

## REVIEW OF UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY

### Part II

By Rick Sherrod

December 1996

Introductory Note: Part II of this review examines eight different subject areas developed in Mr. Armstrong's *United States and Britain in Prophecy (USB)*. In each section, Dr. Sherrod makes observations and recommendation concerning how UCG might most effectively incorporate each respective topic into any publication the Church may produce. Part II concludes with a statement concerning how the knowledge of Israel's modern-day identity is an aspect of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and where this understanding might most appropriately fit into the general body of UCG doctrine.

### The Davidic Throne

One central theme in British-Israel thought is that of the Throne of David and its continuing existence from the early-6th century B.C. when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar apparently terminated permanently the Davidic dynasty. The story of David's throne appears as either a major component or a vignette in most book-length works on Israel's identity in modern times. The critic of ideas concerning a modern day Throne of David is generally quick to recall Richard Brothers (1757-1824) and his far-fetched claim of Davidic descent. If later and more respectable British-Israelite writers say little or nothing of Brothers, they do appeal to long and persistent traditions, myths, and legends which form the backbone--albeit a quite tenuous one--of the story of Jeremiah's precarious trek from Jerusalem to Egypt<sup>1</sup> to Spain<sup>2</sup> and ultimately to Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jer. 43:1-7.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Hine, *Forty-Seven Identifications*, p. 35; G. O. Marx, "Coronation Stone at Westminster."

<sup>3</sup>Ida Ferguson, *Ensign to the Nations*, pp. 35, 72. Ferguson believes that Jeremiah's landing in Ireland occurred at Carrickfergus near present-day Belfast. Frederick Robert Augustus Glover, chaplain to the English Consulate at Cologne, wrote extensively on the travels of the Coronation Stone. His research largely laid the groundwork for one of the genealogical charts tracing the English Throne back to king David. Glover suggested that Jeremiah arrived in Ireland c. 580 B. C. when his ship wrecked along the Irish coastline (Hine, *Forty-Seven Identifications*,

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Mr. Armstrong considered the continuation of the Davidic Throne to be a central part of his case for the identity of modern Israel. He devoted a major portion of *USB*--a full three chapters<sup>4</sup>--to this dimension of our teaching on this subject. He develops the classic British-Israel explanation of how there will be in modern times a descendant of David ruling over the House of Israel. He maintains that since God told David that he would never lack a man (or conceivably a woman) to sit on his throne, the promise of a continuing dynasty should be taken literally. Indeed, Mr. Armstrong places inordinate importance on the promise of a perpetual throne for the House of David, e.g.:

The COVENANT PROMISE to David is plain and definite. Either his dynasty has continued and exists today, ruling over the house of ISRAEL (not the House of Judah), or God's Word fails. The infallibility of the Bible is at stake! God's Word is at stake.<sup>5</sup>

We may be better served by being less assertive, or at least by placing less focus on the promises relevant to the Davidic throne.

The Difficulties

The British-Israel schema about the Davidic Throne presents several difficulties. Apart from the legitimate hermeneutical problems which the WCG has proposed concerning several passages used to support the story,<sup>6</sup> the migrations of 10th century Zarahite Jews and Jeremiah's

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pp. 122-123). Tradition indicates that during its sojourn in Ireland, the Coronation Stone rested primarily at Tara near Dublin. *Portrait of Ireland* offers a rich description of the coronation ceremonies of Irish kings which took place at that site (pp. 56-59). The site of Tara is a worthwhile visit for any traveler--British Israelite or otherwise--to Ireland. Whether or not Jeremiah was ever there, Tara was the location of some remarkably significant events in Irish prehistory. See Kenneth MacGowan, *The Hill of Tara*; Sean P. O Riordain, *Tara: The Monuments on the Hill*; Elizabeth Hickey, *The Legend of Tara*; "Tara of the Kings" (a brochure which can be purchased at the site itself); M. J., *Eri: Being Gleanings of Very Ancient Irish History*; and John Maclaren, *The History of Ancient Caledonia*.

<sup>4</sup>Chapters 7-9, pp. 72-105.

<sup>5</sup>*USB.*, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup>See Greg R. Albrecht, "Hermeneutics," Worldwide Church of God Ministerial Conferences booklet (1993-1994), Version 7.1, pp. 58-61, especially on the prophecies in Ez. 17 and 21.

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company in the early-6th century are impossible to prove historically.<sup>7</sup> While certain documentation of these travels exists, conclusive evidence does not. We are forced to rely heavily on a host of myths and traditions--"evidence" which is justifiably held suspect in the eyes of the scholarly community as well as our critics from the religious Establishment. Moreover, even the best reconstructed lineage from king David to Elizabeth II, found in W. M. H. Milner's *Royal House of Britain An Enduring Dynasty*, is fraught with unbridgeable gaps and based on partial rather than irrefutable evidence and records.<sup>8</sup> Finally, recent scholarship has even posed a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the royal line as descended through Queen Victoria.<sup>9</sup>

To the extent that we emphasize the perpetual throne of David in any new booklet, we must take care to qualify our presentation, casting it in terms of plausibility rather than absolute certainty.

Otherwise, we needlessly paint a target on ourselves at which our critics will certainly shoot. Typically, those who have challenged Mr. Armstrong's work focus on several areas which they consider especially vulnerable:

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<sup>7</sup>WCG Study Paper, "United States and Britain in Prophecy," under the subheading "The Davidic Promises," pp. 4-5.

<sup>8</sup>"A favorite topic of Anglo-Israelites is the legendary royal genealogies of the British Isles. . . . Any alleged genealogy linking the British royal family to King David is an Anglo-Israelite invention. Despite the Anglo-Israelite claim that an Israelite princess migrated to Ireland and married into a royal family, proof of such has never been produced. . . . These genealogies are nothing more than the fabrication of the Anglo-Israelite movement itself" ("United States and Britain in Prophecy," p. 4, column 3).

<sup>9</sup>In 1995, a book--*Queen Victoria's Gene: Hemophilia and the Royal Family*--by two British brothers, D. Malcolm (a Cal-Berkeley embryologist) and William T. W. Potts (a zoologist at Lancaster University), appeared calling into question Queen Victoria's lineage. Based on the medical process by which hemophilia is transmitted, these writers suggest that the Grandmother of Europe was the product of an illicit union (no great stretch of the imagination considering the recent antics of the Royal family. . . or, for that matter, the sexual misbehavior of British royalty throughout the greater balance of their recorded history). A *Newsweek* magazine review (July 24, 1995 in "Back of the Book" section) proclaimed that this "mind-bending possibility. . . breaks new historical ground. . . . [Why] did the interlocking European ruling families' history of hemophilia begin with Victoria? There is no question one of Victoria's sons, and later descendants, had hemophilia. Her husband, Albert, didn't have it, so the gene had to come from Victoria. Where did she get it? Previous genealogical work, unearthed by the Potts, but never published, rules out any of Victoria's forerunners. That leaves only a spontaneous mutation--a one-in-50,000 chance--or Victoria is the daughter of someone other than the Duke of Kent. Circumstances tend to argue for an unknown lover." The key to this mystery lies, literally, in the royal DNA" Validation of the hypothesis would require exhuming the bones of Victoria, something which, given British reverence for their royalty, remains an unlikely prospect. The book is also reviewed in *New Statesman and Society*, August 4, 1995, vol. 8, p. 36; and *Nature*, November 2, 1995, vol. 378, Issue 6552, p. 99.

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- The story of Jeremiah, Baruch, Tea-tephi, Heremon, etc. cannot be established from credible historical records. Many go as far as to say it is a total fabrication, with no basis of historical truth whatsoever.<sup>10</sup>
- According to some geologists, the Coronation Stone<sup>11</sup> is almost certainly of Scottish and not Middle eastern origin.

It is, however, very difficult to get definitive, authoritative information on this, and the debate will probably continue *ad infinitum, ad naseum*.

- Claims about Jacob's Pillar Stone are tentative (more importantly, they are peripheral).
- There are short interregnums in the line of David<sup>12</sup> so why not a long one, from Zedekiah's death to the return of Christ?
- We have misinterpreted the meaning of the "everlasting covenant" with David.

The Biblical Evidence

Nonetheless, the Bible certainly seems to say that God made a covenant with David guaranteeing his throne in perpetuity. A host of scriptures support the case:

The word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David. . . when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom . . . and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever (II Sam. 7:4). 213

This promise was not conditional based on the heir's behavior:

If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: *But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul* [emphasis mine], whom I put away before thee. And thine house and

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<sup>10</sup>WCG Study Paper, "United States and Britain in Prophecy," p. 3, column 2.

<sup>11</sup>See Prince Michael, *Crown Jewels of Europe*, pp. 69, 72. It is interesting that in the year 1996, the British government finally returned the Coronation Stone to Scotland. It has survived numerous attempts at relocation, including Edward III's recantation (at least respecting the Stone) of the terms of the Treaty of Northampton (1328) under which "all Scottish heirlooms were to be restored" (Thomas B. Costain, *The Three Edwards*, pp. 69, 237-238) and rather recently, an successful attempt in 1950 in which certain Scots actually stole the stone and retained it temporarily.

<sup>12</sup>e.g., the gap between Charles I and Charles II.

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thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (v. 14).

This surely cannot be interpreted as a reference to Christ, who never sinned. Note also:

Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt [a symbol of permanence] (II Chron. 13:5)?

Psalms 89 add weight to the case:

If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven* [emphasis mine] (v. 30-37).

In this regard, Jeremiah 33 adds:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel (v. 14 - 17).

When ancient Israel was to be divided, God told Jeroboam, the first king of the northern Kingdom:

Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life *for David my servant's sake* [emphasis mine], whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, *that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem* [emphasis mine], the city which I have chosen me to put

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my name there (II Kings 11:31-37).

Based on these type of passages, Mr. Armstrong concluded that someone, somewhere will be sitting, or eligible to sit on the Davidic throne--one who can trace a lineage back to David--until Christ returns to claim it for Himself. It is evident, of course, from the Gospel of Luke that Christ is the ultimate claimant:

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32).

But Jeremiah suggests that the prophecy cannot be fulfilled with Christ as the only claimant:

In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely [hardly true of Jesus' time] . . . for thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. . . If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. . . If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers [not "ruler"] over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them (Jer. 33:16).

Thus, after arguing for the certainty of a perpetual Davidic throne, Mr. Armstrong traces the story of how God fulfilled this promise through the adventures of Jeremiah and the daughters of Zedekiah.

Jeremiah's Commission

One hundred and thirty years after Israel's final deportation, Judah experienced a similar fate.

And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there (II Kings 23:27).

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The last reigning king of David's line was Zedekiah. The Babylonians killed his sons before his eyes, after which he was blinded. The Bible records his death in Babylon:

Then he [Nebuchadnezzar] put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death (Jer. 52:11).

Theoretically, the line could have been continued through Zedekiah's predecessor, Jeconiah, who was restored to favor after years of captivity. However, the Bible makes it quite clear that God did *not* to continue David's dynasty through Jeconiah or his sons. Jeremiah observes:

Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah (Jeremiah 22:30).

The account in I Chronicles identifies the descendants of Jeconiah:

And the sons of Jeconiah; Assir, Salathiel his son, Malchiram also, and Pedaiah. . . And the sons of Pedaiah were, Zerubbabel (I Chron. 3:17-18) .

Jeconiah's grandson Zerubbabel led the Jews in a 6th century B. C. Restoration. He would become the Persian appointed governor over the first wave of returnees who came back to Jerusalem in 536 B. C. But he never held a royal title, and in fact, very likely lost his governorship about 519 B. C. when the seditious sounding prophecies of Zechariah<sup>13</sup> and Haggai<sup>14</sup> stirred the restored Jewish community with ideas of Messianic Expectation.<sup>15</sup> Popular

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<sup>13</sup>Zech. 3:8-10, 4:6, 9, 6:12-14.

<sup>14</sup>Haggai 1:1-2, 2:20-23, 6. The prophecies of both Haggai and Zechariah came in a setting when civil turmoil rocked the Persian Empire (520-518 B. C.). To many contemporary observers, it must have appeared that the mighty but still relatively young empire was tottering and about to fall. Upon the death of Cambyses (522 B. C.), the son of Cyrus the Great, a power struggle for the throne erupted. Pseudo-Smerdis and Darius battled for the royal title, leaving the peoples under Persian rule with an opportunity to take advantage of the disorder and uncertainty prevailing in the highest echelons of government (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 495-496). When Haggai spoke of the overthrow of "the throne of kingdoms" and the destruction of "the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen," the spirits in the restored Jewish community must have soared. The Millennial imagery and Messianic terminology used by both Haggai and Zechariah led many to anticipate the imminent coming of Messiah in the person of Zerubbabel himself.

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sentiment to elevate Zerubbabel to monarchical status probably prompted the Persian imperial government to remove him from office altogether. Indeed, there was no throne over the restored Jews until the 2nd century B. C.<sup>16</sup>

This history led Mr. Armstrong to believe the perpetual Davidic Covenant remained intact elsewhere. He explains how this occurred in chapter 7 of *USB*, "Jeremiah's Mysterious Commission." For scriptural support, he cites Jer. 1:9.

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant.<sup>17</sup>

Fulfillment of this prophecy involved the reunion of descendants of the two sons of Judah, Pharez and Zarah.

The Breach Between Zarah and Pharez

We base our traditional interpretation of the breach that occurred between Judah's twin sons on the Genesis account of their births.

And it came to pass in the time of her [Tamar] travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. . . when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread,<sup>18</sup> saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and

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<sup>15</sup>On the evolution of the idea of Messianic Expectation, see Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 532-533, 550 and Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 495-496.

<sup>16</sup>By adopting the title of "king" in 104 B. C., Judah Aristobulus of the Maccabean or Hasmonaen family--not of the Davidic line--reestablished a monarchy over the Jewish people.

<sup>17</sup>*USB*, p. 74.

<sup>18</sup>In British-Israel circles, this scarlet thread finds expression in the Irish "Red Hand of Ulster." For a rich and fascinating example of this association, see W. Howard Bennett, *Symbols of our Celto-Saxon Heritage*, pp. 110-114. James Morris also makes mention of the origin of the legend of the Red Hand in *Farwell the Trumpets*, p. 225 (note).



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she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah (Gen. 38:27 - 30).

Mr. Armstrong argues that the recording of this story implies that the "breach" will be healed. In other words, Pharez, who forced himself into the firstborn position, would eventually be reconciled with Zarah. David, Zedekiah, and--through His human descent--Jesus Christ, all were of the Pharez line.

Based on several scriptures found in the Book of Ezekiel,<sup>19</sup> Mr. Armstrong argues that God would heal the breach through a marriage between a ruler of the Zarah branch (which relocated in Ireland as a colony of Israelites during the days of king David) and the daughters of King Zedekiah, the last "Pharez" ruler over the kingdom of Judah.<sup>20</sup>

Although most of the people of the Kingdom of Judah went into captivity along with Zedekiah, a remnant of Jews including the prophet Jeremiah were spared deportation with the general population. This group took Jeremiah to Egypt with Zedekiah's daughters.<sup>21</sup> This much is documented by biblical history. According to legend, Jeremiah then travelled to Ireland with the princesses and Jacob's Pillar Stone, which had become a physical symbol of the covenants. In Ireland, Jeremiah "planted" the throne through the marriage of one of Zedekiah's daughters to an heir to the other branch of Judah's "scepter"<sup>22</sup> family. Then, through two more "overturns," the throne migrated from Ireland to Scotland<sup>23</sup> and eventually to England.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Chapter 17 and 21:18-26. See *USB*, pp. 86-90.

<sup>20</sup>*USB*, p. 102.

<sup>21</sup>Jer. 41:10, 43:5-7.

<sup>22</sup>Gen. 49:10, I Chron. 5:2.

<sup>23</sup>The tradition is that Fergus I MacErc transported the Stone from Tara in Ireland to the Scottish island of Ionia in around A. D. 530. See Marx, "Coronation Stone at Westminster," p. 3 and Ferguson, *Ensign to the Nations*, p. 82. By A. D. 843, Kenneth MacAlpin had united the Picts and the Scots under his own rule. For his coronation, MacAlpin moved the Stone to Scone in eastern Scotland near Perth where it remained for over four centuries as the site for crowning of newly ascended Scottish kings. Marx, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 42; *Treasures of Britain*, p. 426; *Scotland: A Short History*, pp. 57-58; and *Scottish World*, pp. 38, 44, 46.

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Mr. Armstrong makes use of the riddle and parables of Ezekiel 17 and scriptures from Ezekiel 21 as evidence that Zedekiah's daughters would be united in marriage with a ruling member of the Zarah line. He explains Ezekiel 17 writing:

A great eagle came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar. This is explained to represent King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who came to Jerusalem and took captive the king of Judah. The cropping off of the cedar's young twigs and carrying them to a land of traffic is explained to picture the captivity of the king's sons. . . . The riddle covers the *first* half of Jeremiah's commission. Now notice what is revealed concerning the *second* part--the PLANTING of David's throne! It comes in the parable, verses 22-24: 'Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar.' From God's own explanation we have heard that the cedar tree represents the nation of Judah; its highest branch is Judah's king. The riddle told us Nebuchadnezzar took the highest branch--the king. The parable now tells us *God*--not Nebuchadnezzar, but *God*--will take *of* the highest branch. Not the branch, but OF (FROM in Hebrew) the Branch--of Zedekiah's children. But Nebuchadnezzar took, and killed, all his SONS.

God, through his prophet Jeremiah, is now going to take OF this highest branch and "SET IT" (verse 22). "I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a *tender one*, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent," continues the Almighty! Ah! "A tender young twig"! The twigs of this highest branch represent the children of King Zedekiah! Certainly a tender young twig, then, represents a DAUGHTER! ". . . and will PLANT it." Could symbolic language say plainer this young Jewish princess is to become the royal seed for PLANTING again of David's throne? Where? . . . "In the mountain of the height of ISRAEL will I plant it," answers the Eternal in Ezekiel 17:23! David's throne now is to be planted in ISRAEL, after being thrown down from JUDAH! . . . It was PLANTED in ISRAEL, who removed from Judah! After this Jewish princess is "planted" on the throne, now in ISRAEL, lost from view--that throne is to BEAR FRUIT. She is to marry, have children, and her sons are to continue David's dyansty!<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>In 1296, Edward I Longshanks (1272-1307), the king of England removed the Stone from Scone and "took it to Westminster Abbey, London, to form part of Edward the Confessor's chair, used in English coronation ceremonies" (*Treasures of Britain*, p. 426; see also Edward Jenks, *Edward Plantagenet*, pp. 267-268). The Stone's removal was symbolic of the domination of England over the Scots. Albion and Hall assert that "nothing he [Edward I] could have done was more certain to create lasting enmity than his removal of the Coronation Stone" (pp. 165-166). The affront to Scottish dignity was one of the factors inspiring the rebellion under William Wallace of more recent Mel Gibson/*Brave Heart* celebrity (which incidentally plays extremely fast and loose with historical fact).

<sup>25</sup>USB, pp. 88-89. Howie argues that "the fictional account of Jeremiah's trip from Egypt to Ireland has no basis in

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Regarding the three-fold transference of the Davidic throne, Ezekiel made this forecast:

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him (Ez. 21:25-27).

r. Armstrong believed the three “overturns” mentioned in this passage to refer to a three-fold overturning of “the diadem, and the throne. . . . overturned by abasing Zedekiah, the house of Judah, the Pharez line, and exalting, now the house of Israel, and one of the Zarah line! The first of the three overturns was performed as the first half of Jeremiah’s commission.” The house of Israel, “these many years without a king (Hosea 3:4),” would be exalted when Jeremiah healed the Pharez-Zarah breach with a marriage which established a Judahite-Davidic monarch over an Isrealitish people who had long since settled in the Emerald Isle. The remaining two “overturns” would not occur until the 9th and 17th centuries A. D., and “shall be no more *overturned* until the second coming of Christ!”<sup>26</sup>

Since around 1993, Mr. Armstrong’s exegesis of these passages has come under intense attack by those who have changed doctrine in the WCG. Greg R. Albrecht challenges the above analysis noting that “virtually all scholars and commentators see a messianic interpretation of Ezekiel 17:22-24.” Regarding Ezekiel 21, he continues:

“‘Overturn,’ the word used in the KJV, is also translated ‘overthrown,’ ‘distortion,’ and ‘ruin.’ The repeating of the word is a literary technique describing the intensity of God’s judgment (“ruin, ruin, ruin”). The passage is an obvious reference to Christ’s second coming, but not so obviously a reference to

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fact and is sustained only by pure imagination. Interpreting the reference in Ezekiel 17:22 to ‘a tender one’ as the younger princess of Zedekiah is to fly in the face of the interpretation plainly given in the rest of the chapter. This chapter deals with international relations, not with a young woman” (British Israelism and Pyramidology,” p. 317) .

<sup>26</sup>USB, p. 87.

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three geographical/chronological events.”<sup>27</sup>

The WCG Study Paper of November 1995 amplifies this critique, observing that:

nothing in this [NIV] translation implies an overthrowing and transfer of the throne to another country. Instead it tells us that the house of David would be without a ruling king until God decides to fill the vacancy with the rightful heir. . . . Properly understood, “The threefold repetition of ‘ruin’ stresses the intensity of God’s wrath and its destruction administered by Babylonia.” The verse is about the total vacancy of the Davidic throne until *the* rightful heir comes. . . . That this verse prophesies the Messiah’s ascension to the *vacant* Davidic throne is understood by both Jewish and Christian commentators.<sup>28</sup>

As with so many aspects of the British-Israel argument, whether one finds the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea relevant to post-Rehoboam Davidic rule over the House of Israel depends entirely on the hermeneutic used to interpret these predictions.

**“Israel” and Other “Name Games”**

In making his case for a literal and perpetual Throne of David on the earth, Mr. Armstrong put a particular interpretive spin on what is meant when the Bible refers to “Israel.”

What Does the Bible Mean By “Israel”?

Repeatedly in the pages of *USB*, Mr. Armstrong reminds the reader that the prophetic use of the word “Israel” points us exclusively to the descendants of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom--decidedly *not* Judah. He writes:

Wherever you see the name “house of Israel,” or “Samaria,” or “Ephraim” used in prophecy, remember this: IT REFERS TO THE NORTHERN TRIBES of Israel, who composed the nation. . . . Thus it is that many of the prophecies about “Israel” or “Jacob” do not refer primarily to Jews or to any of the nations that are today the descendants of the other tribes of Israel.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>“Hermeneutics,” pp. 58-59.

