

The Most Exclusive Club

The Children of the Lord God of Israel

By
William T. Boyd

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Introduction

During my 30 odd years as a ‘Believer’ and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, I had a continual urge to learn more about what was written for us and how it affected Christians. In the interim, I have studied many different documents and listened to many ‘learned’ teachers. In almost every case the source of the information was the Holy Scriptures. From early childhood I was taught that the King James Version was directly descended from the teachings of the prophets and that anything else was suspect. Where there were points that were just not quite logical and didn’t fit with other known facts the reason was normally given as translation discrepancies or language problems. For a while this sufficed and I went on with the learning process and was ‘growing’ in the knowledge of the purpose of the Bible.

However, some of the promises that I found in the Scriptures didn’t seem to fit into the present day concept of the Jew/ Gentile world and indeed many of them could never be fulfilled by the Jew as we know them today. The little nation of Israel, while holding a position of endearment among most of the evangelical community, had few, if any of the traits identified, as belonging to the Biblical Israel. There were numerous quotations in the Old Testament as well as some of Jesus’ statements that just didn’t mesh with the modern day teachings. Bringing up such subjects as the ‘lost tribes of Israel,’ or questioning the propagation of the entire earth and all its various races from Noah and his wife alone (by the way, her name was Naamah, the daughter of Enoch), were certain to get you ostracized in most congregations.

So, in addition to the promises, I started to study the application of the various covenants, both in the Old and the New Testaments. This brought out the fact that every one of them was

directed to a specific person or people and to no one else. The term ‘Lord God of Israel’ is found over a hundred times in the Bible, and never is He referred to as the ‘Lord God’ of anyone else. That caused me to investigate the quotations that God and/ or the prophets spoke and to whom they were directed.

With all the frantic discussion about the Ten Commandments, I went to see just to whom they were given – I found out that it really doesn’t matter if they’re in the courthouse in Alabama or not. They were given to Israel and there was no indication that any other people were to comply. It became quite clear that from Adam through Revelation there was a definite and specific routing of the attention of God to a single group of people. This revelation was so startling to me that I had to write it down. As the New Covenant in Hebrews 8 says, I’m not teaching my neighbor, I’m merely bringing out the information that has been in the Bible for centuries and has not been taught as fact.

If you find things here that are different than what you have been taught in the past – please don’t react by ‘shooting the messenger;’ check the Scriptures to see what it actually says. Read and ponder, then come to your own conclusions.

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Overview

The modern church doesn't make much of the fact that our Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, is solely the documentation of the genealogy and activities of a select group of people. God refers to them as a 'peculiar' people unto Himself. Only as they interact with or are associated with this select group are any of the earth's other people even mentioned in the Scriptures. Within the Scriptures there are a series of covenants with the people that are the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and them alone. Due to the various misinterpretations of the terms 'tribe,' 'nation,' 'gentile' and 'Jew' there is considerable confusion as to the true meaning of many of the key Scriptures. Only by utilizing a good Concordance to verify the meaning of the words can we be certain of what was meant by the author and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I have attempted to ferret out a number of the confusing items which frequently have been, or are being, taught in a manner contrary to the original language, and documented the original interpretation, which is usually opposite to that being taught today.

Another frequent item causing problems and confusion is the error of determining just to whom the various promises, prophecies and covenants were made. There are many promises within the Old Testament that can only be fulfilled by the children of Israel, and yet they are constantly being applied to other people, thereby causing confusion within the body of Believers, and ridicule from without. In the same manner that persons outside the parties of a contract or covenant are not subject to the provisions of that agreement, they are also not entitled to the consideration or benefits associated therewith. Promises made to a specific group are not applicable to other groups regardless of the desire of those other groups. Hopefully the following will help to clear up some of the problem areas. Keep in mind that this

is offered only as a tool to motivate others to investigate the items and determine for themselves the applicability of the Scriptures. A portion of the New Covenant stated in Hebrews 8 is that “... *they shall not teach everyone his neighbor...*” because we will have the ability to discern for ourselves the truth of the promise. Major problems can be caused by one sitting under the teaching of another without verification of the material being dispensed. Seek the truth!

Genesis

Because of some of the misinterpretations starting in the first chapter of Genesis, the true message of God throughout the rest of Scripture has been hidden and caused many readers to remain confused. The story of creation in Genesis 1 includes the creation of man in verses 26 and 27, *“male and female created he them”*. The creation action here does not indicate that a single man and a single woman were created; this creation would be the creation of masses of animals and plants simultaneously, as well as multitudes of ‘males and females’ that were the created beings. Genesis 2 states that, at the end of the events in Genesis 1, everything to be created had been created, *“God completed His work which He had done”* and He *“rested.”* You will note that it says that God rested - it does not say He rested for a day or two - only that He *“rested... from all His work that He had done.”*

After this, there is no further mention of the created beings. It is as if God put the creation description in the first chapter only to emphasize the fact that He had completed the creation of everything and it was all His doing. Then in Genesis 2:7, after all the created things had been finished and God had rested for an indeterminate period of time, God *“forms”* Adam. This is a completely different verb and act than the creation act of Genesis 1. Upon forming Adam, God *“breathed”* into his nostrils and Adam became *“a living soul.”* None of the previously created beings were given this ‘breath;’ only Adam. Failure to understand this difference in the creation of those people in Genesis 1, and the considerably later forming of Adam as two separate and distinct actions, is the primary cause for much of the confusion regarding the creation process.

Each time Adam is mentioned, after his being formed, he is referred to by God as ‘the man.’ The definite article here signifies that Adam is a

particular being set apart from all others. He is so mentioned nine times in Genesis. There is no evidence or record of any names, description, history or particulars of any other being, man, beast or otherwise, created before the forming of Adam. Only with Adam does God start keeping 'score' by name. The obvious reason being that those 'created beings' later referred to as "*the sons of men*," are not party to the lineage addressed by the Bible, nor were they to have any part in God's ultimate plan for the Adamic people. The common belief that Adam and Zoe (Eve being a name inserted in the later Masoretic text to replace the original term for 'life') were the parents of all the various races is, among other things, a genetic impossibility and violates all the biological rules implemented by the creator. It just cannot be.

All things were said to reproduce "*after their kind*" throughout the creation process. Later in Genesis it also cannot be true that Noah and his wife were the origin of all the various other races after the flood. The use of the term 'seed' in Genesis 3 uses the same word that is later to be used for the descendants of the patriarchs. However, in this first case it has caused problems in interpretation, due to the fact that two 'seed' lines are mentioned – "*thy seed*" meaning Satan and "*her seed*" meaning Eve/Zoe. Both are valid uses and yet very little has ever been revealed about the meaning of the two. The context is meant to be a perpetual enmity between the two lines.

Although there is no mention of the requirements for worship and/ or sacrifice, there had been direction given after Adam and Eve/ Zoe were banished (there was no need for sacrifice prior to the original sin), because Cain and Abel were both aware of how the sacrifice was supposed to be presented. Abel did his properly and Cain improperly:

"And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."
(Genesis 4:6-7)

Cain had brought his sacrifice to God in a manner unacceptable, and was

rejected on the spot. His anger against God resulted in a fit of jealous rage against his brother and he killed Abel. He was banished from the community of Adam at that time, and lamented that action and the danger it presented to him. When he was cast out, Cain said that he was being “*driven out from the face of the earth*” and “*from thy face (God’s face) shall I be hidden.*” He (Cain) then went out to dwell among the “*sons of men*” (the descendants of those men and women created in Genesis 1:26) in the land of Nod, which the Bible says was east of Eden. These were the people that he thought “*...anyone that finds me may slay me.*” He then became a part of that society and intermarried with them and had several children and built a city. That portion of the history is found in Genesis 4:16-24.

At the beginning of Genesis 5 we are told the purpose of the book we call the Bible: “*This is the book of the generations* (the word translated as ‘generations,’ Strong’s #8435, is also often used as ‘descendants’ or ‘race’) *of Adam.*” This is a very important statement! Only from the sons of Adam is there any sort of descendancy recorded. All the genealogies of Adam start with Seth; neither Cain nor Abel are mentioned in the listing. Other races or tribes or people are recorded only as they interact with or are associated with the people that are descendants of Adam. In each family or ‘house’ (scripturally, family or house is always a designation of a man’s descendants, usually sons only) there is always one man selected to continue the line that will lead up to the children of Israel. As many of the sons of Adam in the Genesis account lived for several centuries, it can be assumed that they had a multitude of other children. The text normally specifies that the man lived a number of years after the birth of the succeeding son “*and had sons and daughters.*” Only the particular son ‘seed’ was to be mentioned in the scriptural listing. The Bible becomes much more clear and easier to understand when approached from that standpoint.

The mention of the two types of people in Genesis 6 has been a point of confusion for decades and many of the attempts to explain the passage have only served to confuse the situation even more. However if the terms are used as given elsewhere in the Scriptures, the meaning

becomes quite clear.

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” (Genesis 6:1-2)

In the genealogy in Luke 3, the summation in verse 38 says that, “...*the son of Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was {the son} of God.*” You will note that “*the son*” was added by the translators and the statement should read “*Adam, who was of God.*” Therefore, in this context, all Adam’s sons are also to be considered as “*of God*” and were not to intermarry outside their immediate kin (Adam’s descendants).

Further in Genesis 6 the problem of mixing marriage with the daughters of the people other than the Adamic strain (daughters of men) was the very thing that was angering God. Verse 9 states that Noah was a “*just man and perfect in his generations and pleasing to God.*” Being “*perfect in his generations*” meant that Noah, his ancestors and family had no intermarriage with the “*daughters of men;*” those people created in Genesis 1:26 that were obviously living around the area where Noah and his ancestors were living. That statement has nothing to do with his being a moral person. One must make the distinction in the difference of the creation of ‘man’ in Genesis 1:26 and the ‘forming’ of Adam in Genesis 2:7. Since Noah was a direct descendant of Adam (see the genealogy in Luke 3) he also was ‘of God.’ Later on in Deuteronomy you will find the following:

“When the Most High divided to the nations (ethnos - the 12 original tribes) their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” (Deuteronomy 32:8-9)

This inseparable tie between God, Adam and the children of Israel is

reiterated time and time again throughout the Old Testament. This is the first evidence we have of the divine selection of the chosen line that is to lead to the Messiah. One ancient definition of the term ‘inheritance’ meant ‘right of possession or ownership.’ This possessive guardianship remains in effect throughout the entire Scriptures, and within the Bible there is no mandate more important to God than the prohibition against race mixing by His chosen people. We will see many examples of the terminology He uses, to signify the special place that the people who were to become Israel, have in God’s heart. Starting with Adam, and continuing along the lines in the genealogy given later, God maintained a ‘conduit’ of heritage protecting His ‘peculiar’ people for the purpose He had in mind for them.

Another item of interest is the longevity of the sons of Adam – there is no evidence that any of the created ‘men’ ever attained lives of over nine hundred years. Obviously this was God’s method of allowing the sons of Adam to ‘catch up’ since they apparently had entered the world centuries after the beings created in Genesis 1:26. Strangely, there is no mention of any of the wives dying until Sarah in Genesis 23:1. She was one hundred, twenty seven years old when she passed. As the Scriptures progress through the familiar names, we come to Noah and the flood. God said that Noah was “*righteous in his generations*” meaning that Noah’s family had not mingled with the other races. In Matthew 24 where Jesus says;

“For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away...” (Matthew 24:38-39)

What is meant here is that “*they*,” the ‘children of God,’ Adam’s descendants, were eating and drinking and marrying with the other people (sons/ daughters of men) that they were forbidden to mingle with. This so angered God that He destroyed the entire population of the people (Adam’s sons) He had set on the earth to do His work. Only eight souls of the Adamic race (Sons of God) were saved.

Noah's three sons were to be used to propagate the 'world' after the flood and the particular man chosen to maintain the Godly line was Shem although Japheth was the elder (Genesis 10:21). Since the lineage could only come from a single man his progeny was to continue the line uninterrupted. Again, it is beyond comprehension how men boasting advanced degrees can stand in a pulpit and tell the congregation that Noah and his wife had children that constituted populating all the races of the earth!

Noah's grandson Canaan was cursed as a result of Ham's inappropriate action with his mother and he and his descendants will not be mentioned for years – until the children of Israel are in the 'Promised Land.' The list of descendants of Noah's three sons is set forth in Genesis 10. In Genesis 11 starting with verse 10 the lineage is completed from Shem to Abram, and the selection by God to get Abram out of the Ur of the Chaldeans where his father Terah lived.

Terah was a high official in the court of Nimrod and that administration was the center of pagan 'Babylonian' worship. After moving to Haran in Canaan Terah died and left Abram alone except for Sarah and Lot. While in Ur God had told Abram to *"get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee;"* This was a rather difficult order to obey because sons normally did not leave the area of the 'house' of their father. He then gave Abram the initial promise that,

"...I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."
(Genesis 12:1-3)

Note that this covenant is with Abram only! (*"I will make thee"*...) In the other covenants where the promise/ covenant was to go to his descendants, it is so stated by adding *"thy seed"* after you. (*"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their*

generations for an everlasting covenant,” Genesis 17:7) This same continuation is found in the promises to Isaac and Jacob where their ‘seed’ is promised the blessing of the fathers bringing the Covenant up to the children of Israel. Also note that the promise is to bless ‘them’ (plural) that bless thee (Abram) and curse ‘him’ (singular) that curseth thee...” the curse was to be against an individual, not a wholesale curse. This phrase is often quoted as applying to various other people and used as a motivation for support and fund raising by television evangelists.

Abram was seventy five years old when he left out of Haran with only Sarah and Lot. The promise of Genesis 13 was not given to Abram until he and Lot separated some time later. This would be the first time that Abram was actually alone with the Lord God of Israel since he had received the order to separate himself.

Years later, when Abram was approximately eighty five, Sarah devised a plan to ‘help’ God with an heir for Abram by using her Egyptian maid Hagar. We all know the story of the results of that – Ishmael became the problem that the family could not cope with and later he created a number of princes that were to persecute the children of Isaac for centuries. It was fourteen years later, when Abram was ninety nine, that the Lord appeared to him again (Genesis 17) to establish a covenant with him.:

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after

thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."

(Genesis 17:1-11)

Note the action wording here; "*And I will make my covenant*"; "...*for a father of many nations have I made thee*"; "...*I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger*". God made the decision to place Abraham as a party of the Covenant – Abraham did not make the decision. As to the "*father of many nations*" statement, the context here is not a succession of nations, but many nations at one time. God also changed his name from Abram to Abraham, meaning "*father of many nations*."

Within the provisions of the Covenant there were some rules for Abram. First, He told Abraham that He was going to be the God of Abraham's people (seed), second "*all the land of Canaan*" was given to Abraham's seed "*for an everlasting possession*" and third, the ritual of circumcision was implemented for "*every male child among you*." Later when Abraham suggested that Ishmael might be the selected 'seed' God said that He would make Sarah (formerly Sarai) the mother of the 'seed' that was to fulfill the Covenant, not Ishmael. Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety at the birth of Isaac. From this instance on only the children of Abraham through Isaac were addressed as the "*people of the covenant*" and were watched and guided throughout the rest of history.

One of the most significant examples of this exclusivity is the behavior of Eliezer, Abraham's chief servant or slave who a Syrian. In the Septuagint, Abraham says that, "Eliezer is the son of Mazek my home-born female slave, and is my heir and is going to inherit all my worldly

goods.” Later when Eliezer is sent to obtain a wife for Isaac, he tells Laban that the “*Lord God of my master Abraham*” sent him. As he was praying he also referred to God in the same manner, never claiming that the Lord was his (a Syrian’s) God, only that of Abraham. This covenant was established between Abraham and God, there is no mention of any other party to it. This selectivity was to continue from Abraham through the establishment of the tribes that were to become the people of Israel. One important point to be made here; Abraham was not a Jew! The term ‘Jew’ did not come into usage until centuries later when that term was used to identify most of the residents of Judea.

The same covenant that God had made previously with Abraham is reiterated in Genesis 22 only in this instance it is given to Isaac. He is referred to several times in the promise as ‘thy seed’ and previously God had told Abraham that the ‘seed’ would come out of Sarah. Isaac’s life is not well documented in the Scriptures, but it indicates that he was very prosperous and accumulated much in the way of earthly goods. He had two sons, Esau and Jacob, from whom the lineage was to continue. The story tells that Isaac was endeared to Esau the firstborn because he was an ‘outdoor’ man and Rebecca “*loved Jacob.*” I’ll assume that all are familiar with the scheme that Rebecca and Jacob used to obtain the paternal blessing from Isaac at the expense of Esau. Although Esau did receive a lesser blessing, the two brothers initiated the conflict of the tribes of the mid-east that is still with us to this day. Esau became known as ‘Edom’ (which is translated as ‘*red,*’ Genesis 25:30) and the Edomites were/ are a constant source of conflict to the sons of Jacob/ Israel.

The origination of the various tribes that Israel was to later dispossess when they came into the Promised Land starts with the progeny of Ishmael. Neither he nor his children could become part of the congregation of Israel because his mother Hagar was an Egyptian and therefore he was a ‘mamzer’ and was outside the line from Abraham. We are told in Genesis 28:9 that Esau, in what appears to be an act of spite, went unto Ishmael and took his daughter Mahalath for a wife. Later in Genesis 36:2 we’re told that Esau also had wives of the “*daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah*

the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite.” The Ishmaelites and Esau’s descendants, over the years mingled with the other people of the area of Canaan and became the seven tribes (including the Hivites and Hittites) that were to be destroyed by Joshua when he brought Israel into the Promised Land. In Numbers 20 we are told that the Edomites are the first people to deny access to Moses and Israel when they were traveling north to the Promised Land.

The trail of the Edomites, later to also be known by the Greek term, Idumeans, never gets far from the chosen strain and becomes one of the enemy’s most effective weapons against the Israelites over the centuries. In Genesis 33, Esau, after meeting the returning Jacob/ Israel is said to return to his home in Seir, later known in Scripture as Mt. Seir. The nine Edomites lived in that area, just southeast of the territory that was to become Judea, for several hundred years. Malachi 1: 2-4 reveals the attitude of God toward Esau/ Edom. Interestingly, throughout Scripture, the Lord is often referred to as *“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”* denoting a possession, and Esau’s station is mentioned in Malachi 1:3 where God states *“And I hated Esau...”*

Jacob, of course, is sent away by Rebecca to prevent Esau from killing him. He spends several years in indentured servitude to his uncle, Laban, and in the process accumulates two wives, two concubines and countless livestock and slaves. Over the years, he also fathers twelve sons, who are to become the *“whole house of Israel.”* The Covenant to Jacob, given in Genesis 35 makes it clear that there is to be a number of kings come from his descendants. The promise of the perpetual possession of the land given to his father (Isaac) and grandfather (Abraham) is repeated to Jacob. In Jacob’s version of the promise there is an added commitment on God’s part:

“And behold I am with thee and will keep thee in all the places to which thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoke to thee of.” (Genesis 28:15)

The context here is that God is promising Jacob (Israel) that he will return to the 'land' where he was sleeping and had the dream. This means not only after the period of servitude to Laban but ultimately Israel, through his seed, will return to that particular land.

Genesis 36 starts out with the lineage of Esau. "*Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom;*" and ends with the statement "*...he is Esau the father of the Edomites.*" In between is the description of many of his descendants and where they lived. In the lineage of the descendants of Esau note that the sons are listed as being from the wife, in contrast to the way the Israelite descent is always shown from the father. The origin of the Amalekites who were to continually persecute the Israelites later is given in Genesis 36:12; "*And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son; and she bore to Eliphaz, Amalek.*" Esau separated from Jacob due to the extent of the two brothers holdings,

"And Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters, and all the persons of his house and his cattle and all his beasts and all his substance which he had gotten in the land of Canaan and went into the country from the face of his brother, Jacob."
(Genesis 36:6).

He went to the area known as Mt Seir, named for Seir the Horite who inhabited the land. (Genesis 36:20). The Edomites lived in that locale for centuries.

In Genesis 38, Israel's son Judah gets himself involved in a serious problem with the Lord and the way he gets out of it could only have been by the sanction of God! Judah was living in the area of Canaan prior to going down to Egypt and he took an Adullamite (Canaanite) wife, Shua. This was definitely contrary to the Covenant God had with the descendants of Abraham and in violation of the orders that his grandfather, Isaac, gave for the process of selecting Jacob's wife. Judah had three sons by Shua; Er, Onan and Shelah. Judah selected an Israelite wife, Tamar, for Er the eldest, which was also against the rules of the tribes, and Er was killed by God on his wedding night. Judah then told Onan to

“go into your brother’s wife and raise up children,” but Onan elected not to consummate the marriage, and he was killed by God also. Since Shelah was too young to marry, Judah told Tamar to go back to her father’s house and wait for Shelah to mature. During the waiting period, Judah either forgot or just neglected to fulfill his part of the bargain and Tamar became devious. She posed as a prostitute and enticed Judah into a one time encounter unknown to him that she was his daughter-in-law.

This whole episode can be found in the Genesis 38, but the tremendous importance associated with this union is found in the genealogy of the selected people from this time forward. From the single intercourse were born twin boys Pharez and Zara who were to have significant roles in both sides of the ancestry of the Messiah. In the genealogy of Jesus, in Matthew 1, both the boys are mentioned: “...*And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar (Tamar); and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;*” Although the two sons are key to the lineage of the house of Israel, Tamar disappears into history. Shelah, being outside the purity of the lineage of Israel because of his Canaanite mother, could never be considered an Israelite and shows up later as an adversary of the Israelites.

This is another instance where God comes in and ‘salvages’ the purity of the tribal lineage that He mandated to the original founders of what was to become the tribes of Israel. The descendants of Shelah continued to live in the southern part of Canaan and were to later intermarry with the children of Esau and Ishmael and become a part of the Edomite/ Canaanite people. Here again the ban against miscegenation is obvious; the chosen lineage comes only from the offspring of a union of an Israelite couple. Once the bloodline is established outside the bounds of the Covenant, the children can never be brought back under the Covenant. (See Deuteronomy 23:2)

Again I’ll assume everyone is familiar with the story of the brothers and the sale of Joseph into Egypt and the movement of Jacob/ Israel and all his family down there for approximately four hundred years. During this period the seventy odd people of Jacob’s house that went to Egypt (Gen-

esis 46:27) became approximately two and one half million. The prophecies associated with the sons of Jacob in Genesis 49 are a valuable source of information as to the destinations and futures of the various tribes. Note that each of the tribes (sons) has a unique prophecy and that Joseph is blessed far more than any of the other sons. *"Moreover, I (Jacob) have given to thee (Joseph) one portion above {more than} thy brethren..."* (Genesis 48:22). The prophecies given are unique, limited and specific to each of Israel's sons; there is nothing prophesied for any other race or people.

In an unusual act, Israel (Jacob) took possession of Joseph's first two sons, Ephraim and Manassas and claimed them as his own, stating *"...let my name (Israel) be named on them."* By crossing his hands Jacob placed the prominent blessing on Ephraim, the younger rather than on Manassas, the elder, which was a deliberate act. Later these two tribes will become part of the northern portion known as Israel fulfilling that prophecy. Because of Israel pronouncing this, no people other than the two tribes named after his two grandsons have the right to the name Israel. For this reason, only the northern ten tribes containing Ephraim and Manassas were ever called Israel. The two southern tribes were always known as Judah.

Occasionally the twelve tribes in total were called *"the whole house of Israel."* The role of succession of the father's name should have gone to Ruben. As the eldest he would have been given that honor; however because of his *"defiling his father's bed."* (Genesis 25:22) that honor was given to Judah. Another item not often taught upon is the description of the death and burial of Jacob. In Genesis 50 the process of mourning and embalming and the funeral procession at his death was that reserved for royalty such as kings and Pharaohs.

Jacob's stature was well known in Egypt he was a very powerful man and the Hebrews were a privileged group up until the time of the new kings (Pharaohs) came to power many years after the death of Joseph. The plight of the Hebrews would turn to the worse because *"...there arose a king that knew not Joseph."* (Exodus 1:8). This would bring on

the period of Moses and the exodus.

The Exodus

Moses would not become the prophetic leader of the Hebrews until he was approximately eighty years old. The first forty years were spent in being educated under the royal schooling system of the pharaoh's children. Another forty were spent tending the flocks of his father-in-law. As with the other prominent men in the story, Moses was selected by God. Moses didn't select God. In the 'burning bush' scene in Exodus 3, God informs Moses that He is:

"... the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," and He *"has surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt,"* and that He (God) *"is come down to deliver them (His People) out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a large and good land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites (descendants of Canaan) and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites."* (Exodus 3:6-8)

This is the first recorded instance where God refers to Himself as the *"God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."* He is thus referred to numerous other times within Scripture, but nowhere does God claim to be 'the God' of other races or people. It is interesting to do a little research and find the origin of some of these people who the Israelites were to displace – many of whom were descendants of Ishmael, Shelah or Esau all of whom were descendants of Abraham but outside the 'seed' covenant. God then told Moses that He would send him *"unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth **my people, the children of Israel** out of Egypt."* (Emphasis added). This is the initial declaration by God as to His claim on this particular people. In spite of all the names that scholars use to

identify the Lord God of Israel, when Moses asked Him who he should say had sent him – God told Moses to say “*I AM hath sent me unto you.*”

After the ordeal with the curses and the renegeing on his various promises, mostly because God had “*hardened his (Pharaoh’s) heart*” (Exodus 4:21), God tells Moses to inform Pharaoh that “*Israel is my son, even my first born.*” (Exodus 4:22). In the scheme of descendants the first born son was in a specially privileged situation; always receiving an additional portion of the inheritance (the role of primogenitor). In Numbers 3:13 God says “*all firstborn are mine.*” Moses imposes the last of the curses; that of the death of the Egyptian’s firstborn, and the Egyptians allow the children of Israel to leave. The Israelites came out of Egypt very wealthy. At the departure the Lord had made the Egyptians so weary of Moses and the curses that the population “*gave unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.*” In addition the Israelites took with them “*flocks and herds and very much cattle.*” This is a fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 15:14, “*...and afterward they shall come out with great substance.*”

Exodus 12 says there were six hundred thousand men, plus children and “*a mixed multitude.*” Assuming four to a family, two and one half million seems like a valid number. The “*mixed multitude*” consisted of people other than pure Israelites and was to become a problem later on. This is another instance where the violation of God’s order, to bring “*my people, Israel*” out of Egypt, causes problems for the Israelites. This “*mixed multitude,*” likely ‘mamzer’ children resulting from intermarriage with non-Israelite women, was not part of the liberation plan for God’s people.

In Exodus 6 the Lord speaks to Moses and informs him that He (God) is to bring His people out of Egypt and take them to the land promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then in Exodus 6:7 the Lord God of Israel makes the first declaration of the exclusive relationship between God and the Israelites:

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD,

and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I {am} the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.” (Exodus 6:7-8)

Note that there are seven “*I will’s*” in God’s declarations. This was made to the Israelites without their participation.

As soon as the Israelites were out of Egypt and in the desert, the plan of God started to be implemented. The Covenant in Exodus 19 is the first documentation of the unique relationship that these people had with God. “...*Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for the whole earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*” The “*ye*” denotes Israel as being the ‘peculiar’ treasure and “*above all (other) people*” signifying that God is setting them into a unique position in His sight. Then in Exodus 20, when God is about to deliver the so-called Ten Commandments, He prefaces them with the following:

*“I am the Lord thy God, who has brought **thee** out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” (Exodus 20:1)*
(Emphasis added)

That signifies that the Commandments are directed to the people of Israel only – there is no instance where there is any other people being subjected to the Commandments.

Two of those Commandments have been misapplied for many years, and the current emphasis on them is totally foreign to the meaning of the original application. “*Thou shall not kill,*” has been incorrectly interpreted for centuries as not condoning the killing of any individual by

another. However throughout Scripture there are directions for the children of Israel to kill other people - these orders often coming directly from the Lord God of Israel. Phinehas was rewarded by the Lord for his killing of Zimri and his Midianite wife in front of the entire congregation. Zimri had violated the ban on intermarriage by the men of Israel. (Numbers 25:7) Phinehas went on to serve the Lord and the people of Israel for many years. Saul was removed as king by God because he failed to “utterly destroy” the Amalekites, their livestock and slay their king, Agag. In Luke 19:27 Jesus says that “...*those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me...*” meaning that in the restoration of the kingdom of God/Heaven, those people that reject Jesus’ authority are to be slain by His order.

Elijah took four hundred fifty of the Baal priests down to the river and killed them all – at the direction of the Lord God of Israel. In Numbers 16, God killed fourteen thousand ‘murmurers’ with a plague. The killing of animals for sacrifice and food is obviously allowed, and the killing of predatory beasts and criminals is mandated by the Law. So the actual interpretation of the Commandment is directed to the Israelites, telling them they are not to murder (kill without cause) another Israelite. The shedding of innocent blood is one of the major sins of the Israelites resulting in their dispersion later.

