

A Biblical History of the Lost Tribes of Israel Vol. I

containing:

Building A Nation
A Nation Destroyed
Abraham's Math

by
Dean & Susan Wheelock

And so all Israel will be saved,
As it is written:
"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
For this *is* My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins."
Rom. 11:26-27

Hebrew Roots® Press

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Lakewood, WI 54138

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Printed in the United States of America

The Scriptures used in this booklet are:

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

Jewish New Testament Publications

Clarksville, Maryland, 1998

The Holy Bible - King James Version (KJV)

Oxford University Press

London

The Open Bible

New King James Version (NKJV),

Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, 1985.

Published by:

Hebrew Roots® Press

PO Box 400

Lakewood, WI 54138

715-757-2775

~ Introduction ~

Then say to them,
"Thus says the Lord GOD:
'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations,
Wherever they have gone,
And will gather them from every side
And bring them into their own land;
And I will make them one nation in the land,
On the mountains of Israel;
And one king shall be king over them all;
They shall no longer be two nations,
Nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.'"
Ezekiel 37:21-22



One of the most fascinating enigmas of history is what became of the Lost Tribes of Israel. Historians, for the most part, have no good answers. Some of them simply dodge the question by proclaiming that the entire story is a Biblical myth and has no basis in history. In other words, they claim that the northern Kingdom of Israel either did not exist or was assimilated into the Kingdom of Judah in the south. This latter position is the traditional line in modern Judaism as well.

Many Believers do not buy into these "myths." Instead, they believe that the migrations of the tribes can be followed historically, at least to some degree, and that today there exists millions (if not billions) of people on the face of the earth who can legitimately claim to be the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but do not have the family records or traditions to prove it.

The Almighty Creator is performing a great work on this earth, and the children of Israel (all of them) are central to that work. Without both houses of Israel, the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) will fail, for both are included in many prophecies and will be brought back together at the end.

Included in the New Covenant is God's preparation of a Bride, from both Houses of Israel, for His Son *Y'shua*. The final outcome will be a permanent marriage, one that will last for all eternity:

**"I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
²⁰ I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD [*YHVH*]."**
(Hos. 2:19-20)

This marvelous story begins with the calling of the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt to be molded into a nation called Israel. The first article, *Building a Nation*, (originally published in *Hebrew Roots* issue 00-4) tells this story from the pages of the Bible, recounting how God led the children of Israel through forty years of wandering in the wilderness to finally bring them into the Promised Land. There He assigned them their Tribal territories and eventually established the Unified Monarchy under King's David and Solomon..

The second article, *A Nation Destroyed*, (also from issue 00-4) tells about how this unified nation came apart after the death of Solomon. At that time it was divided into two separate nations, the Kingdom of Israel in the north and the Kingdom of Judah in the south. Eventually, the Kingdom of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians and the people were deported in mass and resettled into other regions to eventually become lost to the historians.

The third article, *Abraham's Math*, tells how the scattering of the House (or Kingdom) of Israel (the northern ten tribes) have allowed Abraham's physical seed to be spread throughout all the nations of the earth.

"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers."
(Jer. 3:18)

It is our hope that you will find deeper insight into the Plan of God and the Scriptures by coming to understand what God did with Israel and Judah so many centuries ago.

Shalom!


Dean & Susan Wheelock

Beit Shalom, 2011

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~ Building A Nation ~

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:
The sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn,
And Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun;
The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin;
The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali;
And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher.
These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.
Genesis 35:22b-26

n today's world, many nations have become a mixture of people groups from all parts of the world who have migrated from their homelands in order to find a better life. This process of migration has been going on for many centuries, if not millennia, causing a mixing of nearly all the peoples of the earth. This is especially so in the countries of the western hemisphere, the so-called 'New World.' The United States has long been called the 'melting pot' of the nations, but today this same thing could be said of many European countries who are seeing a steady migration of people from other nations.

In one sense, it could be argued that the world is going back to a time similar to that which existed prior to the confusing of the languages at *Babel*:

"Now the whole earth had one language and one speech."
(Gen. 11:1)

At that time, the people of the earth began to develop a technology that, if left unchecked, would have allowed them to accomplish whatever they might have decided to do:

"And the LORD [YHWH] said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'"
(Gen. 11:6-7)

It apparently was too early in man's history for God to allow an uncontrolled technology, so He confused their speech and created (according to tradition) seventy nations and seventy languages among the people. In this manner God delayed the development of modern technology until the 'last days.'

"So the LORD [YHWH] scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD [YHWH] confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD [YHWH] scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."
(Gen. 11:8-9)

Based on what historians know about the ancient people, God apparently dispersed the people into family/tribal units when He created the seventy nations and languages. Thus, even today, we find the original nations of the world were generally the descendants of large family units.

The development of the nation of Israel occurred in a similar manner. It too was a family that developed into a number of distinct tribes which, in turn, grew into twelve pillars of a great nation. However, there is one difference between the nations of the world and the nation of Israel. In the case of Israel, *YHWH* (the Creator God), purposely set about to develop a nation of people of His own handiwork and choosing.

God raised up the nation of Israel from one man and one woman, *Avraham* (Ahv'-rah-hahm = Abraham) and *Sarah* (Sah-rah') who were both beyond the age of childbearing. However, God is not slack concerning His promises and, in due time, the son of promise, *Yitzhak* (Yeetz'-sock = Isaac), was born to them in their old age as a result of a divine miracle. Later on *Yitzhak* married and sired two sons, one of which, *Ya'acov* (Yah ah'-cove = Jacob), was chosen to carry on the lineage that God wanted developed.

The Scriptures are clear concerning God's promise that a chosen nation was to occupy the land of Canaan and it was to come from the descendants of these three men, *Avraham*, *Yitzhak*, and *Ya'acov* (see Gen. 13:14-17 and 26:3-5). The last time God directly uttered this promise it was directly to *Ya'acov*. This occurred during the time when he was enroute to the land of his uncle *Lavan* (Lah-vahn' = Laban) in order to escape the wrath of his brother *Esav* (Eh'-sahv = Esau):

"And behold, the LORD [YHWH] stood above it and said: 'I am the LORD [YHWH] God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"
(Gen. 28:13-14)

Ya'acov (Jacob) married his uncle *Lavan's* two daughters; *Leah* (Lay'-ah) and *Rachel* (Rah-kell'), and also took their handmaids (*Bilhah* and *Zilpah*) as concubines (a lesser form of marriage). *Ya'acov* sired a total of twelve sons by these four women:

"Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram."

(Gen. 35:22b-26)

Notice that *Re'uven* (Reh oo'-vehn = Reuben) was the firstborn of *Ya'acov's* sons and by right was entitled to inherit a double portion from his father. Being first in the birth order, *Re'uven* should have been the progenitor of the premier tribe of the twelve tribes that were produced from these children. But *Re'uven* made a terrible mistake, thereby losing the Birthright, when, after the death of *Rachel* (she died giving birth to *Binyamin* [Ben-yah-meen' = Benjamin]), he took *Rachel's* handmade, *Bilhah* (who was, by Scriptural standards a wife of

lessor degree to his father *Ya'acov*), and had sexual relations with her:

“And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.” (Gen. 35:22)

It might seem logical that once *Re'uven* had lost the birthright, it would have gone to the second-born son, *Shim'on* (She-moan' = Simeon), but that was not the case. Instead, the birthright went to *Yoseif* (Yoh-safe' = Joseph) the firstborn of *Rachel*, *Ya'acov's* other full wife:

“Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel -- he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's -- ” (I Chron. 5:1-2)

As the birthright son, the double inheritance of physical blessings belonged to *Yoseif*. In the above passage it is indicated that the tribe of *Y'hudah* (Yeh who'-dah = Judah) was also to be a leading tribe, for the ‘chief ruler’ or king, was to come from *Y'hudah*. So it was, that *Yoseif* (Joseph) and *Y'hudah* (Judah) became the two major tribes of the people group which came to be known as the ‘children of Israel.’ The reason they became known as Israel instead of Jacob is because God changed *Ya'acov's* name to *Yisrael* (Yees-rye-ehl' = Israel) when he returned to the Promised Land with his wives and children:

“And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’” (Gen. 32:28)

~ The Double Portion ~

Another event occurred in these early years which is important to know for a proper understanding of the tribal divisions of the children of Israel. This event involved the passing of the birthright to *Yoseif's* (Joseph's) two children, *M'nasheh* and *Efrayim* (Mah-nah-shay' = Manasseh; Ehf-rye-eeem' = Ephraim). Remember, *Yoseif* had been given the birthright, so he was to inherit a double portion of his father's estate. Normally this would mean that *Yoseif* himself would inherit twice the amount of land and goods than would the other sons of *Yisrael*. Then, upon his death, *Yoseif* would transfer a double portion of his land and other accumulated wealth to his eldest son. Under this traditional scenario, *Yoseif's* eldest son, *M'nasheh*, would have received the double portion from his father.

But God had something different in mind for *Yoseif's* two sons. Instead of the eldest son receiving the double portion birthright, the younger son, *Efrayim* was made the birthright son. However, *Efrayim* did not receive the double portion for himself. Instead, he shared the inheritance with his older brother, *M'nasheh*. The manner in which this transfer took place was through a blessing bestowed upon the two sons of *Yoseif* by their grandfather, *Ya'acov*, who's name had been changed to *Yisrael*.

Yisrael was near death when *Yoseif* brought his two sons, *M'nasheh* and *Efrayim* to his bedside:

“Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, ‘Indeed your father is sick;’ and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And Jacob was told, ‘Look, your son Joseph is coming to you;’ and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.” (Gen. 48:1-2)

Then *Yisrael* recounted the blessing that had been promised to his grandfather *Avraham*, passed down to him through his father *Yitzchak*, and coming finally to *Yisrael* himself:

“Then Jacob said to Joseph: ‘God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, “Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.”’” (Gen. 48:3-4)

Yisrael then turned his attention to the two sons of *Yoseif*:

““And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.”” (Gen. 48:5-6)

Yisrael made a very important statement here. He indicated that *Yoseif's* two sons, *M'nasheh* and *Efrayim* were to be considered as though they were to be his very own sons instead of being his grandchildren. Thus, *M'nasheh* and *Efrayim* became equals with the other eleven sons of *Yisrael*. Not only did they become equals, the descendants of *Efrayim* (as we shall soon see) were to become one of the two premier tribes (along with *Y'hudah*) among the twelve.

~ The Blessing ~

Next came what was a ritual among these ancient people. *Yisrael*, knowing that he was soon to die, passed a blessing on to the two sons of *Yoseif*, whom he has just adopted. It was apparently also a custom that the person pronouncing the blessing place his right hand upon the head of the one receiving the primary blessing. This meant that he should have placed his right hand on the head of *M'nasheh*, the eldest. But *Yisrael* reversed his hands, placing his right hand upon the head of the younger son, *Efrayim*:

“Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, ‘Who are these?’”

“And Joseph said to his father, ‘They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place.’ And he said, ‘Please bring them to me, and I will bless them.’”

“Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, ‘I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!’”

“So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took

them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near him. Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid *it* on Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh *was* the firstborn.” (Gen. 48:8-14)

It is interesting to note that the blessing is not really for the two boys, but for their father *Yoseif*. It was in this manner (through the two sons) that *Yoseif* received his birthright blessing of the double portion; through the establishment of his two sons as equal members among the other eleven sons of *Yisrael*:

“And he blessed Joseph, and said:
‘God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” (Gen. 48:15-16)

The blessing consisted of two parts:

- ◆ *Efrayim* and *M'nasheh* were prophesied to father a multitude of people in the midst of the earth.
- ◆ *Israel's* own name was to be bestowed upon them and their descendants.

This, indeed, was what eventually happened, since the tribes of *Efrayim* and *M'nasheh* became leaders of the northern kingdom which was known as the *House of Israel*, while the southern kingdom became known as the *House of Judah*.

