

Scripture Prophecies the Return of the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel

What Scriptural, Linguistic, Secular Historical & Rabbinic Sources Reveal on the Subject

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A GRASS ROOTS, SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT is sweeping through the Christian church around the world. It is a new phenomenon. This movement is not well defined. To label it would be to mischaracterize it. It is likely the most notable spiritual event to occur within the Christian church since the Charismatic movement of some 45 years. This phenomenon is referred to as the “Hebrew Roots Movement” or the “Messianic Israel Movement.” Unlike the “Jews For Jesus” Movement that started some 30 years ago with the goal of bringing Jews into the Christian Church, the Messianic Israel movement involves Christians returning to a Hebraic expression of the Christian faith. This movement is neither monolithic, well organized, nor is it being orchestrated by any denomination, group of Christian leaders, or any cabal of individuals anywhere. It is strictly grass roots and is the result of a spontaneous spiritual combustion in the hearts and minds of Christians who read their Bibles and know that the Christianity of today, originating from the Catholic Church, is very different than that of the first-century Messianic Jewish Believers including the twelve apostles of Yeshua (Jesus) and the Apostle Paul as chronicled in the Book of Acts of the Bible.

While those in this movement trace their spiritual origins back to various Christian churches, many no longer consider themselves to be “Christian” in the religious or cultural sense of word. Many recognize the fact that the real name of the Christian Jesus was Yeshua (his Hebrew name) and that all the “New Testament” (NT) writers, apostles and most of the original Believers were Jewish, spoke Hebrew, and existed in the Jewish cultural and religious context of the first century. This means that the founders of what became known as the Christian religion kept the Law of Moses (or *Torah*¹), yet they recognized Yeshua as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah and received him as their Redeemer and Master, the Living Torah-Word of YHVH Elohim come in flesh form.

As spiritual archeologists, many of us who are a part of this movement, find ourselves digging backward through the rubble of both the Christian and Jewish religious traditions to separate the wheat from the chaff and truth from error. In this effort to arrive at the bedrock of the biblical truth, as lived and taught by the apostles of Yeshua the Messiah and as recorded in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament or NT), we are endeavoring to discover our spiritual identity in light of our Hebrew roots and Hebrew Messiah. In so doing we run the risk, at the very least, of being misunderstood by both the practitioners of the Christian and Jewish religions, and, at worst, of being branded as heretics or even pariahs by both sides. Forerunners, pioneers, explorers and truth-seekers of all ages have faced similar obstacles, but the wagging heads and clicking tongues of the naysayers, the purveyors and preservers of the accepted status quo, paradigms and comfort zones of science and religion have never stopped the Galileos, Copernicuses, Columbuses or Martin Luthers of their day.

Many of us find ourselves studying the writings of the ancient Bible prophets, Jewish sages and rabbis to gain enlightenment and wisdom to aid us in understanding the present and future. Solomon, the wisest Jew of all time, stated in Ecclesiastes that there is nothing new under the sun and that what has been in the past will be again. Likewise, the wise Jewish sages and rabbis of the past several millennia have been able to look into the future and based on the past cycles of events, as recorded in the Scriptures, predict what would happen again in the latter days. Here are some quotes from some of these learned Jews:

The late Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the head of the Orthodox Jewish Lubivicher Movement, stated that,

¹ *Torah* is a Hebrew word meaning YHVH's instructions, teachings or precepts in righteousness and is nearly always the Hebrew word translated as *law* in the Hebrew Scriptures (OT). It is also equivalent to the Greek word *nomos*, which is translated as *law* in the Apostolic Scriptures (NT).

The future King Messiah (Messiah Ben [Son of] David) will not only redeem the Jews² from exile,³ but will restore the observance of the Torah-commandments to its complete state, which will only be possible when the Israelites⁴ are living in the land of Israel.⁵

At this same time, according Schneerson while referencing the notable rabbinic sage of the Middle Ages, Moses Maimonides also known as the Rambam,

“[T]here will be an ingathering⁵ of the dispersed⁶ remnant of Israel. This will make it possible for the Davidic dynasty to be reinstated and for the observance of the Torah and its *mitsvot* to be restored in its totality.”⁷

Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet states,

The Jewish rabbis recognize that the ingathering⁵ of the exiles,³ including the Ten Tribes⁸ of the Northern Kingdom,⁹ will also return, be reunited with Judah and that the whole House of Israel¹⁰ will serve YHVH together (Ezek 20:32–37, 40–42).¹¹

In regards to Deuteronomy 32:26 which says, “I said, I would scatter¹² them into the corners, . . .” (KJV), the *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* comments,

“This refers to the exile³ of the Ten Tribes,⁸ who were scattered to an unknown place where they have never been heard from again.

On the phrase in the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men . . .” (KJV) the same *Chumash* states,

This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.”

It goes on to say that though nations would seek to destroy Israel entirely YHVH would never allow Israel to become extinct or disappear. Israel’s perpetual existence is a constant reminder of YHVH’s plan and eventually Israel will thrive and fulfill YHVH’s intention for it.¹³

Rabbi Hirsch (a preeminent Orthodox 19th century Torah scholar) in his commentary on Deuteronomy 32:26 translates the phrase “I would scatter them into the corners, . . .” (KJV) as follows: “I would relegate them into a corner, . . .” and then says that the Hebrew here refers to the “extreme end of a surface, the side or corner . . .”

² *Jews*: This term is used some 270 times in Scripture and is a reference to the citizens of the Southern Kingdom of Israel whose capital city was Jerusalem. In general the term refers to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi that formed the Southern kingdom, though in Hebrew the term is *Y’hudai* / יהודי patrinely derives from *Y’hudah* / יהודה who was the father of one of the twelve tribes of Israel by the same name. The first place the term *Jews* is found in Scripture is 1 Kings 16:6 and is a clear reference to citizens of the Southern Kingdom.

³ *Exile* or *exiles*: Both the Houses of Israel and Judah are outcasts (i.e., YHVH cast them out of the land of Israel for their disobedience to his laws and for their spiritual adultery; see Isa 11:12; 27:12–13; 56:8; Ps 147:2; cp. Deut 30:3–4).

⁴ *Israelite*: This name is used more than 2500 times in Scripture usually in reference to all twelve tribes of Israel. When this word is used in contradistinction (184 times in Scripture) to the term *Judah* it is referring to the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom (e.g., 1 Sam 11:8; 18:16; 2 Sam 2:10; 5:5; 19:41; 2 Kgs 14:12; Jer 30:3, 4; 32:30; 33:7).

⁵ *Ingathering* or *regathering*: In the end times YHVH will gather his sheep (the outcasts of Israel) from out of all the nations where they have been scattered (as a judgment for their disobedience to his Torah commands and covenantal agreements) and will restore them to the land of Israel (Deut 30:4; Isa 56:8; Ezek 34:13; 36:24).

⁶ *Dispersed*: The House of Judah and the House of Israel were dispersed out of the land of Israel and were scattered (q.v.) into heathen countries because of their spiritual adultery (Isa 11:12; 56:3, 6–8; Ezek 36:19; Zeph 3:10; John 7:35).

⁷ *I Await His Coming Every Day*, by Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, p. 35.

⁸ *Ten tribes* or *Northern Kingdom*: This is a non-scriptural term referring to the northern ten tribes that seceded from the rule of Rehoboam and under the rule of Jeroboam formed a new nation called *the House of Israel* (q.v.).

⁹ *The Northern Kingdom*: See footnote 8

¹⁰ *Whole House of Israel*: This phrase is used five times in the Tanakh. In Leviticus 10:6 it is obviously referring to all twelve tribes of Israel. In Jeremiah 13:11 the phrase “whole House of Israel” is used in contradistinction to the phrase “the whole House of Judah.” Therefore, in this instance, this term is obviously referring to the Northern Kingdom. In Ezekiel 37:11; 39:25 and 45:6 this phrase is a reference to the “Final Redemption” (a rabbinic term) occurring prior to and at the coming of Messiah Son of David (another name for Yeshua at his second coming).