The Sixth Commandment is generally stated as “*Thou shall not commit adultery.*” This is a total mis-translation of the verb ‘*moicheuseis.*’ The literal meaning is not to contaminate (adulterate) something that is pure. The true translation should be “*Thou shall not adulterate.*” The purpose is to emphasize that the purity of the Israelite race is the paramount concern. Miscegenation was forbidden from the outset and the penalty was permanent and everlasting banishment from the people of God. Phinehas’ action above was an acceptable response to the sin of miscegenation. God said that children of a mixed marriage (Israelite father and a ‘strange’ or non-Israelite wife) could never enter into the congregation of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 23:2). Thus, for example, the children of Judah’s marriage to Shula, the Adulamite, were forever banned from

becoming members of the Covenant people. However, the twins born to Tamar, an Israelite, although born of a questionable relationship (Judah and his former daughter-in-law) were important parties to God's program. There is no mention of an instance of a 'strange' wife's children being converted to the congregation – only banishment.

In the midst of the worship and sacrifice instructions in Exodus 23, the Lord puts a paragraph in to instruct the people as to how they are to go into and possess the land promised to them. The angel referred to in Exodus 23:20 is in a similar position as those later seen in the book of Daniel – operating within a territory assigned by God for the protection and direction of the people. In this discussion the people are told to stay “*in the way*” (God's way) and instructions for the disposal of the various tribes (nations) that were in the land were provided. Notice there was no hint of evangelizing or converting the indigenous population – the methods of dealing with them were quite clear and concise. In Exodus 23:31-33, the essence of the chapter is summarized;

“...for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with any of their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.”
(Exodus 23:31-33)

Notice that God is calling it “*thy land*” and they aren't even there yet! In Deuteronomy 7 the Lord tells Moses:

“When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land where thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations, greater and mightier than thou. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them. Neither shalt

thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their idols, and burn their carved images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people who are upon the face of the earth.”
(Deuteronomy 7:1-6)

There is a definite command here from God for His people to not enter into any sort of association with the people who were occupying the land. They were to be completely destroyed and driven out to the last person and in many cases even the livestock and animals were to be destroyed. There is not even the slightest hint of evangelizing or proselytizing others into the Covenant.

In Exodus 24 Moses takes the Covenant dictated by the Lord, down to the children of Israel and recounted all the Word to them. And “...*all the people (Israel) answered with one voice, and said ‘All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do.’*” Thus Israel accepted the so-called ‘Old Covenant,’ which was to remain in force until rescinded by the Lord, due to Israel’s breaking the terms many years later. In this instance again, the Covenant relationship is solely with the people of Israel – there is no mention of any other parties to the agreement. In a foretelling of the role of the Messiah, in Exodus 24:1, the Lord tells Moses to “*come up*” to worship with seventy of the leaders of Israel and three other named men but they must “*worship afar off*” (at a distance).

Later in Exodus 24:10, after Moses had taken the blood of the sacrifice and “...*sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you (Israel) in accordance with all these words.*,” Moses and those same people were able to approach “*the Lord God of Israel*” and “...*He did not stretch out his hand against the*

nobles of the sons of Israel and they beheld God and did eat and drink.” Only after the payment of the blood sacrifice sealing the Covenant could Israel approach God. This is a prophetic glimpse of the blood sacrifice of Jesus that allows modern Israel (not the Jews) to approach God.

Like the Ten Commandments, the subject of the Sabbath has been debated for centuries. In Exodus 31:16 the Lord says: *“Wherefore the children of **Israel** shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant.”* Again, there is no Scripture obligating any other people to keep the Sabbath. The ‘keeping of the Sabbath’ was instituted as a day of complete rest – it was never meant to be a day of organized worship. Worship was determined by the festivals and sacrificial practices, and the individual only went to the Temple on specific occasions a few times each year. Unless they lived within a *“Sabbath’s days journey,”* the Israelite couldn’t even get to the Temple on the Sabbath. Remember that at the time the rule regarding the Sabbath was given, it would be several hundred years – until the time of Solomon – before there would even be a Temple.

After giving the pattern for the tabernacle and rules for governing and the punishment of crimes and sins the Lord visited the tabernacle and talked with Moses *“face to face”* (Exodus 33:11). The dialogue between Moses and the Lord God of Israel in Exodus 33 shows that Moses was somewhat disturbed by the actions of the people of Israel. God told him to go up and take the children of Israel to the Promised Land and that He (God) would send an angel before them, but He would not go Himself because they were a stubborn (stiff-necked) people and He might destroy them. Later, in the agreement part of the chapter we find the following:

“...Now therefore, I (Moses) pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he (God) said, ‘My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’ And he (Moses) said unto him, ‘If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace

in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.’ And the LORD said unto Moses, ‘I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.’”
(Exodus 33:13-17)

Two very important things are within these verses. First, Moses asks that “*if I and thy people have found grace,*” and God answers “*...thou hast found grace in my sight...*” meaning both Moses and “thy (God’s) people had found (were given) grace”. Since Moses had requested it collectively, it stands that God awarded it in that manner. Second, Moses makes the statement that because God is going “*up*” with the Israelites; “*...so shall we be separated, I and thy people from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.*” The Israelites had already been ordered to totally destroy all the nations that were presently occupying the Promised Land, and after their destruction the Israelites were to have nothing to do with the surrounding people socially. Later, Solomon in his prayer (1 Kings 8) makes the following statement: “*...For thou didst separate them (Israel) from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.*” Failure to maintain this separation was one of the main factors in the demise of the Israelites.

As we read through the story of the exodus, its easy to just assume that all the things were in place and available to the children of Israel. When you consider the support and logistics for such a movement, it is truly impressive! Assume the number of two and one half million souls is a valid number, based on six hundred thousand men, and four people per family, it appears to be logical. Two and one half million individuals would require approximately twelve hundred and fifty tons of manna daily, to give each person one pound per day. Water requirements for that many people just for drinking purposes would be over a million gallons per day to give each person a half gallon. Bathing and washing of food and clothes would probably add another five hundred thousand gallons per day – all from “*the rock.*” In the exodus journey, the source of

the water is always referred to as “*the rock*,” which indicates that there was a specific rock from which they got their water. the Psalms states that:

*“Behold, he smote **the rock**, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?”* (Psalm 78:20) (Emphasis added)

*“He opened **the rock** and the waters gushed out, they ran in the dry places like a river.”* (Psalm 105:41)

This rock was obviously a miraculous source of water throughout the time of the wandering in the wilderness. Moses struck it once the first time (Exodus 17:6), and obtained the water for the people for the journey, but later, when he stuck “*the rock*” twice in anger (Numbers 20:11), it caused him to be forbidden from entering into the Promised Land. The term ‘the rock’ is also frequently used as a label for the Messiah and the flow of life-saving water is also an analogy of the role of the Messiah later in the process of the Israelites.

After eating the divinely supplied manna (“*can he provide bread?*”) for a while, the people complained about only having manna to eat, and the Lord God of Israel sent them quail to eat (“*can he provide flesh?*”). Again, if you assume that each person would consume one bird, twice daily, it would require five million quail per day to satisfy the requirement for meat.

For a period of over forty years, God provided everything that the children of Israel required for the wandering journey. We are told that there were no sick, their shoes and clothing didn’t wear out, and only the doubters of the safety of the Promised Land were allowed to die. Only the following generation and two of the ‘spies,’ Joshua and Caleb, were allowed to enter into the Promised Land at the end of the term.

Although the account of the exodus is quite well documented, some hun-

dreds of years later, someone penned Psalm 105. Within that Psalm there is a condensed version of the history of the people of Israel, and the ways that their Lord God cared for them. Some of the key items in the Psalm relating to Israel's exodus are these:

“O ye seed of Abraham, his (God's) servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen.” (Psalm 105:6)

“He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, which covenant he made with Abraham and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, ‘Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.’” (Psalm 105:8-11)

Study this Psalm and you'll understand that the exceptional care and support God provided the Israelites over the forty year period was a miracle that has never been duplicated in human history. Only Israel has ever been the recipient of such attention!

Leviticus and Numbers

After Exodus there are three books that set forth the principles of how the children of Israel and their God are to live together in the new land that God has given them. Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy complete that portion of the Bible known as the Pentateuch.

Because they had lived in Egypt for approximately four hundred years without the specific organized worship directions (as far as we know), the initial part of Leviticus deals with that problem at the outset. All the sacrificial rules and directions for the sacrifice as well as the participants are set forth in detail. Many find the book difficult to study because of the graphic detail of the sacrifices and the resolution of some of the physical ailment that the people encountered. The rules were put there for the people to know and the penalty for ignoring them was most severe. In Leviticus 18, where many of the laws of sexual behavior are listed and the prohibitions detailed, there is a statement that makes the manner of dealing with the people of the nations that were to be overrun and destroyed more logical:

“Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.”

(Leviticus 18:24-25)

God had listed a number of perversions previous to this quotation and said that the people of the lands given to Israel were guilty of all of them; therefore He was having them destroyed. This type of behavior in addition to the worship of the “*other gods*” was something that the Lord God of Israel could not condone and the penalty was rapid and complete

destruction. Within Leviticus alone you can find the term “*your God*” approximately twenty five times, always referring to the people of Israel. As stated before there is no mention of any ‘evangelizing’ or direction for converting any of the indigenous population. Many of the problems the Israelites encountered later, even during David’s and Solomon’s times were the result of not complying with the direction of God to destroy the neighboring people and allowing them to exist in the role of tributes or slaves.

The laws for the Israelites covered many items that are considered improper today. For instance there are rules for the treatment of slaves and multiple wives, although there is no prohibition on either practice. Treatment of Israelite slaves was quite different than slaves that were obtained from outside the tribes. Servitude, like debt, could (or must) be forgiven at the occurrence of the Year of Jubilee, or at the conclusion of a seven year period in some cases.

The book of Numbers details the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The first couple of chapters provides the census ordered by God (“*Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers*” Numbers 1:2) to Moses and records about six hundred thousand men, over the age of twenty with their families. Note that the succession of the family is always based on the descendant sons of the father. God gave them the tablets of the Old Covenant at Mt. Sinai when they were only out of Egypt a few months. We are also told of the order of the tribes in camping around the tabernacle, and the attendant priestly tribe. Some of the sons of various “*princes*” or leaders of the tribe of Levi were given specific tasks to perform, to support the maintenance and moving of the tabernacle. No others could approach or touch those sacred items under penalty of death. Numbers 3 lists the generations (sons) of Aaron who were anointed as the priests of the Israelites. In Numbers 3:12 God tells Moses “*...I have taken the Levites (sons of Levi) from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the womb among the children of Israel; therefore the Levites shall be mine.*” This action also establishes the special relationship with the Levites when the Promised Land is

divided among the tribes.

Throughout the book there is evidence of an almost continual dialogue between the Lord God of Israel and Moses. That it was a special relationship is verified when Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses' stature with God. (Chapter 12) They were told by God that He spoke to His prophets by visions and dreams but that with *"My servant Moses, it is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth even plainly..."* (Numbers 12:7-8). Later in Numbers 16, some of the sons of Levi also sought to overturn the authority of Moses and Aaron. Because they were rebelling against His servant Moses, God reacted in anger. A total of fourteen thousand of the rebels were destroyed in front of the entire congregation in an awe-inspiring manner.

In Numbers 20 the action of Moses that precluded his entering the Promised Land is set forth. All the while the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness we are told they received water from *"the rock."* There is always the definite article signifying a particular rock. This is the same rock that God told Moses to smite with his rod in Exodus 17:6. However, in the Numbers 20 situation, Moses was told by God to speak to the rock. Because he was angered by the complaining of the people, Moses struck the rock twice (Numbers 20:11) and said *"...must we (he and Aaron) fetch you water out of this rock?"* This action so angered God, that Moses and Aaron were told that they could not enter into the Promised Land with the children of Israel.

When Balaam was engaged to curse Israel, he was aware that he could not do that; he tells Balak that there can be no curse put against Israel because of their God. In Numbers 23 he says,

"...For from the top of the rocks I see him (God), and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people (Israel) shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob (the number of his descendants), and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" (Numbers 23:9)

As a prophet, Balaam knew that the Lord God of Israel had made them a separate people, and that they were not to mingle with the other races. He also knew that the Israelites were to become a huge group, growing from the two and one half million that were coming out of the wilderness.

The gravity of the two principal offenses (bowing to/ worshiping other gods and miscegenation) by the children is found in the story of Numbers 25. Because the children stayed in the area surrounded by the Midianites and Moabites for some time, they became involved in the worship of the “*other gods*” and took “*strange wives*” from the locals. Both actions were forbidden and the reaction of the Lord God of Israel was swift and fierce. The Lord told Moses to have the princes (leaders) of the various tribes kill all the Israelite men that had “...*joined unto Baal-peor.*” This meant their having eaten food sacrificed to the other gods and the “*bowing down*” to them as well as taking the “*strange women*” to wife. We are also told of the action of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, who killed one man (Zimri) and his Midianitish wife (Cozbi) and was rewarded with a perpetual covenant of peace from the Lord God of Israel for his actions.

“And the LORD spoke unto Moses saying, ‘Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.’” (Numbers 25:10-11)

Altogether, we’re told twenty four thousand Israelites were killed that day for the two sins against their God. Apparently Phinehas’ action prevented the wholesale annihilation of the children of Israel. Both of these instances of His killing large numbers of Israelites happen after the issuance of the Commandment interpreted as “*Thou shalt not kill.*”

In Numbers 35, after setting forth the provisions for the cities of refuge, God admonishes the people of Israel to refrain from shedding innocent blood. They are told they are not to “...*defile (pollute) the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children*

of Israel.” Although we know that God is omnipresent (everywhere at once) we have no other instance where He tells of living among any other people.

An interesting aside is in the benediction given countless times in the modern church congregations. Surely we’ve all heard the following:

“The LORD bless thee and keep thee; The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace”
(Numbers 6:24-26)

However the total quotation from Numbers 6:22-27 is as follows:

*“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, on this wise ye (Aaron and his sons) shall **bless the children of Israel** saying unto them, The LORD bless thee and keep thee; The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. And they (Aaron and his sons) shall put my (God’s) name upon **the children of Israel**; and I will bless them.”* (Numbers 6:22-27) (Emphasis added)

So, this blessing that has been quoted so often as applicable to all the world’s congregations is actually only directed to (and for) the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy, which means ‘Second Law,’ is a partial re-iteration of many of the laws and rules of behavior previously given to the Israelites, as well as pertinent laws about living in the Promised Land they are about to enter. Within the book there are many different manners of addressing the Supreme Being and they are ALWAYS used as defining the God of the Israelites. He is referred to as “*your God*,” “*our God*,” “*the Lord God of Israel*,” and several other titles, indicating the relationship is exclusively between the two mentioned parties. Within the book are many prophecies as to the fate of Israel. At times the Lord God of Israel gives them the choice of “*life or death*” and, as seen in the subsequent books, Israel chose the latter. God does explicitly inform Israel that He has selected them “*above all other people of the earth*,” and that He is ultimately to be, to them, their God. (Deuteronomy 28-30).

Deuteronomy 4 is a complete admonition, given by Moses, for the Israelites to remember and keep the laws and commands of the Lord God of Israel:

“Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day. Behold, I have taught you statutes and judg-

ments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire”
(Deuteronomy 4:1-15)

Later in Deuteronomy 4 God verifies the roles of the two parties:

*“Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as **thou** hast heard, and live? Or hath God*

assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.” (Deuteronomy 4:33-40)
 (Emphasis added)

Starting in Deuteronomy 4:33, God summarizes his actions and what He demands from the Israelites. Note the use of the pronouns and the factual references to His past performance. The obvious answer to the questions posed in verses 33 and 34 is “NO.” Two points that require noting are:

1 - in verse 38 God calls the land they haven’t entered yet “*an inheritance as it is this day;*” and

2 - in verse 40 “*...that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.*”

The word for ‘earth’ is the Hebrew word ‘*adamah*’ which can mean the entire earth. However, God is most likely telling Israel before they enter the Promised Land, that He has given them that portion of the earth for ever.

All of Israel was told of the unique status they had with their Lord. Moses coached and taught them for forty years in the wilderness, always emphasizing the fact as set forth above. The rest of Deuteronomy reiterates the same Laws and Commandments.

The following statement made by Moses, quoting a conversation he had with the Lord God of Israel:

“But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.” (Deuteronomy 4:20)

The term “*inheritance*” is used frequently throughout the Old Testament by the Lord God of Israel to address and identify the children of Israel. It always denotes an ownership of something of value having passed to the inheritor, in this case making God the possessor of the Israelites.

Then in Deuteronomy 4:32, Moses asks the children of Israel a rhetorical question that puts them in the position where they become certain that they are a unique people, and have been treated like no other people on earth:

“For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?” (Deuteronomy 4:32-34)

Moses is asking them if they have ever heard of anyone other than themselves witnessing the kind of attention and behavior the children of Israel

had in their journey. Of course the answer to that question is, “NO, Never!” Throughout the Pentateuch there are numerous mentions of the possessive pronoun connecting the members of this exclusive covenant and excluding any and all others. There is no mention of any suggestion of conversion or proselyting the members of the countries that they are to conquer in any of the existing Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 7 is one of the most powerful statements ever made to/about Israel: (quoted here in its entirety)

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth

covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee. And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee. If thou shalt say in thine heart, these nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid. Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed. Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible. And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and

shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.” (Deuteronomy 7:1-26) (Emphasis added)

As you can see there are many of the absolute rules for the Israelites given in this chapter. The gravity of intermarriage (miscegenation) is put forth very clearly and the penalty of the Lord God of Israel is not a light thing! Because of the danger of this problem the residents of the land they were being given were to be completely destroyed with no exceptions. Deuteronomy 20 provides the option of making slaves of the people of the ‘far away’ cities, if and when they surrender when confronted by the Israelites. Verse 16 says:

“...But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 20:16-18)

Note that this is a command from the Lord God of Israel. From these Scriptures it is evident that the two major offenses as far as the Lord God of Israel is concerned are:

- 1 - intermarriage with the heathen people, and
- 2 - serving other gods.

These two things will ultimately cause the downfall of Israel.

Deuteronomy 10 continues the narrative of Moses and documents the issuance of the second set of laws “*hewn in a tablet of stone*” by God because Moses had broken the first set. Starting in verse 12, God tells Moses just what He expects of the children of Israel; the following is a partial quote:

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I command you this day for your good? Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the LORD set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day.”
(Deuteronomy 10:12-15)

Once again Israel is told by the Lord God of Israel that He has chosen them “*above all peoples*” and four times in the quotation He refers to Himself as “*the Lord your God.*” Also notice that the Lord God of Israel says that He chose the descendants of the fathers of the children of Israel; they did not choose Him. He is indeed in charge of all things for the Israelites!

“Ye are the children of the Lord your God. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God and the Lord hath chosen thee to be peculiar people unto himself, above all people that are upon the earth.” (Deuteronomy 14:2)

There can be no confusion in the meaning of that statement: God selected Israel as “*unto Himself*” and they were (are) to be “*above all people.*”

In Deuteronomy 17 there are several admonitions regarding the administration of justice within the tribes. However, the restrictions for their king, beginning in verse 14, have been ignored by royalty since there

have been kings and queens. Here is what God had to say about their coming king:

“When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.” (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

The restrictions of verse 15 limited the king to be only of the tribes of Israel. There was to be no king over the people other than an Israelite. Had the kings of Israel kept these rules and guidelines, one can't help but wonder how the land and people would have prospered? In nearly every case the royal families amassed huge amounts of wealth and material things and made certain they were *“lifted above his brethren”* and caused the ordinary citizens to live in a manner that was considerably lower than it should have been. The contents of verse 19 will be one of the standards judging those rulers in the end and the Lord God of Israel will dole out the judgment in a righteous manner.

There is a statement in Deuteronomy 23 that has been incorrectly interpreted throughout the ages. The verse in the KJV reads:

“A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 23:2)

One could gather from that reading that the emphasis is regarding a child born out of wedlock. That is not the meaning! The offspring of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) were actually bastards - being born out of wedlock - and yet they became a significant part in the development of the house of Israel. The noun translated as “*bastard*” is the Hebrew word ‘*mamzer*,’ meaning a child that is a mongrel or one born to a heathen (other than Israelite) woman and an Israelite father (See Strong’s #4464). The three sons born to Judah by Hira the Adullamite (Genesis 38) were ‘*mamzers*,’ and therefore could never enter the congregation of Israel. The passage should read: “A mongrel shall not enter...” The original Greek text added after “*Lord*” is “*yea, nor forever.*” From this it is obvious that once a line of people is polluted (adulterated) and goes away from the purity of the line of Israel, that offspring can never be a part of the congregation or covenant again - forever! This is the true meaning of the Seventh Commandment, “Thou shalt not adulterate.”

In Deuteronomy 26 there are the instructions for bringing the first fruits to the priests for dedication to the Lord. Included is the recitation of thanksgiving and the recognition of the Lord God of Israel for having provided the land and the produce. In verses 16 through 19 there is a special reiteration of the covenant relationship between God and Israel:

“This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee (Israel) to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched (sworn) the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar peo-

ple, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; And to make thee (Israel) high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy (set aside) people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken."

(Deuteronomy 26:16-19)

Deuteronomy 27-28 contain the multitude of blessings and curses that were given to Israel based upon their behavior before the Lord. It is feasible that if Israel had continued living in accordance with Chapter 28:1-14, after a few thousand years they could have expanded to populate nearly the entire earth. It states that, "*all the people of the earth shall know you are named of the Lord God of Israel and shall be afraid of you.*" Instead, the curses were to be administered; the dispersion and destruction of Israel by another nation that God would send upon Israel for the worship of other gods, and the failure to honor the Sabbath as directed.

Deuteronomy 29-30 document among other things the provisions of another covenant between the Lord God of Israel and the children of Israel which was "*beside the covenant I made with them in Horeb.*" Within these two chapters the significance of the selection of Israel by God is repeated several times. The term "*thy God*" is sprinkled throughout both verses and the narrative makes it very clear that God is addressing Israel directly. None of the blessings in the first part of Chapter 30, nor the curses given in the latter part concern any people other than Israel.

In the last days prior to the death of Moses, God gave Moses a song which He told him to teach to the children of Israel for "*... a witness for me.*" Upon giving the song to the Israelites, God told Moses to go up to a specific mountain and die. Before doing that, Moses blessed the sons of Israel and that blessing is found in Chapter 33. Those blessings are different than the blessings of Jacob/ Israel and are to be considered supplemental to and in addition to the former blessings. As in Genesis 49, Joseph's blessing is larger than any of the others. Concluding the bless-

ings to the individual tribes, in verse 26 Moses gives a word of praise unto the Lord God of Israel like none found elsewhere in the Scriptures:

“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun (the upright one), who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

The Septuagint verse refers to Him as *“the God of the beloved (Israel); He who rides upon the heaven...”* but in both cases the intent is that the people of Israel are the God’s most precious possession and that under the terms of the Covenant He has given them, they are to be safe and prosperous all the days of their lives. Only Israel is ever referred to as *“O people saved of the LORD.”* Unfortunately Israel will not maintain their end of the contract and the ‘curses’ portion of the promises will be their lot for thousands of years before being recalled by their Lord again as promised.

Joshua

The first nine verses of the book of Joshua is the ‘job description’ God gives to Joshua after the death of Moses, when He directs Joshua to take over the task of entering into, and conquering the Promised Land. Although God had referred to the Promised Land as ‘your land’ many times previously, He tells Joshua in verse 3 that every place that Joshua and the Israelites are to walk has already been given to them by God. The Israelites are repeatedly told that no people will be able to stand up to them, and that the Lord God of Israel will be the victor in every conflict in the process of taking over the land. When the two spies enter Jericho, they go to the house of Rahab the harlot. She makes an agreement with the spies to hide them, in exchange for allowing her and her relatives to live when the city falls. She refers to God as “*the Lord your God.*” (Joshua 2:11). There is always an understanding by the people around the Israelites, acknowledging the relationship of the Lord God of Israel having nothing to do with the others.

Although not mentioned very often in the teaching today, the miracle of the crossing of the Jordan by the children of Israel has to be one of the most significant exhibitions of Godly power in the Old Testament. The entire river at flood stage was stopped long enough for over two million people to walk across on dry ground, and the upstream water was piled up waiting for their crossing. (See Joshua 3) After they crossed, the river flow resumed normally. This action was known by the local people and served as another witness to them as to the power of the God of the Israelites.

Every Sunday school student knows the story of the battle of the city of Jericho, which was the first city taken in the conquest. Joshua 6-12 document the campaign of assuming the ownership of the land of Palestine.

The entire campaign is based on Joshua following direction of the Lord God of Israel, and none of the coalitions formed by the indigenous kings was able to stand before the might of the Israelites when acting in concert with the directives of their God. There are a multitude of references to God, always as a possessive pronoun for the children of Israel. The contents of this book leave no doubt that the activity is specifically for the people He has claimed as His *“peculiar treasure,”* - Israel. Joshua 12 ends with the list of thirty one kings that were conquered and destroyed to make a place for the children of Israel. Throughout the conquest there is never a mention of any measure of converting any of the indigenous people, all were to be destroyed. In case one was to think it was the desire of Joshua and the children of Israel to do this, Joshua 11:20 clarifies the order of the operation:

“For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.”

(Joshua 11:20)

In the same manner that God said that He ‘hardened’ Pharaoh’s heart, He did likewise to the people of the area of Palestine, to accomplish His purpose. Sometimes we have difficulty understanding God’s actions but they aren’t to be questioned. The story of the take-over of the Palestine area by the children of Israel is the manifestation of the promises that God had made previously to the various patriarchs. Here again it becomes obvious that only Israel is under the Covenant existing at that time as to the selection of that people to be His particular possession.

The Gibeonites became aware of the impending destruction of all the residents of the Promised Land; they worked an ingenious ploy on Joshua. Posing as men from a considerable distance they fooled Joshua into forming an alliance with them. When Joshua became aware of the situation, he made them bondmen (slaves) to serve the Israelites as *“hewers of wood and drawers of water.”* They remained slaves in bondage to the Israelites for years.

The last part of the book is given to the allocation of the land to the various tribes. Finally in Joshua 21 there is the summary of the book:

“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.” (Joshua 21:43-45)

After the conclusion of the conquest, the two and a half tribes that had claimed land on the other side of Jordan were sent home – having completed the obligation they had agreed to at the beginning of the book. It is estimated that some of the men of the tribes of Rueben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had been on duty with Joshua for over twenty five years.

Chapter 24 tells of Joshua’s calling together the leaders of the children of Israel at Shechem, to remind them of their history and the unique relationship they were to have with their God. Another great stone is set up as a witness to the Covenant the people had agreed to, as stated in Joshua’s lecture to the tribes. When they were sent away, it says that they departed *“every man to his inheritance,”* meaning that the land they received was given to them by one who had possession of it, in a manner that was legally transferable to them as heirs. As far back as Genesis the descendants of Adam were called *“the Sons of God;”* therefore God could pass the land to His heirs - the children of Israel.

Judges

After they had completely taken over the Promised Land, the Israelites lived in a rather unique form of government; a theocracy. They had no king or supreme leader other than the Lord God of Israel. There had been judges appointed in each of the tribes, except for Levi, and they were the ultimate deciding body of enforcement of the Law as given to Moses. The land had been apportioned so that each adult male of every tribe (other than Levi) was given a plot of land, and he was the ruling individual on that plot. The Law given in the Pentateuch was actually the law of the land. The settlement of differences was accomplished by elevating problems up from the rulers of hundreds to rulers of thousands and up to the head judge of each of the twelve tribes as the gravity of the problem warranted.

Over the years the people did not do well under this form of government and gradually fell away from compliance with the Law and the Covenant they had agreed to with their Lord God. Pressure from without, by the heathen people that the Israelites were to have destroyed and didn't, as well as their own propensity for idolatry, caused considerable strife among the individuals as well as between the tribes. This resulted in a state of anarchy and subsequently civil war. It seems that none of the tribes embraced a theocratic form of government and as a result the group (they couldn't be called a nation at this point, due to the fact that it was actually twelve individually independent tribes) fared quite poorly. Judges 1 tells of the various tribes failing to "*drive out*" the Canaanites from their areas, a situation that would prove to be disastrous from that day forward.