When *Yoseif* realized that his younger son, *Efrayim* was receiving the primary position in the blessing because his father, *Yisrael*, had placed his right hand on *Efrayim's* head, *Yoseif* protested:

“And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, ‘Not so, my father: for this *is* the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.’ And his father refused, and said, ‘I know *it*, my son, I know *it*: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.” (Gen. 48:17-19)

This is another very important passage pertaining to the study of the Lost Tribes of Israel. Not only are the two sons of *Yoseif* made equal with the other eleven sons; the youngest son, *Efrayim*, is to become the greater of the two for *Yisrael* prophesied that he (*Efrayim*) would become a “multitude of nations:”

“So he blessed them that day, saying, ‘By you Israel will bless, saying, “May God make you as Ephraim and as

Manasseh!’” And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.” (Gen. 48:20)

The manner in which *Yoseif's* double portion was administered was for his two sons to each have a full portion of land inheritance:

“Then Israel said to Joseph, ‘Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.” (Gen. 48:20-22)

To this day, the memory of *Efrayim* and *M'nasheh* are remembered each week when Jewish parents bless their sons using the words of their father *Yisrael*; “May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.”

~ The Tribes Mature ~

Each of the twelve sons of *Ya'acov* married and had numerous children, so by the time they all went down to Egypt to be with *Yoseif*, they were seventy in number:

“And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt *already*.” (Ex. 1:5)

In Egypt the population of the children of Israel continued to increase until they had become so numerous they were perceived by the Pharaoh to be a threat to his rule. By the time they left Egypt in the Exodus, the number of men between the ages of twenty and fifty were over six hundred thousand. When the women, children and older men are added in, the number is usually said to be about three million, give or take a few hundred thousand:

“Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds -- a great deal of livestock.” (Ex. 12:37-38)

By the time the children of Israel left Egypt, the differentiation between the tribes had taken firm shape, but instead of there being only twelve tribes (one for each of the twelve sons of *Ya'acov*), there were now actually thirteen, for *Yoseif* had been given the double portion. Nevertheless, when it came time for the land inheritance, only twelve portions were given because the tribe of *Levi* (Leh-vee') was not given land. Instead, they were assigned to serve God as keepers of the Tabernacle.

Initially, it was God's intention to take the firstborn from each of the tribes to serve in the Tabernacle. However, after the incident of the golden calf, He decided to take the entire tribe of *Levi* for that task in place of the firstborn of each household:

“And the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation

before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle.' ...

"Then the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses, saying: 'Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, because all the firstborn are Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I am the LORD [YHVH].'"

(Num. 3:5-8, 11-13)

According to tradition, the reason God chose the Levites to be the attendants of *Aharon* (Ah ha-rohn' = Aaron) for the work of service in the Tabernacle, is because none of the members of that tribe were involved in the golden calf incident, plus the fact that they had supported *Moshe* (Mow-shay' = Moses) by going among the other tribes to slay the instigators of that evil deed:

"Now when Moses saw that the people *were* unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies), then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, 'Whoever *is* on the LORD's [YHVH] side -- *come* to me.' And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

"And he said to them, 'Thus says the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel: "Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'"

"So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day."

(Ex. 32:25-28)

~ The Levitical Portion ~

It was understood that once the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, twelve of the tribes would receive a land inheritance but the tribe of Levi would not. Instead, the Levites were to be given cities within each of the other twelve tribal areas in which to live, plus a small portion of land surrounding each city where they could raise a few crops and cattle. In addition to this subsistence food, the Levites were also entitled to the agricultural tithes from the other twelve tribes. In turn, the Levites were to give a tithe of the agricultural tithe, which they received, to the Priests for their sustenance. The tithe was never given in the form of money in ancient Israel:

"And the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *across from* Jericho, saying: 'Command the children of Israel that they give the Levites cities to dwell in from the inheritance of their possession, and you shall *also* give the Levites common-land around the cities. They shall have the cities to dwell in; and their common-land shall be for their cattle, for their herds, and for all their animals.

...

"So all the cities you will give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight; these *you shall give* with their common-land. And the cities which you will give *shall be* from the possession of the children of Israel; from the larger *tribe*

you shall give many, from the smaller you shall give few. Each shall give some of its cities to the Levites, in proportion to the inheritance that each receives.'"

(Num. 35:1-3, 7-8)

In addition to the tithe of agricultural products the Priests and Levites were also to receive food from the sacrifices and offerings which were brought to the Tabernacle by the people:

"The priests, the Levites -- all the tribe of Levi -- shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the LORD [YHVH] made by fire, and His portion. Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD [YHVH] is their inheritance, as He said to them. And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether *it is* bull or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. The firstfruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. For the LORD [YHVH] your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the LORD [YHVH], him and his sons forever.

"So if a Levite comes from any of your gates, from where he dwells among all Israel, and comes with all the desire of his mind to the place which the LORD [YHVH] chooses, then he may serve in the name of the LORD [YHVH] his God as all his brethren the Levites *do*, who stand there before the LORD [YHVH]. They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance."

(Deut. 18:1-8)

By not having extensive amounts of land which needed care, the Priests and Levites were able to focus their attention on the work of service which they had been assigned in the Tabernacle:

"Then the LORD [YHVH] said to Aaron: 'You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting. Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die.

"But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; *it shall be* a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up a heave offering to the LORD [YHVH], I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, "Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."

"Then the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: "When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD [YHVH], a tenth of the tithe.'"

(Num. 18:20-26)

Thus, a tenth of the tithe to the Levites was, in turn, given to the Priests. The tithes were all agricultural products. Apparently excess amounts could be sold to others so that the Levites could have some income to buy other necessities. This would have been permitted because the tithes were considered to be the Levitical inheritance.

~ Marching Orders ~

Even though all the people were considered to be the 'children of Israel,' nevertheless, tribal distinctions were very important both to them and to God. This was evident from the way in which God instructed them to camp and to march, for they were not to intermingle in their camping or marching. Each tribe was to encamp in a specific place relative to the Tabernacle and each tribe was to have a distinctive 'standard' or flag which identified them:

"And the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 'Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting.'"
(Num. 2:1)

Three tribes camped on each side of the Tabernacle. One tribe of each grouping of three was designated as the chief tribe of that group. On the east, Judah was the lead tribe:

"On the east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; ..."
(Num. 2:3a)

Camping along with Judah were the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. Not only did these three tribes camp on the east side (which meant the entrance to the Tabernacle faced them), they were also the group which was the first to break camp and lead the procession when they moved from place to place in the wilderness:

"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Judah, one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred -- these shall break camp first."
(Num. 2:9)

The south side was led by Reuben and accompanied by the tribes of Simeon and Gad:

"On the south side shall be the standard of the forces with Reuben according to their armies, ... they shall be the second to break camp."
(Num. 2:10a, 16b)

The west side was led by the tribe of Ephraim and they were accompanied by Manasseh and Benjamin. This arrangement placed all of the descendants of *Rachel* together:

"On the west side shall be the standard of the forces with Ephraim according to their armies, ... they shall be the third to break camp."
(Num. 2:18a, 24b)

Finally, the north side was led by the tribe of Dan. They were joined by the tribes of Asher and Naphtali:

"The standard of the forces with Dan shall be on the north side according to their armies, ... they shall break camp last, with their standards."
(Num. 2:25a, 31b)

The tribe of Levi (which included the Priests, the sons of *Aharon*) camped in the middle of all the tribes, and moved out between the south (Reuben, Simeon and Gad) and the west (Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin). They were responsible to carry all of the articles which pertained to the Tabernacle:

"And the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps; as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their standards."
(Num. 2:17)

Notice that the entire camp was set up in relationship to the Tabernacle. It was always in the center of everything so that the attention of the children of Israel would always be upon it, and so that it would always be protected if an attack should come from any enemy they might encounter along the way.

~ Tribal Prophecies ~

The relationships between the Tribes remained static during the forty years in which they wandered in the wilderness. However, there were two sets of enigmatic prophecies given concerning what was to befall them in the 'last days.' The first of these prophecies was given by *Yisrael* (Israel or Jacob) when he was on his deathbed:

"And Jacob called his sons and said, 'Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

"Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father."
(Gen. 49:1-2)

It is not the purpose of this article to explore and speculate concerning all of the prophecies found in this passage. However, it is clear from both the size and the content, that two of the tribes (*Y'hudah* and *Yoseif*) were considered to be the most important.*

Most scholars agree that the prophecy given here concerning *Y'hudah* (Judah) promises that Messiah will come from his tribe, for He is promised to be the tribe of kings. According to Jewish teaching, this prophesy will culminate in the coming of King Messiah, who will be from the tribe of *Y'hudah*:

**"Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;
Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
Your father's children shall bow down before you.
Judah is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.
Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes. ..."**
(Gen. 49:8-11)

* For detailed information concerning these prophecies refer to the recorded message series *Tribal Traits* -- available on both cassette tape and CD.

The prophecy concerning *Yoseif* (Joseph) does not delineate between *Efrayim* and *M'nasheh*, so it can be assumed that both of these tribes were to share in the promises made to their father, although it could be assumed that *Efrayim* would gain the greater blessing:

**“Joseph is a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
The archers have bitterly grieved him,
Shot at him and hated him.
But his bow remained in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob
(From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
By the God of your father who will help you,
And by the Almighty who will bless you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
The blessings of your father
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate
from his brothers.”** (Gen. 49:22-26)

Y'hudah was promised the rulership role within the nation of Israel while *Yoseif* was to receive the most physical blessings of all the tribes.

~ Tribal Blessings ~

In addition to the prophecies made by Jacob there were additional prophecies (in the form of blessings) administered to the tribes by *Moshe* (Moses) just before he died:

“Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.” (Deut. 33:1)

An interesting aspect of this list is that the tribe of Simeon is not mentioned. There is no explanation for this oversight, but it could have been due to the fact that the tribe of Simeon, although given a description of his future land inheritance, would never be able to take possession of their portion, in direct fulfillment of the prophecy which Jacob had made when he gave his deathbed blessing:

**“Simeon and Levi are brothers;
Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.
Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstringed an ox.
Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.”** (Gen. 48:5-7)

It has already been pointed out that the tribe of Levi was not given an inheritance, but was to serve God as keepers of the

Tabernacle. However, Simeon was not a recipient of such duties. The reason for their scattering was based solely on their cruelty and wrath. It might be for this reason that Simeon is not mentioned in the blessing of *Moshe*. *Levi*, on the other hand, is given one of the most extensive blessings by *Moshe*. In this passage, when it came to words, Levi's blessing is larger than both Judah's and Joseph's:

**“And of Levi he said:
‘Let Your Thummim * and Your Urim be with
Your holy one,
Whom You tested at Massah,
And with whom You contended at the
waters of Meribah,
Who says of his father and mother,
“I have not seen them;”
Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,
Or know his own children;
For they have observed Your word
And kept Your covenant.
They shall teach Jacob Your judgments,
And Israel Your law.
They shall put incense before You,
And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.
Bless his substance, LORD [YHVH],
And accept the work of his hands;
Strike the loins of those who rise against him,
And of those who hate him, that they rise not again.”** (Deut. 33:8-11)

Meanwhile, the blessing given by *Moshe* to Joseph is similar to the one given by Jacob. In this passage, Joseph is once again promised all of the good things of the earth:

**“And of Joseph he said:
‘Blessed of the LORD [YHVH] is his land,
With the precious things of heaven, with the dew,
And the deep lying beneath,
With the precious fruits of the sun,
With the precious produce of the months,
With the best things of the ancient mountains,
With the precious things of the everlasting hills,
With the precious things of the earth and its fullness,
And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.
Let the blessing come “on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate
from his brothers.”’”** (Deut. 33:13-16)

* The purpose of the *Thummim* and the *Urim* were to answer questions of importance that could not be resolved by the system of Judges. It is thought they were only consulted when the safety of the nation or king was at stake.

The *Thummim* and the *Urim* were said to be objects (possibly stones) attached to the breastplate of the High Priest. They served as a type of ‘divine oracle.’ Because of the presence of the *Urim* and *Thummim* in the breastplate it was called ‘the breastplate of judgment.’

There is no Scriptural record of the *Urim* and *Thummim* being used after the time of king David, but it apparently was in effective use during the time of the Judges, although some say they were used until the destruction of the First Temple.