¹¹ *Masbiach—the Principles of Masbiach and the Messianic Era In Jewish Law and Tradition*, by Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet quoting from *Talmud Sanhedrin* 110b; *Bamidbar Rabba* 16:25; etc, pp. 20–22.

¹² *Scatter*: Israel (both Houses) were scattered over the face of the whole earth as a judgment for their disobedience to the Torah commands and covenants of YHVH (Deut 30:4; 32:26; Ezek 34:6, 12; 36:19; 37:21; Amos 9:9; John 11:52; Jas 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1).

¹³ *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, pp. 1105–1106.

He, too, relates this fate to the Ten Tribes who would be scattered “to some distant corner of the world, where, left entirely to themselves, they could mature towards serious reflection and ultimate return to Me [YHVH],...”¹⁴

In the *ArtScroll Bereishis Genesis Commentary*, in its commentary on Genesis 48:19 regarding the House of Ephraim¹⁵ (the Northern Kingdom of Israel—the northern ten tribes of Israel), we read:

“R[abbi] Munk explains: ‘while it is true that the dispersion [of the descendants of Ephraim¹⁶ and Manasseh] was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim’s descendants (Hos 7:8ff), Jacob’s blessing was not in vain for “they will return¹⁷ to [Elohim]” and will have their share in the world to come ([*Talmud*] *Sanhedrin* 110b).’ And R. Eliezer adds: ‘Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day’ (according to the version of *Avos d’Rabbi Nosson* 36). And in the perspective of history, did not these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of [Elohim], ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah, the Mashiach ben Yosef, Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah* 52a), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity’s redemption, for he will be the precursor of the Mashiach ben David, Messiah Son of David. It is therefore not surprising to find that the prophet Jeremiah (3:12) speaks affectionately of Ephraim. In this light, Jacob’s words, *his offspring will fill the nations nation*,¹⁸ assume the significance of a blessing.”¹⁸

This author whole heartedly agrees with the wisdom of these esteemed Jewish rabbis and biblical scholars regarding the fact that the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (to be distinguished from the Southern Kingdom¹⁹ essentially comprised of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi) forsook YHVH, the Elohim of the Bible, and the Torah YHVH gave to them through Moses and turned to paganism. We agree with the above statement that these same Israelites were to one day be redeemed through the work of the Messiah Ben (Son of) Joseph (the Suffering Servant) who we recognize to be none other than Yeshua (Jesus of Nazareth) and will be brought back to their spiritual heritage as Israelites in the land of Israel under the rulership of the Messiah Yeshua Son of David.

The above statements of the rabbis are entirely consistent with numerous prophetic pronouncements made by the ancient biblical prophets concerning the return or regathering of the exiled or “lost” Ten Tribes of Israel.²⁰ These same prophecies speak of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (also known as the House of Israel, House of Ephraim or just Ephraim²¹) being reunited with the Southern Kingdom of Israel (also known as the House of Judah²²) into one nation with Messiah Son of David as the king over both. This glorious and long-awaited event will occur at the coming of Messiah Son of David at the end of our current age just prior to the Messianic Age or Millennium (see Ezek 37:15–28).

¹⁴ *The Pentateuch—Deuteronomy*, by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, p. 650.

¹⁵ *House of Ephraim*: This phrase is used once in Scripture (Jud 10:9) where it specifically refers to this one tribe. Elsewhere the prophets often use the term *Ephraim* (q.v.) to denote the Northern Kingdom.

¹⁶ *Ephraim*: This name is used 180 times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and is referring to this specific Israelite tribe or is used as a metaphor for the Northern Kingdom of which the tribe of Ephraim was the leading and largest tribe (Isa 7:9, 17; 9:9; 11:13; Ezek 37:19; Hos 4:17; 5:12,13,14; 6:4; 7:1; 10:11; Zech 9:13).

¹⁷ *Return*: In the last days the sons of the Children of Israel (both Ephraim and Judah [Ezek 39:25]) shall return to the land of Israel with David as their king (Hos 3:5; 6:11; see also Deut 30:4; Jer 16:15; 30:3; 31:23; 32:44; 46:27; Mic 4:6–7; Isa 27:11–13; cp. Matt 24:27–31). In rabbinic Jewish thought, this regathering is called the “Final Redemption” and involves the return of the exiles (both the Jews from the Southern Kingdom of Judah as well as those of the ten tribes) to the land of Israel, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the coming of Messiah, and the establishment of a world-ruling Torah-based Messianic kingdom. This will mark the beginning of a period of peace and prosperity on this earth called the “Messianic Era” (or known in Christian parlance as “the Millennium”).

¹⁸ *ArtScroll Series Bereishis/Genesis*, Vol. 1(b), pp. 2121–2122.

¹⁹ *Southern Kingdom*: This is a non-scriptural term referring to the southern two tribes (plus the tribe of Levi) that remained faithful to Rehoboam. Collectively they were called *the House of Judah*.

²⁰ See Hos 8:8; Amos 9:9; Deut 28:64; Hos 3:5; 5:3; 7:7; 8:8; Ezek 34:11, 13, 16; 36:24; Isa 56:8.

²¹ The terms *Northern Kingdom of Israel*, *the House of Israel*, *House of Ephraim* or *Ephraim* are all synonymous terms referring to the ten northern tribes of Israel that broke from King Rehoboam.

²² *House of Judah*: This term is found 41 times in Scripture and is always referring specifically to the tribe of Judah (e.g., 2 Sam 2:4, 7, 10) or to the Southern Kingdom, which included the tribes of Benjamin and Levi (1 Kgs 12:21, 23; 2 Chr 11:1). In addition, this term can refer to a remnant of Israelites from the northern ten tribes who refused to submit to the spiritual apostasy of Jeroboam and defected to the Southern Kingdom (2 Chr 11:16). The phrase “House of Judah” is used in contradistinction to the phrase “House of Israel” eleven times in Scripture including once in the Apostolic Scriptures (1 Kgs 12:21; Jer 3:18; 5:11; 11:10,17; 13:11; 31:27, 31; 33:14; Zech 8:14; Heb 8:8).

The author, as a Messianic Israelite Believer in Messiah Yeshua Son of Yoseph, is one of those exiled and scattered Israelites that the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures prophesied long ago would return to his spiritual heritage. The author is neither a Christian, nor is he Jewish (that is, of the tribe of Judah/House of Judah). He is a born-again Messianic Israelite and believes himself to be a descendant of one of the tribes of Israel and to be part of the fulfillment of what the prophets and rabbis have been saying for several thousand years would eventually transpire in the latter days just prior to the coming (or return) of the Messiah.

Though some may mock and scorn at the author's assertion concerning his identity, the Bible is true and what the rabbis and sages say, in this regard, is true. The truth is the truth regardless of counter-opinions, jealousies, biases or religious traditions, prejudices of men and theologies to the contrary.

This fulfillment of prophecy explains, in part, the great interest among those returning Israelites who identify themselves with the Hebrew Roots or Messianic Israel movement, now occurring in the Christian Church, and with the Torah. This explains the love we have for our Jewish brothers and for the land of Israel. This explains, in part, our keeping the Sabbath, YHVH's appointed times (feast days) as given to Israel. This is why we keep kosher and do Passover Seders. This is why we worship YHVH, the Elohim (God) of Israel, in our assemblies with banners, ram's horn shofars and through the Davidic dance. This is why we wear beards and fringes or tassels (*tzitzit*) on our clothing and are learning to read, write and speak Hebrew. For this reason, we study our ancient biblical prophets and writings. This is why we are learning the Jewish prayers and using the Hebrew names of Elohim and aligning our lives according to the biblical sacred calendar. This love for these things "Jewish" is in every way consistent with our love for the Jewish, Torah-keeping Messiah, Yeshua, and his Jewish Torah-observant disciples (*talmudim*), the testimony of whom is recorded in the Apostolic Scriptures (NT).

