

The Divine Destiny of America



By James Summerville

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“The United States bestrides the globe like a colossus. It dominates business, commerce and communications; its economy is the world’s most successful, its military might second to none.”¹

“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” (Genesis 49:22-26).

Most people don’t realize the connection between the above quotes. The first quote states the obvious: The United States is extremely powerful. “Like Britain in the nineteenth century, the United States in the twenty-first century has power to spare. In fact the U.S. has more power than Britain did at the height of its empire, more power than any other state in modern times. It deploys the world’s only blue-water navy of any significance and the world’s most powerful air force; its armed forces have expeditionary capability undreamed of by any other power; its economy, powered by unceasing technological innovation, is the biggest and most dynamic on earth; its language has achieved a ubiquity unrivaled by any tongue since Latin; its culture permeates distant lands; and its political ideals remain a beacon of hope for all those ‘yearning to be free.’”²

The second quote is a divinely-inspired prophecy from the elderly biblical patriarch Jacob (or Israel, his other name). Jacob had twelve sons and those sons had children, and so on. Jacob, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren entered Egypt. 430 years later the Israelites, now divided into twelve tribes (later nations), left Egypt. In Genesis 49 Jacob describes the latter-day conditions of those nations. According to this prophecy, Joseph’s successful (“a fruitful bough”), colonizing (“his branches run over the wall”) and regal (“crown on the head of him”) progeny inhabit temperate and fruitful (“blessings of heaven,” etc.) lands by the seas (“by a well”), and their militaries are very strong (“But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob”). Furthermore, in Genesis 48 Jacob (or Israel) had prophesied that Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, would become a great company of nations and a great nation, respectively.

Historically, there are only two nations who are related and whose temperate locations, natural resources, histories, economies, and militaries fulfill this divinely-inspired prophecy. Those two nations are Britain and the United States. Later I will demonstrate how Manasseh became the United States. But first I must demonstrate the latter-day fulfillment of that prophecy delivered over three millennia ago. Indeed, Manasseh has blossomed into a great nation called the United States of America.

¹ The Economist, 10/23/99

² Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, pg. 349

The United States, a nation like none other

The United States is the most powerful country since ancient Rome. “Not since Rome has one nation loomed so large above the others.”³ In 2000 candidate George W. Bush rightly said, “Our nation stands alone right now in terms of power.”

Power is the “possession of control, authority, or influence over others.”⁴ We possess such power because of our economic and military preponderance (hard power) and of the allure of our political and social culture (soft power). The German newspaper *Der Spiegel* attested to our soft power when it proclaimed that “American idols and icons are shaping the world from Katmandu to Kinshasa, from Cairo to Caracas. Globalization wears a ‘Made in USA’ label.”⁵ Former French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine lamented the unbeatable combination of our hard and soft power: “U.S. supremacy today extends to the economy, currency, military areas, lifestyle, language and products of mass culture that inundate the world, forming thought and fascinating even the enemies of the United States.”⁶ The United States is so powerful because Americans can “inspire the dreams and desires of others, thanks to the mastery of global images through film and television and because, for these same reasons, large numbers of students from other countries come to the United States to finish their studies”⁷

People around the world are simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by American dominance. Such ambivalence was perhaps best captured by the video image of a Palestinian teenager celebrating the deaths of Americans on 9/11/01. While expressing hatred for the United States, this teenager was nonetheless wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with the logo of the Chicago Bulls, an American basketball team.

Power is relative. Other nations have successful economies (e.g. France, Germany, Japan, etc.) or large militaries (e.g. Russia, China, etc.) or nuclear capabilities (e.g. India, Pakistan, Israel, etc.). However, these nations cannot match the combination of hard and soft power wielded by the United States. Consider:

- a) We’re the only nation with both nuclear weapons and the ability to send armed forces anywhere in the world;
- b) Our military budget is larger than that of the next eight nations combined;
- c) We’ve experienced an unprecedented revolution in military affairs (RMA) by adapting the latest technologies (e.g. global positioning devices, etc.) for military use;
- d) Our share (27%) of the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is equal to that of the next three nations (Japan, Germany, France) combined;
- e) 59 of the 100 largest (in market value) companies in the world are American;
- f) Of the 500 largest global companies, 219 are American, 158 European, 77 Japanese;

³ Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power*, pg. 1

⁴ *Webster’s Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*

⁵ quoted by William Drozdiak, the *Washington Post*, 11/4/1997

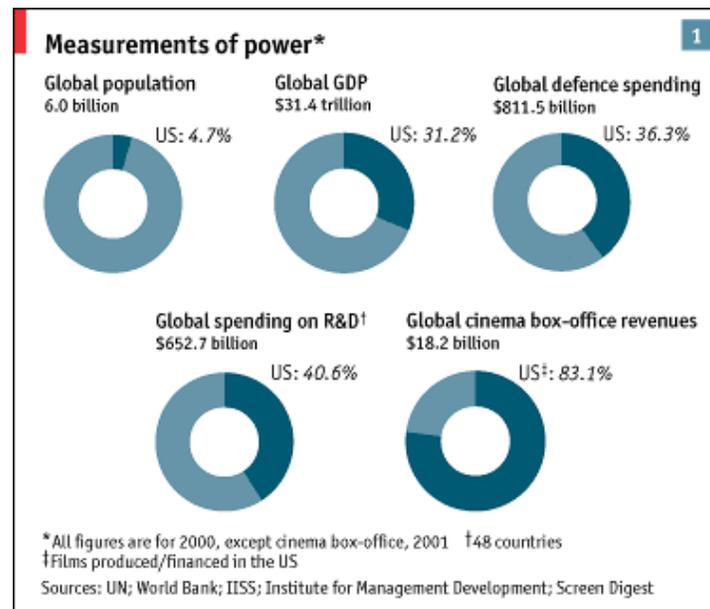
⁶ quoted by Lara Marlowe, the *Irish Times*, 11/4/99

⁷ Vedrine, *France in an Age of Globalization*, pg. 3

- g) We've received almost twice as much foreign investment as the next ranking nation (Britain). Foreign investment is an indicator of our economy's strength and stability;
- h) Our e-commerce is three times larger than that of Europe;
- i) Seven of the top ten software vendors reside in the U.S.;
- j) We attract the most foreign students each year to our colleges.

The following tables demonstrate the disparity of power between the U.S. and other major nations.

Power Resources								
	U.S.	Japan	Germany	France	Britain	Russia	China	India
Basic								
Territory (thousands of km)	9,269	378	357	547	245	17,075	9,597	3,288
Population (in millions)	276	127	83	59	60	146	1,262	1,014
Literacy rate	97	99	99	99	99	98	81.5	52
Military, 1999 figures								
Nuclear warheads	12,070	0	0	450	192	22,500	>40	85-90
Budget in billions of dollars	288.8	41.1	24.7	29.5	34.6	31	12.6	10.7
Personnel	1.3 mil.	236K	332K	317K	212K	1 mil.	2.4 mil.	1.1 mil.
Economic, 1999 figures								
GDP in billions of dollars,								
purchasing power parity	9,255	2,950	1,864	1,373	1,290	620	4,800	1,805
Per capita GDP	33,900	23,400	22,700	23,300	21,800	4,200	3,800	1,800
Manufacturing value added								
In billions of dollars	1,344	1,117	556	290	214	NA	309	63
High tech exports, in								
billions of dollars	637	420	112	69	96	87	183	32
# of personal computers,								
per thousand population	570.5	286.9	297	221.8	302.5	37.4	12.2	3.3



In 1941 Henry Luce, the founder of *Time Magazine*, declared that the 20th century belonged to America; in other words, it was the “American century.” He was right. We boasted the world’s largest economy by the end of the 19th century. Our economic dominance peaked in 1945. In the twenty-five succeeding years, as other economies recovered from the ruinous World War II, our share of the global GDP slipped to its long-term average. Before World War I and again before World War II, the U.S. produced about 25% of the world’s goods and services, and today it remains around that level. Moreover, our economic dominance has been remarkably steady: “The American share of the GDP of the seven largest economies that hold annual economic summits was 48.7 percent in 1970, 46.8 percent in 1980, and 45.2 percent at the end of the century.”⁸

We’ve achieved such relative prosperity quickly. For example:

- In 1900 the average American traveled approximately 1,200 miles in his lifetime, mostly on foot and mostly within his village or town. Now the average American travels about 12,000 miles per year, by car alone.
- By 1900, 8,000 cars were registered in the U.S.; each car was hand-made and cost about \$1,550. The average male earned \$12.74 per week; therefore, only rich people could afford cars. With the advent of mass production, the car has become affordable to just about everyone.
- In 1900 city dwellers disposed of garbage, raw sewage and industrial waste by dumping it into streets and waterways. Unsurprisingly, our cities were cesspools and waterborne diseases (e.g. typhoid fever, cholera) endemic: dysentery was the third largest cause of death. A century later, most Americans consider access to clean water as a birthright.
- At the beginning of the 20th century, most Americans lived on the farm. The country was largely rural. The planting and harvesting of just one crop required a large team of farmers and field hands. Four farmers were able to feed only ten people. Due to the ensuing

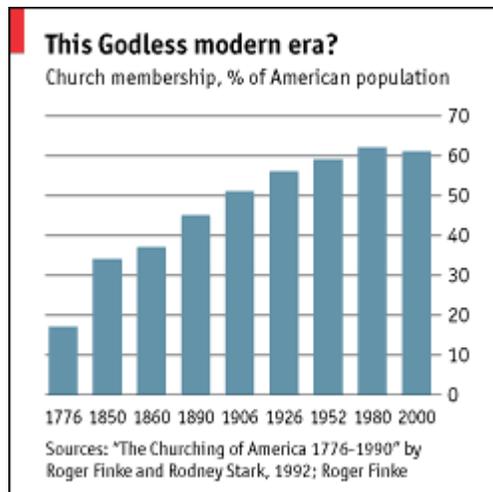
⁸ Nye, pg. 36

mechanization of agriculture, now it takes just one farmer to feed 97 Americans and 32 foreigners. As a result, people have moved to the cities where they built the financial and industrial strength of the United States;

- e) Household appliances (e.g. the washing machine, vacuum, and dishwasher) have transformed housework. Until their arrival, household chores were onerous and backbreaking. For example, most women organized their chores day by day. One day they'd clean, scrub and wax the floors by hand, and take the heavy rugs to the clothes line to beat the dust and dirt away. Another day was devoted entirely to fetching water from streams and wells, and to washing. Tools for washing were washboards, tubs, boilers, and clothes lines. Another day was for baking, canning, and preserving, and so on.

We've come a long way in just 100 years. Today most Americans take their relative prosperity for granted: "Ironically, America's preeminence is often treated with indifference by its own people."⁹ Of course we worry about the state of the Union. Many Americans are pessimists. They believe in the moral decline of America, evidenced by its high divorce, crime and incarceration rates. But "cultural pessimism is simply very American, extending back to our Puritan roots. Charles Dickens observed a century and a half ago that 'if its individual citizens, to a man, are to be believed, [America] always is depressed, and always is stagnated, and always is at an alarming crisis, and never was otherwise.'"¹⁰

The state of our Union is mixed. "Despite being the richest nation on the planet, we suffer from higher rates of poverty, infant mortality, homicide, and HIV infection, and from greater inequality, than other advanced democracies. We have far more uninsured citizens, and a lower life expectancy....We spend more per student on K-12 education than almost all other modern democracies, yet our students perform near the bottom on international tests."¹¹ At the same time, during the last two decades, homicide rates and drug use have decreased exponentially. Most children still live with their natural parents, and the divorce rate has become stable. Americans remain the most religious people in the Western world, and as indicated by the following table, church membership has steadily increased during the last few centuries.



⁹ Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy*, pg. 18

¹⁰ Nye, pg. 114

¹¹ Ted Halstead, *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February 2003.

Moreover, America and the world are in much better shape than they were in just a century ago. Until 1400, the average life span was very short. On average, a newborn would live for twenty to thirty years. For example,

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Life expectancy</u>
France	1800	30 years
Denmark	1845	44
India	1906	25
The entire world	1900	30
China	1930	24
The entire world	1950	46.5
Developing world	1950	41
Developing world	1998	65
The entire world	1998	67

Modern people in Western nations cannot fathom how brutish life was in centuries past. Take health:

“The almost total ignorance of both personal hygiene meant that contaminated food and water were a constant hazard....The result of these primitive sanitary conditions was constant outbursts of bacterial stomach infections, the most fearful of all being dysentery, which swept away many victims of both sexes and of all ages within a few hours or days. Stomach disorders of one kind or another were chronic, due to poorly balanced diet among the rich, and the consumption of rotten and insufficient food among the poor. The prevalence of intestinal worms...were a slow, disgusting and debilitating disease that caused a vast amount of human misery and ill health....In many poorly drained marshy areas, recurrent malarial fevers were common and debilitating diseases....[and] perhaps even more heartbreaking was the slow, inexorable, destructive power of tuberculosis....

“For women, childbirth was a very dangerous experience....[and finally] there was the constant threat of accidental death from neglect or carelessness or association with animals like horses—which seem to have been at least as dangerous as automobiles....

“Another fact of Early Modern life which is easy to forget is that only a relatively small proportion of the adult population at any given time was both healthy and attractive, quite apart from the normal features of smell and dirt....Both sexes must very often have had bad breath from rotting teeth and constant stomach disorders which can be documented from many sources, while suppurating ulcers, eczema, scabs, running sores and other nauseating skin diseases were extremely common and often lasted for years.”¹²

In the last few centuries, and especially since 1900, life in the Western world has become so much better that it’s hard to imagine a life portrayed in the above quote. Indeed, “Infants no longer die like flies...We are no longer almost chronically ill, our breaths stinking of rotten teeth, with festering sores, eczema, scabs, and suppurating boils. We have far more food to eat—despite the fact that the Earth is

¹² Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, pgs 62-64, 306

home to far more people: the average inhabitant of the Third World now has 38 percent more calories. The proportion of people starving to death has fallen dramatically from 35 percent to 18 percent....

“In the course of the last 40 years, everyone—in the developed as well as the developing world—has become three times richer...Americans have become 36 times richer over the last 200 years....

“We are better educated; in the Third World, illiteracy has fallen from 75 percent to less than 20 percent, and the standard of education in the developing and the developed world has increased tremendously....

“We have more leisure time, greater security and fewer accidents, more education, more amenities, higher incomes, fewer starving, more food and a healthier and longer life.”¹³ It sounds like we’ve been blessed, or have we?

Has God blessed America?

Many people believe that God has blessed the United States because Americans are somehow more virtuous and more Christian than most other people in the world. “Do you believe in God? If you are European, you probably shuffle your feet, look mildly embarrassed, and mutter, ‘Well, it depends on what you mean by God?’ Or something of the sort. In Western Europe, a mere 20% of people go regularly to a [church] service; in Eastern Europe, only 14%. But if you are American, the answer is almost certainly an unabashed ‘Yes.’ Only about 2% of Americans are atheists, and a startling 47% tell pollsters that they go to a religious service at least once per week. Even if that is an over-statement, the broad difference between continents is clear. To most Europeans, it has seemed obvious for the past century and more that modernism is the foe of religion, and of Christianity in particular. But religion is flourishing in both the developing world and America. The reason is largely the powerful evangelism of new denominations that sprang up in America in the 19th and early 20th centuries.”¹⁴

There have been a few “Great Awakenings” (periods of intense religious revival) in American history. The first occurred in the 1730s and was spearheaded by George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. They “dealt with the degenerate times by reviving the old Puritan concern with the conviction of sin, the necessity of conversion and the certainty of salvation.”¹⁵ Similar revivals occurred during the Civil War period and in the early 20th century. Note that such revivals were sparked by the general feeling that Americans were becoming degenerate. Despite Robert Bork’s contention that modern Americans are “Slouching Towards Gomorrah” (the title of his popular book), the belief in America’s moral decline is not new.

“Do not say, ‘Why were the old days better than these?’ For it is not wise to ask such questions” (Ecclesiastes 7:10). Under the inspiration of God, Solomon declared that the “good old days” are mythical. And yet, people love to romanticize the past. Somehow the past was more moral than the present. The expanded version of the *All in the Family* (a very popular sitcom of the 1970s) theme song encapsulates such romanticism:

“Boy, the way Glen Miller played. Songs that made the Hit Parade. Guys like us, we had it made. Those were the days! Didn’t need no welfare state. Everybody pulled his weight. Gee, our old LaSalle [a car] ran great. Those were the days! And you knew where you were then! Girls were girls and men were men. Mister, we could use a man like Herbert Hoover again. People seemed to be content. Fifty dollars paid the rent. Freaks were in a circus tent. Those were the days! Take a little Sunday spin, go to

¹³ Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World*, pg 328

¹⁴ *The Economist*, 12/21/02

¹⁵ *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, pg. 90

watch the Dodgers win. Have yourself a dandy day that cost you under a fin [five dollar bill]. Hair was short and skirts were long. Kate Smith really sold a song. I don't know just what went wrong! Those Were the Days!"

God says it's foolish to believe in the "good old days" (Eccl. 7:10). Upon mature reflection, I'm sure most Americans would undoubtedly agree. Should we want to return to the days of slavery and Jim Crow laws? Should we want to return to the Civil War period? "Throughout the Civil War, Missouri was labeled 'the war of 10,000 little incidents,' but it was much more than that. On one level, it was the very embodiment of the Civil War itself: a conflict-ridden slave state that didn't secede, a state deeply divided in loyalties, a state with an ill-formed identity. On yet another level, as it descended into full-scale guerrilla warfare....it became a killing field....The Union soldiers hunted the guerrilla like animals, and in return, they, too, eventually degenerated into little more than savage beasts, driven by a viciousness unimaginable just two years earlier. By 1864, guerrilla war had reached new peaks of savagery. Robbing stagecoaches, harassing citizens, cutting telegraph wires were everyday occurrences; but it was no longer simply enough to ambush and gun down the enemy. They had to be mutilated and, just as often, scalped. When that was no longer enough, the dead were stripped and castrated. In time, even that was insufficient. Then the victims were beheaded. And even that wasn't enough. So ears were cut off, faces were hacked, bodies were grossly mangled....Nor did it end there. All order broke down. Groups of revenge-minded Federals, militia and even soldiers, became guerrillas themselves, angrily stalking Missouri, tormenting, torturing, and slaying Southern sympathizers. Ruthless reprisals and random terror became the norm, and the entire state was dragged into an incomprehensible and accelerating whirlpool of vengeance.... Missouri was something that had never been witnessed before on American soil.... 'The enemy was everywhere and everyone.' Guerrillas dressed as Union men, and Union men as guerrillas....Soon, townsfolk couldn't trust their own neighbors, not even those they had known for years."¹⁶ During the Civil War, in several regions of the U.S., civil society disappeared. Many people, especially in the Border States, committed unspeakable acts of violence against their neighbors. Modern-day Americans cannot understand the demonic passion that transformed men into bloodthirsty beasts.

Should we want to return to the days before social security and pensions? Should we want to work in an economy without the minimum wage, child labor laws, and other laws protecting us from harsh and rapacious employers? Should we want to return to the days of the Wild West, or to the violent 1820s and 1830s? Would we feel safe in American cities (like New York) before the advent of the modern police force in the mid and late 1800s?

God has blessed the United States not because Americans are virtuous. Rather, He has blessed America because of an unconditional promise made long ago to Abraham.

The sources of American power

There are four interrelated and reinforcing sources of American power: military, political, economic, and geographical. The first three sources of power stem from America's unique geography. And as we shall see later, God has blessed His people Manasseh, and fulfilled His promise to Abraham, by bringing them to a large and temperate land in which they could grow and become mighty and prosperous.

1. Military:

Like every other state, the United States has national interests. Sometimes it's hard to define such national interests. Indeed, "as American economic might has soared the confusion about how to wield it

¹⁶ Jay Winik, *April 1865*, pgs. 158, 160-162

has deepened. One day American power is about expanding democracy, the next it is about a [short-lived] ‘Clinton Doctrine’ of humanitarian intervention, even in places where America’s national interests are remote. In the last two years the emphasis has turned to new initiatives to combat old threats, from nuclear proliferation to narco-terrorism, and to bestowing national security threat status on new issues, such as cyber-crime, global economic meltdown and AIDS.”¹⁷

A 1992 Pentagon planning document admitted that the U.S. must “discourage the advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.”¹⁸ Of course our paramount national security priority since 9/11/01 has been the war on terrorism.

The United States has gone to war several times to secure, protect, and enhance its national interests. Since 1991, we’ve fought or intervened in Iraq (twice), Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, and Panama. We fought a long Cold War and several hot, proxy wars (e.g. Vietnam, Korea). We’ve fought the Germans in two world wars, and against Mexico (Mexican-American war of 1848) and Spain (Spanish-American war of 1898). We fought or intervened in North Africa (the Barbary Wars, 1801-1805, 1815); the Marquesas (in the South Seas of Asia); China (1859); Korea (1871); Samoa (1899); China again (1900); the Philippines (1899-1902); Cuba, Panama, Nicaragua, and Mexico (1898-1914); Mexico again (1916-1924); Russia (1918-1920); and Nicaragua again (1926-1933). And contrary to popular belief, the United States was never isolationist during the first part of its history. This era included the War of 1812, the Louisiana Purchase from France, the acquisition of Alaska from Russia, the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, Commodore Perry’s trip to Japan, U.S. intervention on behalf of Hawaiian independence, and trade treaties with China in 1844, 1858, and 1868.

Clearly, one source of American power is its military, and the willingness to use it to protect, maintain and promote our stated and unstated national interests. Another source of American power is the durability of our political system.

2. Political System

“It takes a conscious act of imagination to see America through the eyes of its founding fathers—and to share their perspective may be disturbing. These men inhabited a world alien to modern Americans, a world in which the United States was a fragile, uncertain experiment, a newcomer, and to some degree a beggar at the gates of power and prestige among nations. In 1787 our treasury was empty. Debts to foreign governments and debts to our own citizens could not be paid, and this was a blow to the nation’s honor as well as to its future credit. Everywhere these men looked, anarchy seemed to threaten, for the Revolution had unleashed new expectations and a new rhetoric of equality and political participation. These new ideas threatened a social revolution that would destroy not only their own fortunes but also the rule of law. All around them civil strife seemed to be erupting unchecked, and news of uprisings in western Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Massachusetts during the previous year [1786] shook the confidence not only of these wealthy men [the Constitutional Convention delegates] but also of Americans of all social classes....a political disorder on the highest level had reached critical proportions. The cooperation among the states forged in the 1770s and sustained during the war, had vanished with independence. Competition and exploitation reigned, and the revival of a fierce localism pitted Virginian against Marylander, New Yorker against New Jerseyite, Georgian against South Carolinian....The nation was on the verge of self destruction—or, worse, of simply fading away. Not a few French and English officials in America predicted that soon enough this upstart experiment in republicanism would come to an end.”¹⁹

¹⁷ David Sanger, *New York Times*, 7/9/2000

¹⁸ quoted in Ronald Steel’s *Temptations of a Superpower: America’s Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, pg. 55).

¹⁹ Carol Berkin, *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution*, pgs. 4-5

This was the context of the Constitutional Convention. Fifty-five men entered Philadelphia in May 1787 to create a new American government. In September 1787 they emerged with a document that created a strong federal government divided into three branches (executive, legislative, and judicial) sharing power. Two years later, nine of the thirteen states ratified the Constitution, after the addition of a bill enumerating the inviolable rights of U.S. citizens (the Bill of Rights). The framers also included a built-in mechanism to amend the Constitution. “The founding fathers did not expect their constitution to endure for centuries. They could not predict the social, economic, or technological changes produced by the generations that followed them. Perhaps their ultimate wisdom, and their ultimate achievement, was their willingness to subject the Constitution they created to amendment. With this gesture—a true leap of faith—they freed future generations from the icy grip of the past.”²⁰

The Constitution theoretically created a “government of the people, by the people, for the people;” theoretically because blacks and other minorities were deprived of their constitutional and, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, “unalienable” rights and protections.²¹ Nevertheless, despite several traumatic events like the Civil War and Great Depression, the Constitution and the U.S. Government have survived intact because Americans have faith in them. Time and again in polls, Americans have expressed dissatisfaction with politicians and leaders in government. However, they’ve also expressed faith in the office of the Presidency, and in the institutions of Congress and the Supreme Court. “Apart from the immemorial British constitution, this [the U.S. Constitution] is the oldest constitution in the world, and to have survived almost unchanged across the span of two centuries is a tribute to its adaptability and its almost reverential status among the citizenry.”²²

The Constitution also created mechanisms that authorized the partnership of the U.S. Government and private industry. For example, the U.S. Government helped build canals, roads, railroads, and interstate highways, all of which fostered the creation of a massive continental economy. The U.S. Government also passed laws and created federal agencies to protect private property and to facilitate westward migration (e.g. the monumentally important Homestead Act of 1862).

3. The Economy

We’ve already seen how the United States is by far the most prosperous nation on earth. We represent 4.7% of the earth’s population, but produce 31.2% of its GDP. (If Los Angeles County were a country, it would have the 16th largest economy in the world.) And our relative prosperity has been long-lived: our national income surpassed that of Europe’s around 1740 and we’ve never looked back. “The economy of colonial America grew rapidly because of sustained population growth and profitable cultivation of stable crops....Rapid population growth produced substantial economic development.”²³ Such economic development was facilitated by a temperate ecology, large amounts of fertile land, massive immigration, an industrious people, and governmental intervention (e.g. the building of canals, roads, and railroads, creation of laws and federal agencies to regulate economic transactions, etc.). But most of all, our impressive economy (and impressive political system and military) is due in large part to our favorable location.

4. Geography

²⁰ *ibid*, pg. 210

²¹ Lincoln’s *Gettysburg Address*

²² S.E. Finer, *The History of Government*, Vol. 3, pg. 1501

²³ *The Oxford Companion to American History*, article on Economic Development

Why are some nations rich and others poor? Where are the rich regions of the world? North America, Western Europe, Northeast Asia, the Southern Cone of South America (Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay), and Australia and New Zealand: what do they have in common? They lie outside the tropics, that is, outside the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. (Tropical zones are generally characterized by high year-round temperatures and the lack of winter frost. Temperate zones are characterized by mild temperatures and the presence of winter frost.) Excluding Hong Kong and Singapore, all tropical countries are poor, whereas temperate-zone countries are generally rich. 73% of the poor countries of the world lie within the tropics, while over 92% of the world's rich countries lie outside the tropics. Generally, those temperate-zone countries that aren't rich are either former socialist countries (e.g. Bulgaria and Romania), or isolated (e.g. Mongolia), or war-ravaged (e.g. Serbia and Bosnia), or isolated and war ravaged (e.g. Afghanistan).

	<u>Tropical countries</u>	<u>Non-tropical rich countries</u>
Yearly income, 1995	\$3,326/yr	\$18,818
Life expectancy	51.5yrs	76.9 yrs

Even within countries, the sections lying closest to or in the tropics are usually poorer. For example, the northern U.S. states industrialized before their southern brethren, as did Northern Europe before southern Europe. Brazil's temperate southeast is richer than its tropical northeast. Temperate northeast China is richer than tropical southeast China.