<sup>28</sup>pp. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup>*USB*, pp. 43, 64. See also pp. 60-62, 65-66, 70-71, 88, 107, 122.

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These unequivocal assertions are part of the necessary infrastructure to interpret many of the prophecies relevant to the Davidic Throne in a way which identifies that the throne of England is one and the same as David's.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the biblical use of the name "Israel" is far more ambiguous than we might like it to be. It is often difficult to know for certain whether the biblical narrator or prophet intends it to describe Israel, Judah, Israel *and* Judah, a portion of Judah, or a portion of Israel. In fairness to Mr. Armstrong, he does clarify this point somewhat:

In biblical prophecy, it is *they* [the sons of Joseph], primarily, who are called ISRAEL! . . . No place in all the Bible does the term "Israel" refer to the Jews exclusively. When the sense is not national but individual, the term "Israel" alone, or "children of Israel," or "men of Israel" may, and sometimes does refer to or *include* the Jews. Such an expression, for instance, as "ye men of Israel," which frequently occurs in the New Testament, refers to Israelites as individuals in a collective sense, *not* a national sense. It usually refers to Jews as individual descendants of the patriarch Israel (Jacob).<sup>31</sup>

Considerable focus on what the Bible means by the name "Israel" is given in the November 1995 Study Paper announcing that the WCG would no longer teach that the Anglo-Saxon people are descended from Israel.<sup>32</sup> To buttress this argument, the author cites several

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<sup>30</sup>See *USB*, pp. 88-89, 149 which ties the prophecy of Ez. 17 and the general theme of the Book of Ezekiel to Israel rather than Judah. To refute this position, the WCG has endorsed the notion that Ezekiel's prophecies were "written before the final fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians. . . [proclaiming] Israel's final doom;" that references to "Israel" by this prophet are, like those of Jeremiah, to both Jews and Israelites who remained in the Kingdom of Judea. Chapter 9 is particularly important because it is one of the few places where Ezekiel mentions the house of Judah. This handful of scriptures proves that Ezekiel knew the difference between the house of Israel and the house of Judah. These peoples lived together, both in Jerusalem and in the Babylonian captivity. . . . A significant and influential remnant of the house of Israel lived in Judah and shared in its fall and captivity. Therefore, when the Jews returned out of Babylon, members of the house of Israel probably [emphasis mine] returned with them" ("*United States and Britain in Prophecy*," p. 12, column 2; 13, columns 1-2). As an example of the evolution of the WCG's position on the Book of Ezekiel, see the *Plain Truth* article on the subject by Neil Earle.

<sup>31</sup>*USB*, pp. 60, 64-65, 68.

<sup>32</sup>"*United States and Britain in Prophecy*," p. 11, column 1-3. See also Albrecht's comments regarding this issue: "Is it really as simple as we have made it seem?" Regarding application of Mt. 10:6 and Jesus' charge to his disciples to go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," he argues that we should understand this directive "in the

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passages from the Book of Jeremiah<sup>33</sup> showing that this prophet addressed not only Judah, but Israel as well, even though the Northern Kingdom's captivity had come well over a century before Babylon intruded into the affairs of the Judean kingdom. A similar point is made from the writings of Ezekiel.<sup>34</sup> The argument is that these warnings were *only* to those Northerners who, through the centuries, had relocated within the confines of Judah's territory--the "*Israelites still in Jerusalem.*"

Again, the matter of hermeneutics becomes decisive. Might Jeremiah and Ezekiel like Daniel<sup>35</sup> have written their warnings with an awareness of their messages being for a future generation as well as their own? Were the Israelites mentioned by them only that "remnant"<sup>36</sup> of

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context of Matthew 9:36, a mere seven verses before it in the text. . . . The context would strongly imply those sheep were lost spiritually--not geographically" ("Hermeneutics," p. 58). On the other hand, one South African scholar, A. S. Geysler, makes a convincing case to the contrary, evaluating passages like Mt. 10:5-6--"the Jewish particularistic commission to this college of Twelve"--in its eschatological context. Geysler ties together Mt. 3:15 with Isa. 8:23-29, writing that "Jesus moves to Capernum to launch his public proclamation of the Kingdom. Zebulon and Naphtali whose tribal areas were in the Galilee, were the first two of the twelve tribes to be carried into exile. For the author, it is meet, as it is for all apocalyptic thinking, that the end will reverse the historical sequence. The restoration of the Kingdom must accordingly start where the Exile began its dissolution: in Galilee in the land [but not to the people of] of Zebulon and Naphtali. . . . 'To be with him' set them apart from the other disciples as cadets in special training for the kingdom's twelve-man council. In this capacity they served once only as 'apostles' of Jesus in Galilee, in the land of Zebulon and Naphtali where the Exile began (see footnote 145 below referring to Tiglath-pileser). They performed a trial run in the ingathering of the twelve tribes, an exercise in the restoration of the Kingdom, for which they were instructed to pray daily [Mt. 10:23b]. In these passages the 'lost sheep' of the house of Israel are, of course, none other than the twelve tribes of Israel in the Diaspora. By this time the majority of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were in the dispersion too. Sheep and shepherd images for the people in exile were coined by the prophets in their 'ingathering' prophecies [e.g., Jer. 50:6, Isa. 53:6, Ez. 34:4-16, Zech. 13:7]. Jesus adopted it from them to proclaim the launching of the process" ("Some Salient New Testament Passages," pp. 306-310).

<sup>33</sup>2:4, 9, 26-28, 5:1, 9b-15, 20, 29, 11:9-12, 17, 18:6-11, 31:31-33.

<sup>34</sup>3:4, 7, 11, 15, 8:3-11, 9:6-7, 8b-10, 11:1-2, 6b.

<sup>35</sup>Dan. 12:9.

<sup>36</sup>The author of the WCG Study Paper, "United States and Britain in Prophecy," makes much out of the use of the term "remnant" to describe a significant population of Israel remaining in Palestine (p. 11, column 3). The assertion that "both prophets spoke of the house of Israel as a major portion of the Jewish people" (p. 11, column 1) is difficult to sustain. Note Jer. 6:9. If there were Northerners among the Jewish community--and there absolutely were--we have to ask the question, "How many?" and "What percentage of the total community did they comprise?" The population of Judea and Jerusalem was overwhelmingly Jewish in its tribal makeup. We should remember that, by definition, the word "remnant" means a small number. A case in point is the 6th century B. C. restoration of Judah to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (note the use of the term "remnant" in the context of Zech. 8:6,

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the Northern Kingdom which had taken refuge in Jerusalem from the the 9th century B. C. “religious” reforms of Jeroboam I or the 8th century B. C. Assyrian onslaught of Tiglath-pileser III, Shameser V, and Sargon II? Were the prophets writing for only the people of their own time. . . or do their prophecies have dual application?<sup>37</sup> The Bible does not give us the absolute answers to these questions, and depending on how we answer them, the WCG critique will stand or fall.

Other Name Games

More serious than the exegetical debate about the term “Israel” are the “name games” often played by the less responsible spokesmen for British-Israelism. This aspect of British-Israel literature has a long and not-so-flattering history. Carl G. Howie offers one of the more convincing critiques in his list of philological proofs which frequently appear in British-Israel literature.<sup>38</sup> Those things which he considers as etymologically or linguistically suspect are:

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9-13). The startling thing that is often overlooked is the paucity number of Jews who chose to leave the comforts of their Babylonian “captivity”--a state which Bible historians generally believe to be quite benign and hospitable (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 470-471, 473, 483; Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 156-158, 160, 162; Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, p. 436)--and take on the challenge of rebuilding the nation in a setting which still bore the scars of the havoc wreaked by Nebuchadnezzar’s army in the late-7th and early-6th centuries.

<sup>37</sup>The duality may well extend both into the past *and* the future, e.g., Jeremiah’s assertion that “Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their forefathers. Therefore. . . I will bring on them [both houses according to “United States and Britain in Prophecy,” p. 11, column 3] a disaster” (11:9-12, 17). Could not this allude backward in time to Israel’s Assyrian captivity, forward in time to the coming Babylonian invasion, and still further ahead to an end time punishment to overtake Israel at the end of the age? Moreover, there is nothing in Jeremiah’s references to both Israel and Judah (e.g., Jer. 5:11, 20) that confirms the location of the former house. Neither do Jeremiah’s prophecies require that both houses reside in the same place at the time of the writing. The exegesis of Jer. 10:17-18 juxtaposed against 5:11, 20 strikes me as forced, as does the conclusion that “Jeremiah bears witness to Israelites and Jews living together in the towns of Judah before the [Babylonian] captivity. Naturally this led to the terms *Israelite* and *Jew* being applied to all Israelites no matter what tribe they were from technically” (p. 12, column 2). Considering the personal way in which God dealt with and revealed information to Jeremiah (e.g., 1:4-10), it seems altogether likely that he had some inkling that his prophecies had implications for a time beyond his own.

<sup>38</sup>Howie writes, “one of the pitfalls of the language study is that phonetic resemblance is a basis for semantic identification. Nothing could be more incorrect than this assumption upon which most of the British-Israel ‘linguistic evidence’ rests. Beyond that, composites made up of words drawn from two distinct branches or families of language (e.g. Isaac-Son) are quite unlikely if not completely impossible. . . . The problem is mixing of languages which by nature will not mix. Other phonetic similarities are equally as meaningless as those just cited

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- *Lai-F-ail* or *Leagael* as a name for the Coronation Stone--a seven letter word reading the same from right to left as in Hebrew *and* from left to right as in English
- English as a word derived from the combination of *Angael-ish*, with *gael* (sometimes known as *wael*, purportedly the derivation of the term "Welsh") being the origin of the word "gaelic" which was an early language in the British Isles used among the Celts
- Saxon as a term derived from the Hebrew name for the Birthright son of Abraham, Isaac (the argument being that ancient Hebrew had no vowels and therefore the pronunciation of "Isaac" became *Saac*, with his children becoming known as "Saac-sons")<sup>39</sup>
- Saxon as a name springing from the Scythian tribes who were called *Sakae* or *Scoloti* by the Greeks
- Dan's proclivity to name sites through which it had passed after the tribal progenitor<sup>40</sup>

This last-named type of reasoning presents a large target for critics like Roger R. Chambers, who writes:

To argue for Hebrew etymological connection on the basis of phonic similarity in English is to build a philological citadel on the foundation of a pun. If *Edinburgh* proves that Dan was in Scotland, then the *Danikil* tribe of North Africa are Danites as well. Other traces are Manasseh in *Manchuria*, Ham in *Birmingham*, Asher in *Asia*, Simeon in *Siam*, and Korah in *Korea*. Armstrongite philology enjoys the intellectual stature of Mother Goose.<sup>41</sup>

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[Isaac, London, Saxon] (e.g. Sakae and Scolot)" ("British Israelism and Pyramidology," pp. 312-313, 316-317). Some of the names of ancient world peoples frequently identified by British-Israelites as part of the Lost Tribes are: Celts, Cimbri, Cimmerians, Dacians, Gauls, Goths, Getae, Kimbri, Kimmerioi, Massagetai, Partians, Sacae, Sakai, Scythians, and Tuatha de Danaans. See also Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 59-62. One of the most prolific producers of British-Israel literature, Dr. William Pascoe Goard from Canada, wrote *The Post-Captivity Names of Israel*, a volume particularly useful for anyone wishing to see most of the "name game" arguments efficiently and concisely organized and presented in a single place. See also Raymond F. McNair, "Israel's Post-Captivity Names," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>39</sup>Howie writes, "There can be absolutely no connection between *Sax* and *Isaac*, and it is not possible to have the Hebrew prefix Isaac followed by the English suffix *Son*. It should be Hebrew *ben-Isaac* from which one would hardly be able to create Saxson" ("British-Israelism and Pyramidology," p. 317).

<sup>40</sup>Included in Howie's list of targets is the proposal that London derived its name from a combination of the Hebrew *lun* and *dan* with the meaning "'light of Dan' What better name for the seat of the British empire?" (*Ibid.*, p. 313).

<sup>41</sup>*The Plain Truth About Armstrongism*, pp. 164-165. See also Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, p. 34. Not all efforts to trace Israel by name association are equally suspect. The idea that the name of Omri (885-874 B. C.), the founder of an Israelite dynasty which lasted for about three and a half decades, became the source of "Bit Kumri," "Kimmerians," "Cimmerians," and "Gimmiri" may have some validity. His "12-year reign was more important politically than the Bible indicates. He moved the capital from Tirzah to Samaria. By selecting this



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This kind of word analysis carried far more weight in the mid-19th century when philological evidences enjoyed a greater prestige in tracing the history and origins of people than it does today.<sup>42</sup> In his later editions of *USB*, Mr Armstrong handled the use of philological proofs far more responsibly than in many earlier editions.<sup>43</sup> However, his reference to the origin of the word "British" deriving from the Hebrew for "covenant man" (*berith* for covenant and *ish* for man),<sup>44</sup> the coincidence of "lai-fail" as a name for the Coronation Stone,<sup>45</sup> and his tracing of the migrations of the tribe of Dan by citing locations named after the family patriarch all remain vulnerable points in the discourse.<sup>46</sup>

Having made these observations, it is not that the arguments used by Mr. Armstrong lack merit and should be omitted completely from our presentation. Rather, to the extent we make mention of them, we must clearly identify them as peripheral points which may. . . or may not. . .

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strategic site for his capital, Omri did for Israel what David had done more than a hundred years earlier in selecting Jerusalem. . . . Omri began an extensive defense-building operation, which his son Ahab completed. Whether Omri himself had military encounters with the Assyrians to the east is unknown, but Assyrian records for the next 100 years refer to Israel as 'the land of the house of Omri [*Bit Humri*],' even long after Omri's dynasty had vanished. Omri's personality, political success and business enterprises must have made him famous not only in the eyes of his contemporaries but to later generations as well" (Hershel Shanks, ed., *Ancient Israel: A Short History from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, p. 120--see also Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, p. 298). Eugene Merrill observes that "Israelite kings who followed him were sometimes called sons of Omri even though they were of different dynasties" (*Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 339-340, 393).

<sup>42</sup>In *Our Israelitish Origins*, John Wilson "obviously drew on the now discredited philological system of deriving like sounds from each other. A book very much in this tradition, and one which must have given encouragement to Wilson's followers, was R. Govett, *English derived from Hebrew: with glances at Greek and Latin*" (Wilson, "British Israelism: Ideological Restraints," p. 356, footnote 1). In "British Israelism and Pyramidology," Howie opines, "The word British certainly cannot be derived from *berith* and *ish* for a number of reasons. If there were such a compound, meaning 'man of Covenant,' it would be *ish-berith* and the ending *ish* is frequently found in English where it could hardly mean man, for example, devilish, rakish, prudish, etc. Isaac is derived from the Hebrew consonants *YTSHK* and not from *S'K'* as has been alleged. Hebrews did not write vowels until the Massoretic period, but that there were vowels is certain since no language can exist without the open sounds that vowels represent" (pp. 316-317).

<sup>43</sup>*USB*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>44</sup>Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, p. 34.

<sup>45</sup>*USB*, p. 102. See the critique of this concept in Howie, "British-Israelism and Pyramidology," p. 312.

<sup>46</sup>*USB*, pp. 96-98.

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demonstrate anything other than coincidence. Evidence drawn from philological similarities, like the compelling and suggestive Israelitish symbols found in both British and American heraldry, are intellectually titillating but may best be relegated to the material in text boxes or appendixes.

**Were the Tribes Really Lost?<sup>47</sup>**

Another commonly raised issue is whether or not there is such a phenomenon as "Ten Lost Tribes."<sup>48</sup> Were they ever *really* lost?<sup>49</sup> Mr. Armstrong cites as evidence the "strong, conscious belief" among many Jews today "in the ultimate discovery and restoration of the lost tribes of Israel."<sup>50</sup> In terms of scriptural justification, Mr. Armstrong cites the report on II Kings

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<sup>47</sup>"One effect of the Assyrian invasions on the northern tribes was the deportation of large numbers 'to Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan, and the cities of the Medes' but the subsequent fate of these people is barely recorded, references to them being confined to the largely apocryphal book of Esdras, and the historian Herodotus. To all intents and purposes this part of the Kingdom of Israel was lost." Wilson, "British Israelism: Ideological Retraints," pp. 346-347, footnote 1.

<sup>48</sup>Among the best presented arguments in this regard are in Allen H. Godbey's *The Lost Tribes A Myth: Suggestions Toward Rewriting Hebrew History* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1974) and Roger R. Chambers' *The Plain Truth About Armstrongism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), especially pp. 91-128. One reviewer of Godbey's work wrote a quite flattering assessment: "This is really a fantastic book, packed with such an expanse of information that it almost overwhelms the reader. . . . The main thrust of Godbey's work is to disprove the assumption that the northern tribes, taken into captivity by Sargon II in 722/1 B.C., were lost in the welter of international movements following that event. The author holds that only a small fraction of Israel was actually deported. Only the upper classes were involved and they appear to have enjoyed considerable liberty in the places they were settled. . . . [Godbey] has drawn upon literary sources that are still relevant and the best materials available in other areas up to the date of publication. The twenty-eight chapters, packed with material, are exquisitely written, so that, despite the length of the book, the reader never loses interest and enthusiasm. It betokens immense erudition, careful research, and the ability to synthesize. . . . He is well worth reading--for his consummate passion for detail, for his marvelously intricate tapestry of scholarship in an area where so much is tricky territory" (Jacob M. Myers, *The Catholic Bible Quarterly*, 1975, vol. 37, pp. 575-576). Another reviewer writes, "in more than 800 pages he assembles everything known about the dispersion of the Jewish people and examines his file-cards with the reading-glass of a conservative Christian theologian. . . . Much of Godbey's book is devoted to pricking old bubbles and old fallacies concerning Ten Tribism. . . . [Godbey concludes] no ten tribes ever really existed in the Diaspora" (*Bucherschau* p. 116).

<sup>49</sup>Geysler reminds us that "even in the course of the Exile itself the prophets started to proclaim the return of the people and the restoration of the destroyed Twelve Tribe Kingdom" ("Some Salient New Testament Passages," p. 305).

<sup>50</sup>*USB*, p. 146. During my 1993 visit with John Hulley in Jerusalem, I learned that many leaders of Jerusalem's Orthodox community have expressed interest in Hulley's connections between the Lost Tribes and the Anglo-Saxon people. Indeed, this is a belief which is evidenced in the history of the Jewish people periodically through time. Simon Wiesenthal makes a convincing argument that part of the impetus of Columbus' search for the East Indies was an interest in locating the Lost Tribes (*Sails of Hope*). In the mid-17th century A. D., Dutch Rabbi Menasseh

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as evidence:

Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. . . the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. . . For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day (17:18-23).

In some of his early editions, Mr. Armstrong was emphatic that the Assyrians evicted the entire population of the Northern Kingdom. His presentation of the Northern captivity, in later editions is more balanced and even-handed.<sup>51</sup>

How many Israelites were actually deported? Assyrian court records provide specific numbers. The Assyrian emperor Sargon II claims to have taken 27,290<sup>52</sup> captive from Samaria. If his testimony is a primary resource--something more authentic than the myth and legend

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ben Israel (inspired in part by the stories world traveler Antonio Montezinos) even wrote a treatise--*The Hope of Israel* (1650-1652)--on the subject (R. H. Popkin, "The Lost Tribes, the Caraites and the English Millenarians," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 213-227--see especially p. 215). Menasseh's interaction with Puritan Millenarians (e.g., John Dury [1596-1680]) expresses part of the interest in 17th century England about readmitting the Jews to the British Isles "to complete the dispersion, and to prepare for the Messianic Days to come" (p. 216--cf. footnote 19 in Part I of this review regarding John Sadler). Friedman reminds us that "there is hardly a people from the Japanese to the British, and from the Red Indians to the Afghans, who have not been suggested [to be the Lost Tribes discovered]. Among them, Africa, Media, China, Persia, Kudistan, Caucasia, the United States and Great Britain" (*Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 9-10). Menasseh ben Israel believed the lost Israelites were to be found among the Amerindians of the recently discovered American continent.

<sup>51</sup>USB, pp. 68-69.

<sup>52</sup>See Sargon's *Annals*, 10-18. Howie makes a reference to N. H. Parker, who estimates the 8th century B. C. population of the Northern Kingdom to have been about 500,000 ("British Israelism and Pyramidology," p. 314). Sargon II "claimed in inscriptions, produced several years after the events had occurred, that he was the one who had captured Samaria during the first year of his reign. He probably had no right to that claim, at least not as king. He may have been Shalmaneser's army commander" (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 130-131,154). "Shalmaneser V (726-722 B. C.) was deposed soon afterwards by another king, Sargon II, whose very name, 'True King', betrays the suspect nature of his claim to the throne. Sargon moved the Assyrian capital to his own foundation of Khorsabad, built in imitation of Nimrud. . . . In three campaigns, 734-732 B. C., Tiglath-pileser overwhelmed the area. Damascus and part of Israel became Assyrian provinces, and many of the inhabitants were deported. In 722 B. C. Israel, which had proved a troublesome vassal state, was finally eliminated and Samaria became capital of an Assyrian province. The Assyrian king at this time was Shalmaneser V, but he did not have time to commemorate his achievements in stone, and it was his successor, Sargon II, who claimed credit for his victory" (Julian Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, pp. 33, 45-46)

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bearing witness to the wanderings of Jeremiah and Tea-tephi--it is also considered suspect by most modern-day historians of the period. Sargon may not have even been king at the time of Samaria's conquest; he may have fabricated a role for himself.<sup>53</sup> It is his word against the biblical record in II Kings 17 (see above quote) or the prediction of Moses who wrote: "I [God] said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men."<sup>54</sup>

Granted, there is biblical proof<sup>55</sup> and indirect archaeological evidence<sup>56</sup> that there were

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<sup>53</sup>Shalmaneser V (727-722). . . took Samaria in his last year. . . . Sargon, who probably was not the son of Tiglath-pileser, as some claim, but a usurper, reigned over the vast Assyrian Empire from 722 to 705. One of Assyria's most militant rulers, he claims to have undertaken significant campaigns in every one of his seventeen years. In the annals of his first year he takes credit for Samaria's fall. In actual fact the biblical assertion that Shalmaneser V was responsible is correct; as several scholars have shown, Sargon claimed this major conquest for his own reign so that the record of his first year would not be blank" (Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 408-409). If Merrill is correct, might it be possible that Sargon's figures reflect a mopping up operation and the numbers he lists as deportees do not include those taken by his predecessors Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser V? "Sargon succeeded his brother Shalmaneser V as king of Assyria in 721 B. C., and though in his annals he appears to claim that he conquered Samaria at the beginning of his reign, it is more likely that it was Shalmaneser V to whom this conquest is to be credited. His invasion and siege are referred to in II Kings 17:5; 18:9, and when the conquest is attributed to the 'king of Assyria' in II Kings 17:6 and 18:10-11, sometime in 723 or 722 B. C., this should be Shalmaneser. . . . Sargon's apparent reference in his annals to the conquest of Samaria may refer to a campaign which he conducted to the west in 720 B. C. He claims that he deported 27,280 [*sic.*] Israelites to Assyria, and brought in people from other conquered territories to replace them. . . . Sargon is mentioned only once in the Old Testament, in Isaiah 20:1, where he is said to have sent Tartan to attack Ashdod, an event which took place in 711 B. C." (J. C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, p. 53). For more information, Merrill suggests the examination of *The Ancient Near East* (p. 138) by conservative biblical scholars, William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson.

