

Q&A

Background of New Booklet

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Q. I received a copy of a review of **The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy** (<http://www.ucg.org/booklets/usbbp/>). I understood that this was to be a new work by UCG, but the reviewer said "no new information is being offered." The reviewer also questioned the timing of the Assyrian captivity and the appearance of the Scythians, and whether Celts and Scythians were the same people.

A. The United Church of God publication **The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy** (<http://www.ucg.org/booklets/usbbp/>) is indeed an entirely new work. However, it is important to understand that most of the historical information and sources that are available remain the same, so by definition they are not "new." Most of these classical works and studies are a century or more old.

That is not to say that new information is not coming to light. Recent archaeological discoveries, within the past two decades, confirm that the Scythians were not Mongol peoples as was previously theorized by scholars. Instead, the Scythian body structure has been found to be the same type as that of Europeans.

Additionally, Yair Davidy, whom we listed as an additional resource in the booklet, has published several books on the subject and regularly publishes other material. Mr. Davidy, who is half Jewish and lives in Jerusalem, has no Church of God background, but has independently come to the conclusion that the English-descended nations are the descendants of the lost 10 tribes based on his own studies.

He continues to do research and produce publications on the subject using material we in the Church of God have never used. Apparently, there is a growing belief among conservative religious leaders in Israel that the United States and Britain are descended from the lost 10 tribes. In our booklet we purposely avoided including a lot of historical material on the migrations because there are others who have researched the subject extensively. We originally included a great deal of such material, but it made the booklet far too long and tedious for the average reader, and so we edited it out. For those who want more of such material, we recommend they look at these other works cited in our booklet.

With that being said, the UCG booklet was created entirely new. The original manuscript was written several years ago by Rick Sherrod based on his research on the subject over the years. Dr. Sherrod has a Ph.D. in history and was on the faculty of Ambassador University in Big Sandy, Texas. In the early '90s he and another minister traveled extensively in Europe researching the subject. Their conclusion was that the traditional Church teaching on the subject was correct. However, according to Dr. Sherrod, that was not the conclusion the administrators wanted to hear, so it was shelved and Herbert W. Armstrong's booklet on the subject was withdrawn from circulation.

In addition to Dr. Sherrod, another writer with considerable experience with this subject, Jeff Patton, also contributed heavily.

Other UCG elders who have researched the subject heavily over the years, including Roger Foster, Wilbur Berg, Melvin Rhodes, Randy Stiver and David Treybig, between them read all the current research we could find on the subject and contributed their thoughts. Again, their conclusions were that our traditional teaching is correct and, in fact, more easily defended now based on more current research.

While we did certainly read the earlier Church of God publications on this subject as part of our overall research, we did not use those publications as the sole basis for this booklet. They were a small portion of the overall research we did on this subject.

As for the review's comments about the Assyrians, Scythians and Israelites, we need to be aware of the fact that the deportations of the Israelites took place over quite a few years under the administrations of at least four Assyrian kings-Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II and Sennacherib. Not all of these transitions were pretty or orderly. Some were accompanied by coups, assassinations and military defeats (like that of Sennacherib, which is recorded in the Bible).

We are also talking about a huge area (see the maps in the booklets) over which the Israelites and many other peoples were scattered. In this setting of considerable upheaval and transitions, I think it's perfectly logical that the Assyrians could have lost track of who was who. The Bible itself clearly records that Israelites in different deportations were taken to entirely different parts of the Assyrian Empire (as depicted in our maps).

Keep in mind, too, that the Israelites were only one of many peoples deported and moved around by the Assyrians. Virtually every other people in the region, including Syrians, Edomites, Elamites, Arabs, etc.-virtually all peoples from the Caspian Sea to Egypt-experienced the same thing. Also the Israelites themselves weren't one homogenous group. They were, after all, 10 separate tribes with their own cultural differences.

I think we also have misconceptions about the status of peoples after they were deported. They weren't in slavery as we typically think of it.

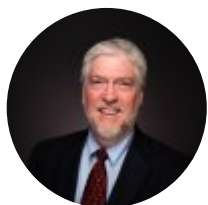
That wasn't the way the Assyrians did things. Their method was to generally leave the people alone, but demand tribute from them. So long as the tribute money flowed, the Assyrians left people alone. When they rebelled, however, the Assyrian military stepped in. Under that system, and particularly as the Assyrian Empire began losing its grip, it's easy to see why the Israelites (and other deported peoples) migrated out of the area to escape Assyrian domination. They couldn't return home, since the Assyrians had repopulated their land with other peoples from other parts of their empire.

Some critics attack a connection between the Scythians and Celts. Given the fact that these people were spread over thousands of miles, one can be technically correct in pitting one isolated group against another. After all, other peoples along with the Israelites were also taken into captivity and spread throughout these regions. Scholars, however, say there are links and similarities between many of these peoples.

The purpose of the UCG book was not to create an exhaustive "proof" of the current identity of the descendants of the 10 tribes. We limited ourselves to a 48-page magazine-format publication and tried to cover the most important points as best we could within that space. The most

crucial parts of the subject are, in our opinion, the promises God gave to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and how those promises were fulfilled. This is the focus of the booklet.

While some have tried to discredit the biblical record, we have yet to see any critic of our teachings on the identity of the lost tribes offer a credible alternative to explain how those promises were fulfilled in any other way, or to explain how God didn't really mean what He said.



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