Whether we are accepted or rejected by Jews or Christians makes no difference. We seek no approbation other than that of YHVH Elohim, the Set-Apart One of Israel and our Redeemer, Yeshua the Messiah. As one of Israel's greatest rabbis, Rabbi Gamaliel (the grandson of Israel's greatest rabbi, Hillel the Great, and mentor to the Apostle Paul), stated concerning the work and ministry of the Jewish disciples of Yeshua, "For if this work be of men ... it will come to naught, but if it be of Elohim, you will not be able to stop them; you might even find yourselves fighting against Elohim" (the Acts of the Apostles 5:38-39). It would be wise for both Christians and rabbinic Jews to consider this cogent advice with regards to their evaluation of this new movement.

Calling a Spade a Spade

There is a false notion in some Messianic Jewish circles that once the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were deported as captives to Assyria they were never heard from again, and that those who may have kept their identity as members of the ten northern tribes of Israel were at some later point in time totally assimilated into the Southern Kingdom. As such, over time, they became numbered with the descendants of Judah (the Jews) of the Southern Kingdom becoming identified as "Jews" themselves.

Let us say, respectfully, but by the authority of the Word of Elohim, that this is a false teaching and does not line up with the facts of Scripture, history, linguistics, archeology, secular historical evidence and the rabbinical Jewish writings.

Some accuse Messianic Israelites of advocating replacement theology when we speak of the "lost" ten tribes of Israel returning and that we are in some way guilty of espousing the concept of British or Anglo-Israelism, which in its early days in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did have a racist orientation. But to call us racists or British Israelites, or to accuse us of racism or anti-Semitism and replacement theology would logically necessitate accusing many of the most noted Jewish rabbis of the past two thousand years as well as the prophets of the Bible of the same (as the evidence below will show), something which no rational thinking individual would consider doing.

The evidence presented below is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. It is our hope to show you that indeed there is ample and credible proof that the northern ten tribes of Israel were not lost forever and that they indeed have their role to play in end-time prophetic events.

Setting the Stage

In Genesis 48:14 and 16 when laying his hands on his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob crossed his arms. Then in verse 16 he speaks of the "Angel which redeemed me from evil." The word "angel" is the Hebrew word

malak,²³ which simply denotes “a messenger” and is used in the Tanakh (OT) in reference to angels, prophets and to a mysterious figure known as “the Angel of YHVH/Elohim.”²⁴ Many, including this author, believe this Messenger of YHVH was none other than an appearance of the Word of YHVH who later become incarnated as Yeshua the Messiah (John 1:1–14). The patriarch Jacob had an encounter with this same individual whom Scripture calls “the Messenger of Elohim” (Gen 31:11). This same Messenger goes on to say of himself, “I am the Elohim of Beth-el.” So in light of all this, what does the crossing of the hands represent in context of Jacob’s referring to this Divine Being as being his Redeemer? In the ancient paleo Hebrew, the letter ט/*tav* was more of a pictographic symbol resembling a cross and signified “a mark, sign, ownership, to seal, to make a covenant, to join two things together.” Are you getting the picture of what this all points to?

Then in verse 16, we find Jacob prophesying that the descendants of his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, would become “a multitude in the midst of the earth.” The *ArtScroll Stone Edition Tanakh* translates this verse as, “May the angel who redeems me from all evil bless the lads, and may my name be declared upon them, and the names of my forefathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they [Ephraim and Manasseh] **proliferate abundantly like fish within the land.**” Onkelos, an early Jewish Aramaic translation of this verse renders it: “And like the fish of the sea may they multiply among the children of men on earth.” “The literal translation of דגים [*dagab*] refers to procreation ... [and] the word essentially denotes fish”²⁵ (emphasis added). What religious group on earth today has spread out across the face of the earth into all nations, has proliferated a message of Redemption pertaining to a Messenger of YHVH involving a cross-symbol resembling the ancient paleo-Hebrew letter *tav*, and who uses the fish-symbol to identify itself? Christianity, of course.

On the phrase found in Genesis 48:18, again pertaining to what would become of the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob prophesies that they would become “a multitude of nations.” What do the rabbis say about this prophetic verse pertaining to the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh?

- ☞ Ibn Ezra: Many nations will descend from him (i.e., the word מלא [melo], “fullness,” connotes “abundance,” the phrase meaning: And his seed will become the abundance of the nation [Neter; Karnei Or].)²⁶
- ☞ R[abbi] Avraham b. HaRambam states somewhat similarly: The expression denotes abundant profligacy to a point that they will have to inhabit lands of other nations, and it is an allusion to Ephraim’s expansive territory.²⁷
- ☞ Radak: This refers to the Exile when the lands of others will be filled with his scattered descendants.... See also Hos 7:8: “Ephraim shall be mingled among the nations.”²⁸
- ☞ What kind of blessing was this prediction that one day [Jacob’s] descendants—the Ten Tribes—would be scattered among the nations? As we have already noted, R[abbi] Munk explains: while it is true that the dispersion was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim’s descendants (Hos 7:8ff), Jacob’s blessing was not in vain for “they will return to God” and will have their share in the world to come ([*Talmud*] *Sanhedrin* 110b). And R. Eliezer adds: ‘Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day’ (according to the version of *Avos d’Rabbi Nosson* 36). And in the perspective of history, did not these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of God, ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah the ... Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah* 52a), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity’s redemption, for he will be the precursor of the ... Messiah Son of David....²⁹

²³ Strong’s H4397.

²⁴ See Gen 16:10; Exod 3:2, 6; Jud 2:1.

²⁵ *ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, p. 2117.

²⁶ *ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, p. 2121.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. pp. 2121–2122.

Israel Dispersed ... How So?

It is perhaps hard for many living in the twenty-first century age of high-speed travel to imagine how the ancients conveyed themselves from place one to another by land, much less across vast oceans. The thinking of many in our day has been affected by the concept of not only biological evolution, but social and technological evolution, as well. After all, little more than one hundred years ago, automobile and aircraft flight was a thing of science fiction, not to think of supersonic flight and rocket transport. It is assumed by some that as one moves back in history over the millennia, back into the ancient world of the Bible, that modes of travel were very limited and movement of people was localized. It is assumed that only through great feats of human endeavor and by chance circumstances, for example, were humans of that era able to move from Europe or Africa to the Americas. The idea of a developed network of intercontinental transportation and commerce is foreign to our thinking, and does not fit a prevailing evolutionary model that ancient man was incapable of such feats, and only in the modern era has this been possible.

Having a basic understanding of these issues is essential if we are to realize that, in light of modern discoveries, the ancient world was more highly developed than previously thought. After all, the Bible predicted that the Israelites would become globally dispersed and then in the end times be regathered from the four corners of the globe, so the question must be asked, if we believe the Bible to be true, just *how* could they have been dispersed?

Navigation in the Ancient World

The book, *Before Columbus—Links Between the Old World and Ancient America*, is a scholarly and well-referenced treatise by the late Prof. Cyrus H. Gordon (1908–2001) on the subject of travel, commerce and communication between the Old and New Worlds (Europe and the Near East with the Americas) in the B.C. period. Gordon was an American scholar of Near Eastern cultures and a leading expert on ancient Near East languages. He was of Jewish lineage who over his long academic career taught at Johns Hopkins University, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N. J., Dropsie College in Philadelphia, Brandeis University and New York University. He was a noted archeologist who worked with the W. F. Albright (who was the leading American Orientalist of his day and the dean of biblical archaeologists and the universally acknowledged founder of the Biblical archaeology movement). Gordon also worked with Sir Flinders Petrie, the noted British Egyptologist, archeologist.