<sup>54</sup>Deut. 32:36.

<sup>55</sup>Frequently cited Biblical passages in this regard are II Chron. 15:8c-9 (during Asa's reign over Judah); 30:1-18, 31:1 (during Hezekiah's religious reformation and the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom); 34:3, 6, 9, 35:17-18 and II Kings 23:19-20 (during the Josianic reformation period). See Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 73-87.

<sup>56</sup>The WCG Study Paper "United States and Britain in Prophecy" concludes that "biblical and archaeological scholars harbor serious doubts about the accuracy of" the view that "all significant parts of the house of Israel went into captivity. They generally believe that the biblical and archaeological evidence proves that many Israelites did not go into captivity but remained in the land. . . . When Jeroboam tried to suppress the faith [I Kings 12:25-33, 13:33], there was a massive movement of Israelites southward into Judah. Every tribe was represented in this mass migration [cited as evidence is II Chron. 11:13-26]" (p. 8, columns 2-3). "It now appears that large numbers [cf. II Chron. 15:9] of Israelites immigrated to Judah and became Jews. Not all of their reasons were religious. Some were refugees from the Assyrian invitation. . . . Archaeologists now recognize a sudden and significant increase in Jerusalem's population at the time of the northern kingdom's fall. . . . When we first published *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, this archaeological evidence had yet to be discovered. Now that it has, it cannot be ignored. From the evidence at Jerusalem alone, we can safely conclude that the Israelite presence in Judah was

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representatives from the Northern Tribes among the people of Judah after Israel's fall. Undoubtedly, some northerners moved to the south in protest of the syncretistic practices introduced by Jeroboam I (931-910 B. C.)<sup>57</sup> and many of his successors.<sup>58</sup> Of less certainty are the claims that all Israel was restored in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, or Nehemiah.<sup>59</sup> The New

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much greater than we previously stated" (p. 9, columns 1-2). "Israelites were major players in the life of the southern nation, having significant economic, political and religious roles" (p. 10, column 3). "It has historically been the Church's claim. . . that since all of the house of Israel went into captivity and were subsequently lost, that none of the prophecies about them could be fulfilled by Judah. Yet because Judah contained large numbers of Israelites, this whole interpretation is highly suspect" (p. 16, column 1).

Perhaps the greatest archaeological find relevant to the issue of northerners relocating in the south is Hezekiah's "broad wall" (20-23 feet wide and located on the city's western ridge) discovered by Nahaman Avigad in 1970 (cf. II Chron. 32:5, Isa. 22:9-11). *Ibid.*, p. 9, column 1; Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 76-77 (Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi estimated that the population of Jerusalem swelled from about 7,500 to 24,000 as the 8th century drew to a close); see also my own article, "Archaeology and the City of David" in the July/August 1996 *Good News*, pp. 8-9. Indirectly related is "Hezekiah's Tunnel"--a subterranean channel beneath the city of Jerusalem to guarantee the city's water supply in time of siege. This archaeological feature attests to the anxieties which the Assyrian invasion (II Kings 18:9-19:37, Isa. 36-37) of the late-8th century must have created.

<sup>57</sup>II Kings 12:25-33.

<sup>58</sup>e.g., Ahab and Jezebel (I Kings 16:28-33, 18:3-4, 18)

<sup>59</sup>Many critics of British-Israelism vigorously maintain that the 6th century B. C. Restoration under Zerubbabel was a restoration of all twelve tribes (cf. mention of "all Israel" in Ezra 2:70, 7:28); not only of Judah. "After arriving, the returnees called themselves both the people of Judah and the people of Israel. The terms were interchangeable," e.g., Ezra 4:3-4, 7:6, 10. Much is made of the sacrificing of "twelve bulls for all Israel" (Ezra 8:35--see also 6:16-17) or references to "Israelites" (Neh. 11:3-4) or Zechariah's admonitions to both houses (Zech. 8:13). "The word *Israelite* in this context [the 6th century B. C. Restoration] does not prove what tribes they descended from. It does prove that by this time *Israel* and *Judah* were interchangeable. This should not surprise us once we have recognized the great influx of Israelites into Judah had occurred before the Babylonian captivity" (WCG Study Paper "United States and Britain in Prophecy," p. 13, columns 1-3).

To bring balance to these assertions, we must remember that the resettlement process was into areas from which the emigrees' predecessors had formally lived. The Bible mentions only a few locations of the area resettled which are not decidedly part of Judah's territorial inheritance (Jericho, Bethel, and possibly Ono, and Neballat--Neh. 7:32, 36-37, 11:31-35), and these are located immediately north of the territory of the Kingdom of Judah. We are likely looking at areas which were peopled by the southernmost inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom--ones who escaped the net of the 8th century B. C. Assyrian captivity--or Jews who eventually drifted north to occupy the land vacated by Assyrian deportation. Ezra 1:5 implies that the leaders and organizers of the return were Jewish rather than Israelite. Considerations like these led Mr. Armstrong to vigorously conclude, "those who *returned* to the Holy Land to rebuild the Temple and restore worship 70 years after Judah's captivity were ALL of the house of Judah--all Jews--all of those whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away. . . . *Only* those of the tribe of Judah, who together with remnants of Benjamin and Levi, constituted the house of Judah, returned at that time. . . . There are, of course, those who *reject* this truth God has seen fit now, in our time, to reveal--and who falsely represent that ALL Israelites, including the ten-tribed house of Israel, returned to Jerusalem at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. . . . *None* of the Ten Tribes had been left in their land after the Assyrian captivity. . . . Names and genealogies are given in Ezra and Nehemiah of those who went back to their land from Babylon--and there was *none* from any of

Testament includes numerous references to "the twelve tribes."<sup>60</sup> Some argue that only a small number of leading people--the Northern intelligentsia--were actually taken captive by the Assyrians, the rest either fleeing as refugees, or being assimilated into the alien populations transplanted in the Northern Kingdom.<sup>61</sup>

Neither the biblical nor secular records support the idea that every last man, woman, and child of the Northern Kingdom went into captivity "in Halah, and in Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."<sup>62</sup> The issue, rather, is *how many* were taken. It is significant that Assyrian ruler Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B. C.) instituted a novel policy concerning the treatment of conquered populations. The practice of mass deportations "became the standard Assyrian policy from that time on. . . . There is good evidence that conditions were not as bad under the Babylonians as under the earlier Assyrians, who had begun the practice of mass

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the Ten Tribes! . . . Some theologians falsely claim that all of the ten tribes who went into Assyrian captivity returned to Jerusalem with the Jews who returned to build the Temple there seventy years after Judah's captivity. But that is total error. Only *part* of Judah went back" (*USB*, pp. 70-71, 132).

<sup>60</sup>Lk. 2:36 (about Anna the prophetess who was from the tribe of Asher); Acts 2:2, 3:12 (which cites Peter addressing his audience as "ye men of Israel"--cf. 5:21); 9:15 (which is employed to argue that Paul fulfilled his missionary work to Israel by preaching to the Jews--contrast to footnote 95 in Part I above about the possibility of Paul travelling to the British Isles--the Book of Acts is obviously cut short, leaving much of the story of 1st century A. D. missionarism untold); 26:2-8, 22-23 (from which the WCG deduces that "in Paul's day the 12 tribes, not just Judah, Benjamin and Levi, but all the 12 tribes, worshipped God. . . [and] they [all] continued to look for the fulfillment of God's promises to them, especially the resurrection of the dead"--"United States and Britain in Prophecy," p. 16, column 1); Rom. 11:1, Phil. 3:5 (which identifies Paul as a Benjamite); James 1:1 (which is addressed to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"); and 1 Pet. 1:1 (addressed to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"--see Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, p. 85). Geyser convincingly challenges those who appropriate these New Testament verses in this fashion. He writes, "In parables and debates he [Jesus] taught them [the Twelve] its [the Kingdom's] nature and the signs of its coming, and to pray for it daily. The 'Twelve' (eleven) asked him after the resurrection, 'Are you now going to establish the Kingdom for Israel?' (Acts 1:6). James perceived their presence, the latent twelve tribes, in the Jewish dispersion in and around Antioch around 46 A. D. . . . Paul pronounces a beracha on the Israel of God in the Galatian diaspora, is convinced that all Israel will be saved and pleads before Agrippa his hope that according to the divine promises the Twelve Tribe Kingdom will be restored [Gal. 6:16, Rom. 11:26, Acts 26:6-7]. The twelve to whom Jesus delegated his power and authority to exemplify the ingathering in Galilee, and who for that occasion quite rightly *his*, not the church's, *apostoli*, are literally fundamental to the Twelve Tribe Kingdom's restoration as apocalyptically symbolised in the 'New Jerusalem'" ("Some Salient New Testament Passages," p. 310).

<sup>61</sup>II Kings 17:24.

<sup>62</sup>II Kings 17:6, 18:11--cf. Hos. 13:16.

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deportations of conquered people back in the eighth century.”<sup>63</sup> Was this a pattern applied by the successors of Tiglath-pileser? The Bible seems to indicate it was.

We must ask whether the biblical statement "Judah only was left"<sup>64</sup> should be taken at face value. The biblical evidence suggests it is wiser to err on the side of literalist interpretation if one accepts the scriptures as a valid primary resource. In predicting the Assyrian overrunning of the Northern Kingdom, the prophet Amos prophetically described the “remnant” that would be left behind: “Thus saith the Lord; as the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.”<sup>65</sup> Thus Amos poetically represents the population of the Northern Kingdom after the Assyrian conquest. Finally, Jewish tradition, which anticipates an eventual reunion of the physical twelve tribes as part of its Messianic eschatology,<sup>66</sup> also strongly supports the notion of lost tribes.

With the exception of the testimony of an Assyrian king, whose *Annals* themselves are suspect there is no specific number assigned biblically or otherwise to the number of Northerners deported or those involved in any resettlement in or return to the region of Judea.

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<sup>63</sup>Boadt amplifies his description of Tiglath-pileser noting that he would hold “entire cities responsible if they did not surrender the rebelling king to him. He would often wipe out a whole population or deport them to far-off lands and replace them with peoples conquered in still other parts of his empire” (Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 43, 383-384). McKay and Bucker note that sometimes the Assyrians deported only a portion of a kingdom or nation. “In other cases they deported whole populations, wrenching them from their homelands and resettling them in strange territories” (*History of Western Society* 3rd ed., p. 50). Howie writes, “it was the practice of the Assyrian Empire at the time to mix populations, thus destroying any cohesiveness which was inherent in a homogeneous group, and offsetting possibility of revolt” (“British Israelism and Pyramidology,” p. 309).

<sup>64</sup>Friedman explains this passage arguing “the temple was there [in Jerusalem] as the center of worship. Those who walked in obedience were allowed to live in the land, but when they disobeyed, they were taken from the land. Notice verse 18, ‘out of his sight,’ means only that the ten tribes were driven from the land. ‘There was none left but the tribe of Judah only.’ Left where? Left in the world? No! Left in the land of Palestine” (*Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 89-90).

<sup>65</sup>Amos 3:12.

<sup>66</sup>See the *Soncino Commentary* on Isa. 43:12-21, Jer. 23:6-8, Ez. 37:19, as well as the section below on the “A Future Exodus and Final Restoration.” Note also Jer. 33:7. Again, Geysers’ “Some Salient New Testament Passages,” pp. 305-310, is relevant.

### **Where Did the "Lost Tribes" Go?**

If the majority of the Northern Kingdom's population went into captivity, where then did they ultimately go? Mr. Armstrong argues that the migrations of the tribes can be traced by hints in the prophecies. Indeed, Amos' prediction expands our understanding of the record of II Kings 17:18-23. The prophet from Tekoa in northern Judea tells us that the "remnant of Joseph"<sup>67</sup> would be scattered, but not entirely lost from God's view:

Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth (Amos 9:8-9).

Note as well the prediction made in the days of king David concerning the long-term fate of Israel:

Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before time (II Sam. 7:10--cf. I Chron. 17:9).

These scriptures imply that Israel would be sifted, and then led to a permanent home. This being the case, we can deduce from other passages that Israel's new land would be located in the British Isles, to the north and west of the Promised Land:

Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim (Isa. 49:12).<sup>68</sup>

Mr. Armstrong explains this passage, reminding the reader that

in the Hebrew, the language in which this was originally inspired, there is no word for "northwest," but this term is designated by the phrase "the north and the

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<sup>67</sup>5:15.

<sup>68</sup>This passage is renowned as the inspiration of the often reproduced map of Israel's migrations found in J. H. Allen's *Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright*, pp. 227-228.. Isa. 49:12, 20 is cited as evidence that Israel would immigrate in a northwesterly direction.



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west.” It means, literally, the northwest! The Vulgate renders “Sinim” as *Australi*, or “south.” So we now have the location *northwest of Jerusalem* and even spreading around the world.<sup>69</sup>

Another frequently cited passage reads:

Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind [i. e., following the east wind implies moving to the west] (Hosea 12:1).<sup>70</sup>

or:

I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers (Psalm 89:25).<sup>71</sup>

Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel (Jer. 3:11-12).

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far (Isa. 49:1).<sup>72</sup>

They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that

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<sup>69</sup>USB, p. 95.

<sup>70</sup>Greg Albrecht challenges our application of this passage to Israel’s migratory patterns, writing “But is this the kind of logic and reasoning needed to correctly understand this verse? How can we be certain the the [*sic.*] blowing of the wind refers to the migrations of Ephraim? This reference to wind is actually a reference to Ephraim’s vainly following after the wind” (“Hermeneutics,” p. 59). Albrecht also disputes the use of Jer. 3:18 in a similar manner, and insists that the reference to “coasts” in Jer. 31:8 “does not mean shoreline exclusively, but refers to borders--some of them land borders” (pp. 60-61).

<sup>71</sup>Albrecht devotes a page of explanation to this “covenant psalm,” arguing that it is Messianic and in reference to the “Son of God who will rule forever. . . . Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the covenant, not any human king.” Yet in the same breath, he concedes, “it is possible this psalm was recited when both the accession of the heavenly and the earthly king were celebrated” (“Hermeneutics,” pp. 59-60). If true, is not the earthly type an important forerunner of the ultimate fulfillment of the promise? The hermeneutic of duality seems relevant here. There are a number of outstanding scholarly articles which examine the ritual and symbolism involved in Hebrew kingship and the enthronement process. The best I have read are A. R. Johnson, “Hebrew Concepts of Kingship” in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship* edited by S. H. Hooke, pp. 204-235; Abraham Malamat, “Organs of Statecraft in the Israelite Monarchy,” *Biblical Archaeologist*, May 1985, pp. 34-65; Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 208-209, 275-276; and Tomoo Ishida, “Solomon’s Succession to the Throne of David--A Political Analysis,” in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* edited by Ishida, pp. 175-187. The Johnson article makes several interesting suggestions (in light of our understanding of holy day symbolism) connecting the Fall Festival season to kingship.

<sup>72</sup>For miscellaneous references to an island location, see Jer. 31:1-3, 9-10, Isa. 24:15, 41:1, 5, 51:5, 66:19, Ps. 89:25. Isa. 23:3 implies that Israel will be a maritime people. Cf. Ez. 17:4-5.

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scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock (Jer. 31:9-10).<sup>73</sup>

If this use of Scripture seems a bit contrived,<sup>74</sup> there are other no less unusual applications of Scripture which were made by the apostles themselves. Even Catholic theologian, Paul Knitter, who probes the Evangelical Christian “scandal of particularity”--the claim that Jesus Christ represents something thoroughly surprising, exceptional and unique in human history--concedes the following: “Both critical Christians and skeptical humanists must be open to the *possibility* that *what* they are saying may be true.”<sup>75</sup> In principle, Knitter’s concession applies similarly to the matter of the identity of Israel in modern times. If our Biblical reasoning--our hermeneutic--is sound thus far, *historical evidence* begins to bear a greater burden of proof.

### **How Did the Israelites Get to Europe?**

A valid criticism of British-Israel literature is its over-simplification of the historical data. Having seen the biblical case, a reader with good knowledge of history probably expects some equally compelling historical material showing how the Lost Tribes got from Mesopotamia to the British Isles. It is a scenario that seems unlikely--a unique interpretation of the facts--and the reader naturally wants details. If there is a paucity of primary resource material,<sup>76</sup> the story can be

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<sup>73</sup>Other passages often cited as evidence of Israel’s modern-day island location are Isa. 41:1 and 24:15. See *USB*, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup>Respecting this type of criticism, Howie writes, “such violence to Scripture is a tragedy of major consequence which makes the Bible actually a reflector of any idea which a man may desire to superimpose on it” (“British Israelism and Pyramidology,” pp.307, 314, 316).

<sup>75</sup>*No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, pp. 45, 49.

<sup>76</sup>The two principal references come from Josephus and the apocryphal work II Esdras. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus writes, “the entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country; wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 11, Chapter V, Section 2). II Esdras 13:39-47 reads “Then you saw him collecting a different company, a peaceful one. They are the ten tribes which were taken off into exile in the time of King Hoshea, whom Shalmaneser king of Assyria took prisoner. He deported them beyond the River, and they were taken away into a strange country. But then they resolved to leave the country populated by the Gentiles and go to a distant land never inhabited by man, and there at last to be obedient to their laws, which in their own country they had failed to keep. As they passed through the narrow passages of the Euphrates, the Most High performed miracles for them, stopping up the channels of the river until they had crossed over [cf. the Israelite crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16, 21-22) and later the Jordan River (Josh. 3:13)--cf. Weldon, *Origin of the English*, p.49]. Their journey through that region, which is called Arzareth, was

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reconstructed from the shards of history we do have.

Regarding the location of Israel in ancient history, Raymond F. McNair's Global Church of God booklet, "America and Britain in Prophecy" (1996), does an admirable job--about as good as can be done--in presenting the historical evidence supporting Israel's trek from the Middle East to Northwestern Europe.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps our time and money would be better used by

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long, and took a year and a half. They have lived there ever since, until this final age. Now they are on their way back, and once more the Most High will stop the channels of the river to let them cross." Cf. John Hulley's article in the footnote below.

<sup>77</sup>One of the most creative, if subjective, demonstrations of how Israel's trek can be demonstrated is to be found in Yochanan Hevroni Ben David's (a.k.a., John Hulley) "Did Any of the Lost Tribes Go North? Is the 'Sambatyon' the Bosphorus?" published in *B'Or Ha'Torah*, No. 6 (in English), 1987, pp. 127-133. In this delightful little article, the author explores the tradition (Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 65B; Jerusalem Talmud *Sanhedrin* 10:6; *Lamentations Rabba* 2:9; *Genesis Rabba* 11:5, 73:6; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Ex. 34:10; and Nachmanides on Deut. 32:36) which indicates that the lost tribes are located beyond the "Sambatyon," a river which is said to have rested--ceased its flow--on the Sabbath day. Hulley demonstrates that the narrow strait of the Bosphorus, through which pass the waters of the Black Sea into the Aegean, is the likely the river about which tradition speaks. "There the current does slow down drastically, stop or even reverse on average about once a week" (p. 128). He continues with an explanation of the physical process which produces this unusual phenomenon. The Bosphorus would have been a likely area through which migrating Israelites would have passed on their journey out of Assyrian captivity and on to the European Continent. Hulley concludes his article with a refreshingly balanced approach writing, "these pieces of evidence are circumstantial, and the identification can therefore only be conjectural. On the other hand, they are unique, and their combination is exceptional." During the summer of 1993, I spent three hours with Hulley in Jerusalem, discussing his plans for a book-length work on the identity of Israel in modern times. Although he anticipated publication within two years, he has yet to publish his monograph--an unfortunate fact given his fascinating method of presentation and cogent ideas to argue his case.

Another interesting treatment is W. E. Filmer's article, "Our Scythian Ancestors," which proposes an Israelite migration, well east of the route proposed by Hulley above, and through the Dariel Pass in the Caucasus Mountains. Filmer agrees that a network of Scythian tombs dating between the early 6th century B. C. through the mid-4th century B. C. exists to the northwest of the area and documents the course of Israelite migrations. These travelers filled the expanse between the Sea of Azov and the Carpathian Mountains. Based on evidence derived from some similarities in burial practices, Filmer attempts to connect the Scythians with the Germanic population which arrived along the coasts of the southern Baltic Sea several centuries later. Filmer's argument, as interesting as it may be, falls somewhat short in making an indisputable connection between Israel and the Scythian tombs. See also McNair, "Hard, Physical Evidence," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 42.

Finally, one of the most interesting and detailed description of Israel's departure from Assyrian territory comes from Major Bertram De W. Weldon (*The Origin of the English*, 2nd ed., rev., 1919, pp. 48-52). Bringing his military experience to bear on the matter, he equates the freeing of the Israelites with the military defeat of the Assyrians at the hands of Nabopolassar of Babylon in a sequence of engagements: first in 612 B. C. with the fall of Nineveh; at the first Battle of Carchemish in 609 B. C.; and then with the final knock out blow seven years later again at Carchemish, site of the last remaining Assyrian stronghold (605 B. C.). Drawing from the apocraphal Book of Tobit, Weldon suggests that Tobit, both a leader in the Israelite community and an Assyrian official, believed a return to Palestine would be impractical. Hostile armies blocked the route back home and Egyptian garrisons occupied Judah. "Between the country of the Carducci and the armies of the Medes a narrow gap lay open. This was the route through the Caucasus. . . . With some dim traditions of their former Exodus to hearten them, with the

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giving Mr. McNair's publication a qualified honorable mention in our own booklet, and then devoting a majority of pages to those historical facts which bear witness to the fulfillment of Genesis 48 and 49. The developments forecast in these prophecies were most dramatically fulfilled in the Anglo-American setting between about A. D. 1660, year of the restoration of Charles II and the Stuart monarchy by the "Convention" Parliament, and 1820 by which time the dust from the Napoleonic Wars had settled and England began to lapse into the Splendid Isolation which allowed her to concentrate on the development that made her the foremost nation-state in the 19th century world.<sup>78</sup> It was between these years that the stage was set for the Anglo-American ascendancy of the last two centuries of human history. We will, of course, need to say something about the more obscure period between Israel's 8th century B. C. deportation and the appearance of Hengist, Horsa, and the other Anglo-Saxons who arrived on the Thanet off England's southeast coast in around A. D. 449.

