come on Israel for national disobedience. In their stubbornness against God, the modern nations of Israel, primarily the United States, Britain and the Commonwealth nations, will face these punishments. God declared that as a result of national sins, He would “break the pride of your power” (verse 19). Though the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the state of Israel are some of the most prosperous and powerful nations on earth today, this power will be taken away.

We see, in fact, that power already beginning to weaken.

### **A time of trouble for all people**

Several other prophets also spoke of this perilous time coming to the descendants of Jacob and the peoples of all nations before the return of Christ. Daniel called it “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (Daniel 12:1). Zephaniah referred to a “day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress” (Zephaniah 1:15).

Many prophets announced the coming **Day of the Lord**. Isaiah added that this “indignation of the LORD” will be “against all nations” (Isaiah 34:2). Joel described it as “the great and awesome day of the LORD” (Joel 2:31).

Explaining to His disciples what would happen before His return (Matthew 24:3), Jesus cast these terrible days as a time of “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened” (verses 21-22).

Revelation reveals times coming that will be worse than any previous war and suffering ever endured by humanity: “By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed” (Revelation 9:18). At current population levels this means over 2 billion people will die, a staggering number once unbelievable but now possible in the nuclear age. But despite this unprecedented suffering, the majority of people will stubbornly refuse to repent and turn to God (verses 20-21).

For further study on this troublous time, see the LifeHopeandTruth.com articles: “[Great Tribulation](#)” and “[Wrath of God](#).”

## God's message to Israel today

God's servants take these sobering prophecies very seriously. God's Church today—like the prophets, Jesus Christ and the early Church—is commissioned to preach a message of warning, repentance and hope to the people of Israel today.

Long ago God revealed to Ezekiel the message His servants were to take to the nations of Israel. They were, and are, a “watchman for the house of Israel” (Ezekiel 33:7). Watchmen in Israel were posted to warn of impending threats; spiritually, God's watchmen were told to sound the *warning* and call people to *repentance*—to “warn the wicked to turn from his way” (verse 9).

God declares: “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?” (verse 11).

This message contains two essential elements: first, a warning of the consequences of national and personal sins and, second, a plea for repentance, imploring people to turn away from sin and toward the true God.

Jesus Christ preached the same message: “Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. *Repent*, and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14-15).

After His death and resurrection, His Church continued the proclamation (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20), and it is being preached through God's servants today—both to the nations of Israel and to all nations on earth.

In the end, it is not a message of “doom and gloom,” but an incredible message of hope: “And now, *Israel*, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13; compare Micah 6:8).

These prophetic messages are all about *cause and effect*. Blessings come from obedience; curses come from sin (Hosea 10:12-15). God's desire is for us as His children to repent of our disobedience and then strive to obey His good and beneficial laws so we can be blessed.

Someday humanity will understand, but for the moment, the reality is that humanity is only *increasing in sin*.

## Our responsibility to repent

What about you?

Even if whole nations don't repent, it is still possible for individuals to repent, turn to God and be blessed and protected! God protected righteous individuals like Noah and Lot, who lived in societies surrounded by wicked-

ness (Genesis 6:7-8; 19:16-17). And He also shows through other prophecies that many righteous individuals will receive divine protection from the coming Great Tribulation (Luke 21:36; Revelation 3:10; 12:14).

The all-important question is: *What will you do with this message?*

Will you respond by repenting of your sins and turning your life to humble obedience to God? Or will you be like the people during the days of Noah, who rejected Noah's preaching and lived as they wished until punishment came (2 Peter 2:5)?

We sincerely urge you to listen to God, to humbly confess and repent of your sins and commit to living according to God's commandments.

## Hope remains for Israel

The good news for the nations of Israel, and the entire world, is that hope lies beyond the coming end-time suffering. Jesus Christ *will* return to earth and save all of humanity from self-destruction. He *will* establish His Kingdom and rule all nations.