Moshe ends his blessing with a direct reference to the two sons of *Yoseif* who were to carry the birthright blessing:

**“His glory is like a firstborn bull,
And his horns like the horns of the wild ox;
Together with them
He shall push the peoples
To the ends of the earth;
They are the ten thousands of Ephraim,
And they are the thousands of Manasseh.”**
(Deut. 33:17)

The tribes of Israel were thirteen distinct groups of people, tied together through their common ancestry and by the promise of God to their fathers; *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov*. Together they were to inherit the Promised Land and “push peoples to the ends of the earth.”

~ Land Assignments ~

The actual assignment of the land portions to the various tribes took place after the children of Israel came into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. However, some of the people did not want to cross over the *Yarden* (Yahr-dehn' = Jordon), but preferred the land which lay on the eastern side of the river:

“Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ...

~ Map of Tribal Territories ~

‘If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan.’”
(Num. 32:1-2, 5)

After some intense negotiation with *Moshe*, they were granted their request:

“And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the River Arnon, and half the mountains of Gilead and its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites. The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. ...”
(Deut. 3:12-13a)

Not only did *Yoseif* receive two portions of land in the inheritance, one of his sons, *M'nasheh* received large land portions on both sides of the *Yarden* (Jordan).

The rest of the tribes were given land west of the *Yarden* River. These allotments are detailed in the book of Joshua (13:8 through 19:48). A map showing the approximate boundaries of the various tribes can be found in the box on this page.

Some interesting and important details concerning the tribal boundaries include:

- ◆ The boundary between Judah and Benjamin is the *Hinnom** valley (known to most Believers as *Gehenna* or Hell). It is a valley that runs south of the Temple Mount. Anciently it was used as a place to burn refuse. This division of land caused the Temple to be located in the territory of Benjamin, not Judah:

“Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin ... The south side began at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that lies before the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is in the Valley of the Rephaim on the north, descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite city on the south, and descended to En Rogel.”

(Joshua 18:11a, 15-16)

- ◆ The tribe of Simeon was given territory, but they were unable to drive out the Philistines who dwelt there. Thus, the Simeonites became scattered throughout the other tribes, just as the prophecy given by Jacob had foretold. However, they mainly dwelt within the confines of the territory given to Judah:

“The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.”
(Joshua 19:9)

- ◆ The tribe of *Dan* was given land in the south but either did not like it or could not defeat the people who dwelt there, so they moved up to the far north and established themselves there:

* Pagan worshippers (along with some Israelites) also used *Hinnom* as a place to sacrifice their children to Molech.

“In those days *there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day *their inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. ...**” (Judg. 18:1-2)

The Danites conquered the people who were living in the north and rebuilt the city of *Laish* renaming it *Dan* after their father, the progenitor of their tribe.

“And they called the name of the city *Dan*, after the name of *Dan* their father, who was born to *Israel*. However, the name of the city formerly *was Laish*.” (Judg. 18:29)

However, there was a problem among the people of *Dan* that manifested itself on their journey to the north. They were deeply involved with idolatry, as were many of the other people of the northern tribes. As the army of *Dan* proceeded north, they came to the home of a man named *Micah*, who owned a number of idols and lived in the territory of *Efrayim*. They found there a Levite who was acting as a priest to *Micah* and his family. The Danites persuaded the Levite ‘priest’ to become their tribal priest and go with them on their journey north to find land:

“And they said to him, ‘Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. *Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?*’ So the priest’s heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people. Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them.” ... So they took *the things Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.*” (Judg. 18:19-21)

Thus began the practice of idolatry among the tribe of *Dan*. Apparently, such practice was also in existence among some of the other tribes as well, since *Micah*, where they found the idols and the Levite who was acting as a priest, were living in the land of *Efrayim*. Such practices were expressly forbidden by God since only the direct sons of *Aharon* were to serve in the priesthood. Later on they also established men from other tribes as priests:

“Then the children of *Dan* set up for themselves the carved image; and *Jonathan* the son of *Gershon*, the son of *Manasseh*, and his sons were priests to the tribe of *Dan* until the day of the captivity of the land. So they set up for themselves *Micah’s carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.*” (Judg. 18:30-31)

Notice this passage states that the tribe of *Dan* remained in an idolatrous state until “the day of the captivity of the land.” In fact, as we shall see, the very reason God took the House of *Israel* into captivity was for this very reason; idolatry.

~ A System of Judges ~

The original type of government which God established for the children of *Israel* was a system of Elders and Judges. They were established to rule over the individual tribes and the nation as a whole, basing their judgments according to the precepts found in the *Torah*. The matter of judging did not fall solely on one single individual, but to a system of judges which had been first established during the time of *Moshe*. This system included various levels of courts which were set up to deal with problems which inevitably arose between individuals:

“And *Moses* chose able men out of all *Israel*, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to *Moses*, but they judged every small case themselves.”

(Ex. 18:25-26)

During the times of the Judges, the children of *Israel* were allowed to run their own affairs within their individual tribal units, for there was no centralized government. The people were supposed to be following the instructions of the *Torah* and allow God to be their king. If they had done as instructed, the nation of *Israel* would have grown great without it ever needing a centralized government controlled by men.

However, when the children of *Israel* moved away from the teachings of the *Torah* and into idolatry, or allowed themselves to come under the rule of the pagans who lived among them, God sent a ‘Leading Judge’ to bring them back to Him. The book of Judges delineates *Israel’s* problems and triumphs during this time.

However, as time wore on, the people began to want to be more unified and to have a king to reign over them, just like all of the other pagan nations around them. They did not want to be ‘different.’ So, during the time of *Samuel*, God agreed to allow them to establish a king to rule over them, even though He knew that it was not a good idea:

“So the children of *Israel* departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance. In those days *there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*”

(Judg. 21:24-25)

~ A Snare ~

One of the chief obstacles the children of *Israel* faced during this time was their desire to make covenants with the people who were already dwelling in the land, rather than drive them out as commanded. *Israel’s* continued coexistence with these people and their pagan practices became a snare to the people. This was the chief cause of their continual turning away from the true worship of the God of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya’acov*, and following the precepts of the *Torah*. Instead, they allowed themselves to be led into the worship of the pagan gods of the very people whom they were supposed to displace:

“Then the Angel of the LORD [*YHVH*] came up from *Gilgal* to *Bochim*, and said: ‘I led you up from *Egypt* and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers;

and I said, “I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.” But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I also said, “I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be *thorns* in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.”” (Judg. 2:1-3)

~ Tribal Independence ~

There was a fairly high degree of tribal independence during the time of the Judges. However, this independence also seems to have contributed to a fairly high degree of ‘falling away’ into pagan practices. If the Elders and Judges who had been appointed to rule over each tribe had done their jobs well and followed the precepts of the *Torah* (the constitution of the nation of Israel), there would have been few real problems and the need for a ‘National Judge’ would probably not have existed. However, this was not the case. Instead, whenever the children of Israel backslid into idolatry, or into subjection to one of the pagan nations, God intervened by sending them a ‘National Judge’ to set things right. The entire book of Judges concerns itself with the story of these events.

Because of their inclination to fall into pagan worship, God decided to leave the pagan peoples in the land as a means of testing the children of Israel to see if they would follow Him or follow paganism:

“Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD [YHVH], died *when he was one hundred and ten years old. ...*

“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD [YHVH] nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD [YHVH], and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD [YHVH] God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD [YHVH] to anger. They forsook the LORD [YHVH] and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.”

(Judg. 2:8-13)

And so, the children of Israel slipped back and forth from idolatry and oppression by their pagan neighbors, to true worship and freedom under a national Judge.

~ Summary ~

The children of Israel all came from one family, the literal descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov*. *Ya'acov's* twelve sons generated twelve separate and distinct tribal units, one of which (*Yoseif*) was given a double portion of land, while another (*Levi*) was given no land but instead received its ‘inheritance’ through the tithes of the other tribes for the work of service they performed in the Tabernacle.

Israel's initial governmental structure was a loose confederation, with each tribe being ‘judged’ by a system of Elders and Judges who were responsible for making decisions concerning the local and tribal community and to see that their

people followed the precepts of the *Torah*. The tribes were to be unified by their singular devotion to *YHVH* as their King and was also to be the final arbiter in disputes through the *Thumim* and *Urim* of the Levites.

However, problems arose primarily because many of the people (including some of the Elders) preferred the worship of idols to the worship of the invisible Creator God. As a result of this proclivity, many of the tribes failed to drive out the pagan people who were dwelling in the land when they entered. Instead they embraced those people and their religions, thus turning their backs on the Tabernacle and the Levitical service prescribed by the *Torah*.

From time to time, God sent a ‘National Judge’ (such as Deborah, Gideon, Samson, and Samuel) to straighten things out and bring peace to the land. However, the people did not learn their lesson, as each new generation went off into idolatrous practices from which they had to be rescued.

This situation prevailed for approximately four hundred years, until the cry went up: “Give us a king!” That subject will be covered in the following chapter, *A Nation Destroyed*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ A Nation Destroyed ~

Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel;
And removed them out of his sight:
There was none left but the tribe of Judah only.
II Kings 17:18



One of the great historical mysteries of the world concerns the apparent demise of the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel. In the first chapter we examined how the twelve sons of *Ya'acov* (Jacob) became the progenitors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and how they eventually developed into a full-fledged nation, taking their place among the other nations of the world in a land of their own, as the single 'chosen' nation of *YHVH*, the Creator God of the earth.

This chapter covers the establishment of Israel as a United Monarchy, under kings *David* and *Shlomo*, and the eventual division and removal, by God, of the northern kingdom which consisted of ten of the tribes of Israel.

As we shall see, a very large portion of the children of Israel were taken captive during the reign of king Hoshea, and never returned to the land of Israel. Not only did they not return, they eventually lost their identity, so that, in time, they no longer knew they were the physical descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzhak*, and *Ya'acov*, and that the Jewish people (from the House of Judah) were their brothers.

~ "Give Us A King" ~

Instead of accepting the Creator God of the universe as their King, the children of Israel kept looking to what their neighbors were doing. They saw that all the other nations had a king to rule over them and they wanted one as well. During the time of Samuel, the Judge and Prophet, their desire finally came to a head, fueled by the knowledge that Samuel's sons were unrighteous:

"And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ...

"Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice."
(I Sam. 7:15, 8:1-3)

As a result of these circumstances the people asked for a king to be placed over them. Samuel was not pleased with their request, so he took the problem to the One who could solve it, *El Shaddai*, God Almighty:

"And the LORD [*YHVH*] said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day -- with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods -- so they are doing to you also.

Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."
(I Sam. 8:7-9)

Samuel warned the people that by asking for a king, they would be putting themselves into subjection to a man instead of their merciful and righteous God. They were choosing oppression by one of their own over individual and tribal freedom under God:

"So Samuel told all the words of the LORD [*YHVH*] to the people who asked him for a king. And he said, 'This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.

"And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD [*YHVH*] will not hear you in that day."
(I Sam. 8:10-18)

However, the people would not listen to Samuel, even though he was telling them the truth. They still wanted to be like all the other nations and have a king of their own whom they could see and admire, rather than having God to be their King, whom they could not see:

**"Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, 'No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.'"
(I Sam. 8:19-20)**

~ The Monarchy Begins ~

The first man anointed to be king of Israel was *Shaul* (Shaw-ool' = Saul). He was a large imposing man from the tribe of *Binyamin*. It seems curious that the first king should be from a tribe other than *Y'hudah*, for the prophetic uttering of *Ya'acov* on his deathbed made it clear that the kingship role was to be from that tribe, not from *Binyamin*:

**"The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;**

And to Him shall be the obedience of the people."

(Gen. 49:10)

Some believe that, from the time he was anointed, *Shaul* was considered by God to be nothing more than an interim king until *David* became old enough to reign. Whatever the case in this regard, the fact that king *Shaul* was from the tribe of

Binyamin instead of *Y'hudah*, may have been instrumental in contributing to the future split between the tribe of *Y'hudah* and the majority of the other tribes.