In his book, Gordon demonstrates through analyzing ancient petroglyphs, writings, rock carvings and monuments, maps, and languages that between the Old World and the New World (North and South America) there existed commercial maritime intercourse back to and before the third and fourth millennia B.C. Ancient peoples involved in these maritime commercial and exploratory ventures included the Philistines, Phoenicians and ancient Hebrews from the time of David onward until the Bar Kokhba revolt of the Jews against the Romans in A.D. 133–135.

Gordon, throughout his book, produces evidence showing that the preclassical science of navigation and cartography (map making) eclipsed anything of its kind from the Iron Age (starting in 1200 B.C.) down to the century of the American and French Revolutions.³⁰ For example, it was not until the middle eighteenth century that European mariners were able to determine longitude. The ancients had the capacity to determine both latitude and longitude thousands of years ago.³¹ Ancient mariners with the capability of transoceanic navigation flourished in preliterate times—certainly throughout the Bronze Age (ca. 3500 B.C.), states Gordon, and probably earlier.³²

The trans-oceanic traffic between the Old and New Worlds was more active in some periods than others, Gordon writes, but the phenomenon took place in depth over the millennia. Now and then ships were unintentionally blown off course and carried by wind and current across the ocean, but most of the traffic was planned and should be viewed as part of a sustained two-way communication.³³

The chief motive for marine missions was not so much for trade as such, writes Gordon, but the securing of minerals needed by the international technologies without which no country or group of people could be in step with the times.³⁴

³⁰ *Before Columbus*, p. 70.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 78–79

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 70

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80

Evidence of Old World Influences on New World Civilizations

Gordon cites evidence, for example, that the Japanese left pottery in Ecuador 5000 years ago, a Roman sculptured head of ca. A.D. 200 was professionally excavated in stratified remains in Mexico, off the coast of Venezuela was discovered a hoard of Mediterranean coins of the fourth century along with some Arabic coins of the eighth century A.D., and ancient pre-Columbian maps record with varying degrees of accuracy the outlines of the North and South American coasts, and a thousand year-old map even shows the outline of Antarctica.³⁵

Another evidence of cultural exchange occurring between the Old and New Worlds is the feathered head-dresses of the American Indians, which is similar in design and its cultural use to that of the second millennium B.C. Mediterranean sea peoples of Minoa (Crete) and Philistia.³⁶

Further connections between the Old and New Worlds that Gordon notes include the similarity between alphabets,³⁷ calendars and astronomy,³⁸ as well as the tradition among many Central and South American tribes that their civilization derived from the east, across the Atlantic Ocean by way of ships, from bearded white men.³⁹ Greek, Latin and Egyptian words are imbedded in the languages of Central America.⁴⁰ Second century Roman coins with Latin inscriptions were found in the American Southwest nearly two hundred years ago.⁴¹

All the evidence of similarities between the cultures of the Old and New Worlds, Gordon notes, points in the direction of an ancient maritime system of which the Mediterranean was only a part, albeit an important part. This is reflected in the *Timaeus* of Plato, which tells of an exceedingly ancient Atlantic Order with interests extending from America into the Mediterranean. It is futile, Gordon states, to dwell on the lost island of Atlantis (which Plato tells us sank 9,000 years earlier according to Egyptian hearsay passed on to Solon) and then forget his plain reference to the continent that seals off the Atlantic Ocean on the west. This continent—which Plato mentions without more ado because it was well known to his reading public—can only be America.⁴²

Israel Situated at the Crossroads of the Ancient World

Israel was blessed to lay at the center of the land bridge connecting Asia and Africa. It also had ports on the Mediterranean and Red Seas. This unique geographical position, according to Gordon, made this region the hub of ancient commerce: it was the crossroad of unique importance, with one set of routes joining the world's two largest continents, and another linking the Mediterranean and Atlantic waterways with those of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Interestingly, in Hebrew the word *Canaanite* not only denotes an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, but also serves as the noun meaning 'merchant.'⁴³ The Land of Canaan was uniquely situated to be one of the key trade hubs of the ancient world.

The Maritime Ventures of Judah and Israel

The Tribe of Dan Goes to Sea

In Judges 5:17, we read that the people of Dan were men of ships and the territory of Dan was on the Mediterranean Sea. According to Gordon, early in the twelfth century B.C. the Danites—whose tribal territory lay in northern Israel along the Mediterranean coast—began to ally themselves with the ancient sea peoples of that region. First they were allies of the Philistines in their assault on Egypt where they were fended off forcing them to attempt conquest of other areas. "The Danites were widespread. Cyprus was called Ia-Dan 'The Island of Dan (an)'. The same people were called Danuna, and under this name they appear as rulers of the Plain of Adana in Cilicia [the ancient name of southern Turkey]. Greek tradition has their eponymous [namesake] ancestor, Danaos, migrating from the Nile Delta to Greece where he became King of Argos. So important was this movement that the Greeks afterward called themselves Danaoi for centuries. Virgil [the Roman poet of the first century B.C.] also designated the Greeks

³⁵ Ibid., p. 68–75, 78

³⁶ Ibid., p. 93

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 93, 99, 100

³⁸ Ibid., p. 101

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 95, 108

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 108

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 175

⁴² Ibid., p. 108

⁴³ Ibid., p. 111

as 'Danai.' Bold scholars see the influence of the Danites in Irish lore about the goddess Danu; and in the name of Danmark ('Denmark'): the land of Dan. In any case, it is a mistake to accept the consensus and to imagine that sea people with enough striking power in the twelfth century B.C. to change the course of history were unenterprising to the point of never sailing west of Gibraltar."⁴⁴ Gordon notes that the Bible indicates that the tribe of Dan was not the only Israelite tribe to be maritime—so were Zebulun and Asher (Gen 49:13; Jud 5:17).

David and Solomon's Maritime Ventures

The biblical record tells us that King David embarked on a program to create prosperity by combining land and sea power. Accordingly, Gordon notes, he made alliances with Hiram I of Tyre that lasted into the reign of his son, Solomon. Gordon sees that David's pact enabled Israel to profit from Phoenician shipbuilding and navigational personnel and experience. Hiram benefited from Israel's control of land routes (including caravan cities) and of the access to the Red Sea via the port of Ezion-geber.⁴⁵

In 1 Kings 9:26-28 and 10:22, we read that King Solomon's fleet of ships and the Phoenician King Hiram's merchant marine fleet of ships formed an alliance to travel the seas bringing back gold (see also 10:11). Solomon and Hiram's fleet would return every three years bringing back to Solomon various exotic treasures. (Interestingly, it took both the modern European explorers Ferdinand Magellan and James Cook three years to circumnavigate the globe via sailing ship many centuries later.)

Noting the biblically recorded voyages of Solomon's and Hiram's merchant ships, whose regular missions took up to three years for the round trip, Gordon makes some interesting assertions about the extent of Israel's sea ventures. Ophir, rich in gold, was the source Solomon's wealth, but its location is still undetermined, but archeological evidence suggests that Ophir was reached via Gibraltar (the geographical contact point between the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea) as well as by the Red Sea pointing to an Atlantic location of Ophir. He notes that when the Straits of Gibraltar were closed in times of political turmoil, Israel could rely on its Red Sea port to access Ophir (by way of the Cape of Good Hope in Africa). Gordon states that some of the products brought by the fleet of Hiram and Solomon suggest identification of their lands of origin: peacocks are from India, while monkeys could come from either Africa or India. He notes that by the time the Israelite merchant marine sailed naval architecture, along with celestial and other methods of navigation, had been refined, and exploration and cartography (the science of map making) had gone through long development. The advent of the Iron Age necessitated access to iron as well as to the metals of the Bronze Age: gold, silver, copper, tin and lead.⁴⁶

The Establishment of Colonies in Distant Lands

Both Judah and Israel had active merchant maritime fleets containing heavy ocean-going ships that likely traveled many of the oceans of the earth pursuing commercial interests. It can be deduced that colonies of Israelites would have been established in foreign lands to promote trade with Israel. This was a typical practice of the maritime nations of Europe several hundred years ago, as well as the ancient Phoenicians with whom the Israelites were allied.