Tropical soils are fragile and therefore insufficiently productive to support urbanization, which is essential for economic diversification and growth. Moreover, the extreme heat and wet climates create an environment in which pests and parasites thrive, and surface water (necessary for healthy plants and soils) evaporates quickly under the hot sun. In addition, poor agriculture results in a poor diet, which leads to malnutrition, undernourishment, and lower life expectancies due to weakened immune systems.

The United States is located wholly in a temperate zone, although the climate of southern Florida is semi-tropical. The United States is thus blessed by its favorable location: "large expanses of fertile, virgin land; a fine climate for growing a crucial industrial entry raw material, namely, cotton; rich deposits of the key ingredients for ferrous metallurgy; plenty of wood and coal for fuel, plus generous waterpower all along the east coast; an abundance of petroleum, valuable from the mid-nineteenth century for light, as a lubricant, and above all as fuel for internal combustion motors; copper ores in quantity, ready by the end of the nineteenth century for the burgeoning demands of electrical power, motors, and transmission. And along with this went relatively convenient lines of access and communication punctuated by superb harbors, large rivers (above all, the Mississippi and its affluents), and wide plains."²⁴ The U.S. is situated perfectly, in a land able to sustain massive immigration, expansion, and the creation of cities, which became engines for growth during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Moreover, the abundance of fertile land created a country of small landowners (in contrast with the landed gentry of Europe) and relatively well-compensated workers. "America's society of smallholders and relatively well-paid workers was a seedbed of democracy and enterprise. Equality bred self-esteem, ambition, a readiness to enter and compete in the workplace, a spirit of individualism and contentiousness. At the same time, smallholdings encouraged technical self-sufficiency and the handyman, fix-it mentality....As a result, the new technologies of the Industrial Revolution found fertile ground in the American colonies and then the United States."²⁵

America's favorable geography facilitated massive immigration and westward expansion. Such immigration and expansion led to the creation of cities, the incubators for industrial and financial growth.

²⁴ David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, pg. 295

²⁵ *ibid*, pg. 297

Our industries created a relatively prosperous nation with the capability to build a strong, modern military to maintain, protect and promote our national interests. In short, our economic and military dominance stems from our favorable geographical location.

The United States is not an accident of history

Is it an accident of history that our ancestors arrived in a land blessed with an array of natural resources, and in a land able to sustain massive immigration and expansion, which facilitated the creation of a strong economy and military? Long ago, God promised that Joseph's progeny would inhabit such a land. They would grow "into a multitude in the midst of the earth" (Genesis 48:16) and later separate into a great company of nations (Ephraim) and a great nation (Manasseh). Because those prophecies (in Genesis 48 & 49) refer to the "latter days," modern-day Manasseh and Ephraim must be strong and rich nations residing in temperate eco-zones, and by the seas. Therefore, they *cannot* be landlocked nations (most of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America), tropical countries (Southeast Asia, most of Africa, all of Central America and a large portion of South America, and the Caribbean nations), and nations with weak militaries (all but a few nations). As we shall see later, other criterion eliminates from consideration all but two nations: the United States (Manasseh, the great nation) and the United Kingdom (Britain, or Ephraim as the great company of nations).

A brief and selective survey of biblical history culminating in two divine, unconditional covenants

The Bible isn't a biography; for example, Abraham's 175 years are condensed into a few chapters. And we know next to nothing about Jesus' first thirty years. Moreover, the Bible doesn't provide an exhaustive account of the history of Israel or of the Church; in several places, years and decades fly by in just a few verses. But the Bible does provide a general outline of ancient Israel's history, and a fragmentary account of God's intervention in the history of mankind. Let's begin in the beginning.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1-2). A cursory glance at these verses would suggest that God created the earth in an imperfect, almost chaotic, state. However, this picture is incompatible with the image of the earth's creation in the book of Isaiah: "For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it *in vain*, who formed it to be inhabited: 'I am the LORD, and there is no other'" (Isaiah 45:18). The words "in vain" are translated from the Hebrew word *tohuw*, which means "formlessness, nothingness, empty space, wasteland, wilderness, place of chaos, vanity."²⁶ In other words, according to this scripture, God **did not** create the earth as an uninhabitable, chaotic, wasteland (the very image presented by the first two verses of Genesis). The nub of the problem is that ancient Hebrew (and many other ancient languages) did not possess the copula verb (the "to be" verb that links a subject and predicate of a preposition). This is why in several places in the Bible you'll see the words *is*, *was*, *become*, *became*, etc. as italicized; the ancient script did not have those words, and the translators inserted them to make the sentence understandable to the modern reader. The translators must have therefore used their discretion in injecting the right copula ("to be" verb) in a particular sentence, and sometimes they made mistakes. The older translators injected the word *was* in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis. Some of the newer translations, however, use the word *became*, or put the word *became* in the margin. *Became* is a much better word to use in Genesis—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth *became* formless and void..."—because it accords with the picture of the earth's creation in Isaiah 45:18. And it implies that

²⁶ Strong's Concordance & the Condensed Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon

the earth is not six or seven thousand years old. God created the earth, and later (who knows how much later) it became formless and void.

God created Adam and Eve, and gave them His laws (including the seven-day holy Sabbath). However, they sinned and God expelled them from the Garden of Eden. They had many children, and their children had children, and so on, and soon the earth became populated. However, man strayed from God's laws: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For *since the creation of the world* His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever...For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them" (Romans 1:18-32).

Man became wicked, resorted to paganism, and engaged in sinful acts (including homosexuality). Therefore God "saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:5-8).

Noah was a righteous man (Genesis 6:9), so God decided to start over with him and his family (his wife, three sons and their wives). God destroyed the rest of mankind with a great flood. After the flood, God made an "*everlasting*" *covenant* with Noah and reaffirmed His laws. The everlasting covenant gave man the right to self-government. In other words, by commanding man to punish sinners (for instance, the death penalty for murderers: Genesis 9:5-7), God gave man the right and obligation to enforce God-given and God-inspired laws. Man, however, has failed: "The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the *everlasting covenant*" (Isaiah 24:5). Here God referred to an everlasting covenant with mankind. The only other place where an "everlasting covenant" with mankind (not specifically with the nation of Israel) appears is in the 9th chapter of Genesis; that is, the everlasting covenant by which God gave man the right to self-government. But man has failed to govern properly; in other words, man has broken "the everlasting covenant."

After mankind's failure to obey His laws and statutes (for their own good), in essence God said, "Fine. If mankind doesn't want to obey Me, then I'll pick a man and give Him the opportunity to obey My laws. If he does so, I will bless him and his children." God found that man. His name was Abram.

"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless

you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3). Abram (later, Abraham) obeyed God: “Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws” (Genesis 26:5).

Because Abram was obedient, God made two unconditional covenants with him. “Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish *My covenant* between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.’ Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the *father of a multitude of nations*. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and *I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you*. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an *everlasting covenant*, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.’ God said further to Abraham, ‘Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations’” (Genesis 17:1-8).

The first covenant with Abraham was sealed with the sign of circumcision (Genesis 17:10). The covenant was everlasting: God’s promises were unconditional, and thus were not dependent on the obedience of Abraham’s descendants. His promise: Abraham would be a father to many prosperous nations, and some of them would have monarchical governments.

At this point in his life, Abraham was childless. He was 99 years old and his wife Sarai (later Sarah) was ten years younger, certainly well past her child-bearing years. However, God said that Sarah would give birth to a son (Genesis 17:16) who would inherit the blessings promised to his father Abraham. Moreover, God extended the covenantal promises to her: “Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her” (same verse). In other words, Abraham’s descendants would separate into prosperous nations, and some of them would be monarchies.

Sarah’s desire for a child was overwhelming. She therefore became impatient. She urged Abraham to produce a child and heir with Hagar, their maidservant. Unsurprisingly, Abraham complied (he was human!). Abraham and Hagar produced Ishmael, his first child. A year or so later, God delivered His promise: Sarah conceived and bore Isaac, Abraham’s second child.

Customarily, the birthright blessings would naturally go to the firstborn child. This custom therefore dictated that Abraham’s firstborn son Ishmael would receive the divine promises. Sarah became jealous of Hagar and Ishmael, and thus urged Abraham to expel them from their household. Abraham became distressed because he, like any good father, loved Ishmael. However, God “said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for *through Isaac your descendants shall be named*. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant’” (Genesis 21:12-13).

God blessed Ishmael with the promise of making his descendants into a nation. However, the covenantal promises (“I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you”) would be delivered through Isaac and his progeny.

Several years passed. Isaac was now a young teenager. He was the apple of Abraham’s eyes. Then God said the unthinkable: “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham! And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you’” (Genesis 22:1-2). God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, the very son through whom the covenantal and everlasting promises were to be delivered. How confusing! How apparently despicable! Yet Abraham complied, and as he was about to kill his precious son, God

intervened: “‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He [God] said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me’” (Genesis 22:11-12).

It was just a test. Abraham was undoubtedly relieved. God then made a *second covenant* with Abraham. “Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice’” (Genesis 22:15-18).

The first everlasting covenant promised that Abraham’s descendants (through the line of Isaac) would become prosperous and separate into several nations, some of them possessing monarchical governments. The second everlasting covenant promised that Abraham’s descendants would become very numerous (“multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore”) and that they (their nations) shall possess the gate of their enemies. In other words, these prosperous and undoubtedly strong nations would possess strategic assets (e.g. control over harbors, isthmuses, canals, etc.) that confer advantages over their enemies. Most important, all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham’s progeny.

God thus made two covenants with Abraham:

- First Covenant: God promised that Abraham’s descendants (through the line of Isaac) would become several prosperous nations, and some of them would be monarchies.
- Second Covenant: God implicitly affirmed the promises of the first covenant by saying that Abraham’s seed would become very numerous and powerful (how else can nations possess the gates of their enemies?). Moreover, everyone on earth would be blessed through Abraham’s descendants (again, through the line of Isaac).

These covenants and their promises did not depend on the obedience of Abraham’s descendants; they were unconditional. The first covenant promised *national greatness*, and the second *transcendental greatness*. It’s common knowledge that Jesus was Jewish, that is, a descendant of Judah, one of Abraham’s great grandsons. *Therefore, the second promise of the second covenant was Messianic*. The other covenantal promises predicted prosperity and greatness for Abraham’s very numerous descendants. Moreover, God extended these promises to Isaac (and later to Isaac’s son Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel). This begs the question: God promised that Abraham’s descendants through Isaac and Jacob would become great, monarchical, and very numerous. There are about 10 to 11 million Jewish people in the world, a drop in the bucket compared to the world’s population of 6 billion. Has God’s promise to make Abraham’s seed (through Isaac and Jacob) very numerous failed? Of course not! As we shall see, the non-Messianic blessings applied not to the Jews (a derivation of the name Judah, who was Abraham’s great-grandson) but to their brethren, the descendants of Jacob’s other children, and specifically to Ephraim and Manasseh.

Déjà vu

The covenantal promises were to be delivered through the line of Isaac, Abraham’s second child. Isaac had two children, Esau and Jacob. Shortly before their birth, God made a promise to their mother Rebekah: “The LORD said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.’”

When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob" (Genesis 25:23-26). Again defying custom (as in the story of Ishmael and Isaac), God promised that the birthright blessings belonged to Isaac's second-born son Jacob.

Jacob and Esau grew up. Jacob was not a spiritual man. Instead, he was shrewd and crafty. One day, when Esau was famished, Jacob offered his brother some lentil soup, on one condition: Esau must surrender his birthright. (Either Jacob did not know that God promised the birthright blessings to him, or he was impatient, like his grandmother Sarah). Esau complied. Later, Jacob again tricked Esau out of his supposed birthright blessings (Genesis 27). An incensed Esau vowed to kill Jacob, and Rebekah convinced the latter to escape to her brother's household until Esau simmered down.

Jacob obeyed his mother. Twenty-one years later he departed Laban's household with two wives (Leah and Rachel), their maids (Bilhah and Zilpah), and thirteen children (twelve sons and one daughter). Jacob's daughter was named Dinah, and his twelve sons were named Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulan, Joseph, and Benjamin. Some of these sons were born to Leah, some to Rachel, and others to Bilhah and Zilpah. However, because Jacob favored Rachel, he also favored her sons Benjamin and especially Joseph.

Jacob and his family traveled to Bethel, where God appeared to him. God said, "Your name is Jacob. You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.' Thus He called him Israel. God also said to him, 'I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; ***a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you.*** The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.' Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel" (Genesis 35:9-15). In Hebrew, Bethel means "house of God."

We've seen a few recurring themes in the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

1. God changed the name of Abram to Abraham, and Jacob to Israel. Each name change signified a covenantal blessing: for example, Abraham means "father of many nations" and Israel means "God prevails."
2. God blessed Abraham with two unconditional covenants and, defying custom, extended those promises to Isaac, his *second* son, and then to Isaac's *second* son Jacob. However, each covenant was more explicit than the previous one. The first covenant promised national greatness and the subsequent covenants (or reaffirmations of the two covenants made to Abraham) included more details. For example, God said that Abraham would be the father of many nations, and his seed would become very numerous and regal. God then promised that Rebekah's son Jacob would produce a strong nation. God's promise to Jacob was even more explicit: "***a nation and company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you.***" This promise reaffirms and elaborates the promise first made to Abraham (the father of many nations, some of them kingly). Jacob's descendants would include a great and strong nation and a great and strong company of nations, and some of them would be monarchies. These nations would become very numerous, and possess the gates of their enemies (possess strategic assets that confer advantages over their enemies).

Joseph and his brothers

Joseph was Jacob's favorite son (Genesis 37:3), much to the chagrin of his brothers. As a teenager, Joseph boasted of Jacob's favoritism. Joseph also had divinely inspired dreams that implied he would rise to preeminence (Genesis 37). And he boasted of this to his outraged brothers. So they plotted against Joseph, and when the time was right, sold him into slavery. (They told their father that Joseph was killed by an animal.) Joseph eventually wound up in Egypt.

The "Lord was with Joseph, so he became a prosperous man" (Genesis 39:2). Eventually, Joseph became the de-facto ruler over Egypt. And he married an Egyptian and fathered two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

In the meantime, there was a drought-induced famine in the region, so the elderly Jacob commanded his sons to fetch wheat from Egypt. Joseph was in charge of providing such buyers with stored wheat. Because more than a decade had passed since the sale of Joseph into slavery, his brothers did not recognize him when they attempted to purchase wheat. But Joseph recognized them, and eventually revealed his identity. He also revealed God's purpose: "God sent me [Joseph] before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:7). Joseph then invited his father Jacob to live in Egypt. Soon thereafter, Jacob and his family (numbering seventy) entered Egypt.

Some time later, Joseph brought his two sons—Manasseh, the firstborn, and Ephraim—to a very elderly and dying Jacob, to receive his blessings. With respect to the divine destiny of America, and its identity, this account of Jacob blessings to Joseph's two sons is very important. I will thus quote it in full (Genesis 48):

"Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, 'Behold, your father is sick.' So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. When it was told to Jacob, 'Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,' Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. Then Jacob said to Joseph, 'God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.' Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance.

"Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

"When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, 'Who are these?' Joseph said to his father, 'They are my sons, whom God has given me here.' So he said, 'Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.' Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. Israel said to Joseph, 'I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well.' Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought

them close to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn. He blessed Joseph, and said, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads, and may my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.'

“When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.' But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know; he [Manasseh] also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.' He blessed them that day, saying, 'By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!' Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 'I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.'”

Again, the themes appearing in the covenantal blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reappear in the account of Jacob's blessings to Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim:

- The greater blessing would go to the second-born son (Ephraim), but Manasseh was also blessed. Together, they would “grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” and later separate into a great company of nations and a great nation.
- Each covenant (or each reaffirmation of the Abrahamic covenants) grew more explicit. God promised that Abraham would be a father to many nations, some of them monarchies. God extended the promise to Isaac. He promised Isaac's wife Rebekah that her son Jacob would become a great nation, and then promised Jacob that he would produce a nation and company of nations. This promise is further described in the quoted account of Jacob's blessings to Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh. They would receive the birthright and national promises first extended to Abraham. As it says in I Chronicles 5:1 – “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed), *his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel.*” The birthright promises of national greatness would materialize in the line of Ephraim (a great company of nations) and Manasseh (a great nation).

Jacob was dying. As was customary, he commanded his sons to appear before him, to receive blessings and his last words. “And Jacob called his sons and said, ‘Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you *in the last days*’” (Genesis 49:1). What follows are prophecies of the latter-day conditions of the descendants of his twelve sons. Obviously his sons would grow into tribes and then into nations (e.g. Joseph fathered two sons who became the forefathers of a great nation and a great company of nations). In the beginning of this essay, I quoted Jacob's description of the latter-day conditions of the nation of Joseph (together, the modern-day nations of Ephraim and Manasseh). It's worth repeating:

“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” (Genesis 49:22-26).

As I’ve mentioned earlier, according to this prophecy, Joseph’s successful (“a fruitful bough”), colonizing (“his branches run over the wall”) and regal (“crown on the head of him”) progeny (the modern-day nations of Ephraim and Manasseh) inhabit temperate and fruitful (“blessings of heaven,” etc.) lands by the seas (“by a well”), and their militaries are very strong (“But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob”). Therefore, they cannot be landlocked nations (most of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America), tropical countries (Southeast Asia, most of Africa, all of Central America and a large portion of South America, and the Caribbean nations), and nations with weak militaries (all but a few nations).

The rise of Israel, the nation

In Egypt the family of Jacob (whose name was changed by God to Israel) grew into a large nation divided into twelve tribes. 430 years after Jacob's entry into Egypt, the nation of Israel left (the exodus from Egypt). God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, under the guidance of Moses.

They left Egypt with the view to entering the Promised Land (Genesis 17:7) of Greater Palestine. However, because the Israelites constantly complained about this and about that, and because they did not trust that God could provide them with a victory over an imposing foe in the land of Palestine, God decided to bar their entry into the Promised Land. "All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?' So they said to one another, 'Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt'" (Numbers 14:2-4).

God was displeased; this was the final straw! "The LORD said to Moses, 'How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? 'I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they'" (Numbers 14:11-12). Yet Moses interceded on Israel's behalf, and God did not destroy them. Rather, He condemned them to forty years of wandering in the wilderness. "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it....Say to them [the Israelites], 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness'" (Numbers 14:22-23, 28-33).

Under Joshua's leadership, the second generation entered into the Promised Land (just as the second sons—Isaac, Jacob, and Ephraim—received the birthright and greater blessings). In the intervening forty years, during their trek in the wilderness, God reminded the Israelites of His laws (including the Ten Commandments), and gave them His holy days and festivals. The laws regulated their conduct toward God (the first four of the Ten Commandments) and with each other (the last six Commandments).

In many ways the laws of God were revolutionary. Many biblical skeptics claim that they were a mixture of Egyptian and Babylonian law (i.e. the Hammurabi Code). This is untrue. "Mosaic law is in fact radically different from all such legal collections. In the first place it is a religious law: here God is not the guarantor of the laws (as in Hammurabi's code, for instance); he is the author. Next, since the law is the 'charter of the Covenant with God,' its prescriptions (unlike other Middle Eastern texts) are often supported by a justifying motive....The substance differs, too. Since the legislation is designed to safeguard the Covenant, the penalties are especially severe for all the crimes against God: idolatry, blasphemy, and those affecting the purity of the elect people, for example, bestiality and sodomy. But for the rest...*it is markedly more humane*. There is no death-penalty for property offences, for instance, whereas these are dispensed unsparingly in the Hammurabi code. The slave was protected against his master's abuse. The children—explicitly—must not be punished for the sins of their fathers (compare the quite barbarous opposite in China!). Mutilation, much practiced in horrible forms in the Hammurabi and Assyrian laws, is totally absent in the Mosaic code....The 'eye-for-an-eye' principle...was itself a

limitation to blood-feud...Finally, quite unlike the Hammurabi code which provides different satisfactions and different penalties according to the social condition of the parties (notably the privileged, the commoners, and the slaves), *the Mosaic code assumes equality before the law*. There was no special status for the priesthood or aristocracy, and even slaves had the protection of the law”²⁷

Equality before the law—what a revolutionary concept, especially in the second millennium BC! “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you” (Deuteronomy 5:12). Here God says that everyone—regardless of status, occupation, or even origin—must observe the Sabbath. The Sabbath was truly revolutionary. Despite its creation at Creation, no other society had an ordained day of rest for everyone. No other society taught that everyone had the same rights, in this case the right to rest and rejoice on the Sabbath. The Sabbath, therefore, was not merely a command; it was a blessing.

The notion of equality was foreign to the ancient world. Instead, inequality was accepted as natural. Aristotle said inferior people are happiest when ruled by their superiors. “It is clear that the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior, and the one rules and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.... And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different, for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and the others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.” God disagreed, and inspired laws that created an egalitarian society.

The purpose of the seven holy days and festivals (Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks or Firstfruits, Feast of the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles and the Day immediately following the last day of such Feast—enumerated in Leviticus 23, Deuteronomy 16 and elsewhere) were educational. They reminded the Israelites that:

- God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt (Passover & the Feast of Unleavened Bread);
- God had blessed them (the Feast of Firstfruits, or Weeks);
- God will protect them when they’re in battle, and has provided them with special events throughout the year, announced by the blowing of *shofars* or trumpets (hence the Feast of the Memorial of the Blowing of Trumpets);
- God will forgive them when they repent of their sins (Day of Atonement); and
- God provided for them during their forty-year trek in the wilderness, and will continue to do so (Feast of Tabernacles and the Day immediately following this Feast, commonly referred to as the “Last Great Day”).

By forcing all of the Israelites to do the same things (e.g. provide offerings, refrain from working, etc.) on the same days, and worship in the same manner with the same people, the holy days and festivals also reminded them that they shared a common heritage, destiny, and God. Thus the holy days and festivals (and the egalitarian laws) created a sense of collegiality, and of nationalism and patriotism, three necessary ingredients for building a nation-state. In essence, the holy days and festivals (and the laws of God) were the social glue that that God used to bind the Israelites into a nation. (The holy days and

²⁷ S.E. Finer, Vol. 1, pg. 249

festivals also provided a prophetic glimpse of the future. To understand this glimpse, and their Christian relevance, please read the Churches of God, Worldwide Ministries articles entitled *Why Have Christians Abandoned the Sabbath?*; *Passover or Easter– Which is Biblical?*; *Pentecost and the Meaning of Life*; *The Feast of Trumpets and the Return of Jesus*; *The Day of Atonement and Satan’s Fate*; and *The Feast of Tabernacles, Christmas, and the Kingdom of God.*)

God chose the Israelites to be a peculiar nation (“a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth” – Deuteronomy 7:6) in which He would fulfill the promises made to Abraham. Furthermore, God preserved His laws among mankind through Israel (Romans 3:2). Preservation of the Law (including the holy days and festivals) through the Israelites had two purposes: (i) obviously the Law of God would be kept alive among mankind, and (ii) by obeying these laws, Israel would serve as an example to other nations: “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deuteronomy 4:5-6). The law of God, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the holy days and festivals, would be magnified through an obedient Israel. Unfortunately, rarely was Israel obedient to God.

The Law of God and the holy days and festivals would shine through an obedient Israel. Therefore, the significance of God’s laws, holy days and festivals transcended boundaries. In the meantime, Joshua and the rest of the Israelites were busy fighting the various city-states (e.g. Jericho) in Greater Palestine, and in establishing the physical boundaries of the twelve tribes. God commanded the Israelites to kill the inhabitants of the lands they conquered. However, they were unwilling and thus unable to obey God’s command. So Israel conquered Greater Palestine; however, they left a smattering of its former inhabitants scattered in the demarcated lands of the twelve tribes. As predicted by God, these people proved to be a thorn in Israel’s side: they would entice the Israelites to adopt their theology, or to fuse their customs with the divine theology taught by God.

Joshua’s generation obeyed God. However, the subsequent generations did not. “Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten....All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel. Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies” (Judges 2:8-14).

How could the Israelites turn against God so quickly? Two reasons: (1) they stubbornly desired to become like the neighboring pagan nations (they wanted to fit in rather than stand out), and (2) they were illiterate and therefore unable to consult the written records demonstrating their identity and proclaiming God’s laws and theology. This explains their ignorance of God and His miraculous works.

Nevertheless, they persisted in adopting the pagan customs and theology of neighboring nations. It’s apparent that at this time, no one city-state or nation could dominate this region. Therefore, during the next three centuries, different city-states and nations jostled for supremacy in the Middle East. On several occasions neighboring city-states and nations (e.g. Moab, the Philistines, Midian, Ammon, etc.) conquered the tribes of Israel. During this time, the Israelite tribes were in a loose confederation similar to the U.S. states under the Articles of Confederation, before the Constitution created a strong federal government. This confederation was unable to defeat these conquering nations without God’s help. So after several decades of foreign rule, they sought God’s help. And God delivered them by providing

strong judges (e.g. Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel, etc.) who could muster the strength and resolve to defeat the foreign nations and city-states. The last such judge was Samuel.

Samuel reigned for several decades. “Not merely by isolated commissions, but in the discharge of a regular office, Samuel acted as prophet in Israel...all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that there was now a new link between them and their Heavenly King, a living centre of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of union for all who were truly the Israel of God.²⁸ Despite Samuel’s commission and success, the Israelites never lost their desire to fit in. They clamored for a king because the neighboring countries had kings. “Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, ‘Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations’” (I Samuel 8:4-5). Samuel was displeased, but God said to him, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also” (I Samuel 8:7-8). So God selected Saul from the tribe of Benjamin to become king of Israel.

Saul ruled for at least two decades. However, God became displeased with his actions. “Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, ‘I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands’” (I Samuel 15:10-11). God rejected Saul and sought a replacement: “Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you’” (I Samuel 13:13-14). That man’s name was David.

We probably know more about David than any other man in the Bible. He was courageous, passionate and impulsive, which worked to his advantage (in fighting the Philistine Goliath) and to his disadvantage (by committing adultery with Bathsheba, which resulted in the murder of her husband, Uriah the Hittite.). Saul recognized David’s talents and enlisted him in his employ. Eventually David became a great general: “So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants. It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. The women sang as they played, and said, ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.’ Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, ‘They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?’ Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on” (I Samuel 18:5-9). Saul began to resent David’s talent, success, and popularity. So he decided to destroy David.

David fled from Saul’s presence. Time and again, David and his supporters evaded capture. Eventually Saul and his sons died in battle against the Philistines (I Samuel 31:6). Suddenly, confederated Israel was kingless. Usually civil wars occur in power vacuums. Israel was no different. The contest was between David and Saul’s son Ishbosheth. The Jews (from the tribe of Judah) had declared their favorite son David to be their king. Ishbosheth reigned over the rest of the tribes. A civil war ensued. David had a distinct advantage: God was on his side. On the other side stood Ishbosheth, the weak lackey of Abner, a powerful commander of Saul’s army.

²⁸ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, pg. 417

After seven years of internecine struggle, David prevailed. Ishbosheth was killed (not by David), and shortly thereafter (after Abner's death at the hands of Joab), David was proclaimed king over all Israel. "Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the LORD at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah" (II Samuel 5:1-5).