Eventually, of course, *Shaul* disqualified his descendants from following him to the throne of Israel because he refused to obey God explicitly. This flaw in his character paved the way for *David* to become king and the establishment of the Davidic Dynasty.

When *David* first became king he did not have all twelve of the tribes under his control. In fact, the majority of the tribes did not recognize him as king but followed one of the descendants of *Shaul* for seven years after *David* came to power. Only the tribe of *Y'hudah* recognized David as king:

"Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." (II Sam. 2:4)

After numerous intrigues and a fair amount of bloodshed, the house of Israel (the remainder of the tribes) also accepted *David* to be their king. Thus began what is commonly called the United Monarchy:

"Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, 'Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD [YHVH] said to you, "You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel."

"Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD [YHVH]. And they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah." (II Sam. 5:1-5)

David was the conquering king; the prototype of King Messiah. He fought a number of wars against numerous enemies in order to fully establish his authority over all the land and tribes of Israel. Nevertheless, *David* was a man after God's own heart and, to this day, he is still recognized as Israel's finest king and a type of the Messiah to come.

~ The United Monarchy ~

Following the death of king *David*, his son *Shlomo* (Shlow-mow' = Solomon) came to power as king over all of Israel. Like his father, *Shlomo* also reigned for forty years. This was the period of Israel's greatest achievements. It was also a time of peace. It is interesting to note that *Shlomo* is a derivative of *shalom* and means 'peace.'

During *Shlomo's* reign a great building program was initiated. The most famous of the buildings erected was the first Temple in Jerusalem. This was a magnificent structure, said to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, even by secular scholars. The Temple was also a unifying focal point for all of the children of Israel, because it was the site where God had 'placed His name,'* and it became the only location in the nation where authorized sacrifice could take place:

"Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD [YHVH] and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD [YHVH] and in his own house. Then the LORD [YHVH] appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: 'I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.'" (II Chron. 7:11-12)

In addition to the building program in Jerusalem, *Shlomo* also established twelve administrative districts throughout the land of Israel:

"And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year." (I Kings 4:7)

It soon became apparent that the prophecy God had given Samuel concerning the taxation which would come upon the people should they have a king over them, was true. Not only did the people have to support *Shlomo's* building programs, they had to support the household of the king, the army, and his stable of horses:

"And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem." (I Kings 10:26)

Despite the excesses of *Shlomo's* reign, it was not the abundance of material things which caused his downfall, it was his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines:

"But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites -- from the nations of whom the LORD [YHVH] had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Solomon clung to these in love."

"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD [YHVH] his God, as was the heart of his father David." (I Kings 11:1-4)

It seems as though the man who is often called the "wisest man who ever lived" lost much of his wisdom in his old age. *Shlomo* actually built high places for his wives to worship as they pleased, thereby encouraging their paganism; a practice which he succumbed to as well:

"For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD

* At the dedication of the Temple, king Solomon prayed to God and referred to the Temple as the place where God had 'placed His name:'

"... Your servant is praying before You today: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, "My name shall be there,""

(I Kings 8:28b-29)

[YHVH], and did not fully follow the LORD [YHVH], as *did* his father David.

“Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.” (I Kings 11:5-8)

Because *Shlomo* turned away from true worship and followed after the pagan ways of his wives, God became angry and chose to take the majority of the tribes of Israel away from his descendants who were to reign after him:

“So the LORD [YHVH] became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD [YHVH] had commanded.

“Therefore the LORD [YHVH] said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.’” (I Kings 11:9-13)

~ The Chosen Servant ~

The servant God chose to take over the kingship of the northern tribes was named *Yarovam* (Yah-row-vahm’ = Jeroboam). He was from the tribe of *Efrayim*. *Shlomo* had made *Yarovam* head over all the labor force of the ‘house of Joseph.’ At the very least, this meant that *Yarovam* was head over all the workers of the tribes of *Efrayim* and *M’nasheh*. However, because they were considered the premier tribes of the north, it is possible that *Yarovam* was head over the workers from all of the ten northern tribes. This would have made *Yarovam* a very well known leader in the north:

“Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two *were* alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that *was* on him, and tore it into twelve pieces.

“And he said to Jeroboam, ‘Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD [YHVH], the God of Israel: “Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), because they have forsaken Me, and worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do *what is right* in My eyes and *keep* My statutes and My judgments, as *did* his father David.”’” (I Kings 11:29-33)

Even though *Shlomo* had sinned, God let him finish out his reign over the United Monarchy in peace. This was not because of *Shlomo*’s righteousness, but because God had made a promise to his father *David*:

““However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes.”” (I Kings 11:34)

The actual dividing of the kingdom was not to come until the reign of *Shlomo*’s son. One tribe would be given to *Shlomo*’s son (in addition to his own tribe, *Y’hudah*). That additional tribe was *Binyamin*, in whose territory the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were located:

““But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand and give it to you -- ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel.”” (I Kings 11:35-37)

This must have been pretty heady stuff for *Shlomo*’s servant, *Yarovam*, for God had promised him that the kingdom of the northern ten tribes was to be in his hands and the hands of his descendants if only he would obey God as *David* had done:

““Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do *what is right* in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.”” (I Kings 11:38-39)

As soon as *Shlomo* heard what had happened, he sought to take the life of *Yarovam*, but God protected him:

“Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.” (I Kings 11:40)

~ The Monarchy Divides ~

After reigning forty years in Jerusalem over the United Monarchy, *Shlomo* died, and his son *Rechavam* (Reh-kah-vahm’ = Rehoboam) became the next king over all of Israel. *Rechavam*’s troubles began immediately, for when *Yarovam* heard that *Shlomo* had died, he returned from Egypt and sought an audience with the new king.

During the reign of *Shlomo*, taxes had been very high in order to pay for all of the building programs and for the king’s lavish lifestyle. The people wanted tax relief and *Yarovam* used that issue as a pretext to drive a wedge between the people and *Rechavam*:

“Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome

service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.” (I Kings 12:3-4)

Here was a brand new king, and the very first decision he is required to make turns out to be the toughest and most important one of his career. *Rechavam* consulted with his older and more experienced advisors and they gave him good advice:

“If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.” (I Kings 12:7)

But *Rechavam* did not heed the advice of the older more experienced counselors, but instead took the advice of the younger set, who wanted their opportunity to tax and build even greater structures and support a lavish lifestyle of their own:

“Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, ‘Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us” -- thus you shall say to them: “My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!”’” (I Kings 12:10-11)

Rechavam accepted the advice of the young men in his cabinet and took a hard line with the people of the north. Needless to say, it did not go over well with them. However, *Rechavam*'s hard line was necessary if the prophecy given to *Yarovam* was to come to pass. For this reason God hardened the heart of *Rechavam* to the people of Israel:

“So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD [YHVH], that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD [YHVH] had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (I Kings 12:15)

Rechavam's decision were words of war to the northern ten tribes:

“Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

‘What share have we in David?

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, O Israel!

Now, see to your own house, O David!”

So Israel departed to their tents.” (I Kings 12:16)

However, the entire nation did not follow *Yarovam* into rebellion. The tribe of *Y'hudah* and those from the other tribes who dwelt in the territory of *Y'hudah* remained faithful to king *Rechavam* and the dynasty of king *David*:

“But Rechavam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.” (I Kings 12:17)

~ “To Your Tents” ~

The phrase “To your tents, O Israel!” became a very famous battle cry of the Israelites. The phrase is found three times in Scripture, the first occurrence is when a man named

Sheba from the tribe of *Binyamin* led a rebellion against king *David*:

“And there happened to be there a rebel, whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew a trumpet, and said:

‘We have no share in David,

Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse;

Every man to his tents, O Israel!” (II Sam. 20:1)

The other two occurrences describe the event of *Yarovam*'s rebellion, which was just covered (I Kings 12:16) and its companion passage in I Chron. 10:16. In all three instances the word ‘tents’ is the result of an emendation which was made by the *Sopherim* (So-fer-reem = Scribes), who changed the text to read in its present form. Originally the text read: “To your gods, O Israel!”

According to E.W. Bullinger (a nineteenth century Biblical scholar), this change was effected by the transposition of two letters which changes the word ‘gods’ to ‘tents.’ The original word would have been אֱלֹהִים (the shortened form of *eloah* or ‘god’ {Strong's #433}). It was changed by the *Sopherim* to אוֹהֶל (*ohel* or ‘tent’ {Strong's #168}) and appears that way in the Masoretic texts.

Apparently this emendation was made to preserve the reputation of the northern ten tribes who followed *Yarovam* into rebellion. However, when rendered ‘gods’ instead of ‘tents’ it makes more sense, since the northern tribes were often caught in the throws of idolatry and paganism. As we saw in the previous chapter, through idol worship and the use of men as priests who had no calling from God for that position, the northern tribes were already well entrenched in idolatry at the beginning of the time of the Judges, over four hundred years prior to this event taking place between *Rechavam* and *Yarovam*. (For more details on the subject of the emendations of the Scribes see the booklet; *Emendations of the Scribes* and E.W. Bullinger's *Companion Bible*, Appendix 33).

Thus we see that the northern kingdom of the House of Israel was idolatrous from the very beginning. Only in the House of Judah did true worship at the Temple exist, but even there it became corrupted, as we shall see.

Rechavam tried to maintain his authority by sending a tax collector to the northern tribes:

“Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.”

(I Kings 12:18-19)

Rechavam made a valiant attempt to restore the United Monarchy. He assembled an army of men from the tribes of *Y'hudah* and *Binyamin*:

“And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

“But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ‘Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD [YHVH]: ‘You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.’” Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD [YHVH], and turned back, according to the word of the LORD [YHVH].” (I Kings 12:21-24)

Meanwhile, *Yarovam* was crowned king over the northern ten tribes and became known as the king of Israel:

“Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.” (I Kings 12:20)

Thus the name of *Yisrael* came to be associated with the northern ten tribes, led by the tribe of *Efrayim*, from its capitol city Samaria, just as *Ya’acov* (*Yisrael*) had prophesied centuries before when he blessed *Yoseif’s* two sons, *Efrayim* and *M’nasheh*.

~ Dividing the Tribes ~

The division of the tribes between the House of Israel and the House of Judah was predetermined by God.

- ◆ The House (or Kingdom) of Israel was composed of ten tribes, and they were ruled over by *Yarovam* from the tribe of *Efrayim*. The northern ten tribes were:
 - *Efrayim* (Ephraim)
 - *M’nasheh* (Manasheh)
 - *Re’uven* (Reuben)
 - *Shim’on* (Simeon)
 - *Yissakhar* (Issachar)
 - *Z’vulun* (Zebulun)
 - *Dan*
 - *Naftali* (Naphtali)
 - *Gad*
 - *Asher*
- ◆ The House (or Kingdom) of Judah was composed of two tribes, and they were ruled over by *Rechavam* who was from the tribe of *Y’hudah*. The southern two tribes were:
 - *Y’hudah* (Judah)
 - *Binyamin* (Benjamin)

The reason the tribe of *Binyamin* was given to *Rechavam* was because God wanted the Temple to be within the borders of the House of Judah so that it would be intact and functioning when Messiah, *Y’shua* came:

“And he said to Jeroboam, ‘Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD [YHVH], the God of Israel:

“Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he [Rehoboam] shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), ...”” (I Kings 11:31-32)

~ The Thirteenth Tribe ~

There is one other tribe which has thus far not been mentioned; that is the tribe of *Levi*. The Levites had been given cities in each of the tribal areas. It was in these cities (along with some surrounding land used for raising animals) where they resided when not serving at the Tabernacle or Temple. The Levites were divided into twenty-four divisions (or courses). Each division served at the Temple for one week, twice during the year. In addition, all of the priests and Levites served at the Temple during the three pilgrimage festivals of *Pesach* (Peh’-sock = Passover), *Shavu’ot* (Shaw-voo oat’ = Pentecost and *Succot* (Sue-coat’ = Tabernacles). This meant each Priest and Levite was in Jerusalem for five weeks out of the year. The rest of the time they would be in their home cities throughout the land of Israel, where they were supposed to be instructing the people in the ways of the *Torah*.