Indeed, Gordon notes, the commercial empires of the ancient world fostered a policy of establishing colonies to look after the interests of the homeland. The Minoans (inhabitants of Crete) left a trail of colonies called "Minoan." Later the Greek cities continued the pattern of sending out colonies as did the Phoenicians who used this as means of expanding their empire. Likewise, says Gordon, Solomon settled Israelites at key points of his empire beyond the natural borders of Israel to look after his commercial interests around the world (2 Chron 8:2-6). "Indeed the Jewish Diaspora went hand in hand with the spread of Phoenician commerce. The disintegration of the Solomonic Empire in the second half of the tenth century B.C. cut off the colonies of Israelites from their homeland, though many of them maintained their Israelite identity, thus beginning the Jewish diaspora."⁴⁷

The Ships of Tarshish

First Kings 10:22 mentions ships of Tarshish. These were likely a heavy ocean going cargo ship as well as the name of a city in the western Mediterranean near modern Gibraltar. The Israelite fleet no doubt ventured from both its Mediterranean and Red Sea ports, the former trading in Europe and the north and west coasts of Africa, the latter

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 110-111

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 113

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 113

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 114

on the east coast of Africa over toward India.⁴⁸ Likely, Solomon had mining operations and colonies to support them manned with Israelites.

According to Gordon, the distant land called “Tarshish” must have been located along the shores of the Atlantic, because it too could be reached via the Red Sea as well as via the Mediterranean. It yielded silver, iron, tin and lead.⁴⁹ During the early part of the sixth century B.C. Tyrian fleets intrepidly sailed the seven seas bringing untold wealth from distant lands, including iron from the far-off Atlantic land called Tarshish (Ezek 27, entire chapter, especially noting verses 12,19).⁵⁰

The Maritime Ventures of Kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat

The divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, states Gordon, continued to embark, at least intermittently, on naval exploits out of Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea. For example, King Ahab of Israel took as his queen the Tyrian princess Jezebel thus strengthening his Hebraic ties to the Phoenicians. It is no coincidence that Ahab’s son, Ahaziah, is described as taking the lead in urging Jehoshaphat of Judah to reactivate the merchant marine expeditions out of Ezion-geber, during the ninth century B.C. (1 Kgs 22:49).⁵¹ The results for Jehoshaphat were disastrous, however, for 1 Kings 22:48–49 and 2 Chronicles 20:35–37 records that his fleet was destroyed.

Israelite Migrations Before the Fall of the Northern Kingdom

After Jeroboam became king over the Northern Kingdom and began to paganize that nation, he disenfranchised YHVH’s Levitical priesthood (1 Kgs 12:31; 2 Chr 11:14) resulting in the priests and the Levites in that nation fleeing to the Southern Kingdom of Judah (2 Chr 11:13–16). Following the examples of the faithful priests, a righteous remnant from all the tribes of Israel moved to the Southern Kingdom (2 Chr 11:16–17). Despite the migrations of the righteous from the Northern to the Southern Kingdom Jeroboam was still able to field an army twice the size of Abijah’s some years later: 400,000 men to 800,00 men (2 Chr 13:3). So overall, very few Israelites migrated to the land of Judah.

Next we see that several kings of Judah, through military actions, took territory from the nation of Israel to the north. King Abijah, son of Rehoboam, battled Jeroboam and took cities from him including Bethel, Jeshanah, Ephraim (or Ephron, see Josh 15:19) with all their surrounding towns (2 Chr 13:19). Likewise, King Asa of Judah took portions of Ephraim, eradicated idolatry from Judah and the portions of Mount Ephraim, which were under his control. As a result of this spiritual revival “the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon ... fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that YHVH his Elohim was with him” (2 Chr 15:8–9). The NAS renders this verse as follows:

He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who resided with them, **for many defected to him from Israel** when they saw that YHVH his God was with him.
(emphasis added)

So many Israelites had defected to Judah that the army of Judah swelled from 400,000 men during the time of Abijah (2 Chr 13:3) to 1,160,000 during the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:14–18) while at the same time Ahab of Israel could only muster slightly more than 7000 soldiers (1 Kgs 20:15) to fight the Syrians.

In this discussion, we have seen that prior to the captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, some Israelites, in one way or another, took up residence within the kingdom of Judah to the south.

The Spartans of Greece Were Israelites

The book of I Maccabees reports of a letter from the Areus, king of the Spartans to Onias, the high priest in Jerusalem. Sparta was a city on the Greek peninsula that came into being around 1000 B.C. (about the time of Solomon) and remained a powerful and prominent city until it came under Roman rule in 146 B.C.

Areus, king of the Lacedaemonians [another name for the Spartans, see Lang’s Commentary], to Onias, the high priest, greetings. It has been discovered in a document concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers, and are of the race of Abraham. [1 Maccabees 12:20–21]

⁴⁸ *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 1030 and *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, pp. 674–675.

⁴⁹ *Before Columbus*, p. 113

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 114–115

Unfortunately, the document referred to in the letter has never been found by modern historians. However, Flavius Josephus also recorded the letter in his writings as follows:

We have met with a certain writing, whereby we have discovered that the Jews and the Lacedemonians [Spartans] are of one stock, and are derived from the kindred of Abraham. It is but just, therefore, that you, who are our brethren, should send to us about any of your concerns as you please. We will also do the same thing, and esteem your concerns as our own, and will look upon our concerns as in common with yours. Demotoles, who brings you this letter, will bring your answer back to us. This letter is foursquare; and the symbol is an eagle with a dragon in his claws.⁵²

Before Onias could respond to the letter, Jerusalem was invaded by Antiochus Epiphanes. Onias died but his successor Jonathan wrote the following response:

Jonathan the high priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other people of the Jews, unto the Lacedemonians [or Spartans] their brethren send greeting: There were letters sent in times past unto Onias the high priest from Darius, who reigned then among you, to signify that ye are our brethren, as the copy here underwritten doth specify. At which time Onias entreated the ambassador that was sent honourably, and received the letters, wherein declaration was made of the league and friendship. Therefore we also, albeit we need none of these things, for that we have the holy books of scriptures in our hands to comfort us, have nevertheless attempted to send unto you for the renewing of brotherhood and friendship, lest we should become strangers unto you altogether: for there is a long time passed since ye sent unto us. We therefore at all times without ceasing, both in our feasts, and other convenient days, do remember you in the sacrifices which we offer, and in our prayers, as reason is, and as it becometh us to think upon our brethren. [1 Maccabees 12:6–11]⁵³

Who were these Israelites to which the historical records above are referring, when did they migrate to Greece and from whence did they come? We know that they came to Greece possibly as early as 1000 B.C. Could these be the Danites that Professor Gordon writes about in his book, *Before Columbus*, which we quoted on this subject earlier? Are these the Danites that history records as having come to Cypress, to the area of southern Turkey and even to Greece, to which Greek lore makes reference? It is entirely possible, based on the evidence that Gordon presents to us, and we cite above.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel Taken Captive

Under King Asa of Judah (prior to the fall of the Northern Kingdom) many from the House of Israel transplanted to Judah (2 Chr 15:9) such that Ahab when confronted by the Syrians could muster not much more than 7000 fighting men (1 Kings 20:15).⁵⁴

The generally accepted date of the Northern Kingdom's fall to the Assyrians is circa 723 to 721 B.C. Prior to this time, Scripture records that the Assyrians began pillaging and taking captives from the frontier regions of Israel years prior to the actual fall of Jerusalem. The tribes of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh (perhaps up to one-third of the Northern Kingdom's population), for example, were taken captive ten years before 721 B.C. (1 Chr 5:26).⁵⁵

In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, Samaria falls (2 Kgs 18:9). Scripture records, interestingly, that only 29,290 Israelites were taken captive in 723 B.C. What happened to the rest of them?⁵⁶

The renowned first century Jewish historian Josephus states that all Israel (i.e., the Northern Kingdom) was transplanted to Media and Persia. He makes no mention of any of Israelites being left in the Northern Kingdom. If there were the numbers must have been insignificantly small.⁵⁷

In 2 Kings 15:29, we find recorded that the entire tribe of Naphtali was taken captive along with the Israelites of Galilee, Gilead, etc. The phrase "The land Gilead" refers to the land east of the Jordan River in which several of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom settled (Num 32:1, 26, 29) (Collins, p. 118). "The region or Land of Gilead extended 60 miles from near the south end of the Sea of Galilee to the north end of Dead Sea and was about 20 miles wide. It is bounded on the west by the Jordan River, on the south by the land of Moab, on the north by

⁵² *Antiquities*, Book XII, Chapter IV, 10.