God's unconditional covenant with David

God was pleased when David expressed his intention to build a temple. God sent the prophet Nathan to deliver this message to David:

"Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and *I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. *Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever*'" (II Samuel 7:8-16).

God promised that David's throne would last forever. Indeed, Jesus will return to earth to inherit this throne: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the *Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David*. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). God has not revoked His promise to David. Somewhere on this earth is the Davidic throne that the returning Jesus will inherit.

A short summary of the Covenants

I've described several divine covenants:

1. The **everlasting covenant** between Noah and God, which gave man the right to self-government. However, man has failed to govern properly. He has thus "broken the everlasting covenant" (Isaiah 24:5).

2. The **Abrahamic covenants**. The first covenant promised that Abraham would become a father of many nations, some of them kingly. The second covenant implicitly reaffirmed the promises of the first covenant by stating that his seed would become very numerous, and that these nations would possess the “gates of their enemies.” Moreover, everyone on earth would be blessed through Abraham’s descendant, namely, Jesus Christ.

God reaffirmed these covenants to Isaac and then to his son Jacob. Each time God was more explicit in describing His promises. Isaac would be the forefather of a very strong nation, and Jacob would produce the forefather (Joseph) of a nation and a company of nations. A dying Jacob (his name already changed to Israel) said that his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh (the sons of Joseph) would fulfill this latest promise: Ephraim would become a very strong company of nations, and Manasseh a very strong nation. These nations would grow together into a “multitude in the midst of the earth” and later separate to fulfill their God-given destinies.

Jacob described the destinies of Joseph’s progeny (and of the descendants of his other children) when he called his sons together shortly before his death. To Judah he said, “Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples*” (Genesis 49:9-10). Whereas Ephraim and Manasseh would achieve national greatness, both together and separately, Judah would become the forefather of the kingly line of Israel (“the scepter shall not depart from Judah”).

3. The **Davidic covenant**. God began to fulfill the promise made to Judah when he selected David (from the tribe of Judah) to become king over Israel. And He established the perpetuity of the Davidic throne: “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever” (II Samuel 7:16).

Thus we have two types of promises or blessings: the **birthright** blessings of national greatness, and the **scepter** blessing. The birthright blessings belonged to Ephraim and Manasseh: “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 Chronicles 5:1-2). As we shall see later, these nations which embodied the birthright (Ephraim and Manasseh) and scepter (Judah) blessings interacted throughout history, and eventually both the birthright and scepter blessings came to reside in modern-day Ephraim.

All Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews

David unified the tribes of Israel into one nation and founded Jerusalem as its capital. He reigned forty years (seven in Hebron as king of Judah; and thirty-three as king of unified Israel). Israel reached its apex during the reign of David’s son Solomon. “Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.... For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphshah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all

the days of Solomon” (I Kings 4:20-21, 24-25). And, “So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom” (I Kings 10:23).

Despite God’s blessings, and despite his abundant wisdom, Solomon committed apostasy. Solomon entered into alliances with other nations by marrying the daughters of their kings and officials. Solomon married 700 women and had 300 concubines, many of them foreign. God had warned Solomon not to marry foreign women, for they would turn his heart away from His truth. And so they did. “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 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 his God, as was the heart of his father David. 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, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David” (I Kings 11:1-6).

God punished Solomon by promising to break up the kingdom of Israel, not during Solomon’s days, but during the reign of his successor, his son Rehoboam. God also promised to deliver ten tribes (later nations) to Jeroboam, an official in Solomon’s household. “And he said to Jeroboam, ‘Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, 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 worshiped 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. 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. 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. 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” (I Kings 31:38). This prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of Rehoboam. The Kingdom of Israel was divided into two lesser kingdoms: the Kingdom or house of Israel (comprising the ten northern tribes, represented by the birthright nation of Ephraim) and the Kingdom or house of Judah (comprising three tribes: Judah, Levi, and Benjamin).

Numerous scriptures attest to the separation of the Solomonic Kingdom of Israel into two competing, sometimes warring (II Kings 16:1, 2, 5-7) lesser kingdoms biblically known as the “house of Israel” and the “house of Judah.” For instance,

- a) “‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the **house of Israel** and to the **house of Judah**’” (Jeremiah 33:14);
- b) “And I will cause the **captives of Judah** and the **captives of Israel** to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first” (Jeremiah 33:7);

- c) “‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people **Israel** and **Judah**,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it’” (Jeremiah 30:3);
- d) “because the **children of Israel** and the **children of Judah** have done only evil before Me from their youth” (Jeremiah 32:30);
- e) “‘For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the **whole house of Israel** and the **whole house of Judah** to cling to Me,’ says the LORD, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear’” (Jeremiah 13:11).

The latter scripture proves conclusively the existence of two distinct kingdoms—the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The kingdom of Israel contained Ephraim and Manasseh, both of which embodied the aforementioned birthright blessings. The southern kingdom of Judah (comprising three tribes: Judah, Benjamin, and Levi) embodied the scepter blessing.

The Kingdom of Israel (the northern ten tribes)

The northern ten tribes of Israel were first confederated under Jeroboam. However, Jeroboam established an unfortunate precedent that was followed by all of his successors: he disobeyed God by altering His truth and adopting pagan customs. “Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. 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 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. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

“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” (I Kings 12:25-32). Jeroboam was concerned about self-preservation, and knew that the holy days and festivals were designed in part to promote patriotism and nationalism. Therefore, if the inhabitants of the northern ten tribes (confederated into the kingdom or house of Israel) observed these holy days and festivals, they would eventually demand reunification with their brethren in the Kingdom of Judah. Thus Jeroboam created new national holy days and festivals, and new national symbols.

Jeroboam’s actions were “fraught with the most fatal consequences to Jeroboam and to Israel...It implied no less than a complete transformation of the religion of Jehovah, and that for a *purely political object*. The danger that, if the people regularly resorted to the great festivals at Jerusalem, their allegiance might be won back to their rightful king, who held rule in the God-chosen capital...”²⁹ Starting with Jeroboam, the kings of the house or Kingdom of Israel had a vested interest in not returning to God. If the northern Israelites returned to God’s laws and theology, their allegiance would then shift to the house or Kingdom of Judah.

²⁹ Edersheim, pgs 635, 636, emphasis mine

The kings of the house or Kingdom of Israel were a sorry lot. Sure, they achieved much: they built cities and extended their boundaries. But to a man, they never departed from the sins of Jeroboam. “When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria” (Hosea 7:1). Here God used three terms or names for the Kingdom of Israel: “Israel,” “Ephraim,” and “Samaria.” “Ephraim” because it was the birthright nation; “Samaria” because it was the capital established by King Omri; and “Israel” because Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and His name lived on especially in Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh, the forefathers of their eponymous tribes (later nations) that resided in the Kingdom or house of Israel.

The Kingdom of Israel lasted a little more than 243 years. Despite God’s attempt to arrest its moral decline by sending prophets (e.g. Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, etc.) to its leaders and people, the Kingdom of Israel never departed from the sins of Jeroboam. In fact, the leaders and people became more degenerate as the years, decades, and centuries passed. The Kingdom of Israel’s descent into degeneracy culminated in their gradual conquest and exile by the Assyrians, from 745 to 718 BC. “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.... So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day” (II Kings 17:5-6, 23).

In the 9th and 8th centuries BC, Assyria was the “scourge and master of the entire Middle East.”³⁰ Moreover, it was the first empire to engage in ethnic cleansing. Conquered territory was administered by Assyrian officials, and the conquered people were deported into other regions of the Empire. “It is reckoned that some 4.5 million persons were uprooted and sent to diverse parts of the empire, and that 80% of these were deported from the days of Tiglath-Pileser III (c. 745 BC) onward. These people, too, were treated in their new homes just like the ‘native Assyrians’—no distinction was made. Simultaneously, great bodies of ‘native’ Assyrians were transported to various frontier posts, sensitive areas, or simply to replace deportees. Thus a huge mixing of the population took place over the century-and-a-quarter, with a corresponding erosion of particularist sentiments and cultural and political identities. Everyone was now, in an even more realistic sense, the ‘slave’ of the king.”³¹

The process of ethnic cleansing, the amalgamation of different nationalities, and the “erosion” of particular identities and religions—summarized in the foregoing paragraph—explains perfectly what happened to the Kingdom or house of Israel (comprising the ten northern tribes, represented by the birthright nation Ephraim). God allowed the Assyrian Empire to conquer the Kingdom of Israel, and to exile the Israelites to another region of the Greater Middle East. He also allowed the Assyrian Empire to transport other people into the lands once occupied by the northern Israelites. These people became the Samaritans of Jesus’ day.

God allowed this to happen because Israel was exceedingly sinful and beyond the point of no return:

“For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. There they burned

³⁰ S.E. Finer, vol. 1, pg. 210.

³¹ Ibid, pg. 225

incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, ‘You shall not do this thing.’

“Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, ‘Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.’ Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone” (II Kings 17:7-18).

Long before the Assyrian captivity, the northern tribes of Israel, including the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh, had rejected God. By rejecting God’s truth and adopting pagan customs, they had thus renounced their identity. Even the nations of Ephraim and Manasseh had renounced their birthright. Luckily for them, God was faithful to the unconditional promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Though Israel, and especially Ephraim and Manasseh, had rejected God, He did not reject them.

After their Assyrian captivity, the ten tribes comprising the Kingdom of Israel became “lost” to history. The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea, and the authors of the New Testament, describe these northern tribes as “lost.” The northern Israelite nations (including the birthright nations Ephraim and Manasseh) are lost because they forgot their identity and origin. However, the Bible provides us with clues regarding their destination.

Ephraim’s and Manasseh’s destination: a clue list

I’m using Ephraim and Manasseh as the representative nations of the Kingdom of Israel (comprised of ten tribes). They are the birthright nations (I Chronicles 5:1) who would, together and separately, inherit the divine blessings of national greatness. Again, according to Jacob’s prophecy (Genesis 49), they would become a great nation (Manasseh) and a great company of nations (Ephraim). It’s obvious they did not achieve such greatness in the Davidic or Solomonic Kingdom, nor did they achieve their destinies before the Assyrian conquest (745-718 BC) or during Assyrian captivity (ending in 612 BC, when the Assyrian Empire crumbled.).

The divine blessings materialized after Ephraim and Manasseh had arrived at their final destinations. Again, Joseph’s successful (“a fruitful bough”), colonizing (“his branches run over the wall”) and regal (“crown on the head of him”) progeny (Ephraim and Manasseh) inhabit temperate and fruitful (“blessings of heaven,” etc.) lands by the seas (“by a well”), and their militaries are very strong (“But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob”). They would grow “into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Genesis 48:16) and later separate into a great company of nations (Ephraim) and a great nation (Manasseh). Because

those prophecies (in Genesis 48 & 49) refer to the “latter days,” modern-day Manasseh and Ephraim must be strong nations residing in temperate eco-zones, and by the seas. Therefore, they cannot be landlocked nations (most of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America), tropical countries (Southeast Asia, most of Africa, all of Central America and large portion of South America, and the Caribbean nations), and nations with weak militaries (all but a few nations). Where, then, did Israel, and especially the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh, go after the Assyrian Empire crumbled in 612 BC?

They did not return to the land of Palestine. In several places the Bible clearly states that the northern tribes (later nations) of Israel, including Ephraim and Manasseh, have not reunified with the house or Kingdom of Judah. For example:

- “Then the **children of Judah** and the **children of Israel** shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel” (Hosea 1:11);
- “I will strengthen the **house of Judah**, and I will save the **house of Joseph**. I will bring them back, because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; for I am the LORD their God, and I will hear them. Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as if with wine. Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD. I will whistle for them and gather them, for I will redeem them; and they shall increase as they once increased” (Zechariah 10:5). (Notice that God uses the “house of Joseph,” and then “Ephraim,” to represent the House of Israel.);
- “Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For **Judah** and for the **children of Israel, his companions.**’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For **Joseph, the stick of Ephraim**, and for **all the house of Israel, his companions.**’ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you mean by these? -- say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Surely I will take the **stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim**, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the **stick of Judah**, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.’ And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. 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 37:15-22).

Clearly, the northern ten tribes of Israel, represented by the birthright nation of Ephraim, never returned to Palestine and thus never reunified with the Kingdom of Judah. Where, then, did they go?

“For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations” (Amos 9:9). The northern tribes of Israel were sifted among the nations. But they were sifted among the nations en-route to their final destination.

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God’” (Hosea 1:10). Coupled with Jacob’s prophecy, Ephraim and Manasseh would grow together into a “multitude in the midst of the earth” and then separate into a great company of nations (Ephraim) and a great nation (Manasseh), in lands where

they would eventually find the grace of God. “Thus says the LORD: ‘The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness—Israel, when I went to give him rest’ (Jeremiah 31:2). Biblically, the “grace” of God can only mean the grace delivered through the acceptance of Jesus and His sacrifice. The northern Israelites found grace in the wilderness (not in Palestine), after God gave them “rest” from their wanderings. The Bible therefore provides the following clues regarding the final destinations and identities of Ephraim and Manasseh:

- a) Ephraim and Manasseh grew into a great company of nations and a great nation residing by the seas. At first they grew together into a “multitude in the midst of the earth,” and later separated to fulfill their destinies. By traveling and growing together, they must have shared the same laws and customs. At one point in their history, an event or series of events forced the two tribes (now nations) to separate;
- b) The nations are fruitful, that is, rich and blessed with abundant natural resources. Therefore, they cannot reside in the tropics (as stated earlier, all tropical nations—save Hong Kong and Singapore—are poor). They must reside in temperate eco-zones, and again, by the seas;
- c) They have strong militaries, thus eliminating all but a few nations;
- d) They engaged in colonization (“his branches run over the wall”), *and*
- e) They are Christian (they “found grace in the wilderness”).

The longer the list, the fewer the possibilities! We’ve eliminated non-Christian, landlocked, tropical nations; in other words, most of Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and inner Europe. We are thus left with North America and European coastal nations.

Westward, ho!

“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and *Ephraim is My firstborn*. Hear the word of the LORD, *O nations*, and declare it in the *isles afar off*, and say, *He who scattered Israel will gather him*, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock” (Jeremiah 31:9-10). Amos declared that God sifted the house of Israel among the nations, and Jeremiah said He scattered them in the “isles afar off.” In these islands they found Christian grace. Therefore, the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh traveled together to the “isles afar off,” where they settled and grew until some event forced them to separate. To which non-tropical, faraway “isles” did they travel?

The 49th chapter of Isaiah describes the future restoration of Greater Israel. The Israelites will no longer “hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them. I will make each of My mountains a road, and My highways shall be elevated. Surely these shall come from afar; Look! *Those from the north and the west and these from the land of Sinim*” (Isaiah 49:10-12). No one knows for sure where “Sinim” is located. However, Isaiah said the Israelites will return to the land of Palestine from the north and west; specifically, from the faraway islands north and west of Palestine. Which faraway islands are directly northwest from the land of Palestine? The only islands that qualify are the British Isles (including Britain, Ireland, and Scotland); they are faraway islands located directly north and west of Palestine. Thus the clue list grows by one significant clue:

- a) Ephraim and Manasseh grew into a great company of nations and a great nation residing by the seas. At first they grew together into a “multitude in the midst of the earth,” and later separated to fulfill their destinies. By traveling and growing together, they must have shared the same laws and customs. At one point in their history, an event or series of events forced the two tribes (now nations) to separate;
- b) The nations are fruitful, that is, rich and blessed with abundant natural resources. Therefore, they cannot reside in the tropics (as stated earlier, all tropical nations—save Hong Kong and Singapore—are poor). They must reside in temperate eco-zones, and again, by the seas;
- c) They have strong militaries, thus eliminating all but a few nations;
- d) They engaged in colonization (“his branches run over the wall”),
- e) They are Christian (they “found grace in the wilderness”); *and*
- f) They traveled to the faraway islands located north and west of Palestine.

The evidence strongly indicates that Ephraim and Manasseh migrated to the British islands, where they became numerous and prosperous. They also found Christian grace there. Beginning in the mid 1600s, during and after the tumultuous English Civil Wars, and after the overthrow of Oliver Cromwell’s government, the British Puritans began to colonize North America. Such colonization fulfills the prophecy that Ephraim and Manasseh would separate. In addition to North America, the British colonized India, Australia and New Zealand, and parts of the Caribbean, Southeast and East Asia, and Africa. British colonization fulfills the prophecy that Ephraim would become a great company of nations. In the meantime, Manasseh (the United States) has fulfilled its destiny by becoming the strongest and most dominant nation since ancient Rome.

Six significant biblical clues

Aside from the clues already mentioned, there are several other disparate biblical clues about the destination and identity of the ancient northern tribes of Israel, together known as the “house of Israel,” which was biblically represented by the birthright nation Ephraim.

1. The Israelites would return from the west

Speaking about the restoration of the Israelites (the northern ten “lost” tribes) to Greater Palestine, God says, “They will walk after the Lord, He will roar like a lion; indeed He will roar, and His sons will come trembling *from the west*...” (Hosea 11:8). God is referring to the northern “lost” tribes of Israel, and earlier in the chapter, He uses “Ephraim” (verse 3) as Israel’s representative nation. Notice that the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, and their “companions” (descendants from the rest of the nations of the house of Israel – Ezekiel 37:15), will arrive at Greater Palestine from the west. This means that, after the Assyrian empire crumbled in 612 BC, the northern Israelites began a long migration westward, into Europe, and as we’ve already seen, the birthright people (from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) settled in the British islands. The westward migration implied in the 11th chapter of Hosea accords with aforementioned prophecies of Jeremiah (chapter 31, verses 9 & 10) and Isaiah (chapter 49, verses 10-12).

2. "Ephraim follows after an East wind" (Hosea 12:1)

An easterly wind blows in a westward direction. Hence the house of Israel (for Hosea was a prophet to the House of Israel) traveled in a westward direction. If they had traveled eastward, then they would have been following a westerly wind blowing from west to east.

3. "I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west" (Isaiah 43:5)

In accordance with the previous biblical clues, God says He will "gather" Israel from the west and their descendants from the east. This implies that the original ten tribes (later nations) of the house of Israel, especially Ephraim and Manasseh, migrated westward, and after they reached their final destination, their descendants established colonies in the East. The nation of Ephraim (or Britain) settled in the British islands, but their descendants colonized India, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Africa, and Southeast and East Asia.

4. The geography of ancient Manasseh and United States

Notice the rough yet striking similarity between the shape of ancient Manasseh and the shape of the eastern section of the United States, from the east coast to about the Mississippi. By affixing East Manasseh to the western border of Western Manasseh, you would get a rough approximation of the United States from its east coast (including Florida and the indentation made by the Great Lakes) to the Rockies (and including Texas). It's almost poetic that God guided Manasseh to a land whose shape and borders resemble its tribal shape and borders in Greater Palestine.



5. Jesus' commission

Jesus commanded His disciples (later apostles) to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus gave His disciples a worldwide commission. However, earlier He predicted that His disciples will not have achieved that worldwide mission before He returns: “go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel...for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 10:6, 23). Although Jesus commanded His disciples to preach to all the nations, here He predicted that their success will be limited to the “cities of Israel.”

In verse 6 of Matthew 10, Jesus referred to the “house of Israel.” Moreover, He described them as being lost. Obviously, Jesus was using a biblical term applied only to the northern ten tribes of the house of Israel, in contrast with the “house of Judah,” that is, the descendants of the tribes of Judah (the Jews), Benjamin, and Levi. It is well known that the house of Judah never became lost. Over a century after Assyria conquered the house of Israel (the northern ten tribes), the Babylonian Empire conquered the house of Judah and exiled its inhabitants into Babylon (commonly referred to as the 70-year Babylonian Captivity). However, after Babylon fell to the Persians and Medes, and during the reign of Cyrus the Great, the Jews (the Benjaminites and Levites were considered Jews by this point) returned to Palestine. Ezra and Nehemiah describe their return in their self-titled biblical books.

Thus the Jews were never lost to history. It's abundantly clear, however, that their brethren—the ten “lost” tribes of Israel, or as the Bible refers to them, the “house of Israel”—became lost. “For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.’ ‘Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her so that *she cannot find her paths*’” (Hosea 2:5-6). Here God poetically and symbolically described the sins of the house of Israel. (Again, Hosea was a prophet to the house of Israel.) God said that He will “build a wall against her [the house of Israel] so that she cannot find her paths.” In other words, the house of Israel (comprising the northern ten tribes or nations) would become so oblivious of their identity that, even if they tried, they will be unable discover their origin.

Jesus referred to the house of Israel as lost and sent His disciples to them. And they (the Church or the collection of God's saints) will remain there until Jesus returns: “you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes.” In which direction did His disciples travel after receiving this command? It's obvious that Christianity spread westward from Palestine. And Christianity today is largely found in the Americas and Europe, and in Australia (originally, a British or Ephraimite colony). A majority of Asia is Buddhist and Islamic, northern Africa is largely Islamic, and sub-Saharan African religion is largely a combination of Christian and pre-Christian animism.

Jesus said His disciples will not “finish going through the cities of Israel” before He returns. Since the disciples went west (for that is the direction in which Christianity initially spread), and because their success will be limited to the cities of Israel, then it's safe to assume that the cities of Israel (of the house of Israel) are west of Palestine. Again, this accords with aforementioned prophecies by Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Hosea.

6. 2,520 years

In the 26th chapter of Leviticus, God describes the consequences of Israel's obedience and disobedience. The first thirteen verses state the blessings of obedience. The subsequent verses describe the consequences of disobedience. It's obvious that the house of Israel traveled down the road of

disobedience. Therefore, they incurred the penalties of disobedience described in Leviticus 26:14-46 (quoted in full):

“But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.

“I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you *seven times* more for your sins.

“I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit. If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you *seven times* according to your sins.

“I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted. And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you *seven times* for your sins.

“I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied. Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you *seven times* for your sins.

“Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you. I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and

they will fall. They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies. But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you. So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

“If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me—I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes.

“Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. ***But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors***, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.’ These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.”

Time and again, God states that He will punish the Israelites “seven times” for their sins. By repeatedly using this term, God is saying something significant about the duration of Israel’s punishment. But the 26th chapter of Leviticus does not define “times.” For that definition, we must turn elsewhere.

Biblically, there are 360 days in a year. Thus, prophetically and symbolically, the amount of time spent by the “woman” in the “wilderness” is 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6), or 3 ½ years, the same amount of time given to the prophetic and symbolic beast of Revelation (42 months - Revelation 13:5 - which amounts to 1,260 days or 3.5 years). Moreover, the woman (prophetically and symbolically, the Church) mentioned in the 12th chapter of Revelation is further described as (prophetically and symbolically) spending “a time, and times, and half a time” in the wilderness. Since she is described earlier as spending 1,260 days (or 42 months or 3 ½ years) in the wilderness, a “time” thus means 1 year; “times” (plural), 2 years; and “half a time,” one-half of a year (or simply, 3 ½ years, or 42 months, or 1,260 days). We are now ready to apply this to the “seven times” specified in the 26th chapter of Leviticus.

A time represents a year, and biblically, there are 360 days in one year. “Seven times” means 360 days multiplied by seven, which equals 2,520 days. However, symbolically, a day can refer to a year: “I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year” (Ezekiel 4:6). (God commanded Ezekiel to lay on his side for a certain amount of days, and each day would represent a year of punishment for the national sins of Israel.) Therefore, we should refer to “seven times” not as 2,520 days but as 2,520 years.

The Assyrians dissected and exiled the house of Israel bit by bit. They did not conquer the whole house at once. Rather, they conquered and exiled a piece of Israel here, and a piece there. Deportation began in 735 BC (or perhaps 745 BC). 2520 years from 735 BC (adding one year to account for the fact that there is no year 0) brings us to 1786, the year in which some American leaders asked for a special Convention to remedy the defective and weak Articles of Confederation. However, the delegates to the Convention (known as the Constitutional Convention) did not just improve the Articles of Confederation;

rather, they tossed the Articles in the garbage and created the Constitution, which created a strong federal Government. How poetic! The ancient house of Israel (including Manasseh, one of the two birthright nations) began to lose their sovereignty and bits of their confederated government in 735 BC. 2520 years later (or the prophesied *seven times* of Leviticus 26), the descendants of Manasseh, who eventually migrated to North America and founded the United States, began to clamor for a federal government in order to preserve their newly acquired sovereignty.

The Assyrians removed the largest number of Israelites (from the house of Israel) in 718 BC. 2520 years (or *seven times*) from 718 BC (again, adding one year to account for the fact that there is no year 0) brings us to 1803, the year of the Louisiana Purchase from France: it was an “agreement by which the United States brought from France that part of France’s North American empire roughly defined by the Missouri and Mississippi watersheds. The deal doubled the size of the nation, creating what Thomas Jefferson termed ‘*an empire for liberty.*’”³² Again, how poetic! Exactly “seven times” (2520 years) after the majority of the house of Israel lost its liberty to the Assyrians, the U.S. government purchased (for a pittance) a huge amount of land from the French, and created what Thomas Jefferson called an “empire for liberty.” In other words, a majority of the house of Israel *lost their liberty* in 718 BC, and the prophesied seven times later (2520 years), its descendants (the modern-day nation of Manasseh) gained an “*empire for liberty.*”

One commentator (Fredrick Haberman) claims that the house of Israel’s captivity began in 745 BC, when the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III conquered large parts of the tribes of Zebulun, Asher, Gad, and Issachar. *Seven times* or 2520 years later (again, adding one year) brings us to 1776, the year of our independence.

Indeed, God did not forget the promises made so long ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: “But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors” (Leviticus 26:46). God remembered to bless His birthright nation Manasseh in their new land in North America. He has thus blessed America, the strongest nation since ancient Rome, because of promises first made to Abraham over three millennia ago.

Historical clues

The Bible states the house of Israel migrated westward and “found grace in the *wilderness*—Israel, when I went to give him rest” (Jeremiah 31:2). In other words, the northern tribes (or house) of Israel migrated to the uninhabited or sparsely populated regions of Europe, and there they would fulfill the divine promise to Abraham: “I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore...” (Genesis 22:17). The Mediterranean region of Europe during the first millennium BC could not have sustained such an explosive growth in population, for that region was already populated with, for example, several large and expanding city-states and nations (e.g. the populated and colonizing city-states of Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor, etc.). Thus many of the peoples who populated West and Northwest Europe—the Celts, the Scandinavians, the Angles, the Saxons, the Iberians, etc.—were descendants of the ancient Israelites, that is, the descendants of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Reuben, Simeon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, and Zebulun (together, the ten numerous “lost” tribes of Israel).

So far I’ve proposed that Ephraim and Manasseh, the birthright nations of the house of Israel, migrated westward and settled in the British islands, whereupon they grew, became prosperous, and found Christian grace. The people of Manasseh then began to separate from their brethren in the 1600s AD, and to migrate to North America, where they eventually founded the strongest nation (the United States) since ancient Rome.

