

# WHY DID GOD CHOOSE ISRAEL?

Today's major topic is why did God choose Israel? Who does the nation of Israel descend from?

And what was Israel's original name? Who were his famous father and grandfather?

So we have the three great patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or Israel.

Before we look further at their family tree and the promises God made to them let's look at a bit of background of mankind's history before God started to call the patriarchs.

God offers Adam and Eve the choice to live by His way or choose the way of the knowledge of good and evil. They chose poorly and God then banished them from the Garden of Eden.

Mr Armstrong in his book "Mystery of the Ages" wrote:

"God said, in effect: 'You have made the decision for yourself and the world that shall spring from you.... you have chosen the 'GETTING,' 'TAKING' way of Satan. Therefore I sentence you and the world you shall beget to 6,000 years of being cut off from access to me and my Spirit -- except for the exceedingly FEW I shall specially call. And that FEW shall be called for special service preparatory for the kingdom of God.

They had many children, the first two being Cain and Abel. In Matthew 23:35 Abel is called "righteous Abel". In the parallel account in Luke 11 he appears to be grouped amongst the prophets and he is listed in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11. Abel appears to be the first of these very few that God called and gave His spirit to. He was, of course, killed by Cain in a fit of anger and jealousy. Adam and Eve's next son was Seth.

In Genesis 4:26 we read: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD." Was this some sort of religious revival? Were there more of these few that God began to give His spirit to? It's hard to tell without more information. There are only two other men before the Flood that the Bible says walked with God? Can anyone tell me who they were? Enoch and Noah.

After more than 1600 years mankind had degraded itself spiritually that God then brought the Flood on the whole world but spared Noah and his family who survived by building a giant ark to help repopulate the world. As part of helping to repopulate the world there seems to be an indication that God injected extra genetic material into Noah and his wife to preserve the races. One indication of this is that the meaning of their son Ham is burnt or black and we do know the black nations descended from Ham's line. In Genesis 9 when Noah gets drunk something the Bible is unclear about is done by either Ham or his son Canaan that greatly upsets Noah. The next son in their line turns out to be a very bad apple indeed leading much of the early post Flood world away from God into idolatry. Who was he? His name was Nimrod who defiantly built the tower of Babel.

Extra-biblical sources add further to what the Bible says indicating that there were rebelling against God's earlier instructions to spread out to the various lands of inheritance God decreed for the different ethnic families of man noted in Deuteronomy 32:8. The Flood occurred around 2300 BC. In a few hundred years most of the early post-Flood world was living contrary to God and His way of life.

There are indications in extra-biblical sources that Noah's son, Shem, was faithful to God though this is not confirmed in the Bible. While we believe that Melchizedek was the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, the Jews believe that Shem was Melchizedek. The Bible indicates that Noah finally died at

950 years old only 2 years before Abraham was born. His son Shem lived for 600 years and died 10 years before Jacob was born so, think about it, Abraham could have known this ancestor of his, Shem, who lived for almost a century before the Flood. Shem died 75 years after Abraham's big move when Abraham was 150 years old. It would be interesting to know what Shem was doing during that time in his latter years.

God then set in motion a major aspect of His plan to offer salvation to mankind. Selecting Abraham was a crucial step in God's long-term plan to turn all nations back to Him. The remainder of the Bible is woven around God's plan to reconcile all humanity to Himself. Abraham's descendants would grow into a group of influential nations chosen for a specific purpose tied in with God's greater goal of reconcile all humanity and reproducing Himself through mankind.

"Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Genesis 12:1-3).

God called Abraham out of Ur to go to the land occupied by many of Canaan's descendants. Most Bible Atlases place this Ur in the far south of Mesopotamia at the famous southern Ur site excavated by Roger Woolley. There is a much better candidate for Abraham's Ur not too far north of Harran where they passed through on the way. Today it is called Sanilurfa though it was called Urfa for much of its time. One piece of scriptural support is in Joshua 24:2 when it speaks of Abraham's family who served other gods who may have been a pantheon known as the Khaldis on the other side of the flood being a reference to the great Euphrates river. The southern Ur is on the Israelite side of that river while Sanilurfa is on the opposite side so it is the better candidate as best as I can tell for Abraham's Ur. Not only that, we know that this area near Sanilurfa anciently called Padam-Aram was where the brides of Isaac and Jacob came from.