⁵³ *The Septuagint With Apocrypha*, by Sir Lancelot Breton.

⁵⁴ Collins, p. 106..

⁵⁵ Collins, p. 118.

⁵⁶ Collins, p. 120.

⁵⁷ *Antiquities* 9.13.1.

the Yarmuk River and on the east by the desert ... The term *Gilead* ... came to be applied to the entire region of Israelite Trans-Jordan (Deut 34:1) ... When Canaan was being allocated to the Israelite tribes, Gilead fell to the Reubenites and Gadites because of its suitability for grazing cattle (Deut 3:12–17). The half tribe of Manasseh also shared in the land of Gilead.⁵⁸ The inhabitants of Samaria were carried off captive to Media (2 Kgs 17:6). Samaria was in Ephraim.

In 2 Chronicles 34:9, we read that during the spiritual revival of righteous king Josiah of Judah when the Temple was being repaired, all the remnant of Israel (which had not been taken captive) from Manasseh and Ephraim contributed money to the High Priest for the repairs of the Temple. Scripture does not say that *all* Israel contributed to this project, for that would have been impossible since most of Israel had been deported to Persia some 100 years earlier. This passage says that *all the remnant* of Manasseh and Ephraim (by implication, that had avoided being taken captive) was on hand to help in repairing the Temple. So from this passage of Scripture, we see that a remnant of Ephraim and Manasseh was left in the land of Israel.

There were remnants of Ephraim and Manasseh living in Judah long after Samaria's fall (2 Chr 34:9). Additionally, there were a few small pockets of Israelites in the former territory of the Northern Kingdom left after the fall of that kingdom many had exiled into the areas of Judah and Benjamin.⁵⁹ A remnant of 80 men, for example, from the former territory of the Northern Kingdom (?) came to worship in Jerusalem. Were they Israelite or Samaritan? (Jer 41:5). Scripture does not say.

A Remnant of Jews Left in Judea After the Fall of the Southern Kingdom

After Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the poor Jews of the land were left to tend the orchards and vineyards.⁶⁰

The Ten Tribes of Israel Exiled to Foreign Lands and Lost Among the Gentiles

The prophecy portions of the Scriptures specifically states, in numerous places, that the people of Israel, because of disobedience to YHVH's commandments, would be deported as slaves and taken into foreign lands. From there they would scatter to the four corners of the earth only to be regathered in the last days by the hand of YHVH back to the land YHVH promised to the patriarchs where Messiah will rule over them in his 1000 year-long Messianic Era (Millennial) kingdom. Below are a few of the Scriptures that foretell of this regathering.

Exiles of Ephraim to Return from the West

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am El, and not man; the Set-apart One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city. They shall walk after YHVH: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. (Hos 11:9–10)

Exiles of Ephraim to Return from the North

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

“Therefore, behold, the days come,’ says YHVH, ‘that it shall no more be said, YHVH lives, that brought up the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, YHVH lives, that brought up the Children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.’” (Jer 16:14–15)

“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travails with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.’ Hear the word of YHVH, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd does his flock.’” (Jer 31:8–10)

⁵⁸ *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 422.

⁵⁹ *ArtScroll Tanach Series 2 Chronicles*, p. 293, see note on verse 6.

⁶⁰ See 2 Kings 24:14; 25:12; Jer 39:10; 40:7; 52:16.

Exiles of Ephraim to Return from the Isles of the Sea

“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.’ Hear the word of YHVH, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd does his flock.’” (Jer 31:9–10)

Wherefore glorify you YHVH in the fires, even the name of YHVH Elohim of Israel in the isles of the sea. (Isa 24:15)

He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his Torah. (Isa 42:4)

Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a Torah shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. (Isa 51:4–5)

Isles of the Sea and the Ships of Tarshish

Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the YHVH thy Elohim, and to the Set-Apart One of Israel, because he has glorified you. (Isa 60:9)

According to *Talmud Chullin* 91b, Tarshish could be a reference to the Atlantic Ocean, since the rabbis state, “we have a tradition that Tarshish is two thousand *parasangs* long.” A Persian *parasang* (a measurement of distance, like the English mile) was the distance a horse would walk in one hour (approximately six kilometers or three to four miles). In a footnote to the *Soncino Talmud*, according to rabbinic tradition, Tarshish is the sea of Africa—probably the Mediterranean Sea. It must be noted that there are several seas (and or oceans) associated with Africa. Furthermore, two thousand parsangs would be six to eight thousand miles across—a distance slightly larger than the width of the Mediterranean Seas, and more likely that of the Atlantic Ocean. America is due west of Persia approximately six to eight thousand miles. What Isaiah is saying here is that the sons of Elohim will return to Zion from these far lands.

Israel to Inherit the Desolate Heritages and Far Places

“Thus says YHVH, ‘In an acceptable time have I heard you, and in a day of salvation have I helped you: and I will preserve you, and give you for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.’” (Isa 49:8; see also 49:6,12)

Israel Scattered to the Ends of the Earth

The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came. (Isa 41:5)

You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called you from the chief men thereof, and said unto you, You are my servant; I have chosen you, and not cast you away. (Isa 41:9)

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. (Isa 43:6)

Look unto me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am El, and there is none else. (Isa 45:22)

YHVH has made bare his set-apart arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our Elohim. (Isa. 52:10)

“O YHVH, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto you from the ends of the earth, and shall say, ‘Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.’” (Jer 16:19)

“For so has YHVH commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light of the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.’” (Acts 13:47)

Israel to Be Lost Among the Gentiles

And YHVH rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land [*Eretz Acheret*], as it is this day.” (Deut 29:28)

The Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 17a (c. A.D. 500) (*Soncino Talmud*) states,

“[T]hey had declared them [i.e., the ten tribes of Israel, see rabbinic footnote below]¹⁹ to be perfect heathens [or gentiles]; as it is said in the Scriptures, “They have dealt treacherously against YHVH, for they have begotten strange children.”²⁰” A rabbinic footnote on this passage states, (19) ‘The ten tribes; (20) Hos 5:7.’”

The *ArtScroll Tanach Series Bereishis/Genesis* (an Orthodox Jewish commentary on Genesis) states, regarding Genesis 48:19, quoting Orthodox Jewish sage of the Middle Ages, Ibn Ezra:

“Many nations will descend from him [Ephraim]. That is, the word, *fullness, melo*, connotes *abundance, the phrase meaning: and his seed will become the abundance of the nations (Neter; Karnei Or)*” (p. 2121). According to Radak (Rabbi Dovid Kimchi Torah scholar in the Middle Ages), “This refers to the Exile when the lands of others will be filled with his scattered descendants.’ See also Hoshea 7:8: Ephraim shall be mingled among the nations” (Ibid.).