An angel, actually a theophany, comes to chastise the Israelites, in Judges 2, for their failing to do as they were told about the inhabitants of

the land. In every case where Israel failed to perform God's commands to the letter, they suffered tremendously. After the death of Joshua, and the generation that lived with him passed on, the children of Israel *"...did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Balaam."* This was the direct result of influence from the Canaanites around them and the inter-marriage with them. The judges that were established, did have some influence on the people, and in many instances kept the populace from being totally destroyed.

The various kingdoms surrounding the Israelites consisted of people that were to have been destroyed when the Israelites came into the Promised Land. The Lord actually used them to punish the children of Israel when they strayed. Here is another example of the two major sins that caused the ire of the Lord God of Israel:

"...And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods."
(Judges 3:5-6)

This behavior began a series of cycles going from obedience to apostasy to redemption that lasted for the entire time of the judges, approximately three hundred fifty years. In every case the Lord would appoint a judge to lead the people out of the bondage they had incurred as a result of their disobedience, especially on the two points stated above. After restoration the land would have peace for years, until the people would stray again and their Lord God would impose a violently oppressive enemy on them as punishment. During the period of the fifteen or sixteen named judges, the land did not do well and continued to behave in a manner that brought the violent reaction from their God. Rather than submit to the rule of God through the judges, the people began to demand a king as the other countries around had.

2 Samuel

After he had become king over all of Israel, David wanted to build a house for God, but in a revelation to Nathan, God told David to forget it. In addition to forbidding David's building of the house, the Lord God of Israel provided further information to Nathan for David. Here is a part of that promise:

“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 beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.” (2 Samuel 7:10-11)

This is another instance where the Septuagint version makes more sense than the KJV – here is that translation:

“And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell by themselves, and shall be no more distressed: and the son of iniquity shall no more afflict them, as he has done from the beginning. From the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel: and I will give thee rest from all thine enemies and the Lord will tell thee that thou shalt build a house to him.” (LXX)

At the time of this promise Israel had been in the Promised Land for over three hundred fifty years, yet the message is in the future tense. At that time also, the people Israel had never dwelt by themselves – they had caused themselves considerable problems by not carrying out the orders

of God to destroy the people living in the land that they were to inherit. The children of wickedness (more properly “*the son of iniquity*” in the LXX) that had been “*afflicting them from the beginning*” refers all the way back to the conflict initiated between Adam/ Eve and Lucifer. The embodiment of the “*son of iniquity*” was the people that were not destroyed as God had told Joshua to do. Later in the chapter David’s prayer shows just how unique the relationship was (is) between Israel and their Lord God.

“For thy word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.” (2 Samuel 7:21-27)

At this time the whole house of Israel was still being addressed as one nation. The possessive pronouns verify the relationship between Israel and God and the language signifies that it is to be forever. That the people of Israel had been “*confirmed*” to God meant that He had verified the possession to His own satisfaction. David’s throne (house) was also to be established forever and the name of the Lord God of Israel was to be

magnified over Israel forever.

Under David the house of Israel prospered for many years. He accumulated much in the way of material things and numerous wives. The book tells of the troubles he had with his family that was almost his undoing. Absalom was the most vicious and vengeful of all the sons and his death was devastating on David. 2 Samuel 22 contains the song of David, in which he describes the role of the Lord God of Israel on his life and the life of the Israelites.

Ezra

The two men that have documented the restoration of the city of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity each have a book in the Old Testament. Ezra was responsible for the restoration of the temple and Nehemiah for the wall around the city. Both were actually living in the area of the captivity when the books were started. The book of Ezra covers a period of more than sixty years. Considered historical, both books are replete with mentions of the unique status of the children of Israel (in this case the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin) even during the seventy years of captivity. Ezra, known also as Esdras, was the author of several books; his other books were removed from what is now the canonical portion of the Scriptures. Given the frequent mention of the years of the various kings in the narrative, the exact times being described are easily known.

In Ezra 1:1 the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:12) that the captivity would last for seventy years, is mentioned as the basis of the proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia. In the proclamation, Cyrus states that since the *“Lord God of heaven”* had *“given me all the kingdoms of the earth”* he felt that he (Cyrus) *“should build him (The Lord God of Heaven) an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.”* Cyrus then invites all those of *“his (God’s) people”* to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of the Lord God of Israel. Cyrus is quoted as continually referring to the God of Israel as *“the God that is in Jerusalem”* or *“the Lord that is in Jerusalem”* or *“your God.”* At no time did Cyrus claim any intimate relationship with the Lord God of Israel. The period of time to rebuild the temple covers the reign of three different kings, Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes. In most cases where the KJV refers to the returning people as *“Jews”* the proper word should be ‘Judeans’ (*‘Ioudaios’*) referring to the residents of Judea.

In Chapter 2, Ezra lists the names and genealogy of those returning, and the number of each family by the head of each of the houses. During the seventy years of living in the Babylonian society, there had been inter-marriage by some of the Judean men with the women of the local people. In Ezra 2:61-62 they were found to be missing from the registration of priests and were therefore banned from assuming the priestly duties and were put out of the priesthood. The Scriptures say they were “*polluted*,” which is the same connotation as the verb in the Seventh Commandment, which is properly translated as ‘adulterate’ rather than “*commit adultery*.” Later, Ezra is faced with the situation of many Israelites having “*strange wives*,” and he must make the men comply with the Law of the Israelites.

Ezra 4 mentions the two returning tribes, Judah and Benjamin; the northern ten tribes had been removed (along with all the outlying population of the north part of Judah) by the Assyrians some two hundred years previously. Earlier, God told Joshua that the people living in the land Joshua was to take, were guilty of all sorts of abominations and that living among them would adversely affect the Israelites. In Ezra 6 Israel is said to have “*separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the nations of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel...*” A significant part of the problems were caused by the descendants of the people that the Israelites didn’t destroy when claiming the land during the conquest of Canaan according to the direction of the Lord God of Israel. (Deuteronomy 7:2).

Ezra is finally named in Chapter 7, and his complete lineage is provided back to Moses’ brother Aaron, the Chief Priest of the Israelites. He is said to arrive in Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, which would be approximately seventy five years after the initial return ordered by Cyrus. Ezra brought with him a number of heads of houses and they are numerated in Ezra 8. Notice that, as was usual in those times, only the males are counted. In addition to the many men returning, Ezra also brought back a considerable treasure that had been taken by the conquering armies when Judah was overrun. Upon his arrival, the first problem brought to Ezra by the leaders of the Judahites, was to inform him that

the separation from the people of the land had not been done as ordered earlier, and there was considerable intermarriage among the Judeans. The severity of this problem was a disaster to Ezra, and he reacted with the most profound response. After rending his clothes, tearing out hair from his head and beard, he sat down appalled. He was aware that this had been a problem during the captivity, and knew that it was now a major sin against the people of Israel. The rest of Chapter 9 is Ezra's prayer in an attempt to mitigate the wrath of the Lord against the people of Judah.

After his prayer there came a large congregation of the leaders of the Judahites, and they commenced the process that they were to use to resolve the problem. One of the princes addressed Ezra:

“And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.”
(Ezra 10:2-3)

The resolution was to “...put away all the wives and such as are born of them...” Because this problem was so widespread within the congregation, it was decided that all men of Israel had to gather in Jerusalem in three days under penalty of being banned from the congregation and forfeiting all their substance. When they gathered on the third day, Ezra addressed them:

“And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange

wives.” (Ezra 10:10-11)

As a result, all the men that had married foreign (‘strange’) women separated from them and all the children they had born. Note that they are referred to as “*such as born of them*” and not as sons or daughters. Ezra 10:18-44 contains a list of all the priests that had also married strange wives and had children by them. There is never any suggestion to convert them, or to ever consider including them into the congregation of the Israelites.

Nehemiah

In the book of Nehemiah, we are given the story of the restoration of the wall about the city of Jerusalem, which takes place approximately one hundred years after the start of the restoration of the temple (538-430 BC). With the enthusiasm and number of motivated people he had involved with him, the wall was completed in fifty two days from the start - a monumental task. The story tells that they often worked with tools in one hand and swords and spears in the other because of the opposition from the locals.

In early chapters we are told how Nehemiah was enabled to return to the task of building the wall and the resources that the king made available to him. All the many references to the 'Jews' in the story mean 'Judeans,' or those of the tribe of Judah that were either in captivity with Nehemiah, or still living in the area of Jerusalem.

In the same manner that Ezra had listed all the participants based on their genealogy, Nehemiah also had them registered. In this case also, there were many that could not be found in the records and were banished from the priesthood. After this it is said that the children of Israel separated themselves from every stranger, and began a prayerful repentance unto the Lord.

When the priests stood up and read, it was from the *"Book of the Law of the Lord their God;"* they then *"for another fourth of the day worshiped the Lord their God"*. (Nehemiah 9) As a part of that assembly, Ezra's prayer, starting in Nehemiah 9:6 and going through to verse 38, covers a condensed version of the Old Testament activities of the children of Israel. Again the problem of miscegenation is addressed in the sealing of the Covenant of the prayer of Ezra:

*“They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God’s law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; **And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, not take their daughters for our sons.**”*
(Nehemiah 10:29-30) (Emphasis added)

After the temple and the wall were completed and purified, the temple procedures were restored and the magnitude of the celebration is huge. In the re-establishment of the worship procedures, Nehemiah 13 provides a number of the temple activities that had been forgotten, and were implemented by Nehemiah to become compliant with the direction of the Lord God of Israel as had been given to Moses.

During the reading of the Law, they read to the people that the Ammonites and the Moabites could never be allowed into the congregation of the Lord. *“Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them:”* One of the actions upon hearing the Law for the first time in many years was the *“separation from Israel all the mixed multitude”* that was remaining from the exodus journey. Some historians put the number of the *“mixed multitude”* at over one hundred thousand people.

Nehemiah was furious when he found that there were still men living with Ammonite and Moabite wives in the congregation of Israel. He said *“I contended with them and cursed them and smote certain of them and plucked off their hair.”* (Nehemiah 13:25). His admonition to the populace at large is given in verse 27: *“...hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange women?”* Then in verse 30 he states, *“...thus cleaned I them from all foreigners...”*

It should be noted that even with all the problems associated with the rebuilding and restoration of the temple and the re-establishing of the Judean population, the action of intermarriage was considered as paramount and required immediate resolution. Thus the restoration of the

temple and wall was completed after the captivity of Judah and Benjamin, and the Israelites were back in Judea and Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the orders to separate from the others didn't last, and the people of Judea were doomed to be scattered by the Lord shortly after the time of Christ. However, the changes to the worship procedures as a result of the time spent in Babylon would forever change the worship practices of the Judean people.

Isaiah

The wonderful book of Isaiah contains a multitude of the most explicit promises ever given to Israel by the Lord. If one is to study the book with an understanding, other than the fact that it is solely directed to Israel, it can become a bit confusing. Where there is a reference to the ‘nations,’ keep in mind that the Greek word *‘ethnos’* is translated here, and the true meaning is frequently to the other tribes. In addressing the other tribes as in Isaiah 2:4, where the Lord God of Israel “*shall judge among the nations* (*‘ethnos’* – tribes).” There have been many different theories as to the object of the book and some of them border on heresy. I believe that one could learn the proper relationship of the Lord and Israel by the contents of Isaiah alone, because of the multitude of descriptions therein. Starting with the first verse we are told to whom the book is written:

“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” (Isaiah 1:1)

It is declared that the message is to Judah and Jerusalem. The ten northern tribes, and many of the people of Judah and Benjamin, had been taken away years previously. Isaiah 1 goes on to state that the Lord is tired of the phony worship of the people, and He will not honor their sacrifices and temple practices. The people are again told that they can be reclaimed by the Lord God of Israel:

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”
(Isaiah 1:18)

The term “*reason*” actually means to openly and honestly discuss. At this point in their lives, God couldn’t even get the people of Judah to talk directly to Him. This verse has been quoted as a universal proclamation to the entire world, but the language structure indicates it is directed to the same people as stated in Isaiah 1:1, Judah and Jerusalem.

Rather than quote extensively from the Scriptures, I would encourage you to study the book and pay particular attention to the references to the people, and to the terms used to identify the Lord. Thirteen times in the book of Isaiah, He is referred to as “*the God of Israel*”; twenty four times as “*The Holy One of Israel*.” There is a prophetic promise in Isaiah 14, that is, for the most part, ignored by the modern Evangelical preacher/ teacher that should be examined closely.

“For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers (‘ger’ – foreigner-people of another tribe) shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, (the foreigners) and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants (‘ebed’ – slave) and handmaids: and they (Israel) shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.” (Isaiah 14:1-2)

The Septuagint words that promise a little differently:

“But the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and my children shall rest on their own land: and the stranger shall be added to them, yes, shall be added to the house of Jacob. And my people shall take them and bring them into their place: and shall inherit them, and they will be multiplied upon the land for servants and handmaidens: and those who had taken my children captives shall become captives; and those who had lordship over them shall be under their rule.” (LXX)

The underlying promise here, is that when the Lord God of Israel does gather his children of Israel/ Jacob and “*set them in their own land,*” they will have the benefit of numerous servants and handmaidens to serve them. These servants (the term throughout the Old Testament for slave) are from ‘strangers,’ which is a word denoting another race of people, and evidently at some former time these other people had some sort of oppressive role over the children of Israel. As retribution for their actions, the Lord God of Israel is making them servants to the Israelites. The term ‘possess’ denotes actual ownership. Such action will not fit well into the universal equality concept being taught by most of the world today. There is more on the servant relationship of the strangers in Isaiah 60-61.

Israel is promised rest from their sorrow and in Isaiah 14:4 the purpose of the following passages is provided; “*...thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon...*” Because of this, and even though beginning with Isaiah 14:12 the word picture in the KJV is credited to ‘Lucifer,’ the narrative in succeeding verses indicates the true villain (adversary) is none other than King Nebuchadnezzar. The next verse tells of his arrogance as documented in Daniel 3, where he made the image of gold to be worshiped by all under penalty of death. Although God had used Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Judah and the temple, his arrogance and conceit caused him to “*...be brought down to sheol ...*” (literally the grave) by GOD. After the LORD God of Israel brings him down to “*sheol*” in the last days, “*... they that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee (look with squinted eye, looking intently) ...and ask themselves ‘Is this the man (note “is this the man” - NOT some spiritual ex-angelic being, but a man) who made the earth to tremble (the “earth” didn’t tremble, but the population of the nations Nebuchadnezzar confronted, did tremble in terror) and who did shake kingdoms...*”

Isaiah 14:20 says that the Lord God of Israel is going to prohibit his proper burial because of his actions. In verse 18 we are told that “*all the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory every one in his own house...*” meaning that all the other kings have had a proper and dignified burial in their own sepulcher. But Nebuchadnezzar is to be

“...cast out of thy sepulcher like an abominable branch.” His body and property are to be thrown out in the streets and trampled down by his successors. In the KJV the statement is that he has destroyed “*thy*” land and slain “*thy*” people. This appears to make the country and people belong to Nebuchadnezzar which isn’t true. However the Septuagint (LXX) puts it “...because thou hast destroyed my land and slain my people; thou shalt not endure forever, {thou} an evil seed.” This makes more sense – the LORD is talking about what he (Nebuchadnezzar) has done to Israel, the Lord’s land and people. Then the Lord says “*Prepare thy children to be slaughtered for the sins of their father;*” as was common in that day, when the Persians came into power (c. 530 BC) - after Nebuchadnezzar was defeated (brought down to sheol) all the king’s children and kin were killed. Very emphatically God says; “...that they (the king’s children) do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, (the king’s kin. Note that God is using another king to accomplish his purpose, here it’s the Persians) saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant and son and nephew saith the Lord.”

The LORD God of Israel reserves the option of installing and disposing of kings at His whim. “...The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomever he (God) will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” (Daniel 4:18). The utter destruction of the land of Babylon is described in Isaiah :23.

In Isaiah 19 there are some verses that would seem to contradict the many statements regarding Israel alone being the people of God.

“In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”
(Isaiah 19:23-25)

Verse 25 refers to Egypt as “my people” and Assyria as being “the work of my (God’s) hands”. Nowhere else in Scripture is Egypt so identified. Again the Septuagint tells a different story:

“In that day there shall be a way from Egypt to the Assyrians, and the Assyrians shall enter into Egypt and the Egypt shall serve the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be third with the Egyptians and the Assyrians, blessed in the land which the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, Blessed be my people that is in Egypt and that is among the Assyrians and Israel my inheritance.” (LXX)

As you can see, the proper usage of “my people” is to indicate those that were “in Egypt” and among the Assyrians, namely “Israel, my (God’s) inheritance.”

Isaiah 41 is a very revealing treatise on the feeling God has toward Israel/ Judah. Notice how He answers His own question in verse 4.

“Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.” (Isaiah 41:1-4)

Here again the KJV has obviously taken liberty with the language of the original. The Septuagint (LXX) version reads as follows:

“Hold a feast to me, ye islands; for the princes shall renew their strength; let them draw nigh and speak together; then let them declare judgment. Who raised up righteousness from the

east, and called it to his feet, so that it should go? Shall appoint it an adversary of Gentiles and shall dismay kings, and bury their swords in the earth and cast forth their bows and arrows as sticks? And he shall pursue them; the way of his feet shall proceed in peace. Who has wrought and done these things? He has called it who called it from the generations of old; I God, the first and to all futurity, I AM.” (LXX)

The point being made here is that only God has been responsible for the actions that have transpired against Israel/ Judah. This is another instance of God stating His name in person, and it is not with the names we are often given as being the really ‘sacred’ names used so frequently today. Throughout the rest of Isaiah 41, there are many mentions of the unique relationship between God and Israel/ Judah. Here are a few of them:

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” (Isaiah 41:8)

“Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant (‘ebed’ - slave, Strong’s #5650); I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.” (Isaiah 41:9)

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isaiah 41:10)

“For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.” (Isaiah 41:13)

“Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 41:14)

“and thou (Israel) shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 41:16)

“...I the Lord God, I the God of Israel” (Isaiah 41:17)

*“...and the Holy One of Israel has displayed them.”
(Isaiah 41:20)*

In order to put the chapter into context, it must be read in its entirety. There are a multitude of very strong promises to Israel/ Judah here and the repeated assurances of just how God is to maintain the possession of His chosen people, Israel. Isaiah 42 continues the description of uniqueness. Here are a few of the gems within Isaiah 43:

“And now thus saith the Lord God that made thee, O Jacob, and formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)

“For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel that saves thee.” (Isaiah 43:3)

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 43:10)

“Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel;” (Isaiah 43:14)

“I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.” (Isaiah 43:15)

“This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise?” (Isaiah 43:21)

In order to grasp the focus of Isaiah 43, one needs to study it from end to end. Remember that this was written after the ten northern tribes were captured and taken away by the Assyrians, just a few years earlier, and

God is giving them an account of how He is to redeem them in the end times. That dispersed Israel didn't maintain their former form of worship and the temple procedures is because they are told,

“Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old.” (Isaiah 43:18)

“Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen.” (Isaiah 44:1)

“Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel and his redeemer the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 44:6)

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” (Isaiah 44:21-23)

We see in Isaiah 45, that the Lord addresses Cyrus, whom He would use to accomplish God's purpose against the children of Israel. Notice that Cyrus is told that he did/ does not know the Lord God of Israel, but that God was directing him in his actions.

“And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:” (Isaiah 45:3-5)

No person ever called a king by name – God says “*I call thee by name,*” indicating there is no obeisance from God to Cyrus. Later in Isaiah 45, the Lord predicts things that were to happen to Cyrus, all of which came to pass.

“Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him (Cyrus) up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.”
(Isaiah 45:11-14)

In Isaiah 48 the Lord reminds Israel/ Judah of what could have been:

“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.” (Isaiah 48:17-19)

Israel is told that if only they had “*hearkened to my commandments*” (listened to the Lord’s directions), they would have had peace immeasurable, unlimited righteousness and offspring that couldn’t have been counted! And the name of Israel would not have been “*cut off*” when

they were dispersed. Although they had gone off from the path that their Lord had directed and were in for a terrible punishment, God maintains that the future will be as promised: “...*thou are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.*” (Isaiah 49:3).

God’s glory is mentioned several times in Isaiah and each time it is in conjunction with the house of Israel. Twice He states that “...*I will not give my glory to another.*,” meaning only to Israel. (Isaiah 42:8 and Isaiah 48:10). Other references to glory are given:

“...*for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel.*” (Isaiah 44:23) (Emphasis added)

“...*and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.*” (Isaiah 46:13) (Emphasis added)

“...*for I have created him (Israel) for my glory.*” (Isaiah 43:7) (Emphasis added)

“...*And said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel in whom I will be glorified.*” (Isaiah 49:3) (Emphasis added)

“*Thy people (Israel) ...shall inherit the land forever ...the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*” (Isaiah 60:21) (Emphasis added)

“*It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow to Tobal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard of my fame, neither have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*” (Isaiah 66:18) (Emphasis added)

Within Isaiah nearly every mention of ‘glory/ glorified’ is specifically directed to and/ or about Israel. No other people or place is considered

associated with the glory of God.

Isaiah 61 starts with a statement of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, part of which he read in the synagogue (Luke 4:16-21). The rest of the passage will come to pass when Israel is gathered again. Isaiah 61:4 tells us that Israel is to be brought back to re-build the area to which they are called. Interestingly the next verse states that the “strangers” (other than Israel) are to be engaged as workers (*“feeders of flocks, vinedressers and ploughmen”*) in support of the Israelites when they are called back to *“...build the old wastes ... raise up the former desolations ...repair the waste cities, the desolation of many generations.”*

These servants will also build up the walls of the city, (Isaiah 60:10) those nations or kingdoms that will not submit to serving Israel shall be *“utterly wasted”* or totally destroyed. (Isaiah 60:12) These ‘strangers’ would be allowed in the cities of the new Israelites and must conform to their laws, but they can never be brought into the congregation of the Lord God of Israel. This is in keeping with the policy established by Joshua with the Gibeonites. They were made bondmen (Joshua 9) and were obligated to comply with the laws and rules of the Israelites, but were kept as slaves and were never allowed to become free men or part of the congregation. Both David and Solomon used these types of forced laborers to perform menial tasks for the kingdom.

Isaiah 65 is a message to two types of Israelites; those who do not accept the rule and Commandments of the Lord God of Israel and those who do. The unbelievers are given a dire prophecy:

“But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop (the various other gods that the children of Israel were worshipping at that time), and that furnish the drink offering unto that number. Therefore will I number you to the sword (Jesus said in Luke 19 “...and mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring here and slay them before me.”), and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not

answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, 'Behold, my servants (Israel) shall eat, but ye (those who have rejected their Lord God) shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye (the rejecting population) shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen (Israel): for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name: That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes. ''' (Isaiah 65:11-16)

This message compares the future of the two segments of Israel – the people that accept the reign of the Lord God of Israel ‘the servants’ and those that reject Him. The contrast is profound! These things are to transpire when the House of Israel and the house of Judah are recalled as told in Ezekiel 37, among other Scriptures.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah is one of three men in the Scriptures that was selected for a specific role prior to birth “in the womb”; John the Baptist and Jesus being the other two. Jeremiah was ordained by God to be “...*a prophet unto the nations.*” The term “*nations*” here is the Greek word ‘*ethnos*’ which means ‘tribes’ also. Throughout the book of Jeremiah, there is no evidence that he was ever sent to be a prophet to any other “*nation*” than the two nations of Israel, namely Israel and Judah. We are told that he was one of the priests that lived in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. When Jeremiah tried to excuse himself due to his immaturity, God touched his mouth and said: “*Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth.*” Jeremiah 2:4 exhorts the people to listen to Jeremiah: “*Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and every family of the house of Israel.*” God then gives them a dissertation of how they have ignored Him, and the way they have forsaken their God. This is continued in Jeremiah 3 with a comparison of the two kingdoms. In the comparison God reminds them that they saw what Israel (the northern kingdom) had done and they (Judah) went and did worse. In Jeremiah 3:11 God says, “...*Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah.*”

In a prophetic promise made hundreds of years ago, the Lord God of Israel tells Jeremiah that the day will come when the two nations (Judah and Israel) will be brought out of the countries where they have been and returned to the land “*given for an inheritance*” to the patriarchs. The Lord is talking to the two “*nations*” (‘*ethnos*’) of Judah and Israel, and informing them that the restoration will come about in His time and in His manner. This promise is made after the Lord provides the history of the two separately backsliding and playing adulterous games with the Lord God of Israel. Although He states that He gave Israel, the ten northern tribes, a bill of divorcement (Jeremiah 3:8), Judah, the two southern

tribes *“feared not, but went and herself also committed fornication.”* The term *“fornication”* here has nothing to do with physical sexual activity, but acknowledging and worshipping other gods. In Jeremiah 3:11 the Lord tells Jeremiah that *“Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah.”* Because of their iniquity God is to scatter both houses throughout the world. However, He will cause them to return to Him:

“And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with (to) the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” (Jeremiah: 3:16-18)

There are many references in the various modern teachings and even some movie stories about the Ark of the Covenant. Where it is hidden and the mystical powers supposedly attributed to it and the magnificent glory that the person or persons that uncover it will obtain. However, in the reference here in Jeremiah 3, the Lord says that restored Israel will no more mention it or even remember it. No one will go to visit it again. This is more evidence that the Covenant that was represented by that Ark has long since been done away with.

“...saith the LORD, that 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 that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them.” (Jeremiah: 31:31-32)

The New Covenant doesn't require an Ark – the body of the Messiah (Jesus Christ) is the evidence of the New Covenant - and the Law has been put “*on their inward parts*” and “*written in their hearts.*” This is the reason the New Covenant doesn't require teaching – it comes from within. The reference to “*all the nations*” in verse 17 is the use of the noun ‘*ethnos*’ again, meaning all the tribes of Israel, not all the nations of the world. Verse 22 in the KJV is somewhat confusing in that it contains both sides of the conversation in a context different than the previous and the following verses. However the Septuagint translation makes things much clearer:

“Turn ye children that are given to turning and I will heal your bruises. Behold, we will be thy servants; for thou art the Lord our God.” (LXX)

God is telling them “change your hearts again and come back to me, since you are given to doing that sort of thing, and I will make you well.” Judah replies with “we are your servants (slaves) Lord God of Israel – whatever you tell us to do we shall do it.” They know that “*...by the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.*” Jeremiah 4 tells of what Judah and Jerusalem have to do, in order to receive the blessings of the Lord God of Israel. In the next chapter they are told of the forthcoming punishment and the reasons for it. It is prophesied in Jeremiah 5:19, because “*...ye served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours.,*” which came to pass in the seventy-year captivity. The manner in which the people had ignored the Covenant over the years is told to Jeremiah by God, with instructions to tell the “*men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*”:

“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my

voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD. Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do: but they did them not. And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” (Jeremiah 11:1-9)

As usual the punishment is against the Israelites because of their failure to comply with the Covenant. However, since only Israel was a party to that covenant, only Israel is to suffer the consequences. Because much of the problem with the people was caused by the priests and leaders of the temple, God issued a warning to the ‘shepherds’ of Judah/ Jerusalem:

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment

and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 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 countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.” (Jeremiah 23:1-8)

After the restoration, Israel will no longer refer to their exodus from Egypt as evidence of their relationship with the Lord, but will relate how He (The Lord) gathered them (both houses) from the places they had been scattered. The promise of the restoration of the “*whole house of Israel*” is never forgotten. Although this book is primarily addressed to Judah and Benjamin, the promise here is for all the tribes. In Chapter 30 Jeremiah is told to write these words in a book;

“For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.” (Jeremiah 30:3)

The term “*possess*” here denotes complete ownership. Jeremiah 30:5-6 tell of the forthcoming tribulation period and verse 7 states that Jacob (Israel) shall be saved out of it. Jacob/ Israel is told that those that have oppressed them over the ages are to be removed from the oppressive role. Israel is reminded that he is to be ‘saved from afar’ and returned to the ‘land that I gave to their fathers.’ The fate of the nations or races that have burdened Israel is given in verse 16. Within the prophets there are numerous mentions of the wealth and material possessions of the oppressing nations being awarded to Israel upon their restoration and the destruction of the oppressors. The rest of Chapter 30 is a prophetic description of what the restored Jerusalem is to be like.

“...Behold I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents and

have mercy on his dwelling places; the city shall be built on its own heap..." (Jeremiah 30:18)

Some of the dimensions are given in Jeremiah 32:38-40. Again Israel is told that *"...ye shall be my people and I will be your God."* The last verse says that *"...in the latter days ye shall consider it."* (Jeremiah 30:24). A better translation is *"...in the latter days ye shall know these things."* (LXX). If Jacob (Israel) is to inhabit the restored Jerusalem which is to be built *"on its own heap;"* the former Jerusalem must therefore have been totally obliterated.