Some historians have argued that the successive waves of migrants into Europe were essentially the same people.<sup>79</sup> However, we must be careful not to over-generalize. Not all

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encouragement given by the more recent prophetic messages that had reached them [allegedly from Jeremiah--p. 48], the tribes left their starting point (probably in the region of Ecbatana, crossed the upper waters of the Euphrates, where their enemies very nearly cut them off [II Esdras 13:43-44], and swung North through the Caucasus into Scythia. In the Caucasus one of the important passes bears the name of the 'gates of Israel' to this day. . . . The flight of Israel, which may be dated 608 B. C. [*sic.*], the year of the battle of Carchemish, would bring the tribes across the upper Euphrates, through the passes of the Caucasus, into the vast and barren plains of the Scythian steppes." As fascinating as the story created by Weldon may be, like much British-Israel literature, his version of events appears rooted in intuition rather than solid historical evidence. As an aside, Weldon is one of numerous military figures (many of whom were retired) who embraced ideas of British-Israelism and wrote about them with great enthusiasm.

<sup>78</sup>Church member Steven M. Collins recently wrote *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel. . . Found!* (1995). Collins' focus is on finding Israel in the ancient world. Like all other inquiries of this nature, the results are limited by the subjectivity of interpreting the very incomplete historical record of antiquity. Since the records from the past are so partial--often limited by the ravages of time, war, and the elements, not to mention the intractable difficulty of reconstructing the histories of the non-literate populations of the ancient world--a single find in archaeology can literally overturn a whole interpretive paradigm in a matter of months. That focus is--and until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb--will remain subject to criticism and radically different interpretations of the same evidence.

<sup>79</sup>"Scythian" appears to be more a *generic* name for tribal peoples rather than a specific ethnic group. As we have often suggested, some Israelites were included in the group so designated after the close of the 7th century B. C. Note in Col. 3:11 the interesting biblical use of the term "Scythian" in juxtaposition to "Barbarian" which legitimately can be understood to imply Israelite vs. non-Israelite just as the phrase "neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28) suggests. See McNair, "Anglo-American Ethnic Roots," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, pp. 28-44.

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Scythians or Celts were Israelites. The historical record is fragmented and tracing lost Israel's trail is like tracking an underground river. One can follow its course by finding the occasional places where it breaks through the surface.<sup>80</sup> One must know what he is looking for and where it is most likely to appear.

This review is not the place to go into expansive detail, but elements of the story which *could* be included in a new booklet are:

- Some members of Israelitish clans had left Israel well before the final deportation in 721 B.C. A number of Danites departed Israel shortly after the Exodus, going first to Greece, but eventually settling in Ireland. During the reign of Solomon and other kings, it is possible that Israelite colonists left Israel for Britain, Ireland and northwestern European coastlands. The Bible tells us that Solomon had a navy which he operated with the Phoenicians.<sup>81</sup> We know the Pheonicians established colonies in North Africa, Spain, and Ireland. It is a reasonable possibility that the Israelites did the same.
- The Assyrians began taking the Israelites into captivity as early as the 730s B.C., with the final and great deportation from Samaria beginning in 721 B.C. The power of Assyria began to be broken in 612 B.C. with the destruction of Nineveh. The final demise came at the Battle of Carchemish when the Babylonians, Persians and their Scythian allies destroyed the last remaining Assyrian outpost (605 B. C.).<sup>82</sup> After that date, some of the Israelite tribes in captivity south of the Caspian Sea began to free themselves and migrate towards Europe. This process extended over several centuries.

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<sup>80</sup>As the reserach of Keith Stump demonstrates, it is actually somewhat easier to make a convincing *historical* case linking modern Germany with ancient Assyria. But then, God did not say specifically that the Assyrians would be "lost." Mr. Armstrong writes, "Many of the ancient Assyrians migrated NORTHWEST from their ancient land south of the Caspian Sea--and settled in Central Europe. . . . So when you read about Assyria in prophecies pertaining to NOW, they refer to central Europe" (*USB*, pp. 178-9). The Ambassador University text for Western Civilization, *A History of Western Society* (3rd ed.), observes: "Their cities destroyed and their power shattered, the Assyrians disappeared from history, remembered only as a cruel people of the Old Testament who oppressed the Hebrews. Two hundred years later, when the Greek adventurer and historian Zenophon passed by the ruins of Nineveh, he marveled at their extent but knew nothing of the Assyrians. The glory of their empire was forgotten" (p. 50). See also Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, p. 44. We might consider introducing some of the German history material as a "gravity assist" in tracing the fate of their captives.

<sup>81</sup>I Kings 9:26-28, II Chron. 8:18, 9:21.

<sup>82</sup>Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 450. See also Weldon, *Origin of the English*, p. 47.

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- The *first wave* of Israelite people (very likely the Cimmerian<sup>83</sup> or Celtic people ) migrated from Assyria through the Caucasus mountains; then into Western Europe. Those people became known to the Greek writers by the name "Celts" (Kelts) but were called Gauls by the Romans. The migration of the Celts into Europe took several centuries.
- The *second wave* of Israelites (probably the Scythians) migrated around the Eastern side of the Caspian before turning westward. They passed through what is now South Russia into northern Poland and Germany. They were pressed from the rear by the Samaritians (or Slavs.) The Scythians overspread much of Northwest Europe, becoming Normans, Danes, Swedes, Franks, Lombards, Scots, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, etc. From here the story is clear, since no one disputes that the British are Celtic and Anglo-Saxon, or that the United States was initially settled by people of the same ethnicity.

If Israelites are to be found among so many different Northwestern European and Scandinavian peoples, then how can we know where each respective tribe eventually settled? The question of the identity of the tribes other than Joseph should be neither the main focus of a UCG booklet nor of prophecy. However, much research has been done by French, Dutch and Scandinavian adherents of the Anglo-Israel movement to link their nations with one or another of the tribes. Mr. Armstrong believed it possible to locate the descendants of Reuben. He writes, "The tribe of Reuben settled in the country that is France today. They had lost their national identity. But the French have the very characteristics of their ancestor Reuben [Gen. 49:3-4]."<sup>84</sup> This identification is an important one which the historical record does much to affirm. If we wish, we can develop a significant thread in the booklet draft which identifies the long-term Anglo-French rivalry through Western history--an enmity which reached crescendo around the very decades when we would expect Joseph's sons to be positioning themselves to inherit the Birthright blessings--as a struggle between Jacob's two firstborns over the colossal inheritance about to be bequeathed.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>For a legitimate scholarly treatment which suggests that the Cimmerians included Israelitish stock, see Kristensen, *Who Were the Cimmerians, and Where Did They Come From? Sargon II, the Cimmerians, and Rusa I*, especially chapter 3, pp. 118-122.

<sup>84</sup>*USB*, p. 146; see also pp. 40, 42, 104-105, 148-149, 152-153.

<sup>85</sup>Mr. Armstrong examines the typical pattern of firstborns inheriting the birthright (and how that pattern is sometimes broken) in *USB*, pp. 40, 42.

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Mr. Armstrong also explored the question of tribal identities other than Ephraim, Manasseh, and Reuben, but only in a general way. He writes:

But what about the *other* tribes of the so-called "Lost Ten Tribes"? . . . The other eight tribes of Israel [excluding Judah, Joseph, Levi, and Benjamin] were also God's chosen people. They, too, have been blessed with a good measure of material prosperity--but *not* the dominance of the birthright. . . . The countries of Europe [are] prosperous compared to the teeming illiterate masses [of the world]. . . Suffice it to say here that there is evidence that these other eight tribes, along with elements of the tribe of Benjamin, which were swept up in the Assyrian conquest of most of the biblical land of Israel, have descended into such northwestern European nations as Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, northern France, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Finland. The political boundaries of Europe, as they exist today, do not necessarily show lines of division between descendants of these original tribes of Israel.<sup>86</sup>

Mr. Armstrong's assessment raises an interesting point relevant to the promise articulated in Gen. 48:22--that Joseph would have "one portion above his brethren."<sup>87</sup> By implication, we should expect to find considerable wealth in the hands of the modern-day descendants of the remaining tribes. Such is the case today among the people of northwestern Europe and Scandinavia. In Church literature over the years, we have not developed this concept thoroughly. With the exception of Dibar Apartian's "Pays de les Langues Française en Prophetie," connecting Reuben to the people of northern France, the Church has not published

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<sup>86</sup>USB, pp. 104-105, 152-153. One of the early divisions within the 19th century British-Israel community revolved around whether heirs to the promises to Abraham were to be found in European countries other than Great Britain (a position held by John Wilson, author of the seminal monograph, *Our Israelitish Origin*) or exclusively in the British Isles (as maintained by Edward Hine, author of *Forty-Seven Identifications*, pp. 22-23). "Hine considered that the British people were manifestly the sole heirs of the Abrahamic covenant. . . . He referred to those who accepted Wilson's interpretation as 'Teutonists', and from his emergence as a very much more charismatic figure than Wilson, there were divisions among those who took up Israelite ideas. . . . He described the Teutonist Anglo-Ephraim Association's magazine, *The Standard of Israel*, as 'a fanciful and excessively foolish rendering of the Tribeships.' . . . Hine was sure that in the light of present knowledge, Wilson would have confined the identification of Israel to the British race alone" (Wilson, "British Israelism: Ideological Restraints," pp. 361, 365 [footnote 1]).

<sup>87</sup>Cf. Deut. 21:15-17 and Ez. 47:13. Although Mr. Armstrong writes that the "BIRTHRIGHT was not to be inherited by *all* the tribes of Israel!" (USB, p. 40), elsewhere he acknowledges that the other tribes have been richly blessed materially speaking (p. 104).

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anything substantive on the identity of tribes other than Joseph.

On a smaller scale, we did publish an article entitled "Why the Dutch Beat Back the Sea"<sup>88</sup> in 1984. In this piece, John Ross Schroeder outlines some of the principal arguments linking the Dutch to the tribe of Zebulun. The best argument for this particular position is *The Netherlands: Strange Parallels* by Helen W. van Woelderren. Her case is a convincing one and, if room permits, we could include some aspects of the story of Zebulun<sup>89</sup> in whatever UCG publishes.

In the birth order of Jacob's children, Zebulun and Joseph were the closest. They no doubt spent more time together with one another than they did with the other older brothers. The story of the Anglo-Dutch relationship in more recent times is a macrocosmic account of the relationship between these two brothers in macrocosm, complete with examples of sibling rivalry (the three Anglo-Dutch Wars of the 17th century--1652-1654, 1665-1667, and 1672-1674--over colonial possessions) and cooperative ventures between (e.g., the collaboration between the English Sea Dogs and the Dutch Sea Beggars in opposition to the Philip II's Catholic Spain).

In that connection, Anglo-Dutch relations took an interesting turn during the Revolt of the Netherlands which broke in 1566. Dutch Calvinists violent resistance to Roman Catholicism in general and the imperial control of Philip II in particular precipitated a violent Spanish reaction. Philip dispatched 10,000 Spanish regulars under the infamous Duke of Alva who instituted a brutal reign of terror (1567-1573) during which he boasted about the execution of up to 18,000 religious and political dissidents. The troubles persisted even beyond Alva's administration, and the Dutch repeatedly appealed to Elizabeth I across the English Channel to render aid. By 1585, the sack of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma signaled a Catholic sweep

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<sup>88</sup>*Plain Truth*, January 1984.

<sup>89</sup>Gen. 30:20-24. On a somewhat different note, it is interesting that Zebulun in its ancient tribal territorial configuration was a land-locked entity. And yet, Jacob's prophecy of Gen. 49:13 predicted that Zebulun's descendents would "dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships." British-Israelite theorists have posited that the modern Dutch have fulfilled this prophecy.



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through the Netherlands. Elizabeth responded with the Treaty of Nonesuch (August 20, 1585).<sup>90</sup> Between 1585 and 1587, Elizabeth sent to Holland some 2,000 British troops and a quarter of a million pounds. Elizabeth's support of the Dutch, combined with her execution in 1587 of her Scottish cousin and rival for the English throne, Mary Queen of Scots, were in no small way the precipitating factors moving Philip to dispatch the ill-fated Spanish Armada of 1588.

These late-16th century events set the stage for a shifting of an east-west to the north-south axis of power and influence in European affairs. Although it would be some time before England ascended to the heights of European and world hegemony, but the stage was definitely being set. The collective impact of these events freed England from the threat of Spanish domination. It insured that England would remain a religiously tolerant<sup>91</sup> Protestant power where the Church of God could enjoy a modicum of freedom to remain faithful to the commandments, judgments, and statutes of God.

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<sup>90</sup>In our past interpretations of prophecy, we have pinpointed A. D. 325 and the Council of Nicea as the landmark event from which the 1,260 prophetic days of the Church's exile in the wilderness would begin. At that conclave sponsored by Emperor Constantine (A. D. 306-337), the ecclesiastical hierarchy settled the Quatrodecimin Controversy by proscribing the observance of the "Jewish" Passover on Nisan 14. Even before Nicaea, Constantine had issued an edict in A. D. 321 forbidding work on Sunday. At the Council of Laodicea in A. D. 365, the Roman government made keeping of the "Jewish Sabbath" illegal for Christians. Considering the ultimate results of England's stiffening policy against Philip's Spain (see above), the year 1585 may mark the expiration of the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of the woman's flight into her place to be nourished in the wilderness (Rev. 12:6). On the Treaty of Nonesuch, see Charles Wilson, *Elizabeth I and the Revolt of the Netherlands*.

<sup>91</sup>"The early Elizabethan years were decisive in settling the formal religious character of the English nation" (Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, p. 36). As Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, "Englishmen desired above all else strong, vigorous, and secular leadership devoid of fanaticism and passion," the likes of which had rocked the kingdom through the successive reigns of Henry VIII (1509-1547) whose religious changes were driven primarily by practical, dynastic, and harmonal considerations; Edward VI (1547-1553) whose youth enabled various powers behind the throne to introduce policies of extreme Protestantism; and Mary I (1553-1558) who drove the English kicking and screaming back into a narrow and intolerant Roman Catholicism. Sweet Bess "put out the spreading fires of religious hysteria, she secured the realm in a world filled with women rulers and religious frenzy. . . . The new queen was a *politique*, a firm believer that religion should be an instrument of state and a compartment of life, not the end of government or the whole of human experience." For all these reasons, her reign is oftentimes styled the "Elizabethan Compromise." (Lacy Baldwin Smith, *This Realm of England*, pp. 160-162). "Elizabeth spared England the terrible excesses which were marking religious disputes in many other lands during her day" (Hall, *History of England*, pp. 281, 284-285). Under Elizabeth, there was "no place for either Roman Catholicism or extreme Protestantism." Her policy was one of "theological inclusivism." The Thirty-Nine Articles "sought to achieve a 'via media' in which all but Roman Catholics and the most doctrinaire Protestants could participate" (Gonzales, *Story of Christianity*, vol. 2, p. 79).

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Another provocative connection might be made between Sweden and Napthali, the second and last son born to Bilah, and the tribe that the Church of God in recent years has associated with the Swedes.<sup>92</sup> During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648),<sup>93</sup> Swedish king Gustavus II Adolphus (1594-1632) made a very nearly successful bid for regional hegemony. His spectacular leadership and military organization enabled him to piece together an impressive Scandanavian empire. Had Gustavus Adolphus not met an untimely death at the Battle of Lutzen (1632), it would have been interesting to see what kind of long-term impact Sweden might have had on European affairs.

The Swedish example is illustrative of an interesting dimension of the whole question of tribal identities outside the descendants of Joseph. As early as the 17th century, we see periodic bids by the northwestern European and Scandanavian nation-states to dominate the European Continent. Are we witnessing in these struggles for power a picture of sibling rivalry writ large as the expiration of the withholding of the Birthright blessing inexorably drew near? If so, one brother after another fell short in his efforts to usurp the promises made to Joseph and his two sons.

Regarding those two sons, there are some studies which identify Ephraim as the U.S.A. and Manasseh as Britain--an attempt *a la* Joseph to reverse the hands of the aged patriarch Jacob.<sup>94</sup> One minister for the UCG, Steve Sheppherd,<sup>95</sup> has recently presented a Bible study

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<sup>92</sup>Robert Boraker wrote an article "Skandinavenes Opprinnelse [Uncovering Scandinavian Roots]" in the *Den Enkle Sannhet*, July/August 1984, pp. 10-11, 28. In his book *Luther and the Reformation: The Life Springs of Our Liberties* (1883), Joseph A. Seiss wrote of Gustavus Adolphus, "what America lost by his death she more than regained in the final success and secure establishment of the holy [i.e., Protestant] cause for which he sacrificed his life" (p. 142). The Gustavus Adolphus supported Swedish expansion into America (pp. 176-177) which may well represent an unsuccessful 17th century bid by Napthali to garner the double portion of the Birthright.

<sup>93</sup>The conflict had four distinct phases. The third or "Swedish Phase," during which Gustavus Adolphus intervened, lasted from 1630-1635.

<sup>94</sup>Gen. 48:17-19. Cf. Heb. 11:21.

<sup>95</sup>Sheppherd is a non-salaried minister serving as pastor for the Elkhart, Indiana congregation.

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series maintaining this very position. Sheppherd's inverts of our traditional identifications of Ephraim and Manasseh, and raises several interesting, if not valid points,<sup>96</sup> arguing each of them well.

- The United States has become the *greater* of the two powers; no nation--not even Britain at the height of her power--has ever had in real terms the material and economic power as has the U. S.
- The U. S. is far greater blessed than Britain in having the best and most land.
- The U. S. is approximately ten times the size of Britain in population; this fact of present-day demographics finds expressions in Deut. 33:17<sup>97</sup> which ascribes "ten thousands" to Ephraim and "thousands" to Manasseh.
- The concept of "company of nations" applies not to Britain's imperial edifice but rather to the legal autonomy accorded the American states and the division between state and federal government.

From the earliest English settlement of North America, this division in the form of thirteen separate colonies with their own governmental apparatus and laws has existed; and so it continues to exist today with each respective state empowered to make its own laws.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>In the audiotapes I listened to, Sheppherd also made reference to the fact that as Manasseh was the only tribal territory in ancient Israel divided by a great river--the Jordan--so the U. S. A. is divided by the Mississippi River. This point, however, seems to support our traditional understanding rather than the new.

<sup>97</sup>Deut. 33 is a parallel passage to Gen. 49 which assigns the various blessings of Jacob to the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>98</sup>Shepperd proposes that "only in recent years has the federal government become strong;" that as recently as the American Civil War (1861-1865), the states--not the federal government--sent their own armies, state militias, into battle. This thesis has weaknesses in two respects. First, the Civil War ended over 130 years ago. Second, the tendency toward a strong federal government was apparent as early as the administration of Andrew Jackson (1829-1836), sometimes derisively called "King Andrew" by his political enemies. Jackson was a staunch supporter of the Union over states rights, an issue which intermittently troubled American political life from the time of Jackson through the presidency of Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865). Along with slavery, the issue of states rights was a central consideration igniting the Civil War. Perhaps the greatest immediate outcome of that war was President Lincoln's success in holding the Union together, thus preserving a concentration of the resources of North America under the umbrella of a single, unified nation-state. In any case, the victory of the Union effectively guaranteed the survival of the United States.

From 1865 forward, the political and economic energies of the U. S. were released to produce what Raymond F. McNair has rightly described an "ascent to greatness." One popular university textbook opines, "The United States was on its way to becoming a true nation-state with an effective central government. . . . The wartime achievements added up to a decisive shift in the relationship between the federal government and private enterprise. The Republicans took a limited government that did little more than seek to protect the marketplace from the threat of

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- The number 13 should be associated with Ephraim as the 13th of Jacob's children<sup>99</sup>
- As Manasseh preceded Ephraim in birth, so England established a presence in North America before the American colonials established their own independent but "second born" nation; i. e., in both cases, there was a time when there was a Manasseh but no Ephraim.
- The appellation "Great" preceding "Britain" is predictable considering Jacob's affirmation that Manasseh "also shall be great."<sup>100</sup>
- Finally, and less relevant to the Ephraim-Manasseh issue, in ancient Israel there were 48 Levitical cities;<sup>101</sup> so there were 48 states which eventually filled continental North America and comprised the contiguous territory of the United States.

Sheppherd's interpretation obviously departs from Mr. Armstrong's point of view, which is strongly expressed in the following quotation:

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monopoly and changed it into an activist state that promoted and subsidized the efforts of the economically industrious. The most pervasive effect of the war on northern society was to encourage an 'organizational revolution.' . . . [The North's] victory meant that the nation as a whole would now be ready to embrace the conception of progress that the North had affirmed in its war effort--not only advances in science and technology, but also in bringing together and managing large numbers of men and women for economic and social goals. The Civil War was thus a catalyst for the great transformation of American society from an individualistic society of small producers into the more highly organized that 'incorporated' America of the late nineteenth century." Robert A. Divine, *et. al.*, *America: Past and Present*, pp. 455-458. See also Stephen B. Oates, *Lincoln: His Words and His World*, p. 12; and John Ross Schroeder, "Abraham Lincoln. . . and America Now," *Plain Truth* "Man and Religion" column, March 1989, pp. 21-22.

<sup>99</sup>As a result of Jacob's naming his name upon Joseph's two sons (Gen. 48:46), both Ephraim and Manasseh were considered *sons* of Jacob by adoption. In Sheppherd's schema, the two grandchildren replace Joseph with Manasseh becoming son number 12 and Ephraim son number 13. While this alignment may indeed be the way to understand the numeration of Jacob's children, J. H. Allen makes an equally convincing and far more thoroughly developed case of associating the number 13 with Manasseh in his volume, *The National Number and Heraldry of the United States of America* (a book coincidentally written in Pasadena, California in 1919 from 591 El Molino Avenue only a few blocks from the old Ambassador College campus). Mr. Armstrong wrote "there were twelve original tribes. Joseph was one of these twelve. But when Joseph divided into two tribes and Manasseh separated into an independent nation, it became a *thirteenth* tribe. Could it be mere coincidence that it *started*, as a nation, with *thirteen* colonies" (*USB*, p. 104). Gen. 48:5 further weakens Sheppherd's case in its implication that Ephraim and Manasseh took the place of Reuben and Simeon, the first two sons born by Leah. Moreover, British and American heraldic symbols (subjective evidence that they may be) make a stronger case for associating Ephraim with the British and Manasseh with the Americans. The best volumes I have examined on this subject are W. Howard Bennett's *Symbols of Our Celto-Saxon Heritage* (the product of over 30 years of meticulous research), and Ida M. Ferguson's *Heraldry. . . And the United States of America* and *Lifting Up an Ensign to the Nations*, two less scholarly works but of relatively good credibility in the places where it counts.