Azareth: Hebrew for Another Land or New World (?) to Which Israel Migrated

Apocryphal book of *2 Esdras 13:40-45* (elsewhere known as *The Fourth Book of Ezra*; quoted from *Lange’s Commentary*; bracketed phrases are from an alternate translation by James H. Charlesworth in his book entitled, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha—Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*); *Two Esdras* is a Jewish work written near the beginning of the Christian era,

[T]hese are the ten tribes, which were carried [led] away prisoners out of their own land [into captivity] in the time of Josia[h] the king, whom Salmanasar king of Assyria led captive, and carried them over the river, and they were brought over into another land. But they took this counsel [formed this plan] amongst themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen [nations], and go forth into a further country [a more distant region], where mankind never dwelt, that they might there keep their own statutes, which they had not kept in their own land. But they entered into Euphrates by the narrow passages of the river; for the Most High then wrought signs for them, and held still the waves [stopped the channels] of the river, till they had passed over. But through that country there was a long journey to make of a year and a half; and the same region is called Azareth [Hebrew for “another land”].

Azareth or “another land” is a reference to the prophecy in Deuteronomy 29:28 which states, “And YHVH rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land [*Eretz Acheret*], as it is this day.” *Acheret* in the Hebrew means “another,” but also has the connotation of “new” such as “next year” (or in the “new year,” Gen 17:12), a “another well” (Gen 26:21); “another man” (i.e., a new husband); and so on. Other Hebrew words for “new” include *chodesh* or *chadashah*, which can mean either “brand new” or “renewed” such as in “new moon, new heart, or new heaven and new earth”; *tiyrowsh*, which refers to “new wine” or “new fruits,” which is a unique Hebrew word which specifically describe those things and nothing else; and *beriyah*, which is used once in Numbers 16:30 to describe the earth opening up to swallow Korah and his malcontents. The point of this brief word study is that *Eretz Acheret* can justifiably be translated into English as “new earth,” or “new world.” “New World” is a common historical reference to what? North America, of course. It was there that Scripture would seem to indicate that the Israelites would, in part, at least, be scattered and the rabbinic writings of *2 Esdras 13:40-45* make reference to this land or to the New World.

Migrations of the Ten Tribes From Assyria to the Black Sea Region

Many from the Northern Kingdom by the time of Jeremiah (3:6-12) had already migrated from Assyria (which is east of Israel) to the area of the Black Sea or Armenia, which is north of Israel. Jeremiah’s prophetic message was given to the Jews about a century after Samaria fell to the Assyrians. This confirms the account of *2 Esdras* (elsewhere known as *The Fourth Book of Ezra*) concerning the migrations of the ten tribes. Jeremiah 3:6-12 states,

“YHVH said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, ‘Have you seen that which backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there has played the harlot.’ And I said after she had done all these things, ‘Turn unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her

whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly,' says YHVH. And YHVH said unto me, 'The backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. **Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, "Return, backsliding Israel,"**' says YHVH; 'and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful,' says YHVH, 'and I will not keep anger for ever.'" (emphasis added)

In the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, in an article entitled "Tribes, Lost Ten" we read the following:

(Written by: Executive Committee of the Editorial Board, Joseph Jacobs)

According to the Bible, Tiglath-pileser (2 Kgs 15:29) or Shalmaneser (ib. xvii. 6, xviii. 11), after the defeat of Israel, transported the majority of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and Habor, on the stream of Gozan, and in the towns of Media. In their stead a mixed multitude was transported to the plains and mountains of Israel. As a large number of prophecies relate to the return of "Israel" to the Holy Land, Believers in the literal inspiration of the Scriptures have always labored under a difficulty in regard to the continued existence of the tribes of Israel, with the exception of those of Judah and Levi (or Benjamin), which returned with Ezra and Nehemiah. If the Ten Tribes have disappeared, the literal fulfillment of the prophecies would be impossible; if they have not disappeared, obviously they must exist under a different name. The numerous attempts at identification that have been made constitute some of the most remarkable curiosities of literature.

In the Apocrypha it is presumed that the Ten Tribes still exist as tribes. Thus Tobit is stated to be of the tribe of Naphtali, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs assume their continuous existence. In the Fourth Book of Ezra (xiii. 39-45) it is declared that the Ten Tribes were carried by Hosea, king in the time of Shalmaneser, to the Euphrates, at the narrow passages of the river, whence they went on for a journey of a year and a half to a place called Arzaeth. Schiller-Szinessy pointed out that "Arzaeth" is merely a contraction of "ere aretz," the "other land" into which YHVH says He "will cast them [the people] as this day"; see Deut xxix. 27, which verse is referred by R. Akiba to the Lost Ten Tribes (Sanh. x. 4; comp. "Journal of Philology," iii. 114).

Hebrews influences in the Americas

Did the ancient Hebrews make it to America, and other distant lands where they have survived to this day, lost and forgotten by men, but remembered by Elohim, who according to the word of his prophets as recorded in Scripture, he will regather in the last days? Let us now examine some evidence that shows that the Hebrews were scattered to distant lands as Scripture clearly states.

Archeological Evidence in North America

The Yuchi Indians who once inhabited Georgia, but were forcibly resettled to Oklahoma in 1836, celebrated an agricultural festival that Gordon notes is strikingly similar to Feast of Tabernacles of Leviticus 23. Like the Feast of Tabernacles, the Yuchis festival lasts eight days, starts on the fifteenth day (or full moon) of the fall harvest month, and through the holiday they live in booths the roofs of which were covered by loose branches, and they nurtured a sacred fire reminiscent of the Jew's Second Temple-era menorah lighting ceremony and daily sacrifices. Gordon sees no evidence to link the Yuchis with the "lost ten tribes" of Israel, but neither can he deny the fact that somehow the Hebraic or similar culture impacted these Indians of North America at some time in the past. On the site of the ancient homeland of the Yuchis, in the area of Fort Benning, Georgia, was found a stone (dubbed the "Metcalf Stone") inscribed with an ancient language Gordon states bears affinities to several ancient eastern Mediterranean scripts of the latter half of the second millennia B.C. They are Minoan (early inhabitants of Crete), Mycenaean and Phoenician (early inhabitants of the sea coast of Lebanon) and allies to several Israelite kings.⁶¹ Gordon further notes, that were the Metcalf Stone unique, it might be considered an archeological anomaly, but this is not so since the Mayan language bears resemblances to that of ancient Crete. Furthermore, a number of Aztec glyphs (rock carvings) also bear resemblance to the Cretan writing of the same period.⁶²

Contact between Mediterranean Jews of the second century A.D. and America have come to light in several cities in Kentucky where Jewish coins from the Judean Jewish Bar Kokhba rebellion against Rome (A.D. 132-135) have been unearthed. Gordon writes that the assorted coins were dug up in Louisville in 1932, Hopkinsville in

⁶¹ *Before Columbus*, p. 90

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93

1952 and Clay City in 1967. These are in addition to the Roman coins found in the American Southwest nearly 200 years ago. Gordon notes that neither the Roman nor the Hebrew coins made any impression on archeologists or historians, partly because the coins were not excavated by professionals. However, unbeknownst to the academic world, a stone with a Hebrew inscription of a Roman date (probably A.D. 135) was scientifically excavated in Tennessee in the nineteenth century, and is now property of the Smithsonian Institute. The stone was excavated at Bat Creek, Tennessee at an ancient burial mound. Gordon's deciphering of the Hebrew characters on the stone revealed references to the Bar Kokhba revolt, "Judeans," a Messiah-like figure (probably a reference to Bar Kokhba himself), and "the end of days." Gordon writes that it is a likely reference to Jewish refugees fleeing the Roman overthrow of their homeland in Judea who were seeking safe haven in the New World after their hopes for freedom in the Old World had been shattered. He feels that the discovery of the Bar Kokhba coins in the adjacent state of Kentucky helps to confirm the date of the writing on the stone to around A.D. 135.⁶³