Jeremiah 31 starts with another unilateral promise for the Lord God of Israel: *"At the same time, (the time referred to in Jeremiah 30:18-24) saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people."* (Jeremiah 31:1). The New Covenant is given beginning in Jeremiah 31:31. This is given only to *"... the house of Israel and with the house of Judah..."* The wording of this covenant is also quoted in Hebrews 8, again mentioning only those parties.

Jeremiah's prayer in Chapter 32 is a pleading for God to remember who Israel is, and to act in their behalf to prevent the destruction of the people. God's response starts with another indictment of the Israelites and describes how they have rejected Him over the ages. Jeremiah 32:28 tells of God's plan for Jerusalem: *"Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon and he shall take it."* Shortly thereafter the Babylonians did take the city and remove the people for the seventy years of captivity. However, God reiterates the promise of restoration of His people:

"And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this

place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.”

(Jeremiah 32:36-44)

When the people came to Jeremiah to ask him to pray about the situation, they requested that he pray to *“the Lord your God.”* He is mentioned in that respect three additional times, before the people say that they will *“...obey the voice of the Lord our God.”*

Jeremiah 33 contains another dissertation about the way Judah and Jerusalem had rejected the Lord God of Israel, and earned the punishment they had received, but God again reminds them that He is going to return them to the Promised Land in His time. Additionally here, the Covenant God had made with David is included in the latter part of the chapter. Study this chapter and see the profound promises that their Lord God again tells Israel (Judah and Jerusalem in particular).

Then, after ten days (Jeremiah 42:7) the Word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, and he called the congregation together *“from the least even to*

the greatest.” He said to them “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel:

“If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.” (Jeremiah 42:10-18)

Even the promise of restoration didn't convince the people to remain in Jerusalem and trust in the Lord. The self appointed spokesmen came to Jeremiah and told him they were going to Egypt, and forced him to accompany them. This departure ended the population of Jerusalem by the Israelites for all practical purposes.

Ezekiel

Of the three major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it is difficult to say which has the most to offer. For any given subject, any of the three can, at different times, provide a volume of information appropriate for the student. However, Ezekiel has been said to be the “story of the end of the Jews.” This can only be true if one doesn’t distinguish between the true Israel and the modern Jew as far as prophecy is concerned. It is a complex dissertation on the feelings that God has for His people Israel, and He repeatedly tells Israel that they were obstinate and contrary in their relationship with Him and that they broke the previous covenant (Ezekiel 16:59) that He had made with Israel (Ezekiel 16:8). Throughout the book there are numerous indications that God wanted Ezekiel to convey a message to both kingdoms, but stated in Ezekiel 2 that he was being sent to “*the children of Israel.*”

The instructions that he was later given seem to address both Judah and Israel, so perhaps this is an instance where the term is referring to the “*whole house of Israel*” as is used later in the book. That address - “*house of Israel*” - is used seventy seven times in Ezekiel and the term “*God of Israel*” is used only seven times. However, there is no doubt to whom God is telling Ezekiel to speak. There are also mentions of messages to the “*land of Israel*” which is only used twenty nine times in the Old Testament.

After showing Ezekiel the abominations being perpetrated by the people of Jerusalem, God gives them a glimpse of what He has in store for His people in the future. Here again this is an unconditional promise, and has a very similar ending to the promise of the New Covenant given in Jeremiah. However this prophecy also has the promise of the reward for the people that will not embrace the new relationship.

“Therefore say, ‘Thus saith the Lord GOD: ‘Although I have cast them (Israel) far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.’” Therefore say, ‘Thus saith the Lord GOD: ‘I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.’”
(Ezekiel 11: 16-21)

This prophecy is another promise to Israel as to the restoration of the tribes after the dispersion. In each version of the New Covenant, God states that Israel is to have a changed heart. This denotes a significant difference from the Covenant that was based on the Law. In order to place the present nation called Israel into this prophecy, as many of the TV evangelists do, one has to ignore much of God’s statement. The real people of Israel that return to the land will be those that act as stated in Ezekiel 11:18-20. As of today, the Jews have not *“taken away any of the detestable things”* from present-day Israel; there is no evidence of them having *“one heart”* or a *“new spirit”* nor do they *“walk in my (God’s) statutes and keep mine (God’s) ordinances and do them.”* It has been said, there is a higher percentage of atheists in present-day Israel than any other country on earth, so they hardly qualify as being *“my people.”* Note that even those of Israel that continue to reject their Lord God are destined to have severe retribution for their reward. (See Luke 19:27).

Ezekiel 16:4-14 has one of the most beautiful descriptions of God’s love

for Israel, and then portrays the betrayal of Israel in rather vivid language. He finishes with a promise that God is to reclaim the “*whole house of Israel*” in the end time, remember the original covenant, establish an “*everlasting covenant*,” (Ezekiel 16:60) and provide “*atonement for all you have done*.” After all the tongue-lashing that God gives Israel, in Chapter 20 He tells Ezekiel to

“...say unto them, ‘Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed (sons) of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am the LORD your God...’” (Ezekiel 20: 5)

It is quite clear that God wants them to know that He chose them, not the other way around. Later He says “*...I will rule over you...*” Note that the statement is in the imperative; they have no choice. God also promises that His people Israel will be met “*face to face*” by the Lord God of Israel. The language of Ezekiel 20 doesn’t seem to be loving and pretty, but He tells them that after they have dealt treacherously with Him, He will bring them “*out from the people (heathen) and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered:*” (Ezekiel 20:34)

Although the two nations actually separated after the death of Solomon, God had known them as two separate beings even when they were in Egypt. This is described in Ezekiel 23. Here again, God makes the accusation that Judah, even after seeing the demise of Samaria (Israel), went on to even more contemptuous behavior. Both were to be “*scattered amongst the nations*,” although almost two hundred years apart. In Ezekiel 34 there is a profound warning to the “*shepherds*” that have supposedly been looking after the “*lost*” sheep of “*the house of Israel*.” God reminds them that He will save the entire flock and restore them to the status they deserve. The positive identification of the flock is provided in the following verses:

“Thus shall they know that I, the LORD their God am with them and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people,

saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.”
(Ezekiel 34:30-31)

Ezekiel 35 is devoted to the prophecy of the fate of Mt. Seir/ Edom/ Idumea. This is a special incident where God spends an entire chapter telling a people (sons of Esau) what is to become of them, and why He is going to totally destroy them. God’s accusation is based on the boasting of the Edomites that “*The two nations (Judah and Israel) and the two countries (Judah and Samaria) are mine and I will inherit them...*” (LXX). In Ezekiel 35:14 God tells Mt. Seir/ Edom that “*...When all the earth is rejoicing, I will make thee a desert O mount Seir and all Idumea; and it shall be utterly consumed: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord their God.*” (LXX). Note that God tells them that He is the Lord their (Israel’s) God – and not the God of Edom.

God then prophesies to the land (people) of Israel in Ezekiel 36. He states that the land will be healed and restored to a condition He likens to the Garden of Eden. The nations around Israel that have persecuted Israel all these years, will be devastated in a manner that shows them it is an act of God. God says that those nations that have “*appropriated my land to themselves for a possession with joy...*” (LXX) are to be utterly destroyed because of their actions. Throughout Scripture, Edom’s destruction is always described as by fire. Ezekiel tells of the New Covenant that will exist between God and Israel and the future of the land they are to occupy:

*“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart (note the mention of a new heart) also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put **my** spirit within you, and cause you to walk in **my** statutes, and ye shall keep **my** judgments,*

*and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; **and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.** I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, **O house of Israel.** Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by (This is most likely to be done by the “strangers” described in Isaiah 60 and 61). And they shall say, ‘This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by **the house of Israel,** to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.’ (Ezekiel 36:24-38)*
(Emphasis added)

Ezekiel 36:26-27 are, in a way, just another version of saying the same thing as the Covenant in Jeremiah and Hebrews. Note that God is to put “My” spirit in them and cause them to walk in “My” statutes and keep “My” judgments – a unilateral edict; the Israelites have no choice but to accept the implantation. During the period of restoration, He says the land of Israel will become lush “*like the garden of Eden,*” and populated

solely by the men of the whole “*house of Israel*.” Even though the Edomites that were around the Israelites were to be destroyed as per Ezekiel 35 above, the other “*heathen*” (non-Israelites) that were living in the area are to observe that the Lord God of Israel has “*built the ruined places and plant that that was desolate.*”

The bones that God shows Ezekiel in Chapter 37 are depicting Israel. In this stage Israel is dead. “*And he (God) said to me, son of man can these bones live?*” God then tells Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind and “*...Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*” So, we’re told that this large number of Israelites are “*slain*” and are restored by their God. “*So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*” Only after seeing this widespread resurrection does Ezekiel receive the explanation of what it represents. God provides the explanation:

“Then he said unto me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel:’ behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.’ Therefore prophesy and say unto them, ‘Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.’”
(Ezekiel 37:11-14)

Now we know that these are the Israelites that have been “*slain*” by the oppressors over the centuries. They wail that their “*...bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off (killed or dispersed) for our parts.*” God tells them that He will open their graves, cause them to come up out of them, breathe life into them and return them to the land of Israel (“*your own land*”).

The “two sticks” represent “the whole house of Israel.” (Ezekiel 37:11) Based on the rest of Chapter 37, it appears that those that are gathered from all the nations where they have been dispersed, are to be joined with those resurrected as described above. The two sticks become one in Ezekiel’s hand to indicate that the act is complete. In this instance again God tells them that He will place His Spirit in them at the time of the restoration. The balance of the chapter describes the conclusion of the re-gathering:

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, (non-Israelite races) whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 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. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 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 they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: 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 will set my sanctuary (holy place) in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen (non-Israelite) shall know that I the LORD do sanctify (set apart) Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” (Ezekiel 37:21-28)

Because of the number of times God states “*I will,*” we know that this is done at His instigation, and that Israel as a people has no choice in the regathering. The children of Israel will be dwelling in the “their own land” as one nation rather than the divided house that they had become at the death of Solomon. Also their Lord God will have His tabernacle among them and His sanctuary shall be in the midst of them. Again, the “*heathen*” (‘gowy,’ Strong’s #171 - non-Israelites) that live around the children will be aware that the Lord God of Israel has sanctified His people Israel. Both David’s kingdom and the Lord’s sanctuary are to be in the midst of the Israelites “*for evermore.*”

Ezekiel 38-39 contain the description of the multi-national attack against Israel. This campaign results in God’s destruction of all the armies that are coming against Israel in a manner that proves it to be an act of God. At the conclusion of that battle and the disposal of the dead, God makes a promise in Ezekiel 39:21-22; “*And I will set my glory among you (Israel), and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have wrought, and my hand which I have brought upon them (the other nations). And the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God, from this day and onwards.*” (LXX). From this statement it is obvious that Israel does not know about His being their Lord God prior to His making them aware of that at this time. This is another instance where God tells Israel that His “*glory*” is to be “*set among you.*” There is no other mention of God’s glory being associated with any other race.

After Ezekiel is shown the plans for the new temple and the construction of it, he witnesses the “*glory of the God of Israel*” entering into the temple by the eastern gate. God tells Ezekiel:

“Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even

defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.” (Ezekiel 43:7-9)

Here is the Septuagint version:

“Son of man, thou hast seen the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, in which my name shall dwell in the midst of the house of Israel for ever; and the house of Israel shall no more profane my holy name, they and their princes, by their fornication, or by the murders of their princes in the midst of them; when they set my door-way by their door-way, and my thresholds near to their thresholds: and they made my wall as it were joining myself and them, and they profaned my holy name with their iniquities which they wrought: and I destroyed them in my wrath and with slaughter. And now let them put away from me their fornication, and the murders of their princes, and I will dwell in the midst of them forever. (LXX)

Here again God makes known His intention of living forever among Israel (only) in the land He gave to their fathers.

Daniel

Every evangelical pastor/ teacher at one time or another has a favorite study based on the book of Daniel. Many of the teachings even put the “church” in the midst of the prophecies. The discussion as to the applicability of the “70” weeks has caused some heated arguments and even “splits” within the various congregations. I have sat under some excellent teaching on the book of Daniel by some of the best teachers of the day and learned much from them. However, I have yet to hear a lesson or sermon based on the actual words in Daniel – regarding to whom it was written and to whom the prophecies are directed. Since it is in keeping with the “conduit” of the people of Israel and leads directly to the Savior and Messiah, Jesus Christ, I will try to present a few of the applicable things in Daniel.

Everyone knows that Daniel and his fellow princes were taken out of Jerusalem about 606 BC, and we know three of the other princes names due to the “*fiery furnace*” miracle. These young men were the cream of Judean royalty (they were not Jews), and were selected by King Nebuchadnezzar to become officials within his kingdom. They were enrolled in a 3-year training program (Daniel 1:5) to learn the literature, laws and language of the Chaldeans. Such a long period was necessary partially because Chaldean was written from right-to-left rather than the left-to-right method of the Phoenician script that they had been taught as children. The Chaldean history and customs were also meant to replace the Israelite history and customs they had known. There was also a significant difference in the dietary customs of the two people, and Daniel elected to abstain from the Chaldean king’s provisions in favor of his customary diet. We will not re-hash the Sunday school lesson parts of the book, but will concentrate on the application of the book as told to Daniel by the Lord God of Israel.

In Chapter 9 Daniel entreats the Lord about the completion of the seventy years of “*desolation*” spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah for the people of Judea. In his prayer Daniel mentions the Covenant the Lord had with Israel. The wording describes the agreement that was established between the Lord God of Israel and the children of Jacob/ Israel. The rest of his prayer is a thumbnail of the disastrous history of the southern kingdom of Judah, but includes a mention of the northern tribes which had been taken away by the Assyrians almost two hundred years previously, and were “*far off in all the countries to which You have driven them because of the unfaithfulness (sins) which they have committed against You.*” (Daniel 9:7). This indicates that Daniel was aware of the other tribes being in other countries at that time. In Daniel 9:15, still in his monologue with the Lord God of Israel, Daniel refers to Israel as “*Your people;*” in the next verse he calls Jerusalem “*Your city,*” and Israel “*Your people*” again. Daniel’s prayer ends in verse 19 with the plea, “*O Lord... defer not (don’t wait), for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.*” This would indicate that Daniel knew where he and Israel were, in relation to the Covenant with the Lord God of Israel. Gabriel was then sent to respond to Daniel’s prayer and to explain the situation to him. In a rare statement, Daniel is told that he is “*greatly beloved*” by the Lord. Gabriel tells Daniel that the seventy weeks are “*for your people and your holy city,*” meaning specifically Judah and Jerusalem. The future of those people and that city were prophesied in a manner that has caused much discussion and confusion ever since it was written down.

The vision seen by Daniel in Chapter 10 is obviously that of the pre-incarnate Christ, when comparing that description with the same seen by John in Revelation 1. Daniel 10:14 tells us that the vision is for “*your people*” (Judah) and will take place “*in the latter days*” which is stated as many days off or yet to come. Again, in verse 19 Daniel is called “*O man greatly beloved.*”

The complex prophecies of Daniel 11 are, in my opinion, multiple in nature. Many of the incidents with the kings of the South and North took place shortly after the death of Alexander, when his kingdom was

divided into four parts, and the four kings fought over the land. They even went so far as to give daughters in marriage, thereby establishing political alliances to assist them in defeating their enemies. The action described as *“to come”* will be one of the happenings of the *“time of the end”* or as we call it *“the end times.”*

The lead-in for Daniel 12 says, *“At that time (the time defined in Daniel 11:40-45) Michael shall stand up.”* Michael is identified as *“The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people (Israel).”* Daniel is also told, that at that time there will be a *“...time of tribulation, such tribulation as has not been from the time that there was a nation on the earth until that time;”* Daniel is told that *“...thy people” (Israel) shall be delivered, every one that is written in the book.”* This is very similar to the statement about the tribulation in Jeremiah 30:7, where *“...he (Jacob) shall be saved out of it.”* Note that this is probably the same incident as described in Revelation 12:14-16.

Throughout the history of the Hebrew people, from Abraham until the dispersion of Israel, every person born was registered into a book of his tribe. At the return to Jerusalem, Ezra records in Ezra 2:62, that he *“...sought their listings among who were registered by genealogy, but were not found.”* Because of the intermarriage with the locals during the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, many of the people returning to Jerusalem could not be found in the *“book”* of registration, and were therefore not to be considered as members of the Judah/ Benjamin congregation.

Remember, according to the statement in Deuteronomy 23, once an offspring was born out of the line of Israel, it, nor any of its offspring, could ever be considered a member of the sacred congregation again. God obviously has His own *“book”* and only those found in that book are to be delivered. It is quite clear though, that this man clothed in linen is referring to Israel (*“thy people”*) as being delivered, and they will be treated to two different rewards. (Daniel 12:2). Note that the one group will awake to *“everlasting life”* and the rest will awake to *“shame and everlasting contempt.”* A different reward than what is normally taught

in the churches. This resurrection is for “*many*” (Daniel 12:2), and in this instance it is exclusively for Daniel’s people, Israel. There is no resurrection mentioned for those people to be destroyed in Obadiah nor for the so called “*vessels (people) of wrath fitted to destruction...*” mentioned in Romans 9.

In Daniel 12:7 the same man “*clothed in linen,*” is seen again by Daniel standing “*above the waters of the river.*” And He says “*...and when he (God) shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*” Here again the Septuagint words this in a somewhat different manner: “*...when the dispersion is ended they shall know all these things (the things sealed up).*” (LXX). Daniel responds with, “*And I heard, but I understood not.*” To that, God replies,

“Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.”

(Daniel 12:9-10)

Explanations of the two different time periods given in Daniel 12:11-12 (a difference of forty five days), have invariably been wrong, and as stated above, I believe the true meaning has been “*closed up*” and will not be revealed until “*the time of the end.*” If, as it was told to Daniel, the “*words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end,*” all of the teaching we have been given on the magnificent book has probably been erroneous! It just doesn’t seem right that God would tell that to a man referred to as “*greatly beloved,*” and yet reveal the meaning to various and sundry evangelicals to dispense through books, tapes and radio/ television programs.

The last verse in Daniel contains a promise to him that I have never heard taught: “*...for you (Daniel) shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.*” The Septuagint says, “*...But go thou (Daniel), and rest; for {there are} yet days and seasons to the fulfillment of the end; and thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*”

Daniel's lot would be that of Judah (Daniel 1:6), and at the deliverance stated above, Daniel will be among the people of Judah called up after Michael "*stands up*." When that is to happen is part of what is "*closed up*," and waiting for the completion of actions against the "*holy people*" as stated in Daniel 12:7 above. Verse 12 says "*Blessed is he that waiteth* (is patient)..." Let us wait and be patient.

Looking at the over-all structure of Daniel, it becomes apparent that the book is directed specifically to Israel. Some of the conversation can be applicable to one or the other of the two kingdoms, but there is no indication that any other nation or people have been addressed by the actions and prophecies described therein.

Hosea

Just to the right of Daniel is the book of Hosea. It is not one of the more popular teaching books for the modern church. This can be attributed to the difficulty one has in trying to understand the contents, unless the situation of people of Judah and Israel are made clear. If one attempts to fit the present day Jews into Hosea, the entire book becomes a senseless, confusing mixture of punishment and blessings that fits nothing or nobody.

Hosea 1 contains a tremendous amount of information and it is provided in some unique ways by God to get His point across. In Hosea 1:2, God makes it known as to who and what the problem is; *“for the land (Israel) hath committed great harlotry, departing from the Lord.”* He then says *“...I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel (the northern kingdom).”* (Hosea 1:4). Throughout the book of Hosea, the Lord uses several terms to describe or identify the two kingdoms, Ephraim, Samaria, Jacob, Judah, Jerusalem, etc. However, He always keeps them separate and makes it known that they were the culprits in breaking the original covenant. His plans for the two *“houses”* are stated briefly in the next couple of verses. Hosea 1:6: *“...for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel (northern kingdom), but I will utterly take them away.”* The context here is that they will be gone forever. In the next verse He states *“...but I will have mercy on the house of Judah (the southern kingdom consisting of Judah and Benjamin).”* One might think that would be the end of any conversation about the house of Israel, but in verse 10 He says: *“Yet the number of the children of Israel (northern kingdom) shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered.”*

God is informing the two kingdoms that the northern kingdom, which was about to be defeated and taken away by the Assyrians, would, in

time, be so huge that it couldn't be numbered. Actually, the Assyrians also captured and deported many of the Judeans and Benjaminites from the northern part of Judah, when they took away the ten northern tribes. Only Jerusalem and a few of the larger, walled cities remained for the Babylonian captivity a couple of hundred years later. The second promise of Hosea 1:10 says, *"...and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it is said unto them, 'You are not my people,' there it shall be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God.'"* It should be noted here, that the specific place where the dispersed northern tribes are told that they are not God's people, is also the specific place where they will be told *"You are the sons of the living God."*

In order for a person to be considered a son they must have a verified lineage from that particular sire. For Israel, the lineage is set forth in both Matthew 1 and Luke 3. In Luke the statement is made that Adam was *"the son of God."* That makes both of the *"houses"* valid sons of God, providing they had remained within the tribes of Israel. When these people are told they are the *"sons of the living God,"* they will know it. God says in His New Covenant with Israel *"for all (of Israel) shall know me, from the least to the greatest."* Hosea 1 contains this promise:

"Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered (come) together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." (Hosea 1:11)

This is the first time in Hosea where the re-joining of the two kingdoms is mentioned. Throughout the other prophetic books, it is stated repeatedly and the union is to be permanent and under a single king. This is the same promise as depicted in the *"two sticks"* parable in Ezekiel 37. The statement of God to Israel in Ezekiel 37:15-23 is, without a doubt, the most definite promise, of what is to happen to Israel when they are joined again, that can be imagined. Not since the days of Solomon have the two nations been able to peacefully co-exist, but under the hand of the Lord God of Israel they will, and joyfully.

Another mark of the “*Sons of the living God*” is found in Hosea 2,

“And I will take away all her gladness, her feasts, her festivals at the new moon, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies.” (Hosea 2:11)

Referring here to the house of Israel, when they left the area under the captivity of the Assyrians, all the rituals and procedures of temple worship were discontinued and quickly forgotten. Accordingly, if one were to look for the “*lost*” tribes, you wouldn’t go looking for people that had a form of worship involving those things God took away from them. In Hosea 2:13 God states that the reason for the banishment is their practice of worshipping other gods, and the pagan method of pursuing those gods and forgetting the Lord God of Israel.

The remainder of Hosea 2 tells of the way that Israel will be treated when they return to their Lord, ending with the promise in Hosea 2:23 that, *‘I will say to them who were not my people* (Hosea 1:10); *‘Thou are my people,’ and they shall say, ‘thou art my God.’*” Hosea 3 is a short summary of the dispersion and return:

“Afterward (after the things set forth in Hosea 3:4) shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord, their God and David their king and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:5)

“Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel” starts Hosea 4, making certain that the point of the criticism is known. In Hosea 4:6 is the oft quoted line: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;”* and this lack of knowledge has caused them to be isolated from their God for long periods of time. In the chastisement, the Lord states that: *“...I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”* This failure of the two houses of Israel to maintain the proper worship relationship with their Lord God is described in several ways in the next few chapters. Although some of the analogies may not be significant to us, they were well aware of the point God was making.

Continuing the admonition of the sin of miscegenation, Hosea 5 states:

“They (Israel) have dealt treacherously with the LORD, for they have begotten strange children.” (Hosea 5:7)

The Lord never lets Israel forget the gravity of intermarriage with those outside the tribes of Israel. Even in the New Testament, this is known as the doctrine of Balaam (1 Corinthians 10:8), for which over twenty thousand Israelite men were killed in one day (Numbers 25). The only solution to this problem was for the men to cast off the “*strange*” wives and children. There is no instance where it is suggested to convert or ‘save’ any of them.

Later in Hosea 13, the Lord expresses His stature to them again:

“Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me; for there is no savior beside me.” (Hosea 13:4)

“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help.” (Hosea 13:9)

Hosea 14 lists some of the future blessings that will be given to Israel upon their restoration.

Joel

The little book of Joel, with only three chapters, is rarely used as the basis of sermons in today's 'New Testament' congregations. Within those three chapters there are a number of references that show the content is meant for, and directed to Israel, namely Judah and Jerusalem. In the first verse it says that all the inhabitants of "*the land*" are to listen. This means, of course, the land of Israel. Unfortunately, we do not know precisely when the book was written, but the message is applicable to more than one period in the time of the children of Israel.

The disastrous famine caused by the locust plague, described in the first part of Joel 1, indicates the vast expanse of the problem; all the agricultural products of the land were consumed by the succeeding waves of the locusts, and there was nothing left for the population to eat or drink. The required sacrificial items were also consumed, and the house of the Lord God of Israel had no offerings presented. You will note that in the word to Joel, the Lord refers to the place as "*my land*" and "*my fig tree.*" From the obvious invasion of the locusts, the narrative makes a very subtle change to describe what can only be a human invasion of horrendous proportions. That it is to be a future event is indicated by the quote in Joel 2:1, "*...for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is near at hand...*"

It is made quite clear that the reason, for this severe punishment, is the continuing apostasy of the Israelites. The battle described in Joel 2 is dealing with the total destruction of Israel if the Lord doesn't interfere. In Joel 2:16 the Lord becomes involved and His voice shall roar out of Jerusalem "*...and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people (Israel) and the strength of the children of Israel.*"

The people are told what they are to do, in order to receive the help of the Lord, and starting in Joel 2:18, Israel is promised a complete restoration, and a life of plenty, if they repent and comply with the directions previously given.

“And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else; and my people shall never be ashamed.” (Joel 2:27)

There are people that consider the contents of Joel 2:28-29 as being exhibited during the present ‘dispensation,’ but the first half of verse 28 says, *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh”*. This is to happen after the restoration to plenty, referred to earlier in Joel 2. The Spirit is to be poured out only on all the flesh of Israel and your sons, your daughters, your old men and your young men are the ones to see the dreams and visions. Here again is the fact that the restored Israel will have slaves (*“...upon the servants and upon the handmaids...”*), mentioned in Joel 2:29.

In contrast to the devastation described in the first part, there is a promise of abundance after the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem in Joel 3. The ultimate judgment of the nations that have oppressed the tribes (nation) of Judah/ Jerusalem is also described in Joel 3 which is to happen *“...in those days and in that time.,”* again referring to the time of the restoration of Israel.

“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.” (Joel 3:1-2)

A litany of the trespasses is given in the first part of the chapter, and one thing stands out; *“Because ye have taken my silver and my gold ...”* (Joel 3:5). This is the conviction these oppressing nations must face, for the

forbidden practice of imposing usury upon the children of Israel. This will be avenged by their (Israel's) Lord God. Joel 3:8 states,

“And I (God) will sell your (referring to the oppressing nations mentioned above) sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah and they shall sell them to the men of Sheba to a people far off; for the LORD hath spoken it.” (Joel 3:8)

The ultimate outcome for Jerusalem is told:

“...but the LORD will be the hope of his people and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.” (Joel 3:16-17)

Jerusalem is frequently called the Holy City, but the Lord says, “*then* (at the time of the harvest and judgment as stated in Joel 3:12-13) *shall Jerusalem be holy*” and no strangers will be allowed inside the walls. The term “*strangers*” here means those of another group or race, other than the sons of Israel.

However, the fate of Egypt and Edom is again stated:

“Egypt shall be desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will avenge their blood that I have not avenged; for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.” (Joel 3:19-20)

This is vengeance that God is bringing in the future for the crimes and oppression those nations have imposed on the Israelites over the past centuries.

Amos

Amos, who said he wasn't a prophet but a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore seeds, wrote the book "*concerning Israel*," during the reign of Solomon's son Jeroboam. The first two chapters consist of descriptions of the punishment that God is going to put onto the various countries and kingdoms around Israel, as well as the two kingdoms of Israel. Edom is mentioned as having "*...pursued his brother with the sword and did cast off all pity and his anger did tear perpetually and he kept his wrath forever*," (Amos 1:11) which is a description of how Edom treated Israel (his brother Jacob) over the period since Israel came up from Egypt.

Both houses of Israel are promised dire punishment because of their behavior, and all the predictions come to pass on both houses in the near future. Amos 3 starts with an order for the children of Israel to pay attention to what their God is telling them, and He states that,

"You only (Israel) have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities". (Amos 3:2)

This is another instance of the Lord God of Israel making certain that His people know the relationship they are involved in with Him. Twice in Amos 5 He tells Israel, "*...seek me and ye shall live*." They are also told that if they stop their oppression of the poor, widows, orphans and strangers (these are the people so described of the tribes of Israel) that He, "*will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph*." (Amos 5:15)

There are some dire predictions for Israel in the next few chapters, but as always there is the promise of redemption.