God promised to make of Abraham a great nation, a promise that was later expanded to many nations in Genesis 17. His original name Abram means father of height indicating he was probably a tall man. God then changes his name to Abraham meaning father of nations before he even becomes a father. Sarai's name was also changed to Sarah. She was upgraded from a name meaning princess to one meaning queen (as per the rock band).

Abraham was 75 when he left for the land of Canaan. God had promised them a son but God did not appear again for many years and so they took matters into their own hands. As per an ancient custom when wives were barren, Sarah asked Abraham to beget a son for them with Sarah's servant girl, Hagar. She became pregnant and bore him a son named Ishmael. Ishmael became the father of the people who we call the Arabs who God promised would become a great nation in Genesis 17:20. This was fulfilled in the centuries after Mohammed around 700-900 AD.

God told Abraham that the birthright promises would not go to Ishmael but instead would be passed on through a son that would come from Abraham's wife, Sarah (Genesis 17:15-21). Given that Sarah was already an old woman well beyond her childbearing years the birth of Isaac was truly a miracle from God. Isaac later had two sons, Esau and Jacob. As the oldest, Esau was entitled to the birthright but he did not value it and sold it to his brother Jacob. Esau's descendants in time became the Turks and the Palestinians.

All of you are probably well familiar with the story of Abraham's grandson Jacob. Can anyone tell me what the name Jacob means? Supplanter or Deceiver. And that certainly matched his character up until the time that God called him. Jacob had a tenacious spirit that was tested when God appeared to him and they wrestled all night. After this incident God gave him a new name - Israel. Can anyone tell me what the name of Israel means? Some say it means "Prince with God" the same meaning as Michael however I think there is a more likely alternative suggested in Genesis 32:28 where God says "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." He prevailed or overcame with God. Israel can also mean

"Overcomer with God". The meaning of names are very important in the story of Israel as we will see as we look further into it.

Jacob or Israel had twelve sons (Genesis 49). His favourite was Joseph. His older brothers were envious and sold him into slavery. Through an amazing set of circumstances Joseph eventually became vizier of Egypt. Through a famine, which forced Jacob's family to have to go to Egypt to buy grain, Jacob was eventually re-united with Joseph and moved his whole family to the rich Nile delta area called Goshen in Egypt around 1660 BC. I'll be covering some of the amazing historical proofs for the Exodus in a sermonette I'm scheduled to do at the end of March.

Now there has been a rather persistent myth that has continued to be perpetuated that the slavery of the Israelites lasted some 400 years. This is based on a misunderstanding of Exodus 12:40 that says that the sojourning of Israel was 430 years. Notice carefully the word is sojourning not the word slavery. Paul says in Galatians 3:16-17 that from Abraham when the promises were made till Mt Sinai and the giving of the law was the same period of time – 430 years. Josephus in his writings says that from Jacob moving to Egypt until the Exodus was exactly half that period – 215 years. From that remaining 215 years in Egypt you have to subtract the remaining 71 years of Joseph's life after his father moved to Egypt so in reality the slavery was probably not much more than 100 years at most.

It's interesting that it says that Israel left Egypt on the same day of the year as their forefather Abraham left the land of the Chaldees. It is quite fitting that Abraham came out of the land of the Chaldees on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the Israelites came out of Egypt, which pictures us coming out of this world and sin. The children of Israel journeyed to Mt Sinai where God gave them the Ten Commandments and offered to be their God and bless them physically if they would obey Him. This proposal by God and the acceptance by the nation of Israel became known as the Old Covenant.

In his book "Mystery of the Ages" Herbert W. Armstrong wrote:

"Did it ever strike you as most unusual that the Great God should have raised up the ancient nation Israel to be His chosen people? Consider these seemingly paradoxical facts: God says He is not a respecter of persons. Is He, then, a respecter of nations? Does He have a favourite? Did you ever realize that God denied His chosen people salvation--save only their prophets? That the chosen nation was given only material and national promises--that God's Holy Spirit was inaccessible to them? Did it ever occur to you that the Holy Bible is the book of and concerning only that one people Israel? And that other nations are mentioned only if and as they came into contact with Israel?" (p.132).

