

# The Real Meaning of 'Israel'

Most people are confused about Israel. They believe that when the Bible mentions Israel, it means the Jews, but the Jews did not exist when God chose Abram/Abraham and gave him the promises of many blessings because of his obedience, including a special relationship with Him. Genesis 26:5, "...because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

Abraham became the father of Isaac, who was the father of Jacob, whose name God was to change to Israel, Genesis 32:28, "Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Jacob had 12 sons and each son became the father of a tribe. One of those sons was called Judah and *his* descendants became known as the Jews.

Of the other 11 tribes, one was called Joseph, he of the coat of many colours, and Jacob's favourite. Joseph had 2 sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim eventually became the leading tribe in Israel, but God chose a King from Judah – The shepherd boy who slew Goliath, David, who was to become "a man after God's own heart".

These 2 tribes, Ephraim and Judah, became even more significant in the 7<sup>th</sup> century before Christ, because after King David's death, in the reign of his grandson, the nation of Israel split apart over taxes. The ten Northern tribes led by Ephraim rebelled against their King, leaving Judah and some of Benjamin and Levi to the South around Jerusalem. When the term 'Jews' is used for the first time the 2 nations were at war! (2 Kings 16:5-6) but the 10 tribes retained the name 'Israel'.....

Both nations fell into sin and were eventually punished by God with invasion and captivity; Israel first, carried away by the Assyrians, and the Jews later, carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. When Assyria was defeated by Babylon the Israelites were freed from Assyria to migrate and fulfil 2 Samuel 7:10, "And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning." NIV. In the Apocrypha, 2 Esdras 13:41, it says, "But they formed this plan for themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the nations and go to a more distant region, where mankind had never lived, that there at least they might keep their statutes which they had not kept in their own land'.

In the Scottish 'Declaration Of Independence', 1320, the Scots affirm that their ancient nation [part of Israel] passed through Scythia, and the Mediterranean Sea to Spain 1200 years after the Exodus, to acquire their appointed land in the West which they "now hold in their kingdom, where 113 kings [since David] have reigned". As we will see in a coming article, Israel settled in "the islands of the sea" to the West, which is of course where Scotland and the British Isles are to be found to this day.

Judah, however, eventually returned to their own land on the instructions of Cyrus, King of Persia after he had conquered Babylon, Ezra 1:2, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem.'

While you can prove all the above by finding the historical, archeological and linguistic evidence in books by many authors such as Steven M Collins, Raymond Capt and Yair Davidy, we can also use the evidence of fulfilled prophecy which we find in the Bible, as it is so specific that it becomes clear exactly *where* Israel is to be found today. In doing this we will also see that God never fails to fulfil that which He has promised, and that He is still doing so today.

It all started with the man called Abraham, or Abram as he was originally called, Genesis 12:1-3, 'Then the LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, your kindred, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you; and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

The promises were twofold. First, there were material promises of race. His descendants were to be special and become an outstanding nation, richly blessed. Also through Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed spiritually, and it would not be wise to be an enemy of Israel. Somewhere then, if God's prophecy be true, we will find a great nation which has also provided other nations of the earth with spiritual riches.

We should understand that although his descendants would have a special role to play for God, He looks at each one of us individually, and being of Abraham is of no advantage individually over the other races. God is no respecter of persons and rewards us according to our choices and character. Revelation 22:12, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have **right to the tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' Actually the Greek says 'Blessed are they who wash their robes', ie. repent of their sins, but the meaning is the same.

So far we have learned that, according to God's promises, somewhere there must exist nations that God has blessed above all others and that have enabled others to receive spiritual blessings. One part of them would have a special connection with the 'holy land', but, in time, all Abraham's seed would possess it, 'Genesis 12:7, 'Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.'

All of this because Abraham was obedient, prepared to leave 'civilisation' behind with its idolatry, and trust in God to provide his new home in Canaan, which he had never seen.

Next, we find that the promises are expanded and made part of a covenant with God. Genesis 17:1-8, 13,1. 'When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be **the father of a multitude of nations**. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and **kings shall come from you**. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an **everlasting covenant**, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

Abraham was to walk in God's ways, and this he largely did, though not perfectly. He lied to Abimelech of Gerar, just as he had previously lied to Pharaoh king of Egypt, over his beautiful wife Sarah. That God was merciful and overlooked Abraham's faults is an encouragement to the rest of us who, try as we might, can be trapped by our own weaknesses. No man or woman is without sin. 2 Chronicles 6:36, 'If they do wrong against you, (for no man is without sin,).....' God knows our

human frailty and, instead of condemning us, mercifully looks upon our hearts, and if we repent, forgives us.

Genesis 22:17-18, “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” Here God adds that Abraham’s descendants would be without number and would be powerful at sea. They would control the choke points around the world’s oceans, such as the Suez Canal, Gibraltar, Panama etc., which would prevent their enemies moving or trading freely. Their influence and example would be such that all nations would gain from their standards, freedoms and rights; even their enemies would benefit.