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful king-

dom, 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. 9 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)

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen and close up the breaches of it and I will build it as In the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom and all of the nations which are called by my name saith the LORD who doeth this”. (Amos 9:11-12)

Again, God promises to keep a remnant of the house of Israel that He will redeem. As stated elsewhere, they are to be brought out of all the various nations where they have been scattered and brought into the land He has made *“their land.”* The context of the statement addressing the possession of Edom, means they will possess the people as well as the land. And *“all the nations which are called by my name,”* are all the tribes of Israel. The word for *“nations”* here again is *‘ethnos.’* The book ends with another of the absolute promises of God to Israel:

“And I will 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. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.” (Amos 9:14-15)

This has not happened as yet! These are the things the people of Israel have to look forward to. The Lord God of Israel says that these are the things that *“I”* will do for *“my people Israel”* and *“I will plant them”* in the land that *“I have given them.”* Isaiah 61 states that, *“sons of strangers”* are to build the walls and their kings shall serve Israel.

Obadiah

The little book of Obadiah has very little to say about the exclusive relationship between the Lord God of Israel and His people Israel. The focus of the book is on the fate of the people of Edom/ Esau.

“Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, (southern area of Edom) shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount (family) of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.” (Obadiah 8-10)

This single-chapter book is a complete condemnation of that people and their predicted total destruction (Obadiah 18). God tells Edom that, *“...I have made thee small among the nations; thou are greatly despised.”* The context here is that they are despised by everyone, including God, because the people of Edom assisted the *“strangers”* that carried away *“thy brother”* Judah and even *“stood in the crossway”* and helped to point out and detain the Judahites that were trying to escape the Babylonian conquerors, as well as entering the cities and looting their *“substance.”*

These are some eight things that are listed in Obadiah 11-14, wherein the Edomites persecuted their *“brother”* Judah, and God tells them that these things are the motivation for His destruction of the Edomites. God says Edom’s reward is to have the same returned upon their head. God promises that,

“... the house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a

flame, and the house of Esau for a stubble, and they (Jacob and Joseph) shall kindle in them (the house of Esau) and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.” (Obadiah 18)

This emphatically predicts the total and utter destruction of the Edomites. Note that the destruction, directed by the LORD God of Israel, is to be by the houses of Jacob and Joseph - an unusual description of the children of Israel. Their (Esau's) destruction is always described as being by fire.

In Malachi 1:4 the arrogance of Edom is shown by stating that they are returning and rebuilding the area around Jerusalem. God says in reply that He is to “*throw them down*” (destroy) and persecute them forever. In Malachi 1:3 the Lord God of Israel reminds us that He has hated Esau/Edom forever.

All the land of the Edomites (Idumea) is to be possessed by the Israelites, and all of the area of the Philistines, which we know as Palestine, will be re-taken by the Israelites. The last few verses of the book explain the area that the children of Israel will occupy.

Micah

Micah addressed his little book to the people of “*Samaria and Jerusalem*,” just prior to the captivity of the northern tribes (Micah 1:1). Because of the way this book is structured, it can be a bit difficult to understand the points being presented. Micah says, “*Hear all ye people*,” meaning all the people of Israel, listen to the Word of the LORD God of Israel.

The people are told what the Lord God is to do to the earth in the early verses of Micah 1, and the reason for His doing so is given:

“For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?” (Micah 1:5)

“*High places*” refers to the places that were used for pagan worship. The term is used almost one hundred times in the Scriptures. God then tells both houses what is to become of them. The corrupted social and business practices of the people are listed and the punishment due to them, for such things, follows. Micah 2-3 present God’s knowledge of these flaws and His promise of recompense. However, there is also a promise to them:

“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king

shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.”
(Micah 2:12-13)

Here again the Septuagint has a different interpretation:

“But it shall come to pass {that} out of the dropping (remnant) of this people, Jacob shall be completely gathered with all {his people;} I will surely receive the remnant of Israel; I will cause them to return together, as sheep in trouble, as a flock in the midst of their fold; they shall rush forth from among men through the breach made before them: they have broken through, and passed the gate and gone out by it: and their king has gone out before them and the LORD shall lead them.”
(LXX)

In both cases it is apparent that, once again, the Lord God of Israel is promising the restitution of the whole house of Israel in a grand and glorious manner. In contrast, Micah 4 brings God’s promise of restoration of the whole house of Israel *“in the last days.”* The many nations shall come and want to go:

“...to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:2)

The term *“many nations”* here could mean nations other than Israel, based on the usage of the Hebrew word ‘gowy.’ However since Micah uses the plurals *“us”* and *“we”* and refers to the Law, it can only be meant to address the Israelites, who were the only people ever to be subject to the Law. Again, the God referenced here is specifically *“the God of Jacob.”* In Micah 4:5, he says that during the end times *“...all people will walk every one in the name of his god* (note the small ‘g’), *and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God, forever and ever.”* The *“we”* and *“our”* here denote Israel only.

The promise of restoration continues:

“In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth (literally “is lame”; Judah) and I will gather her that is driven out and her that I have afflicted (Israel/Samaria); And I will make her that halteth a remnant and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and the LORD shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever. And thou O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Zion.” (Micah 4:6-8)

Judah’s fate is described further on:

“Be in pain and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now shalt thou go forth out of the city (Jerusalem) and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.” (Micah 4:10)

This prophetic promise of being sent to Babylon was some two hundred years before it actually happened. Judah was sent to Babylon and was redeemed from there, as told in Ezra and Nehemiah. The people of Jerusalem were also bivouacked (dwelled) in the fields around the city in preparation for the forced journey into captivity fulfilling another portion of this prophecy.

In Micah 5 is the quote that the priests told Herod in Matthew 2:6, regarding the coming of the Messiah:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come he that is to be ruler in Israel...” (Micah 4:2)

Israel’s victorious outcome of the forthcoming battle of Armageddon is told in Micah 5:11-12.

Twice in Micah 6 the Lord God of Israel refers to them as “*O my people*” and pleads for them to remember how He has taken them out of their troubles and made them His redeemed possession. In the ultimate example of keeping the procedure simple, God tells Israel that what He desires more than the multitudes of sacrifices and offerings is that they:

“...*do justice and love mercy and to walk humbly with the Lord thy God.*” (Micah 6:9)

The book ends with another promise of future liberation and restoration:

“The nations (the oppressing nations; those that are to be “utterly destroyed”) shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.” (Micah 7:16-20)

The awesome power of the restored Israel will have the other nations “*confounded*” and totally terrified. Micah asks a question (“*Who is a God ...?*”) and then responds with the correct answer (“*He will...*”) and reverts to the possessive pronouns (“*us,*” “*our,*” “*their,*” etc) to verify that this is directed to Israel. Micah 7:20 in the Septuagint reads:

“He will give blessings truly to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, as thou swarest to our fathers, according to the former days.” (LXX)

Zephaniah

Zephaniah was a descendant of King Hezekiah, king of Judah. His book carries some solemn prophecies for Judah and Jerusalem in the “*day of the Lord*.” A term he uses more than any of the other prophets.

“I will utterly consume all things from off the land, (Judea) saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked: and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;”

(Zephaniah 1:2-4)

Although some of his prophecies could be applied to the forthcoming defeat and abduction by the Babylonians, the ultimate judgment is obviously to come at the so-called ‘day of the Lord.’

The context of Zephaniah 1:2 actually means that in the process of the destruction, God will not leave as much as a blade of grass! The consuming will affect every living thing in the area. Those that are forsaking the Lord God of Israel are to be destroyed first and the “*princes*” (rulers) and their families are to be punished. (Zephaniah 1:8). In the destruction, God says he will search Jerusalem with a lamp to find every one of the men that are to be destroyed. That day is described in Zephaniah 1:15; a horrible day to witness. Zephaniah 1:18 tells that neither wealth nor position will be able to absolve the people from their ultimate judgment for: “...*he (God) shall make even a speedy riddance of all those that dwell in the land.*”

The second chapter lists all the nations that have persecuted and

oppressed Israel and gives the predictions of the judgments that God has in store for them. Note that these nations/ people are being destroyed as the result of their former actions against the children of Israel! In Romans 9, Paul says that *“God... endured with much long-suffering the vessels (nations/ people) of wrath fitted for destruction.”* This action is the end of his “enduring.” Look at the list and you will see, that those that feel as though they have been able to do so with no recompense, are sadly mistaken.

This action is summarized in Zephaniah 3:8 where God says: *“...for my determination is to gather the nations (those to be destroyed) that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine anger; for all the earth (This is all the earth of those nations being destroyed) shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”* Note the similarity of this and the actions described in Obadiah 18.

Finally, in Zephaniah 3:9 the redemption and regathering of Israel is described. The term *“peoples”* refers to the dispersed tribes who will *“all call on the name of the Lord.”* The next verse in the KJV says that *“...my supplicants (humble subjects) ...shall bring mine offerings.”* The Septuagint version says, *“From the boundaries of the rivers of Ethiopia will I receive my dispersed ones; they shall offer sacrifices to me.”*

The attitude of the Israelites is to be changed to a humble and contrite group who will trust in the name of the Lord. (Zephaniah 3:12). This is obviously the result of the implantation of the New Covenant given in Jeremiah 31 *“...I will put my law in their (Israel’s) inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”*

In Ezekiel 39, we are given another version of the destruction of these nations and thereupon the Israelites *“...shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.”* The joy and celebration associated with the regathering of Israel is covered in Zephaniah 3:14-20. This is another instance where only Israel is assured that their Lord God is to dwell in their midst. Note that God is to *“...undo (destroy) all that afflict thee...”*

There is also another mention of just whom is to be brought back into the fold: “...and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that is driven out;” This statement is a repeat of the promise given in Micah 4:6, “*In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth (Judah) and I will gather her that is driven out (Israel), and her that I have afflicted.*”

This book is another instance of God’s telling Israel the reason for their punishment, but reassurance of the unique status they are to enjoy upon His recalling them to the land promised to their fathers.

The final verses contain the rewards that Israel is to receive when regathered.

“...and I will get them (Israel) praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. 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 peoples of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.”
(Zephaniah 3:19-20)

This promise is the fulfillment of that initially given to Israel in Deuteronomy 26:19.

Zechariah

In Zechariah we have a prophet speaking out of the captivity of Judah/Jerusalem. A large portion of the book is taken up in the Lord telling the people that He is very dissatisfied with their behavior, and they are in their present position because of the way they have treated (or ignored) Him. Some of the visions are difficult to understand but all seem to be associated with the fury of the Lord toward the sinning nation of Judah. However, in chapter two, there is the oft repeated promise of restoration to *“His people”* and how He will gather them from throughout the world and bring them back and dwell in their midst.

This is the source of the familiar term *“apple of his eye.”* Referring to the nations that attack or oppress the Israelites, He says *“for he that touches you is as one that touches the apple of his eye.”* The fate of the oppressing nations is *“I bring my hand upon them and they shall be a spoil to them that serve them.”* This promise is quite common within the Old Testament. Even the nations that were used by God to punish Israel were to be destroyed by God as a result of that action. In this case Judah (and Benjamin) is being told that they are to be masters over the people that have been oppressing them. Within the book there is that definite thread signifying the exclusive relationship between the people of Israel, in this case Judah, and their Lord.

There is another prophetic promise in Zechariah 2 about the restoration of Israel:

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that

the Lord of hosts hath sent me to thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and shall choose Jerusalem again.” (Zechariah 2:10-12)

That God says those nations are “*my people*” marks them as the other tribes of Israel. Several times in the Old Testament God states that He is to dwell in the midst of Israel. Zechariah is given a vision in Chapter 5 that he doesn’t understand. It consists of two olive trees among other items associated with the worship practices for the temple. When he inquires about the two olive trees, the angel tells Zechariah that “*these are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*” This is another illustration of the two “*houses*” of God’s children: Judah and Israel. The olive tree is frequently used as a symbol for Israel.

Among the things that provoked the Lord was the performance of the religious leaders, and their insincerity in their worship of Him. He told them that their sacrifices and fasting was to be of no importance to Him, since they were not performing these activities to Him, but rather to themselves. Their form of justice was also not in accordance with the true Law of the Lord, so the Lord told Zechariah:

“And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.” (Zechariah 7:8-10)

The ordered acts were to be implemented by the people of Israel to their kin “...*every man to his brother.*” Failure to do this, along with the worship of “*strange*” gods and the “*shedding of innocent blood,*” are some of the things that caused the demise of the nation of Judah. Although they had been told repeatedly, they continued to ignore the orders and spent seventy years in captivity for their ‘sins.’

Using the term “*jealous for Zion*” the LORD of hosts says that,

“...Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”
(Zechariah 8:7-8)

This means that “*my people*” (Israel/ Judea) are to be living in the midst of Jerusalem with their God, since that’s where He said He would come to dwell also. Later in Zechariah 8, after He explains the future of these in captivity, He also reiterates the promise of restoration:

“And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.” For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.” (Zechariah 8:13-15)

Notice that the house of Israel is included in this promise. But there were some requirements that were added to this promise that had been common practice and which were a major reason for the destruction of Judah:

“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.” (Zechariah 8:16-17)

The reference to “*neighbor*” actually applies to the relationship of the Israelites among themselves. This is in consonance with the New Testament order to “*love thy neighbor.*”

Towards the end of Zechariah 8, God is talking about when the survivors

come to Jerusalem, others (not Israelites) will want to attach themselves to the people of Judah and come along. In Zechariah 8:23 they “...shall take a hold of the skirt of a Jew, saying we will go with you for we have heard that God is with you.” The word translated here as “Jew” should be ‘Judahite’ (Strong’s #3064), referring only to the true members of the tribe of Judah.

In Zechariah 9-10 additional instructions are given as to the future of the two nations and the intentions of the Lord God of Israel. All of the predictions culminate in the complete restoration, prosperity and rewards of that regathering.

“And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD. I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.” (Zechariah 9:6-8)

The Septuagint phrases this a little differently:

“And I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph, and I will settle them; and they shall be as if I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and I will hear them. And they shall be as the warriors of Ephraim, and their heart shall rejoice as with wine: and their children also shall see it and be glad; and their heart shall rejoice in the LORD. I will make a sign to them and gather them in: for I will redeem them and they shall be multiplied according to their number before.” (LXX)

These are promises of the future to a nation in abject captivity. Some of these phrases may not mean much to today’s people, but the people of that day were well aware of the analogies. They knew what the stature of the nations of Israel and Judah were before the dispersion, and therefore

knew what was being promised. The warriors of Ephraim were legendary, and had once been considered unconquerable, so the promise that they were to become as they were was indeed a profound promise. In addition, they were being promised that they would become as numerous as they once were. Altogether these were huge promises and they were being told to *“fear not and let your hands be strong.”*

The breaking of the Covenant made back in Exodus, is documented here in Zechariah 11:10-11. Because this was now broken, the New Covenant spoken of in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34) was to be established at a later date with the *“house of Israel and the house of Judah.”*

What the area of Jerusalem is going to be like, is set forth in Zechariah 14. All nations that have come against Jerusalem and have destroyed the city and ravaged the people, are to be defeated by the Lord God of Israel. (Zechariah 14:3) The return of the saints is mentioned in verse 5 and tells of the issue of living waters that shall come from the split in the Mount of Olives. Zechariah 14:9 states that the kingdom promised by Jesus is established at that time with: *“...the LORD shall be king over all the earth; and in that day shall there be one LORD and his name one.”*

The last statement concerning the restored Jerusalem under the rule of the LORD God of Israel is the final sentence of the book: *“...and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.”* These Canaanites are the Pharisees that Jesus chastised so soundly in John 8. This absolutely ends the period of time that the Canaanites/ Edomites have been usurping the true Israelite people's role in the temple worship.

Malachi

The book of Malachi closes out the Old Testament. Written approximately fifty years after the restoration of the temple, it is apparent that the Babylonian Pharisee-ism brought back from the seventy year captivity had permeated the temple worship. In a profound declaration in the first part of Malachi 1, God makes known His attitude regarding the two peoples originating from Isaac.

“I have loved you (Israel), saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.” (Malachi 1:2-4)

Here is the wording of the Septuagint:

“I have loved you saith the Lord. And ye said, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? Saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau and laid waste his borders and made his heritage as dwellings of the wilderness? Because one will say, Idumea has been overthrown, but let us return and rebuild the desolate places; thus saith the Lord Almighty, they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall be called the borders of wickedness and the people against whom the Lord has set himself for ever. And your eyes shall see and ye shall say, the Lord has been magnified upon the borders of

The tense of the verbs here signifies that God has always loved and will always love Jacob and has always hated and will always hate Esau. This hatred will culminate in the destruction of Esau/ Edom as prophesied in the book of Obadiah.

Although the temple had been restored at this time, Esau is saying that “...*we will return and build the desolate places.*,” which is in the future tense, meaning it was to happen at a later date. God responds with “*they* (Esau/ Edom) *shall build, but I will throw down* (destroy).” So, when Esau/ Edom (note that the terms are used interchangeably) does return and build the desolate places, be assured that God will destroy their handiwork. When that happens Esau/ Edom will be known publicly as the people for whom God has had indignation (hatred) forever. The last sentence in the Septuagint tells Israel (Jacob) that they will see the “*throwing down*” of Idumea when the Lord does it.

Much of the book consists of God asking rhetorical questions to the priests, and responding with answers and clarifying their state of hypocrisy. It is obvious that the priests had strayed so far from the proper worship procedures, that God was no longer even going to consider their worship. In Malachi 3 God tells them that if they were to “*return to me*” and practice the proper worship procedures, He would inundate them with blessings. As usual, they ignored this promise. However, starting in Malachi 3:16, the LORD addresses “*the few that feared the LORD*” and says that He hears them and that they will be richly rewarded “*in that day*”. “*For I am the Lord your God and I change not.*” (Malachi 3:6). Malachi 4 contains an ominous prediction of the future and the destiny of some of the people.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name (this is the “few” that feared the LORD

in Chapter 3) *shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 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.*” (Malachi 4:1-5)

The Septuagint words Malachi 4 a little differently:

“For behold, a day comes burning as an oven, and it shall consume them: and all the aliens, (foreigners – other than Israel) and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that is coming shall set them on fire saith the Lord Almighty and there shall not be left no root or branch. But to you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise and healing shall be in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and bound as young calves let loose from bonds. And ye shall trample the wicked; for they shall be ashes underneath your feet in the day which I appoint, saith the Lord Almighty. Remember the law of my servant Moses, accordingly as I charged him with it in Choreb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances. And behold I will send to you Elian the Thesbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes; who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come and smite the earth grievously.” (LXX)

Malachi 4:1 is a reiteration of the promise to Edom/ Esau given in Obadiah.

“And the house of Jacob (the whole house of Israel) shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph (the house of Joseph consists of

three tribes: Joseph, Ephraim and Manassas) *a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.*” (Obadiah 18)

This is verified by the quote in Malachi 4:3 above. “...*For they (Esau/Edom) shall be ashes under the soles of your (Israel’s) feet.*” This is to be accomplished “...*in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD.*” In Malachi 4:4 above, Israel is admonished to “*Remember the law of my servant Moses.,*” including the Commandments and Statutes, meaning that the Talmudic Pharisee-ism form of religion was not what the Lord God of Israel wanted for His people. Note also that the Law was only “*for all Israel.*” The Law is/ was never given for people other than Israel.

Between the Books

During the approximately four hundred years between Malachi and Matthew, there is very little scriptural evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit, messages from prophets or any other contact from God. For the most part, the Scripture is silent as to what transpired during that period.

Probably the most significant single thing, as far as Israel is concerned, is the transition of Edom from a small nation sitting off to the southeast of Judea, to a political and religious force within the area of Judea. From the return of Jacob/ Israel in Genesis 33 (approximately 1400 BC) until 312 BC, the descendants of Esau/ Edom occupied the area around Mt. Seir. *“So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.”* (Genesis 33:16) Seir was the great grandson of Canaan. He, you will remember, is the son of Ham, who had the curse put on him and his descendants by Noah shortly after the flood (Genesis 9:25). During the period they were in the vicinity of Mt. Seir, the Edomites became a local power, built cities and remained safely protected in them. One in particular, Petra, was considered impregnable until the Nabateans, by utilizing treachery, infiltrated the cities and defeated the Edomites, forcing them out of their homeland. The considerable number of Edomite survivors fled northwestward into the land belonging to the tribe of Judah and settled there.

Since the Edomites had several hundred years experience operating as crafty, powerful and oppressive vandals, preying on merchants and caravans passing through their territory by exacting tolls or outright robbery, they were more than the peaceful residents of Judea were able to control. Occasionally in the Old Testament they are referred to by the Greek name of *“Idumeans.”* In about two hundred years they had become such a factor in the business and political arena, that the leader of Judea, John Hyrcanus, gave them a choice; either convert to the religion of the Jews

or leave the area of Judea. Of course they embraced the conversion enthusiastically and converted *en mass*. This conversion was not to the form of temple worship that was brought in by Solomon, but to the Talmudic Pharisee-ism form that was brought back from the Babylonian captivity by the few Judahites and Benjaminites, as told in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The *Talmud* was known as the *Traditions of the Elders* at the time of Jesus and is still used as the basis of the 'Talmudist' form of Jewry. During the time they were living in the land given to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the Edomites aggressively pushed the average Israelite out of the metropolitan areas of Judea into the outlying areas of Bethany, Bethlehem and Nazareth. This oppression continued to the extent that the king of Judea, Herod, and nearly all his associates were Edomites. Herod was so powerful that when notified of the birth of Jesus, he was able to have all the male Israelite babies less than two years of age murdered. Since the Edomites along with the Nethinim, assumed the ruling role in the management of the temple that had been rebuilt, the form of worship had changed from the Levitical manner to a paganized form, incorporating the *Talmud* and portions of the *Cabalah's* magical procedures. The Nethinim were initially supposed to be those, other than Israelites, that were kept to do the menial tasks around the temple, and the daily tasks of the sacrifices, and to be "*hewers of wood and water carriers,*" but because of the influence of the Edomites, they became part of the non-Israelite people operating and managing the temple and the daily worship process.

At the time of the birth of Christ, there was tremendous oppression from the temple rulers toward the true Israelites (Judah/ Benjamin). Animal sacrifices and coinage for tithing was handled in a manner that made many of the temple officials wealthy, and forced the worshippers to refrain from the required attendances. This was the cause of Jesus saying to the Edomite Jews: "*Ye have made my Father's house a den of thieves.*"

Although there was little or no communication by God to His people during this four hundred year period, there were many things that were constructed and/ or completed in the interim, that verified a number of

the prophecies concerning the Messiah given in the Old Testament.

Another important development during that period, was the generation and completion of the Bible in the form known as the Septuagint. This is the Bible that was in common use at the time of Christ. Written in Greek during 285 BC in Alexandria Egypt, it is still in print today and most of the quotes of the Old Testament that are in the New Testament can be traced to the Septuagint. Because most of the modern English translations are based on the Masoretic translation of the Septuagint, there can appear to be some differences. The Masoretic version of the Bible was not available in a complete form until the ninth century AD, almost a thousand years after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Amongst many of the modern day evangelical teachers and seminaries, there is a story about a divine origin of the Septuagint where it was translated from the ancient Hebrew to the Greek by six priests from each of the twelve tribes in seventy days. Such a task would have been utterly impossible under ordinary circumstances; therefore it had to have been under divine assistance. As it is known as the 285 BC translation, such a story couldn't actually have happened, because the ten tribes of the northern kingdom had been captured and taken away some four hundred fifty years previously.

It is also common knowledge that Alexandria had a sizeable Greek-speaking Israelite community at that time, that was capable of translating the Scriptures from the common form of Greek spoken around the area of Judea, into the Koinineia dialect, that was the finished form, in such a short time.

The New Testament

Starting Anew with Matthew

With the end of the four hundred years of silence from the Holy Spirit, the book of Matthew opens the door to the birth, life, death and resurrection of the greatest and most influential individual to ever have existed! Since the lineage from Adam through Abraham has been so well documented in the Old Testament, the genealogy of Jesus Christ starts with Abraham, and goes through the earthly father of Jesus, Joseph, *“the husband of Mary.”* Note that both sons of the Judah/ Tamar encounter, described in Genesis 38, are in the lineage of Jesus. Joseph was told not to *“put away”* Mary when he found that she was *“with child”* in a message from an angel of the Lord, and was told that the child’s name would be Jesus, and that He *“will save his people from their sins.”* Again, the term *“his people”* is given, to show that only Israel is to be the recipient of the saving program of Jesus the Messiah. The term *“people”* is the Greek word *‘laos,’* (Strong’s #2992), meaning *“those of the same stock and language.”* This is somewhat a repetition of the prophecy given in Isaiah 7:14, *“...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (literally God with us).”*

The primary reason for Jesus’ family being in Bethlehem was due to the fact that the Idumeans (Edomites) had become the ruling political and religious force within Judea. They practised the Talmudic Pharisee-ism form of religion that had been brought back from the Babylonian captivity, rather than the Mosaic form given by God to Moses. Herod, known as Herod the Great, was procurator of Judea, having inherited the position from his grandfather, Antipas, who was governor of Idumea, and his father, Antipater, who was procurator of Judea. All of these men were descendants of Esau/ Edom and were not Israelites. The term Herod used in Matthew 2:2 translated *“king of the Jews,”* actually should have been translated as *‘king of the Judeans.’* Herod was so concerned about the

possibility of the Messiah being born, that he called all the Chief Priests and Scribes together to ascertain just where He was to be born. They informed Herod that the Scriptures said Bethlehem; and then quoted a passage out of Micah 5.

*“But you Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler who will **Shepherd My people Israel.**”* (Matthew 2:6)

This inference that this child was to be the Ruler (King) of Israel infuriated Herod and he was not willing to allow another to claim the position he held. By this time, the Idumeans had so much power that Herod was able to order the murder of all the male children less than two years of age within the Judean community. This was the first action directed at elimination of the Messiah, and that campaign continues to the present day. The fact that the Messiah that had been prophesied was potentially coming to pass within the Judean community, caused the ruling Edomites to resort to extreme measures to prevent that from happening.

In every association, there was conflict between them and the righteousness of Jesus. Because they were the prominent group living in the area of Judea, they were called ‘Judean’ which was subsequently shortened to ‘Jew.’ Since most of the true Judahites had been taken away as a result of the two dispersions, there were few of the descendants of Judah left in that area. In Ezra and Nehemiah we are told that only approximately fifty thousand of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin actually returned to Jerusalem and the area of Judah. We are also told that many of them had mingled with people other than Israel, while in the seventy years of captivity, and could not be considered members of the congregation of Israel. Because of the oppression of the Idumeans, many of the Benjaminites had left the vicinity, and had moved northward to the area where some of the previous Israelites had settled outside of the land of Israel. Those that remained had been forced out of Jerusalem to the outlying areas such as Galilee, Capernaum, and Nazareth, and were generally looked down upon by the ruling class.

In the reference above to Jesus saving *“His people”* from *“their”* sins - the emphasis throughout the Scriptures is on just a few of Israel’s sins. They consist primarily of worshiping or even recognizing other gods, shedding innocent blood, profaning the Sabbath and intermarriage with people other than Israelites. After the return from the Babylonian captivity, Ezra is so concerned with God’s reaction to the fact that so many of the men from Judah and Benjamin, as well as some of the priests, had married *“strange wives”* that he proclaimed a long and spirited prayer for forgiveness for that particular sin (Ezra 9). To resolve that problem the men had to *“put away”* the foreign wives and all *“born unto them.”* None of the mixed breed children, or their mothers (*“strange wives”*) were allowed to remain with the people of the two tribes. The men, including the priests, were given no alternative. In this case also, there is no effort to convert the strange wives and their children to the worship (congregation) of the Lord God of Israel.

Within the Scriptures there is an eighteen year ‘gap’ in the life of Jesus - nothing is available in the Scriptures, from the time He was twelve and was left at the temple by His parents, until the start of His ministry at the approximate age of thirty. After Jesus’ birth, Mary and Joseph had several other children. Matthew 13:55 lists James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (or Jude), and nothing is provided about their maturing either. Jude later became the author of one of the smaller books in the New Testament.

In the passage where John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, is mentioned (Matthew 3), it states that *“all Judea”* went out for baptism by him. These were the true Israelites. However, when the Scribes and Pharisees (Edomites) came out, John recognized them instantly and called them a brood of vipers, and warned them that they were not going to escape the forthcoming judgment as stated in the book of Obadiah. The schism between the two people; Israel and Edom was (and is) very well known by both parties.

In Matthew 4:10 Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13: *“You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him alone.”* This command was given to Israel at the exodus, and was never given to any other people, nor is the

term “*your God*” used for any people but Israel. We are told that Jesus spent much of his time “*traversing all of Galilee.*” This was the result of the Edomites having taken over the political and religious management of Jerusalem and the immediate area. The true Israelites were forced out into the remote parts of Judea.