With that as background how does God calling the nation of Israel fit into the plan of God to build His God family? What purpose does it serve that couldn't be done through the church which He called later?

Did Israel have access to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? What proof is there that Israel was denied the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the exception of their prophets as claimed by Mr Armstrong?

In Numbers 11 we read: "So the LORD said to Moses: 'Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel ... Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone'...Then Moses said to him [Joshua], 'Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!'" (Numbers 11:16-17, 29).

Moses wished that God would give His Holy Spirit to all of the people but he realized God had decreed that only a select few would be given the Holy Spirit to help them fulfill special jobs that God had in mind for them.

John 14:17 says the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive because it does not see it nor knows it. But you know it, for it dwells with you and shall be in you. Prior to a person receiving God's spirit within them the Holy Spirit can work with a person and help them to obey God. During Christ's ministry the apostles had the Holy Spirit working with them but it wasn't in them until after Christ was resurrected. Such would have been the case with the minority of Israel who did strive to faithfully obey God as best as they could in Old Testament Israel. They would have been in much the same situation of those of you here that strive to obey God but haven't been baptised. Just out of interest who here has been baptised?

If you don't understand the difference between God's Spirit being with you and God's spirit being in you, you can easily become confused, especially when you see zealous people in mainstream christian churches who seem to genuinely get help and assistance from God and have a certain degree of biblical understanding. God's spirit may work with them and they may do well with the half of God's truth they have access to but there's a bunch of doctrines – the other half of God's truth – that understanding of appears to be reserved for those that God specially chooses to call into the church of God. You young people here are really blessed to know that other half of God's truth and I really hope that you value and appreciate that.

In 1 Peter 1:10-11 Peter said that "the Spirit of Christ...was in them." David in Psalm 51:11 in his famous prayer of repentance asked that God not take His holy spirit from him. Even though the Holy Spirit can work externally with people to better obey God as they respond, only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes us eligible for the first resurrection and a part of His true church (Romans 8:9-11). Christ said in "I WILL (future tense) build my church" (Matthew 16:18). In Old Testament times only a few scattered individuals were given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but in the New Testament He open that up much further that there would be a whole church community that would have His spirit.

In Mystery of the Ages Mr Armsrong wrote: "Educated men and scientists today [say]...'Give us sufficient knowledge, and we will solve all problems and eradicate all evils -- we will create utopia!' He [God] was going to demonstrate to them that the mind of man, with its one spirit, and without the addition of God's Holy Spirit, could not have spiritual discernment -- could not solve human problems, could not cure the evils that were besetting humanity. The nation Israel would be his guinea pig to demonstrate that fact. Also they had the quality heredity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel)."

Our first reason for why God chose the nation of Israel, something that could not be done through the church who have His spirit is:

[1] To prove that even with the knowledge of God's laws which He gave them through Moses and every other advantage such as the quality heredity of Abraham and the patriarchs which included many valuable talents that man still needs the Holy Spirit to live by God's way of life.

Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. That's why God has had the history of Israel recorded for us. Their lessons of experience showed time and time again that only living God's way leads to happiness and breaking God's laws will only bring misery.

The apostle Paul wrote the following in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 to show how their examples have been recorded for our benefit so we don't repeat their mistakes:

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea... For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our

examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them... Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did ... Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

On this point Raymond McNair writes: “They were divinely chosen to serve as an example for the rest of humanity of what happens to those who obey or disobey the Creator God. As one Jewish man painfully remarked in the aftermath of World War II, ‘Why doesn't He choose someone else for a while?’” (America and Britain in Prophecy, p.4).

Our second reason for why God chose the nation of Israel is:

[2] To write through the painful lessons of experience that only living God's way leads to happiness and breaking God's laws only brings misery.