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of *Ephraim*, and the *tribes of Israel*, his *companions*’” (Ezekiel 37:19). And, “for truly I [Jesus] say to you,

³² *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, article on the Louisiana Purchase

you [His disciples, collectively known as the Church] shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 10:23). As we’ve already seen, Jesus sent His disciples on a worldwide mission. However, His disciples will not have finished going through the “cities of Israel” before He returns. Here the cities of Israel refer not only to the cities of modern-day Ephraim (Great Britain) and Manasseh (the U.S.) but also to the cities of the other tribes (nations) of the house of Israel. Ezekiel refers to those tribes as Ephraim’s “companions.” Thus many of the modern-day European nations are descendants of the tribes of the house of Israel. As “companions” these tribes (or now, nations) would share similar attributes (e.g. languages, laws, and social and religious customs). Some of these national attributes are described by the dying Jacob (in Genesis 48 & 49). I’ve described Jacob’s description of the national attributes and conditions of the latter-day nations of Ephraim and Manasseh (together, the tribe of Joseph), and of Judah (comprising the Jews and descendants from the tribes of Benjamin and Levi). We are thus left with eight other nations: Reuben, Simeon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, and Zebulan:

1. **“Reuben**, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch.
2. **“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.
3. **Zebulun** shall dwell by the haven of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall adjoin Sidon.
4. **Issachar** is a strong donkey, lying down between two burdens; he saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; he bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, and became a band of slaves.
5. **Dan** shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider shall fall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!
6. **Gad**, a troop shall tramp upon him, but he shall triumph at last.
7. Bread from **Asher** shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties.
8. **Naphtali** is a deer let loose; he uses beautiful words.”

It’s impossible to trace with certainty the migration of thirteen nations over two millennia. It’s easier to conclude that Ephraim (the great company of nations) and Manasseh (the great nation) became, respectively, the United Kingdom (or Britain) and the United States because the Bible provides several significant clues. Ephraim and Manasseh:

- (i) Grew together (Genesis 48:16) and thus shared similar laws and customs, and later separated into a great nation and company of nations (same verse);

- (ii) Are rich (“fruitful” – Genesis 49:22)
- (iii) Reside in temperate eco-zones (barring Hong Kong & Singapore, there are no rich tropical nations), and by the seas (Genesis 49:22);
- (iv) Possess strong militaries (Genesis 49:24);
- (v) Have monarchies (Genesis 49:26). This attribute applies only to Great Britain, which possesses a constitutional (and titular) monarchy.
- (vi) Are Christian (they “found grace in the wilderness”—Jeremiah 31:2);
- (vii) Migrated westward, to the faraway islands (Jeremiah 32:9-10) north and west of Palestine (Isaiah 49:12); and
- (viii) Engaged in colonization (Genesis 49:22).

In history, only two related, brother nations (both of which are Christian countries sharing much of the same Judeo-Christian culture, customs, and laws) match this criteria: Great Britain (Ephraim) and the United States (Manasseh).

The prophecies concerning the other nations are much less specific. However, as we’ve seen, we do know these nations migrated westward and settled in Europe. We must also remember that Jacob described the latter-day (or the modern-day) conditions of these tribes-turned-into European nations. Therefore, we can assume that:

1. Reuben became a preeminent (“excellency of dignity”), strong (“My might”), and “unstable” nation that won’t excel in the “latter days.” This sound suspiciously like modern-day France: “Although ultimately a victor in World Wars I and II, France suffered extensive losses in its empire, wealth, manpower, and rank as a dominant nation-state. Nevertheless, France today is one of the most modern countries in the world and is a leader among European nations. Since 1958, it has constructed a presidential democracy resistant to the instabilities experienced in earlier parliamentary democracies.”³³ Indeed, in accordance with Jacob’s description of Reuben, France is one of the preeminent nations, and it has a rich history. Yet it’s also “unstable” (it’s now in its Fifth Republic) and, during the 19th and 20th centuries, has suffered invasion (World War I) and humiliating defeats (“you shall not excel”) in the Napoleonic Wars, the War of 1870 (with Prussia) and World War II, and in Algeria and Indochina.
2. Simeon (and Levi) have been scattered among the nations of the house of Israel.
3. Zebulun resides by water and must therefore be located either in Southern Europe (bordering the Mediterranean), Western Europe (bordering the Atlantic Ocean), or Northern Europe (bordering the North Sea). However, the prophecies hint that Ephraim’s “companions” (the “tribes of Israel,” including Zebulan) migrated to the sparsely populated regions of Europe, thus eliminating from contention the populated Mediterranean region; this leaves Western Europe bordering the Atlantic or Northwestern Europe bordering the North Sea.

Moreover, modern-day Zebulun shares a border with modern-day “Sidon” (or perhaps the Sidonians and Zebulunites merged into one nation). Sidon was a Canaanite city-state along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. It was a maritime power, as was Zebulun. According to this prophecy, the modern-day nation of Zebulun migrated to a coastal area of Europe, and it became a maritime power. Some researchers (e.g. Helen Koppejan, *Strange Parallel-*

³³ *The CIA World Factbook*, article on France

Zebulun, Tribe of Israel-Holland) have claimed that Zebulun became Holland (alternately called the Netherlands), which was a major maritime power during the 1600s AD. Indeed, Holland became a “haven” for ships: “Even more impressive were the ports large and small, hives of shipping. By the 1560s the province of Holland alone possessed some one thousand eight hundred seagoing ships—six times those floated by Venice at the height of its prosperity a century earlier....the whole seaboard was a pincushion of masts...”³⁴

4. Issachar settled in a “pleasant land” but became a “band of slaves,” implying that it became a weak, subservient European nation situated in a beautiful land. It’s impossible to ascertain which nation, however.
5. It’s also difficult to ascertain the modern-day identities of Gad, Asher, and Naphatali. However, the modern-day nation of (i) Gad seems to have experienced foreign occupation (“troop shall tramp upon him”) which it overthrew after a hard and long struggle (“but he shall triumph *at last*”); (ii) Asher is a nation noted for its agriculture (“Bread from Asher shall be rich”); and (iii) Naphatali is noted for its literature (“he uses beautiful words”).

Again, it’s very difficult to ascertain the identities of these eight nations with certainty, with one exception: Dan. This itinerant and enterprising tribe of Israel habitually renamed conquered, traversed, and settled territory by the name of its eponymous ancestor.

The tribe of Dan

God told Joshua to divide the conquered land of Greater Palestine among the tribes of Israel (Joshua 13:7). The tribe of Dan was apportioned a sliver of territory abutting and sloping around the western and southern borders of Ephraim. However, the territory proved to be too small for the enterprising Danites: “And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father” (Joshua 19:47). The tribe of Dan became dissatisfied with the size of its territory, so the Danites decided to conquer territory, first in Leshem and then in Laish: “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....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 [Laish] and search it....they struck them [the inhabitants of Laish] with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there. 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” (Judges 18:1-2, 27-29). These early examples demonstrate two national characteristics of the Danites:

- a) The Danites were an itinerant people who became dissatisfied with their lot and thus sought more territory. In other words, they were ambitious, opportunistic and enterprising. Initially located in the southwest coastal region of Greater Israel, the Danites founded colonies in the northern and western sections of Israel.

³⁴ Landes, pg. 137

- b) They tended to rename conquered territory after their eponymous ancestor. Both Lesham and Laish became “Dan.”

There are no vowels in ancient Hebrew. Thus God was spelled G-d, and Dan D-n. This posed no problem when writing, but speaking was a different story. How did they pronounce G-d, or D-n? They solved this problem by inserting a vowel that varied phonetically according to the dialect of the person speaking, for example, D-n.

Like all nations, the dialects of the ancient Israelites varied by region. Because the Danites were found in different regions of Israel, their dialects differed; therefore, the pronunciation of D-n by the Danites varied by region. Over time, and because of the different dialects, D-n was pronounced phonetically as Dan, or Dun, or Din, or Den, or Don. And when the Danites migrated westward, they took these different pronunciations with them.

Again, the Danites tended to rename conquered, traversed and settled territory after their eponymous ancestor. Because of the absence of vowels in ancient Hebrew, and because they surmounted this problem by inserting a vowel that varied phonetically according to the particular dialect, the words Don, Dun, Din, Den, and Dan would appear in the renamed territories that the Danites conquered, traversed and settled. Thus we have the rivers DAN-ube, DAN-ieper, and DAN-iester. Or countries called Mace-DON-ia and DEN-mark, which literally means “mark of Dan.” The citizens of Denmark are called DAN-es, who left their “mark” in a territory called Denmark.

This is what the beloved 11th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica says about the history of Denmark:

“Denmark (Danmark): Our earliest knowledge of Denmark is derived from Pliny, who speaks of three islands named Skandiai, a name which is also applied to Sweden. He says nothing about the inhabitants of these islands, but tells us more about the **Jutish** peninsula, or **Cimbric** Chersonese as he calls it. He places the **Saxons** on the neck, above them the Sigoulones, Sabaliggoi and Kobandoi, then the Chaloi, then above them the Phoundousioi, then the Charondes and finally the **Kimbri**. He also mentions the three islands called Alokiai, at the northern end of the peninsula. This would point to the fact that the Limfjord was then open at both ends, and agree with Adam of Bremen (iv. 16), who also speaks of three islands called Wendila, Morse and Thud. The **Cimbri** and Charydes are mentioned in the Monumentum Ancyranum as sending embassies to Augustus in A.D. 5. The Promontorium Cimbrorum is spoken of in Pliny, who says that the Sinus Codanus lies between it and Mons Saevo. The latter place is probably to be found in the high-lying land on the N.E. coast of Germany, and the Sinus Codanus must be the S.W. corner of the Baltic, and not the whole sea. Pomponius Mela says that the **Cimbri** and **Teutones** dwelt on the Sinus Codanus, the latter also in Scandinavia (or Sweden). The Romans believed that these Cimbri and Teutones were the same as those who invaded Gaul and Italy at the end of the 2nd century B.c. The Cimbri may probably be traced in the province of Aalborg, formerly known as Himmerland; the Teutones, with less certainty, may be placed in Thyth or Thyland, north of the Limfjord. No further reference to these districts is found till towards the close of the migration period, about the beginning of the 6th century, when the Heruli (q.v.), a nation dwelling in or near the basin of the Elbe, were overthrown by the Langobardi. According to Procopius (Bellum Gothicum, ii. 15), a part of them made their way across the desert of the Slays, through the lands of the Warni and the Danes to Thoule (i.e. Sweden). This is the first recorded use of the name Danes. It occurs again in Gregory of Tours (Historiae Francorum, iii. 3) in connection with an irruption of a Gotish (loosely called Danish)

fleet into the Netherlands (c. 520). From this time the use of the name is fairly common. The heroic poetry of the **Anglo-Saxons** may carry the name further back, though probably it is not very ancient, at all events on the mainland.

According to late Danish tradition Denmark now consisted of Vitheslaeth (i.e. Zealand, Men, Falster and Laaland), Jutland (with Fyen) and Skaane. ***Jutland was acquired by Dan, the eponymous ancestor of the Danes.***

Notice that the authoritative Britannica states that Jutland was “acquired by Dan, the eponymous ancestor of the Danes.” This territory was therefore settled by people called Danites, and as we’ve seen in the above quote, the Danites were linguistically and physically related to several tribes called the Teutones, the Anglo-Saxons, the Cimbri, the Jutes, and the Kimbroi. We’ll meet these people in a subsequent section called “How did an Israelite become a European?” For now, suffice it to say that the Danites migrated westward and northward into Europe, and were related linguistically and physically to other tribal people. Perhaps these are the companions referred to in Ezekiel 37:15.

Some historians also claim that the settlers of Ireland were called the *Tuatha de Danaans*, translated as the tribe of Dan. Unsurprisingly, we find the following names in Ireland: DAN-sower, DUN-drum, DUN-garven, DON-e-gal City, DIN-gle, etc.

Ephraim and his “companions”

“Dan shall be a serpent by the way.” As some scholars have noted, perhaps that prophetic utterance should be translated, “Dan shall be a serpent’s trail.” After all, like a snake leaving a trail in the sand, the Danites have left their trail, or mark, throughout Europe.

Ireland and Denmark were probably the final destinations of the Danites. Ephraim and Manasseh migrated to the British islands. Zebulun might have migrated to Holland. Because the Bible states that the Israelite tribes are Ephraim’s “companions” (Ezekiel 37:15), and because Ephraim (and Manasseh) settled in the British islands, we should assume the rest of the tribes relocated to the surrounding region. And yet, it would be so much easier if the tribes had imitated the Danites in renaming their territories after their eponymous ancestors. At least we know this much: Ephraim, Manasseh, and the rest of the tribes of the house of Israel migrated, slowly but surely, to Western and Northwestern Europe.

It’s not inconceivable that some ancient Israelites migrated there long before the Assyrian conquest (745-718 BC). After all, the Solomonic Kingdom conducted extensive trade with nearby and faraway countries: “In partnership with Hiram of Tyre, Solomon organized shipping for trade in the Mediterranean and on the Red Sea; with Cilicia and Egypt, he developed a cartel of horses and chariots; and he arranged with the Queen of Sheba (Saba) for trade in frankincense and myrrh from south Arabia.”³⁵ And, “the coastal area [of the Syria-Palestine] relied on trade: routes from Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Arabia led to the Mediterranean coast and were linked by ship to Cyprus, Greece, and Egypt.”³⁶ Because of such foreign trade, the Israelites built many harbors on its west coast (the east coast of the Mediterranean). Moreover, there’s no mention that such trade, even on a much smaller scale, stopped after the demise of the Solomonic Kingdom under his son Rehoboam. And it’s logical to assume that the coastal tribes built local economies dependent on trade, and that they would have continued to engage in trade with other countries of the world.

The ancient Israelites engaged in trade because they were not self-sufficient. The following table illustrates the complexity of their economy, and their dependence on foreign trade:

³⁵ *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th ed., pg. 34

³⁶ *ibid*, pg. 33

In the time of the kings:	<u>Israel's exports</u>	<u>Israel's imports</u>
	oil & cereals	tin, lead, silver (the western Mediterranean!)
	fruit	copper (Asia Minor, or modern-day Turkey)
	honey	timber (Lebanon)
	nuts	linen (Egypt & Syria)
	aromatic gum	purple dyed cloth (Phoenicia)
	myrrh	

The ancient Israelites also imported many luxury items: by land, from the East: gems, spices, gold; and by sea: ivory, apes, peacocks, precious stones, algum wood, gold, silver. Even today, Israel must import “crude oil, grains, raw materials, and military equipment.”³⁷

During the Solomonic Kingdom and thereafter, the Israelites engaged in seaborne trade with countries far and near. Such trade survived the demise of the unified Kingdom. Harbors were built along the east coast of the Mediterranean, and the harbor in Joppa was among the most famous. Joppa was located in the territory of Dan; therefore, the Danites were especially well-situated to engage in foreign trade.

Foreign trade promotes interaction with foreigners, and it is largely carried out by entrepreneurial people and nations (in this case, tribes). Long before the Assyrian conquest (745-718 BC), the ancient Israelites engaged in foreign trade, even with people and nations living on the western fringes of the Mediterranean. We must assume that some entrepreneurial Israelites migrated westward along well-established trade routes. Thus some Israelites arrived in Europe *before* the prophesied westward migration spurred by the demise of the Assyrian Kingdom in the seventh century BC. And we must remember that the Israelites (the trailblazers—especially the Danites—and the larger part of the house of Israel who began their migration soon after the demise of the Assyrian Empire) were prophesied to go to the uninhabited or sparsely populated regions of Europe (the “wilderness,” Jeremiah 31:2).

Why Europe?

What type of Europe did the ancient Israelites encounter? And why did the unseen hand of God guide His people to Europe, specifically Western and Northwestern Europe (Isaiah 49:10-12, Jeremiah 31:9-10, etc.)? Because of His promises to Abraham, whose very numerous descendants were to grow into strong nations living by the seas, in temperate eco-zones. The geography and climate of Europe, especially Western and Northwestern Europe, enabled God to fulfill these divine promises. “Take climate. Europe does have winters, cold enough to keep down pathogens and pests. Winter’s severity increases as one moves east into continental climes, but even the milder versions fend off festering morbidity. Endemic disease is present, but nothing like the disablers and killers found in hot lands. Parasitism is the exception...Even in winter, Western European temperatures are kind....As a result, Europeans were able to grow crops year round. They were assisted here by a relatively even rainfall pattern, distributed around the year and rarely torrential...This is a pattern found only exceptionally around the globe....This privileged European climate was the gift of the large warm current that we know as the Gulf Stream....This geological good fortune gives western Europe warm winds and gentle rain, water in all seasons, and low rates of evaporation—the makings of good crops, big livestock, and dense hardwood forests.

³⁷ CIA World Factbook, article on Israel

“Why was Europe so slow to develop, thousands of years after Egypt and Sumer? The answer, again, is geography: those hardwood forests....Not until people had iron cutting tools, in the first millennium before our era (B.C.E.), could they clear those otherwise fertile plains north of the Alps.”³⁸ This region of Europe is the “wilderness” of Jeremiah of 31:2, the region to which the people of the house of Israel (the northern ten “lost” tribes) would migrate.

Moreover, “European herds were typically larger and yielded lots of animal fertilizer (as against the human night soil employed in East Asia). This enabled more intensive cultivation and larger crops, which gave more feed, and so on in an upward spiral. As a result, Europeans kept a diet rich in dairy products, meat, and animal proteins. They grew taller and stronger while staying relatively free of the worm infestations that plagued China and India.”³⁹

In large part, geography (and clearly defined property rights, stable political systems, and culture) determines the prosperity of a nation. As we’ve seen, according to World Bank standards, all tropical countries save Hong Kong and Singapore are poor, and by contrast, most temperate countries are rich. It’s obvious that the unseen hand of God guided His people to regions of the earth (Northwestern and Western Europe, and then North America) whose productive soils and temperate ecologies could support the growth and prosperity promised to Abraham’s descendants.

The Europeans

As demonstrated in the foregoing sections, because of extensive foreign trade, some Israelites (especially the Danites and others from the coastal tribes) migrated westward, probably along well-established trade routes. It’s not uncommon for traders to establish colonies along such trade routes. Perhaps, then, the entrepreneurial Israelites engaging in trade colonized some sections of Europe before the Assyrian conquest in the eighth century. Colonies require laws, bureaucracies, governments, and militaries to defend the colonial governments, all necessary ingredients for building nations. Hence, over time, some of these Israelite colonies would have grown into nations.

“Most of the Northwestern and western parts of Europe were occupied in about 3000 BC by peoples sometimes termed western Mediterranean....By about 1800 BC the resulting cultures seemed to have fragmented sufficiently distinctly for us to identify among them the ancestors of the *Celts*...a society of warriors rather than traders or prospectors. They had wheeled transport. One enterprising group got to the British Isles and have some claim to being the first north-European sea travelers.”⁴⁰

Anciently, “Celts” is the name applied to related peoples living in Central, Western and Northwestern Europe. “The ancient writers regarded as homogeneous all the fairhaired peoples dwelling north of the Alps, the Greeks terming them all Keltoi. Physically they fall into two loosely-divided groups, which shade off into each other. The first of these is restricted to north-western Europe, having its chief seat in Scandinavia. It is distinguished by a long head, a long face, a narrow aquiline nose, blue eyes, very light hair and great stature. Those are the peoples usually termed *Teutonic* by modern writers. The other group is marked by a round head, a broad face, a nose often rather broad and heavy, hazel-grey eyes, light chestnut hair; they are thick-set and of medium height. This race is often termed Celtic or Alpine from the fact of its occurrence all along the great mountain chain from south-west France, in Savoy, in Switzerland, the PO valley and Tirol, as well as in Auvergne, Brittany, Normandy, Burgundy, the Ardennes and the Vosges. It thus stands midway not only geographically but also in physical features

³⁸ Landes, pgs. 17-19

³⁹ *ibid*, pgs 20-21

⁴⁰ J.M. Roberts, *History of the World*, pgs. 124, 126

between the Teutonic type of Scandinavian and the so-called Mediterranean race with its long head, long face, its rather broad nose, dark brown or black hair, dark eyes, and slender form of medium height.”⁴¹

Celtic tribes had established themselves all over Central and Western Europe. Some of them were called Cimmerians, Celt Iberians (in Spain), Belgi (modern-day Belgium), Gauls (modern-day France), and Brythons (or Britons, modern-day Britain). According to the *Britannica*, these Celts fell into two loosely divided groups that differed mainly in appearance. However, the similarity of their customs, laws, and religion (Druidism) betray a common origin. And because they “continually moved westward,” they must have originated in the east.⁴²

For several centuries, the Celts occupied and dominated Central, Western, North, and Northwestern Europe. However, they weren’t the only people living in these regions. The Celts shared their lands with several Germanic tribes. Over time, the Germans supplanted Celtic supremacy.

The Germans

“Ancient Germany....extended itself over a third part of Europe. Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various *tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language, denoted a common origin, and preserved a striking resemblance.*”⁴³

The Alamanni, Angles, Saxons, Burgundii, Lombards, Teutons, Goths and Visigoths: these were main Germanic tribes who—separately and sometimes together—destroyed the western half of the Roman Empire. Linguistically and physically related, these tribes populated and came to dominate Central and Northern Europe.

The “earliest mention of the Germans is by a Greek navigator who saw them in *Norway and Jutland* in the 4th century BC.”⁴⁴ The Germans were first observed in Norway (in Scandinavia) and in Jutland, a province of the Danish peninsula. Scandinavia includes Denmark (or Danmark), one of the final resting places of the Danites. Therefore, the Danish peninsula was shared among Celtic Danes and the following Germanic tribes: Angles, Saxons, Cimbri, Teutons, and Jutes. Who were these people? The Celtic Danes descended from the Israelite tribe of Dan; as we’ve seen, the Danites renamed territory after their eponymous ancestor. History, however, recognizes the Danes as Celts.

Where, then, did the Germanic tribes originate? The different Germanic tribes betrayed a “common origin” because of similar customs, languages, and appearance. Moreover, they were a fierce people who gloried in militarism, much like the ancient Assyrians. “In the faith of soldiers (and as such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins. A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch who lost his shield, was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen....All agreed, that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world.”⁴⁵

Remember that God promised to sift the house of Israel among the nations (Amos 9:9). This prophecy began to be fulfilled when the coastal Israelites started to establish colonies—or at least migrate westward—during and after the Solomonic Kingdom. However, this prophecy was fully realized when the Assyrians conquered and deported the house of Israel, from 745 to 718 BC. The ten-tribe house of Israel was exiled to another part of Mesopotamia, and became lost to history after the demise of the Assyrian empire. The Bible provides abundant evidence that they migrated westward. Could the

⁴¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., article on the Celts

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, pg. 230, emphasis mine

⁴⁴ *Columbia Encyclopedia*, article on the Germans

⁴⁵ Gibbon, vol. 1, pgs 230, 246

Assyrians—and the other subject peoples in their Empire—have followed them? Could they have left with them?

Germans and Assyrians – one and the same?

“Assyrian expansion was carried forward by repeated and crushing victory. Its greatest successes followed 729 BC, when Babylon was seized. Soon after, Assyrian armies destroyed Israel, Egypt was invaded, and its kings confined to Upper Egypt and the delta was annexed. By then, Cyprus had submitted, Cilicia and Syria had been conquered. Finally, in 646 BC, Assyria made its last important conquest, part of the land of Elam [in modern-day Iran]...The consequences were of great importance for the whole of the Near East. A standardized system of government and law spanned the whole area. Conscript soldiers and deported populations were moved about within it, sapping its provincialism. Aramaic spread widely as a common language. A new cosmopolitanism was possible after the Assyrian age....Assyrian Empire had a brutal foundation of conquest and intimidation. It was made possible by the creation of the best army seen until that time.”⁴⁶

The Assyrian empire was the first empire in the modern sense of the word. “It was the first empire involving a methodical and permanent occupation of conquered territory, with the implantation of military garrisons and its division into provinces directed by governors who were strictly subjected to the authority of the central government that was founded by the King of Assyria, Tiglath-Pilaser III, from 745 BC.”⁴⁷ The Assyrians were also vicious: “There is absolutely no doubt that the Assyrian armies and their kings carried out exquisite torture and extensive atrocities. Defeated enemies were flayed alive, impaled on pillars or stakes, walled up alive, castrated, and decapitated. After the defeat of Elam its king was decapitated and his head slung round the neck of a captured courtier; three rebellious chieftains had their tongues pulled out by the roots and were then flayed alive; three other noble rebels were slaughtered and their flesh distributed around the surrounding lands. Two more were forced to crush the bones of their father...From the time of Tiglath-Pileasar III the deportation of the conquered peoples was institutionalized....The reasons were various—to punish, to weaken the rival power, to enlarge the Assyrian manpower base, to import skilled craftsmen, to populate urban centers and strategic sites and to re-cultivate abandoned lands.”⁴⁸

Such ethnic cleansing resulted in a Mesopotamian melting pot: conquered and deported peoples transported to other areas, living under the same government, obeying the same laws, speaking Aramaic, and practicing, more or less, the same religion. Thus, in the days of the Assyrian Empire, the Middle East became homogenized. What happened to the Assyrians and their subject peoples after the Empire succumbed under the onslaught of the Babylonians and Medes, in 612 BC? Popular history has no answer.

Like the Israelites, the Assyrians were composed of several tribes, one of which was called the *Halmanni*, from which the Latin word German (*Aleman*) is derived. Furthermore, the Spanish word for German is *El alemán*; in French, it is translated as *Allemand*. This is important. The Romans called the Germans by the name of an ancient Assyrian tribe. Because Latin gave birth to the modern-day romance languages of Spanish and French, the latter two nations call the Germans by the name of an ancient Assyrian tribe. Is this a mere coincidence, or does it suggest that the Assyrians migrated westward?

As Edward Gibbon noted in his magisterial history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the Germanic tribes shared the same appearance, language, and customs. Such similarity betrays a

⁴⁶ J.M. Roberts, pgs 92-93

⁴⁷ *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, ed. by M.T. Larsen, pg. 319

⁴⁸ J.M. Roberts, pgs 235-236

common origin. If the Germanic *Halmanni* originated in Assyria, then the other Germanic tribes—the *Teutons* and *Cimbri*, for example—must have originated in Assyria, or at least in Mesopotamia.

To some ancient historians, the Germanic *Teutones* and *Cimbri* were one and the same. From the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition: “TEUTONI, or TEURONES, a tribe of Northern Europe, who became known to the Romans in the year 103 B.C., when, according to the Epitome of Livy, together with the Ambrones they reinforced the Cimbri...after their repulse from Spain by the Celtiberi....The racial affinities of the Teutoni have formed a matter of dispute amongst historians. Their name is Celtic in form, and *many writers suppose that the Teutoni were really a Celtic tribe, a branch of the Helvetii.* But a people of this name seem to have been mentioned by the early traveller Pytheas as inhabiting the coasts of the northern ocean in his time. Strabo and Velleius, moreover, classify them as Germani, and this is perhaps the more probable view, although apparently the distinction between Cimbri and Teuton was not clearly realized by some of the earlier historians. *If the Teutoni really came from the same quarter as the Cimbri, it is possible that their name may have been preserved in that of the district called until recently Thyland or Thythysssel in the extreme north-west of Jutland.*”

Some historians believe that the Teutons and Cimbri were the same people, and if so, they must have originated in the same land. The Cimbri were a “Germanic people from the area of Jutland [in the Danish peninsula] who migrated south with the neighboring Teutons towards the end of the end of the 2nd century BC in search of new lands.”⁴⁹ They found that land in Northern France, and became known to history as the Gauls.