Many descendants of the ancient Israelites will eventually repent, the Bible assures us.

One of the first actions Christ will take is to destroy the "beast" power and free the Israelite nations from national captivity. He will then bring Israel back together: "It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will *assemble the outcasts of Israel*, and gather together *the dispersed of Judah* from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:11-12; also see Psalms 14:7; 85:1-2).

He will rescue them from the severe punishment of the time of "Jacob's trouble," and bring them home, back to their land of origin. The northern 10 tribes will be reunited with Judah—healing the breach that has existed since the two kingdoms split under Rehoboam and Jeroboam. God told Ezekiel to join two sticks together as one, symbolizing a remarkable prophecy He then gave to bring comfort to the Jews and their "lost" brothers of Israel: "And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again" (Ezekiel 37:22).

The prophet Isaiah also eloquently described how the people of Israel will be gathered from all over the world and miraculously returned to their homeland (Isaiah 43:2, 5-6, 14-17). Try to imagine the Israelite peoples coming from places such as the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, New Zealand



and Australia back to their homeland—finally understanding their identity and the true God!

Were these just the mystical ramblings of deluded old men, as some scoff, or were these the promises of God, assurances that Judah and Israel will finally repent of their sins and be restored?

Yes, there is hope beyond the coming trouble! Though the Israelite nations will be brought down and punished, God will restore them to greatness. They will abandon their idolatrous and sinful ways and “will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments” (Deuteronomy 30:8).

Furthermore, the future is so clear in God’s plan that He went so far as to explain that the resurrected King David will rule over the reunited Israel (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24-25). Then Jesus Himself explained that under David, the individual tribes will be ruled by the 12 apostles (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30).

At that time, Jerusalem will become the world’s capital and “out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). Eventually, the knowledge of God will fill the entire earth (Isaiah 11:9). People of all nations will obey and reap the blessings of obedience!

The true Sabbath and holy days will be restored to Israel and will eventually be faithfully observed by all nations around the world (Isaiah 66:23; Zechariah 14:16-19), resulting in worldwide blessings and happiness—a stark reversal of the curses that have come through rejecting God’s days of worship.

Eventually, Israel will be united with the gentile nations who formerly enslaved them in serving and obeying the true God: “In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance’” (Isaiah 19:24-25).

Israel will finally fulfill its intended destiny to be a model nation, setting the example of obedience toward God, which brings such positive blessings (Isaiah 2:3; 27:6; Zechariah 8:23).

The Kingdom of God only starts with Israel—God will see that it spans the globe to include all peoples and nations!

This is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God—the heart of the true gospel message (Mark 1:14).

## **Your response**

Yes, God has set on the horizon hope for all humanity, but between now and the return of Christ we seem determined to chart our own course, one that is leading to destruction! Why? Why is our world today so bent on following a path of ruin and suffering? Why are we grasping for solutions to our

problems but finding no answers? What are we missing?

Is the Bible right after all—that the root cause of our problems is our choosing to live by our own ideas while ignoring God and His Word?

God foretold centuries ago that the world would inevitably come to this point. The apostle Peter warned us “that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’” (2 Peter 3:3-4).

Humanity has never been particularly obedient to God, but today the “scoffers” Peter spoke of are growing as never before, casting God’s words behind and influencing others to do likewise! Many even ridicule the thesis of this booklet, scorning the idea that remnants of the “lost tribes of Israel” could exist in any form today.

What about you? Do you look at the handwriting on the wall of today’s declining moral and spiritual conditions and fear where this is leading, wondering what it means for your family and loved ones, and what you can do about it?

God gives a clear-cut answer. He pleads with all of His children today, just as He did with Israel—turn to Me, He says, seek Me, repent and change your ways!

What could be more important than listening to God and seeking to draw close to Him? Fulfilled prophecy stands as a mighty witness to God’s truthfulness, His power, even His existence! Why would anyone ignore the prophecies of earthshaking events yet to unfold?