Let's look at one more reason why God chose the nation of Israel that is recorded for us in Deuteronomy 4:6-8. God told the nation of Israel: “Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?”

God called them not because they deserved it but for a service which would ultimately benefit all mankind. God wasn't playing favourites. He said that He didn't call them because they were more numerous or any greater in influence than other nations (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). He said that they were the least of nations when He called them out of Egypt and that He was going to remain faithful to His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to make of them a group of influential nations.

In Exodus 19:5-6 we read: "And now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

God wanted a free, obedient and happy people free of the many burdens governments put on people. Other peoples would look at them thinking, “How can we be free from the burdens our governments put on us” and from that could spread the idea, “Hey, let's worship Israel's God. Let Israel's God be our king.” It was God's intent that the whole world be blessed through the descendants of Jacob.

So did this ever happen? No, it never did, at least not on this side of God's kingdom but there will come a time when they will. Israel, both ancient and modern, have been very much a mixed bag of good and evil. Relatively there were times when they have been much better morally than other nations but compared to God's standards they fell way short.

So our third reason for why God chose the nation of Israel is:

[3] To be a model nation that would encourage other nations to want to come under God's rule.

What restrictions did God place on Israel regarding their interactions with the Gentiles as part of keeping them an obedient holy nation?

He told them not to make any covenant or alliances with Gentiles as they would become a snare to them and he also forbid them from marrying with the Gentiles “lest they turn your sons away from following Me”.

God wanted Israel was to be a model nation so that other nations would see the benefits of living by God's way so they might want to come under His rule and live by His way.

"God's grand purpose - anciently, today and tomorrow - for Abraham's descendants has never varied. He selected them to be a blessing to 'all the families of the earth' (Genesis 12:3). To make this possible He promised them every material advantage they would ever need" (The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy, p.34). These material blessings would make it possible for them to help and benefit many other nations all around the world. These birthright promises were passed down through Isaac and Jacob. The descendants of all of Jacob's 12 sons would share in the blessings promised to Abraham but the double portion of this birthright was passed onto Joseph sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

In Genesis 48:19, "He (Manasseh) also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother (Ephraim) shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

Remember before that God promised Ishmael would become a great nation. The fulfillment of this promise – the Islamic Caliphate – was an empire larger in size than the Roman Empire. If Ishmael becoming a great nation meant an empire larger in area than the Roman Empire then how much greater are the birthright promises that God promised would come through Isaac's descendants?

Not all dimensions of the promises, however, would go to Joseph and his descendants. In Genesis 49:10 we read that 'the sceptre shall not depart from Judah' (Genesis 49:10). This pointed both to the dynasty of Israel's future king, David, and to the role of Jesus Christ as the Messiah (Luke 1:32)"

In terms of power Israel was at its height during the reign of Solomon. The Phoenician empire which included Israel as the senior partner had a vast maritime trading empire reaching as far as the both sides of the Atlantic, however due to Solomon's sin it did not last long. The physical benefits of prosperity, wealth and fame became their chief focus. They lost sight of the reason for their existence as a nation.

In the days soon after King Solomon, the nation of Israel split into two nations, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah (from whom the Jews descend). Both kingdoms went into terrible idolatry and sin though there were brief revivals under a few of the kings of Judah. Because of the depth of their sin God punished the northern Kingdom of Israel who were conquered by Assyria around 709 BC and carried away to Mesopotamia.

The northern kingdom included the birthright tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh and they eventually became known as the "Lost Tribes of Israel". The southern Kingdom of Judah from whom the Jews descend also descended into such great sin that they were also conquered and taken into exile by the Babylonians around 586 BC. A remnant of the Jews returned. Jesus was born amongst the Jews 500 years later. After the Jewish people for the most part, rejected Christ as the Messiah they revolted in 70 AD against the Romans and were defeated and consequently scattered amongst the nations for nearly 2000 years until the Jewish state of Israel was created in 1948.

At no time during Israel's history as recorded in the Bible do we ever see the promise fulfilled through Ephraim and Manasseh becoming a nation and a company of nations so was this promise ever fulfilled?

What Biblical proof is there that the lost tribes of Israel exist today and didn't assimilate into other nations?