One big melting pot in Denmark

The Danish peninsula was inhabited by ancient Celts (the Danes, from the Israelite tribe of Dan) and the Germanic Teutons, Cimbri, Jutes, Angles, and Saxons. The Danes stayed in Denmark. However, the Cimbri and Teutons migrated south to modern-day France. The Angles and Saxons “formed the bulk of the invaders who, in the two centuries following Roman withdrawal from Britain [409 AD], conquered and colonized most of what became England. Anglican rulers were apparently dominant by the 8th century and the Angles ultimately gave their name to England, its language and people.”⁵⁰ Thus the Angles and Saxons (together, the Anglo-Saxons) conquered and colonized England, and the Teutons and Cimbri conquered and colonized modern-day France (thus becoming the Gauls of ancient history).

I’ve already mentioned that one Germanic tribe—the Alemanni—are in fact the Assyrian tribe of Halmanni. Who, then, were the Cimbri, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes? The answer resides in ancient Assyria.

Assyria and Israel

The Israelites were so named because they were the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed by God to Israel. The Assyrians, however, were oblivious of Israel’s history. They therefore called the Israelites not after the name of their eponymous ancestor, but after one of the kings of Israel, namely, Omri:

“Omri was one of the most important kings of Israel, and the founder of a dynasty. He was one of the generals of the army under Elah, son of Baasha. This king was assassinated by Zimri, another of the officers. Omri was at the siege of Gibbethon at the time, and his troops acclaimed him king instead of his rival. A civil war of some

⁴⁹ *The Larousse Dictionary of World History*, pg. 202

⁵⁰ *ibid*, pg 41

duration followed, in which (apparently after the death of Zimri) one Tibni took part, himself aspiring to the throne. Omri finally prevailed, and for a time occupied the old capital Tizrah (I Kings 16:16). But he had the intelligence to perceive the advantages of Samaria as a site for the capital, and removed thither, enlarging and fortifying the city.

“Omri’s political measures included an alliance with the Phoenicians, in which he had the example of David and Solomon, though subsequent generations condemned him for it. The alliance was cemented by the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel, so important for latter history. Omri seems to have been an able soldier, and he subdued Moab to Israel. This is acknowledged by the Moabite king Mesha in an inscription which has come down to us. The wars with Damascus were not so successful. *The Assyrians first became acquainted with Israel in the time of Omri, and they called the country ‘the land of the house of Omri’ even after the extinction of his dynasty.* The length of this king’s reign is given as twelve years, but some think it to have been more.”⁵¹

Thus the Assyrians conquered not the “house of Israel,” but the “house of Omri.” They pronounced “Omri” according to their own language and dialect. In Assyrian, “Omri” became “Khumri,” with a silent ‘K’ and a soft ‘H.’

Hence the ten-tribe house of Israel became lost to history because they:

- a) Renounced their heritage and the birthright blessings conferred to Ephraim and Manasseh. Luckily for them, God’s birthright blessings were unconditional and everlasting; they did not depend on Israel’s obedience;
- b) By renouncing God and His covenants and adopting pagan customs, they consequently discarded the everlasting signs between God and His people: the Sabbath and holy days and festivals (Exodus 31:17);
- c) By discarding the unique Sabbath and holy days and festivals and by adopting pagan customs, the Israelites and neighboring nations became religiously indistinguishable;
- d) A disgusted God declared that, even if the Israelites were willing, they would be unable to discover their origin and identity (Hosea 2:5-6);
- e) The Assyrians conquered the house of Israel and deported them to other parts of Mesopotamia. The Assyrians practiced ethnic cleansing, and the Israelites became their most famous victim. “Thus a huge mixing of the population took place over the century-and-a-quarter, with a corresponding erosion of particularist sentiments and cultural and political identities. Everyone was now, in an even more realistic sense, the ‘slave’ of the king.”⁵² Such ethnic cleansing resulted in a Mesopotamia melting pot in which, over time, the conquered and deported nations lost their identity.

By piecing together several biblical and secular clues, and by realizing that the Israelites were prophesied to migrate westward, we are thus able to deduce that the ancient Israelites became known by other names. For example, it doesn’t take a wild leap of faith to deduce that many of the so-called

⁵¹ *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, article on Omri, pg. 668, emphasis mine

⁵² J.M. Roberts, pg 225

Germanic peoples who were called Khumarian (inhabitants of Crimea) or Cimmerians (from the tribe of *Cimbri*) or Saxons were in fact ancient Israelites who migrated westward with their one-time captors, the Assyrians (*Halammanis* in Assyria; the Germanic *Alemmani* in Europe).

As already noted, the Cimbri and Teutons migrated to the Danish peninsula, and then south to northern France. The Cimbri descended from the house of Khumri, that is, the house of Omri (notice the phonetic similarity between “Cimbri,” pronounced with a soft ‘C’, and “Khumri,” pronounced with a silent ‘K’ and a soft ‘H’). Their Teutonic companions were either other Israelites or Assyrians, or perhaps the other subject peoples of the Assyrian Empire. They occupied Denmark with the Celtic (Israelite) Danes, and the so-called Germanic **Jutes**, Angles, and Saxons (together, **Anglo-Saxons**).

Jutes: They were members “of a Germanic people who, with the Angles and Saxons, invaded Britain in the 5th century AD. The Jutes have no recorded history on the European continent, but there is considerable evidence that their home was in the Scandinavian area (probably Jutland) and that those who did not migrate were later absorbed by the Danes.”⁵³

The Assyrians were the “master and scourge” of the Greater Middle East. No kingdom, no nation, no town was safe. Shortly after the Assyrians conquered Samaria, and deported its inhabitants, they set their sight on the house of Judah. The account is recorded in the eighteenth chapter of II Kings. “And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, ‘I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay.’ And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria” (II Kings 18:13-16). Assyrian records state that in addition to spoiling the house of Judah and conquering its “fortified cities,” the Assyrian army transported “250,150....men and women.”⁵⁴ These Jews (and Benjaminites and Levites, for they were considered Jews by this point) were treated no differently than other captives. They were deported to other regions of Mesopotamia where, like the men and women of the ten-tribe house of Israel, they mixed in with other cultures and adopted other customs and religions. After the Assyrian Empire crumbled, many of these Jews (close to a quarter of a million were deported!) started to migrate with the other several million people of the Assyrian Empire. Where did these Jews go? Is it a coincidence that, phonetically, “Jute” sounds a lot like “Jew,” and that the Jutes wound up in the Danish peninsula occupied by, among other tribes, the Celtic Danes (Danites from the Israelite tribe of Dan), and Cimbri (inhabitants of Bit-Khumri, or the house of Omri)? The Jutes (or Jews) migrated to the Danish peninsula, and then to England.

Consequently, in England there were Jews from the house of Judah. Earlier, I mentioned that the birthright blessings belonged to Ephraim and Manasseh: “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**

⁵³ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, article on the Jutes

⁵⁴ Edersheim, pg 921

came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's" (I Chronicles 5:1-2). God promised the birthright blessings of national greatness to Ephraim and Manasseh. However, He stated that the throne of Israel (the entire 12 tribes) resided in the house of Judah; this is referred to as the *scepter blessing*. We have seen so far how the Assyrians captured and deported the house of Israel, including the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh. Some time later, the Assyrians captured and deported over 200,000 Jews. After the fall of the Assyrian Empire, its subject peoples—including these Jews and Israelites—began to migrate. In accordance with biblical prophecy, the unseen hand of God guided some of them to Northwestern Europe. Eventually, some of the Jews (now called Jutes) and the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh wound up in the British islands (Isaiah 49:12). Therefore, both the birthright blessings and the scepter blessings wound up in Britain. Interestingly, the Hebrew word for Covenant is "briyth," pronounced as "ber-eeth." "Briyth" looks and sounds a lot like the Celtic tribe of Brythons, the Celtic ancestors of modern-day Britons. Moreover, the Hebrew word for man is "iysh," pronounced as "eesh." Combined, "Brit" (Briyth) and "ish" is translated as "Covenant man."

Thus, the Birthright and Scepter Covenant people both wound up in Britain, which was populated by the Celtic Brythons, and afterward, the Jutes (Jews) and Anglo-Saxons. The placement of both the birthright and scepter blessings in one place is alluded to in Jacob's description of the modern-day nations of Ephraim (Great Britain) and Manasseh (the United States): "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*)" (Genesis 49: 24); more on that "Stone of Israel" later.

Anglo-Saxons: is the "name given to the Germanic-speaking peoples who settled in England after the decline of Roman rule there. They were first invited by the Celtic King Vortigern, who needed help fighting the Picts and Scots. The Angles (Lat. Angli), who are mentioned in Tacitus' Germania, seem to have come from what is now Schleswig in the later decades of the 5th century. Their settlements in the eastern, central, and northern portions of the country were the foundations for the later kingdoms known as East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria. The Saxons, a Germanic tribe who had been continental neighbors of the Angles, also settled in England in the late 5th century after earlier marauding forays there. The later kingdoms of Sussex, Wessex, and Essex were the outgrowths of their settlements. The Jutes, a tribe about whom very little is known except that they probably came from the area around the mouths of the Rhine, settled in Kent...and the Isle of Wight. The Anglo-Saxons eventually formed seven separate kingdoms known as the heptarchy. The term "Anglo-Saxons" was first used in Continental Latin sources to distinguish the Saxons in England from those on the Continent, but it soon came to mean simply the "English." The more specific use of the term to denote the non-Celtic settlers of England prior to the Norman Conquest dates from the 16th century. In more modern times it has also been used to denote any of the people (or their descendants) of the British Isles."⁵⁵

We've already seen how centuries of wandering transformed, for example, the Jews into Jutes, and the Danites into Danes, and the people of Ephraim into Brythons, and the house of Omri (or Israel) into the Bit-Khumri (the Assyrian pronunciation of that name). Before

⁵⁵ *Columbia Encyclopedia*, article on the Anglo-Saxons

they had reached their final destinations in Europe, many of the Israelites and the Jews deported by the Assyrians had lost their identity. With some difficulty, we can see traces of the Israelite origin of many of the so-called Celtic and Germanic tribes that came to dominate much of Europe. We see this trace in the name *Saxon*:

“The people who are known as Angles, Saxons, Danes, Celts or Kelts, Jutes, Scots, Welsh, Scyths (or Scythians), or Normans can trace themselves back to Media-Persia, *but no further*, and find their ancestors in the *Khumree*, at the place, and at the very time, when Israel was losing her identity and was actually known in the history of that country as the Beth Khumree.

“We cannot take time or space to deal with the origin of all the above names, but we feel that we must say something concerning the name Saxon, as it is the most general name of the race—really the present generic name of the house of Joseph.

“It seems to be a well-known Hebraism, and for some reason it certainly was a very common custom among the Israelites, to drop the first letter of a proper name. Bible examples of this custom are: Oshea, otherwise Hoshea; Hagar, otherwise Agar; Jachan, otherwise Achan; Heber, otherwise Eber, etc. Scholars tell us, if we have caught their thought, that this Hebrew idiom is peculiar to the possessive case, and also to allow the introduction of an affix.

“When Jacob transferred the birthright to the sons of Joseph he, with one hand resting on the head of each, prayed: "Let my name (Israel) be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac." The birthright kingdom did, as we have seen, inherit the name of Israel, and also that of Isaac. For Amos says: ‘And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel [Bethel and Dan] shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword,’ (Amos 7:9). Here we have *Isaac*, *Israel* and *the house of Jeroboam* used as interchangeable names for the ten-tribed kingdom. Amaziah also says to Jeroboam, the king of Isaac-Israel:

““The Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. Now, therefore, hear thou the word of the Lord, (but) thou sayest, Prophecy not against *Israel*, and drop not thy word against the house of *Isaac*,’ (Amos 7:16).

“Thus the name of Isaac was named upon the house of Joseph, and it is true, both in race and name, that, in Isaac shall thy seed be called." It seems that the Jews had a preference for the name of Jacob, but Israel clung to the name of Isaac, especially after they were taken into captivity; they dropped the name of Israel and called themselves "Saac" -- Sacae, or Saxae, as per Latin derivation -- which is nothing more or less than the Hebrew name of Isaac, from which the initial letter "I" has been dropped.

“It is now a well-authenticated fact that the word Saxon is derived from the Hebrew name of I-saac, together with an affix which means sons of. Prof. Totten says: "In most of the Eastern languages 'sons of' is written 'sunnia.' It is equivalent to the Scottish 'Mac' and the English and Irish 'Fitz' -- Mac Donald, son of Donald; Fitz Henry, son of Henry. So, in the distant home of our ancestors, Saac-Sunnia means sons of Isaac. Stambul is formed of Istanbul by dropping the prefix I, and so the Saxon is a direct descendant of our father

Isaac. Dr. W. Holt Yates accepts this derivation of the Saxon name as positive, and the Rev. W. H. Poole, D. D., speaks of it as follows: ‘It is a little curious to glean from the ancient nations and from the stone monuments of the early times the various forms in which this word is to be found. I will here insert a few from a list of my own gleaned from ancient history, thus: Sons of Isaac, Sons of Saac, Saac-Sunnia, Saac-Suna, Saac-Sena Saaca-pena, Esakska, Sacae-Amyrqui, Beth-Sakai (House of Isaac), Sunnia-Sakai, Sakai-Suna, Saca-Suna, Sacae-Sunnae, Sackisina, Sacka-Sunia, Saca-cine, Saka-Suna, Sacas-Sani, Sakas-Saeni, Saxi-Suna, Sach-Suni, Sachi, Sacha, Sakah, Saachus, Saacus, Sacho, Saxo, Saxoi, Saxonia, Saxones, Saxae, Sach-sen, Sack-sen, Saxe-sen, Saxone, Saxony, Saxon – ‘Our Race.’

“Concerning the etymology of the word Saxon, Yatman says: ‘Its history is as follows: The Persians used the terms Sacae and Scythian as *convertible*, whether from a corrupt rendering of one from the other or because the Sacae, a great tribe of Scythians (wanderers) bordering upon them, were so called by a tribal name. Of the fact of the *identity* of the Sacae and the Scythians there is not the shadow of a doubt, and it is clear that these people called their country Sacasena. It is equally clear that the Saxons of England were the Scythians or Celte-Scythians. Their geographical position in Europe is accurately described by Plutarch, Tacitus, Ptolemy, and other authors.’

“To this testimony all the historians agree. Strabo asserts that the most ancient Greek historians knew the Sacaea as a people who lived beyond the Caspian Sea. Diodorus says: ‘The Sacaea sprung from a people in Media who obtained a vast and glorious empire.’

“Ptolemy finds the Saxons in a race of Scythians, called *Sakai*, who came from Media.

“Pliny says: ‘The *Sakai* were among the most distinguished people of Scythia, who settled in Armenia, and were called Sacae-Sani.’

“Albinus says: ‘The Saxons were descended from the ancient *Sacae* of Asia.’

“Prideaux finds that the Cimbrians came from between the Black and Euxine (Caspian) seas, and that with them came the Angli.

“Sharon Turner, the great Saxon historian, says: ‘The Saxons were a Scythian nation, and were called *Saca*, *Sachi*, *Sacki*, *Sach-sen*.’

“Gawler, in ‘Our Scythian Ancestors’ (Page 6), says: ‘*The word ‘Saacae,’ is fairly and without straining or imagination, translatable as Isaacites.*’”⁵⁶

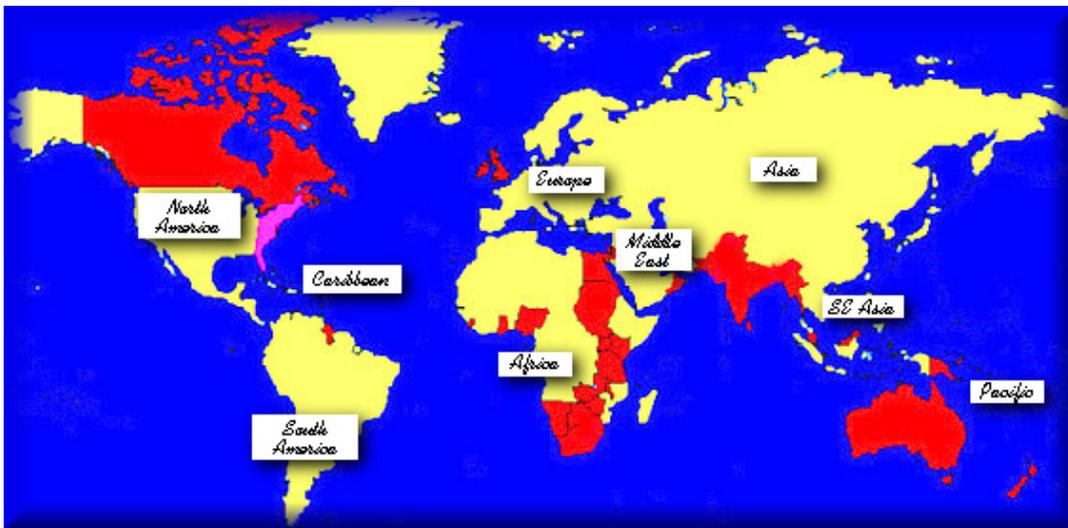
Thus with some difficulty we’ve discovered the Israelite origins of the so-called Celtic and Germanic tribes that dominated Europe for so long. The Anglo-Saxons (or “Isaacites”) helped create one of one of the greatest empires in history. In Britain and its Empire, and then in the Commonwealth of Nations, we see the fulfillment of a divine prophecy uttered over three millennia ago by the dying Jacob: “Ephraim shall become a great company of nations.”

⁵⁶ J.H. Allen, *Judah’s Scepter and Joseph’s Birthright*

The British Empire, a brief interlude

“Once there was an Empire that governed roughly a quarter of the world’s population, covered about the same proportion of the earth’s land surface and dominated nearly all its oceans. The British Empire was the biggest Empire ever, bar none. How an archipelago of rainy islands off the north-west coast of Europe came to rule the world is one of the fundamental questions not just of British but of world history.”⁵⁷

Rome wasn’t built in a day; nor was the British Empire. “The history of the British people is a complex, sometimes violent or revolutionary one, full of disjunctions and abrupt changes of pace or of course. The idea of a tranquil, undisturbed evolutionary progress even for England, let alone the turbulent, fractured, schizophrenic history of the Celtic nations....(is) a myth, fit for the refuse-heap of history, like the romances of ‘golden ages’ over the centuries from Arthurian times onwards.”⁵⁸



The British Empire, in red and purple

Just like Americans, the English have had their ups and downs. Their history begins in Celtic England, in which quarreling and warring Celtic tribes (e.g. the Brythons, Belgae, etc.) vied for supremacy. During this period that ended with Roman conquest, there was “little or no national sentiment.”⁵⁹

Julius Caesar conquered Britain around 54 and 55 BC. Roman dominance lasted until the fifth century; from the 430s AD onward, so-called Germanic tribes (the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes) began to arrive in substantial numbers. The “settlers....belonged to the same broad culture as southern Scandinavia, Germany, and northern France. Their earliest known poems include hero-legends set in Denmark and Frisia....Britain exchanged the Roman Empire for another, if very different, international community.”⁶⁰

For the next several centuries, the Anglo-Saxons dominated Britain. These centuries included Anglo-Saxon consolidation under Alfred the Great and his successors, periodic invasion by the Vikings

⁵⁷ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, pg. ix)

⁵⁸ *The Oxford History of Britain*, ed. by Kenneth Morgan, pg. vii.

⁵⁹ *ibid*, pg. 5.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, pg. 63

(Danes and Norwegians), and urbanization. English society changed greatly during these centuries: “The mid-ninth to mid-eleventh centuries saw rapid growth in the population and economy.... Not surprisingly, more people meant more bigger towns. By the [Norman] Conquest [in 1066] there were English towns in the sense that we would understand today: large concentrations of people with markets and tradesmen, groups of craftsmen in specialized quarters, guilds and regulations, numerous churches, and in some cases rapidly expanding suburbs.”⁶¹

The Normans (from Normandy, in northern France) conquered Britain in 1066. The following centuries included the:

- a) Magna Carta (1215);
- b) Hundred Years War with France (1290-1390);
- c) Periodic and destructive plagues;
- d) War of the Roses (1450s);
- e) Tudor Era (1485-1603), which included (i) the reigns of Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and Mary Stuart; (ii) the creation of the English Bible in 1611; (iii) the creation of the Anglican Church; (iv) the defeat of the Spanish Armada; and (v) William Shakespeare;
- f) Stuart Era (1603-1688), which included the English civil wars, colonization of North America, the growth of the British navy, and the birth of a nascent Parliament: “The significance of the government’s dependence on the voluntary support of local elites cannot be overestimated. They controlled the assessment and collection of taxation; the maintenance, training, and deployment of the militia; the implementation of social and economic legislation; the trial of most criminals; and, increasingly, the enforcement of religious uniformity...The art of governing in the seventeenth-century was the art of persuading those who ruled in town and country that there was a close coincidence of interest between themselves and the Crown.”⁶²
- g) Glorious Revolution of 1688, which ended once and for all the destructive religious wars of the 1600s, and which brought to the crown the Protestant William of Orange. The “major change of course carried out in 1688 can be seen to have been truly revolutionary. The Bill of Rights clearly overrode the hereditary right which formed the basis of the restored constitution of 1660 and replaced it with the will of the nation expressed through Parliament....At a time when absolutism, both in theory and practice seemed to be in the ascendant in the Western world, the importance of this transformation should not be underestimated.”⁶³
- h) The wars with France (1688-1697; 1702-13);
- i) The Seven-Years War (1756-1763). “The successes of the Seven Years War, which decisively defeated France in North America and India, and turned back the Bourbon threat

⁶¹ *ibid*, pg. 113

⁶² *ibid*, pg. 346

⁶³ *ibid*, pg. 401

elsewhere, represented a high point of imperial achievement.”⁶⁴ Thereafter, Britain consolidated its rule in India, and an Empire was truly born.

In the next few centuries, the British Empire waxed and waned. In 1615 Britain was hardly ‘Great’; it was a second-rate power on the periphery of Western Europe. Two hundred years later, Britain had acquired the largest empire in history, comprising forty-three colonies in five continents and covering about 25% of the world’s land surface. Almost 450 million people lived under its rule. Despite the American Revolution (1775-1783), a momentary (and for future generations, momentous) blip in Empire building, the English built an Empire through war (e.g. the Anglo-Dutch Wars, the Seven-Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, etc.), commerce, and trade. During the 20th century, the British Empire unraveled under the burden of two ruinous world wars, and under the onslaught of national sentiment unleashed by those wars. The Empire dissolved with astonishing speed. While it took three centuries to build the Empire, it took just three decades to dismantle it. Nevertheless, we all owe the British a huge debt of gratitude. “In 1940, under Churchill’s inspired, indomitable, incomparable leadership, the Empire had stood alone against the truly evil imperialism of Hitler. Even if it did not last for the thousand years that Churchill hopefully suggested it might, this was indeed the British Empire’s ‘finest hour.’ Yet what made it so fine, so authentically noble, was that the Empire’s victory could only ever have been Pyrrhic. In the end, the British sacrificed her Empire to stop the Germans, Japanese and Italians from keeping theirs.”⁶⁵

British influence has been colossal. “Without the spread of British rule around the world, it is hard to believe that the structures of liberal capitalism would have been so successfully established in so many different economies around the world....Without the influence of British imperial rule, it is hard to believe that the institutions of parliamentary democracy would have been adopted by the majority of states in the world, as they are today....Finally, there is the English language itself, perhaps the most important single export of the last 300 years. Today 350 million people speak English as their first language and around 450 million have it as a second language. That is roughly one in every seven people in the world.”⁶⁶ Moreover, the “nineteenth-century Empire undeniably pioneered free trade, free capital movements and, with the abolition of slavery, free labour. It invested immense sums in developing a global network of modern communications. It spread and enforced the rule of law over vast areas. Though it fought many small wars, the Empire maintained a global peace unmatched before and since. In the twentieth century, too, it more than justified its own existence, for the alternatives to British rule represented by the German and Japanese empires were clearly far worse. And without its Empire, it is inconceivable that Britain could have withstood them.”⁶⁷

The British Empire was foreordained by God. He promised that Joseph’s son Ephraim would become a great company of nations, and that Ephraim (and Manasseh) would relocate to the British islands (Isaiah 49:10-12, Jeremiah 31:9-10). God guided the birthright nations to lands suitable for growth and prosperity. As we’ve seen, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh became the Celts, Angles, and Saxons. Before their migration, and along the way, the Israelites lost all vestiges of their national identity. However, they retained some of the national characteristics bred in Palestine. We can identify three:

⁶⁴ *ibid*, pg. 450

⁶⁵ Niall Ferguson, pg 302

⁶⁶ *ibid* pgs 303-304

⁶⁷ *ibid*, pg. 304

a) The respect for private property:

So far we've seen how the unseen hand of God guided the birthright nations, Ephraim and Manasseh, to the British islands, and the rest of "Ephraim's companions" (the tribes of Israel) to the surrounding region in Western and Northwestern Europe. This region is the "wilderness" of Jeremiah 31:2

Western and Northwestern Europe are located in a temperate eco-zone. The lands are blessed with productive soils, which produced healthy agriculture. Therefore, over time, less and less people were needed to farm the land, and they thus migrated to towns and then to cities, where they built the industrial and financial strength of their nations. Over time, they created stable political systems and capitalist economies that fostered the growth of private industry. They also came to regard the right to property as inalienable; in John Locke's memorable phrase, "Government has no other end but the preservation of Property." And James Madison said, "The personal right to acquire property, which is a natural right, gives to property, when acquired, a right to protection, as a social right."

"Imagine a country where nobody can identify who owns what, addresses cannot be easily verified, resources cannot conveniently be turned into money, ownership cannot be divided into shares, descriptions of assets are not standardized and cannot be easily compared, and the rules that govern property vary from neighborhood to neighborhood or even from street to street."⁶⁸ This describes most third-world countries.

Most poor nations share the following attributes: their location (they lie in the tropics); their unstable or autocratic political systems; their culture (for instance, the Arab World has translated about as many books in the last 1,000 years as Spain does in one year; this is indicative of a closed-minded, paranoid, chauvinistic culture); and their lack of clearly-defined property rights. Conversely, the Western World, spearheaded by the British and Americans, has created capitalist societies based on the identification and protection of private property.

Put simply, "in the West every bit of land, every building, every piece of equipment or store of inventories is represented by a property document," for example, a title.⁶⁹ Because it's documented, the property can be used as collateral for credit (e.g. mortgage on the entrepreneur's home). These assets can also provide a connection to debts and taxes, and be used for the creation of reliable and public utilities, and as the foundation for creating securities like mortgage-backed bonds. By this process the Western nations inject life into their assets, and capital is born. The creation of capital is what gives life to capitalism.

The lack of a system identifying and protecting private property prevents most poor nations from creating capitalist economies. The creation of such a system is difficult and gradual. It took centuries in Britain.