The beatitudes were a message to the Israelites who were being oppressed by the Edomites, and each one was applicable to a specific need. Every category that was mentioned as being rewarded is a characteristic of the Israelites, and lacking in the oppressive Edomites. These were the people that knew the Messiah when He came, and were able to hear and understand Him. In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells the Edomites why they can’t hear or understand His teachings. Jesus repeatedly says that “*my sheep know my voice*” and the reception by the Israelites proves this time and again.

Although He repeatedly stated that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, Jesus frequently ordered a person or persons He had healed to “*show thyself to the priest*” as a powerful witness of the position He held, and to frustrate the Idumean (Edomite) priests of the day. They refused to accept Him as the Messiah and such miracles caused them considerable anguish. In some instances they actually tried to kill Him for performing miracles. In the case of the Centurion’s servant, when Jesus pronounced him healed, He didn’t make any further commitment to the Centurion as to his fate, since he was not obviously an Israelite. In the case of the palsied man in Matthew 9, Jesus calls him “*son*” which means he was an Israelite, and in addition to healing him, Jesus told him that his sins were forgiven as was explained in Matthew 1:21 above.

When the disciples were gathered and ‘briefed’ prior to being sent out (Matthew 10), they were told not to go to any people but “*...rather (only) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” Later, Jesus would use this same exclusion to indicate His mission. It becomes very clear that the mission was to the very select people that God had called “*My people*” throughout the Old Testament, and to no one else. They were told to go and preach the coming of the “*kingdom of heaven.*” It should be

noted that only in Matthew is the forthcoming kingdom referred to as “*the kingdom of heaven.*” The other Gospels use the term “*kingdom of God.*” The penalty for any Judean city that did not warmly receive these disciples was quite severe:

“...It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.”
(Matthew 10:15)

Note that in Matthew 10:20, Jesus tells them that the Spirit that would be speaking in them during times of persecution is that of “*your Father.*” This term, “*your Father,*” is used eleven times in Matthew, all referring to the relationship God has with Israel. There is no place in the Gospels where Jesus refers to God in any manner other than “*Father.*” It would seem that if any of the supposedly divine names used by some of the present day preachers were proper and valid, the Son would have known how to use them. A study of the Talmudic Pharisee’s *Cabbala*, brought back to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, will reveal where many of these various names originate, and the purpose for them in that Babylonian based practice.

In contrast to the message of “*Peace on Earth*” that we hear every Christmas time, Jesus tells the disciples what he actually brings to the world:

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword (conflict). For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that

sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matthew 10:34-42)

Obviously following Christ is to be a very divisive journey. He reiterates the fact that if one does not accept (receive) Him as the Messiah, they do not accept (receive) the Father that sent Him.

In the dialogue with the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 12, Jesus tells them that He is actually not held to their interpretation of Sabbath restrictions. He makes the statement that, *"...in this place is one greater than the temple,"* meaning that He was not to be compared with their type of temple worship. In verse 9 there is a very key statement: *"And when he was departed from there, he went into their synagogue."* (Emphasis added). Jesus had no claim on the synagogue type of worship of the Edomite Scribes and Pharisees, because the synagogues had no association with Him.

Jesus' teaching in the Matthew 13 reveals several points of 'selective' teaching. While He taught in parables to the multitude, which included some Judeans, the Edomite Pharisees, as well as people of other tribes and races, His disciples asked Him why He did that. His response in verse 11 was *"Because it is given unto you (Israel) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (other than Israel) it is not given."* He then added, *"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."* This means that those that have the ability to know the mystery of the kingdom (Israel), shall the understanding be given, but to those who do not possess that ability, all things will be taken away. He then tells the disciples *"...But blessed are **your** eyes, for they see: and **your** ears, for they hear."* (Matthew 13:16)

In the parable about the wheat and tares, there is a very important statement by the “householder” when the servants came to him asking him if he wanted that they pull up and destroy the tares. The roles here are Jesus being the “householder” and the saints being the “servants.” The response of the householder was for the servants to let them grow together until the harvest time, “...and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers (these are the reapers of the “harvest of the earth” mentioned in Revelation 14:14), *Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*” The analogy implies that the people that are tares (sown by an enemy), are gathered first and burned, and afterwards the people of the “good seed” or wheat are gathered and brought into the storehouse of the householder. Later when the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable He responded with:

“...He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom (Jesus’ kingdom of heaven) of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:37-43)

Those that are not of “His people” (tares) are collected and destroyed (burned) first “...so shall it be in the end of this world.” Then the people belonging to the Lord God of Israel (His people) are gathered and brought into the kingdom of heaven. In this parable, as in the fish and net parable in Matthew 13:49, notice that the “wicked” are removed (“...and cast away”) and destroyed and the “just” are not taken away (gathered). There is no mention of “converting” a “tare” to “wheat” - the two are to “grow together” until the harvest time and then be separated. This is similar to the sheep and goats parable in Matthew 25. There

is no hint of converting a goat to a sheep - Jesus only keeps the sheep on His right (Israel), and sending the goats on the left to destruction. The ones denoted as “*righteous*” in verse 43 are the sons of God. In Matthew 25:46, talking about those that honor Him (the righteous), and those who don’t, Jesus quotes: “*And these (those men that reject Jesus) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the **righteous** (those that accept and follow Him) into life eternal.*”

Of particular interest is the quotation by Jesus to the Canaanitish woman in Matthew 15, when she asked Jesus for attention. His response was, “*I was not sent save (except) for the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” The term “*lost*” (‘*apollumi*,’ Strong’s #622) here does not mean misplaced as one would lose an item – the connotation is ‘put away for punishment,’ a better term would probably be ‘exiled.’ Another instance of Jesus’ use of ‘*apollumi*’ is in Matthew 18:11: “*For the Son of man (Jesus) is come to save that which was apollumi (put away for punishment).*” This statement amplifies the “*His people*” destination given in Matthew 1 above. This was not an act of malicious prejudice, but a factual statement of His divine objective. Throughout His lifetime, Jesus was very specific that His message and His services were meant only for the people of Israel.

The scathing berating Jesus gives to the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23, is one of the most descriptive dissertations on the activities of that group ever put into print. Other than the similar charge stated in John 8, the true demeanor of the Edomites has never been put more succinctly. Remember, this is just a short time before this same group attempts to end the life of Jesus, in the most cruel and painful method known. Elsewhere in the Scriptures they cheerfully acknowledged, “*let his blood be on us and our children!*” In Matthew 23, “*Woe unto you*” occurs eight times, all directed toward the Scribes and Pharisees that were the ruling faction politically and religiously in Jerusalem. That the Edomites were significantly different than the Israelites is indicated in Jesus’ quote about their proselytes:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is

made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.” (Matthew 23:15)

The Edomite Jews accepted proselytes from just about any race or tribe. (*“Ye compass sea and land.”*). In the book of Esther the people became “Jews” out of fear; *“And many of the people of the land became Jews for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.”* (Esther 8:17). The true Israelites could not accept proselytes from anyone - they legally couldn’t even accept the children of the “*strange wives*” marriages they had entered into previously. In this case again, Jesus refers to the Scribes and Pharisees as “*children of hell,*” a label He repeats again in the John 8. In Isaiah 14:21 God tells Lucifer that his children are to be slaughtered for the sins of their father; each is a “*child of hell*” referred to above. In another condemnation, Jesus tells the Edomite Jews that:

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye (Edomites) slew between the temple and the altar.” (Matthew 23:33-35)

There is an interesting passage from Numbers concerning innocent blood that could be applicable here:

“So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.”
(Numbers 35:33)

Therefore, if all the ‘innocent’ blood shed in the land of Judea was shed by the Edomites (Matthew 23:35), including the blood of Jesus (*“let his blood be on us and our children”*), then the land cannot be “*cleansed,*”

but by the blood of the Edomites! The land must be cleansed prior to the restoration of the whole house of Israel. The LORD says the land cannot be “*defiled*” (polluted) because “*...I dwell among the children of Israel.*” (Numbers 35:34).

In the dissertation in Matthew 25, Jesus tells of when He shall return and what He will do upon that return.

“...then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep (Israel) on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the king (Jesus) will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come you blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”
(Matthew 25:31-34)

He is to separate people, here depicted as sheep and goats, based on the same process as the wheat and tares found in Matthew 13. There He cautioned that only He can tell the sheep (wheat) from the goats (tares) and He will sort them at that time. He then addresses the sheep (Israel) in a term found nowhere else in the Scriptures when He calls them “*blessed of My Father.*” This also identifies them as Israel, and since they are “*sons of God*” they are qualified to inherit the kingdom.

Jesus makes a statement regarding the New Covenant in Matthew 26:28 during the Lord’s Supper, stating of the cup: “*For this is my blood of the new testament (covenant) which is shed for many (not all!) for the remission of sins.*” This is in contrast to the blood of the original covenant found in Exodus 24. In that instance Moses and some of the elders of the children of Israel were called up to worship “*afar off*” from the Lord God of Israel. The Israelites acknowledged the Covenant and replied that: “*...all the words which the Lord hath said we will do.*” Moses then “*...took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.’”* Only after the sprinkling of the blood of the Covenant,

were Moses and the elders of Israel able to approach the God of Israel. From that point on, the children of Israel were under the first covenant, until it was rescinded by God due to their lack of compliance. Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8 both give the promise of the New Covenant that was implemented by the ultimate sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because it is probably the most important message in the New Testament, here is the language of the New Covenant:

“For finding fault with them, he saith, ‘Behold, the days come,’ saith 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; (Exodus 24) because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not (He rescinded the contract),’ saith the Lord. ‘For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel (in this instance this also includes Judah) after those days,’ saith the Lord; ‘I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:’ In that he saith, ‘A new covenant,’ he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” (Hebrews 8:8-13)

The direction given to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 contains a phrase that is often misinterpreted as to the meaning. When they are told to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,”* He uses the Greek word *‘ethnos’* again, actually telling them to go to all the tribes of Israel and make disciples. The KJV just says *“all nations,”* but the actual Greek says *“all the nations”* (all the tribes) which has been corrected in the NKJ version as in most other translations.

Note that four times in Matthew, and once each in Mark and Luke, the Pharisees synagogues are referred to as *“their synagogues.”* Jesus never claimed any relationship with those establishments.

Mark

Within the book of Mark there is little to indicate the exclusive relationship with Israel. Jesus moves among the people of the country, but actually spends little time in Jerusalem. However, in Mark 12:28-29 when the scribe asked Jesus what the greatest Commandment was, Jesus responded, “...*The first of all commandments is: Hear, **O Israel**; The lord our God is one Lord.*” Again in this case, Jesus makes certain that everyone knows He is addressing Israel only. Note that the selection of the disciples was made solely by Jesus. When He found them He told them to “*come*” or “*follow me.*” In Mark 3:14, it says that Jesus ordained or appointed twelve “*that they should be with Him...*” This selection will always be the decision of the Lord.

Throughout the book of Mark there is the constant friction from the Scribes and Pharisees. These are the Edomites that had become the rulers/ managers of the synagogues and the political rulers of the area known as Judea/ Jerusalem. Another term used a few times is “*Herodian,*” meaning those members of the council of Herod who was himself an Edomite. There are numerous instances of Jesus’ healing and restoring people in this book, but only a couple of occasions where He told them their sins were forgiven. The first case is the young man lowered down through the roof to Jesus’ feet in Mark 2:4-11; Jesus called him “*son,*” meaning that He knew the young man was an Israelite. The other was the woman with the issue in Mark 5, where Jesus called her “*daughter*” after establishing who had touched His garment. In the case of the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7, Jesus commended her for her faith and healed her daughter. When first asked, Jesus told her that it wasn’t “*...right to take the children’s bread and cast it unto dogs.*” This statement does not mean the canine type of dogs. This was a term used to mean persons outside of the house of Israel. There are several instances

where it is used in that fashion. In Revelation 22:15, where the righteous are given access to the eternal city, there is without (outside), “...dogs, and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” All these describe human beings. Jesus was telling the woman that His blessings were reserved for His people Israel. Notice that He complimented her on her faith but didn’t make any attempt to evangelize her or to announce that she could be converted to a follower of Christ.

When the disciples asked Jesus why He used parables when talking in public, His response was as follows:

“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn and their sins be forgiven them.” (Mark 4:11-12)

Jesus is telling them that as Israel they have been given the “mystery” (Strong’s #3466 - as in a secret relating to a religious rite) of the kingdom of God, but to those “outside” - non-Israelites - the meaning is not to be given.

When the Pharisees, in Mark 8:11, tried to force Jesus to give them a sign from heaven, He responded with: “*Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Assuredly I say to you, there shall no sign given unto this generation.*” The word translated here as “generation” is the Greek ‘genea’ (Strong’s #1074) and has several meanings. Probably a better translation would have been ‘people’ or ‘nation’ because Jesus was telling them that they (Pharisees) would never get a sign from heaven.

The warnings about the end times in Mark 13 include the statement that the Gospel must first be published (actually proclaimed) among all nations. This is another use of the word ‘ethnos’ also meaning tribes. Jesus had told the disciples several times that they were to only go to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The impending persecution of the

disciples and the forthcoming followers of Christ are told here. This is to be so severe that “...except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.” (Mark 13:20). Jesus says that after that great tribulation “...then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. And then (after the tribulation) shall he send his angels and shall gather his elect (Israel) from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”

Here is another mention of Jesus’ selecting the people that are to be “his people;” here called “the elect, whom he hath chosen.” Individuals don’t make the decision, they are chosen by God.

At the Passover, Jesus again tells of the purpose of the cup at the Lord’s Supper: “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.” (Mark 14:24). Note that He said “many,” not all!

A great deal of doctrine and dogma has been established on the contents of Mark 16, however, nearly every version of the modern translations indicate that the portion from Mark 16:9-20 was not in the original and was added by a scribe sometime in the third century AD. It would seem odd that after three years of constantly reminding all around Him that He “... came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” that Jesus would suddenly change His mind and have the disciples going to “all the world.” Also the statement where Jesus “upbraided them” does not concur with the statement in Luke 24:50, where, as He was leaving, Jesus “...lifted up His hands and blessed them.” Many of the authoritative encyclopedia and research volumes indicate that the writing is different and the grammar changed from the best manuscripts of the original Gospel. Modern teacher/ pastors are reluctant to clarify the situation, most probably due to the difficulty of reconciling some of their denomination’s primary teachings and financial objectives.

Although there isn’t much to signify the role of the Savior to Israel in Mark, there is considerably more to denote the bad relationship between the Son of Man and the Scribes, Pharisees and Herodians, all of which

were Edomites.

Luke

The third Gospel of Luke is the longest of the four and is, primarily, a historical writing of the life of Jesus while on earth. Luke says he will “...write to you an orderly account...” of the things Jesus did. Luke was not a disciple, but was highly educated (a physician), as was Paul, and the two of them traveled together during Paul’s journeys.

The book starts with a description of the birth of John the Baptist, followed by the visitation to Mary telling of the birth of Jesus. John the Baptist is said to “*turn many of the **children of Israel** to the Lord their God.*” (Luke 1:16). Mary is told that she is to conceive a son and His name is to be called Jesus and “*He will reign over the **house of Jacob** (Israel) forever...*” Mary’s “song,” while she was at the house of Elizabeth, contains this unique statement identifying the relationship of Jesus and Israel; “*He hath helped **his servant Israel**, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to **his seed forever.***” (Luke 1:54-55) (Emphasis added).

At the birth of John, his father Zacharias regained his speech and, being “*filled with the Holy Spirit,*” spoke a prayer that indicates his intimate knowledge of the role of the Israelite priesthood, that he had been working in for many years. He prophesied:

*“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath **visited and redeemed his people**, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant **David**; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from **our** enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the **mercy promised to our fathers**, and to **remember his holy covenant**; The oath*

which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:68-79) (Emphasis added).

The “*dayspring from on high*” referred to in verse 78 is an endearment, describing the Lord God of Israel (our God). Within the prophecy, there are descriptions of the roles of the two major individuals in this book; John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ. Zacharias was aware of the role John was to play and also knew that the “*Highest*” of the Lord was to come while John was mature.

After the birth of Jesus, and when He was presented at the Temple, as was required for every male that opened the womb, there was a man there called Simeon who had been waiting for the “*consolation of Israel.*” Simeon was at the temple when Jesus was brought in, and picked him up, blessed God and said, “*Lord, now let thy servant depart (die) in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou has prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles (‘ethnos,’ Strong’s #1484) and the glory of thy people Israel.*” The use of the term “*gentiles*” here is also frequently mis-translated. It should be ‘tribes’ and that is the context in this case.

The genealogy in the third chapter is a complete listing of the male members of the family, that stretches from Adam to Jesus through the house of Israel. In the Israelite succession, father-to-son was the principal source of heredity. Only in rare instances, where there was no male member for transition, could the succession pass through a daughter.

In the dissertation to the people “*near to Jerusalem*” in Luke 19, Jesus tells them two important things; his divine assignment; “*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (‘apollumi’)*.” (Luke 19:10) (no party other than Israel is referred to as being “*lost*” by Jesus); and the fate of those people that reject His kingdom after the restoration of Israel: “*But those mine enemies, who would not that I reign over them, bring here and slay before me.*” (Luke 19:27) There is no hint of conversion for these people. One can assume that all factions, including those non-believing Israelites, that have rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah will suffer that fate.

During the last Passover (Luke 22:20), Jesus tells the disciples that “*...this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you.*” From that point on, Israel (and only Israel) was under the provisions of the New Covenant as given in Hebrews 8. In Luke 22:28, He tells them that: “*Ye are they who have continued with me in my trials, and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my father hath appointed unto me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” This is the promised position that the disciples and the whole house of Israel will attain in the kingdom of Jesus, referred to as the “*kingdom of heaven*” and the “*kingdom of God*” in the Gospels. No other people are promised anything similar to this.

After the resurrection, Jesus meets with the followers and explains several things to them about His mission. Using the Law, Prophets and Psalms, He tells them of the things that were written before concerning Him. Jesus says that “*...all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*” (Luke 24:44). In verse 45 it says, “*Then He opened their understanding that they may understand the scriptures.*” Jesus also tells them “*...And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his (Jesus) name among all the nations (‘ethnos’ - the dispersed tribes) beginning in Jerusalem.*” This direction is found again in Acts 1:8 where “*...he (Jesus) ...had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen;...*” saying, “*But ye (Apostles) shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me*

both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Then He informs them that “...I send the promise of my Father upon you.” After which He “...lifted up his hands and blessed them” just prior to being “carried up into heaven.”

John

The Gospel of John is probably the most read and taught of the four Gospels. It starts with the declaration that ‘The Christ,’ referred to as “*The Word, (‘Logos’),*” existed from the beginning, was God, is God, was with God, and is responsible for all the creation. The Apostle John then mentions John the Baptist, who was a witness of Jesus and preceded Him to “*make straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Isaiah.*” (Isaiah 40:3) In John 1:31, John the Baptist says that Jesus was to be “*...made manifest to Israel...*” (Emphasis added). There is no indication that He was to be “*made manifest*” to anyone else.

Most of the book takes place in the northern part of Judea, because of the oppression imposed by the Edomite Pharisees in Jerusalem. Oppression by the Pharisees was a fact of life for all the followers of “*The Way,*” who were to be called Christians from the start of the ministry of Jesus, until the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

John 3 starts with the meeting between Jesus and a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Nicodemus is called a ruler of the Jews. Within this book the term “*Jew*” is used for a few different kinds of people, and the use of a good concordance is mandatory to determine just which one is being mentioned. In this case, it refers to one of the Edomite Pharisees, but in other instances it can mean one of Judea, who could be a true Israelite. In the conversation, there are several important points that are not frequently taught, and if taught, often taught incorrectly. This is where the oft used term “*born again*” originates. However, in almost every translation in use today, except for the Scofield Bible, side notes provide the correct term as “*born from above.*” The Greek word being used is ‘*anōthen*’ and is used again in John 3:7 and 31, where it is translated correctly as “*above.*” It is also used to describe the tearing of the veil of the

temple curtain at the death of Jesus on the cross, as being from top to bottom. (See Matthew 37:51) Jesus then tells Nicodemus that what is born of flesh (world) is flesh, and that which is born of spirit (above) is Spirit, and the two are incompatible and not exchangeable. Reverting to an analogy, Jesus then tells Nicodemus that in the same manner that he cannot tell where the wind comes from and goes to, *"...so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* Or, to paraphrase; "You (Nicodemus) can't tell from where the wind comes or where it goes, in the same manner you are unable to determine where one born from above, comes from or goes to." At no time does Jesus suggest that Nicodemus should be 'converted' to a member of the elect.

The most quoted verse in the Scriptures, John 3:16 has also been misquoted nearly every time. The word "world" here (*'kosmos,'* Strong's #3625) does not mean all of the earth. It was normally used to define the populated area around the writer's location. When Joseph came to Bethlehem in response to the decree from Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1), it didn't mean all the people of the earth had to come to his own city - only the residents of the area of Judea. As for loving the world, God said that *"...yet I loved Jacob and Esau I hated."* (Malachi 1:3).

With the scriptural continuity of the families, one can gather that God loves all of Jacob's family, and hates all of Esau's to this day. He also ordered the complete destruction of the indigenous population in the land of Palestine, when Joshua and the children of Israel entered. Joshua was to *"...consume all the people whom the Lord thy God shall deliver to thee..."* Joshua was to take no prisoners because the survivors would be a *"snare unto thee."* The priests of Baal weren't allowed to exist after the display of the power of the Lord God of Israel through Elijah, and all four hundred fifty were killed at the brook Kishon. (1 Kings 18:40).

Deuteronomy 7:6 tells of the difference in stature God has with Israel and all other people: *"...For thou (Israel) are a holy (set aside) people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people who are upon the face of the earth."* In keeping with the actions He maintained in the Old Testa-

ment, the context here is that God so loved His people Israel, (“...and he will love thee and bless thee and multiply thee;...” Deuteronomy 8:13), His “inheritance,” that He sent Jesus Christ to atone for **their sins**. Since only the children of Israel had broken the initial covenant, there is no reason for anyone else requiring atonement.

In a conversation with the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus tells them, “*You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.*” They (the Jews) responded with: “*Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles?*” (John 7:34-35). This is another instance where the Scribes and Pharisees are not able to understand what Jesus is telling them. In the next chapter Jesus tells them why they cannot understand. The word translated as “Gentiles” here is ‘Hellen,’ (Strong’s #1672), which is also to be used frequently by Paul in his epistles to denote the Greek-speaking dispersed members of the ten tribes. The usage here indicates that the Scribes and Pharisees were knowledgeable about the location and existence of the dispersed Israelites (the so-called ten lost tribes).

In John 8 there is another conversation where Jesus tells the Edomite Pharisees “...for I know from where I come, and where I go; but ye cannot tell from where I come and where I go.” (John 8:14). In verse 23, He tells them “...Ye are from beneath; I am from above (‘another’): ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” This dissertation continues for the rest of John 8 and contains the most illuminating description of the role of the Pharisees found in the Scriptures. In verse 31, He refers to the “Jews that believed on him” (using the Greek word ‘Ioudaios’ or Judean), telling them that the truth (about Him) will make them free. Then the conversation changes to the Pharisees again and they inform Jesus that they “were never in bondage (slavery) to any man.” That was a true statement. The Edomites had never been in slavery in Egypt; only the Israelites had (in this instance Judah/ Benjamin). The difference in the two parties is made very clear by Jesus starting in John 8:38 where he tells of the two having different fathers: “I speak that which I have seen with my father and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.” In

stating that they were “...*not born of fornication.*,” the Pharisees are making an uncomplimentary comment about the source of Judah’s two sons, Zerah and Pharez, after his impregnating his daughter-in-law Tamar. Jesus ignores that statement. Here is the content from John 8:43:

“Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts (desires) of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews (Edomites), and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonor me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham (these Edomite/ Pharisees were descendants of Abraham but not of Jacob/ Israel) rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am...” (John 8:43-58) (Emphasis added)

There is a sharp contrast in the way Jesus addresses the two different groups. Just as the conversation with Nicodemus, there is no mention of ‘winning them’ or converting them to ‘the way.’ The statement in verse 43 does not imply that they were physically hard of hearing - it actually meant that it was impossible for the Pharisees to hear and comprehend the message that Jesus was bringing to Israel (*“Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world”*). In instances used to describe genealogy, the term “of” actually denotes ‘son of’ or ‘descendant of.’ In the monologue, Jesus tells the Scribes and Pharisees that they are “of” (sons of) their father the devil, and that only those “of” (sons of) God could understand His teaching. This differentiation has never been rescinded.

This confrontation continued for the rest of the time that Jesus was on earth prior to his crucifixion, instigated by the Pharisees: *“Let his blood be on us and our children.”* (Matthew 27:25). Jesus had no kind words for them - He did explain some of the points to Pharisees, but actually never spent a lot of time or effort on them. The Pharisees insisted on persecuting the people that Jesus had cured of blindness and major afflictions, even to the extent that they wanted to kill Lazarus that Jesus had called from the grave. John tells us that many of the Judean (Israelite) rulers who were still in Jerusalem were believers in Jesus, but were afraid of the reprisals of the Pharisees (*“for fear of the Jews”*) and would not admit it openly.

In the parable of the Good Shepherd, John 10, Jesus tells the Pharisees that only the true shepherd has the desire to care for his sheep and that the workers or servants do not have the true interest of the sheep at heart. Then He explains:

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (John 10:14-16)

Jesus is telling them that He knows His “*sheep*,” the people of Israel, and that they know Him. He is foretelling His sacrifice for the “*sheep*,” and informs them that He has “*other sheep*,” meaning the exiled Israelites known to us as the ‘ten lost tribes.’ His prediction that they would “*be one fold and {have} one shepherd*” is a profound statement, because the Judahites had no attraction for the “*uncircumcised*” (dispersed) tribes of Samaria/ Ephraim. Both Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34 contain additional promises to the “*sheep*” from God, the ultimate Shepherd.

This is another instance where the Pharisees are unable to discern the meaning of Jesus’ words. Later, Jesus tells them:

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” (John 10:26-27)

All this reference to sheep is related to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 15:24: “*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” Jesus is again verifying His purpose for being here. As in John 8, the Pharisees are told that they are not Jesus’ sheep. This statement of Jesus is in concert with the passages about the sheep of Israel in Ezekiel 34 and Micah 5.

That the Scribes and Pharisees were aware of the dispersed Israelites and the ultimate gathering of the tribes is confirmed by Caiaphas’ in John 11 where he states that:

“Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation (Israel) perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God (Israelites) that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews.” (John 11:49-54)

In John 12:20 we find the first mention of the term “*Greeks*.” (*‘Hellen,’* Strong’s #1672) Note that hereafter this is used interchangeably with “*uncircumcised*” and “*dispersion*” to denote the former northern ten tribes that had been “*scattered*” throughout the area. It also is frequently translated as “*Gentile*” but invariably means the members of the dispersion. (See 1 Corinthians 12:13, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews [‘Judeans’] or Gentiles [‘Hellen’]*”).

The matter of choice is in John 15:16: “*Ye (disciples - Israel) have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...*” and in John 15:19: “*...ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*” The choice belongs strictly to God, not us humans!

The prayer of Jesus takes up all of John 17 and verifies the association of Jesus and the Father, as well as Jesus and the Israelites. In verse 9 He tells The Father “*I pray for them, I pray not for the world but for them thou hast given me, for they are thine.*” And in verse 16 He says “*They (Israel) are not of the world even, as I am not of the world.*”

There is another frequent misquotation found in John 19:19 - the sign that Pilate had put over Jesus’ cross actually read “*JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JUDEANS*” again using the Greek word ‘*Ioudaios*,’ rather than “*King of the Jews*” as is found in most translations. The Pharisees wanted Pilate to change the sign to read “*He said I am the king of the Judeans*” but Pilate said “*what I have written, I have written*” and ended the conversation.

After the resurrection, Jesus has the conversation with Peter, about him loving Jesus (John 21:16-17), and when Peter acknowledges that he does indeed love Jesus, Jesus tells him twice to “*feed my sheep.*” Even after implementing the New Covenant with Judah and Israel, Jesus is only concerned that His sheep (Israel) are to be cared for. This is the mark of the true Shepherd!