When the rebellion began, the Priests and Levites saw immediately what was happening. They were already aware

~ Map Showing the Divided Kingdom ~

that pagan practices were common among the people of the northern tribes. When *Yarovam* took control, one of the very first things he did was to set up a new national form of worship so that the people would not be drawn to the Temple in Jerusalem and, as a result, return their loyalty to *Rechavam* the king of Judah:

“And Jeroboam said in his heart, ‘Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD [YHVH] at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.’

“Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’

“And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.” (I Kings 12:26-30)

Not only did *Yarovam* set up the two golden calves (one in the far north and the other in the south of the kingdom of Israel, not far from Jerusalem), he also had the audacity to change the time of the Festival of *Sukkot*, and institute an illegitimate priesthood:

“Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.” (I Kings 12:32-33)

Seeing what was happening in the land of Israel, the Priests and Levites left their homes in the cities that had been set aside for them by God, and moved to the territory of *Y’hudah* and *Binyamin*:

“And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him [Rechavam]. For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD [YHVH].” (II Chron. 11:13-14)

In place of the Priests and Levites who had been ordained by God, *Yarovam* took it upon himself to appoint other men to fill their offices in Israel:

“Then he [Jeroboam] appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made.” (II Chron. 11:15)

From the very beginning, the House of Israel was given over to an idolatrous form of worship. Israel’s national religion was, what is called, syncretistic. That means it blended false pagan worship into true worship. Because of this blending, *Yarovam* could claim (as we just saw in I Kings 12:29) that the

golden calf was the very god who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt.

~ The Faithful Flee ~

Not all the of the common people in Israel pursued idolatry. When the faithful ones saw the pagan practices becoming a state religion, and the movement of the legitimate Priests and Levites to Judah, many Israelites followed their example:

“And after the Levites left, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD [YHVH] God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.”

(II Chron. 11:14-17)

Because of this influx from the northern kingdom, the House of Judah became a strong nation, even though they were originally composed of only two tribes.

In addition, it must be remembered that the tribe of *Shim’on* was scattered among all of the other tribes from the very beginning. As we saw previously, many of the people of that tribe were already settled in the territory of *Y’hudah*:

“The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.” (Joshua 19:9)

However, for the purpose of reckoning the tribal divisions, *Shim’on* was included in the count with the House of Israel, since many of them were also scattered throughout the northern kingdom as well, based on the prophecy given by *Ya’acov*:

**“Simeon and Levi are brothers;
Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.
Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.
Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.”**

(Gen. 49:5-7)

Thus we can see, that from the beginning of the dividing of the Monarchy, clear cut divisions did not exist between the tribes. Certainly the vast majority of *Y’hudah*, *Binyamin*, and *Levi* dwelt in the south, in the Kingdom of Judah. However, the House of Judah also included a large number of *Shim’on* plus a remnant of those faithful to Temple worship from among all of the northern tribes.

On the other hand, it can be assumed that at least a few of the Priests and Levites stayed in their homes in the north and eventually assimilated into Israelite culture. In addition, it is generally assumed, by Biblical scholars, that not all of *Binyamin* remained loyal to the Kingdom of Judah, but that

many of them attached themselves to the Kingdom of Israel. After all, the territory of *Binyamin* lay between *Y'hudah* and *Efrayim*, so they could have easily gone either way.

Many of the personal decisions on what to do when the division occurred would be based upon family, land, and religious ties. If a family were inclined to be idolatrous, they would probably have gone to the north. As we have seen, those who were loyal to Temple worship went south. However, a good number with idolatrous tendencies must have stayed in the Kingdom of Judah, for later on they had the very same kinds of religious problems as did the House of Israel; in fact, Judah eventually became worse than Israel:

“Then the LORD [YHVH] said to me, ‘Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.’”
(Jer. 3:11)

~ The Wayward Kingdom ~

The history of the Kingdom of Israel is not a pretty one from the standpoint of faithfulness to God. Nevertheless, it existed for over two hundred years, proving that God is very patient and that He gives people adequate time to change their ways.

Halley's Bible Handbook lists all of the kings of Israel and Judah and rates them according to their righteousness in following the *Torah*. Halley's analysis of the Scriptures led him to make the following statement:

“Every one of the 19 kings of the Northern Kingdom followed the worship of the Golden Calf. Some of them also served Baal. But not one ever attempted to bring the people back to God.” (p. 193)

Halley's analysis of the Kingdom of Judah is not much better, even though a few of the kings did in fact renew right worship in Jerusalem. However, every time they returned to God, when the next king took power they invariably slipped back into pagan practices:

“...though most of the kings served Idols, and walked in the evil ways of the kings of Israel; some of Judah's kings served God, and at times there were great reformatations in Judah. On the whole, however, in spite of the repeated warnings, Judah sank lower and lower in the horrible practices of Baal worship and other Canaanite religions, till there was no remedy.” (p. 193)

Despite God's repeated warnings, the Kingdom of Israel refused to change their ways and return to a proper form of worship. During the times when the Kingdom of Judah returned to true worship, men from the Kingdom of Israel who had a love for God would move to the southern kingdom. One such instance was when king *Asa* of Judah began removing the idols which had been set up in the south. At that time the kingdom of Judah also held some of the territory of southern Ephraim:

“And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD [YHVH]

that was before the vestibule of the LORD [YHVH]. Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD [YHVH] his God was with him.”
(II Chron. 15:8-9)

Here we see that a ‘great number’ of men from *Efrayim*, *M'nasheh*, and *Shim'on* came to the kingdom of Judah so they could serve God properly in worship. It is safe to assume that at least some of their descendants remained with the House of Judah and later became known to the world as Jews.

~ Patience Runs Out ~

Elijah prophesied to the northern kingdom during the reign of king *Ahab*, as did the prophet *Elisha* who followed him. Among the prophets whose writings are found in Scripture, *Amos* and *Hosea* are the ones who gave the most extensive prophecies concerning the northern kingdom. *Isaiah* was primarily considered to be a prophet to Judah, although he also had much to say about Israel. In any event, the kingdom of Israel could not say that they had not been warned, for many prophets were sent to the northern tribes in an effort by God to get them to change their ways. But, finally, God's patience with the Kingdom of Israel ran out.

The instrument which God used to chastise the House of Israel was the nation of Assyria. When Assyria first began to flex their muscle, the kings of Israel acquiesced by paying them tribute money in order to be left in peace:

“Pul king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. And Menahem [king of Israel] exacted the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land.”
(II Kings 15:19-20)

In due time, tribute was not enough. During the reign of *Pekah*, king of Israel, Assyria began to pick off pieces of their land:

“In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria.”
(II Kings 15:29)

Here is the first indication of the type of captivity the Assyrians placed upon their captors. They not only conquered the land, they also removed the inhabitants (at least the ones they could find) and transported them to other places. Historical records indicate this was the method of operation whenever Assyria conquered another country.

The area which was taken during the reign of *Pekah* was in the north, especially the region of the Galilee, but also territory on the east side of the Jordan River.

“So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He carried

the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day. (I Chron. 5:26)

Meanwhile, Assyria was harassing the Kingdom of Judah as well, but even though they wrecked great havoc on Judah, they were never able to completely conquer them or take the city of Jerusalem. That task was left to the Babylonians and it would take place over one hundred years later.

The end of the Kingdom of Israel was now in sight. King *Pekah* reigned about twenty years and was followed by the last king of Israel, *Hosea*, who ruled for nine years until the captivity of the House of Israel was complete:

“Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute money.” (II Kings 17:3)

Apparently *Hosea* thought he could wiggle out of his financial obligations to *Shalmaneser* of Assyria by making an agreement with Egypt, one of Assyria’s enemies:

“And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.” (II Kings 17:4)

The Kingdom of Israel did not fall immediately. It took three years of siege against the capitol city of Samaria before the last remnants of resistance were overcome by the Assyrians:

“Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” (II Kings 17:5-6)

Just before the final captivity of the House of Israel took place, a revival was begun in Judah by king *Hezekiah* who came to power in the third year of king *Hosea*’s reign in Israel:

“Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. ... And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD [YHVH], according to all that his father David had done.” (II Kings 18:1,3)

King *Hezekiah* of Judah proceeded to clean up the spiritual mess that existed in Judah at that time:

“He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the LORD [YHVH]; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD [YHVH] had commanded Moses. The LORD [YHVH] was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.” (II Kings 18:4-7)

As a result of this strong stand for righteousness, once again many from the kingdom of Israel joined their Judean brethren in destroying the idols found in the land:

“Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the sacred pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the high places and the altars -- from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh -- until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession.”

(II Chron. 31:1)

Not only that, many from the House of Israel came to Judah to celebrate Passover:

“And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD [YHVH] at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel. So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD [YHVH] God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner.

“Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: ‘Children of Israel, return to the LORD [YHVH] God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. And do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the LORD [YHVH] God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation, as you see. Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD [YHVH]; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD [YHVH] your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. For if you return to the LORD [YHVH], your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD [YHVH] your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.’” (II Chron. 30:1, 5-9)

Most of the people in the kingdom of Israel rejected the appeal, but there were some who responded positively:

“So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them. Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.” (II Chron. 30:10-11)

However, there was a problem with *Hezekiah*’s plan. The people of Israel had not kept the Festival of *Pesach* properly for such a long time they did not know how to present themselves in a ritually clean state so they could legally eat of the Passover:

“For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was

written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, ‘May the good LORD [YHVH] provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD [YHVH] God of his fathers, though *he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.*’

“And the LORD [YHVH] listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.” (II Chron 30:18-20)

Here we see God giving all of those Israelites, with willing hearts, the opportunity to return to true worship just prior to when disaster is about to fall. This was the nation’s last chance to repent and return to God’s ways before being punished for their national sin of idolatry.

Today there is another call going out from the Hebraic roots movement to the Believer’s in Jesus (*Y’shua* under His Greek/English name) to return to the ways of God -- to learn again the old paths which God established for His people, the children of Israel:

“Thus says the LORD [YHVH]:

‘Stand in the ways and see,

And ask for the old paths, where the good way is,

And walk in it;

Then you will find rest for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)

~ Captivity ~

It was shortly after this Passover event took place that the remainder of the nation of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians. All of the people who could be found were removed from the land and, according to both Scripture and historical records, never returned:

“Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is*, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

“Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD [YHVH] their God, but transgressed His covenant *and all that Moses the servant of the LORD [YHVH] had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them.*” (II Kings 18:9-12)

The people were moved to an area at the northern and eastern ends of the Assyrian Empire, far away from the Promised Land.

The reasons given for the demise of the Kingdom of Israel are listed in II Kings 17:7-23. They are chiefly sins of idolatry and the worship of false gods, instead of following the commandments of God:

“For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, until the LORD [YHVH] removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.” (II Kings 17:22-23)

It is clear from this passage that, as of the time of the writing of the book of II Kings, the House of Israel had not yet returned to the land. According to Talmudic tradition, the books of I and II Kings were written by Jeremiah (who lived over one hundred years after the captivity of Israel) during the time the Kingdom of Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians.

This same phraseology was used in the book of I Chronicles relative to the captivity of the Israelites who had lived east of the Jordan River:

“So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.” (I Chron. 5:26)

According to Talmudic tradition, the books of I and II Chronicles, were written by Ezra. If this is true, then we have Scriptural authority stating that Israel was still in captivity in the northern and eastern reaches of what was, by that time, known as the Babylonian Empire. Thus, their whereabouts was still known some two hundred years after they had been taken out of the land of Israel.

It is fairly safe to assume that not every man, women, and child remaining in the region of the House of Israel was taken captive. Some, when they saw what was taking place, would have undoubtedly fled to the Kingdom of Judah for refuge. Others may have successfully hid themselves in caves, or the forested portions of the mountains, and thereby continued to exist in the land even after the general deportation had taken place. As we have already seen, numerous people from the House of Israel did migrate to the kingdom of Judah over the years, primarily those who wanted to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Thus, a remnant of the House of Israel could always be found within the House of Judah., even from the time of the division of the monarchy.