<sup>100</sup>Gen. 48:21. On my July 31, 1991 visit to the British Israel World Federation headquarters in Putney, England, I heard the BIWF Secretary (a Mr. Gibb) make the same argument (only emphasizing the portion of the verse which reads "but truly his younger brother shall be *greater* than he") with respect to identifying Ephraim as *Great* Britain. As an interesting aside, he also believed the Scots--not the Americans--to be Manassite.

<sup>101</sup>Num. 35:7-8, Josh. 21:41-42.

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The British Commonwealth of Nations is the *only* COMPANY OF NATIONS in all earth's history. . . . The proof that we are Manasseh is overwhelming. Manasseh was to separate from Ephraim and become the greatest, wealthiest single nation of earth's history. The United States alone has fulfilled this prophecy. Manasseh was in fact a *thirteenth* tribe.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, Shepherd's discourse is a fascinating one. He contends that the narrative of Genesis 34-38 is intended to show how the Birthright passed successively from Leah's sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, before landing by default in Joseph's hands. These chapters show how each son did things which yielded disinheritance. Genesis 34 recounts the tale of how Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, defiled Dinah the daughter of Jacob. In retaliation, Simeon and Levi slew the entire male population of Shalem<sup>103</sup> necessitating the rapid flight of Jacob's family from the immediate area. Genesis 35 includes the account of Reuben's illicit relationship with Bilah, the handmaiden of Rachel and mother of his two half-brothers, Dan and Naphtali.<sup>104</sup> Genesis 36 is a vignette about Esau, the firstborn son who sold the Birthright for a bowl of red pottage.<sup>105</sup> Genesis 37 establishes Jacob's preference for Joseph, and then describes

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<sup>102</sup>USB, pp. 102-104. See also McNair, "Ephraim and Manasseh--Which Is Which?," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 47.

<sup>103</sup>v. 25-26.

<sup>104</sup>v. 22, 49:4, I Chron. 5:1-2.

<sup>105</sup>Gen. 25:29-34. Cf. Rom. 9:12-13, Heb. 11:20, 12:16. The matter of Esau's descendants has relevance in another interesting way. Mr. Armstrong himself recognized that "another 'key' to Bible understanding for the reader to carefully fasten in his memory [is] the fact that 'Edom' refers to ESAU. Many prophecies pertaining to the present and future employ the name Edom. They cannot be understood unless it is realized that they refer to the descendants of Esau" (USB, p. 37). Some British-Israel exegetes have suggested that many of the descendants of Esau eventually settled in Spain, the kingdom which led the way in the 15th and 16th century Age of Discovery or Exploration. As a consequence of Spanish colonialism, Central and South America became largely a Spanish provinces. From the 15th century ascendancy of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella to the Spanish heyday under Charles V and his dimutive and idiosyncratic son, Philip II, Spanish ships largely ruled the world's oceans; the Conquistadores brought Amerindian empires under heel; American gold and silver, routed through Spain, determined the fluctuations of the entire European economy; and the Spanish army was considered the class of the military field even beyond its prime until the Battle of Rocroi in 1643 when the French finally shattered the "myth of Spanish invincibility." It is interesting and probably quite significant that Spain's defeat at Rocroi--its first major loss in a century and a half--came at the hands of the French, a Reubenite people about to take their place in line to vie for the national, physical promises passed on to the descendants of Abraham. By 1715, Spain had fallen to the rank of a second rate power. Eighteenth century France, notwithstanding Louis XIV's failed bid for European hegemony, became *the* nation-state which set the standard for Europe in most significant areas of human endeavor. See Clifford F. Parker, *A Short Study of Esau-Edom in Jewry* (1949) and David Davidson, *Palestine: Esau Claims*

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the sordid results of that favoritism in the selling into slavery of the younger brother by his older siblings. Judah appears to be the instigator of the sale,<sup>106</sup> an act which in itself made his claim to the Birthright invalid. Finally, if that were not enough, Genesis 38 exposes Judah's indiscretions with Tamar, which also merited his elimination in the inheritance pattern.

However, an equally compelling case can be made that once Reuben slept with Bilah,<sup>107</sup> the Birthright passed *directly* to Joseph, "do not pass go, do not collect \$200." If Shepperd's exegesis is correct, then why do we not find descriptions of incidents in the Bible whereby Issachar and Zebulun, the fifth- and sixth-born sons of Leah,<sup>108</sup> disinherited themselves as did their four older brothers. Why does the biblical narrative present the stories about those acts which caused the disinheritance of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah out of the sequence of their birth order? Moreover, Jacob's words as recorded in Genesis 48:5 certainly seem to imply that Ephraim and Manasseh--Joseph's sons--were replacements for Reuben and Simeon. Mention of Levi and Judah is conspicuously absent.

From this perspective, Joseph becomes Jacob's "second firstborn"--indeed the firstborn

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*Possession* (1947). If the identification of Esau with Spain is accurate, we find again another example of the struggle for the birthright (cf. Gen. 25:22) between first and second born sons. The Spanish Golden Age may well be Esau's macrocosmic quest to reverse the effects of his sale of the Birthright to Jacob (v. 29-34) and rescind his father's disappointing pronouncement about his future (recorded in Gen. 27:34-40). If so, the Spanish bid for hegemony was premature, coming some two centuries before the expiration of the withholding of the Birthright blessing.

<sup>106</sup>v. 26-27. Shepperd argues that chapter 38 is an inset--a purposely placed break in the story about Joseph--positioned in the text precisely at this juncture to emphasize a particular point: the acute concern over Judah's descendants reflects Jacob's belief that Judah's sons stood in line to inherit the Birthright. Since Jacob was unaware that Joseph remained alive (37:34-35), Shepperd contends that the general expectation was that Judah's lineage would inherit the Promised Land as well as political leadership over the children of Israel. He suggests that Judah's marriage to Shuah, a Canaanite woman, made his offspring Er and Onan ineligible to inherit Canaan (cf. Deut. 7:1-6). Shepperd also proposes that Judah would later redeem himself, restoring to his descendants the promise of the sceptre (Gen. 49:10, I Chron. 5:2). He did so by volunteering to stand in the place of Benjamin whom Joseph threatened to imprison (Gen. 44:18-34).

<sup>107</sup>Gen. 35:22.

<sup>108</sup>Gen. 35:23. Chapter 35 of Genesis lists the sons of Jacob according to mother. Gen. 29:32-30:24 lists his sons (with the exception of Benjamin whose birth is recounted later in Gen. 35:16-18) according to birth order.

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of the woman he had intended to marry as his first (and presumably only?) wife.<sup>109</sup> Sheppherd's vignette on the Louisiana Purchase<sup>110</sup>--that Napoleon's sale of the Louisiana territory on behalf of France to the U. S. A. is a kind of antitypical handing of the Birthright from Reuben to Joseph--seems to support an interpretive view where Reuben passed the Birthright straight to Joseph more than a schema in which there is successive passing of the blessing through the first four of Leah's sons.

Sheppherd's reversal of England and Manasseh can also be challenged on a more intuitive level. The Bible includes some hints that one feature of the Manassite character is resistance to monarchy as a political institution. The Manassite deliverer and judge Gideon singularly rejected the offer of his people to found an Israelite dynasty.<sup>111</sup> So did others who came later and are of probable Manassite lineage: Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) and George Washington (1732-1799). In fact, the American Revolution itself was a large scale expression of the aversion to the "tyranny of a king."

Is Manasseh to be found in England or America? Finding support for either position depends largely on *when* we examine the respective histories of the British and American people.

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<sup>109</sup>Gen. 29:20-30.

<sup>110</sup>The Louisiana Purchase illustrates another interesting feature which I believe is antitypical of the character of Reuben as described in scripture. Although Reuben liked the self-flattering dreams of Joseph (Gen. 37:5-10) no better than his other brothers (v. 4), his sense of responsibility as the firstborn would not allow him to consent to his younger brother's death at the hands of his jealous and resentful siblings (v. 21). Indeed, Reuben's ultimate intent when the hostile brothers expressed their murderous intentions was to "rid him [Joseph] out of their hands" (v. 22). Upon discovering that the other brothers had sold Joseph into slavery, Reuben grieved and tore his clothes (v. 29-30), something which he angrily reminded his brothers about when standing uncomfortably in the presence of the Egyptian prime minister some two decades later (42:22). The sale of the Louisiana Territory at the ridiculously low price of five cents an acre (the total sale price amounted to about \$15 million for 8.28 million square miles of the world's richest land) prompted Napoleon's now famous remark, "this accession of territory affirms forever the power of the United States and I have just given England a maritime rival that sooner or later will lay low her pride." In a single stroke, with one hand France extended untold treasures to one branch of Joseph's family; and with the other, she reduced in relative but very real material terms the power of the other branch. A similar if less dramatic example of this Reubenite ambivalence toward Joseph is found the career of privateer Jean Lafite. This French pirate provided American General Andrew Jackson with the cannons, gun powder, and strategic information about the New Orleans area which insured an American victory over the British in the final battle of the War of 1812.

<sup>111</sup>Judg. 8:22-23.

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This is a point not missed by Sheppard. He attributes the classical identification of Manasseh with America as a product of early-20th century world conditions. Mr. Armstrong and other British-Israel writers came to a logical conclusion given the world dominance of the British and the relative insignificance of the United States in world affairs prior 1941. If the U. S. A. has become the greatest and most powerful nation in all world history, this development has reached full maturity since World War II.<sup>112</sup>

The determining factor in this matter is not which nation in world history has accumulated the greatest volume of *real* wealth, power, and glory. Rather, it is who in relative terms has been the greatest nation through time. Historian A. J. Hobsbawm, viewing this question from an economic perspective, captures the essence of the matter writing:

The Industrial Revolution marks the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world recorded in written documents. For a brief period it coincided with the history of a single country, Great Britain. An entire world economy was thus built on, or rather around, Britain, and this country therefore temporarily rose to a position of global influence and power unparalleled by any state of its relative size before or since, and unlikely to be paralleled by any state in the foreseeable future. There was a moment in world history when Britain can be described, if we are not too pedantic, as its only workshop, its only massive importer and exporter, its only carrier, its only imperialist, almost its only foreign investor; and for that reason its only naval power and the only one which had a genuine world policy.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Sheppard notes that as recently as World War II, people of Europe generally considered the United Kingdom as the premier nation of the world; the perception was that the U. S. "was so puny that Hitler didn't even consider us a threat."

<sup>113</sup>*Industry and Empire*, p. 13. On Britain's overwhelming world dominance, see also James Morris, *Pax Britannica*, pp. 126-127 and *Farewell the Trumpets*, pp. 338-362; *Heaven's Command*, pp. 195-196. Regarding the role of the Industrial Revolution as an aspect of Joseph's Birthright blessing, the record of history dramatically illustrates another example of Joseph supplanting Reuben. The academic community marvels over how the British were in many respects more poorly positioned and less endowed than the French in many of the human and material resources necessary for industrial take-off. Nevertheless, it was England that burst ahead of the rivals across the English Channel as the 18th century drew to a close. On this subject, see R. M. Hartwell, ed., *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England* (noting in particular the essay by F. Crouzet, "England and France in the Eighteenth Century: A Comparative Analysis of Two Economic Growths," pp. 155-156, 160-161, 167, 169, 173-174); E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions*, pp. 30-32 relevant to the importance of entrepreneurship; and William McNeill, *The Ecumene*, pp. 528-529 on the critical impact of the French Wars (1792-1815) in propelling the economy of Britain to unchallengeable supremacy over France and every other nation-state of the world (quite an irony considering these conflicts very likely represent Reuben's last frenetic effort to retrieve the Birthright it had forfeited some three and a half millennia before). One of the best little volumes to explore the Birthright blessing in



Robert Briffault, another academic observer amplifies Hobsbawm's commentary, noting that;

The world control of industrial and wave-ruling England did not become fully evident to the world until the middle of the [19th] century. The year of the Great Exhibition of 1851 may be regarded as marking the proclamation and recognition of that matchless power and influence. . . . That power and influence rested almost exclusively on the fact that England was first in the field of new economic conditions which transformed the world and displaced all other sources of wealth and economic control. . . . The chief cause of their [the English's] 'muddling through' was that they had more money.<sup>114</sup>

In light of all the above considerations, our traditional understanding of the modern-day identity of Ephraim and Manasseh should be considered quite satisfactory.

### **What Are the "Times" of Leviticus 26?**

The industrial and economic growth of the Anglo-American world began to crescendo in the mid- to late-18th century.<sup>115</sup> For England, that industrial supremacy was an important factor

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the form of Anglo-American industrial and economic development and predominance is William J. Hale's *Chemivision* (1952).

<sup>114</sup>*The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 5, 7-8, 12-13.

<sup>115</sup>Economic historians argue furiously about the point at which the industrialization process reached critical mass. Generally speaking, the earliest dates suggested are in the 1750s and the latest near the turn of the 19th century. In any case, the proximity of these dates to the issuing of the Birthright to Joseph's seed helps to make sense of the failure of so many previous kingdoms and empires to develop an industrial economic base, a fact which has long puzzled historians. An interesting aside on this very matter relates to the claim of one Dud Dudley, a 17th century Worcestershire innovator, who in 1619 experimented with smelting iron ore through use of coal. He was so encouraged by the outcome of his experiments that he even sent samples of his product to King James I. What appeared to be a promising beginning met with failure due to flooding, the coming of the Civil War (1642-1651), and Dudley's misbegotten decision to fight in that conflict on the Royalist side. The Cromwell government which succeeded Charles I was not receptive to his ideas, and when Charles II was restored in 1660, the new king was too cash poor to help Dudley with the financing he needed to forge ahead (*Warwickshire & Worcestershire Life*, February 1974, p. 45). Today's experts in metallurgy are disagreed over whether Dudley's processes would have succeeded. As history shows and Providence seems to have directed, successful iron production on a commercial scale had to wait until Abraham Darby's little foundry at Coalbrookdale initiated the process. Between 1709-1717, Darby produced iron from a coke-fired blast furnace, and from 1750 forward, the British were able to make machinery and equipment out of cast iron.

My favorite assessment of the timing of industrialization comes from conservative historian, Charles Wilson, who writes in *England's Apprenticeship*: "As yet [c. 1763] 'industry' did not mean industrialization as a later age was to understand it. The manufacturing part of the economy was like the components of a watch ready for assembly but not interacting with each other. There were already urban industries (like brewing, soap boiling, sugar refining, etc.) but industry as a whole was far from urbanized. The greater part of the expanding export trade was sustained by rural and semi-rural industries organized on a domestic basis. 'Factories' there were, but few of them were mechanized on a [large] scale" (chapter 14 summary, p. 312). In other words, as the 19th century approached the

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in the successful neutralization of the threat posed by Napoleon. It also made possible the eventual broadcasting of British imperial power around the globe. However historians or theologians may interpret these astonishing developments, it is undeniable that this flowering of Anglo-Saxon power came some 2,520 years after Israel's demise and disappearance as a result of the invasion of the Assyrians. If presented carefully, such a "coincidence" is a powerful argument in favor of our traditional understanding of prophecy.

How does the figure 2,520 enter into our exegesis? Our critics accuse us of participating in "numeric gymnastics," of using "mathematical exegesis" to create an "interpretive mirage."<sup>116</sup> Are such criticisms valid or is our case plausible and legitimate? Based on an examination of Leviticus 26:18-21, Mr. Armstrong<sup>117</sup> argues that in context, the "seven times" of verse 18 is a

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stage was set for the industrial take-off.

The *dues ex machina* of the industrial process--the steam engine--was a replacement for the Newcomen engine, an atmospheric pump created in 1712 to lift water from mines. Newcomen's machine was in no small way a product the late-17th century wood shortage in Britain. With little wood available for fuel, the English found an alternate source for heat: coal. And coal mines required removal of water from those mines which, due to move aggressive mining, began to be increasingly deep. During the French Wars, the need to extract metals for the war effort also meant mining deeper than ever before. Thus arose another incentive to improve pumping capacity. In 1768, James Watt, the "father of the Industrial Revolution," built his first working model of the steam engine. He patented it in 1769. By 1776, the engine was in practical use and within another ten years--just a few years prior to the French Revolution of 1789 which significantly slowed industrial development in France--it became a commercial success. Interestingly, the same year it became a practical tool in England, the American colonists declared their independence initiating the separation of Ephraim and Manasseh. And in that same year, Adam Smith published *Wealth of Nations* which became the intellectual and philosophical support structure for England's developing capitalist economy. That economic system propelled the Western world in general and the British economy in particular to unprecedented heights. The gospel of *laissez-faire* articulated by this Scottish University of Glasgow professor of moral philosophy gave the rising commercial, industrial, and entrepreneurial classes of the British Isles the moral sanction they needed to implement "the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world recorded in written documents" (Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, p. 13--see also Marshall B. Davidson, *The Horizon History of The World in 1776*).

<sup>116</sup>Orr, "How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church," p. 7, columns 3-4.

<sup>117</sup>Chapter 10 of *USB* is devoted to the the meaning of Lev. 26 and the 2,520 years withholding of the Birthright. Orr suggests that Mr. Armstrong borrowed the "seven times theory"--the concept of 2,520 as an important prophetic number in Scripture--from the Jehovah's Witnesses, British millenarian H. Grattan Guinness (author of *The Approaching End of the Age*, 1878), and A. F. Dugger. The last-named "interpreted the words *seven times* not as a sevenfold intensity of punishment, which a study of different translations and many commentaries would show, but as a duration of seven *times* in length (even though word *times* is not in the Hebrew text)" ("How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church," pp. 7, column 3-4; 8, column 1; 11, columns 1-2; 13, column 2, note 22). Mr. Armstrong, of course, used the concept for different ends, initially relating it as did Dugger to events in the Middle East associated with Allenby's capture of Jerusalem, but also identifying it as a linchpin of his understanding about Israel's modern

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measurement of prophetic times, equalling 2,520 years. Conversely in context the "seven times" of verse 21 is referring to intensity.

And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you *seven times* more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:<sup>118</sup> And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring *seven times* more plagues upon you according to your sins (Lev. 26:18 - 21).

Based on Hebrew grammar and construction, other similar passages of scripture, and pure and simple logic, the 1986 edition of *USB*<sup>119</sup> makes the best case we as a Church have ever presented for this interpretation. Using the principle of a "day for a year," it can be calculated that "seven times" = 7 x 360 days<sup>120</sup> = 2,520 days or prophetic years.<sup>121</sup> Two thousand five hundred and twenty years from Israel's captivity brings us to about A. D. 1800 when we propose God began to restore the Birthright to the modern descendants of Israel.

The conditional aspect of certain of God's promises is strongly reinforced in the "blessings and cursings" chapters of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. That the promise to Israel<sup>122</sup> was *conditional* was almost immediately demonstrated by the fact that the generation of

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identity. Mr. Armstrong applied the "seven times theory" to the Lost Tribes in September 1942 with the first edition of *USB* (p. 12, column 2).

<sup>118</sup>In this we see a kind of rescinding of the blessings promised to Joseph in Gen. 49:25--"and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of the heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb."

<sup>119</sup>See chapter 10 of *USB*, especially pp. 123-131, 166. See also McNair, "Birthright Blessing Delayed 2,520 Years!," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 21.

<sup>120</sup>The ancient Israelites considered 30 days the length of a month.

<sup>121</sup>Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:4 - 6. Also relevant to this discussion is the "seven times" or literal years of insanity experienced by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:32). See also *The Companion Bible* Appendix 10, "The Spiritual Significance of Numbers," p. 14. "The four *perfect numbers*, 3, 7, 10, and 12, have for their product the remarkable number 2,520. It is the Least Common Multiple of the ten digits governing all numeration; and can, therefore, be divided by each of the nine digits without remainder. It is the number of chronological perfection (7 x 360).

<sup>122</sup>Ex. 19:5-8.

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Israelites leaving Egypt *never* entered the Promised Land. Mr. Armstrong illustrates his case by recounting what happened to Israel in the wilderness. God *suspended* the inheritance of the Promised Land for one generation when the Israelites rebelled in faithlessness and unbelief. Based on this principle, Mr. Armstrong argues that God employed the same type of withholding only extending it over several dozen generations after the chosen people were taken into their in the 8th century B. C. captivity.<sup>123</sup>

The Hebrew Scriptures richly describe how the recently freed Israelites failed to keep their side of the bargain struck at the foot of Mt. Sinai. God promised Israel: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people."<sup>124</sup> The assertion, "*If* you will obey my voice," is better understood when considered against the "blessings and curses" specified in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 especially relevant. The Abrahamic Covenant, on the other hand, was *unconditional*. "By myself," said God in Genesis 22:16. Moreover, there are some aspects of the unconditional covenant relationship that could hardly be fulfilled by a Church called from *many* peoples, *united in spirit* but *scattered* throughout the world. If the Northern Kingdom was invaded and became the Ten Lost Tribes, God remained responsible to fulfill the *unconditional* promises to Abraham.<sup>125</sup> He still needed eventually to restore the Birthright promises to the physical descendants of those people taken into captivity.

Seen this way, the Abrahamic Covenant is like a "time release" medicine capsule with different ingredients activated at different times. We know that God does things decently and in order.<sup>126</sup> Thus, the various aspects of God's covenants with humans are "released" in orderly and

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<sup>123</sup>USB, pp. 117-131.

<sup>124</sup>Ex. 19:5.

<sup>125</sup>Gen. 22:12, 16 and USB, p. 23.

<sup>126</sup>I Cor. 14:33, 40.

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logical sequence. For example:

- After the Flood, God made a promise to Noah that he would not again destroy mankind (Gen. 8:21 -22). This is the oldest covenant.
- Then in Abraham, God chose a man through whom he could begin the process of salvation; He made unconditional promises to him.
- Israel, the descendants of Abraham, were chosen to be a holy nation of kings and priests, a model of Godly conduct before the world (Deut. 4:6-8).

The conditional Old Covenant was made at Sinai. Israel did not fulfill her part of that the conditional agreement and paid the physical penalty of exile.

- It was not necessary that there be a flourishing nation of Israel inheriting the *fullness* of the birthright promises in order for Christ to accomplish what needed to be done at the time of his first coming.