One of their many nations would be the Jews’ land called Israel in the Middle East, Genesis 26:2-5, ‘The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt. Settle in the land where I tell you. Stay in this land as a foreigner, and I will be with you and bless you. For **I will give all these lands to you and your offspring**, and I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations of the earth will be blessed, because Abraham listened to My voice and **kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**” Interesting to see that God’s Commandments were in existence long before Sinai, and that today the nation of Israel is the only free, stable democracy in a sea of Islam, war, chaos and suffering.

Genesis 27:28-29, “May God give to you the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth—  
an abundance of grain and new wine.  
May peoples serve you  
and nations bow down to you.  
May you be the master of your brothers,  
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.  
May those who curse you be cursed,  
and those who bless you be blessed.”

In this chapter Abraham’s son Isaac passes on the promises to his son Jacob. We learn that their nations would be rich in natural resources and never lacking in food. Jacob/Israel would be more powerful than his brother Esau or Abraham’s other sons by later wives, who would learn not to be their enemies.

Genesis 28:14, ‘Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ This verse tells us that the nations descended from Israel will not only possess a homeland in the Middle East, but colonise lands around the globe. The very name of ‘Britain’ and the ‘British’ is significant, devolving from the Hebrew words for ‘Covenant land’, and ‘Covenant man’. Even to this day nations around the world would receive aid from the generous charity of his offspring.

God had changed Jacob’s name to Israel after He had wrestled with him for hours, Genesis 32:28, Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Later, God made His promises more specific. Genesis 35:10-11, ‘God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. **A nation and a company of nations** shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.

On his deathbed, Jacob, or Israel, passed on God's promises to his son Joseph's 2 sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. First, he adopted them as equal to his own sons, Genesis 48:5, 'And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, **are mine**; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.' Next, He differentiates between them, verses 17-19, 'When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and **he also shall be great**. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become **a multitude of nations**.'"'

Manasseh would become the single great nation, but Ephraim's children would colonise lands around the world. Genesis 49 provides God's predictions for all the Israelite tribes. Verses 22-26 explain that Joseph, ie. Ephraim and Manasseh, but especially Ephraim as we see from verse 24 which mentions the stone [of Scone] upon which its kings are always crowned, will become a colonising nation, though **both nations** would be richly blessed with natural resources. Genesis 49: 22-26, "Joseph is a fruitful bough,

a fruitful bough by a spring;

**his branches run over the wall.**

The archers bitterly attacked him,  
shot at him, and harassed him severely,

**24** yet his bow remained unmoved;

his arms were made agile

by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob

(from there is the Shepherd, **the Stone of Israel**),

by the God of your father who will help you,

by the Almighty who will bless you

with **blessings** of heaven above,

**blessings** of the deep that crouches beneath,

**blessings** of the breasts and of the womb.

The blessings of your father

are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents,

up to the bounties of the everlasting hills.

May they be on the head of Joseph,

and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.'"'

If what we have read so far is not enough to show where Israel is to be found today, let us see the clincher! Psalm 89:28-37, concerning Israel's King David:

'My steadfast love I will keep for him forever,

and my covenant will stand firm for him.

I will establish his offspring forever

**and his throne as the days of the heavens.**

If his children forsake my law

and do not walk according to my rules,

if they violate my statutes

and do not keep my commandments,

then I will punish their transgression with the rod

and their iniquity with stripes,

but I will not remove from him my steadfast love

or be false to my faithfulness.

I will not violate my covenant  
or alter the word that went forth from my lips.  
Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;  
I will not lie to David.

**His offspring shall endure forever,  
his throne as long as the sun before me.**

**Like the moon it shall be established forever,'a faithful witness in the skies."**

This of course, is one of the many promises made to King David of Israel, who suffered many setbacks but his throne was always to continue, and today it is found in Great Britain, the 'Covenant Land'. No other throne fits these prophecies. Manasseh of course, separated from Ephraim to found the USA.

In my office I have a chart listing every king from David through to Elizabeth the second of Britain, which fulfils the 3 over-turnings mentioned in Ezekiel 21:27. That throne is still to be seen in Westminster Abbey, London, though the Stone of Scone, which fits into it, has been taken to Scotland, from where it came. It will be returned for the coronation of the next monarch, a descendant of King David.

If we put all these scriptures together, I think you will agree that we hardly need all the secular, historical evidence which I mentioned earlier. Israel includes the US, Britain, and its Dominions and ex-colonies, Canada, Australia and New Zealand etc., not forgetting the tribe of Judah, a portion of whom live in the nation of Israel in the Middle East. God fulfilled all His promises, but Israel once again turned away from His Laws and failed to provide the example God expected, so God has been gradually taking away those blessings, and Israel is due for severe punishment.

But now that we understand that the Jews are only a part of just *one* of the 12 tribes, God's many prophecies begin to click into place and we can more easily understand God's word!

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