God recognizes the importance of identifying and protecting private property. In the world tomorrow, in God's Kingdom that will be inaugurated upon Jesus' return (please see the Churches of God, Worldwide Ministries article, *Biblical Prophecy Explained*), private property will be defined and protected:

"Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting

⁶⁸ Hernando de Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, pg. 15

⁶⁹ *ibid*, pg. 6

covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them. ***Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying***, It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans. ***Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed....***says the LORD” (Jeremiah 32:37)

“Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed.” Private property will exist in the Kingdom of God and it will be documented. People will be able to legally acquire land and property, and build houses.

The Kingdom of God has not arrived. However, God instilled in His people a very healthy respect for the identification and protection of private property. “The concept of property rights went back to biblical times and was transmitted and transformed by Christian teaching. The Hebrew hostility to autocracy, even to their own, was formed in Egypt and the desert....Let me cite two examples, where the response to popular initiative is directly linked to the sanctity of possessions. When the priest Korach (sic) leads a revolt against Moses in the desert, Moses defends himself against charges of usurpation by saying, ‘I have not taken one ass from them, nor have I wronged any one of them’ (Numbers 16:15). Similarly, when the Israelites, now established in the Land, call for a king, the prophet Samuel grants their wish but warns them of the consequences: a king, he tells them, will not be like him. ‘Whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken?’ (I Samuel 12:3).”⁷⁰ It’s no wonder that God’s people who migrated to Northwestern and Western Europe, and then to North America, eventually built economies based on the identification and protection of private property.

Britain (and America) has excelled because of its geography, stable political system, and capitalist economy that puts a premium on the identification and protection of private property.

b) Freedom

English “society...shed the burdens of serfdom, developed a population of cultivators rather than peasants, imported industry and trade into the countryside, sacrificed custom to profit and tradition to comparative advantage....England gave people elbow room. Political and civil freedoms won first for the nobles (Magna Carta, 1215) were extended by war, usage, and law to the common folk....by comparison with populations across the Channel, Englishmen were free and fortunate.”⁷¹

I’ve already discussed how God’s laws, and holy days and festivals created a society based on equality before the law and God. Israelite “society...was egalitarian: a free peasantry, literacy [at least for the elites], a popular militia side by side with the royal mercenary army.”⁷²

In ancient Egypt and elsewhere, there was the ruler, his bureaucrats and army, and then everyone else. However, in ancient Israel, “we are not dealing with the servile and illiterate dependent agricultural masses of Egypt or Mesopotamia, but with an egalitarian society of independent, semi-literate small holders—all warriors if need be—each having his own individual share in the Covenant...”⁷³ These notions of liberty and freedom were retained by the migrating Israelites. And it’s no coincidence that the greatest expressions of liberty, freedom and equality are found in Preamble to the American Declaration

⁷⁰ Landes, pg. 34

⁷¹ *ibid*, pg. 220

⁷² J.M. Roberts, pg. 240

⁷³ S.E. Finer, pg. 244

of Independence and in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. These documents were written by descendants of the Israelite nations, who retained their love of liberty and freedom.

c) Preference for a limited monarch

The ancient Middle East states were monarchies. Because the Israelites wanted to fit in rather than stand out, eventually they clamored for a monarch. However, unlike the monarchies of the neighboring countries, the ancient Israelite monarch was hemmed in by the uniqueness of the Israelite religion. “The religion was one where each was equal to each other. Even more, it was one that did not really have place for a monarch. The king of ‘the land’ was God—‘Our Father and King’—and the laws of the land were God’s laws. The monarchy was in principle redundant, except ‘to judge us and go out before us and fight our battles (I Samuel 8:20)—that is, purely secular and instrumental concerns—and, as the later prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah argued, entirely subordinate to the purpose of the Jewish [Israelite] people, which was to keep the Covenant by obeying the Law....Thus the *wholly novel, revolutionary concept of limited monarchy*, limited not as in the rest of the Middle East by cultic or ritual obligations, but in ever more elaborate social and ethical detail, by extraneous and immutable law.”⁷⁴

The British monarchy was limited first by the Magna Carta (1215) and other laws that defined the relationship between the nobles and their king, and then, centuries later, by Parliament. In other words, the monarch wasn’t absolute. Just like the ancient Israelites, over time, the British tried to prevent the accumulation of power in one man. They thus created laws and institutions to constrain their king.

The framers of the American Constitution followed their example: they created a Government marked by (i) federalism (the division of power between the states and the federal government); (ii) separation of powers between the three branches of government; (iii) judicial review by the courts; and (iv) a Bill of Rights enumerating the inviolable rights of American citizens. It’s no wonder that the British and Americans (respectively, the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh) disliked the concentration of power in one man or organ of government. After all, that national characteristic was bred in Palestine over two millennia ago.

British royalty

“It is the stuff of fairy-tales, at least in the popular mind. Kings—wise if old, gallant if young—are banished by nasty politicians (typically communists). Sustained by a few faithful courtiers, the exiled royals live in elegant nostalgia, inspiring their countrymen until times change and they can return in triumph to claim their stolen thrones. An age-old story; and surely, in this age of democracies and microchips and espresso for the masses, an archaic one?”⁷⁵

We live in the age of modernity. Kings, queens, princes, princesses, dukes, and duchesses: they all seem a bit out of date. After all, Western nations are either presidential or parliamentary democracies. Some countries, however, are sentimental. “Two dozen or so monarchs actually reign, and some of them rule fairly important countries (Saudi Arabia, Jordan) or, as figureheads, inspire deep public allegiance among peoples who are otherwise fairly modern (Japan, Britain).”⁷⁶ Britain is a constitutional monarchy, although its queen is a figurehead.

Britain is a country that has embraced modernity in all its forms except one: the monarchy. Why? The reason for this goes way beyond a sentimental attachment to the past. There are two transcendental reasons for the British monarchy: (i) As we’ve seen, God promised that the Davidic throne will last

⁷⁴ *ibid*, pg. 240

⁷⁵ *The Economist*, Monarchs and mountebanks, 12/18/97

⁷⁶ *ibid*

forever (II Samuel 7:16, Psalms 89:35-37, Jeremiah 33:20, 21), and (ii) Jesus will return to inherit this throne (Luke 1:32-33). Somewhere on this earth, then, is the everlasting Davidic throne that Jesus will inherit when He returns.

The Scepter blessing

Long ago God made a few promises to Abraham. These promises were expressed in two covenants. The first everlasting covenant promised that Abraham's descendants (through the line of Isaac) would become prosperous and separate into several nations, some of them possessing monarchical governments. The second everlasting covenant promised that his descendants would become very numerous ("multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore") and that they (their nations) shall possess the gate of their enemies. In other words, these prosperous and undoubtedly strong nations would possess strategic assets (e.g. control over harbors, isthmuses, canals, etc.) that confer advantages over their enemies. Most important, all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's progeny.

Later, God reaffirmed the covenantal promises to Abraham's son Isaac, and then to his grandson Jacob. Each reaffirmation grew more explicit: for example, God said that Abraham would be the father of many nations, and his seed would become very numerous and regal. God then promised that Rebekah's son Jacob would produce a strong nation. God's promise to Jacob was even more explicit: "a nation and company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you."

A dying Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel) called his twelve sons before him, to receive his last words and blessings. In the 49th chapter of Genesis, Jacob describes the latter-day conditions of the modern-day nations descended from his twelve sons. I've discussed in detail how the United States and Britain have fulfilled the prophecies about Manasseh and Ephraim. However, I've only alluded to the promise made to Jacob's son Judah: "***The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples***" (Genesis 49:10). Whereas Ephraim and Manasseh would achieve national greatness, both together and separately, Judah would become the forefather of the kingly line of Israel ("the scepter shall not depart from Judah").

God began to fulfill this prophecy when He selected David to be the king of Israel. David unified the Israelite tribes and announced his intention to build a temple. Afterward, God sent the prophet Nathan to deliver the following message to David:

"Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and ***I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever***. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ***Your house***

and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever” (II Samuel 7:8-16).

God promised that David’s throne would last forever. Indeed, Jesus will return to earth to inherit this throne: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the ***Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David***. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). God has not revoked His promise to David. Somewhere on this earth is the Davidic throne that the returning Jesus will inherit.

To locate this throne, we must return to the days of the house of Judah.

The House of Judah

From the *Columbia Encyclopedia*: Judah was “the southern of the two kingdoms remaining after the division of the kingdom of the Jews [Israelites] that occurred under Rehoboam. The northern kingdom, Israel, was continually at war with Judah. In the Bible the southern kingdom is regarded as usually more loyal to God than the northern kingdom was. Judah’s capital was Jerusalem, and its dynasty was the house of David. It lasted from 931 B.C. to 586 B.C.”

The house of Judah, in the unified Kingdom of Israel and thereafter as the one of the two lesser kingdoms, survived for 345 years before it was conquered by Babylon in 586 BC. That’s a long time; specifically, 117 years longer than the existence of the United States. Generally, we can divide its history into the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.

- a) The Good: Unlike the house of Israel, on several occasions the house of Judah was ruled by good kings (e.g. Jehoshaphat, Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah, etc.) who, while imperfect, tried to obey God and instituted godly reforms.
- b) The Bad: Conversely, the people of the house of Judah never lost their appetite to fit in rather than stand out. Therefore, the godly reforms established by, for example, kings Hezekiah and Josiah were short-lived and did not survive their deaths. This means that the desire to obey God was not deep-rooted in the people of Judah.
- c) The Ugly: “Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against ***Judah***, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, ‘Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.’ Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them” (II Kings 17:13-15).

God had mercy on the house of Judah: “Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children” (II Kings 8:19). However, God’s disposition changed. In some eras, particularly toward the end of its independence in 586 BC, the people and rulers of the house of Judah were irredeemably bad. For example, “The LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with

which Manasseh had provoked Him. The LORD said, ‘I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, ‘My name shall be there’” (II Kings 23:26-27).

The removal of the Jews (including the descendants of Benjamin and Levi) occurred a little over 130 years after the Assyrian conquest of the ten-tribe house of Israel. The Babylonians conquered the house of Judah and deported its inhabitants to Babylon.

Babylonian history can be divided into two phases: (1) the emergence of the Babylonian Empire under Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC); and (2) the reemergence of the Babylonian Empire (historically known as the neo-Babylonian Empire) under the Chaldeans (a tribe originating in lower Mesopotamia), beginning in the 9th century BC.

At its zenith the neo-Babylonian Empire ruled Mesopotamia and the Greater Middle East, and its greatest and most famous king was Nebuchadnezzar. “If for nothing else, Nebuchadnezzar would be remembered as a great conqueror. He destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC after a Jewish revolt and carried off the tribes of Judah into captivity, using them as he used other captives, to carry out the embellishment of his capital....He was the greatest king of his time, perhaps of any time until his own.”⁷⁷

According to the Bible, God allowed the conquest and exile of the house of Judah because of their egregious sins. Indeed, this seventy-year captivity was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah:

“The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

“And though the LORD has sent all his servants the prophets to you again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention. They said, ‘Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the LORD gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever. Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me to anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you.’ ‘But you did not listen to me,’ declares the LORD, ‘and you have provoked me with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.’

Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: ‘Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. ***This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years***” (Jeremiah 1:11)

The beginning of the end of Jewish independence began during the eleven-year reign of king Jehoiakim. His government was marked by corruption, violence, and malaise. The Jews (including the Levites and Benjaminites) continued their spiral into degeneracy. During this time, in a power vacuum

⁷⁷ J.M. Roberts, pg. 94

created by the demise of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BC, the neo-Babylonians locked horns with Egypt. The Babylonians defeated the Egyptians at the decisive battle of Carchemish. During Nebuchadnezzar's advance, he and his armies entered Jerusalem and captured Jehoiakim, who was considered at the time a vassal of the Egyptian Pharaoh. He was bound and carried off to Babylon. Moreover, the Babylonians appropriated some of the treasure located in the Temple of God.

Jehoiakim remained a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar for three years, after which he unsuccessfully rebelled. Soon thereafter his son Jehoiachin was proclaimed king of the House of Judah. His reign in Jerusalem lasted three months and ten days (II Kings 36:9). For reasons unknown, Nebuchadnezzar and his armies appeared in Jerusalem and besieged it. Perhaps this was due to Jehoiakim's rebellion, or because Nebuchadnezzar thought that Jehoiachin was secretly allied with the Egyptians. "The punishment inflicted on the city was of signal severity. All the treasures of the temple and the palace were carried away.... Thus was the word of the Lord, long and often spoken, fulfilled (2 Kings 24:12, 13). The king himself, his mother, his wives, and all the officials, whether of the court, the state, or the army, were carried to Babylon...to make sure of the permanence of the conquest, 'all Jerusalem'....and all who in any sense were 'strong and apt for war'—who could either lead, or fight, or prepare the means for it—were carried away into captivity....Among the captives was also the prophet Ezekiel."⁷⁸ Jehoiachin languished in prison for thirty-seven years; afterward, Nebuchadnezzar's successor released him from prison.

Upon leaving Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah (from the line of David) to be king in Jerusalem. He was Jehoiachin's uncle and the last independent Jewish monarch. "Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence" (II Kings 24:18-20).

Zedekiah was no different from the preceding kings. His reign was marked by corruption and rank paganism. While in captivity, Ezekiel had a divinely-inspired vision of the wickedness committed by the rulers, priests, and people of Jerusalem:

"He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain. Then He said to me, 'Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north.' So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.'

"Furthermore He said to me, 'Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations.' So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. Then He said to me, 'Son of man, dig into the wall;' and when I dug into the wall, there was a door. And He said to me, 'Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.' So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a

⁷⁸ Edersheim, pg. 967

thick cloud of incense went up. Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, ‘The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.’

“And He said to me, ‘Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.’ So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. Then He said to me, ‘Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again; you will see greater abominations than these.’ So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east. And He said to me, ‘Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them’” (Ezekiel 8:3-18).

Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. “Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon” (II Kings 25:1-7).

Zedekiah was bound and brought to Babylon, where he received the worst punishment a father can endure: they killed his sons before his eyes (and then blinded him). Therefore, Zedekiah's last image, and lasting image, was the murder of his two sons before his eyes. And he was the reason they were brutally killed. This probably haunted Zedekiah for the rest of his life, provided that the Babylonians spared his life.

Beginning in the summer of 587 BC, the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem. Conditions were dire; some people had even resorted to cannibalism. Jerusalem fell in 586 BC, and its inhabitants—save a small number of “vinedresser and plowmen” (II Kings 25:12)—were deported to Babylon. With this deportation the independent house of Judah came to an end.

Life is of full of irony

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.” (Psalms 137:1). The psalmist was poignantly speaking for a bereaved nation captive in a foreign land. The exilic Jews began to realize that their wounds were self-inflicted. They had only themselves to blame. God sent several prophets to them with a message to repent or else. Time and again, they ignored such warnings. God's patience wore thin and finally, beginning in Jehoikam's reign and ending in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BC, His patience disappeared.

The Jews in exile “were led to believe that the disaster that had befallen the state was a just visitation for their apostasy. They preserved their identity by making *torah*—the Law—the rule of their daily lives. Scribes—the *soferim*—through schools and ceremonies—expounded the Law, and within fifty years of Exile the Deuteronomic religion [that is, the religion expressed most fully in the book of Deuteronomy] had become the religion of the mass. The identity of the people was no longer rooted in Temple ritual, the native soil, or the state.”⁷⁹

In exile the Jews finally discarded what had proved to be their downfall: the desire to fit in. When they returned to Jerusalem, during the reign of the Persian monarch Cyrus, and under the guidance of Ezra and other notables (e.g. Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, etc.), the Jews “publicly covenanted themselves to the Law...Henceforth the community conducted itself strictly according to the Mosaic law, which its ‘scribes’ ‘fenced about’ with numerous additional injunctions and prohibitions. This detailed code was widely inculcated in school and through ceremonies, daily worship, and readings...the Jews at last formed a true theocracy and they could do this precisely because they no longer constituted a sovereign state. They were an *ethnos* [a group of people based on ethnicity] in a vast, polyglot empire that tolerated all religions, and *it was the Empire, not the Jews, which took on itself the secular functions of the former Jewish monarchy.*”⁸⁰

An interesting question

The Jews returned to a land with a divinely-inspired religion they had rediscovered in exile. However, they returned without a monarch. How confusing! God promised that the Davidic throne would last forever (II Samuel 7:16). Isn't Jesus supposed to inherit this throne when He returns (Luke 1:32-33)? Didn't God promise that the “scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Genesis 49:10)? Where, then, did this throne go? Certainly it never returned to Jerusalem. And yet, it's somewhere on this earth. Where?

Jeremiah, a prophet and the missing link

“Jeremiah’s career as a prophet spanned 40 of the most tragic and eventful years in the history of Judah, from 627 BC to the destruction of the Temple in 587 BC. His name is synonymous with unrelieved gloom, but far from being merely a sorrowing and passive witness of the disintegration of Zion, Jeremiah also did all in his power to influence the course of events. Although he failed to prevent Jerusalem’s fall, his exhortations, and hope in the future, proved crucial in ensuring the survival of Judaism during the exile in Babylon....

“Jeremiah counseled against involvement in the struggle between the great powers [Egypt and Babylon]—an unpopular view at the time. His contemporaries believed that Judah was inviolate because of divine protection afforded by the presence of the Temple in Jerusalem. Jeremiah was more realistic: he prophesied the catastrophe which eventually overcame Jerusalem—although he attributed it to Yahweh’s withdrawing his protection from an undeserving people.

“Jeremiah’s influence, however, is not due to the fact that he was proved right; it stems from his belief that a better future would be brought about by a genuine commitment to the faith and its underlying values—the renewal of the covenant between the individual and God. His teachings contributed in large measure to the survival of the faith throughout the Exile and to the Jews’ steadfast belief in their ultimate return to Zion.”⁸¹

What the author of the above quote fails to mention, and apparently doesn't understand, is that

⁷⁹ S.E. Finer, pg. 268

⁸⁰ *ibid*, pg. 268, emphasis his

⁸¹ *Great Events of Biblical Times*, pg. 107

Jeremiah was much more than a prophet. He, in fact, was the missing link. In other words, he was the link between the Davidic throne in Jerusalem and its reappearance in the modern-day nation of Ephraim (Britain).

Jeremiah's commission

Jeremiah was unique: he was one of a few men in the Bible whose purpose in life was divinely foreordained before his birth:

“The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month. Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.’”

“Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.’ But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,’ declares the LORD.

“Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. ***‘See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant’***” (Jeremiah 1:1-10).

God commissioned Jeremiah to exercise authority over the nations (plural) and kingdoms (plural). Moreover, Jeremiah would somehow be instrumental in destroying and rebuilding them. How? To discover the answer, we must analyze his commission phrase by phrase:

1. *I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms:*

Jeremiah's prophetic career began around 627 BC, several decades after the captivity and exile of the house or Kingdom of Israel. Only the Kingdom of Judah remained. But this phrase is pluralized; in other words, Jeremiah was to exercise authority both over the nations and the kingdoms. Aside from the house or Kingdom of Judah (comprising three tribes or nations: Judah, Benjamin, and Levi), to which nations and kingdoms is God referring? The Kingdom of Babylonia and the various subject nations under its domain? Unlikely, because Jeremiah directed his message to the house of Judah.

“Therefore prepare yourself and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, lest I dismay you before them. For behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,’ says the LORD, ‘to deliver you’” (Jeremiah 1:17-19). God repeated this assurance of safety several times.

Jeremiah and Baruch, his scribe and companion, went into Babylon. But they were released from temporary captivity. They left Babylon and returned to Judea. “The word that came to Jeremiah from the

LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: ‘The LORD your God has pronounced this doom on this place. Now the LORD has brought it, and has done just as He said. Because you people have sinned against the LORD, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you. And now look, I free you this day from the chains that were on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land is before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there.’ Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, Nebuzaradan said, ‘Go back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go.’ So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go. *Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land*” (Jeremiah 40:1-6).

Jeremiah did not stay in Babylon; instead, he and Baruch returned to Jerusalem. Thus we can rule out Babylon as one of the kingdoms and nations that God set Jeremiah over.

While in Jerusalem, Jeremiah was confronted by troublemakers. “Now it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and of the officers of the king, came with ten men to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. And there they ate bread together in Mizpah. Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him, arose and struck Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, that is, with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war” (Jeremiah 41:1-3). These men, led by someone named Ishmael, decided to take things into their own hands.

Because they were afraid of retribution—if caught by the Babylonians, they would be killed—Ishmael and his companions decided to seek refuge (asylum?) in Egypt. “And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, as they went on their way to Egypt, because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor in the land” (Jeremiah 41:17-19). However, some of them sought Jeremiah’s advice about going to Egypt. Jeremiah in turn sought God’s advice regarding this petition. God’s answer arrived ten days later:

“Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, ‘I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you. So they said to Jeremiah, ‘Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.’”

“And it happened after ten days that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.... ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: ‘If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,’ says the LORD, ‘for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you

and cause you to return to your own land. But if you say, ‘We will not dwell in this land,’ disobeying the voice of the LORD your God, saying, ‘No, but we will go to the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell’—Then hear now the word of the LORD, ‘O remnant of Judah!.... ‘If you wholly set your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, then it shall be that the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there you shall die. So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.’

“For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘As My anger and My fury have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.’

“The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt!’ Know certainly that I have admonished you this day. For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the LORD our God, and according to all that the LORD your God says, so declare to us and we will do it.’ And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell” (Jeremiah 42:4-22)

The people asked Jeremiah’s advice about returning to Egypt. Jeremiah in turn asked for God’s advice. In no uncertain terms God said “No!” But true to form, the people refused to listen. They went to Egypt and took Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch with them. “But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all nations where they had been driven—men, women, children, *the king's daughters*, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah. So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. And they went as far as Tahpanhes” (Jeremiah 43:5-7).

The next two chapters of the book of Jeremiah recite God’s fierce disapproval of them going to Egypt. However, God concludes with this special assurance to Baruch: “The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the instruction of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: ‘You said, ‘Woe is me now! For the LORD has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.’ Thus you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘*Behold, what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up*, that is, this whole land. And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh,’ says the LORD. ‘*But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go*’” (Jeremiah 45:1-4).

Thus God extended his divine protection to both Jeremiah and Baruch. But that’s not all. He also promised that “a *small number* who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs” (Jeremiah 44:28).

A small amount of them would return to the land of Judah. Who were they? “Surely it will be well with your [Jeremiah’s] remnant; surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you in the time of adversity and in the time of affliction. Can anyone break iron, the northern iron and the bronze? Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder without price, because of all your sins, throughout your territories. And I will make you cross over with your enemies into a *land which you do not know*; for a fire is kindled in My anger, which shall burn upon you” (Jeremiah 15:11-14). Obviously this remnant included Jeremiah, Baruch, some of their enemies, and most likely Zechariah’s daughters (i.e. “the king’s daughters”—Jeremiah 43:5-7).

Thus far we have ruled out Babylonia as one of the nations and kingdoms over which Jeremiah would exert authority (Jeremiah 1:10). Because Jeremiah and his remnant (Baruch, etc.) left Egypt and returned to Judah, we can strike Egypt from our list of possible nations and kingdoms. We’re left with Judah. However, God said that He “*will make you [Jeremiah] cross over with your enemies into a land which you do not know.*” Jeremiah knew the land of Judah like the back of his hand. Thus we can strike Judah from the list of possibilities. (Nor could He have meant Egypt, for the land of Egypt was well known.) If not Babylon, Egypt, and Judah, over which nations and kingdoms would Jeremiah exercise authority?

2. “*to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow*”

This is obvious: Jeremiah was the prophet who foretold the destruction of the house of Judah. Judah, Benjamin and Levi were the tribal nations that were ‘plucked’ up and destroyed.

3. “*to build and to plant*”

God commissioned Jeremiah to exercise authority over the nations and kingdoms, and those nations and kingdoms cannot be Babylonia and Egypt. In addition, the first part of his commission referred to nation(s) and kingdom(s) that will be overthrown and destroyed; those nations (together, the nations of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi) and that kingdom belonged to the house of Judah.

However, God prophesied that Jeremiah and his “remnant” will return to Judah from Egypt, and then travel to an “unknown land.” And He promised to protect Baruch “in all places,” wherever he went. Taken together, these scriptures can mean only one thing: Jeremiah and his remnant (undoubtedly including Baruch, and as we shall see later, the “king’s daughters”) returned to Judah and shortly thereafter traveled to an unknown land, where they built and planted a nation and kingdom, in accordance with God’s wishes. Where, then, did they go? And which kingdom did Jeremiah build?

An obscure yet profound prophecy

“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ‘***Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him***’” (Ezekiel 21:25-27). Here God promised that He would overturn thrice the Davidic throne of Israel and no more until the return of Jesus (Luke 1:32-33). (The throne of Israel belonged to the Davidic family of Israel: “Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?”—II Chronicles 13:5.) As we shall see, “overturn” simply means that God will relocate the Davidic throne to some other place.

Thus far we can conclude that:

- a) The scepter blessing was promised to Judah (Genesis 49:9-10). In other words, Judah would become the forefather of the kingly line of Israel;
- b) God fulfilled this promise when He selected David (from the tribe of Judah) to be king over all of Israel. God promised that the Davidic throne would last forever, and that Jesus will return and inherit this throne;
- c) David unified the confederated tribes of Israel into a kingdom, and this kingdom reached its apogee in the reign of David's son and successor Solomon. After Solomon's death, the Kingdom split into two lesser kingdoms: the house or Kingdom of Israel, comprising ten tribes (including the birthright tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh); and the house or Kingdom of Judah, comprising the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin.
- d) The Assyrians conquered and deported the house of Israel; thereafter, they became "lost" to history. However, we've deduced that the nations of the house of Israel migrated westward into the "wilderness" of West and Northwest Europe, and the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh into the British islands (Jeremiah 32:9-10 & Isaiah 49:12). Because of opportunities bred by flourishing trade, some Israelites had left Palestine and probably established European colonies (and thus nascent nations) long before the Assyrian conquest. These Israelites, and the bulk of the house of Israel that left after the demise of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BC, became known to history as Celts, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, Cimbri, Cimmerians, etc.
- e) The Babylonian Empire conquered the house of Judah and deported its inhabitants into Babylon.
- f) Some people, including Jeremiah, Baruch and the king's daughters, escaped captivity. Under compulsion from Ishmael and others, they entered Egypt. However, God promised to deliver Jeremiah and his "remnant" from Egypt, and to bring them to an unknown land. Jeremiah returned to Judah, but he and his remnant then traveled to this unknown land.
- g) The Babylonian Empire fell to the Medes and Persians, and the Jewish exiles in Babylon returned to Judah without a monarchy. However, because God promised that the Davidic throne would last forever, the throne of Israel was not destroyed; it must have gone elsewhere. Where?
- h) In the book of Ezekiel, God hinted that He would overthrow the Davidic throne of Israel thrice and then no more until Jesus returns and claims it. The first overturn occurred during the reign of King Zedekiah, in Jerusalem. Where did God "overturn" (relocate) this throne?

Overturn to where?

Zedekiah was dethroned both by Nebuchadnezzar and God (Ezekiel 21:25-27). To whom, then, did God transfer the "diadem?" The first part of the prophecy stated that the diadem will be turned over to "him that is low;" by doing so, God will "abase him [Zedekiah] that is high." In other words, God will turn over the kingdom (the "diadem") to a Jewish man who is not part of the ruling family. (Remember that the Davidic throne must always be represented by a descendant of Judah—the "scepter shall not depart from Judah.")