There are prophecies of end-time Israel and even tribes as recognisable entities in end-time: Genesis 49:1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Genesis 49 goes on to give us a description of each of the tribes in the end-time. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus promised at His return that the 12 apostles

would rule each of the 12 tribes. While some intermingling with other tribes and nations has taken place there would be enough of a recognisable homogenous core of each of these tribes.

Nehemiah 11 shows that those who volunteered to return and rebuild a Jewish presence in the Promised Land came almost exclusively from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. No significant numbers from the northern tribes after this ever returned their homeland so they are to be found elsewhere. Many Jews claim that they migrated back with the formation of the nation of Israel in 1948 but this does not match the birthright promise of a great nation and a company of nations.

Since God began His church in the New Testament has God stopped working with physical Israel? Why or why not?

Along with the way that He has been working with His church, the way God has worked with modern physical Israel in giving them the birthright blessings shows that He is still working with physical Israel. In addition to national prosperity there is evidence of miraculous protection as well as times.

George Washington, Dunkirk, Jews.

Let's go the famous blessings and cursing chapter of Leviticus 26 in verses 17 & 18 we read: "And I will set My face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies. They that hate you shall reign over you. And you shall flee when none pursues you. And if you will not yet listen to Me for all this, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins."

While it is very obscure, some people see here a prophecy about how long God would withhold the birthright promises from Ephraim and Manasseh. Times can also refer to years. Seven years = around 2500 days. Using the day for a year principle they see the birthright promises as being withheld for 2500 years following the captivity of Ephraim and Manasseh around 700 BC. 2500 years after their captivity brings us to the years around 1800 AD. At this time Britain followed by America burst onto the world scene as a great nation and a company of nations.

The Jewish Encyclopaedia says the following: "The identification of the Sacae, or the Scythians [recognised by most historians as the ancestors of the British peoples] with the Ten Tribes because they appear in history at the SAME TIME and very nearly in the SAME PLACE, as the Israelites removed by Shalmaneser, is one of the chief supports of the theory which identifies the English people, and indeed the whole Teutonic race, with the Ten Tribes. Dan is identified sometimes with Denmark and sometimes with the Tuatha da Danaan of Irish Tradition" (p.250)

The term 'Caucasian' is a traditional, historic name commonly applied to the white race. It gets its origin from the major Caucasian migration into Europe mostly via the Caucasian Mountains that occurred after the fall of Parthia in 226 AD. At this same time pushed out by the religious intolerance of the conquering Arabs a whole host of so-called barbarian tribes pour into central and eastern Europe and into the Roman empire itself and contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire. The Israelites migrated to NW Europe and behind them were the Assyrians who migrated to Germany.

Hundreds of years earlier many Israelites in a smaller wave of immigration via the Phoenician fleets migrated to Carthage and then onto Spain and then onto Northern France and the British Isles known to us as Celts. Armenian historian Ortellius notes "the kingdom of Arsareth, where the ten tribes retiring...took the name of Gauthai' because, he says, they were very jealous of the glory of God." It is from Gauthai that the term Goths comes from.

There are a series of books that go further into the migrations of the ten tribes following their captivity in Assyria. Firstly, there is our booklet "The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy". I would also recommend Steve Collins original book "The Lost Tribes of Israel...Found" and the 4 part series that expands on the original book.

In Genesis 49 Jacob gave this prophecy about the descendants of Joseph in the end time. He said: "Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall. Archers attack him violently and shoot at him angrily, but he aims his bow well. His arms are made strong. He gets his power from the Mighty God of Jacob (Genesis 49:22-26, New Century Version)."

This prophetic passage tells us that Joseph's descendants 'in the last days' will live in a productive, well-watered and fruitful land. They will be a people who have greatly expanded their territory and influence - politically, militarily, economically and culturally - a people 'whose branches grow over the wall,' or beyond their natural borders. They will be a people that, on occasion, will be attacked by other nations but will generally be victorious. Their triumphs will sometimes seem 'miraculous' or 'providential' because the Almighty God is their helper and source of blessings. They will be a people who live in an unusually favourable climate that easily supports their steadily expanding population.