But there did need to be a remnant of the "holy nation, a kingdom of priests," and God went to great lengths to see that this was the case (*viz.*, the events recorded in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, etc.). A sort of rump state existed precariously until Christ completed His earthly ministry.

- During his ministry, Christ transferred the responsibility given to Israel under the Old Covenant from the physical nation to "a holy nation" He would call from all the people of the earth.

There remained no need to preserve the physical trappings of the old "kingdom of priests" which ended in A. D. 70 with the fall of Jerusalem to Roman armies under Titus.

- However, many prophecies concerning the Second Coming of Christ do seem to demand the existence of a physical people who, aware of their identity and repentant of their national sins, are rescued and restored.

They form the nucleus of the Kingdom of God on earth, into which all nations of the world are eventually absorbed.

One plausible and somewhat novel way of presenting our understanding of the 2,520 year withholding of the Birthright is to consider the broader sweep of Assyrian-Israelite contacts.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>Lawrence Boadt describes that period writing, "The two hundred years from 922, when Jeroboam [I] began to rule, down to 722, when the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians, were mostly taken up by war: either battles

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Relations between the two peoples began to sour as early as the mid-ninth century B. C. when Ahab (874-853 B. C.), second monarch of the Omride dynasty, took military precautions in anticipation of confronting Assyria's imperialist-minded Shalmaneser III (858-824 B. C.). Ahab furnished 10,000 soldiers and 2,000 chariots as his contributions to an Israelite-Syrian alliance designed to forestall Assyrian advances to the southwest.<sup>128</sup> Three generations of Israelite kings later, Jehu (841-814 B. C.) felt the brunt of Assyrian pressure to the extent that he became a tributary of Shalmaneser III.<sup>129</sup> This Assyrian ruler immortalized Jehu's subservience in stone on the renowned Black Obelisk which prominently resides today in the British Museum.<sup>130</sup>

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against Assyria, border disputes with Judah, revolt by subject peoples such as Moab, or the struggle against the growing power of the new Aramean state of Damascus in Syria. . . . But it was above all the age of the rise of Assyria, the great Mesopotamian power. Assyrian ambition was to conquer all the western lands, and it slowly but surely moved against its neighbors in the two centuries after Solomon's death. . . . By the end of the ninth century. . . [Assyria] placed enough pressure on all the others to force an end to the fighting between northern Israel and Damascus. . . . Under a series of strong kings in the ninth century B.C., Assyria began a program of systematic conquest and empire-building that spread in all four directions, especially toward the south to control Babylon, and toward the west to gain access to the forests of Syria and Lebanon which would insure a steady wood supply for the largely treeless homeland" (*Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 294, 309).

<sup>128</sup>It is probable that anxieties about Assyrian interference in Israelite affairs date to the reign of Assurnasipal II (883-859 B. C.). Merrill writes "he initiated a program of annual western campaigns which became notorious for their cruelty. By around 875 he had brought all the northern Aramean states as far as Bit-Adini under Assyrian control. Even so, Israel, Judah, and Damascus were given a reprieve for twenty-five more years until, at last, even they were drawn in into the maelstrom of international upheaval occasioned by the inexorable westward and southward sweep of the Assyrian war machine under Shalmaneser III. . . . The frenetic machination of Ben-Hadad, Ahab, Jehosaphat, and the other rulers of the Mediterranean littoral" were a response to the burgeoning Assyrian power (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 120, 122). "The revived empire had begun a sustained westward movement under Adad-nirari (911-891). This was intensified under Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884) and, by the time of Ahab and Jehosaphat, had achieved extremely threatening dimensions under Assur-nasirpal II (883-859). By about 875 he had pressed west as far as Bit-Adini on the upper Euphrates, bringing all the Aramean states of that region under Assyrian control" (*Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 337, 348--see also p. 349). "The first time, so far as we know, that the Assyrians became directly involved with one of the main Biblical kingdoms was in 853 B. C. Shalmaneser III was then advancing through Syria towards Lebanon and Palestine" (Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, p. 44).

<sup>129</sup>"Jehu voluntarily became a vassal of the Assyrian monarch Shalmaneser III. Jehu began paying tribute to Assyria as soon as he ascended the throne. . . . Jehu evidently considered it prudent to reverse Israel's policy toward Assyria, which had been one of hostility, in order to secure Assyrian help against Israel's chief enemy, Hazael of Syria" (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 125-126).

<sup>130</sup>The great Austen Henry Layard discovered Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk in 1846 at Nimrud. It bears the earliest depiction of an Israelite in artistic form. Theologian "P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., argues. . . that the *ai-u-a* (or *ia-a-u*) on the stela should be identified with Joram, not Jehu. Reading Yaw as a hypocorism for Joram solves two problems: (a) the king in view is called the 'son of Omri,' an improbable designation for Jehu in that he wiped out the family of Omri and founded his own dynasty [I Kings 16:16-28]; and (b) it is unlikely that a king would pay tribute in his first year" (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 349 note, 361). See also Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, pp. 44-45.

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The Assyrian records of Adad-nirari (810-783 B. C.) show Israel's king Joash (798-782 B. C.) also paid tribute to Assyria. Not until the Indian Summer of the early 8th century did these Assyrian intrusions into Israelite life appear to abate. Roman Catholic theologian Lawrence Boadt tells us:

by the year 800 B. C., Assyrian power weakened and the western states of the Near East enjoyed about fifty years of relief. During this time, both Israel and Judah reached their greatest prosperity since the time of Solomon under two remarkable kings, Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah of Judah. There was a revival of trade and commerce, towns were rebuilt, Jeroboam was able to extend his control over parts of the kingdom of Damascus, and the number of wealthy citizens increased dramatically, at least if we can believe the archaeological evidence showing that much larger private houses began to appear at this time. . . . [By Jeroboam's death, Israel] faced the difficult problems of an age that had known great prosperity, but was now under a renewed pressure from Assyrian power which robbed Israel of independent movement.<sup>131</sup>

The Bible says little of Jeroboam II (793-753 B. C.), devoting only seven verses<sup>132</sup> to his entire administration. Nevertheless, he was a major figure in the line of Israelite monarchs.

[Jeroboam] regained so much lost territory that, with the exception of the territory held by the kingdom of Judah, his kingdom was almost as large as the empire of David and Solomon. He restored Israelite rule over the coastal and inland regions of Syria to the north, conquered Damascus and Hamath, and occupied Transjordan south to the Dead Sea, which probably means that he made Ammon and Moab vassals to Israel. These tremendous gains were possible only because Assyria was suffering a period of political weakness and was unable to interfere. . . . In the midst of its prosperity and evident political security, Israel did not realize that only a few decades later its doom would come, as predicted by the prophets.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>*Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>132</sup>II Kings 14:23-29.

<sup>133</sup>Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 127. It is both interesting and significant that *all* of Israel's rises to regional power status--even that of David and Solomon--were more the product of the eclipse of the kingdoms and empires surrounding the Israelite states than the political and military superiority of Israel in real terms. In this respect, it is accurate to say that Israel was only *relatively* powerful. In national Israel's story, we see a physical precursor to its spiritual counterpart, the Church of God. Not surprisingly, Jesus described His people as a "little flock" (Lk. 12:32) and Paul shows us that the Christian is typically drawn from the weak and foolish of the world (I Cor. 1:26-28).

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It was in this benign setting of Israelite prosperity, and just before Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B. C.) disturbed that peace, that the prophets Amos and Hosea appeared on the scene. These men initiated in Israel the age of "Classical Prophecy."<sup>134</sup> Amos broke new ground, indicting not only national leadership but the whole people as responsible for the sins of Samaria.<sup>135</sup> Both prophets inveighed against the evils of the day which included oppression of the poor, perversion of judgment, unbridled greed, selfish luxury among the aristocratic classes (particularly its women), and superficial religiosity which found expression in irreverence toward the Sabbath, faithlessness toward the covenant, and worship of foreign gods. Unsuccessfully, these two prophets called for national repentance.

Boadt summarizes the fidelity of Amos' message writing, "God does not stand idly by and watch evil go on. The political moves of Assyria and its fearful military victories are not accidents of history but permitted and directed by God to punish Israel."<sup>136</sup> Ultimately, the Assyrians proved to be "the rod of God's anger" about which Isaiah wrote.<sup>137</sup> Amos' younger

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A message of coming doom in an apparently prosperous and thriving context, we can probably learn an important lesson about the end time Church's obligations and responsibilities. Micah 5:8-15 predicts a time when "the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver." Such *has* been the character of Anglo-American world dominance over the last two centuries. But it is in just such a time that the hand of Jacob will "be lifted up upon all thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off"--that God "will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all they strongholds." If the Assyrian captivity of Israel is a forerunner of an end time punishment upon Abraham's modern-day descendants, the implications for the Church at the end of the age are overwhelming. It appears that God would expect His people to deliver a warning message even if it is in a setting where the outward signs of military and economic decay are absent (parallels do about, however, between the social and moral malaise in 8th century B. C. and the 2th century A. D. Israel)

<sup>134</sup>Until this juncture, we read primarily biblical narratives *about* the prophets themselves. After the coming of Amos and Hosea, Scripture richly preserves their actual words.

<sup>135</sup>"Sparing neither king nor priest, nobility nor common people, Amos castigated them all in simple but sharp messages of reproof and denunciation. . . . Amos warned that only complete repentance by king and people, and a turning again to Yahweh, whom they had forsaken, could avert the approaching catastrophe" (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 127).

<sup>136</sup>*Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 304, 317-318.

<sup>137</sup>Isa. 10:5-6.



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counterpart, Hosea, probably lived to witness the awful fulfillment of his own predictions. He no doubt “saw one king after another change loyalties for and against Assyria, saw the violence of assassination destroy the inner spirit of the country, and watched as little by little the Assyrians conquered and deported parts of the kingdom until the capital itself went down in flames.”<sup>138</sup>

Very shortly after the death of Jeroboam II (753 B. C.), the Northern Kingdom plunged into political chaos.

Civil wars, assassinations and internal fighting between groups which supported Assyrian policies or opposed any capitulation to them racked the northern state. . . . The deaths of Jeroboam and Uzziah. . . came at the very moment when Assyria regained her power and renewed her push to the west.<sup>139</sup>

In the midst of this internal difficulty, Israelite policy-makers also had to consider the intrusions of the Assyria into their affairs. By the time of Tiglath-Pileser III, king Menahem (752-742 B. C.) was forthcoming with “enormous sums of tribute” intended to induce the Assyrian monarch to leave him and his people in peace.<sup>140</sup> In 738 B. C., king Pekah (752-732 B. C.) rebelled against Assyria, only to surrender later and pay a huge ransom in order to retain his throne.<sup>141</sup> Typical of the Assyrian policy of the time, Pekah’s disloyalty set in motion the usual Assyrian response of converting the offending kingdom into a vassal state. This adjustment was the first in a sequence of three levels of response which were automatically and successively introduced as a matter of imperial policy.

Second time offenders forfeited their political control and were replaced by a vassal-king about whose loyalty the Assyrian government could feel assured. The Assyrians also reduced the amount of territory that the new vassal controlled with the Assyrian monarch taking direct

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<sup>138</sup>Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 311-312. “About 750 B. C. . . . marks the beginning of the encounter of both Judah and Israel with the rising power of the new Assyrian empire (which in three decades would put an end to the northern kingdom of Israel)” (Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 128).

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>141</sup>II Kings 15:19-20.

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rule over at least some of the original kingdom. All in all, the new replacement vassal king was less independent than his predecessor. As an additional dimension of punishment, limited segments of the population were often deported. Finding themselves among strangers whose language they did not understand and whose culture was unfamiliar, the deportees had little hope of successfully revolting against their Assyrian masters. Even if they did, they were hundreds of miles from their original homeland and unlikely to find their way successfully back home. Tiglath-Pileser initiated this second stage of punishment upon Israel in response to Pekah's alliance with Damascus and a second attempt at revolt in 734 B. C. The first deportation of Israelites (734-732 B. C.), sometimes referred to as the "Galilean Captivity," took part of the population to northern Syria as well as northern and northwestern Mesopotamia.<sup>142</sup> Tiglath-Pileser III also occupied the greater part of Galilee and Gilead. He divided Israelite territory itself into four new provinces: Magidu, Duru, Gilead, and Samaria.

The third and final official Assyrian response in dealing with rebellious subjects was extinction of the people as a nation. This action usually included wholesale removal of almost the entire population. The Assyrians scattered deportees throughout the Empire and repopulated the vacated territories with others from distant and far-flung regions.<sup>143</sup> The pro-Assyrian but unreliable puppet king Hoshea (732-722 B. C.) set in motion the events which brought on the final deluge. Hoping to receive critical aid from Egypt to the south, Hoshea betrayed Assyrian trust in around 725 B. C.<sup>144</sup> Shalmaneser V (727-722 B. C.) eventually responded with a three year siege (722/1-718 B. C.) which resulted in the fall of the capital city, Samaria. At that point, the Northern Kingdom ceased to exist.

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<sup>142</sup>II Kings 16:5-9, 15:27-29. "The Israelites were deported in *two separate captivities*. The one just mentioned was the *first* (c. 734-732 B. C. Based on the locations just given, this first deportation was also known as the 'Galilean Captivity.' It included all the Israelites living throughout Galilee and the Plain of Sharon, plus the territories east of the Jordan (Reuben, Gad and the eastern half-tribe of Manasseh)" (McNair, "Israel's Two Assyrian Captivities," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 15).

<sup>143</sup>II Kings 17:24. Cf. Ezra 4:2, 10.

<sup>144</sup>II Kings 18:9-10.

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There is an important postscript to the fall of Samaria in 718 B. C. For Judah, the deterioration continued beyond Shalmaneser V's major military campaign of 721-718 B. C., Hezekiah's kingdom experienced part of a final denouement in failed Israelite-Assyrian relations. In 701 B. C. Simeon,<sup>145</sup> the final tribe outside of Judah proper, was taken captive by the army of Sennacherib (704-681 B. C.) in part of the general Assyrian campaign described in II Kings 18, II Chronicles 31, Isaiah 36.<sup>146</sup> Working from the assumption that Assyrian-Israelite relations were generally troubled from the reign of Shalmaneser III through the final campaign of Sennacherib, the period A. D. 1660-1820 becomes a particularly significant. As Assyrian intrusions into Israelite affairs inexorably increased and the impending catastrophe of massive deportation became inevitable, might it be logical to assume that we would find a corresponding crescendo of Israelitish power across a century and a half leading to the expiration of the withholding of the Birthright?

If it is a fact of history that about 2,520 years after ancient Israel ceased to be an independent kingdom, the Anglo-Saxon people were on the verge of exercising unparalleled influence. It is also a matter of clear, unquestionable historical record that during the century and a half from 1660 to 1820, developments in Britain and the United States *laid the foundation* for the Anglo-American military, political, and economic dominance of the last two centuries. We weaken our argument when we put too much emphasis on a particular date or event, e.g. 1803 and the Louisiana Purchase--a perspective which is dangerously Amerocentric for a Church

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<sup>145</sup>Filmer's "Simeon: Last of the Ten Tribes 'Scattered in Israel'" is a brief and interesting four page circular on Simeon's deportation just prior to the end of the 8th century B. C. The map appearing in this article locates Simeon south of Judah and Lachish (site of the renowned seige which Sennacherib immortalized in his limestone bas reliefs, originally paneling for the walls of Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh, and now gracing several of the walls in the Assyrian rooms of London's British Museum) and between Gerar and Beer-sheba. Howie confirms that Simeon "was located on the edge of the desert in the Shephelah" exactly where Sennacherib's southern sweep would have taken the Assyrian army ("British Israelism and Pyramidology, p.309). On the Lachish reliefs, see Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, pp. 60-64; and Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, pp. 47-52.

<sup>146</sup>The Taylor Prism records Sennacherib's western campaign of 701 B. C. "The best known passage in this description states that because Hezekiah had not submitted to the Assyrian 'yoke,' Sennacherib laid siege to forty-six fortified Judean cities, deported 200,150 people, and invested Hezekiah in Jerusalem" (Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, p. 59).

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which identifies itself as *an International Association*.

The 19th became Britain's century. The British--specialists it seems in "muddlingthrough"--seemed unable to do anything wrong. To their own astonishment, they found themselves ruling about a quarter of the world's population and a fifth of its land mass (and that being not just any locations, but the choicest and most fertile territories on earth). Across the Atlantic, the United States' destiny was becoming manifest.<sup>147</sup> As the 2,520 year withholding of the Birthright drew to a close, it is hardly surprising that educated people of the day saw the hand of God in the process. It was hard to miss.

One example of many comes from Lord Roseberry, not a British-Israelite but a former British Foreign Secretary (1886, 1892-1894) and Prime Minister (1894-1895), speaking to the students of Glasgow University about the British Empire in November 1900:

How marvelous it all is! Built not by saints and angels, but by the work of men's hands; cemented with men's honest blood and with a world of tears, welded by the best brains of centuries past; not without the taint and reproach incidental to all human work, but constructed on the whole with pure and splendid purpose. *Human, and yet not wholly human, for the most heedless and the most cynical must see the finger of the Divine.* Growing as trees grow, while others slept; fed by the faults of others as well as the character of our fathers; reaching with a ripple of a restless tide over tracts, and islands and continents, until our little Britain woke up to find herself the foster-mother of nations and the source of united empires. *Do we not hail in this less the energy and fortune of a race than the supreme direction of the Almighty?*[emphasis mine].

In those more Biblically literate times,<sup>148</sup> people like Rosebery saw some parallel between

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<sup>147</sup>Mr. Armstrong put enormous emphasis on the fact that the real rise of Britain and America came *after* 1800. "It may not be generally realized--but neither Britain nor the United States became great world powers until the nineteenth century. Suddenly, in the very beginning of the nineteenth century, these two--until then small, relatively unimportant countries--suddenly spurted to national power and greatness among nations, as no nations had ever grown and multiplied in wealth, resources and power before. . . . Never did any people or nation spread out and grow so suddenly and rapidly into such magnitude of national power. . . . And nearly all this wealth came to us after A. D. 1800!" (*USB*, pp. 9, 11, 155, 161).

<sup>148</sup>In our own day of biblical illiteracy, it is hard to realize to what extent people of the past identified with the Bible: In *God's Englishmen: The Evolution of the Anglo-Saxon Spirit* (Little, Brown and Co., 1944, pp. 70-71), Leland Dewitt Baldwin writes:

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their own remarkable circumstance and that of the chosen people of ancient Israel. Was not God blessing *them* as he had promised to bless those same ancient people? It did not seem unreasonable to see the British Empire as the Kingdom of God on earth and the British people as the "chosen of God." Some British-Israel enthusiasts even began to regard the British Empire as the fifth or "Stone Kingdom" prophesied by Daniel.<sup>149</sup>

It is also significant that around the turn of the 19th century, the British began to alter their perception of their ancestral roots. Traditionally, the view had been that the British were descended from the ancient Trojans and from Gomer son of Japheth. It was not then considered uneducated to trace one's national origins to the Bible, even as the other "People of the Book," the Jews and Arabs do today. As the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions began to make a general impact, the British came to be increasingly fond of theories and histories proposing a national Anglo-Saxon/Teutonic origin. Little wonder that British-Israel speakers on the public

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In song and story, in sermon and miracle play, the Bible--and particularly the Old Testament--became woven into the being of Englishmen. Something in the peasant culture of England rose to meet the Book that had been produced by the peasant of Palestine. . . . That the Bible has become an integral part of the background of the Anglo-Saxon race is a fact that no one seeks to escape, even those who have sneered at its moral teachings. . . . Written for a race of shepherds and vintners, [its words] have become the comfort, the admonition, and the marching orders of another race that has carried its power to every part of the earth.

<sup>149</sup>See Edward Hine's *Forty-Seven Identifications* (pp. 46, 115-119, 162, 164) expressing this kind of mentality. Most people of the late-20th century very probably do not even know what the "Stone Kingdom" is. For additional (and critical) observations about those who considered the British Empire and Anglo-Saxon world to be the Kingdom of God on earth, see "British-Israelism and Pyramidology," pp. 314, 318. Howie observes, "this, then, is the substance of the claim. The Kingdom of God is the Anglo-Saxon world and the throne of David is the English throne. . . . The thought that God's Kingdom is coextensive with an earthly empire and that the throne of England is the seat of this rule, is abhorrent to all who are acquainted with the profundity of the kingdom and Messiah concepts. That the Kingdom of God is spiritual and not physical is axiomatic and that the church, as it is true to Christ by faith, is the Israel of faith [an idea vigorously opposed by Hine--PAGE #] is equally sure (cf. I Peter 2:9-10)." Friedman joins the debate explaining that the Stone that filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45) "is Christ. The stone is Messianically interpreted even in the Targum. . . . As a former Orthodox Jew, the writer resents the interpretation of British-Israelites in taking the place of Israel" (p. 89). Drawing from Louis T. Talbot's *What's Wrong With Anglo-Israelism?*, Friedman observes, "We must see the terrible danger in Anglo-Israelism, not only in its substitution of a counterfeit Messiah. . . and the substitution of a worldly British empire for the kingdom of God on earth, but also because the whole system substitutes confidence in the flesh for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Anglo-Israelism is "another gospel"" (p. 110). See McNair, "A Note About Anglo-Israelism," *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 53.

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circuit attracted sizeable audiences from the respectable ranks of society.<sup>150</sup> If these listeners found the ideas of Wilson, Hine, and others captivating, most of them probably did not embrace the Identity truth with the zeal of new converts. British-Israelism was more a curious and passing fancy which made little impact on the religious life of the nation. Had the idea been presented differently, this did not necessarily have to be.