In order to discover his identity, we must refer back to the days of Jacob's son Judah, the forefather of the Jews. Judah had five sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zarah; however, the first two sons died. Judah was thus left with three living sons, the latter two, twins.

"It came about at the time she [Tamar] was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, 'This one came out first.' But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, 'What a breach you have made for yourself!' So he was named Perez. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and he was named Zarah" (Genesis 38:28-30).

As was customary, the firstborn would receive the inheritance. However, Judah's inheritance was extraordinary because it included the divine promise: the "scepter would not depart from Judah." Naturally, Judah expected that his firstborn twin would produce the kingly line of Israel. Hence it was important to distinguish the firstborn of the twins with a scarlet thread tied around his tiny wrist. Therefore, the midwife tied the scarlet thread around the first twin to appear: Zarah. However, something odd occurred. As she tied the scarlet thread around Zarah's tiny wrist, his brother Perez was born: "But it came about as he [Zarah] drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out." Zarah's hand appeared first; then he withdrew his hand as his brother Perez was born. Zarah appeared first but Perez became the firstborn. In Hebrew Perez means "breach" and his brother's name, Zarah, means "seed."

Perez inherited the scepter blessing. The second chapter of the first book of Chronicles states the lines of Perez and Zarah, and indeed, King David descended from the line of Perez. Zedekiah, the last king of the independent house of Judah, was a descendant of David and thus of Perez. And God removed the diadem to someone "low," that is, to someone who was not part of the king's household and therefore not part of the line of Perez.

A riddle

"In connection with the record of the fact that the '*high*,' or ruling, Prince of Judah has been uncrowned and dethroned, and that the '*low*' has been crowned and placed on the throne, we find that a royal prince, a royal princess and the ten-tribed kingdom of Israel are all together in the same country, also that this royal pair are united and placed on a throne, and are ruling over the kingdom of Israel."⁸² This is no mere coincidence.

God promised to transfer the diadem to someone who wasn't part of the king's household and therefore not a descendant of Perez. He also promised to overturn (not destroy) the Davidic throne of Israel. (This represents the first of the promised three 'overturns.')

But according to His divine promise, the throne would never depart from the house of Judah. Therefore, God deposed Zedekiah (the last king of independent Judah) and transferred his diadem to another Jew.

At the same time, God commissioned Jeremiah to build and plant a kingdom, which necessarily includes a king. Jeremiah was a prophet, not a king. However, his companions (the "remnant") included Baruch and the king's daughters. Therefore, God had given him the ingredients (the king's daughters) to build a kingdom. This kingdom would not be in Judah because God had promised that (i) Jeremiah and his companions would travel to an unknown land, and (ii) He would protect Jeremiah and Baruch in "all places" (Jeremiah 45:4), wherever they went. Where did they go, and how did Jeremiah build this kingdom? A riddle in the seventeenth chapter of Ezekiel (quoted in full) provides significant clues:

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 'Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the *house of Israel*; and say, 'Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great

⁸² J.H. Allen, *Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright*

eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the **highest branch of the cedar**: He cropped off the **top of his young twigs**, and carried it into a land of **traffick [trade]**; he set it in a **city of merchants**. He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a **fruitful field**; he placed it by **great waters**, and set it as a willow tree. **And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.**

“There was also **another great eagle** with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this **vine did bend her roots toward him**, and shot forth **her** branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. It was planted in a good soil by **great waters**, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly [i.e. majestic] vine. “Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? Shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? It shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? Shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? It shall wither in the furrows where it grew.’

“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ‘Say now to the **rebellious house**, Know ye not what these things mean? Tell them, Behold, the **king of Babylon** is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon; and hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: that the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant it might stand. But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? Shall he escape that doeth such things? Or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die.’

“Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons: seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely **mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken**, even it will I recompense upon his own head. And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it.

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the **highest branch of the high cedar**, and will set it; **I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent**; in the mountain **of the height of Israel will I plant it**. And it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly [i.e. “majestic”]

cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have ***brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish.*** I the LORD have spoken and have done it.”

This chapter begins with a riddle and parable, then cuts to an explanation, and resumes and concludes with a riddle and parable.”

- a) The first section refers to “the house of Israel” and thus not to the house of Judah. The Assyrians conquered and deported the house of Israel, which included the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh, into Mesopotamia, and they never returned to the land of Palestine. They migrated westward, and the birthright nations (Ephraim and Manasseh) relocated to the faraway islands north and west of Palestine. According to Jacob’s divinely-inspired prophecy, the children of Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—would inhabit coastal lands (“a fruitful bough by a well,” Genesis 49:22), in a temperate (non-tropical) eco-zone which would produce good and productive soils (“a fruitful bough” and “blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath”). The first part of this riddle confirms this account.

Symbolically, a great eagle grabbed the “topmost young twig” of the “highest branch of the cedar.” The “cedar” represented the house of Israel, and because of the birthright blessings, the “highest branch” refers to the house of Joseph (together, Ephraim and Manasseh). The “top of his young twigs” refer to Joseph’s children (and thus the descendants of) Ephraim and Manasseh. Together, these descendants were brought to a “land of trade” by the “great waters.” (“Great waters” cannot mean mere streams, ponds, or even rivers; rather, it means they were placed near an ocean or a sea.) Moreover, the land they occupied was “fertile,” and there they would “grow” and become a vine of “low stature.” The section alluding to their explosive population growth (“So it became a vine, brought forth branches, and put forth shoots”) is reminiscent of Jacob’s description of Ephraim and Manasseh: they would “grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” (Regarding the “land of trade,” it’s not coincidental that Great Britain became the most powerful maritime Empire this world has seen, and its prosperity was due in part to trade.)

God promised that the house of Joseph would be regal. However, the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh would not achieve a kingdom (“crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers,” Genesis 49:26) until the latter part of the riddle. Until then, symbolically they were a vine of “low stature.”

- b) God then refers to another “great eagle” and to another “vine.” The second vine bent “her roots toward him [the eagle] and shot forth [stretched] her branches toward him, that he [the eagle] might water it by the furrows of her plantation. It was ‘planted in ***good soil*** [reminiscent of the “fertile field” that Ephraim and Manasseh would occupy] and by ***great waters*** [reminiscent of the “great waters” abutting the land occupied by Ephraim and Manasseh], that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, and become a goodly [majestic] vine.” By contrast, the first vine—the house of Israel represented by the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh—was “low in stature.” In other words, someone or some important people of the house of Judah traveled to the fertile land of trade (the British islands). Together,

these important people would bring a kingdom to this land occupied by the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh.

- c) In the following few paragraphs, God dispenses with the riddle and parable and condemns the house of Judah in plain language. He refers to how Nebuchadnezzar captured and deported the king and the “mighty men and families of Judah,” and by doing so, the kingdom was brought “low.” By using language similar to the aforementioned obscure prophecy found in the 21st chapter of Ezekiel (“Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high”), God has identified the man (Zedekiah) whose diadem was removed, and who was “brought low.” The removal of the diadem represented the first part of Ezekiel’s obscure prophecy. The second part (‘overturning’ or relocating the Davidic throne) will come later.
- d) After His condemnation of Zedekiah, God resumes the riddle. God had dethroned Zechariah, and transferred his throne and diadem to “*one of the highest branches of the high cedar.*” “High cedar” implies majesty, so God transferred the throne to a “tender” person in Zedekiah’s family. In the second paragraph, this “tender” person is a female (“her roots,” “her branches”). Moreover, because the first paragraph describes the “house of Israel,” by contrast God is referring to the house of Judah in the following paragraph. Therefore, this female was a member of Zedekiah’s family and thus of the kingly Perez line of Judah (the “high cedar”).

Earlier I discussed that, in accordance with the prophecy inherent in the birth of Perez (the progenitor of the kingly line of the house of Judah), God promised to overturn the kingdom to someone who is “abased” and “low,” that is, to someone not of the kingly line of Perez. This fact is alluded to in the concluding sentence of this riddle: “And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have *exalted the low tree*, have dried up the green tree, and *have made the dry tree to flourish.*” By using words similar to the obscure prophecy in the 21st chapter of Ezekiel (“exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high”), God is explaining in the form of a riddle that this female member of the king’s household married a person not of the kingly line of Perez.

- e) God concludes the riddle by stating that He will guide this “young twig” (the female member of the “high cedar,” which represents the Judaic dynastic family) to a high and eminent mountain; in “*the height of Israel will I plant it.*” Thus we have the unification of the Judaic royal family and the house of Israel, specifically the house of Joseph.

The riddle concludes by bringing us back to its opening section. The riddle opens with the removal of the “house of Israel” (represented by the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh) to good and fertile lands by great waters, in which they will conduct extensive trade. In the 2nd paragraph, the second vine (of the house of Judah) spread “her” (Judah is represented by a female) “roots” and “branches” toward “him” (the “eagle” that brought her—the second vine—to the fertile land occupied by the first vine). We should thus assume that: (i) the female representative of the kingly Perez line of Judah married someone who was not of that line, in the “unknown land”

occupied by Israelites (the faraway islands northwest of Palestine—the British Isles); and (ii) the monarchy relocated to the land of the house of Joseph.

The riddle therefore explains the enigmatic and parenthetical insertion in Jacob's prophecy concerning the progeny of Joseph: "*from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel*" (Genesis 49:24). The Shepherd of Israel is Jesus: "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a *shepherd does his flock*'" (Jeremiah 31:10). And "behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the *throne of His father David*. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:31-33). *Therefore the throne belonging to the Shepard of Israel (Jesus) resides in the house of Joseph, that is, in the birthright nation of Ephraim.*

In accordance with God's prophecy, Jeremiah and his companions traveled to an unknown land. His companions included the king's daughters. At least one of them married someone not of the kingly line of Perez ("exalt him that is low"). God turned the diadem over to the man she married, in this unknown land occupied by descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. He has since overturned it two more times. After the final "overturn," the throne of David came to reside in Britain. The Shepherd of Israel (Jesus) will inherit this throne when He returns. Thus we see the fulfillment of Jeremiah's commission: in his prophetic ministry he oversaw the destruction of the house of Judah ("I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down") and was instrumental in planting and rebuilding ("to build and to plant") the monarchical family (the "kingdom") of Israel in the land of Ephraim (modern-day Britain).

Stone of Israel

In addition to referring to the "Shepherd of Israel," Jacob also mentions the "Stone of Israel," which resides in the modern-day nation of Joseph, particularly in the modern-day nation of Ephraim. What is this Stone?

Earlier I referred to God's appearance to Jacob. God said, "Your name is Jacob. You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.' Thus He called him Israel. God also said to him, 'I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.' Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. *Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel*" (Genesis 35:9-15). In Hebrew, Bethel means "house of God."

God promised that Jacob would produce a "nation and company of nations." This promise was extended to, and fulfilled in the histories of, the nations of Ephraim and Manasseh. After receiving this divine message, Jacob was sufficiently moved to "set up a pillar stone," consecrate it, and then call this place, and this *pillar stone*, Bethel, which means "house of God." Symbolically, this pillar stone embodied the house of God. By extrapolation, "the house of God" resides in the place in which this "pillar stone" is located.

As stated earlier, God told Joshua to divide the conquered land of Palestine among the twelve tribes of Israel. The town of Bethel resided in the land given to the tribe of Benjamin. However, with God's approval, the house of Joseph conquered this town (Judges 1:22-26). Thus, the "pillar stone" (representing the "house of God") came to reside in the house of Joseph, specifically in the tribe of Ephraim. Again, this explains why Jacob referred the house of Joseph as having the "Stone of Israel."

This "pillar stone" was no mere stone. Because it played a great part in the earliest history of Israel, the stone became a national monument. And because it represented the "house of God," God Himself placed special importance in it. For example:

"The first mention of no water for the people to drink was while the Israelites were encamped at Rephidim. Without previously selecting one special rock, the Lord said unto Moses: 'I will stand before thee there upon *the rock* in Horeb, and thou shalt smite *the rock*, and there shall come water out of it.' The phrase, 'There in Horeb,' points out the place where the rock was at the time, and if the Lord, when he spoke of the rock, had used the demonstrative form, and said 'That rock,' then we should know that he was designating which one, or a certain one not yet selected, but the fact that he said '*The rock*' is proof to us that he was speaking of a rock with which they were already familiar. May it not have been the Bethel pillar rock, '*the shepherd, the stone of Israel,*' which had been committed to the keeping of the house of Joseph?

"This possibility is more clearly manifest in the account of the other circumstances when there was no water, which occurred at Kadish, a city in the border of Edom, the country which belonged to the descendants of Esau. At this place the people of Israel were very bitter against Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, 'Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranites; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: 'Take the rod, and gather the assembly together, and speak ye unto *the rock* before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the *rock*; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before *the rock*, and he said unto them: Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch water out of *this rock*. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote *the rock* twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also,' (Num. 20:5-11).

"We have quoted this account in full, from the beginning of the complaint by the people until the water was given, that our readers may see that, although the phrase 'the rock' is used four times, there is not the slightest indication that there was any selection, or indication of preference for any certain rock in the vicinity of Kadish, or that one was not already chosen, and in their midst. It was to show also that at the very first mention of water for the people from 'this rock,' all that was necessary, as a preparatory measure, was for the Lord to say to Moses, 'Speak to the rock;' and also that when the

people were commanded to ‘gather before *‘the rock,’* they understood so well which rock it was that, in all that vast company of two and a half millions, no explanations were necessary. Hence, it must have been among them before this, and well known. Let us also bear in mind that this name, *‘The Rock,’* was used in the same relation at Rephidim, and yet the children of Israel had removed, journeyed and pitched their tents twenty-one (see Numbers, 33rd chapter) times after leaving Rephidim, and here at Kadish there is with them that which is still familiarly known as ‘THE ROCK.’”⁸³

Moreover, the kings of Israel received their coronation or made special announcements near this Rock or Pillar Stone (e.g. II Kings 11:13-14, II Kings 23:3).

Therefore, Jacob’s pillar stone represented the “house of God,” translated as Bethel, which was a town located in the land occupied by the ancient tribe of Ephraim (Judges 1:22-26). According to Jacob’s description of the latter-day nation of Joseph (together, the nations of Ephraim and Manasseh), the Stone of Israel (or Jacob’s pillar stone) resides in the house of Joseph. The monarchs of ancient Israel were crowned near this Stone or Rock. And it’s no coincidence that the British have retained their monarchy, and that monarchs of the United Kingdom receive their coronation near a special rock:

“On the occasion of Queen Victoria's coronation, June 28th, 1837, an article appeared in the *London Sun*, which gives a description of the coronation chair and the coronation stone, as follows: ‘This chair, commonly called St. Edward's chair, is an ancient seat of solid hardwood, with back and sides of the same, variously painted, in which the kings of Scotland were in former periods constantly crowned, but, having been brought out of the kingdom by Edward I, in the year 1296, after he had totally overcome John Baliol, king of Scots, it has ever since remained in the Abbey of Westminster, and has been the chair in which the succeeding kings and queens of this realm have been inaugurated. It is in height six feet and seven inches, in breadth at the bottom thirty-eight inches, and in depth twenty-four inches; from the seat to the bottom is twenty-five inches; the breadth of the seat within the sides is twenty-eight inches, and the depth eighteen inches. At nine inches from the ground is a board, supported at the four corners by as many lions. *Between the seat and this board is enclosed a stone, commonly called Jacob's, or the fatal Marble, Stone, which is an oblong of about twenty-two inches in length, thirteen inches broad and eleven inches deep; of a steel color, mixed with some veins of red. History relates that it is the stone whereon the patriarch Jacob laid his head in the plains of Luz.*’”⁸⁴

The first prophesied “overturn”

Jeremiah and his companions (“remnant,” including Baruch and the king’s daughters) relocated to an “unknown land,” which is in the British Islands occupied by the house of Joseph (Jeremiah 32:9-10, Isaiah 49:12). We’ve seen how God transferred the “diadem” to a man who was “low” and thus not of the Perez (kingly) line of Judah. The first of the three prophesied overturns occurred when God dethroned Zedekiah and transferred the diadem to this new man, who must have married one of the king’s daughters who arrived with Jeremiah in the “unknown” land occupied by the ancient Israelites, specifically the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh.

⁸³ J.H Allen, *Judah’s Scepter and Joseph’s Birthright*

⁸⁴ Quoted in J.H. Allen, from a *London Sun* article in 1837

Before their relocation to the unknown land, Jeremiah and his companions (including Baruch and the king's daughters) were carried into Egypt by Ishmael and his band of troublemakers. They went "as far as Tahpanhes" (Jeremiah 43:5). Some time later, Jeremiah, Baruch, and the king's daughters returned from Tahpanhes to the land of Judah, and from there they traveled to an unknown land. Thus their journey began in Tahpanhes, and after a quick stop-over in Judah, they left for an unknown land occupied by the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh.

People in the ancient world were known by their first name and the name of their (i) tribal clan or (ii) birthplace or (iii) town in which they lived. In other words, Jesus did not have a surname (last name) in the modern sense of the word. Instead, He was known as Jesus of Nazareth (the town in which He resided); similarly, we have the example of Joseph of Arimathea. So a resident of, for example, Tahpanhes would be named Jane or Mary (to use modern names) of Tahpanhes.

In addition, if the ancient person was part of the ruling household, he or she would have been known by the name of the dynastic household, or simply by the appellation, "the son" or "daughter of the king." For example, the aforementioned king's daughters are not named in the book of Jeremiah. Instead, they were known simply as the daughters of the king. Therefore, when they left Egypt and eventually traveled to an unknown land, the king's daughters would have been known as the "king's daughters" or by other similar titles peculiar to the languages of the people they encountered.

The aforementioned riddle in the 17th chapter of Ezekiel implies that a member of the ruling household of Judah (of the line of Perez) went to the land occupied by "house of Israel," which was located near "great waters" (i.e. ocean or seas). Since God promised that Jeremiah and his companions (the "remnant," which included Baruch and the king's daughters) would travel to an unknown (foreign) land—where Jeremiah would undoubtedly fulfill his divine commission to build and plant a kingdom—at least one of the king's daughters must have traveled to a foreign land and married and produced children with a Jewish man who was not part of the king's household and thus not part of the Perez (kingly) line of Judah.

Remember that the Assyrians deported over 200,000 Jews, and when the Empire crumbled, these Jews migrated just like the rest of the other subject nations and peoples. Some of them became known to history as "Jutes," a so-called Germanic tribe that inhabited part of the Danish peninsula. Some of these Jutes then migrated and settled in the British islands. Thus there were ethnic Jews living in the lands (British islands) occupied by the house of Joseph (together, Ephraim and Manasseh).

Therefore, we have discovered the first of the promised 'overturns' (relocations) of the Davidic throne. God made the first prophesied overturn by relocating the Davidic throne to a land occupied by the house of Joseph; hence the reference to the Stone of Israel being in the House of Joseph.

This account is supported by an obscure reference to a very important visitor to Ireland:

"We must also remember that Jeremiah and his little remnant were taken, against their will, and against the direct command of God, to Egypt, and that while there they dwelt in Taphanhes. Morton W. Spencer says, 'It is an undeniable historical fact that about 580 B. C. (i.e. the very time of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon), that a princess from the East did arrive in the north of Ireland. Her name was Tephi, a pet name like 'Violet,' denoting beauty, fragrance. Tea Tephi was her full name, found in Hebrew. The Tea, *a little* one, and Tephi answering to a surname. *Taph*, the root word, is used in many scriptures (Gen. 34:29, and Deut. 1:39) (*Vide Concordance*). Her names were interchangeably used as Tea, Taffe, Taffes, Tephi, the Eastern Princess, the Daughter of Pharaoh, and Tea Tephi; either of these serve to identify her as 'The King's Daughter.' In Egypt she was offered protection, and from her the city of Taphanhes or Dahpne was named, doubtless, and to this day we are shown the site of 'The Palace of the Jew's Daughter,' by the Arabs. The fact that she fled the country is still preserved in her

name, Tarah, meaning one banished or flight.

“The name of Pharaoh is neither a given nor a surname, but it is the Egyptian name for king or monarch. The very fact that Irish historians called Tea Tephi ‘The Daughter of Pharaoh’ is proof that they knew her as ‘The King's Daughter.’ Also this name, ‘The King's Daughter,’ is the only one used in the Bible account of the first overturn to designate that daughter of Zedekiah who succeeded him to the inheritance of David's throne, excepting, of course, that metaphorical name, ‘Tender twig,’ of Ezekiel's riddle. Since the name Tea means ‘*little one*,’ and since a *tender* twig is also a *little one*, it certainly takes no great stretch of faith to believe that these two names belong to one and the same person. Especially is this the case when we consider that in the Tea Tephi of Irish history we have a king's daughter, with a Hebrew name, who not only came from the East, but also from Egypt, and who is the daughter of a Jew.

“But there are still other facts connected with the arrival of this princess in Ireland, which, as we consider them, will strengthen our faith more and more. Tea Tephi was accompanied by an aged guardian, who was called *Ollam Folla*, more Hebrew words which mean revealer, or prophet. The prophet was accompanied by a man who was his scribe, whom the chronicles of Ireland called Brug, or Bruch. Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe while they were in Judea; he went with the little remnant to Egypt, and escaped when the rest did; for his life, like the lives of the rest of his party, was to be preserved in all places whither he should go. This little company disappeared from Egypt, but surely they reappeared in Ireland, for, marvel of marvels! they brought with them a pillar-stone, which has ever since been used as the *coronation stone of the kingdom*”⁸⁵

This account describes the first prophesied overturn (or relocation) of the Davidic throne to the British islands. Ireland fits this description because it was a faraway island (Jeremiah 31:9-10) occupied in part by Jutes (Jews), and located by “great waters” (Ezekiel 17:5). In all likelihood, some of these Jews descended from the Judah's son Zarah. And one of them married one of the king's daughters, who were part of the Perez (kingly) line of Judah. The circumstances of Perez's birth caused a “breach” in the kingly line of the house of Judah. Thus this marriage healed the “breach” caused by the birth of Perez. Henceforth, the scepter would reside in the dynastic family. And this dynastic family will hand their monarchy over to Jesus when He returns (foretold in the parenthetic statement made in Jacob's description of the modern-day nation of Joseph: “from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel”).

The prophesied second and third overturns

The first overturn (or relocation) of the Davidic throne occurred in the transfer of the monarchy (represented by the pillar stone) to Ireland. Ireland was occupied by, among other peoples, the Jutes (Jews that left Mesopotamia after the demise of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BC). Through the marriage of one of the king's daughters to one of these Jews, the monarchy was reestablished and Jeremiah's commission fulfilled. In bringing the king's daughters to Ireland, and overseeing the marriage between her and one of the Jews (Jutes) of the line of Zarah, Jeremiah planted and rebuilt the monarchy of Israel. And because of this, the scepter and birthright blessings came to reside in the house of Joseph, specifically in Ephraim (modern-day Britain).

From Ireland, the Davidic throne was overturned twice. “The first, as we have shown, was from

⁸⁵ J.H. Allen, *Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright*

Palestine to Tara, in the plantation of Ulster, through Tea Tephi, Jeremiah's ward, the 'King's Daughter.' The second overturn was from Ireland to Scotland, through Fergus, who sent for Lia Fail, the Stone of Destiny, and had it brought from Tara to Iona, where he was crowned. The third overturn was from Scotland to England. At this time the throne was brought from Scotland and placed in Westminster Abbey, where it *rests* under the protection of the greatest monarchy on earth."⁸⁶ The throne will remain in Westminster Abbey until Jesus (the prophesied "Shepherd of Israel," Genesis 49:24) returns.

Back to the past

So far I've made the following propositions based on biblical clues and predictions, on secular history, and on common sense:

- a) God made two covenants with Abraham and extended the promises therein to his son Isaac and grandson Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel. God promised national greatness to the Israelite nations, especially to the birthright nations of Ephraim and Manasseh. God also promised that the "scepter shall not depart from Judah." In other words, Judah would become the forefather of the kingly line of Israel. Moreover, God promised that the entire earth would be blessed through the descendant of Jacob. This was fulfilled when Jesus, the descendant of Judah, was born.
- b) David, a descendant of the kingly Perez line of Judah, unified the confederate tribes of Israel into a kingdom. God promised that his throne would last forever.
- c) Unified Israel divided into two lesser kingdoms—the house of Israel, comprising ten northern tribes, including the birthright nations Ephraim and Manasseh; and the house of Judah comprised of the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin—in the reign of David's grandson Rehoboam. In the 8th century BC the Assyrians conquered the house of Israel and deported its inhabitants into Mesopotamia; thereafter, they became "lost" to history. Over a century later, the house of Judah was conquered and exiled into Babylon.
- d) Before the Assyrian conquest (745-718 BC), some Israelites of the house of Israel (represented by the birthright nation of Ephraim) migrated westward, undoubtedly guided by the unseen hand of God to a sparsely populated section (the "wilderness" of Jeremiah 31:2) of Europe blessed with a good climate and productive soils. There they established colonies, which over time grew into nations known to history as the Celts (e.g. the Brythons of Britain; the Scoti of Scotland; the Belgi of Belgium; the Danes of Denmark, the Celt Iberians of Spain, etc.). They were the trailblazers who, because of opportunism and trade, began to leave Israel during the days of Solomon.
- e) Again guided by the unseen hand of God, the bulk of the house of Israel followed their trailblazers after Assyria succumbed to defeat in 612 BC. European ecology would support the explosive growth of the Israelites in their new lands. After all, God promised that Ephraim and Manasseh would grow together into a "multitude in the midst of the earth" and later separate into a great company of nations and a great nation (Genesis 49:12). The sparsely populated northwestern and western sections of Europe were ecologically well-suited to

⁸⁶ *ibid*

support such growth in population and prosperity. While there, these Israelites found Christian grace (Jeremiah 31:2).