~ The Samaritans ~

Another group of people, with whom a remnant of the House of Israel may have assimilated, were the Samaritans. They were foreign people groups who, like the House of Israel, were taken from their homelands and transported, in mass, to Israel to populate the land which was left desolate:

“Then the king of Assyria brought *people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.*” (II Kings 17:24)

These people were pagan to the core and initially had difficulty in their new homeland:

“And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that they did not fear the LORD [YHVH]; therefore the LORD [YHVH] sent lions among them, which killed some of them.*” (II Kings 17:25)

Their pagan solution to this immediate problem was to try and find out something about the ‘gods’ of the land to which they had been brought:

“So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, ‘The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land.’

“Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, ‘Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land.’

“Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD [YHVH].”

(II Kings 15:26-28)

Once again we see a veiled reference to the syncretistic habits of the House of Israel being brought over into the worship of the Samaritans. For even though the House of Israel had *Torah* instruction, they also had golden calf worship and Baal worship, mixing some truth in with their errors. This is exactly what we see in the Samaritans doing.

It is quite probable that the state religion of the Kingdom of Israel (and the Samaritan worship which was patterned after it) was based on worship similar to the golden calf worship which took place at Mount Sinai, a mixture of *Torah* instruction along with the images of the golden calf being used to represent the supposed image of God. This was, of course, expressly forbidden by God:

“You shall not make anything to be with Me -- gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.”

(Ex. 20:23)

Centuries later, the Samaritan religion evolved to require observance of the *Torah*. This development was a result of a Levitical High Priest from Judah bringing the religion of the Jews to the Samaritans. During the time of *Y’shua HaMashiach* (Yeh-shoe’-ah = Jesus, Hah Mah-she-ahck’ = the Messiah), Samaritans could become full-fledged members of the Jewish religion by simply renouncing sacrifice on Mount Gerizim (their holy site for sacrifice), being immersed, and bringing a proper sacrifice to the Temple at Jerusalem -- for the men were already physically circumcised. The Samaritans already understood the *Torah*, for it was the basis of their religion at that time. Therefore, they did not have to undergo a lengthy training period as did the other Gentiles.

Apparently the first Samaritans had a certain amount of Godly fear, but it was not mixed with proper understanding, as it is written:

“So they feared the LORD [YHVH], and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. They feared the LORD [YHVH], yet served their own gods -- according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.” (II Kings 17:32-33)

Notice the Scriptures state that these people feared the LORD (YHVH). Yet in the very next verse it seems to say just the opposite:

“To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD [YHVH], nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD [YHVH] had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel, ...”

(II Kings 17:34)

While the Samaritans did ‘fear’ God and wanted to follow the religion of the land, their problem was, in all probability, the Israelite ‘priest’ who had been sent to them by the king of Assyria, for he did not know how to worship properly either. This false ‘priest’ would not have been from the tribe of Levi, but would have come from one of the other tribes:

“He [Jeroboam] made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.” (I Kings 12:31)

Thus it is evident that the Samaritans had a bit of *Torah* truth, but they mixed it with a lot of pagan error; a practice that is abhorrent to God. Religiously speaking, this made them just like the House of Israel whom they replaced in the land.

~ A Remnant Returns ~

The last portions of the kingdom of *Yisrael* fell into the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BCE, with the capture of the capitol city, Samaria. About one hundred years later the Chaldeans conquered the Assyrian Empire and established the Babylonian Empire. Then the Babylonians began their own imperialistic conquering. About 600 BCE they began a campaign against the kingdom of *Y’hudah*, which culminated with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of *Shlomo’s* Temple in 586 BCE.

The Babylonians did not take entire populations captive in the manner of the Assyrians. Instead they left the common people in the conquered land and moved all of the upper classes to Babylon. Thus, all the members of the royal house, the Priests and Levites, and the rich landowners and merchants were taken captive and moved physically to Babylon.

However, it was not God’s intention to remove forever the House of Judah from the promised land. After a seventy year captivity the Jews in Babylon (taken captive from the House of Judah) were allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of the city and the Temple. This work was done over a period of years by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

While in Babylon, the Jewish captives may have come into contact with a remnant of the House of Israel who had moved there after the Assyrians had been destroyed. It may have been a few members of this remnant that returned with the Babylonian Jews to help in the rebuilding of the Temple:

“So all Israel was recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they were inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel. But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. And the first inhabitants who dwelt in their possessions in their cities were Israelites, priests, Levites, and the Nethinim. Now in Jerusalem the children

of Judah dwelt, and some of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh:"

(I Chron. 9:1-3)

The House of Judah was never made up purely of people from the Tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. There were always faithful members from all the tribes who lived in Judea and worshipped at the Temple.

~ The Tribes in the New Testament ~

References to individuals from the 'Lost' tribes of Israel are scant in the New Testament record. However, it is clear that people did exist in the first century who were from tribes other than *Y'hudah* and *Levi*. One such person was an aged woman who was at the Temple worshipping when the infant *Y'shua* was brought there by His parents:

"Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. ... And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

(Luke 2:36, 38)

The only other direct reference to an individual being a member of one of the specific tribes is the case of *Shaul* (Shaw-ool' = Saul or the Apostle Paul). *Shaul* states twice that he was from the tribe of *Binyamin*:

"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

(Rom. 11:1)

In addition to these two specific references, there are a number references to the 'house of Israel' that can be found in the New Testament. The first of these is from *Y'shua* Himself, when He sent out His disciples on a brief missionary journey instructing them:

"These twelve Jesus [*Y'shua*] sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

(Matt. 10:5-6)

A few verses later, *Y'shua* gives what seems to be a prophetic instruction to His disciples:

"When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

(Matt. 10:23)

Then there is the case of the Canaanite woman who came to *Y'shua* seeking healing for her demon-possessed daughter. At first *Y'shua* declined to help her saying:

"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

(Matt. 15:4)

Y'shua also spoke of a time in the future when all of the tribes of Israel would be together in the Kingdom:

"So Jesus [*Y'shua*] said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also

sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

(Matt. 19:28)

The followers of *Y'shua* did not proclaim Him to be the King of *Y'hudah*, they always referred to Him as the King of Israel, possibly indicating a belief that eventually all twelve tribes would be reunited:

"The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: 'Hosanna! "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD [YHVH]!" "The King of Israel!"'"

(John 12:12-13)

At the time of His ascension into heaven, the last question the disciples asked *Yeshua* was not when He would come and restore the kingdom to Judah, but when He would come and restore the kingdom to Israel:

"Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'"

(Acts 1:6)

Shaul (the Apostle Paul) spoke about a time when not just Judah, but all Israel would be saved:

"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.'"

(Rom. 11:26-27)

The half-brother of *Y'shua*, whom we commonly know as James (his real name was *Ya'acov* or Jacob), wrote his epistle:

"To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings."

(James 1:1b)

Ya'acov seems to indicate that he knew where all twelve tribes were dwelling when he wrote this letter.

Finally, the Apostle Paul when he stood before king Agrippa to defend himself against the charges brought by the Jewish nonbelievers, spoke of the twelve tribes as though they all still existed:

"To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain."

(Acts 26:7)

~ Summary ~

From the perspective of Old Testament Biblical history, the captivity of the Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians ended the story of House of Israel. However, this is not the end of the story, for we have not even touched on the many prophecies which speak of a marvelous future for the House of Israel and her people. Somewhere on this earth people exist who are the physical descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzhak*, and *Ya'acov*, but who do not know their real identity.

Many theories have been put forth concerning these 'Lost' Tribes of the House of Israel and numerous people groups have claimed to be a part, or even all of those descendants. However, as Winston Churchill would have said: "It is a mystery wrapped in an enigma," despite all of the tantalizing clues offered in the Prophetic Scriptures.

- ◆ Chiang-Min of Tibet
- ◆ Khazars
- ◆ Karaites
- ◆ Samaritans
- ◆ Berbers of North Africa
- ◆ Shindai tribe of Japan
- ◆ Various American Indian groups.

One group of people have actually been recognized by the Chief Rabbis of Israel as being a remnant of the 'lost' tribe of *Menashe* (Meh-nah-shay' = Manasseh). They are known as the *Shinlung* tribe and they live in the northeast corner of India. The *Shinlung* migrated to their present location after many years of wandering throughout the east. The native peoples of the area in which they live refer to them as "lu-Si," Which some say means "Ten Tribes." Some members of the *Shinlung* tribe have been accorded the right of return to Israel and have made *aliyah* (ah'-lee-yah = going up) or immigration to Israel as Jews.

~ The Dispersion of Judah ~

Because God divorced the House of Israel, their national identity has been lost among the Gentile nations of the world. However, that is not the case with the House of Judah. No where in Scripture can a statement be found stipulating that God divorced the House of Judah the way He did with the House of Israel.

Although there have been exceptions, the vast majority of people who are from the House of Judah know they are Jewish. Jews can be found in practically every nation on the face of the earth. Several years ago, a large contingent of black Jews, known as *Falashas*, were airlifted from Ethiopia to Israel in order to take them out of harms way during intense civil strife. Due to intermarriage with native tribes, the color of the *Falashas* skin has darkened, but they are every bit as Jewish as those who migrated to Europe and had their skins lightened through intermarriage with Caucasian peoples.

Recently, the *Lemba*, a black African tribe with a tradition of being Jewish, were given the Aaronic DNA test* to determine if any of their men might be descended from *Ahron* (Ah ha-rohn' = Aaron) the first High Priest. Over fifty percent of the *Lemba* males tested as being physical descendants of *Ahron*.

There may be a large number of people of Jewish descent in Mexico and Central and South America. It is a historical fact that king Ferdinand and queen Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain in 1492, the very same year that Columbus set sail and rediscovered the Americas. It is believed that the New World became a refuge for many of the Jewish people who had nowhere else to go. It is also believed that many of the Spanish names which end in the letter "Z" may well be of Jewish origin, however this cannot be taken as positive proof that one is actually Jewish.

* A DNA test has been developed which can determine if men are directly descended from *Ahron* through their male line. Such men carry an identical Y chromosome.

~ *British-Israel* ~

Another theory that has gained some acceptance in the English speaking world, is commonly referred to as *British-Israelism*. This teaching began in the 17th century, although it was not known under this term until about two centuries later. In short, the *British-Israel* theory teaches that the British people (and other Caucasians of northwestern Europe) are physical descendants of the 'lost' ten tribes of Israel.

There was another early teaching that had wide acceptance among the Puritans who first settled in Massachusetts. While they did not claim to be physical descendants of the House of Israel (they believed those people to be somewhere in Asia), the Puritans did believe that the American colonies were the 'New Israel.'

The first *British-Israel* teacher in England was Richard Brothers (1757-1824). He believed that God had given him a divine mission to lead the Jews back to Palestine and that he was a direct descendant of the House of king David.

The actual *British-Israel* movement began with a teacher named John Wilson (d. 1871). He published a book entitled; *Lectures on Our Israelitish Origin*. Wilson attempted to demonstrate that the lost tribes had migrated from the Middle East to Europe. He did this by finding words in different languages which sounded the same. For example:

- ◆ British = *Brit Ish*, which is Hebrew for "Covenant Man."
- ◆ Saxon = "Isaac's Sons."
- ◆ Denmark = "Dan's Mark"
- ◆ Juteland = "Jews Land." (Juteland is the peninsula of Denmark.

This technique is still used today by a number of writers such as Yair Davidy, an Orthodox Jew living in Israel, who has published several books on the subject.

John Wilson was the first to teach that the main body of English people were descended from the tribe of *Efrayim* (Ehf-rye-eem' = Ephraim) and the United States was primarily *Menashe*.

~ *British-Israel* Teaching Comes to America ~

In the 1870's a Congregational Church pastor in Brooklyn, named Joseph Wild, began teaching *British-Israel* theory in the United States. Numerous men picked up the teaching. One of the most influential was J.H. Allen (1847-1930) who wrote a classic book on the subject called *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*. It was this book which greatly influenced Herbert W. Armstrong, leader of the Worldwide Church of God, and led to his writing *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. Many of today's teachers on this subject have been directly influenced by Armstrong's writings and thereby also by J.H. Allen.