Acts of the Apostles

In the book of Acts, Luke tells of the activities immediately preceding the ascension of Jesus, and the activities of the disciples at the time immediately after the ascension. We're told that Jesus had spent forty days with the apostles "*whom he had chosen.*" Throughout His time on earth we are repeatedly told that Jesus 'chose' individuals, and at no time are we given the impression that just anyone could 'choose' Jesus. At that time the Apostles were told (Acts 1:8) that they are to be witnesses "*...to me (Jesus) in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.*" (This is frequently misquoted as "*ends of the earth.*") In Isaiah, God told the children of Israel that He was going to scatter them "*to the end of the earth.*" (Isaiah 42:10) So the witnessing was to be in the places that the children of Israel had been dispersed, not world-wide. Note that the question regarding the restoration of the kingdom was whether it was to be restored to Israel. There was no consideration of any other people constituting any sort of a kingdom over them other than an Israelite.

Peter's sermon in Acts 2 stirred things up among the Edomite rulers of the synagogues and the temple. Notice that in verse 14 he starts out by addressing "*Men of Judea*" and continues to quote from the book of Joel which is specifically addressed to Israel. In the quotation Israel is referred to as "*My servants and maidservants*" (Joel 2:29) Peter then directs his message to the "*Men of Israel*" and delivers his address which provides the role of Jesus to their salvation. In verse 36 he says "*...Therefore let all the house of Israel know...*" From this time on the body of believers within the Judean community was growing at a tremendous rate. Later in Acts 3:12 he again addresses his audience as "*Men of Israel*" and in verse 13 reminds them that "*the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers...*" In verse 25 Peter reminds

them that “*You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers...*” All of which leaves little doubt that the entire congregation was acutely aware of the exclusive position of the Israelites.

After being released from the prison by the action of God, Peter tells the people that, “*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*” (Acts 5:30-31) (Emphasis added)

In the first part of Acts 6 there is mention of the Hebrews (Judeans or ‘*Ioudaios*’) - being accused of neglecting the widows of the “*Greeks.*” (Both parties were actually Israelites) The term for Greek is “*Hellenists*” and refers to those Greek speaking members of the dispersed tribes of Israel. The dispersed tribes were not held in any respect by the true Judahites and later even Paul was reluctant to go and preach to them.

The persecution of the true Israelites is mentioned again in Acts 8:1 which verifies the fact that they were driven out of Jerusalem and the area around it. Within Acts 8 we find the tale of the so-called “*Ethiopian eunuch.*” This is frequently used to document a Negro Ethiopian being “*saved.*” However, starting at verse 27, we find several things that indicate otherwise. We’re told that the person is a “*man of Ethiopia*” and is one of “*great authority*” having “*charge of all her (Ethiopia’s) treasure.*” Such a position would require a man being highly educated. This is verified in that he was “*sitting in his chariot and read Isaiah the prophet.*” This man is of such a station that he has his own chariot and is able to read, something few of the populace were able to do. We know he was reading Greek because the quote in verse 32 is from the Septuagint Bible. We also know he was not a Negro because he had “*come to Jerusalem to worship.*” A Negro attempting to enter the temple at that time would have been killed on the spot. Rather than a Negro eunuch of Ethiopian stock, this man is an Israelite that was living in Ethiopia (“*man of Ethiopia*”) and employed by Queen Candace as her treasurer.

Paul's mission as specified by the Lord God of Israel to Ananias was "...to bear my name before the Gentiles (again the Greek word translated "*Gentiles*" is '*ethnos*,' Strong's #1484 meaning tribes) and kings and the children of Israel." Later in the book the direction of the Holy Spirit would prevent Paul from going where he wanted to go (Asia) and instead directed him toward Macedonia. Paul knew there were many of his tribe of Benjamin still in the Babylonian area that had not returned to Jerusalem at the time of the Nehemiah rebuilding, and his desire was to go to them rather than the despised brethren of the northern tribes that were now residing in the area where the Spirit was sending him. Later when he was returning to Jerusalem, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to the saints in Macedonia to spread the Word.

In the dissertation of Paul at the synagogue in Antioch (Acts 13) there is another 'thumbnail' sketch of the history of Israel. Paul was well schooled and was able to condense the story into approximately a thirty minute monologue. He makes certain that the object of the speech is well documented. Here are some of the key phrases:

Verse 16 – "...Men of Israel ...Listen:"

Verse 17 – "...The God of this people Israel chose our fathers..."

Verse 22 – "...I (God) have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart who will do my will..."

Verse 23 – "...God raised up for Israel a Savior – Jesus..."

Verse 24 – "...after John (the Baptist) had first preached ...to all the people of Israel."

Verse 26 – "Men and brethren, sons of the stock (family) of Abraham... to you the word of this salvation has been sent."

In Acts 13:32 Paul tells them: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children..." Since Paul was addressing "Men of Israel," he is making certain that these men know that the "promise" of selection and redemption made to "the fathers" (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/ Israel) is also directed to them. By including himself with them, Paul lets them know that both he and they are included.

Continuing the talk, Paul cautions the brethren to remain steadfast in their faith and to ignore the teachings of the Edomite Pharisees. Note that in Acts 13:26 and 38 the KJV says “*men and brethren*” with “*and*” being in italics. This means that “*and*” was not in the original script. It should read “*men, brethren*” since these were true Israelites and of the same stock. (Referred to above in verse 26). This allows Paul to call them ‘*adelphos*.’

There are two key words here in these passages that are used by the disciples throughout the New Testament to denote just who is being addressed in their epistles;

Stock – ‘*genos*,’ (Strong’s #1085) meaning, offspring of the same family, tribe or nation.

Brethren – ‘*adelphos*,’ (Strong’s #80) meaning, having the same national ancestor; belonging to the same people (race).

Some Lexicons go so far as to make adelphos to mean “from the same womb.” In this case that would have to have been Rebecca, which could conceivably include Esau, except we’re told in Romans 9 that even prior to being born, God had by His own volition forever eliminated Esau (“*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*,” Romans 9:13) from the list of the fathers of the promise.

In Acts 13:44-48 the KJV uses “*Gentiles*” to describe the people that Paul and Barnabas are addressing. “*And when the Gentiles (ethnos) heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord;*” In each case the word is again “*ethnos*” meaning the tribes. Verse 48 says that they (the tribes) were “*ordained*” or elected (chosen) to eternal life. When the Jews came into the city they are said to have been “*contradicting and blaspheming*” similar to what Paul said he was doing prior to his Damascus road conversion. Following Jesus’ instructions in Luke 9:5, Paul and Barnabas “*...shook off the dust of their feet...*” against the Jews and left the city.

In Acts 15, James the brother of Jesus speaks at the council at Jerusalem about the various rules that the Apostles were debating as appropriate for the new Christians. In verse 13, he mentions that “... *Symeon (Peter) had declared how God at the first did visit the ethnos to take out of them a people for his name.*” Then in verse 16 he quotes out of the book of Amos a passage that verifies the application is to Israel only. Since James quotes from the LXX, here is the quote:

“In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and will rebuild the ruins of it, and will set up the parts there of that have been broken down, and will build it up as in the ancient days, that the remnant of men and all the Gentiles (‘ethnos’ – tribes) upon whom my name is called may earnestly seek me saith the Lord who does all these things.”
(Amos 9:11-12 LXX)

This rebuilding of the Davidic tabernacle has not occurred as yet. In both Peter’s quote and the passage from Amos, the Lord God of Israel is referring to “*a people for his name*” and only Israel can fit that description. Notice that the salutation of the Jerusalem Decree is “*The apostles, the elders and the brethren. To the brethren (‘adelphos’ – meaning of the same kin) who are of the gentiles (‘ethnos’ – tribes) in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:*” meaning that the letter was actually going from one group of Israelites to another of the same.

When Timothy is introduced in Acts 16 it is said that his father was a Greek (‘*Hellen*,’ Strong’s #1672 - a Greek speaking person) and his mother was “...*a certain Jewish woman.*” Again this “*Jewish*” translation is for the word ‘*Ioudaios*’ meaning she was a former Judean. Timothy’s father was obviously a descendant of the Israelite people that had migrated to Greece from either Egypt or Samaria prior to the dispersion. If both parents had not been Israelites, Paul would (could) not have included him in his journeys to the Israelites. Note that throughout the book there are many mentions of the term “*Jew.*” In most cases it is used to denote a Judean (‘*Ioudaios*,’ Strong’s #2453), namely a resident of Judea, the area formerly given to the tribe of Judah. In other instances it

can be used to mean one of the Edomite Scribes or Pharisees that were rulers of the temple at that time who were violent enemies of anyone associated with the “way.”

After his arrest in Acts 21, Paul attempts to inform the mob that he is one of them in Acts 21:39 and Acts 22:3, he tells them that he is an ‘*Ioudaios*’ or ‘Judean.’ This shows the complexity of the term ‘Judean.’ Paul lived in Judah so he could call himself an ‘*Ioudaios*’ or Judean; when actually he was of the tribe of Benjamin so he was also a Benjaminite and an Israelite. In verse 21 the quote from his vision from Jesus tells Paul that he is to be sent “*far from here to the ‘ethnos’*” or tribes which is what his mission turned out to be.

Romans

In this the first of the Pauline epistles we have the opportunity to see how the man, that “*turned the world upside down*,” addressed the problems the Israelite brethren, residing in Rome, were having. The epistle is addressed to “...*all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints*,” verifying it was to Israel, “*the beloved of God*.” Invariably when He uses the term “*saints*” (*hagios*) Paul is referring to fellow Israelite believers. He also uses the terms “*the Jew first and also the Greek*” several times in his letters, and in every case the term is using the Greek words ‘*Ioudaios*’ and ‘*Hellen*,’ denoting the difference between the brethren of Judah, and those of the ten dispersed tribes who were Greek-speaking Israelites. The Judeans had the opinion that the northern ten tribes were outside the Covenant since they had been “*divorced*” and scattered, and became known as the “*uncircumcised*,” but Paul tells them in Romans 3:29-30 that their God is the one God of both sets of tribes. The present day interpretation of a Gentile being a non-Jew does not fit the meaning of Paul’s illuminating epistle. The inconsistencies of the translators leads to the confusion, when trying to discern just what is meant by the various terms, and use of a good concordance is mandatory.

Paul refers to “*Jesus Christ our Lord*” in Romans 1:3 and that is “*by whom we have received grace and apostleship ...among all nations* (*ethnos*) *for his name*.” When talking about the “*fruit*” in verse 13, “...*that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles*,” he is talking about the results of their progress in the way of the Lord. The word translated here as “*Gentiles*” is the same word (*ethnos*) given as “*nations*” in verse 3.

He starts Romans 4 by reminding them about “*Abraham our father*,” signifying that he was the father of both Paul, and those he is writing to.

Later, Paul identifies the recipients in Romans 7:1: "*Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law).*" The term "*brethren*" is the Greek word '*adelphos*' meaning near kin, and is used here to denote the people descending from Jacob/ Israel. Paul then spends some time explaining that the New Covenant is far superior to the old Law, and that they have been liberated from the burden of the Mosaic Law. Since only Israel had the Law originally, relief could only be granted to them. In Romans, as in Paul's other epistles, there is no hint of any soliciting outsiders (those other than Israel) to be 'saved' and become members of the "*brethren*." Paul maintains the concerted effort toward the "*lost*" (actually exiled) tribes located in the areas of his multiple journeys. In Romans 4:25 Paul tells the Romans that Jesus was "*...delivered for **our** offenses, and was raised again for **our** justification.*" Later in Romans 5:8 he says that "*...Christ died for **us**.*" (Emphasis added)

Romans 8 is where Paul gives the saints a lesson in the difference between two kinds of men, carnal and Spiritual. "*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*" (Romans 8:5). Then he adds in Romans 8:9, "*But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit...*" "*...the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children ('teknon' - sons) of God.*" (Romans 8:16). This entire chapter is spent telling the saints that they, and their inclusion into the congregation, is a far superior position than those without. Paul uses the term "*adoption*" several times in this epistle. The Greek word here is '*huiothesia*' (Strong's #5206) and actually means to 'place a son,' rather than make a son of an outsider. Some of the phrases are often taught to mean that others (other than Israel) are being 'adopted' into the congregation, but the meaning does not include that interpretation.

In Romans 9, Paul provides an explanation of the process wherein the members of the "*seed*" are in the flock of Israel, and even though some of the others are sons of Abraham, they are not. The entire chapter is a condensed dissertation on how the separation and selection was done, and who the parties of each group of children are.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. (Genesis 21:12). That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: (“that which is flesh is flesh” John 3:6) but the children of the promise (Jacob’s children) are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. (Genesis 18:14). And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scriptures saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (Exodus 9:16). Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him

that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel (people) unto honour, and another (people) unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles ('ethnos' – tribes), which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

(Romans 9:1-33)

Paul starts this part of the epistle by stating that he would like even to sacrifice himself away from Jesus Christ, if that would redeem all his Israelite brethren. The description of those brethren signifies that they are indeed those of Israel now living in the area of Rome. Note that in verse 10 God made the decision that "*Jacob I loved and Esau I hated*" even "*before (they) have done any good or evil.*" To emphasize the fact

that God alone makes the decision on who He will have mercy and who He will reject, Paul gives the analogy of the potter. Verse 16 states that *"It is not of him that willeth or him that runneth, but God that showeth mercy."* (A person cannot decide to 'join' the 'seed' by a willful decision or by working their way in – only God provides the way). We are given a rhetorical question as to the validity of the clay questioning the potter, and the response is that it just isn't done! It is quite important that one understands the message about the vessels in verses 21-23. Paul is saying, and I'm paraphrasing here, that God has made some people (races) for destruction from the beginning, and others for glory from the beginning; there is no way of revising the parties. No method is given as to how a *"destruction"* vessel can convert to a *"mercy"* vessel. He says that God (has) *"endured much longsuffering"* (put up with considerable rejection and dishonor) from the ones destined for destruction, but in the end He (God) will destroy them. Obviously there is no resurrection for those destroyed by God. Edom's demise is described in the book of Obadiah. Where Paul refers to *"Jews"* and *"Gentiles"* in verse 25, he means Judeans (*'Ioudaios'*) and the dispersed tribes (*'ethnos'*), and notice that he includes himself: *"Even us, whom he (God) has called..."*

Paul expresses himself at the start of Romans 10: *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."* Paul's efforts were spent solely for the benefit of his Israelite brethren.

In Romans 11 Paul asks a rhetorical question: *"Has God cast away His people?"* and answers it by saying, *"Certainly not."* In verse 7 Paul continues with *"What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it and the rest were blinded."* The *"elect"* here are the true Israel and the *"rest"* are the *"children of the flesh."* The statement about the grafting of the branches has been utilized as a basis for the universal salvation message in modern churches; however, only an olive branch can be grafted back onto the original olive tree. This is verified in Romans 11:23, *"...for God is able to graft them in again."* The promise to the elect is repeated in Romans 11:26, but only to Israel.

Paul's exhortation in Romans 12-14 for the saints to act in accordance

with the ‘golden rule’ of Christianity is addressed to the “*brethren*” (“*I beseech you brethren*”) and his use of the pronouns indicate he is telling the Israelite brethren how to behave toward one another. Romans 12:13 is another version of the admonition of Jesus about giving the children’s things to the dogs: “... *distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality...*” The “*brethren*” are told to give for the benefit of the saints (brethren) and to be hospitable to them. The “*neighbor*” they were to love is again their brethren (the other Israelites). Later they are told to be considerate of the other saints that are having problems and to share in their burdens. Paul tells them that “...*whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,*,” meaning that the message conveyed in the Old Testament, was written for the edification of the saints of the time.

1 Corinthians

In this epistle, Paul is giving a spiritual ‘pep talk’ to keep the saints in Corinth progressing in their walk. It is addressed to “...*them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints*” (‘*hagios*,’ Strong’s #40), which is literally “*holy ones*.” As in all Paul’s letters, it is addressed specifically to fellow (“*brethren*”) Israelites. None of Paul’s letters suggest that the recipients are to attempt to evangelize outsiders (i.e. other than Israelites).

Although most Bibles refer to Paul’s epistles as “...*to the Corinthians*,” or “...*to the Galatians*,” they are, in fact, only to the saints in those respective locales. It is made clear in all the letters, that he is addressing only the dispersed Israelite “*brethren*.” Properly, the books should be entitled “...*to the saints in Corinth*,” or Philippi, or Galatia, etc.

Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5), and as such was somewhat reluctant to go to the ten dispersed tribes, because the Judahites (‘*Ioudaios*’) referred to them by such pejorative terms as “*uncircumcised*,” “*divorced*,” and “*lost*.” He admonishes them to live as to be “...*blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*.” Because of some information he had received from other sources, Paul pleads with them to eliminate any divisions among the congregation. The term “*brethren*” (‘*adelphos*,’ Strong’s #80) is used here several times. That this is exclusively to Israelites is verified in Chapter 10:

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiri-

tual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”
(1 Corinthians 10:1-3)

Given that “*all our fathers*” were under the cloud can only mean the children of Israel during the forty year trek in the wilderness. (The “*rock*” referred to here as Christ is always addressed as “*the rock*” in Exodus, meaning a specific rock.) Paul is emphasizing that all twelve tribes were so represented.

Evidently some of the people had been taking their fellow saints to court to settle differences and Paul is furious! In 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 he asks them: “*Do ye not know that the saints (Israel) shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*” He then tells them to establish a process to handle the differences among themselves. This matter of judicial resolution was to entail the proceedings of the Israelite community only; there is no hint to exercise similar action over other peoples. Paul is reminding them of the role reserved for Israel upon their restoration and re-gathering under the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:7 tells of the disaster that befell the Israelites while in the wilderness, and their mingling with the “*strange women*” of Moab. “*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them (Israel) committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*” (The OT says on that day four and twenty thousand were slain – I’m not sure why Paul chose three and twenty thousand). That statement refers to the activities described in Numbers 25, “*And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom (fornication) with the daughters of Moab.*” The gravity of this offense is told by Moses’ reaction – he was told by God to have the leaders of the various tribes “*slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.*” The Lord God of Israel killed twenty four thousand Israelites that day for the sin of intermarriage, and being sexually involved with the women of Moab. (Numbers 25:9). Paul is telling the Corinthians not to be involved in mixed marriages (here called “*fornication*” - Greek ‘*porneuo*,’ Strong’s #4203 by Paul) with the people other than Israel that live around and amongst them. One definition

of ‘*porneuo*’ is to ‘give oneself to unlawful sexual intercourse.’ That this particular sin was of such paramount importance was known from the earliest days of the selection of the people that were to become Israel; and that prohibition has never been rescinded.

Paul tells of some other instances where Israel contested their God and were severely punished and reminds the Corinthians that “...*all these things happened unto them for examples and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.*” In other words, learn from their mistakes and don’t commit the same ones in your time.

2 Corinthians

The second epistle to the Corinthians, written approximately a year after the first one, is another exhortation from Paul to the church there, and “to all the saints who are in all Achaia.” Paul reminds the saints that their Lord God is the source of all their comfort:

*“Blessed be God, even the Father of **our** Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth **us** in all **our** tribulation, that **we** may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith **we** ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in **us**, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”*
(2 Corinthians 1:3-5) (Emphasis added)

Paul’s use of pronouns here makes it clear that he is including himself with the saints in the relationship with the Lord God of Israel. Paul refers to himself as a minister of the New Testament (New Covenant) that is set forth in Hebrews chapter 8. He then describes some of the attributes of the Covenant, and emphasizes that it was for the children of Israel. In Chapter 3 he states that the saints should keep in mind that even though the previous covenant (given to Moses) was glorious, the New Covenant is much more so.

It seems there was some confusion among the saints about the Gospel being hidden from people. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:3 that it is only hidden from “*them that are lost*” whose minds have been blinded by God. This is what he was referring to in Romans 11:7 when he stated that “*the rest (non-Israelites) were blinded.*” He is speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees who Jesus told the disciples were not to understand the message of the kingdom of heaven. Conversely, in verse 6 Paul reminds

the saints that God has “*shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” This again explains the difference in the purpose of the words of the Gospel to the two different groups; Israel, and the Scribes/ Pharisees.

In his instructions to “*be separate,*” Paul spends several verses in Chapter 6 providing examples of how the saints were to disassociate themselves from the non-Israelites living around them. In verse 16 Paul quotes the promise of God in the New Covenant that He “*will be their God, and they shall be my people.*” In 2 Corinthians 6:17 where the word “*thing*” is in italics, the true translation should say “*touch not the unclean*” and the connotation means for them not to have intimate relations with the unclean people. Verse 18 is a repeat of God’s promise to Israel: “*And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*” This verifies the classification throughout Scripture of the saints being “*the sons of God.*”

As in his other epistles, Paul makes certain that the addressees – always Israelites – are made aware that they are the sole purpose of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note also that the gift that was sent to Jerusalem is only to the saints there.

Galatians

The epistle of Galatians documents Paul's concern that the saints (Israelites) in that area were being receptive to teaching of "*another*" gospel, that was brought there by men that would "*pervert*" the true Gospel that Paul had taught them previously. The book is addressed to "*the churches of Galatia*." The term "*churches*" is from the Greek word '*ekklesia*' (Strong's #1577) literally meaning "*called out ones*," in this case meaning the people of Israel that had been "*called*" by their Lord. The salutation offers them grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Most translations reflect the Greek which is "*our*" God and "*our*" Lord Jesus Christ. For some reason the KJV leaves out the possessive pronoun for God.

Paul relates his former occupation as a Pharisee enforcer of persecution against Christianity, in what he refers to as "*the Jew's religion*" or Judaism, and how, in his enthusiasm, he was progressing faster than many of his colleagues at that task. This is a good example of why there can be no such thing as 'Judeo-Christian' since the two are diametrically opposed. The beliefs of Judaism cannot condone the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the promised Messiah. Later, in Timothy, Paul calls his activities which were the normal oppressive actions the Edomites performed under Judaism, "*blasphemous*." (1 Timothy 1:13). 2 John tells us that if one "*hath not the doctrine of Christ they hath not God* (the Father)" and spells out the facts of what such rejection of Jesus Christ entails. Paul states that God called him; Paul did not 'choose' God.

The references to "*the uncircumcised*" in Paul's epistles are a description of the people of the ten dispersed tribes of the northern kingdom to whom Paul was sent. As in some of the other books the use of "*Gentile*," "*Jew*," and Greek can cause some confusion. Most often the word being

used for the Israelites is ‘*ethnos*’ and is translated as “*Gentile*” or “*Jew*” with little consistency. Galatians 3 is an exceptional treatise on the comparison of the two forms of relationship between God and Israel; the Law and the New Covenant. In it, Paul gives the Galatians a brief but thorough lesson on the superiority of the New Covenant. In verse 26 he tell the Galatians that “...*ye are all sons of God.*” Which identifies them as descendants of Isaac and as stated in verse 29, “*heirs according to the promise;*” which is that promise given to Abraham.

Notice that in Galatians 3:14 it says: “*That the blessing of Abraham might come on the **Gentiles** through Jesus Christ that **we** might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.*” Here Paul includes the Galatians and himself as being “*Gentiles.*” Again the word being translated “*Gentiles*” is ‘*ethnos.*’ The Greeks in this case are most often Greek-speaking members of the dispersed tribes. Paul acknowledges that he was sent to the “*uncircumcised*” or dispersed Israelites, and Peter was directed to the Judahites, or those Israelites still in Judea. In his discussion about Peter in Chapter 2, it says that Paul calls Peter a “*Jew,*” but again the word is ‘*Ioudaios*’ meaning ‘Judean’ (Strong’s #2453). This same word is used again in Galatians 2:15 which should read “We who are Judeans by nature...”

Paul explains the difference between the two sons of Abraham in Galatians 4, and explains that only Isaac is the son of “*promise.*” The purpose of Jesus’ mission is put quite succinctly in Galatians 4:5 “...*To redeem them (Israel) that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*” Note that Paul includes himself (“*we*”) and that the word for “*adoption,*” ‘*huiiothesia,*’ (Strong’s #5206) means ‘to place as sons out of the children (‘*teknon*’) of Israel.’ He then tells the Israelite Galatians “...*Now we brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.*”

Ephesians

As usual, Paul addresses this epistle to “*the saints*” who in this case are at Ephesus. He then gives the Ephesians an outstanding explanation of what has been done in their behalf:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of **our** Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed **us** with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen **us** in him before the foundation of the world, that **we** should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated **us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made **us** accepted in the beloved. In whom **we** have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward **us** in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto **us** the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also **we** have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That **we** should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom **ye** also trusted, after that **ye** heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that **ye** believed, **ye** were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of **our** inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”* (Ephesians 1:3-14)

(Emphasis added)

That this is directed to Israel is further documented later in the epistle, but the way Paul has defined the relationship here also indicates that he is speaking to, and about, men of Israel. The use of the specific pronouns narrows the application of the message. Note that Paul tells them that they were chosen by God “*before the foundation of the world*” and that God chose them, not the Israelites choosing God.

In Ephesians 2:11-13, Paul asks the saints to remember from where they came. Calling them “*Gentiles*” (*‘ethnos’*) and “*uncircumcised*,” he is explaining how they have gone from “*having no hope*” to being “*made near*” by the blood (sacrifice) of Jesus Christ. This is a reference to the incident in Exodus 24, where Moses and the people could not come close to God until the blood sacrifice was made. The mention of the partition being broken down in verse 14 is in reference to the animosity existing between the two houses of Israel (See Isaiah 11:13 “*Ephraim shall not vex Judah any more.*”), which will not exist after the gathering of the tribes. Here again Paul refers to the dispersed men of Ephesus as “*afar off*” and Judah as “*near*” but noting that both are now “*reconciled*” by the sacrifice of Jesus.

Philippians

The epistle to the Philippians is addressed to “*all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.*” They are called “*brethren*” (‘*adelphos*’) in Philippians 1:12,14, signifying they are true Israelites. That Paul had previously been with this congregation in Philippi is noted in Philippians 2:12, where he states that their obedience was the same when he was there, as when he has been gone. Paul gives them the instructions for living a life that shows they are “*...blameless and harmless, the sons of God...*” In Chapter 3 Paul states that “*...we are the circumcision.,*” after including the Philippians. Paul gives them a brief history of his conversion and the benefit of his conversion. That he includes himself with the subjects of this epistle is documented in the rest of Philippians 3:

Verse 15: “*Let **us** therefore...*”

Verse 17: “***Brethren**, be followers together of me...*”

Verse 20: “*For **our** conversion is in heaven; from which also **we** look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:*”

Verse 21: “*Who shall change **our** lowly body...*”

Finally in Chapter 4, Paul calls the Philippians “*brethren*” again on two occasions and ends the epistle with a ‘pep talk,’ to encourage their continuing in their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. .

Colossians

Although Paul had never been to Colosse, he was aware that there was a group that had been dispensing “*another gospel*” in the form of Gnosticism. Here again, the epistle is addressed in a manner that identifies the “*saints and faithful brethren*” as being Israelites. In Colossians 1:2 God is referred to as “*our God*” and in verse 3 “*our Lord Jesus Christ*” is mentioned. Paul’s use of the pronouns in verses 10 to 14 of Chapter 1 indicates that both the Colossian saints and Paul know the “*grace of God in truth,*” as mentioned in Colossians 1:6, which was evidently taught to the saints by one Epaphras. There is considerable information contained in Colossians 1:10-14. First Paul wants the saints (“*ye*”) to walk worthy of the Lord and to increase in the knowledge of God. In verse 12 “*...who hath made **us** fit to be partakers of the inheritance ...*” and in verse 13 “*...hath delivered **us** from the power of darkness and hath translated **us** into the kingdom of his dear son.*” (Jesus). Verse 14: “*In whom **we** have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins;*” (Emphasis added)

Inheritance means that which was spoken of by the Old Testament fathers, as the passing of the Covenant to the Israelites. The “*kingdom of his dear son,*” means the kingdom that Jesus taught and preached about during His time on earth. Since only Israel had broken the original covenant and suffered the banishment, only they were in need of redemption. Matthew 1:21 tells us that Jesus was come to “*save his people from their sins.*”

In the rest of Colossians 1, Paul gives them a profound lesson on the role of Jesus Christ as Creator, Savior, and ultimate Hope of Israel. Chapter 2 is a dissertation on the dangers of what other people are trying to teach them, and the reasons why only the Gospel of Jesus is worthy of their

time and effort. Chapters 3 and 4 are another sermon on the behavior of the saints among one another. In Colossians 3:24 Paul reminds them that “...*of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Jesus.*” Within these verses slaves (servants) are told how to serve their masters, and masters are admonished to treat their slaves justly.

This is another example of Paul writing to Israelites and reminding them that they “...*as the elect of God*” are to care for other saints and live in harmony with one another.