Will you pay heed to the prophetic messages of the watchmen God has sent—the sober warning of the consequences for personal and national sins, and the incredible promises of the blessings for obeying Him?

Will you wholeheartedly respond to God, turn to Him in heartfelt repentance of your sins and fully dedicate yourself to loving and obeying Him?

God’s prophecies about the world in general, and the descendants of Israel in particular, are prime examples of Jesus’ words: “for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it” (Matthew 7:13).

That’s why He fervently urged those listening to “enter by the narrow gate.” Yes, it’s a narrow and difficult path, He said, and “there are few who find it,” but it is “the way which leads to life” (verse 14).

Please, choose life!

# WHAT SHOULD YOU DO NOW?

A time of great trouble is coming on all nations—that is certain. What remains to be seen is the role these prophecies will play in your life. Will you be counted worthy to escape it? Will you make the changes in your life that God desires you to make? No prophecy can answer that—only you can.

Here are four immediate action steps you can take:

1.

## **BEGIN STUDYING THE BIBLE TO LEARN WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF YOU.**

Begin by studying the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20). These are basic laws that govern life. Studying and immediately implementing the 10 Commandments will bring blessings to your life (Deuteronomy 11:27; 28:1). To learn how to start applying these laws today, read our free booklet *God's 10 Commandments: Still Relevant Today*.

2.

## **LEARN HOW TO PRAY AND COMMUNICATE WITH GOD.**

When you learn His standards and where you have fallen short (sinned), go to Him in repentance. Ask for His forgiveness and help to change. Seek genuinely to overcome sin and change your life. To learn how this process works, study our free booklet *Change Your Life!*

3.

## **START KEEPING GOD'S SABBATH AND HOLY DAYS.**

Israel was punished for neglecting these special days. If you really want to be blessed in your life, you can't afford to make the same mistake. The true biblical Sabbath is on the seventh day of the week (from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset). The biblical holy days are observed in the spring and the fall (and do not include Easter or Christmas). To learn how to integrate God's special days into your life, read *The Sabbath: A Neglected Gift From God* and *From Holidays to Holy Days: God's Plan for You*.

4.

## **REACH OUT.**

This booklet is published by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association. We have pastors all around the world who can help you. If you are heeding the warning contained in this booklet and want to change your life, we are here to help. We also welcome you to join us in this effort to proclaim this message to the nations. Visit our website to learn more about us and to contact a pastor in your area: [cogwa.org](http://cogwa.org).

# Recommended Reading From LifeHopeandTruth.com

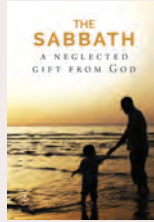
## *God's 10 Commandments: Still Relevant Today*



Why is the world so violent? Why do half of Western marriages end in divorce and so many children live in single-parent families? What are so many overlooking? What is the missing key to living a happy and productive life? If you want true peace and

happiness, acting on the biblical lessons in this booklet is vitally important to you!

## *The Sabbath: A Neglected Gift From God*



From the beginning, God designed a day of rest and refreshment as a special blessing for humanity. So why do so few Christians today observe the Sabbath? In this booklet, explore the fascinating biblical story of the Sabbath and how you can enjoy

the wonderful benefits of this neglected gift from God.

## *Change Your Life!*



Do you want to see your life change, but wonder what to do? This booklet will help you identify the most important changes you can make, and it shows how these changes will make all the difference in your life! You really can experience the life

God wants you to have—one full of meaning, satisfaction and joy!

## *Welcome to the Church of God, a Worldwide Association*



All of these booklets are made available free of charge by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association. Who are we? What are our beliefs, and what is our mission? Find out what we are all about in this booklet.



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# About **LifeHope&Truth**

LifeHopeandTruth.com exists to fill a critical void in this world: the lack of understanding about the purpose of life, the lack of realistic hope for a better future and the lack of truth!

Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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