~ The Position of the Jews in the *British-Israel* Theory ~

In classic *British-Israel* teaching, it was taught that the Jews were brothers of the Lost Tribes and that those who called themselves Jews were from the House of Judah. This was true of the teachings of both Allen and Armstrong. However, later on certain teachers and religious sects began to pervert this early teaching by claiming that those people we know today as being Jews are not really descendants of the House of Judah but are "impostors." This has led to what might be called 'the dark side' of *British-Israel* teaching.

~ Perversions of *British-Israel* Theory ~

It must be remembered that for every true teaching, *HaSatan* (Hah Sah-tahn' = Satan, the Adversary) has a counterfeit. Like most Biblical and historical teaching, not every last piece of information that has been taught by the *British-Israel* teachers is totally factual. However, we believe that much of it is based upon good historical evidence. Nevertheless, the truths of *British-Israel* teaching have been so grossly twisted by some, that it often discredits (in the minds of some) those portions which are based upon correct understanding.

One of the first men to pervert *British-Israel* teaching was Reuben H. Sawyer, an Oregon clergyman who was involved with the *Ku Klux Klan* in the early 1920's. He began to teach that the Jews were not from the House of Judah, but were made up of "objectionable Jews" who are not really descended from Judah at all but are from "mongrel" races. In Sawyer's view (as with many who followed him) the mixed race line of the Lost Ten Tribes somehow becomes the 'pure' blood line, while the much more racially pure line of the Jews is called 'impure.'

The 1920's and 1930's saw a dramatic rise in anti-Semitism both in Europe and America. The flames of this disease were fanned by the radical leader of Germany, Adolph Hitler, and by numerous demagogues in the United States and other countries. After World War II, the more virulent strains of anti-Semitism were quenched as a result of the horrors of the Holocaust. However, a stubborn underground of anti-Semitism found a new outlet within a radical element of fundamentalist Christianity. Some of the doctrines of this new movement within fundamental, right-wing, Christianity were views such as:

- ◆ Believing that Judeo-Christian history is divided into various ages or dispensations and that currently the world is in the Age of Grace.
- ◆ That the 'True' Christian Church has replaced the Jews as God's Chosen people (Replacement Theology).
- ◆ That Jews are the targets of wrath from both God and Satan.
- ◆ That the white, Anglo-Saxon people of northwestern Europe, the British Isles (including its white English speaking commonwealth nations), and the United States, are the pure race of the Lost ten Tribes of Israel and that they are now the 'Chosen' of God.

- ◆ That the Jews are rejected by God and are now a mongrel race.

~ The Ultimate Perversion of the *British-Israel* Theory ~

Some even go so far as to teach what is called the 'Satan's Seed' doctrine. In this extreme view the Jews (and often times Blacks as well) are said to be descended from Cain rather than Seth. In addition, some also teach that Cain was not fathered by Adam, but by *HaSatan* himself. There is an easy way to disprove the idea that *HaSatan* fathered Cain, for the Scriptures state unequivocally that Adam was his father:

"Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, 'I have acquired a man from the LORD [YHVH].'"
(Gen. 4:1)

Still others teach that the modern day Jews are really descended from Esau, rather than from Judah, and that all the 'true' Jews became followers of 'Jesus' in the first century. In this teaching, the only ones left who call themselves Jews today are those who are descended from Esau. (It must again be pointed out that the original *British-Israel* teachers all looked upon the Jewish people as brothers, not as adversaries and members of a foreign race.) The idea that the Jews who rejected *Y'shua* were descended from Esau is also easily refuted:

"He [*Y'shua*] came to His own [the people of Judah or the Jews], and His own did not receive Him." (John 1:11)

If the people who rejected *Y'shua* were really Edomites (descendants of Esau), then it stands to reason that *Y'shua* must have been an Edomite as well. This, of course, was not the case:

"For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood."
(Heb. 7:14)

Y'shua was a Jew from the tribe of Judah, and those who were "His own" and rejected Him were also Jews. Of course, thousands of Jews did accept Him as the Messiah:

"And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ...'"
(Acts 21:20)

Thus today, the original *British-Israel* teaching often takes a bum rap because of those who have perverted the original teaching into racist anti-Semitism in its worst form.

~ A New Approach ~

Beginning in the late 1990s, a new approach to these teachings has been expounded by writers such as Batya Wooten (in her book *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know*) and Eddie Chumney (*Restoring the Two Houses of Israel*), as well as a number of other "Two House" or "Two Stick" teachers. In their works, Wooten and Chumney lay forth the position that the physical descendants of *Avraham* (Ahv'-rah-hahm = Abraham), *Yitzhak* (Yeets'-sock = Isaac), and *Ya'acov* (Yah

ah'-cove = Jacob) may be far more widespread among the peoples of the world than just those of Anglo-Saxon stock. In fact, the "seed of Abraham" may, by this time, have become nearly universal.

The basis for this idea lies in how one interprets an early passage in Genesis:

**"I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be
blessed."** (Gen. 12:3)

Eddie Chumney interprets this crucial verse as follows:

"In Hebrew, the phrase in Genesis (*Bereishit*) 12:3 that reads in English as "*And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*" is written:

"Ve nivrecu bekah kol mishpachot ha-adamah."

"The Hebrew word '*nivrecu*' is translated in most English texts as '*be blessed*.' However, the usual Hebrew word for '*be blessed*' is not *nivrecu*. It is *yivrecu*. The word '*nivrecu*' is the 'niph'al' conjugation of the Hebrew word, *barak*. The Hebrew word *barak* has a deeper meaning than just 'blessed.' The simplest Hebrew meaning of the word *barak* is blessing which invokes the G-d of Israel's presence, favor or choice in a given situation. Jewish prayers (*house of Judah*) begin with the phrase, '*Baruk atah Adonai...*' which in English is '*Blessed are you, LORD...*' and reflects the idea that 'blessed' is related to being 'chosen' or 'favored' by the G-d of Israel.

"In five places in the Talmud and other Rabbinic literature, *nivrecu* is translated as '**grafted** or intermingled.' In the Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Tenakh Series*, Volume 1, page 432, it is written:

"There is ... an opinion shared by *Rashbam* [to Genesis 28:14], *Chizkuni*, *Da'as Zekeinim*, and quoted by *Tur* that the verb (*ve nivrecu*) in Genesis 12:3 is related to the root *barak* as in the Mishnaic term *mavreek* meaning to 'intermingle or **graft**.' [cf Kelaim 7:1, Sotah 43a.] As Heidenheim explains it, this interpretation is inspired by the fact that nowhere else besides here do we find *barak* in the sense of blessing in the niph'al conjugation, while in the sense of '**grafting**' it is common in that form."

"Therefore, based upon this insight of the Hebrew language by respected Hebrew scholars within the *house of Judah* (Judaism), Genesis (*Bereishit*) 12:3 is better understood to be translated as:

*'And in thee shall all families of the earth nivrecu [will be **grafted** or intermingled].'*

The only PHYSICAL way ALL FAMILIES of the earth would be *nivrecu* (**grafted** or intermingled) is by the seed of Abraham (*Avraham*) being assimilated into EVERY FAMILY of the earth."

(pp. 438-439 *Restoring the Two Houses of Israel*, [author's emphasis]).

~ Does *Nivrecu* Fly? ~

Shaul (Paul) teaches that all Believer's are of the seed of *Avraham*:

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*]. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ [*Messiah*] have put on Christ [*Messiah*]. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*]. And if you are Christ's [*Messiah's*], then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:26-29)

This passage is almost universally understood to mean that when one is immersed (baptized) into *Messiah Y'shua*, they become *Avraham's* seed spiritually. However, it might also be understood to mean that the very fact that a 'Gentile' becomes a Believer in *Y'shua* proves that he is the physical seed or descendant of *Avraham*.

The assumption behind the *Nivrecu* Theory is that all (or nearly all) people who are Believer's in *Y'shua HaMashiach*, are very likely not only the spiritual descendants of *Avraham*, but his physical descendants as well. The question that must be asked is: does this theory have a leg to stand upon, or is it all just wishful thinking?

This issue has turned into a great debate in the Messianic community, with people actually being asked to leave congregations if they take an opposing view from that of the leadership. Far better, we should learn to disagree without becoming disagreeable.

~ Genealogical Evidence ~

The May 2002 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine contains an interesting article on genealogy. The writer, Steve Olson, is not a genealogist himself, but has done some family research and is quite familiar with the procedures involved in tracing one's family tree.

During a visit to Ireland (one of the countries of his ancestry) Olson met a computer scientist and genealogist at Dublin City University named Mark Humphrys. One of the discoveries Humphrys made in his research was that:

"Whenever a reliable family tree was available, almost anyone of European ancestry turned out to be descended from English royalty -- even such unlikely people as Hermann Goring and Daniel Boone. Humphrys began to think that such descent was the rule rather than the exception in the Western world, even if relatively few people had the documents to demonstrate it." (p. 62)

It is interesting to note that if one is descended from English royalty, they might also be descended from king David of Israel, for the royal family has genealogical charts showing their ancestry all the way back to David and further on to *Adam*.

~ Mathematical Evidence ~

According to Eliezer Shulman, in his book, *The Sequence of Events in the Old Testament*, *Avraham* was born in the year 1948 from creation (approximately 2050 BCE). His son of promise, *Yitzhak*, was born one hundred years later in 2048 from creation (approximately 1950 BCE). This places the birth of *Yitzhak* some 3950 years from the present time. Using 25 years as a generation means that today we are 158 generations removed from *Avraham*. Using 40 years per generation, still removes us nearly 100 generations.

The number of ancestors for any single person increases exponentially with each generation (two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, etc. -- see *Abraham's Math Chart* on pages 30-31). Going back only 40 generations yields a potential of over one trillion direct ancestors for a single individual. This number far exceeds the total number of people who have ever lived on the earth since the beginning of time.* With such immense numbers involved, it should come as no surprise that we are all more closely related than might have been imagined. Steve Olson continues his article:

"The idea that virtually anyone with a European ancestor descends from English royalty seems bizarre, but it accords perfectly with some recent research done by Joseph Chang, a statistician at Yale University.' ...

"In a 1999 paper titled 'Recent Common Ancestors of All Present-Day Individuals,' Chang showed how to reconcile the potentially huge number of our ancestors with the quantities of people who actually lived in the past. ... Under the conditions laid out in his paper, the most recent common ancestor of every European today (except for recent immigrants to the Continent) was someone who lived in Europe in the surprisingly recent past -- only about 600 years ago. In other words, all Europeans alive today have among their ancestors the same man or woman who lived around 1400." (pp. 63-64)

The mathematical model developed by Chang contains one assumption that can change this seemingly incredible fact. It assumes that every person in Europe, over this six hundred year period, could potentially marry any other person (of the opposite sex) in Europe. According to Olson:

"These departures from randomness must push back somewhat the date of Europeans' most recent common ancestor." (p. 64)

However, there has been a great "churning" of the peoples of the world over the last several hundred years, as European civilization spread around the world during the Age of Discovery.

"This constant churning of people makes it possible to apply Chang's analysis to the world as a whole. For example, almost everyone in the New World must be

* Current estimates show approximately six billion living on earth, the largest number ever recorded as far as we know, although it is possible the earth contained a population figure in the billions just prior to the Flood.

descended from English royalty -- even people of predominantly African or Native American ancestry, because of the long history of intermarriage in the Americas." (p. 64)

Olson's conclusion to the matter is that:

"... the most common ancestor of all six billion people on earth today probably lived just a couple of thousand years ago." (p. 64)

Avraham lived nearly four thousand years ago. Surely, if this statistical model is anywhere near correct, every person on earth could conceivably be descended from him, just as the *Nivrecu* Theory suggests. Equally possible is the theory that every person on earth could be descended from the twelve sons of *Ya'acov*, the progenitors of the children of Israel.