British historian James Morris wrote the following about the British Empire: "It was the largest empire in the history of the world, comprising nearly a quarter of the land mass of the earth, and a quarter of the population...In fact...it continued to grow until 1933 when its area was 13.9 million square miles and its population 493 million...The Roman Empire in its prime comprised perhaps 120 million people in an area of 2.5 million square miles" (Pax Britannica, p.21, 27, 42). At its height the British Empire was over 5 times the size of the Roman Empire and ruled over 4 times as many people as the Roman Empire.

America's rise to greatness was just as incredible. There was this pivotal 40 year period between 1775 when the American Revolution began to 1815 when Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo and the War of 1812 concluded which boosted America's pride. America doubled in size with the Louisiana Purchase at a bargain price, the greatest land deal in history. Never before in history had any nation received land to remotely compare with those newly-acquired American territories - either in sheer size, richness of soil and having such a favourable climate. Abraham Lincoln said in 1863:

"We find ourselves in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth, as regards fertility of soil, extent of territory, and salubrity of climate... We...find ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them."

Britain and America also possessed "the gates of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17) including sea gates such as the Suez and Panama canals and Gibraltar. No other brother nations in the history of the world have dominated the world so much in terms of military power, natural resources and control of fertile land in the best parts of the world. No other brother nations fit so well the prophecy of a great nation and a company of nations.

"The British proved to be able administrators who dramatically improved the infrastructure and standard of living in the countries they governed. The descendants of Joseph led the world into an era of unprecedented knowledge, prosperity and technological advancement. The Bible, plus biblically oriented reference works and publications, began to be distributed globally, thanks to the English speaking nations who have shown great talent for administration and technical invention.

Britain received many requests from various peoples to come under British rule. This was motivated by the kinder rule of the British compared to the more aggressive European powers and other native peoples as well as the opposition by the British to slavery. The slave trade where new slaves were sold was abolished in 1807 with the British Navy policing it and then existing slaves were all freed in 1833. Many of these native peoples who asked Britain to annex them wanted to be protected from those who still continued the slave trade. In modern times both the United States and Britain have given many billions in foreign aid to other countries including rebuilding Europe and Japan after WW2. And of course the English invented cricket which the Indians are forever grateful for. These are some of the ways Britain and the United States have been a blessing to the nations of the world.



Along with the positives there have also been great sins and injustices perpetuated by the descendants of Joseph because they have not fully obeyed the God who blessed them. The British ramped up the hideous slave trade in the Caribbean and got rich off it in the 1700's before they abolished it in 1833, the first of the Western nations to do so. The southern United States some 30 years after tenaciously out of economic greed held onto slavery and fought a bloody Civil War over it that cost more lives than any other war America has fought in. The British fought China in the Opium wars supporting the British drug lords who were getting the Chinese hooked on heroin, a war fought out of economic greed. It was the British who invented and promoted the theory of evolution. In modern times we have seen an explosion of sexual immorality, pornography and homosexuality as well as millions of abortions since it was legalised.

Only partially they have been the righteous model nations God had intended for them. The biblically based values on which the founding fathers built the United States of America have given way to evolution and the denial of God and the same kind of self-serving materialism that led to the collapse of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah" (The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy, p.36, 41).

Since the sexual and moral revolution of the 1960's, America and Britain, along with Australia, New Zealand and Canada, have suffered a terrible moral degeneration with crime and sexual immorality and other sins rapidly escalating as they drift further and further away from God and His way of life. During the 1960's when the sexual revolution began Britain's empire rapidly shrunk with decolonization and signs of decay in America's power and political will began to show with their defeat in the Vietnam War. The birthright blessings were beginning to be taken away and replaced with the terrible curses for disobedience mentioned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Jeremiah wrote of a time of national trouble that is yet ahead for the modern descendants of Israel. In Jeremiah 30 we read: 'For behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel AND Judah ... And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it...Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them' It is out of this foreign domination and enslavement that Christ will deliver them at His second coming. This will be the time when King David and Christ's 12 apostles - along with all the rest of God's saints - will be resurrected to begin ruling with Christ over a restored Israel in the Kingdom of God (Ezekiel 37:24; Matthew 19:28)" (p.42, 44).