1 Thessalonians

Paul had only spent about a month in Thessalonica during his second journey. Due to the violent reaction of the Edomites, he was rushed out of the city to save his life. (Acts 17). This epistle, like his others, is addressed to the church of the city, and identifies them as followers of Jesus. “*Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God*” verifies their status as Christians. Paul commends them profusely in the rest of Chapter 1, and includes himself in verse 10 by stating “*...who delivered us from the wrath to come.*”

Paul reminds them how he and the men with him, were never a burden to them, and that the teaching of the Gospel was the primary reason for their being there. The saints are referred to as “*brethren*” several times in this book, and Paul mentions that he is aware of the persecution by the Jews towards them, as it was in Jerusalem (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). Paul expresses the desire to return to visit them again and prays that “*...God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.*” (1 Thessalonians 3:11) Note the “*our*” Father and “*our*” Jesus Christ. Chapter 5 starts out as a ‘pep talk’ and provides encouragement for the saints to continue in the way they have been performing. In verse 9 Paul says, “*For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*” He then gives them a series of twenty one items for guidance in their lives. These are directions for the Israelites to follow in living among themselves “*...that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.*”

2 Thessalonians

Paul's second epistle is addressed "*...unto the church of the Thessalonians in God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" In Chapter 1 he reminds them that the suffering they are enduring, is part of the walk with the Lord Jesus. He encourages them by telling them

"And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

(2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

The ones to be destroyed are the same that John tells about in 2 John 7-9.

Note how Paul uses the possessive pronouns in this epistle: "*our Father,*" "*our Lord Jesus Christ,*" "*our God;*" always making sure that he includes himself with the saints to whom the epistle is written. In 2 Thessalonians 3:13 there is another reminder that God had reserved these saints "*...because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" As usual Paul uses the "*brethren*" term several times to indicate his passion for these saints. In parting, he instructs the saints to ostracize any of the brethren that do not engage in productive efforts and refuse to work.

1 Timothy

Paul sent this epistle to “*Timothy, my own son in the faith:*” to encourage, motivate and instruct his young colleague. As in his other letters, Paul uses his excellent vocabulary to get across the important points of his concern. In the first chapter Paul confesses that his prior actions while with the Pharisees was, in his opinion, blasphemy, but that his conversion has put him in good standing with his Lord Jesus Christ.

Although some phrases in the book could be taken as directed to the populace at large, there are many words that signify the message is given to the dispersed Israelites. In 1 Timothy 2:7 he states that he is “*a teacher of the Gentiles*” where “*Gentiles*” is the word ‘*ethnos*’ normally translated as “*tribes,*” meaning the tribes of Israel. Several times he uses the term “*brethren*” which is the Greek word ‘*adelphos*’ referring to one of the same family also meaning they are of the tribes of Israel.

The word “*doctrine*” is used here in the instructions to Timothy. This is the Greek word ‘*didaskalia*’ meaning ‘teaching or instruction;’ literally ‘that which is taught.’ The doctrine here is the teaching of the salvation of Israel, i.e. the doctrine of Christ. This is the same term John uses in 2 John 1:19, where he says, if anyone comes to you “*that does not abide in the doctrine* (of Christ)” you are “*not to receive him into your house, neither bid him Godspeed.*” Without the “*abiding in the doctrine of Christ,*” John states that one “*hath not God.*” John is saying that although the Scribes and Pharisees professed to worship God, without acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Messiah, they could not. Both Paul and John, in their respective epistles, are referring to the Scribes and Pharisees that were working (in what Paul calls blasphemy) to negate the work of the saints.

Paul's Lesser Epistles

All of Paul's epistles are written to other members of the so-called 'ten lost tribes.' As with the major epistles, his smaller letters are remarkable in their construction and deliverance to men that he continually calls "*brethren*," and how he feels about them and their station, under the Covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord God of Israel.

Hebrews

Hebrews is a profound epistle that was written to the Israelite community residing in and around Rome. Obviously they were comparing the earlier structure of their worship as in the days prior to Jesus Christ, with that of the New Covenant. The overall context of the book indicates it is directed to people familiar with the procedures of the Mosaic worship, that was used prior to the splitting of the tribes. Since no other group of people were given the office of Priest and/ or High Priest, it is obvious that this epistle is directed to members of the dispersed tribes of Israel. Authorship of the book has been debated for centuries and some of the theories sound quite convincing, but no one has been able to verify the writer.

The primary thrust of Hebrews is to show the superiority of the New Covenant. There is a continuing comparison with the New Covenant implemented by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In all cases the author reveals the superiority of the new over the old, that these Hebrews were wanting to continue. That it was directed specifically to the children of Israel is indicated in several places.

The first place is Hebrews 1:1, where it is said that God in times past spoke “...to the fathers” (the patriarchs of the Israelites) and again in Hebrews 1:3 “...when he (Jesus Christ) had by himself purged *our* (Israel’s) sins ...” (Matthew 1:21 says that Jesus was to “*save his people from their sins.*”) The author also repeatedly refers to them as “*brethren*” and other terms of endearment throughout the epistle. There are many other references as to the role of the priesthood as fulfilled by the Christ and no other people were ever under the subjection of a Priest or High Priest other than the children of Israel. In Hebrews 2:16-17 the statement is made that He (Jesus) was to “...give aid to the seed of Abra-

ham,” and to “...make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Israel).”

Hebrews 8 is a detailed dissertation on the role of the new High Priest of the tribes, namely Jesus Christ. The description of the New Covenant is probably the most important message in the New Testament. Here is that covenant:

*“But now hath he (Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith 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; (Exodus 19) because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of **Israel** after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” (Hebrews 8:6-13)*

One really needs to study the chapter deeply to glean the message of the position Jesus takes in the New Covenant. Verse 6 says “...*He is also Mediator of a better covenant which was established on better promises.*” Verses 7-12 reiterate the promise of the New Covenant that was first given in Jeremiah. Jesus said in Matthew 26:28 “... *For this is my blood of the new testament, (covenant) which is shed for many (not all) for the remission of sins.*” Upon the sacrifice of Jesus, Israel was under

the New Covenant.

In Hebrews 9:15 He (Jesus) is verified as the “.... *Mediator of the new covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant...*” indicating that Israel, who had violated (transgressed) the first covenant by their sins, was now redeemed under this New Covenant by a unilateral act of the Lord God of Israel through Jesus. Chapter 9 also provides the contrast between the old form of worship’s repetitive sacrifices and the ultimate sacrifice “*once for all*” by the blood of Jesus Christ. The New Covenant is repeated in part in Hebrews 10:16-17. Note that it says that He “*will be to them a God and they will be to me a people*” both cases singular; meaning there will be no other God to the people, nor no other people to God!

Hebrews 11, known as the “*Faith*” Chapter, lists a number of the past heroes of the family of God, from Abel down through those of the Promised Land. The enormity of God is described in Hebrews 12, and you will also find another reference to the hatred of Esau in verse 16. Jesus is again referred to as the ‘Mediator of the New Covenant’ in verse 24. This chapter continues the comparison of the New Way versus the Old Way, and shows the superiority of the New Covenant, which is referred to as “*the everlasting covenant*” in Hebrews 13:20.

James

The little epistle of James, a younger brother (actually half brother) of Jesus starts with a specific address. James 1:1 states “...to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad...” Throughout this book James continues to use the noun “*brethren*” which is the Greek word ‘*adelphos*’ (Strong’s #80) meaning a close relative such as a blood brother (actually related from the womb), which further identifies to whom the book is written. Written about 50 AD, the knowledge of the tribes that had been dispersed hundreds of years previously, was still maintained in the Israelite community. Nearly all of the so-called ‘general’ epistles are addressed similarly.

The basic premise of the book is to “*keep the faith*” and do not allow yourself to become discouraged. Taken as a whole the book becomes a guideline for living within the Israelite community at the time it was written. There are some words of encouragement for the “*brethren*,” to remind them of the ultimate reward they have in store. There is also a very stinging condemnation of the “*rich men*” in James 5:1-6, that promises the people that have oppressed and plundered the Israelites over the years, a serious set of miseries for their reward. His statements on faith versus works have caused considerable discussion within the modern church, but when analyzed, James 2:11-26 actually tell the people that their actions originating in faith are seen as a form of righteousness. James condemns the mixing of earthly wisdom with wisdom that is from above (James 3:15-17) for the every day activities. This word “*above*” (‘*anōthen*,’ Strong’s #509) is the same word used in John 3:3, where it is usually incorrectly interpreted as “*again*.” The wisdom from above is that as described in the New Covenant (Hebrews 8) as being written on the Israelites hearts, “...*I will put my laws into their (the house of Israel) mind, and write them in their hearts...*”

Peter's Epistles

Peter, who had as much personal contact with Jesus as any of the disciples, starts out his first epistle (1 Peter) by addressing it to the:

"...strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Peter knew these people to be the members of the original Samarian/Israel tribes captured and removed by Assyria; the so-called ten tribes. The term "*strangers*" can also be translated as pilgrim and refers to people living in a land that is not their own. In the Greek the phrase actually should have been translated as "To the exiles of the dispersion." "*Elect*" here carries the meaning of being chosen by God. (See Strong's #1586). In 1 Peter 1:3 he tells them that God has "*begotten us again ...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" The children of Israel were begotten initially as a part of the original covenant and were later "*put away*" as a result of their breaking of that covenant.

Now, under the New Covenant, they have been begotten again, this time "*...To an inheritance ...that fadeth not away.*" This latest covenant is unilateral, eternal and implemented by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Where Peter tells the elect that they were redeemed by things other than precious metals (1 Peter 1:18), meaning the blood of Jesus was their redemption. Since only Israel was 'convicted' of breaking the original covenant, only Israel needed redemption. Peter tells these Israelite "*strangers:*"

"But ye (the "strangers" referred to in verse 1) are a chosen generation (should be 'race' not 'generation' – 'genos,'

Strong's #1085), *a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* (See Hosea 1:6-7) *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*" (1 Peter 2:9)

In this single quotation, there are several descriptions that specifically identify the children of Israel. All have been used within the Old Testament by God to identify His people Israel; none are used in addressing any other people throughout Scripture. The portion of Scripture in verse 10 is a quotation based on one of the prophecies of Hosea. The definite article indicates that the "ye" in verse 9 are "*the people of God*" – meaning there are no others. Also in verse 10 is a verification of an important part of the New Covenant, wherein God states that "...*and I will be to them a God and they will be to me a people.*" (Hebrews 8:10). Peter, the writer, and the "*strangers,*" the recipients of the epistle, were all familiar with the history of the true Word of God and knew intimately the application was to Israel.

Reference to Jesus' comment about His coming for the lost sheep of Israel is found in 1 Peter 2:25, "*For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*" Ezekiel 34 is a dissertation on the sheep, and in verse 30 they are identified as "*Thus shall they (the sheep) know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, even the house of Israel are my people, saith the Lord.*" The theme of the sheep and shepherd is constant throughout the Scriptures. Here Peter reminds the elect that they are now under the attention of the true Shepherd of Israel. This is continued in Chapter 5 where Jesus' return is called "*.when the chief Shepherd shall appear.*"

The exhortation starting in 1 Peter 5 is worded to comply with the descriptions given by Jesus in the Gospels as His being the "*Shepherd*" sent here to tend His sheep – Israel. Verse 2 should state 'tend' the flock

of God, rather than “*feed*,” which includes all the actions of an overseer, and not just providing food. It is a rare instance today where the modern ‘shepherds’ comply with the provisions of 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Given the introduction that is specifically directed to the dispersed Israelites, it is quite revealing to read the two epistles, paying particular attention to the pronouns.

Peter’s second epistle is not initially addressed to the dispersed brethren but in 2 Peter 3:1 he states that: “*This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both.,*” showing that both epistles are addressed as stated in 1 Peter 1:1. In 2 Peter 3:17, Peter reminds them that “*...seeing ye know these things before.,*” or that the things that Peter was writing were common knowledge to the people that had been exposed to the contents of the Word (the Septuagint) and the Prophets beforehand.

John's Epistles

1 John

In John's first epistle, which was written around 90-95 AD, he is delivering a motivational and educational treatise to the Israelites, that he refers to as his *"little children;"* an endearing term indicating that they were close to his heart both spiritually and physically. The salutation is not found until 1 John 2:7, where he calls them *"brethren,"* the same term used by James in his epistle (*'adelphos,'* Strong's #80 - the meaning here is the same - 'person or persons close to one in a relative sense.'). There are several references herein to the antichrist. John provides a very succinct description of the antichrist in 1 John 2:22-23: *"He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."* He is telling the brethren this, to refute the words of the Pharisees - that they, the Pharisees, had the Father, but did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. John makes it very clear, as one that had spent considerable time with Jesus on earth, that without embracing the Son, one cannot have a relationship with the Father.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (1 John 14:6)

Another way the separation is described is in Chapter 3. John tells them that *"we"* (Israel - the brethren) have been given a special *"manner of love"* so that we can be called the sons of God but the world (other than Israel) cannot know us because they didn't know Him (Jesus). I am paraphrasing here, but the language is in 1 John 3:1 for all to see. With the same emphasis we find, in many of the other epistles, the command to *"love thy brother."* With the dispersion and loss of their homeland, the Israelites were scattered about, but some of the bitterness that had been prevalent in the Promised Land between the tribes, was still being dem-

onstrated among the various people. John cautioned them to stop that. He says in 1 John 3:14, *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death."* This theme continues throughout the rest of the epistle.

Chapter 4 provides a comparison of the different belief levels. Verse 2 tells John's "brethren" how to discern between the good and bad spirits. *"...every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God;"* This is very similar to what Jesus told the Pharisees in John 8. The distinction is made more obvious in verse 5; *"...They (those that do not believe that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh) are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We (Israel) are of God. He that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears (understands) not us."* This is very similar to the statement that Jesus made to the Pharisees in John 8:43 *"Why do you not understand my speech? Because you cannot hear my word."* These statements are for the most part totally ignored in today's evangelical congregations. This was not a case of being physically hard of hearing, but they were not "of God" and therefore could not possibly understand His words. In this particular case, John is speaking also of the Pharisees that were still persecuting the new Christians and attempting to prevent the spread of the Gospel.

2 John

John, in his little epistle of 2 John, which was written to the “*elect lady*,” is talking about the Jews (Scribes and Pharisees) that were traveling throughout the area being covered by Paul and John, refuting their message that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, had been crucified, and had risen and ascended into heaven. Describing them as “...*who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*,..” these Jews were vigorously attempting to negate the messages of the Apostles, in the same manner that Paul had persecuted the “*elect*” prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus. The term “*elect lady*” here refers to the people of the northern ten tribes who had been taken captive by the Assyrians, and later dispersed throughout the area north of the Black Sea, and were living in the area of Macedonia and northern Greece. Here below is the epistle in its entirety:

“The elder (John) unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us (Israel), and shall be with us for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to

yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister (Judah) greet thee. Amen.” (2 John 1:1-13)

Where John uses the term “*truth*” in the introduction, he is referring to the “*doctrine of Christ*” that he and Paul have been dispensing. John knows it is the truth, and makes certain that those addressed know it also. Note that John says that, “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God,*” meaning of course, The Lord God of Israel. The primary purpose of these Edomite Pharisees was to stop the teaching of the “*doctrine of Christ*” and is to this day.

Therefore, they are not only out of the doctrine of Christ, but according to John they are also out of the covering and covenant of the Lord God of Israel. Remember that John had spent over three years in close companionship with the Lord Jesus, and obviously knew how Jesus felt about the Pharisees’ beliefs. Conversely if one is a believer in the doctrine of Christ, that person has the covering of both the Father and the Son. The admonition in verses 10 and 11 indicates how serious the conflict was, and how John saw it. The Israelites were not to have these “*deceivers and anti-Christ*s,” who professed not the doctrine of Christ, into their house, or to wish them “*Godspeed*” or to give them God’s blessing in any way. He says that if an Israelite does this, they are partakers in the evil deeds (denying the doctrine of Christ) of the “*deceivers and anti-Christ*s.” John closes with “*The children of thy elect sister,*” in reference to the people of the tribe of Judah, from where John’s epistle was originating.

The Revelation

The book of Revelation, placed at the back of our Bible, is probably the most confusing and misunderstood book of all. It was written by the disciple John, who was at the time in exile on an island named Patmos, *“for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”* This is an indictment of John’s dispensing the *“doctrine of Christ”* he referred to in his last epistle. It covers a considerable period of time, *“...write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”* (Revelation 1:19). That statement covers the past, present and future.

We are told in Revelation 1:1 that the purpose is to *“...show unto His (Jesus’) servants, things which must shortly come to pass...”* This is the same as the address on a letter, meaning this book is addressed only to the servants of Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament, God refers to Jacob/ Israel as His servant.

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant:” (Isaiah 44:21)

This term *“servant”* is predicated on the relationship established during the time of Abraham, and was carried down through the lineage of the children of Israel. We therefore are told that this book is addressed specifically to Israel. In verse 5 there is a description of Jesus, the Messiah who *“...loved us (Israel) and washed us (Israel) from our sins ... and hath made us (Israel) kings and priests unto God and His father...”*

Starting at verse 13 there is a description of *“The Son of Man”* that is very similar to that seen by Daniel in his time. One difference is the fact that He is clothed in a garment *“down to the foot.”* When performing the

priestly duties within the Holy of Holies, the Chief Priest would bind up the length of his robe with a belt or girdle, so as to prevent his stepping on the hem during his activities, which could be somewhat strenuous. When he was done and came out of that part of the tabernacle, he would let the hem of the robe down. The statement of the robe being down to the feet signifies that his work is done. (*"It is finished"* John 19:30)

In Revelation 2-3 there are statements about "*Jews*" that have caused considerable confusion, primarily because of the translation of the Greek noun '*Ioudaios*.' (Strong's #2453).

"...and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, (Ioudaios) and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

(Revelation 2:9)

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews (Ioudaios), and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet,..."

(Revelation 3:9)

In both cases above, the verses should have actually been translated as 'say they are Judeans (of the tribe of Judah) and are not.' So they were Jews, or rather the Edomite Jews who were the ruling faction that was so oppressive to the real Israelites during the time of Christ, but they were never Israelites. Jesus says that they will be made to come and worship at the feet of the restored Israelites.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain the messages to the seven churches, each of which is worded so as to identify the sender as Jesus Christ. Every description can be found in the Scriptures, and the method of identifying fits each particular church's message. I am not going to provide my interpretation of the messages as they apply to the individual churches here, but they are definitely fitting for the occasion. Study them and gain your own interpretation.

In Revelation 4 we are told of a throne, and before the throne were four

beasts. The beasts had four different likenesses; lion, calf (bull), man and eagle, and were continually worshipping the LORD God Almighty. These same beasts were seen by Ezekiel in Chapter 2 of his book, and were described in a very similar manner. Again, this is a symbol of the house of Israel. Numbers 2 sets forth the structure of the tribes camping around the tabernacle during the forty years in the wilderness.

The tribes were commanded to form their encampments in a hollow square, protectively surrounding the tabernacle in the center. On the eastern side of the square were camped the three tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; these were under the leadership of Judah, on whose banner was a lion. On the southern side were camped the three tribes of Rueben, Simeon and Gad; these were led by Reuben on whose banner was the image of a man. The tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin were camped on the western side, led by Ephraim, on whose banner was a bull (calf). On the northern side was the camp of Dan, Asher and Naphtali; these were led by Dan, on whose banner was a flying eagle. This is yet another symbology of the application to Israel.

The vision of the scroll opening in Chapter 5, verifies that only Jesus Christ in the role of the ‘kinsman redeemer’ could be worthy to perform the task. At the point of opening the scroll, the *“four living creatures”* and the *“four and twenty elders”* begin to sing a new song.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

(Revelation 5:9-10)

This is a very complex statement. First, *“thou hast redeemed us,”* sung by the very symbols of Israel, verifies who was redeemed. Second, the fact that they have been made unto *“our God,”* kings and priests, was first stated in Exodus 19:6, *“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”* As for the *“kings”* part, Jesus told the disci-

ples:

“...verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28)

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:2 told them, *“Do ye not know that the saints (Israel) shall judge the world?”* The *“kindred, tongue, people and nation”* requires some clarification. They (the four living creatures) are saying that Jesus has redeemed them (Israel) out of every kindred tongue, people and nation, etc., where God said He would scatter them. This is occasionally used to state that individuals out of *“every kindred, and tongue and people and nation”* were redeemed; that is not the context here. That these terms are meant solely for the Israelites is further made by the use of *“...redeemed us”* (only Israel was exiled and therefore only Israel could be redeemed) as well as the *“we”* by the twenty four Elders in the song.

Chapter 6 describes the opening of the seals on the scroll. Of particular interest is the fifth seal which reveals the multitude of saints under the altar.

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 6: 9 - 11)

We know that these are the souls of Israelites because they are to wait a while so that their *“fellow servants”* and *“brethren”* meet the same fate as they had. Only those that were slain due to the *“word of God and for*

the testimony which they held” would have been the true children of Israel. Note that this is the same reason why John had been exiled on Patmos. (Revelation 1:9)

A number of Israelites have been sealed to protect them from the actions of the angel that has the power to *“hurt the earth and the sea;”* a seal placed in their forehead denoting that they were *“servants of God.”* They number one hundred and forty four thousand, twelve thousand from each of twelve tribes of the house of Israel. (Chapter 7). No other people are *“sealed,”* only Israel. After hearing this, John saw a *“great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues standing before the throne ...and they cried out with a loud voice, saying Salvation to our God who setteth upon the throne...”* This multitude again consists of Israelites from all the tribes that have been gathered from all the various nations where they had been killed, during the period of the great tribulation (verse 14). This is that tribulation period mentioned in Jeremiah 30:5-7 and Daniel 12:1. In the Greek it is called ‘The Tribulation, the Great One.’ They recognize and worship *“our God,”* because these are the total of the people described in Revelation 6:9-11, and include the rest of their *“fellow servants and brethren”* that have been fulfilled as God told them.

The description of the end time activities in Chapter 10 is not given to John to write down. However John is told that when the seventh angel is sounding, the *“...mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”* The term *“mystery”* here, denotes some specific information that has been withheld from Israel up until that time. Obviously the prophets had been told of the mystery at some time previously.

The description of the destruction of *“Babylon the great,”* (which is a system of commerce as described in verses 12 and 13) is set forth in Chapter 18. The Israelites are told to *“come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues.”* Upon restoration, Israel is ordered to reward Babylon with a double portion of oppression in relation to what she had imposed on the Israelites

over the ages. This is in accordance with the Law given to Israel in Exodus 22:9. How this is to be done isn't clear, because verse 8 identifies this Babylon as the same people who were told in the book of Obadiah that they were to be *"utterly burned."* That fate follows some other punishments included here:

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." (Revelation 18:8)

John saw *"a new heaven and a new earth"* in Chapter 21. In addition there was a *"new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God, out of heaven."* We are told that God is to be dwelling with men and *"...they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* (Revelation 21:3). This description identifies the *"men"* as Israel, since this is a repeat of the roles from other Scriptures. When John is taken away to view *"...that great city, the holy Jerusalem"* he sees that it has a great wall and twelve gates, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Only they that are *"written in the Lamb's book of life"* of Israel are allowed into the city.

The Lord tells John that, *"These words are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."* (Revelation 22:6). Here again, the use of the familiar terms identifies the message as being to the Israelites. Only they had the *"holy prophets"* and are known as *"servants"* of the Lord God of Israel.

Conclusion

After going through the entire Bible and learning just what the LORD God of Israel has documented over the centuries, it becomes obvious that the conclusion is going to be considerably different than what is taught in the modern church. It is apparent that the Bible is written to, about, and for the people that sprang from Adam. As documented in a couple of lists of the ‘fathers,’ (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), they ultimately became the twelve tribes of Israel. These Israelites, after being divided into two major kingdoms, and “*scattered*” throughout the world, are to be regathered under the rule of their LORD God.

“The Bible is written about, and addressed to, God’s people, “Israel.” It is the history of their past, the prophecy of their future, the law of their relation to their God and the promise of God’s eternal care of them.” Bertrand L. Comparet.

There is no assumption expressed or implied in this book as to the standing or fate of any people, other than those addressed as the children of Israel. Since the Scripture is almost totally silent on that subject, I have elected to also remain so. However, numerous quotes make it clear that, as far as God is concerned, Israel is “*above all other people*” in His plans. There are several references to the complete annihilation of certain tribes or races of people (Obadiah, Luke 19, etc.), that are to take place upon Jesus’ return. The dissertation about “*vessels*” in Romans 9 is actually referring to various people, some of whom were created to be utterly destroyed and others are “*prepared for glory from aforetime* (before the beginning).” Revelation 22:14-15 says that Israel will be able to come and go, into and out of the New Jerusalem, but that the others, even those who have consented to be under the rule of the King of Kings, will be living “*without*” or outside the walls. There are also several references throughout the Scriptures where the gathered Israel is to have servants (slaves) doing the menial tasks. (See Isaiah 14:1-2, 60:10, 61:5).

It is important to remember that God chose Noah, Abram, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, the twelve Apostles (including Judas, the traitor) and, most graphically, Saul of Tarsus, who we know as Paul. None of these men ‘chose’ God! God’s choice of Israel (not the Jews) in exception to all other nations, is the result of His divine choice, and is not subject to discussion. There is nothing in the Scriptures that subscribes to the global ‘fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man’ concept. Nor is there a hint of ‘universal salvation’ based on a confession of faith or belief. Those choices are made solely by God! In Jesus’ parables in Matthew, there is no inference that a “tare” can be converted to “wheat” nor can a “goat” be changed to a “sheep.” (Note that both the “tares” and the “goats” are taken away – not the “wheat” or the “sheep”). The only way a person can be part of the house of Israel is to be born into the family by an Israelite mother and an Israelite father – no exceptions. **Indeed a most exclusive club!**

When Jesus Christ returns as He has promised numerous times, He is to sit on the “*throne of David*” and rule over the whole house of Israel. The disciples were told that they would also be “*ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel*,” so it appears that there is to be a ‘layered’ form of theocracy, with the Lord Jesus Christ at the preeminent seat and a “*prince*” over each of the tribes. In the restored kingdom, God tells Israel: “*Whereas thou has been forsaken and hated ... I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.*” (Isaiah 60:15) He then tells them of the utopian land where He has brought them and the tremendous material and peaceful blessings they are to receive forever. (Isaiah 60:16-22)

Simplistically, one could say that there is a two-step process required for righteousness. The first step is, one must be a member of the tribes of Israel. Jesus was very emphatic when He said “*I have not come, save for the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” Matthew 1:21: “*...thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save **his people** from their sins.*” There are a number of good books that document the history of the dispersed tribes from Samaria and Judea down through the ages, and where they are today. I suggest that you get one or more of them and see for yourself.

The second step required is that Israelites are to be keeping the Law and the Commandments; *“for sin is the transgression of the law.”* (1 John 3:8) For this reason, Isaiah said that *“although thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant (small portion) of them shall return.”* This means that only a few of the “seed” will comply with both requirements for attaining righteousness. Although the sacrificial portion of the Law was completed by Jesus, there are numerous mentions in the New Testament as to the applicability of the balance of the Law and Commandments to the present-day Israelites. (See John 14:15, 14:21, 15:10, Romans 2:13)

If one would like to pursue this thesis further, I would suggest you use several Bibles. First I would recommend a King James Version – NOT a Schofield edition! A New American Standard is also quite good and the use of a Septuagint is mandatory. Acquire an Interlinear Greek-English New Testament – it provides the direct translation and eliminates the changes added by ages of interpreters. I also really like the Ferrar Fenton Bible for research and just good reading. That version is a monument to dedication from a very talented man. A web search will reveal sources on where you can get one.

It puzzles me how those multitudes of people that are quite conversant in English and profess to have ‘studied’ the Bible, can ignore passages like this from Jeremiah 31:

*“At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of **Israel**, and they shall be **my people**. Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even **Israel**, when I went to cause him to rest. The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of **Israel**: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Sama-*

*ria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for **Jacob**, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save **thy people**, the remnant of **Israel**. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. 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 scattered **Israel** will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed **Jacob**, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.” (Jeremiah 31:1-11) (Emphasis added)*

I cannot deduce anything from such a dissertation other than that God is going to redeem **His people Israel** and only Israel! Any effort put forth in the study of the truth will be rewarding I can assure you!! Know for certain the New Covenant is still in effect!

“He remembers his covenant forever, the word he has commanded, to a thousand generations: The covenant he made with Abraham and his oath to Isaac. For he confirmed it to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an eternal covenant.”

(Psalm 105:8-10)

Come quickly Lord Jesus!

Acknowledgements

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www.divinepageant.com

I have used his site and writings as verification for information I've gathered from other sources, and frequently studied the contents of his articles to further my knowledge on the instant subject.

There are many more I've not mentioned, primarily because I've forgotten where this stuff came from, and over the several years that I've ploughed this ground (lost the manuscript once), it's been difficult to keep track of all the sources. God knows and He rewards in His fashion!