**The Sabbath Covenant and National Punishment**

It is in the area of practical impact that Herbert W. Armstrong made a rather unique contribution to the body of British-Israel literature. The dimension he added was a part of his written discourse from his earliest attempts to introduce British-Israelite information to the Church of God. If *many* before Mr. Armstrong connected the Lost Tribes of Israel to the modern British and Americans, no one else had ever linked Israel's disappearance from the record of history to her abandonment of the seventh day Sabbath. Mr. Armstrong writes, "Why did they come to be known as the 'LOST Ten Tribes'? They had lost their national identifying sign!"<sup>151</sup> He convincingly demonstrates that the Sabbath was not solely part of the Old Covenant sealed at Sinai<sup>152</sup> but part of a separate, independent covenant<sup>153</sup> subsequent to the giving of the Law. This special "Sabbath Covenant" is described in Exodus 31:14-17. Granted, the Sabbath is included

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<sup>150</sup>John Wilson's "lectures were well attended and his audiences were principally middle-class people who were no doubt seeking diversion as well as edification." And it was the middle class that largely "composed the Victorian lecture audiences. As a theory of prophetic exegesis with direct and immediate and, in this period, increasingly plausible, political and topical implications, British-Israelism could be accepted in greater or lesser degree as an entertaining, perhaps titillating, set of speculations. The audiences need feel neither committed to it, nor incensed by it: it was offered, certainly by one who believed it, but without obligation to decide finally about it, and without all the persuasions and antagonism with which it would have been inevitably associated had it been the creed of a particular sect or demonomation. . . . Finally, in their formulation by Wilson, British-Israel ideas remained a largely intellectual theory of prophecy, without any specific implications for religious belief and practice in connection with non-prophetic matters. Much as prophecy engaged the Victorians, it was far from being the totality of religious commitment. It had little concern with devotional subjects, and only the most general and obvious associations with faith and morals: it was in no sense an alternative to the formulated religious positions of the time, but only an added teaching" (Wilson, "British Israelism: Ideological Restraints," pp. 354, 359).

<sup>151</sup>USB, p. 145.

<sup>152</sup>Exodus 24:6-8.

<sup>153</sup>Ex. 31:12-17. See USB, pp. 133-134, 141-142.

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in the Ten Commandments received by Israel at Sinai. But God also reinforced the importance of the Sabbath making Sabbath observance *the* “identifying sign”<sup>154</sup> by which God’s people could be located. Thus, in chapter 11 of *USB*,<sup>155</sup> we find a resounding endorsement of Sabbath observance. . . for both then and now.

The incorporation of this aspect of doctrine is typical of Mr. Armstrong’s integration of a broad selection of doctrinal concerns into a single written work focused on a specific topic.<sup>156</sup> He used *USB* as a vehicle to teach his readership about the importance of obedience to the laws of God, the fourth commandment in particular.<sup>157</sup> Obedience to the Law and observance of the Sabbath became “the context in which Mr. Armstrong believed Anglo-Israelism should be presented.”<sup>158</sup> He placed enormous emphasis on Sabbath-breaking as a significant reason for God's punishment of ancient (and by extension, modern) Israel. He argues the Sabbath remained

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<sup>154</sup>“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Ex. 31:13). See *USB*, pp. 134-135, 143-147. To buttress his argument, Mr. Armstrong suggests that the Jews retained their ethnic identity *because* the majority of them continued to keep the Sabbath through their long and troubled history (pp. 146-147).

<sup>155</sup>pp. 132-151.

<sup>156</sup>See pp. 32-34 for a less developed but equally illustrative example, in this case concerning the matter of “law and grace.” Regarding the focal point of Mr. Armstrong’s ministry, Orr writes “God’s grace became of secondary importance. The important message for today, Mr. Armstrong felt, was obedience” (“How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church,” p. 12, column 1).

<sup>157</sup>One interesting aspect about the evolution of Mr. Armstrong’s theology is that he originally suspected that the Sabbath was never intended “to be for gentiles, but for one race only--Israel” (Orr, “How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church,” p. 9, column 1). Orr suggests that Mr. Armstrong “wondered if modern racial Israel, to once again inherit their Abrahamic blessings, must become Sabbatarian besides becoming Christian. ‘But, unless they accept, also the Sabbath, they are not recognized in the sight of God as of Israel, subject to those special and higher blessings--higher than salvation--an additional reward’” (HWAP, No. 307, 3, 5). As an aside, it is also interesting to note that in the 1920s, Mr. Armstrong believed the architects of the Protestant Reformation--Luther and Calvin--as well as John Wesley, the Anglican clergyman who founded the Methodist denomination, to be divine instruments who carried the message of the Second Angel of Rev.14:8 to the world (pp. 9, column 4; 11, column 4).

<sup>158</sup>Orr, “How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church,” p. 11, column 1--see Mr. Armstrong’s manuscript, *What Is the Third Angel’s Message?*, p. 43. Orr points out that Mr. Armstrong created an interesting and unique “union of Anglo-Israelism with Sabbatarianism.” Chapter 15 of his manuscript is devoted entirely to the Sabbath (p. 11, column 3). See also McNair, “Birthright Blessings Delayed 2,520 Years!,” *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 21, column 2, paragraph 6.

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binding even after the Old Covenant was supplanted by the New. He thus deduces that God will punish modern Israel for breaking the Sabbath even as he did their ancestors. A typical expression of this perspective is his admonition and warning that once the unconditional promise to Abraham was bequeathed, God is no longer “obligated by His promise to *continue* our underserving peoples in world prestige, wealth and greatness.” He predicted that God would even “strip entirely from them [the modern Israelites] this colossal, unprecedented national blessing--returning them to captivity and slavery. . . . *At the very time* their power reaches its zenith, He suddenly” will break it, cutting “off their implements of war and” destroying “their cities.”<sup>159</sup>

Drawing again from Leviticus 26, he applies the “seven times” of verse 21 to “intensity” rather than “duration.” The reference to breaking the “pride of your power” in verse 19<sup>160</sup> could be nothing other than the Great Tribulation forecast by Jeremiah, Daniel, and Jesus Christ.<sup>161</sup>

In no less somber terms he asserts:

Today God warns us, through many prophecies in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Micah, and many others, that unless we of this generation REPENT of our sins, and turn to Him with fasting, and with weeping, and earnest PRAYER, He will destroy our cities, all our fortresses, with the foreign sword; that He will punish us at the hand of a CRUEL ONE; that we shall be invaded, defeated, reduced to SLAVES! GOD HELP US TO HEED THAT WARNING!<sup>162</sup>

In these sober admonitions, Mr. Armstrong’s approach was rather unique. As a rule, British-Israel literature refrained from rebuking its readership. When it includes corrective material, it often does so in cautious and tentative fashion.

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<sup>159</sup>*USB*, pp. 10, 163, 166. Cf. footnote 133 in Part II above discussing Micah 5:8-15.

<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 166-167, 174.

<sup>161</sup>Jer. 30:5-7, Dan. 12:1, Mt. 24:21-22. Mr. Armstrong describes this as a “time of national calamity greater than any before” (*USB*, p. 176).

<sup>162</sup>*USB*, pp. 161, 179, 182, 188. In particular, Mr. Amrstrong drew inspiration from the prophecies of of Hos. 5:15-6:2.



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The movement's teachings were not a doctrine of protest against society, nor dissenting beliefs. . . . The movement was adventist, and so, perhaps more nominally, were many Protestants, but the adventism of the movement remained somewhat muted. Adventism tends to be emphasised in sects which seek to overthrow society, yet British-Israelism did not seek that but rather the fulfillment of promise and the continuance and enhancement of God's favour to the newly identified chosen people.<sup>163</sup>

Somewhat typical of the British-Israel style was the approach of Edward Hine who used his publications to celebrate a people riding high on the stage of the world--a self-congratulatory, indulgent perception of the Empire as the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. An entire section of *Forty-Seven Identifications* is entitled "Israel Cannot Be Conquered in Their Isles." Rather than repentance, Hine's prescription for true happiness was acknowledgement by the British of their Israelitish identity. Hine considered Israel's punishment fulfilled in the 8th century Assyrian captivity; in more recent times, the British "always have been, and still are, under the blessings [of Deuteronomy 28]. . . . The curses have only been applied by the Prophets to the Jews, and not to Israel."<sup>164</sup>

In contrast, Mr. Armstrong's novel and corrective approach is found in even in the earliest written materials which he produced about Israel's modern-day identity. As his interest about belief in the identity of the Lost Tribes grew, Mr. Armstrong approached A. A. Beauchamp, the publisher of J. H. Allen's *Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright*, about producing "a new book on the Anglo-Israel subject." He promised Beauchamp that "the book would be written. . . in an entirely different style."<sup>165</sup> After Beauchamp declined in about January 1929, Mr. Armstrong proceeded nonetheless with his plans for writing. Ultimately, he produced

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<sup>163</sup>Wilson, "British Israelism: Ideological Restraints," pp. 372-373.

<sup>164</sup>*Forty-Seven Identifications*, pp. 24, 39, 59-61, 103-105, 116, 153. In fact, Hine misapplied numerous Millennial prophecies, believing that they were fulfilled in contemporary Britain which was, in effect, God's Kingdom on earth. Orr writes, "To understand why the union [of Anglo-Israelism and endorsement of Sabbath observance], realize that Herbert Armstrong took Anglo-Israelism to its logical conclusion. Previous Anglo-Israelites emphasized God's blessings to Israel. Nobody said anything about the curses" ("How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church," p. 10, column 1).

<sup>165</sup>HWAP, No. 873, 1-3, cited in "How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church."

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the manuscript entitled *What Is the Third Angel's Message?*. The “new twist”<sup>166</sup> which Mr. Armstrong introduced had ties to an Adventist interpretation of Revelation 14. This chapter of the Apocalypse described three angels, each with a different message for humankind. In Adventist circles, the first angel represented the preaching of the Gospel during the Apostolic Age; the second forecast the great Protestant Reformation of the 16th century; the third represented a last and final “eleventh-hour warning” to the world before catastrophe overtook humanity.<sup>167</sup>

The Church of God Seventh Day believed in the endorsement of commandment keeping (including the fourth) as part of the third angel's message.<sup>168</sup> This CGSD paradigm very likely stimulated Mr. Armstrong to add a stern message of warning to his treatment of Israel's modern identity.<sup>169</sup> If he drew from Ezekiel's prophecies to find scriptural evidence of Jeremiah's trek to Ireland, so he found in that same prophet's austere warnings a message with quite modern implications. Orr writes:

Beginning from an Anglo-Israelite worldview, he saw Ezekiel's references to the House of Israel not as evidence of an Israelite presence in Judah, but as proof that Ezekiel was written to the lost tribes. Ezekiel was, he believed, not for the Jews

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<sup>166</sup>Orr, “How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church,” p. 9, column 1.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 9, column 3; 12, column 1.

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9, column 4. “The Adventist movement gave birth to the doctrine of the Third Angel's Message following the Great Disappointment [of William Miller in 1844]. It brought solace to Sabbatarian Adventists attempting to cope with their humiliation. The Third Angel of Revelation was delivering its message, they believed, and that because of this, faithful Adventists had become Sabbath keepers. When the Sabbatarian Adventist movement split into various camps, the doctrine of the Third Angel's Message followed its division.” Mr. Armstrong's understanding of the Third Angel's Message is described on p. 12, column 1.

<sup>169</sup>“While Herbert Armstrong would eventually drop the term Third Angel's Message from his vocabulary, and deemphasize Revelation 14, such changes were cosmetic. The underlying message remained the same. . . . The *Plain Truth* never mentioned the Third Angel's Message by name. By this time, Herbert Armstrong may no longer have accepted Adventist views on this doctrine. Yet the teaching was there. It was just framed in other terms. The emphasis, besides Anglo-Israelism, became the coming kingdom of God. . . . The substance of the message did not change. The Third Angel was present, only transformed. . . . Though the phrase ‘the Third Angel's Message’ had long since dropped from his vocabulary, the basic belief that God had given him a unique commission remained. That he continued to see his mission linked to Anglo-Israelism is evident from reading [his final work] *Mystery of the Ages*” (*Ibid.*, pp. 10, column 3; 12, column 1-3.)

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but for Israel. . . . He reasoned that God intended Ezekiel's book to be a warning to end time Israel. . . . Herbert Armstrong's transformation of Ezekiel into a warning for America appears to be unique in all Anglo-Israelism. It may be the one significant contribution he made to the belief. As such, it became an effective tool in calling people to repentance and to the Sabbath. Hence the connection with the Third Angel's Message. In making the Ezekiel connection, Armstrong made the same error that many prophecy expositors have made. He ignored the plain statements of the prophet himself as to whom he was addressing and when his prophecy would be fulfilled. . . . Having concluded that Ezekiel was written to modern America, much of the remaining text of *What Is the Third Angel's Message?* attempts to show that America should keep the Sabbath. God's ancient judgments on Israel for breaking the covenant became transformed into a condemnation of America for breaking the Ten Commandments.<sup>170</sup>

It is significant that Ezekiel 20 and 22 are excoriating indictments for Sabbath-breaking. As an incipient evangelist in an Israelitish nation where Sunday-keeping was the dominant form of Christianity, it took little imagination for Mr. Armstrong to deduce that God had selected him for a "special calling." He wrote to G. A. Hobbs in February 1929 declaring, "I was made to see clearly that I have been given given a commission to get this warning message out with the loud shout to *the world*."<sup>171</sup> Over the next half-century, Mr. Armstrong came to see himself in the role of a Watchman like the one described in Ezekiel 33.<sup>172</sup> For Mr. Armstrong, it became imperative

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<sup>170</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10, column 1; 11, column 2-3; 12, column 3-4.

<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10, columns 1-2, citing HWAP, No. 850. See also pp. 11, column 1-4; 12, column 3-4. Mr. Armstrong "believed God had revealed only to him Anglo-Israelism's connection to the Third Angel's Message." In a co-worker letter written in early 1944, he declared, "God has called me to the special mission of WARNING THIS NATION. . . . [Writing in *Mystery of the Ages*,] in a clear reference to his many appearances before world leaders, he saw himself fulfilling that role. The idea that God had specially commissioned him to 'shout' the Third Angel's Message to the whole world--[was] an idea traceable back to January 1929."

<sup>172</sup>Orr subtly suggests that Mr. Armstrong may well have conceived the idea of his role as an "end time watchman to modern Israel" through contact with A. A. Beauchamp's magazine *The New Watchman* (1922-?), originally called *The Watchman of Israel* (*Ibid.*, p. 9, column 1). Moreover, as his contributions to the CGSD publication the *Bible Advocate* reflect, even as early as 1928 Mr. Armstrong had come to appreciate the potential of the fledgling communications revolution in putting the Third Angel's Message into effect. In the October 16 edition of the *Bible Advocate*, he asserted "we are blessed with facilities for spreading the message which never were so much as dreamed of in the days of the First and Second Messages" ("Have We Tarried for the Power to Carry the Third Angel's Message?," *Ibid.*, pp. 9, column 4). "Two years before his ordination, Mr. Armstrong had already envisioned a worldwide radio ministry whose primary purpose was not to preach the gospel of salvation (the so-called First Angel's Message) but an Anglo-Israelite message that he called the Third Angel's Message" (p. 10, column 3).

that the American and British people recognize their ties to the ancient Middle East. He wrote in his *What Is the Third Angel's Message?*, "unless we know our identity as Israel, we cannot understand the mighty personal warning which the Almighty has published in every English Bible to every individual Israelite."<sup>173</sup> For him, it became the duty of the Church "to warn the Anglo-Saxon nations about God's wrath. The Church had to call them to repentance and urge them to keep God's Sabbath and Holy Days." In his final observations on Israel's identity in *Mystery of the Ages*, he "continued claiming that unless the Anglo-Saxon peoples repented of their sins, Old Testament prophecies foretold their horrible conquest by a united Europe."<sup>174</sup>

### **A Future Exodus and Final Restoration?**

Is there unfinished business in Bible prophecy? There is good news and bad news. We have already looked at the bad news in the form of prophetic punishment on end time Israel. Mr. Armstrong answered drew from numerous Bible prophecies which portrayed a repentant Israel, turning at last to God and obedient to His laws. He frequently reminded us, that punishment was effected with a positive end--a "glorious purpose"--in mind:

God is going to keep multiplying chastening--correcton--upon our peoples *until* they *do* turn from their evil ways--until they turn *to* the ways that *cause* peace, happiness, prosperity, all the *good things!* . . . The prophecies record also the RESULT of that intensified punishment. The *result* will be a corrected people. The result will be an eye-opening realization of what we have done to ourselves. The supreme punishment will teach us, at last, our lesson! The punishment will *break* our spirit of rebellion.<sup>175</sup>

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

The time is just before the RESURRECTION of the just, at Christ's coming. As Moses delivered the ancient Israelites from Egyptian slavery, so CHRIST is coming to deliver modern Britain and America from the now-impending

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<sup>173</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11, column 2.

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12, columns 3-4.

<sup>175</sup>*USB*, pp. 167-168, 170.

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*Babylonish* slavery (See Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 7:37; Jeremiah 23:5-8).<sup>176</sup>

A part of this deliverance entails the fulfillment of some of the most exciting and encouraging prophecies in all the Bible. These predictions foretell a second and coming exodus of unparalleled magnitude--one which will dwarf the experience of Moses and the Israelites:

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into the land that I gave unto their fathers (Jer. 16:14-15).

or:

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land (Jer. 23:7-8).

Jeremiah continues:

And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive (29:14).

Isaiah writes about the same unprecedented regathering of Israel:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the *second time* [emphasis mine] to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from their thrones all the kings of the nations. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (11:11-12).

Moses forecast this event as well.

And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bond women, and no man shall buy you. . . . And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor

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<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 177.

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eat, nor smell. But if from thence thou shall seek the Lord your God, thou shalt find him, if you seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even in the latter days* [emphasis mine], if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient to his voice (Deut. 4:27-30, 28:68).

The prophet Amos wrote of a time when God promised to:

bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them (9:14).

Zephaniah adds to this chorus of voices:

At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord (3:20).

Mr. Armstrong's focus in *USB* was retrospective, i.e., his "proofs" concentrated heavily on those prophecies of Genesis 48-49 fulfilled around the turn of the nineteenth century. He did not dwell as heavily upon those prophecies about an end time restoration of Israel. Perhaps we *should* in any future publication. Certainly there is much to anticipate based on the prophecies. Mr. Armstrong wrote:

The house of Israel is *yet* to return, at Christ's coming, to their original homeland--yet to plant grapes in Samaria, their original country. . . . At the future exodus, at Christ's coming, they are to return to the Holy Land out of the land of the NORTH! [Hosea 11:8, 10]. . . . This prophecy is for consideration in the "latter Days" (Jer. 30:24, 31:1), and is addressed to 'Israel' (verses 2, 4, 9), to "Ephraim" (verses 6, 9), and "Samaria" (verse 5). Here is added another hing--"the coasts of the earth" (verse 8)--evidencing that they are dominant at sea and indicating they have spread abroad widely by colonization. Referring to the house of ISRAEL, not Judah (Isa. 49:3, 6), God says: "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these *from the NORTH and from the WEST*; and these from the land of Sinim" (Isa. 49:12).<sup>177</sup>

These predictions tell about a bringing of physical, national Israel together to Palestine from all four corners of the earth at the return of Christ.

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<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95. See also Ps. 107:3-7, Isa. 48:20-21, 49:12, 60:4, Jer. 31:7. See also Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, p. 122.

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And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isa. 27:12-13).

The prophecies of Ezekiel point to a dramatic reunion of “lost Israel” with brother Judah.

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions. And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. . . . And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. . . . And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. . . . and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore (Ez. 37:16-17, 22, 24-26).<sup>178</sup>

This regathering of Israel is a physical aspect of the “restitution of all things” about which Peter spoke in the Temple shortly after the founding of the Church on the Day of Pentecost.<sup>179</sup>

The physical and logistical implications of such a regathering of a people scattered literally around the globe are breathtaking. The task seems practically impossible. Our minds boggle at the scope of such an enterprise. Is God big enough to make it happen? Christ answer to His disciples--”with God all things are possible”<sup>180</sup>--inspires faith that these prophecies can and will be fulfilled.

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<sup>178</sup>”For the first time in some three thousand years, for the first time since the days of Solomon, the house of Israel (the Ten Tribes) will be reunited with the house of Judah. They will become one twelve-tribed nation!” See *USB*, p. 184.

<sup>179</sup>Acts 3:19-21. Mr. Armstrong identified the account in Acts where this story is recounted as the “pivotal passage” in all the Bible.

<sup>180</sup>Mt. 19:26. If God can resurrect a human body--one of the most essential features of the Christian claim--He can also regather his national physical people from points far distant.

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If we understand the restoration prophecies as having physical as well as spiritual fulfillment. As such, they add great weight to the case for Israel's post-captivity existence. In fact, the notion of a restoration and reunion of the 12 tribes is as old as the Assyrian captivity itself

The belief in the restoration of the Twelve Tribe Kingdom of Israel survived every storm which subsequently broke over its remnants. . . . Even in the course of the Exile itself the prophets started to proclaim the return of the people and the restoration of the destroyed Twelve Tribe Kingdom. It crystallized as a central conviction in late Jewish eschatology and apocalyptic literature. . . . The author of the Letter of Aristeas presupposes this restoration in his story of the seventy two scholars, six from each of the twelve tribes, who produced the Septuaginta.<sup>181</sup>

The expectation of a reunion of the tribes was alive and well in the days of Jesus and the 1st century Church. "In parables and debates he [Jesus] taught them [the Twelve] its nature and the signs of its coming, and to pray for it daily. The 'Twelve' (eleven) asked him after the resurrection, 'Are you now going to establish the Kingdom for Israel?' (Acts 1:6)"<sup>182</sup> From that time to this, it has been a periodic focus of theological interest among the Christian ecclesiastical hierarchy and the religiously sensitive laity.<sup>183</sup>

It is significant that the 19th century concentration on these very prophecies was a critically important part of the theological climate which helped the Anglo-Israel theory become more popularly accepted. Barbara Tuchman describes how well-meaning men like Lord Shaftesbury, around mid-century actually nurtured the formation of government policy designed to promote "an Anglican Israel [by which he meant the Jews] restored by Protestant England, at one stroke confounding popery, fulfilling prophecy, redeeming mankind."<sup>184</sup> His efforts, like

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<sup>181</sup>A. S. Geysler, "Some Salient New Testament Passages," pp. 305-306. See footnote 96 in Part I.

<sup>182</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>183</sup>Cf. the ebbing and subsiding of pre-millennialist enthusiasm since the 1st century A. D. See Rodney L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of the 'Two Witnesses' in the 16th & 17th Centuries*, pp. 3-58. See for example Robert Alter and Frank Kenmode, eds., *Literary Guide to the Bible* about the millennialism of 12th century A. D. Calabrian abbot, Joachim of Fiore (pp. 529-537) who introduced a "new form of apocalypticism."

<sup>184</sup>*Bible and Sword*, pp. 175-207.



those both before and after, failed to hasten the anticipated return of Jesus Christ and Millennial conditions. Shaftesbury and others<sup>185</sup> wanted to do all they could to do their part. As we reflect on the prophecies about punishment, repentance, and restoration, what exactly is our responsibility? Do we have an obligation to teach the world about Israel's modern identity?