- f) Great Britain (Ephraim) and the United States (Manasseh) fulfilled the divine blessings promised to the house of Joseph. After all, they:
- Grew together (Genesis 48:16) and thus shared similar laws and customs, and later separated into a great nation and company of nations (Genesis 48:16);
 - Are rich (“fruitful,” Genesis 49:22);
 - Reside in temperate eco-zones (barring Hong Kong & Singapore, there are no rich tropical nations), by the seas (Genesis 49:22, Ezekiel 21:5);
 - Possess strong militaries (Genesis 49:24);
 - Have monarchies (Genesis 49:26). This attribute applies only to Great Britain, which possesses a constitutional (and titular) monarchy;
 - Are Christian (they “found grace in the wilderness” – Jeremiah 31:2);
 - Migrated westward to the faraway islands (Jeremiah 32:9-10) north and west of Palestine (Isaiah 49:12); and
 - Engaged in colonization (Genesis 49:22).
- g) The rest of the Israelite tribes are described as Ephraim’s “companions” (as the birthright nation, “Ephraim” was often used biblically to represent the ten-tribe house of Israel). As companions, they would have probably relocated to the northwest region of Europe, where they, too, “found grace in the wilderness.”
- h) The ancient Danites tended to rename conquered, traversed, and settled territory after the name of their eponymous forefather. Many European names betray their Danite origin: Macedonia, the Danube, the Danieper, the Daniester, and especially Denmark (or Danmark, the “mark of Dan”). The Danish peninsula was occupied not only by the Danes (anciently known as Celts), but also by several Germanic tribes: Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Cimbri, and Teutons. The word German stems from the Latin *Aleman*, a name applied to the Germanic Alammani. The word *Alammani* (one of the Germanic tribes) looks and sounds a lot like the word *Halmanni*, the name applied to the main tribe of Assyria. If the Danes (Celts) originated in the Israelite tribe of Dan, and the Germanic tribes in Assyria, then such a mixture of ancient Israelites and Assyrians fulfilled the divine prediction that God will sift the ten-tribe house of Israel among the nations (Amos 9:9).
- i) Because of this admixture, some of the ancient Israelites were mislabeled as Germanic. For example, the Germanic Cimbri (and probably Teutons) were likely ancient Israelites, as were the Saxons and Jutes (Jews).
- j) In 586 BC the Babylonian Empire conquered the house of Judah and exiled its inhabitants into Babylon. However, God promised to deliver Jeremiah and some of his companions (his “remnant”) from captivity and bring them into an unknown land.
- k) God commissioned Jeremiah to exercise authority over the nations and kingdoms (together, the nations of Judah, Levi and Benjamin, comprising the kingdom of Judah), and “to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant” (Jeremiah 1:1-10).

- l) Jeremiah fulfilled his commission, and the prophecies specified in the 17th and 21st chapters of Ezekiel, by bringing the king's (Zedekiah's) daughters to the island of Ireland. One of them married a Jew (Jute) not of the kingly Perez line of Judah, thus healing the breach in the kingly line of Judah and reestablishing the Israelite monarchy in the land of Joseph (together, Ephraim and Manasseh), as was prophesied in Jacob's parenthetical statement: "From there [the land of the house of Joseph] is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (Genesis 49:24).
- m) Upon His return, Jesus will inherit the throne located in Westminster Abbey. This represents the very last "overturn" of the Davidic throne. Jesus will relocate that throne to Jerusalem, the eventual seat of His everlasting government on Earth.

More clues about Manasseh's identity

The Israelite nations of Ephraim and Manasseh relocated to the British islands. There they would "grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" and later separate to fulfill their individual destinies. True to the divinely-inspired prophecies specified in Genesis 48, Britain became an empire (company of nations) whose domain spanned five continents. America became the strongest nation since Rome, and has succeeded the British Empire. Pax Britannica has become Pax Americana.

America has assumed Great Britain's role as the indispensable, hegemonic power of its day. "No one could deny the extent of the American informal empire—the empire of international corporations, or Hollywood movies and even of TV evangelists. Is this so very different from the early British Empire of monopoly trading companies and missionaries? Nor is it any coincidence that a map showing the principal U.S. military bases around the world looks remarkably like a map of Royal Navy coaling stations a hundred years ago. Even recent American foreign policy recalls the gunboat diplomacy of the British Empire in its Victorian heyday, when a little trouble on the periphery could be dealt with by a short, sharp, 'surgical strike.' The only difference is that today's gunboats fly."⁸⁷

Our founding fathers did not have crystal balls. They could not peer into the future and discover the greatness of the state they founded. In George Washington's eyes, our experiment in republicanism was tenuous at best. Even Lincoln stressed that the Civil War severely tested whether our nation can survive: "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."⁸⁸

As unlikely as it sounds to the modern, secular ear, God promised that Manasseh (the United States) would become a great nation (and that Ephraim would become a great company of nations). Historically, only the United States and Britain could have fulfilled the divine promises made so long ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Earlier I stated the cultural similarities between Britain and ancient Israel (in the section entitled "The British Empire, a brief interlude"), specifically the (i) respect for property rights, (ii) love and desire for freedom and liberty, and (iii) preference for limited government. These cultural traits can also be found in America.

"During the seventeenth century, English immigrants established several New England colonies on a foundation of private family faith as well as on public church covenants and a general sense that God was a partner in their enterprise. Conditions of settlement in the Middle Colonies—with thriving bands of Presbyterians, Quakers, Mennonites, Dutch Reformed, Moravians, Baptists, and more—soon made that

⁸⁷ N. Ferguson, pg. 315

⁸⁸ Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*

region one of the most religiously pluralistic parts of the world. By the 1740s, subjective and evangelical forms of Christianity were exerting more influence in America than corresponding movements did in Britain or the Continent...the Revolutionary War was as much a religious civil war as it was an international conflict. While the Patriots' confidence that God favored the new nation received attention in later American historiography, the Loyalists' conviction that God wanted the American colonies to remain a part of Britain was almost as strong....

"Led by grand visions of a Christian America among northern Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and fueled by the diligent labors of Methodists itinerants and Baptist farm-preachers, Protestant leaders, local churches, denominations, and voluntary agencies transformed the religious landscape of the country. In the wake of the Revolution, the United States had been a substantially unchurched society. Slightly more than a generation later in 1835, the visiting Alexis de Toqueville wrote in *Democracy in America*: 'There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.'"⁸⁹

Religion played a large part in the formation of the colonial governments. "The Old Testament traditions were coherent, mutually supportive, and reflective of our original image of America as a Promised Land, a New Israel, set apart for liberty under God....The evidence that the colonialists believed that America was a holy land (that is, 'set apart') is so abundant as to be trite. As early as 1630, Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop implored his people 'to Consider that wee shall be a Ciity upon a Hill, the eies of all people are upon us....Over and again, colonial divines invoked God's blessing on the American cause of 'civil and religious liberty,' for the one could not survive without the other. Congress declared days of national fasting and prayer during the Revolutionary War, again when independence was won in 1783, and again when the Constitution was finished. Preachers up and down the seaboard attributed American independence to the sure hand of Providence. 'Here has our God...prepare an asylum for the oppressed in every part of the earth.'"⁹⁰

Despite the fact that several of our founding fathers (e.g. Franklin, Jefferson, possibly Washington) were deists, many colonialists believed that America was, in the words of John Winthrop, a Christian City on a Hill. (Deism is a "generic term for the 'rational' religion that challenged orthodox Christianity from the middle Colonial Era through the era of the Early Republic....Deists rejected Christian belief in scriptural inerrancy, miracles, Jesus's divinity, and revelation."⁹¹) To these Christian colonialists, America represented the New Israel, figuratively speaking. Little did they know that God brought the birthright nation of Manasseh to the shores of the East Coast during the 1600s, to fulfill a promise He made so long ago to Abraham.

Considering the divine prophecy concerning Manasseh, and the biblical and secular clues that support its westward migration first into the British islands and then, beginning in the 1600s, into North America, is it a mere coincidence that:

- a) The United States consisted first of 13 colonies, and Manasseh was the 13th tribe of Israel? (Ephraim and Manasseh constituted the larger tribe of Joseph. Therefore, technically there were thirteen tribes in ancient Israel, and since Jacob placed Ephraim before Manasseh [Genesis 48:17-19], Manasseh represented the 13th tribe of Israel);

⁸⁹ *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, article on "Religion," pg. 657

⁹⁰ Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1976*, pgs 5, 17

⁹¹ *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, article on "Deism," pg. 177

- b) Our currency depicts the great pyramid of Egypt, and Manasseh was part-Egyptian from his mother's side? (Interestingly, the national Crest of England has the Egyptian Sphinx on its reverse side.); and
- c) Our currency has the words "Annuit Coeptis," translated as "He [the Lord] has *prospered* our undertakings," similar to the words concerning Joseph's time in Egypt: "And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a *prosperous* man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian" (Genesis 39:2).

If you believe in God's prophecies, then you must believe that the modern-day nations of Ephraim and Manasseh achieved national greatness. At the risk of redundancy, I feel compelled to reiterate the list of clues that help us locate these nations. Ephraim and Manasseh:

- Grew together (Genesis 48:16) and thus shared similar laws and customs, and later separated into a great nation and company of nations (Genesis 48:16);
- Are rich ("fruitful" – Genesis 49:22);
- Reside in temperate eco-zones (barring Hong Kong & Singapore, there are no rich tropical nations), by the seas (Genesis 49:22, Ezekiel 21:5);
- Possess strong militaries (Genesis 49:24);
- Have monarchies (Genesis 49:26). This attribute applies only to Great Britain, which possesses a constitutional (and titular) monarchy;
- Are Christian (they "found grace in the wilderness" – Jeremiah 31:2);
- Migrated westward to the faraway islands (Jeremiah 32:9-10) north and west of Palestine (Isaiah 49:12); and
- Engaged in colonization (Genesis 49:22).

Historically, the only related (brother) nations to have fulfilled such criteria are Britain (technically, the United Kingdom as Ephraim) and the United States (as Manasseh). Moreover, these nations share some of the cultural characteristics (e.g. respect of private property, love of freedom and liberty, and the desire for limited government) of the ancient Israelites. It's thus hard to escape the conclusion that Manasseh has become the United States of America.

A disclaimer

Earlier I stated that many Americans believe that God has blessed the United States because it's somehow more virtuous and Christian than other countries. On the contrary! God has blessed the United States because of His irrevocable promise made so long ago to Abraham.

The American story has had its share of good and bad moments. From the beginning, we were a land of opportunity. And early Americans took advantage of such opportunities. "In 1870, the United States had the largest economy in the world, and its best years still lay ahead....This American system of manufacture had created, for better or worse, a new world of insatiable consumerism, much decried by critics who feared for the souls and manners of common people. The world has long learned to live with the lavishness and indulgences of the rich and genteel; *but now, for the first time in history, even ordinary folk could aspire to ownership of those hard goods—watches, clocks, bicycles, telephones, radios, domestic machines, above all, the automobile—that were seen in traditional societies as the appropriate*

privilege of the few."⁹² The American political and economic system produced a large middle class with the ability to afford goods and services that heretofore were available only to the rich and the elite. This is good.

What's bad is that this culture of opportunism has fostered greed and the crass consumerism propagated by the advertising firms of Manhattan's Madison Avenue. Moreover, the preamble of the Declaration of Independence was a unique expression of equality and freedom. However, such freedom and equality were denied to blacks and other minorities for much of the subsequent two centuries. And who can forget the sage observation by Abraham Lincoln. Concerning the different sides of the Civil War, Lincoln said:

"Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged."⁹³

In other words, Lincoln is noting that both sides of the Civil War are Christian-professing, church-going, Bible-reading men. And yet both sides had two very different theological perspectives regarding the institution of slavery. And both Christian-professing sides were committing atrocities against each other (especially in "bleeding Kansas," Missouri, and other Border States).

In many ways, we're a nation of contradictions. We're a nation that is "immensely powerful yet persistently afraid or ashamed of using that power; that celebrates self-reliance yet fosters big governance, big technology, and big business; that by inward grace is the most religious Western nation, yet by outward signs appears decadent; that is more generous than any other people in history yet obsessed with material wealth; that trumpets diversity yet imposes its values on others; that accepts global leadership yet seems often to wish the rest of the world would just go away; that prides itself equally on its idealism and pragmatism, and likes to believe they are identical."⁹⁴

My purpose in this section is not to bring the United States down a notch or two. Rather, by pointing out some of our national indiscretions (e.g. slavery, discrimination, greed, etc.), I am emphasizing the goodness and faithfulness of God. Again, God has blessed the United States not because of its virtue but because of His irrevocable promises made to Abraham.

The Divine Destiny of America

The American story has a good ending. However, it has a very bumpy road ahead.

September 11, 2001 is my generation's Pearl Harbor. It was a watershed in our history. We should have seen it coming. In 1993, in 1995, in 1996, in 1998, and in 2000: a series of escalating terror attacks on America and our interests overseas, which culminated on that fateful day in September. Yet 9/11 was not a mere failure in intelligence. Above all it was a failure of imagination. It was hard to imagine demoniacal terrorists using planes as missiles, and flying them into buildings full of regular people.

Six or seven days after 9/11, in a televised address to both houses of Congress, President Bush declared a War on Terror. It's a war we're unaccustomed to fighting. At least during the Cold War, our enemy (the USSR) had a face and an address. Now, we know neither. But we do know this: terrorists have exploited the very things that contribute to our national greatness: our open borders, our open

⁹² Landes, pg. 307, emphasis mine

⁹³ Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

⁹⁴ McDougall, pg. 9

society, our rule of law. Consider our open borders: In year 2000 alone, 489 million people, 127 million cars, 11.6 million maritime containers, 11.5 million trucks, 2.2 million railroad cars, 829,000 planes, and 211,000 ships entered the U.S. A determined terrorist would have little trouble getting lost in such a crowd. What can we do to stop him (or her)?

We have the world's largest economy, which depends on the speed in which goods get to the markets. If we inspect every truck, every container, every car and every plane entering the U.S. every year, then our economy (and hence the world's economy) would grind to a halt, with untold consequences.

We're an open society because we want to be open. We have the world's largest economy because we want to be prosperous. Openness and prosperity: those are good things. But such things come with a price: vulnerability.

Since 9/11, our politicians and leaders have been reminding us that another terrorist strike is inevitable. And this time the terrorists might use unconventional weapons. What would be the consequences of another terror strike, this time by terrorists armed with, say, a portable nuclear weapon, or a vial of smallpox, or a radiological bomb (or, conceivably, all three)?

“Consider the consequences of a second major attack on the mainland United States—the detonation of a radiological or dirty bomb, perhaps, or a low-yield nuclear device or a chemical strike in a subway. Any of these events could cause death, devastation and panic on a scale that would make 9/11 seem like a pale prelude. After such an attack, a pall of mourning, melancholy, anger and fear would hang over our public life for a generation.

“An attack of this sort is already in the realm of possibility. The recipes for making ultimate weapons are on the Internet, and the materiel required is available for the right price. Democracies live by free markets, but a free market in everything—enriched uranium, ricin, anthrax—will mean the death of democracy. Armageddon is being privatized, and unless we shut down these markets, doomsday will be for sale. Sept. 11, for all its horror, was a conventional attack. We have the best of reasons to fear the fire next time.

“A democracy can allow its leaders one fatal mistake—and that's what 9/11 looks like to many observers—but Americans will not forgive a second one. A succession of large-scale attacks would pull at the already-fragile tissue of trust that binds us to our leadership and destroy the trust we have in one another. Once the zones of devastation were cordoned off and the bodies buried, we might find ourselves, in short order, living in a national-security state on continuous alert, with sealed borders, constant identity checks and permanent detention camps for dissidents and aliens. Our constitutional rights might disappear from our courts, while torture might reappear in our interrogation cells. The worst of it is that government would not have to impose tyranny on a cowed populace. We would demand it for our own protection. And if the institutions of our democracy were unable to protect us from our enemies, we might go even further, taking the law into our own hands. We have a history of lynching in this country, and by the time fear and paranoia settled deep in our bones, we might repeat the worst episodes from our past, killing our former neighbors, our onetime friends.

“That is what defeat in a war on terror looks like. We would survive, but we would no longer recognize ourselves. We would endure, but we would lose our identity as free peoples.”⁹⁵

This is scary, but also realistic. Civil society might disappear, we might seek refuge in the embrace of despots promising draconian measures to make us feel safe, and we might try to isolate ourselves from the world.

Surely, such a withdrawal from the world would make many people in Europe and elsewhere happy. Yet, can you imagine a world without the leadership and protection provided by the U.S.? “However, the plain fact remains that when the rest of the world wants anything done in a hurry, it applies to American power. If the ‘Europeans’ or the United Nations had been left with the task, the European provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo would now be howling wildernesses, Kuwait would be the 19th province of a Greater Iraq, and Afghanistan might still be under Taliban rule.”⁹⁶ And, “But, on the whole, U.S. imperialism has been the greatest force for good in the world during the past century. It has defeated the monstrous evils of communism and Nazism and lesser evils such as the Taliban and Serbian ethnic cleansing. Along the way, it has helped spread liberal institutions to countries as diverse as South Korea and Panama.”⁹⁷

Presently, the European nations and the others have neither the ability nor the will to lead, despite protestations to the contrary. The Europeans “are unwilling to pay to project force beyond Europe, but, after the Cold War, they would not pay for sufficient force to conduct even minor military actions on their own continent without American help...For Europe, the fall of the Soviet Union did not just eliminate the need for geopolitics. Many Europeans took the end of the Cold War as a holiday from strategy. Despite talk of establishing Europe as a global superpower...average European defense budgets fell below 2 percent of GDP...”⁹⁸

American hegemony is assured, at least for the moment. “Unless the United States suffers a major catastrophe (and one, moreover, that does not also affect other major powers), there is only one way that the relative balance of power capabilities between the United States and the other major powers extant at the turn of the millennium will change: very slowly, and over many decades.”⁹⁹

It’s unthinkable to imagine a world without American hegemony. Such a world would become rapidly unstable. If America withdraws its forces and security umbrella from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, several nations would be forced to provide for their own security. In all likelihood, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan would go nuclear at speed. The Germans, French and other European nations would reevaluate their priorities. The Middle East would become even more unstable, even more of a mess. Coalitions and counter-coalitions would appear.

In short, in the absence of American hegemony, the world that we see in the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation would appear. The prerequisite for this world: American defeat and withdrawal, probably due to a series of major catastrophes.

In history, when the civilized world is ruled by a dominant nation exercising hegemony (e.g. *Pax Romana*, *Pax Britannica*, *Pax Americana*), other nations are quick to heel. However, when the hegemonic nation or empire relinquishes its leadership, a power vacuum ensues. In such a power vacuum, different nations or blocs of nations jostle for supremacy. I’ve already provided the example of Babylonia and Egypt vying for supremacy in the power vacuum created by the downfall of Assyria in 612

⁹⁵ Michael Ignatieff, “Lesser Evils: what it will cost us to succeed in the war on terror,” *NY Times*, 5/2/04

⁹⁶ Christopher Hitchens, *Slate*, an article on “Imperialism: Superpower dominance, malignant and benign,” 12/10/02

⁹⁷ Max Boot, *USA Today*, 5/5/03

⁹⁸ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, pg 25

⁹⁹ Kim Nossal, “*Lonely Superpower or Unapologetic Hyperpower?*” quoted in Nye, pg. 38

BC. Other examples include the Macedonian Empire (led by Philip the Great, and then by his son Alexander the Great) and the Greek city-states after the destructive Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BC); and the European states before World War I, when Britain's power began to erode vis-à-vis other nations, such as Germany.

Because of America's military and economic dominance, it's inconceivable to imagine such a world. However, the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation portray a world governed by coalitions of states vying for supremacy. This means that something catastrophic must happen to America. Perhaps a big terrorist attack or series of terrorist attacks will weaken the U.S. to such a degree that it will lose its capability and will to provide global leadership and stability. Hence the world will become rapidly unstable, and this will force nations to combine into power blocs to provide security in their own regions, and to protect their own interests (e.g. access to Middle Eastern oil).

The biblical books of Daniel and Revelation prophetically and symbolically portray a world governed by three competing, warring power blocs:

- a) The King of the North, alternately known as the beast power, or the fourth kingdom (the last manifestation of the Roman Empire) of Daniel 2;
- b) The King of the South, probably an Islamic nation or group of nations; and
- c) The Kings of the East, probably Asian nations.

Moreover, they describe a great tribulation lasting three and one-half years. These years will include the:

- a) Martyrdom of God's saints (foretold by Jesus in His Olivet prophecy);
- b) Persecution of Israel (the Jewish nation and other modern-day nations of Israel, especially the United States and Great Britain);
- c) Worldwide war that will threaten the existence of man: "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:22);
- d) Ascendance of the symbolic beast power and its ally, the false prophet; and
- e) Ministry of God's two witnesses: "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them" (Revelation 11:3-7).

Of this period of time, Jesus said, "For then there will be a ***great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.*** Unless those days had been cut short,

no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short” (Matthew 24:21-22).

According to Jesus, this period of time will be unparalleled in severity and destruction. Jeremiah uses similar language to refer to the same period of time: “‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people *Israel and Judah*,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’ Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning *Israel and Judah*. ‘For thus says the LORD: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! ***For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.*** For it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them” (Jeremiah 30:3-8).

Jeremiah refers to this period as the time of Jacob’s trouble. In other words, during this period of time, the nations descended from Jacob will endure unparalleled hardship. In several places depicting the end time, the Bible refers to the Israelite nations (e.g. the United States as Manasseh, Britain as Ephraim, the Jewish nation in the Middle East as Judah) as in captivity and dire trouble (Jeremiah 30:3, 33:7; Zephaniah 3:20; Isaiah 6:11, 27:1, 35:4; Zechariah 12:6; Zechariah 14:2). Indeed, the 11th and 12th chapters of Daniel present the whole house of modern-day Israel—that is, the modern-day nations, including and especially the U.S., Britain, and the Jewish nation of Israel in the Middle East—as being in desperate need of help in the years preceding Jesus’ return: “And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your [Daniel’s] people shall be delivered” (Daniel 12:1). (For understanding of end-time events, including Armageddon, please see the Churches of God, Worldwide Ministries article entitled *Biblical Prophecy Explained*.)

Because it is one of two of the birthright nations of the house of Israel, America’s destiny includes defeat and subjugation. It involves captivity, privation, famine, and pestilence, in a period known biblically and alternately as the Great Tribulation or the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.

During this time, many Americans will turn to God and ask, Why?!? The Bible provides the answer:

- a) “Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and the fear of Me is not in you,’ says the Lord GOD of hosts” (Jeremiah 2:19);
- b) “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help” (Hosea 13:9); and
- c) “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.’ For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations?’ ‘Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 7:3-11).

In the latter scripture Jeremiah described the iniquity of the inhabitants of ancient Judah. They believed they were safe from trouble because the temple of God was in Jerusalem; they could therefore commit all sorts of crimes (sins) with impunity. The Lord begged to differ.

Likewise, Americans today are the most religious and churched people in the Western world. However, the United States is among the most violent nations in the world. If we're blessed by God, how, then, does one explain the high homicide, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, and divorce rates; and the violence, sex, and crass language displayed on our TVs and computers? How do we explain growing inequality, and alcoholism and widespread drug use? How do we explain the deterioration of our inner cities, and of our marriages? How do we explain the acceptance of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle?

It's commonly assumed that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because their residents were homosexuals. Yes, some of them were homosexuals. And homosexuality is an abomination to God. But homosexuality wasn't their only sin. "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it" (Ezekiel 16:47-49). Arrogant, satiated with abundant food (i.e. goods and services), and living in careless ease: this description can apply to many Americans today.

Probably America's greatest sin today is the acceptance of deviant behavior. In a seminal article entitled "Defining Deviancy Down," the late Senator Daniel P. Moynihan said that, beginning in the last two or so decades, Americans have been reclassifying deviant behavior. In other words, what was deviant behavior in the previous generation is now defined as acceptable. "I proffer the thesis that, over the past generation...the amount of deviant behavior in American society has increased beyond the levels the community can 'afford to recognize' and that, accordingly, we have been redefining deviancy so as to exempt much conduct previously stigmatized, and also quietly raising the 'normal' level in categories where behavior is now abnormal by any earlier standard."¹⁰⁰ In previous generations, teenage pregnancy, drug use, cohabitation, homosexuality, etc. were frowned upon; such behavior was considered deviant. Nowadays, in a race to become as non-judgmental as possible, Americans either embrace such behavior or look the other way. In so doing, American culture has suffered.

As He did to the ancient Israelites, God says to us, "Amend your ways and your doings....Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations?' Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes?" (Jeremiah 7:3-11). We're the most religious nation in the West, but if we practice what we preach, we wouldn't commit, or tolerate the commitment of, so many murders, rapes, and burglaries. Inequality would be the exception, not the norm. Teenagers would practice abstinence, and divorce would become the absolute last resort. Yet just like the ancient Israelites, their modern-day descendants (Americans et. al.) will not listen to God. And thus God will allow us to destroy ourselves (Hosea 13:9).

In the years preceding the return of Jesus, America and the other modern-day descendants of ancient Israel will suffer from defeat, persecution, pestilence and other ailments. This will be the time of Jacob's trouble. Yet there's a light at the end of the tunnel:

- a) "“For behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, ‘when I will restore the fortunes of My people *Israel and Judah*.’ The LORD says, ‘I will also *bring them back to the land* that I gave to their forefathers and they shall possess it.... ‘Fear not, O Jacob My servant,’ declares

¹⁰⁰ Daniel P. Moynihan, "Defining Deviancy Down," *The American Scholar*, Winter 1993

the LORD, ‘And do not be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar and your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, and no one will make him afraid’ (Jeremiah 30:3, 10).

- b) “Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For **Judah** and for the **children of Israel, his companions.**’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For **Joseph, the stick of Ephraim,** and for **all the house of Israel, his companions.**’ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you mean by these? -- say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Surely I will take the **stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim,** and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the **stick of Judah,** and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.’ And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. 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 37:15-22).
- c) “‘Therefore behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when it will no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers” (Jeremiah 16:14).

The scriptures reveal a second exodus from the lands occupied by the descendants of ancient Israel to the land of Greater Palestine. And God will lead the way.

Moreover, the 37th chapter of Ezekiel refers to the house of Israel and the house of Judah as distinct nations that will be reunified after Jesus returns. Such reunification will heal the breach which occurred in the division of the kingdom of Israel in the reign of king Rehoboam. Because God brought the descendants of ancient Manasseh to shores of America, from there He will bring their descendants back to Greater Palestine.

Right now Americans trust in their military might. Surely nothing could happen to us; after all, we are the most powerful nation since Rome. But Rome fell. And our military won’t save us from the trouble ahead.

“And He removed the defense of Judah. In that day you depended on the weapons of the house of the forest, and you saw that the breaches in the wall of the city of David were many; and you collected the waters of the lower pool. Then you counted the houses of Jerusalem and tore down houses to fortify the wall. And you made a reservoir between the two walls for the waters of the old pool. But you did not depend on Him who made it, nor did you take into consideration Him who planned it long ago. Therefore in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called you to weeping, to wailing, to shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth. Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, eating of meat and drinking of wine: ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die’” (Isaiah 22:8-13). Here God chastised ancient Judah for not trusting in Him, but in trusting in the might of its own armed forces and fortifications. And when God called for repentance, the people of Judah responded with “gaiety and gladness,” for they thought they were in no danger.

This example should also apply to America. We’re the strongest nation in the world, by far. We have the largest economy, by far. Our culture is pervasive. Because of these reasons, most of us feel

pretty secure. But according to the example provided in the 22nd chapter of Isaiah, and as demonstratively shown on 9/11, America is not secure from the dangers lurking abroad and within.

“What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? ***Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?*** ‘So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. ‘I will lay it waste; it will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.’ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the ***house of Israel*** and the ***men of Judah***, His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress” (Isaiah 5:4-7).

God expected the Israelites to obey him; in symbolic and plaintive language, He expected Israel (His “vineyard”) to produce “good grapes,” that is, to obey Him and reap the blessings of obedience (Leviticus 26:3-13). Ancient Israel, however, failed to live up to His expectations. Their modern-day descendants, including America, have followed in their footsteps. And yet, God’s mercy has no end. In the future, in our darkest hour, God will save us from afar and bring us back to the land of Greater Palestine. This is the divine destiny of America.