~ Grafted In ~

If all of this is true, then why do the 'Gentiles' need to be "grafted in" to the Olive Tree of Israel, for it would seem they were already a part of the Olive Tree through intermarriage:

"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew." (Rom. 11:1-2a)

Yet, a few verses later, *Shaul* does say that some of Israel has been "cast away" while a remnant of faithful ones has been retained:

"I say then, have they [*Israel*] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are my flesh and save some of them*. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit *is holy, the lump is also holy*; and if the root *is holy, so are the branches*."

(Rom. 11:11-16)

The "casting away" of Israel is only a temporary phenomena so that the world as a whole can be "reconciled." What can this possibly mean? Could it have anything to do with the 'casting away' of the House of Israel through a written bill of divorcement? Is it possible that the salvation of the Gentiles might have something to do with the temporary 'casting away' of the House of Israel some 750 years before the time of *Shaul*?

In Isaiah chapter five, the children of Israel are likened to a vineyard that was planted with much hope and promise, but which failed to produce good fruit:

**"Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:
My Well-beloved has a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.
He dug it up and cleared out its stones,**

And planted it with the choicest vine.
 He built a tower in its midst,
 And also made a winepress in it;
 So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
 But it brought forth wild grapes.

'And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men
 of Judah,
 Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.
 What more could have been done to My vineyard
 That I have not done in it?
 Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth
good grapes,
 Did it bring forth wild grapes?
 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My
 vineyard:
 I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;
 And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled
 down.
 I will lay it waste;
 It shall not be pruned or dug,
 But there shall come up briars and thorns.
 I will also command the clouds
 That they rain no rain on it.'

For the vineyard of the LORD [YHVH] of hosts
is the house of Israel,
 And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.
 He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;
 For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help."

(Isa. 5:1-7)

Both the House of Israel and the House of Judah failed to live up to the expectations and hopes which were invested in them when God called them out of Egypt. They brought forth 'wild grapes' instead of 'good fruit.' Because of their wickedness, God sent both houses into captivity:

"Therefore my people have gone into captivity,
 Because *they have no knowledge*;
 Their honorable men *are* famished,
 And their multitude dried up with thirst." (Isa. 5:13)

Isaiah wrote his prophecies from about 740 to 680 BCE. Thus, his ministry began eighteen years prior to the captivity of the House of Israel and extended nearly forty years after that event.

Meanwhile, the House of Judah was not taken captive until nearly one hundred years after the time of Isaiah. As of this date the House of Israel has not yet returned to the land from its captivity, although there are most certainly a remnant in Israel who are descended from the northern ten tribes. The House of Judah, on the other hand, was not only sent into captivity and returned (during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah), they were dispersed among the nations a second time, after the destruction of the Second Temple. They began returning from that dispersion in the late nineteenth century, which culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 CE.

Nevertheless, the House of Israel will yet return to the land, along with those of the House of Judah who are still in the Diaspora:

"He will lift up a banner [*nissi*] to the nations from
 afar,
 And will whistle to them from the end of the earth;
 Surely they shall come with speed, swiftly." (Isa. 5:26)

What is the 'banner' that will be lifted up to the nations when God 'whistles for Israel'? That banner is none other than the Messiah:

"And in that day there shall be a Root
 of Jesse [*Messiah*],
 Who shall stand as a banner [*nissi*] to the people;
 For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
 And His resting place shall be glorious.'

It shall come to pass in that day
 That the LORD [YHVH] shall set His hand again the
second time
 To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
 From Assyria and Egypt,
 From Pathros and Cush,
 From Elam and Shinar,
 From Hamath and the islands of the sea.
 He will set up a banner [*nissi*] for the nations,
 And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
 And gather together the dispersed of Judah
 From the four corners of the earth." (Isa. 11:10-12)

Returning now to Romans chapter 11, we are better able to understand that at least a portion of the 'Gentiles' who are grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel were actually the very ones who were descended from the House of Israel and the House of Judah who had previously been cut out and cast away:

"For if their [*Houses of Israel and Judah*] being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance *be* but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also holy; and if the root *is* holy [*set apart*], so *are* the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*"

(Rom. 11:15-18)

Today, the descendants of the House of Israel and even some of the descendants of the House of Judah do not know that they are of the seed of *Avraham*. They believe themselves to be Gentiles. Yet in reality, many of them may very well be descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov*.

The full restoration will occur when God removes all of the sins of His people Israel:

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

'The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
 And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
 For this *is* My covenant with them,

When I take away their sins.'

"Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Rom. 11:25-29)

God called Israel to be a nation of priests -- His chosen people. He cannot and will not renege on that promise:

""And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Ex. 19:6)

Even though the children of Israel did not live up to their end of the bargain (to obey every word of God) He has still promised to uphold His end of the bargain:

""But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD [YHVH]: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (Jer. 31:33)

**"And they sang a new song, saying:
'You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth."** (Rev. 5:9-10)

"Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [Messiah], and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6)

~ God's Promises to the House of Israel ~

The book of Hosea is a prophecy that is addressed specifically to the House of Israel. Read the promise God has made to those whom He previously divorced:

**""Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her.
I will give her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land
of Egypt.**

**""And it shall be, in that day,'
Says the LORD [YHVH],
'That you will call Me "My Husband,"
And no longer call Me "My Master,"
For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.
In that day I will make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
With the birds of the air,
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.**

**Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,
To make them lie down safely.**

**""I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD [YHVH].**

**""It shall come to pass in that day
That I will answer,' says the LORD [YHVH];
'I will answer the heavens,
And they shall answer the earth.**

**The earth shall answer
With grain,
With new wine,
And with oil;
They shall answer Jezreel [*God sows*].
Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,
And I will have mercy on *her who had not obtained*
mercy;**

Then I will say to *those who were not My people*,

"You are My people!"

And they shall say,

"You are my God!""

(Hosea 2:14-23)

~ Summary ~

The northern ten tribes of the House of Israel were taken captive in 722 BCE and never returned to the land of Israel as a body of people, although a small remnant of them are undoubtedly mixed in with today's Jewish population.

The vast majority of the House of Israel have spread around the world. In some cases, they remained together and became known by other names, such as the *Shinlung* tribe of India and the *Anglo-Saxon* people of Britain. Still others remained in the vast stretches of Asia, while others migrated into Africa. Eventually, they made their way to the New world and even the islands of the South Pacific.

Through intermarriage, the skin color and facial features of those original Israelites have taken on the form of the indigenous people with whom they intermarried, so that today Israelites can be found among all of the people groups of the world.

The veracity of this claim can now be substantiated through genealogical and statistical research. The claim that all the people on the face of the earth today are quite likely descended from any number of single individuals who lived only two thousand years ago, make it even more feasible that everyone could very well be descended from *Avraham*, *Yitzhak*, and *Ya'acov*, and therefore from the twelve sons of Israel:

**""Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness,
You who seek the LORD [YHVH]:**

**Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn,
And to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug.**

Look to Abraham your father,

And to Sarah *who bore* you;

For I called him alone,

And blessed him and increased him."

(Isa. 51:1-2)

What does it mean to be a physical descendant of these great Patriarchs? It does not mean a thing unless one has dedicated their life to serving *YHVH*, the God of all creation and the Giver of life. Is there any advantage to tracing one's genealogy to try and 'prove' their ancestry from the Patriarchs? *Shaul* had the answer to that question:

"To Timothy, a true son in the faith:

"Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ [*Y'shua Ha Mahshiach*] our Lord. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith."

(I Tim. 1:2-4)

From a human standpoint it is interesting to find out if one is Jewish, or a Levite, or *Kohen* (Koh'-hen = Priest). But it is not really important unless one hopes to serve in the Temple when it is finally rebuilt in Jerusalem. It would be even more difficult to truly discover if one was a descendant of any of the other tribes of Israel, for all genealogical records have been lost and only the Jews (descendants of Judah) and Levites have a tradition of handing down that information within their family.

In Jewish teaching it is said that when Messiah comes He will tell everyone from which tribe they are descended. Placing ourselves in categories only adds to the ongoing problem of division, which is already rampant within too many congregations of Believers:

"But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. ..."

(Titus 3:9)

Whether we, as individuals, are physical descendants of the House of Israel, the House of Judah, or a full-blooded Gentile with no Israelite genes whatsoever, the important thing is that we are grafted into (or back into) the Commonwealth of Israel. For in the end the only ones who will be saved from sin and death are those who are a part of Israel:

"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands -- that at that time you were without Christ [*Messiah*], being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*] you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. [*Messiah*]"

(Eph. 2:11-13)

The House of Israel was divorced by God and became just like "Gentiles in the flesh." Now all of us are brought together in service to God through the blood of Messiah *Y'shua*.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] His Son cleanses us from all sin."

(I John 1:7)

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Abraham's Math Chart

Abraham

Abraham was said to be born in the year 1948 from creation.
Bishop James Ussher calculated Creation as occurring in 4004 BCE.
That would place the birth of Abraham in 2056 BCE ($4004 - 1948 = 2056$).

You and Your Ancestors

[illegible]

First Generation = 1 (that's you)
Second Generation = 2 (your parents)
Third Generation = 4 (your grandparents)

Fourth Generation = 8 (your great-grandparents)
Fifth Generation = 16 (your great-great- grandparents)

Sixth Generation = 32
Seventh Generation = 64
Eighth Generation = 128
Ninth Generation = 256
Tenth Generation = 512
Eleventh Generation = 1,024
Twelfth Generation = 2,048
Thirteenth Generation = 4,096
Fourteenth Generation = 8,192
Fifteenth Generation = 16,384
Sixteenth Generation = 32,768
Seventeenth Generation = 65,536
Eighteenth Generation = 131,072
Nineteenth Generation = 262,144
Twentieth Generation = 524,288
Twenty-first Generation = 1,048,576
Twenty-second Generation = 2,097,152
Twenty-third Generation = 4,194,304
Twenty-fourth Generation = 8,388,608
Twenty-fifth Generation = 16,777,216
Twenty-sixth Generation = 33,554,432

Twenty-seventh Generation = 67,108,864
 Twenty-eighth Generation = 134,217,728
 Twenty-ninth Generation = 268,435,456
 Thirtieth Generation = 536,870,912
 Thirty-first Generation = 1,073,741,824
 Thirty-second Generation = 2,147,483,648
 Thirty-third Generation = 4,294,967,296
 Thirty-fourth Generation = 8,589,934,592
 Thirty-fifth Generation = 17,179,869,184
 Thirty-sixth Generation = 34,359,738,368
 Thirty-seventh Generation = 68,719,476,736
 Thirty-eighth Generation = 137,438,953,472
 Thirty-ninth Generation = 274,877,906,944
 Fortieth Generation = 549,755,813,888
 Forty-first Generation = 1,099,511,627,776
 (That last figure is over one trillion people.)

Generation Length

If a generation is 25 years in length, it would take 1025 years to get back to the 41st generation.
(That would be 980 CE)

If a generation is 40 years in length, it would take 1640 years to get back to the 41st generation.
That would be 365 CE)

If a generation is 100 years in length, it would take 4100 years to get back to the 41st generation.
(That would be 2094 BCE)

(Note: Subtract 1 year when crossing the CE/BCE break because there is no year zero.)

Duplication of Ancestors

Since it is not possible for there to have been over one trillion people existing on planet earth in the year of Abraham's birth (nor in 365 BCE or 980 BCE), it stands to reason that all of us must have many duplicate ancestors in our family tree. In other words, since a period of 41 generations requires over one trillion ancestors (half male and half female), and there could not have been anywhere near that number of people on earth at any of those times, all of us have multiple millions of people who appear more than once in our family tree. This means that we all share multiple ancestors. We are all cousins.

This fact is made even more evident when we consider that the entirety of the human family is descended from two people, *Adam* and *Chava* (Eve). Thus, our real family tree looks more like a diamond shape:

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To Eat or Not to Eat?

There is much confusion concerning the food laws given in Leviticus 11. Many believe these laws were "nailed to the cross." This booklet explores this question in detail.

Which Law?

There were two sets of laws practiced in first century Pharisaic Judaism; the *Written Torah* (instruction/law) and the *Oral Torah* (traditional interpretation). Which law was Paul speaking about when he made some of his "anti-law" comments?

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