### CONCLUSION

Mr. Armstrong presented this information in a powerful, compelling way which has undoubtedly helped many people to make a commitment to God and Church. In the spirit of the prophets, he persuaded many thousands to turn from their sins, and to seek repentance, baptism, and the Christian life. Arguably, it was the teaching about Israel's modern identity that built the Church in the years of the WCG's greatest growth. Thousands saw it as "the key" that began open the Bible to their understanding.

#### The Church's Mission

As such, the prospect of a UCG publication on this subject raises significant possibilities. In regard to approach and presentation, we must deal with many critical questions which will ultimately define how United perceives both itself and its mission. Are we comfortable maintaining Mr. Armstrong's line of reasoning in an updated booklet? Can we still assert that this teaching is a legitimate use of the Old Testament message? Are the prophecies to Israel dual in nature teaching that God will again intervene as he did in Old Testament times? Are we correct to assume that "Jacob's trouble"<sup>186</sup> is tantamount to God's end time punishment of the Birthright people? Will punishment begin with the people who are the descendants of physical

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<sup>185</sup>The most notorious among that group was, of course, our friend Ricahrd Brothers. Garrett writes that Brothers "became convinced that his special mission was to gather the Jews, including the 'Jews' who, like himself, were 'hidden' among the population of Great Britain, and lead them to Palestine, where he would rule over them until the Second Coming. Brothers spent the last thirty years of his life planning the New Jerusalem and designing its flags, uniforms and palalces. Although Brothers himself was forgotten, the idea that the English were the New Israel grew and flowered in the nineteenth century and has persisted to the present day" (Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, p. 183). See also Orr, "How Ango-Israelism Entered the Church," pp. 6, column 3-4; 7, column 1, on the symbiotic relationship between restorationalism and British-Israel theology. "It is but a short step from . . . restorationaism to classic Anglo-Israelism."

<sup>186</sup>Jer. 30:7. Cf. Dan. 12:1, Mt. 24:41.

Israel? If prophecy holds a warning for Israelites of the 20th and 21st centuries, what is the responsibility of God's Church in the matter? Can we say, as Mr. Armstrong concludes,<sup>187</sup> that there is "divine protection" to those who will heed? Our answer will depend on how UCG applies such passages Mt. 24:14 and the "Watchman Chapter"<sup>188</sup> of the Book of Ezekiel.

The majority of Christian through history have *not* had an understanding of Israel's post-captivity identity. . . nor have they necessarily needed it for salvation. But if it is the job of an end time Church to warn Israel of a coming Tribulation, then the information suddenly takes on an critical significance. A. S. Geysler's exegesis on Matthew 15:24 throws the seriousness of this issue into high relief. According to the Matthean record,

Jesus countered the appeal of a Syrophenician woman with a harsh, "I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." . . . Apart from lending support to the authenticity of Mt. 10:5b and 6, the passage conveys that the gathering-in of the lost sheep of the house of Israel was *Jesus's own task*. When he appointed and commissioned the Twelve to it, he was in fact *delegating* HIS personal task and authority to them.<sup>189</sup>

Was this charge to the apostles the forerunner of an end time work? If it was, are we then dealing with a commission which Jesus Himself *expects* His Church at the end of the age to fulfill?

### The Racist Charge

If Jesus' response to the Samaritan woman sounds racially insensitive, so might we as a

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<sup>187</sup>pp. 188-189.

<sup>188</sup>Chapter 33. Mr. Armstrong never questioned that it was the Church's job to carry out this "Ezekiel-like commission" today. Once he understood, he regarded carrying out this commission as a major part of his life's work, a logical and legitimate extension of the role of the true Church, particularly in the end times. As we have dramatically witnessed, since his death, some have argued that the New Testament nowhere instructs the followers of Jesus to do this. In Shanks' *Ancient Israel*, we read that "the preaching of Ezekiel shows that not all of these communities had been assimilated by pagan cultures; much of this biblical book is concerned with the reunification of the Judean and Israelite branches of the nation after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B. C. Indeed, some passages in Ezekiel read as if they are actually directed at specific Israelite--that is, northern--communities in exile" (pp. 130-131, 154). In contrast, Orr argues that the Book of Ezekiel was written to Israel in anticipation of Jerusalem's fall in 587 B. C. (Orr, "How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church," p. 10, column 1).

<sup>189</sup>"Some Salient New Testament Passages," p.308.

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Church which endorses an idea with demonstrable connections to racist, elitist groups of extremists.<sup>190</sup> Although the WCG's abandonment of the teaching about Israel's modern-day identity is unfortunate, the distancing of the Church from the less attractive elements of British-Israelism has not necessarily been unwise. There is a certain prudence in the deemphasis of our understanding of Israel's modern-day identity as a part of our front line position. Moreover, there is a certain validity to the charge that "some have erroneously thought that *The United States and Prophecy* was the primary message God wanted us to preach to the world."<sup>191</sup>

Certainly, the idea is not the easiest information to make credible or palatable in today's Western environment of political correctness, affirmative action, and sensitivity to minority rights. We face some very real challenges regarding the inclusion of information about Israel's modern identity as part of the Church's efforts to reach the public of the late-20th and early-21st centuries. Any new publication will be carefully scrutinized by our critics for more than stylistic perfection. However, if J. Gordon Melton (*Cults in America*) is correct, the number of adherents apart from the Worldwide Church of God (during those years when the WCG endorsed the teaching), is only about 10,000-20,000.<sup>192</sup> Viewed from that perspective, our numbers in United Church of God alone are as large as all the rest who accept the idea that the Anglo-Saxons are Israelitish. We should not be overly intimidated by any insalubrious fellow-travellers. Whatever the UCG produces, we simply must make it appropriate for a readership of the 21st century. Matters of style and diplomatic presentation must be addressed. . . but these are easily resolved

In fact, the idea of Anglo-Israelism is not inherently racist any more than Christianity is

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<sup>190</sup>"While British-Israelism is untrue, it is not without peril. One of its most persistent dangers is the ease with which it justifies and fosters racial pride and prejudice" (Friedman, *Origins of the British Israelites*, p. 103).

<sup>191</sup>WCG Study Paper, "United States and Britain in Prophecy," p. 2, column 2.

<sup>192</sup>Friedman offers a far more inflated figure, claiming that "150 million people have already been engulfed in this philosophy" (*Origins of the British Israelites*, p. 99). As is often the case in his book, there is no indication about the source of his assertion.

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inherently violent. It depends who is endorsing and practicing it. Neither are its implications, when properly understood incompatible with New Testament teachings. God was not racist in the selection of Abraham to initiate His plan for the salvation of all humankind.<sup>193</sup> That choice did not mean God preferred Abraham's race above all others; merely that God had to begin somewhere and selected Abraham as his instrument to do so. At the national level, Abraham's descendants--the Israelites--received a similar opportunity.<sup>194</sup> Israel's selection was for the purpose of providing all the other nations of the world with a model of Godly behavior<sup>195</sup> so that people of every nation might also receive the benefits which Israel was first to receive.<sup>196</sup>

In the body of British-Israel literature, Mr. Armstrong's work does one of the best jobs of escaping the outright racist inclinations which mar so many Identity publications.<sup>197</sup> We need to remember that Mr. Armstrong, in the mid-20th century, wrote to a far different audience than the readership that we will address at the close of this century. Any re-write of *USB* must bear present-day sensitivities clearly in mind--sensitivities which largely did not exist during the apogee of Mr. Armstrong's 20th century ministry. We can be encouraged that the multi-racial, integrated, worldwide nature of today's United Church of God, *an International Association*, bears testimony to our lack of racial bias and a correct understanding of the New Covenant.

But Is It the Gospel?

Even if we successfully circumvent the problem of racism, we are bound to encounter

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<sup>193</sup>Gen. 12:3, Gal. 3:8, 14.

<sup>194</sup>The earth "and the fulness thereof" are God's. It is His prerogative to give that earth to whomsoever He pleases (Ps. 50:12). Deut. 32:8-9 indicates that God intended from the beginning of human history that various peoples should inhabit specific territories of the earth. Moreover, "he set the bounds of the people according to [emphasis mine] the number of the children of Israel" (see also Acts 17:26).

<sup>195</sup>Deut. 4:6-8. See also *USB*, p. 184.

<sup>196</sup>See Isa. 20:23-24, Zech. 8:23.

<sup>197</sup>Nevertheless, "some came to believe our message was race-based, not grace-based. . . . Unfortunately, some found the Anglo-Israel belief in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* as excuse enough not to repent of racism" (WCG Study Paper, "United States and Britain in Prophecy," p. 2, column 3).

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other criticisms. The understanding about Israel's modern identity has *always* had its share of opponents, and so will we if we publish our position on the subject. People will dismiss the teaching as ridiculous, and utterly unsupported by archaeological evidence. Our opponents will attack the idea as foolish, unintellectual, and unprovable. Most importantly, the idea will be attacked as outside the scope of the Gospel message. The idea is generally seen as a threat by mainstream churchmen who believe it is in conflict with their understanding of the New Covenant. These individuals argue that it diminishes the role of Jesus Christ. One critic writes, "we must see the terrible danger in Anglo-Israelism, not only in its substitution of a counterfeit Messiah. . . . Anglo-Israelism is 'another gospel' (II Cor. 11:4). . . . Anglo-Israelites go to this dung-heap, pick up its morsels and make it their only gospel." Friedman asserts:

British-Israelism fosters fable, not fact. British-Israelism diverts the thoughts and activities of Christians from meditation upon the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of Christ. It is true that some addicted to the delusion do preach the Gospel, but it is emphatically true that generally considerably more energy and zeal and money are devoted to the untruth that "Britain is Israel" rather than to the truth that "Jesus is Christ."<sup>198</sup>

These criticisms notwithstanding, the Church of God fully understands, appreciates, and values the spiritual dimension of the Abrahamic promise. It preaches and teaches that regardless of race,<sup>199</sup> salvation is open to all who believe on Jesus Christ and bring themselves under His beneficent rule in their lives. An awareness of the physical promises tied to the Abrahamic Covenant is useful to our understanding of prophecy, but is and always has been subordinate to the spiritual aspects of the promise. If Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of the Gospel message, we must also remember that Christ came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God<sup>200</sup>--*not* solely a message about His personal role in the opening phase of God's master plan. The Gospel

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<sup>198</sup>*Origins of the British Israelites*, pp. 106, 110-111.

<sup>199</sup>Acts 10:34-38, Rom. 10:17, Gal. 3:26-29.

<sup>200</sup>Mk. 1:15. Cf. Albert Schweitzer's *In Search of the Historical Jesus*, which emphasizes the centrality of the "Gospel of the Kingdom" in Jesus' message.

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message has several different facets and aspects. Writing before his late-1994 rejection of the Sabbath, the holy days, tithing, and the dietary laws, the late-Pastor General of the WCG, Joseph W. Tkach, Sr., acknowledged that the Gospel had three specific dimensions:

Indeed, the gospel--the *good news*--does entail the great future hope for all God's people--the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of his rule over all nations. Yet, there are also equally important past and present aspects of the gospel. As God's people, we need to understand and focus on *all* the gospel, not just any one part of it. (This is one of the many lessons to be gained by keeping the three annual festival seasons.) . . . The first aspect of the gospel is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. . . . As Herbert W. Armstrong frequently pointed out, many churches omit the future aspect of the gospel. They bog down in various unbalanced forms of the gospel message, centering mainly around Jesus' rule as crucified Lord who forgives the sins of humanity, but failing to add the complete picture. . . . The third aspect of the gospel has to do with the future--the glorious second coming of Christ, when the resurrection of the dead will occur and the millennial reign of Christ with the saints will begin. . . . It is the great and marvelous time when God will intervene in human history in an unprecedented way to begin the final process of ending all evil, tears and death. This aspect of the gospel is one that most churches today have failed to emphasize. It is the culminating aspect of the gospel that we have the blessing of celebrating each year during the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup>"Personal From Joseph W. Tkach," *The Worldwide News of the Church of God*, November 25, 1991, pp. 1, 3, 6. Regrettably, the WCT shift away from an emphasis on the future dimension of the Gospel has led some to the misguided idea that the Kingdom in its fulness exists on earth today. That perception inspired the Church's administration to encourage its membership to become more active in the world's affairs and problems. While this produced some good fruit, in many cases, members became involved in futile programs or personal quests to rid the world of evils which are systemic and so deeply rooted in society's structure and fabric that nothing less than the establishment of Christ's rule on earth will effect the necessary changes. Ours were not the first such well-intentioned efforts. The historical record is filled with them. On a larger scale, 17th century Puritans witnessed a similar and far more concerted attempt to change humankind, in this case, through legislated morality. Oliver Cromwell and his associates sought to "inaugurate a new millennium. . . . Cromwell's failure was the tragedy of all men of good will who recognize evil but find it difficult to describe the right." As a "soldier-saint" he took on the "responsibility of forging a New Jerusalem" but "was eventually destroyed by the means forced on him to attain his ends. The kingdom of God belongs to heaven, the city of man to earth, and not even a Cromwell could unite the two" (Lacy Baldwin Smith, *This Realm of England*, pp. 266, 275-277).

Renegade Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung put his finger on just the problem in his reflections about the near universal failures of revolutionary movements through human history. He writes, "even if revolution succeeds, there is often no more than a change of rulers, while the problems and the oppression remain unchanged. . . . Since Jesus' time, it has become difficult to find God in the event of such a liberation, which is simultaneously an event of violence. . . . This is the plan of all who want to make great structural changes, the educators and politicians, technocrats and revolutionaries. . . . They have had only a partial success in changing man inwardly, in his innermost core, in changing his 'heart,' with the aid of environment technology or psychoanalysis or even political revolution. . . . The message of Jesus Christ is aimed precisely at this change, at this new man. . . . With all the many reforms are we not merely painting over the surface and not getting at the cause of evil. We seem to be

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If the future dimension of the Gospel message deals with events leading to the end of this age and the return of Jesus Christ to establish His millennial rule over the earth, then the message about Israel's impending punishment, repentance, and restoration *is* a part of that Gospel. Little wonder that Mr. Armstrong

couldn't understand why Dugger treated Anglo-Israelism so casually. In Mr. Armstrong's eyes, this doctrine directly affected the preaching of the gospel. It gave it power, at a time in world history that the gospel needed more power. Jesus was about to return! . . . The important message for today, Mr. Armstrong felt, was obedience.<sup>202</sup>

The message of the coming Kingdom of God is no more palatable today than it was to many in Jesus' 1st century A. D. audiences. It threatens to overturn principalities and powers, to upset the political, social, and economic systems in which we all to one degree or another have a stake.

Parting Thoughts

In spite of the opposition which will inevitably arise, the Church must not abandon its position, even if it is controversial and unfashionable; even if delivering that message requires a repackaging of the information to make it suitable for an audience of the 21st century. The true Church of God, the "holy nation and kingdom of priests" of the New Covenant has inherited the spiritual responsibilities of ancient Israel. One of those abilities was the need to sound, when necessary a prophetic warning. God chose prophets from Israel to make announcements that became a permanent part of the Hebrew Scriptures. Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 remind us that God does not change. Amos implies He does not intervene in human affairs without first giving fair warning through "his servants the prophets."<sup>203</sup> Will the warning message be

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engaged less in necessary radical reform than in bustling, flustered *reformism* which in various spheres of life (university, industry, Church, education, state legislation) has produced a great deal of change and little improvement. At any rate there has been no change in man himself, no different basic attitude, no new humanity. . . . Liberal reformers and disappointed revolutionaries meet one another at the grave of their expectations" (*On Being A Christian*, pp. 55-56, 554, 569-570).

<sup>202</sup>Orr, "How Anglo-Israelism Entered the Church," pp. 5, column 4; 12, column 1.

<sup>203</sup>3:7.

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accepted? Probably not--no more so than was a similar 8th century B. C. message was. "Neither Hosea's ministry nor Amos's warnings seem to have made a lasting impression on the nation; the people did not change their lifestyle."<sup>204</sup> We are overly optimistic if we think that we are more persuasive than Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, or later still Jeremiah.<sup>205</sup>

Is it then not logical that God would use his Church--spiritual Israel--as a prophetic voice in the New Testament dispensation at such times when a prophetic warning should be delivered?

That Church is built on the foundation of the apostles *and the prophets*.<sup>206</sup> The New Testament Church described in the Book of Acts had prophets in a limited sense.<sup>207</sup> There are New Testament prophecies.<sup>208</sup> Could it not then be the job of the "holy nation"--the Church of God--to witness as did the prophets of ancient Israel and Judah? Mr. Armstrong believed that the Church was called to act in the power and spirit of Elijah. If his sense of urgency<sup>209</sup> and his belief in the soon-coming return of Christ were premature, such was the case in the days of Zerubbabel. Stirred by the prophets of his day, Haggai and Zechariah, his acute sense of imminent 6th century B. C. Messianic Expectation revived the work of God in that day and led to a great accomplishment: the completion of the Temple of God.<sup>210</sup> In similar fashion, Mr. Armstrong's enthusiasm fueled the construction of the spiritual Temple of the Church.<sup>211</sup> In both cases, the achievements of these two men were largely due to the sense of urgency imparted by the

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<sup>204</sup>Shanks, *Ancient Israel*, p. 127.

<sup>205</sup>Jer. 38:6; Cf. Ex. 4:21, 7:3, 9:12, 35.

<sup>206</sup>Eph. 2:10-21.

<sup>207</sup>e. g., Acts 21:10-11.

<sup>208</sup>e.g., II Tim. 1:6.

<sup>209</sup>*USB*, pp. 3-4, 11, 167, plus almost every co-worker and member letter sent by Mr. Armstrong during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

<sup>210</sup>Ezra 4:24, 5:1-2, 14-15.

<sup>211</sup>II Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:19-21.



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*erroneous conviction* that their own respective generations would be the one to see first-hand the coming of Messiah.

If the teachings about *USB* are not *the* central message of the Gosepl--and they decidedly are not--they nevertheless have historically been a facet of that Gospel which attracted an audience by revealing a new and often unknown dimension of relevance to the Bible itself--an aspect of God's Word which seems to apply to people's lives in the here and now. As the leadership of United Church of God discusses and reflects on future directions, perhaps these considerations are good to bear in mind.

The Bible has a message for the physical heirs of Abraham's Birthright as the end of the age approaches. The degree to which the Church gives priority to that message is for others to decide. Eventually, however, it seems that modern Israel must be made aware of its heritage and its destiny. As Malachi observes:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (4:5 - 6).<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup>Cf. Mt. 24:22. In this connection, Harold Stough observed that this passage "must really mean that the hearts of the children are to be turned to the fathers, which can only refer to our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the patriarchs. It must be some mission that reconciles the present generation with its inheritance with Israel of old and this is a tremendous thing because, in fact, it is the identity message: identifying ourselves with our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "Jubilee of Witness," October 1969.

## Appendices

If it is not cost prohibitive, I suggest we include the following materials in any new UCG booklet on Israel's modern identity:

1. general index
2. scripture index
3. a topically arranged bibliography of best works preceded by a carefully worded disclaimer to prevent linking the Church to any unacceptable ideas included in these volumes
4. 2520 year chart showing the parallel developments between the the periods 860-700 B. C. and A. D. 1660-1820. This could be done in a graphically appealing fashion, e.g. creatively presented as a border (top & bottom or sides of the pages) as a part of the chapter which treats the 2,520 year withholding of the Birthright blessings
5. holy day connection chart listing those events in ancient and modern Israelite history which coincided with God's holy days. This chart should include: date, holy day, event, source documenting date & information
6. illustrations from the UCG slide collection--I live close enough to Shaun Venish (3 hours driving time) to work with him one-on-one on this aspect of booklet production
7. possible text boxes:

all of the possibilities cited below are subjective but, if worded cautiously and with discretion might well be attention-getting additions to supplement the basic text.

British Royal Arms--lion & unicorn and the biblical symbolism relating those creatures to Judah and Israel (with an honorable mention to the camp of Israel and the animals symbolic of Judah [lion], Epharaim [ox], Reuben [man], and Dan [eagle]; or the story of the lion in Britain's royal heraldry; or, the symbol of "John Bull" as representative of England--the potential illustrations for this are almost limitless)

The Coronation Stone--its trek from Jerusalem to Egypt to Spain to Ireland to Scotland to England

Breastplate of the High Priest -- tied to the classic Henry VIII Tudor portrait with the vestment bearing 12 stones and making use of the Milner lineage of David which connects the House of Tudor to the tribe of Levi

The Twelve Pointed St. Edward's Crown

The Cullinan Diamond -- 3,601 carats and the largest diamond ever found as one illustration of the resources falling to Israel *a la* Gen. 49:25 ("the blessings of the deep that lieth under") -- also included

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here could be the fascinating story of the Koh-i-Noor diamond

The British Museum & treasures from Egypt and Assyria -- *why* did this archaeological treasure trove (from the Rosetta Stone to some of the most precious of Egyptian monuments & Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk to the bas reliefs of the siege of Lachish) fall into British hands?

The British Union Flag (a.k.a., the "Union Jack") and the crossed arms of Jacob (Gen. 48:14)

Cleopatra's Needle in London & the Egyptian Obelisk in New York City's Central Park -- *why* did these precious relics wind up in Britain and America

American heraldry and Egyptian symbolism -- there are numerous (many little known) connections here including but not limited to the Pyramid of Gizeh on the backside of the \$1 bill (e.g., Franklin's design of the "Great Seal of the U. S. A."; Thomas Jefferson's personal seal & his proposal regarding the obverse side of the Great Seal) -- see also McNair, *America and Britain in Prophecy*, p. 50

the America and the #13--U. S. flags, map of 13 colonies, the Great Seal of U. S. A., the American flag (particularly the earliest version), etc.

George Washington's inauguration -- his hand placed on the Bible opened to Gen. 49 (numerous illustrations available)

Stars in American heraldry tied to Gen. 37:9-10

The story of Francis Scott Key and the composition of what became the lyrics to the American national anthem

The Harp of David and Irish heraldry

Scottish Declaration of Independence which indicates that the Scots passed "from the greater Scythia through the Mediterranean Sea and Pillars of Hercules," and sojourned "in Spain. . . coming thence one thousand two hundred years after the outgoing of the people of Israel" -- dated April 6, 1320

Red Hand of Ulster and its traditions tied to the scarlet thread tied around the hand of Zarah

Dan and the "serpent's trail" (with an honorable mention to the rattlesnake)

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“Don’t Tread On Me” American flag)

Behisthun Rock Inscription with its reference to the *Sacae* -- cf. McNair’s  
“The Master Key Linking Two Great Peoples” in *America and  
Britain in Prophecy* (pp. 35-36) and Mitchell, *Bible in the British  
Museum* (pp. 84-85)

Shalmaneser’s Black Obelisk -- McNair, *America and Britain in  
Prophecy*,  
p.14