When Christ returns He will bring the remaining Israelites of all the tribes back to the land of Palestine in an exodus that will be even bigger than that of Moses' day.

We read about this in Isaiah 11:11-16, "It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria [Germany] and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush [Ethiopia], from Elam [Eastern Europe] and Shinar [Iraq], from Hamath and the islands of the sea..."

"The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dry-shod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt."

An interesting verse that also speaks of this return from captivity is in Deuteronomy 30 where God says: "If you are driven out into the outermost parts of the heavens, the LORD your God will gather you from there, and He will bring you from there." So there may be some on the International Space Station. They'll do well to survive the meteor showers of the Day of the Lord.

The nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms in the days of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Ezekiel prophesied that at Christ's return the two kingdoms will be re-united as one nation – the Jews and the other tribes led by Joseph (America and Britain) will be one united nation (Ezekiel 37:15-23).

What differences are there between the old and the new covenants?

Symbolically, the relationship between God and Israel was like a marriage. In Jeremiah 31:32 God said: "I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; My covenant...they broke, though I was a husband to them." Israel broke their covenant with God when they went into idolatry and worshipped false gods and turned away from His laws. Jeremiah 3:8 says that Israel was so unfaithful that God had to divorce her. Next time Jesus will re-marry a more faithful wife – the church when He returns as it speaks about in Revelation 19.

The apostle Paul spoke about the new covenant in Hebrews 8 when he said: "He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which was built upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD'" (Hebrews 8:7-9).

The problem was not with the laws that God gave to Israel. As Paul said in Hebrews 8:8 the fault was with the people who didn't keep God's laws. What will make the difference is the better promise that will enable them to keep God's laws we read about in Ezekiel 36:27. After Christ's second coming He says to them: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them". Receiving God's spirit and salvation through accepting the sacrifice of Christ is the better promise of the new covenant.

Who does God make the new covenant with?

We have seen above that God specifically says that God will make the new covenant with the two houses – the house of Israel and the house of Judah who will be re-united after Christ returns. Who else does he make the new covenant with?

At the last supper when Jesus took a cup of wine he said to His disciples: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). All who are baptized and partake of the Passover have made a covenant with God to come under God's rule and live by God's way of life.

With the Old Covenant Jesus Christ was married to physical Israel. With the New Covenant He will not marry physical Israel but He will marry the church. When physical Israel repents at Christ's return they will be baptized into and become a part of the church.

In the millennium God says to Israel: "For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations" (Isaiah 54:3).

Hosea also wrote that in the millennium that Israel's "branches shall spread" (Hosea 14:6) which is the same phrase used by Jacob to describe how Joseph's descendants spread around the world in the days of the British Empire and colonized many nations (Genesis 49:22). Paul mentions in Romans 4:13 that the promise to Abraham expanded to become heir of the world. Like in the days of the British Empire, they will go into other nations (Isaiah 14:1-3), help rebuild their cities, develop their civil infrastructure and teach them God's way of life.

The Gentiles nations will see how well they are blessed because they are following God and eagerly seek their guidance. "Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with

you, for we have heard that God is with you” (Zechariah 8:22-23). Notice these other prophecies about Israel in the millennium:

ISAIAH 45:17: But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation

ISAIAH 60:21: Your people also will all be righteous; they will inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, so that I may be glorified.

ISAIAH 61:6: But you will be named the priests of the LORD; it will be said of you, Ministers of our God; you will eat the riches of the nations, and you will revel in their glory.

ISAIAH 61:9: And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

Israel will finally become the example God intended her to be.

Is there anywhere in the Bible where a distinction is made between someone as a physical Israelite and a spiritual Israel?

In Romans 9:3-8 Paul draws for us a distinction between physical Israel (the physical descendants of Jacob/Israel) and spiritual Israel (the church). Paul says the following: “For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called.’ That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.” Notice that he says they are not all Israel (spiritual Israelites) who are of Israel (physical Israel).

Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria: “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). Was He saying that salvation is only for those who are physical Jews by bloodline?

In Romans 2:28-29 Paul writes: “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

Remember before how we talked about the importance of the meaning of names. Judah’s name means “Praised of God”.

Paul is saying that it is better to be a spiritual Jew living a life worthy of God’s praise than simply to be a physical Jew who has undergone the physical ritual of circumcision. True circumcision is that of the heart – to have a heart that is gentle and soft and willing to live God’s way. Spiritual Jews are those who have received God’s spirit and who’s life is worthy of God’s praise.

Israel’s (Jacob’s) name means “Overcomer with God”. One can be a physical Israelite having descended from Israel (Jacob) but to be a true spiritual Israelite one needs to be a part of God’s church and be an “overcomer with God”.

Just as God places restrictions of dealing with those outside of physical Israel what restrictions has God placed on us in the church dealing with those outside of spiritual Israel? We are to stay out of politics. We’re ambassadors to Christ (2 Cor. 5:20) and ambassadors remain outside the politics of the nation they are residing in which also includes not voting. We’re also to marry only within the church and not marry those outside of spiritual Israel.

In Romans 11 Paul wrote: ...

Just like a branch grafted onto a tree, God replaced the disobedient and unbelieving "branches" with "wild olive branches" – Gentile people not directly descended from Abraham, who have been called and become spiritual Israelites.

Paul tells these Gentiles not to boast against the physical Israelites who are not a part of the church. God may have called them ahead of those physical Israelites but their time for salvation will eventually come. God may have cut them off as branches but they can be grafted back on again to the "Israel of God" when God calls them in the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment period.

In his book "The 144 000" author Art Braidic makes an interesting case that the 144 000 are spiritual Israelites and not physical Israelites. He writes:

"The Almighty God inspired the names of the tribes of Israel in such a way that they tell a wonderful story of every true christian's struggle and ultimate triumph. Notice how a paragraph placing the meaning of these names in their order [in Revelation 7] might read:

"I will praise the Lord (Judah) for He has looked on me (Reuben) and good fortune comes (Gad). Happy am I (Asher) because my wrestling (Naphtali) with God makes me forget (Manasseh) my trials. God hears me (Simeon) and has joined me (Levi) to Him. He has purchased me (Isaachar) and my Husband will dwell with me (Zebulon). God will add (Joseph) me to the Son of His right hand (Benjamin)" (p.117).

We are told that the names of the tribes of Israel, whether spiritual or physical, will be on the gates of the New Jerusalem and will give such a message (Revelation 21:12).

If you read Genesis the meaning of every son of Jacob is mentioned when they are born. If we put together the meaning of the names of the original twelve tribes in their order of birth order the message reads:

"Those who look on me (Reuben), hear (Simeon) and are joined with Him (Levi) will praise the Lord (Judah) who judges (Dan). For those who fight (Naphtali) and prevail, fortune (Gad) and happiness (Asher) is the reward of their hire (Isaachar) and He will dwell (Zebulon) and shall be added (Joseph) as sons along with the Son of His right hand (Benjamin)."

God is preparing the Kingdom of God in dual stages. He is working both through physical Israel AND spiritual Israel - the church. He has been working with our Israelite nations giving them the birthright promises and seeing what they will do with them. At the same time He is working with spiritual Israel – His church who are called "a royal priesthood, a holy nation" in 1 Peter 2:9. Like physical Israel they are to be a model people and an example of God's way of life (Matthew 5:13-16).

God's punishment will come first on Israel and then on the Gentiles (Isaiah 10:5-12). After Christ returns God will first work with physical Israel and offer them the chance to be spiritual Israelites and then, through their example when they do repent, God will open up salvation to the Gentile nations. Israel will become God's model nation and all nations will be blessed because of their example.

After Israel fulfils its destiny as God's model nation in the World Tomorrow all nations will become God's chosen people. "In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt (Arabs) My people, and Assyria (Germany) the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance'" (Isaiah 19:24-25). God truly has a wonderful plan to save all mankind and bring them into His family!