Derivation of the Name *Yankee*

According to Jewish linguistic scholar, Isaac Mozeson in his book, *The Word—The Dictionary That Reveals the Hebrew Sources of English* (p. 20), the English word "ankle" derives from the fact that the ankle is made of an angle and means "to slant or bend." He relates this to the Old English word *ancleow* and to the Old Norse *ankula* both of which are related to several other words, which contain the root *ank*. These include the words *Angle*, *Anglo* (as in *Anglo-Saxon*), *ankle* and *England*. Mozeson states that the root *ank* ("to bend") is a nasalized form (annend N) of a two-letter Hebrew root AK/ אק. The root is noted in terms like AKEF ("roundabout"), *ekal* ("to bend, twist" or "pervert"), *akam* ("to curve, make crooked"), and *akash* ("to make crooked"). In this family of Hebrew words, the word *eekooll* אקל ("crookedness") is closest to the "ankle" sound, while *a'cav*/ אקב (heel) is closest in meaning. Jacob is named for the heel in Genesis 25:26 and the pet name for *Y'ackhov*/ אקב' is *Yankle* as European Jews also nasalized in their pronunciations. Mozeson then goes on to show that in all probability the term *Yankee*, as referring to Americans, derives from the Hebrew name *Jacob* or *Ya'acov* meaning "heel" or the AK Hebrew words meaning "to bend words" as Jacob was noted for doing. The same can be said the words "England" and "Angle" or "Anglo."

Does this little word study prove anything conclusively about the migrations of Israelites? Probably not, but knowing that the migration routes of people-groups can often be traced through the study of linguistics, this information, coupled with other information we have provided in this work, seems to indicate that some Israelites did migrate westward into the area of the Americas, and that eventually many will return to the land of Israel.

Rabbinical Discussion on the Regathering of the Dispersed Remnant of Israel (Including the Ten Tribes)

According to the late well-known orthodox Jewish rabbi, Menachem Schneerson, the future King Messiah (Messiah Ben [Son of] David) will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but will restore the observance of the Torah-commandments to its complete state, which will only be possible when the Israelites are living in the land of Israel. At this same time, Schneerson who is quoting the notable rabbinic sage of the Middle Ages, Moses Maimonides also known as the Rambam, say,

[T]here will be an ingathering of the dispersed remnant of Israel. This will make it possible for the Davidic dynasty to be reinstated and for the observance of the Torah and its *mitsvot* to be restored in its totality.⁶⁴ (emphasis added)

The Jewish rabbis recognize that **the ingathering of the exiles, including the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom, will occur and that the whole House of Israel will serve YHVH** (Ezek 20:32-37, 40-42).⁶⁵ (emphasis added).

The ArtScroll Bereishis, vol. 1(b) states in its commentary on Genesis 48:19 regarding Ephraim,

R. Munk explains: "while it is true that the dispersion [of the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh] was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim's descendants (Hos 7:8ff), Jacob's blessing was not in vain for 'they will return to [Elohim]' and will have their share in the world to come

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 175-187.

⁶⁴ Schneerson p. 35,

⁶⁵ Schochet, pp. 20-22, quoting from *Sanbedrin* 110b; *Bamidbar Rabba* 16:25; etc..

([*Talmud*] *Sanhedrin* 110b).” And R. Eliezer adds: “Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day’ (according to the version of *Avos d’Rabbi Nosson* 36). And in the perspective of history, did not these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of [Elohim], ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah the Mashiach ben Yosef, Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah* 52a), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity’s redemption, for he will be the precursor of the Mashiach ben David, Messiah Son of David. It is therefore not surprising to find that the prophet Jeremiah (3:12) speaks affectionately of Ephraim. In this light, Jacob’s words, ‘his offspring will fill the nations,’ assume the significance of blessing.”⁶⁶

The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash quoting Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch states in regards to Deuteronomy 32:26 which says, “I said, I would scatter them into the corners ...” (KJV),

This refers to the exile of the Ten Tribes, who were scattered to an unknown place where they have never been heard from again.⁶⁷

On the phrase of the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men ...” the same *Chumash* states, “This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.” It goes on to say that though nations would seek to destroy Israel entirely YHVH would never allow Israel to become extinct or disappear. Israel’s perpetual existence is constant reminder of YHVH’s plan and eventually Israel will thrive and fulfill YHVH’s intention for it.⁶⁸

Rabbi S. R. Hirsch in his commentary on the Pentateuch on the same verse translates the phrase, “I would scatter them into the corners ...” as, “I would relegate them into a corner ...” and then says that the Hebrew here refers to the “extreme end of a surface, the side or corner ...” He, too, relates this fate to the Ten Tribes who would be scattered “to some distant corner of the world, where, left entirely to themselves, they could mature towards serious reflection and ultimate return to Me ...”⁶⁹

Rabbi Abraham Cohen in his classic book, *Everyman’s Talmud—The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages* states with regard to the Messianic Era (Millennial period),

“Another confirmed belief was that the Messiah would effect the reunion of the tribes of Israel. While we find the teaching, ‘**The ten tribes will have no share in the World to Come**’ (*Tosefta Sanh.* 13.12), the *Talmud* usually takes the opposite view. **By appealing to such texts as Isaiah 27:13 and Jeremiah 3:12, the Rabbis enunciated the doctrine of the return of the lost ten tribes** (*Sanh.* 110b, emphasis added). ‘Great will be the day when the exiles of Israel will be reassembled as the day when heaven and earth were created’ (*Pes.* 88a). A law of nature will even be miraculously suspended to assist this great reunion. ‘In the present world when the wind blows in the north it does not blow in the south, and vice versa; but in the Hereafter, with reference to the gathering together of the exiles of Israel, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, ‘I will bring a northwest wind into the world which will affect both directions; as it is written, ‘I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the end of the earth’ (Isa 43:6)” (Midrash to Esther 1:8). (emphasis added)

“The regathering of the tribes will be preceded by another wondrous event, viz. the restoration of the Holy City. If a man tells you that the scattered exiles of Israel have been gathered together without Jerusalem having been rebuilt, do not believe him, for thus it is written, ‘YHVH doth build up Jerusalem’ (Ps 147:2), and then, ‘He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.’”⁷⁰ (emphasis added)

Babylonian Talmud Megilah 17b (Soncino Press) states,

What was their reason for mentioning the gathering of the exiles after the blessing of the years?—Because it is written, “But ye, **O mountains of Israel**, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to your people Israel, for they are at hand to come.”²⁴ [Ezek 34:8] And **when the exiles are assembled**, judgment will be visited on the wicked, as it says, “And I will turn my hand upon you and

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 2121–2122.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 1105.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 1105–1106.

⁶⁹ *The Pentateuch/Deuteronomy*, p. 650.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 354–355.

purge away your dross as with lye,” and it is written further, “And I will restore your judges as at the first.” And when judgment is visited on the wicked, transgressors cease,²⁷ and presumptuous sinners are included with them, as it is written, “But the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake YHVH shall be consumed.” And when the transgressors have disappeared, the horn of the righteous is exalted, as it is written, “All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.” And “proselytes of righteousness” are included with the righteous, as it says, “you shall rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man,”³³ and the text goes on, “And if a stranger sojourn with you. And where is the horn of the righteous exalted?” In Jerusalem, as it says, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may they prosper that love you.” And when Jerusalem is built, David will come, as it says.” (emphasis added)

Rabbi Akiba Vs. Rabbi Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus on the Fate of the Ten Tribes in the World to Come

Sanhedrin is the name of a tractate (i.e., a tract or a brief treatise) or a rabbinic dialog that runs through the *Mishnah*, *Tosefta* and the *Talmud* (in chronological order), which are the written records of rabbinic legal debates and rulings from the early third to the seventh centuries. The *Mishnah* was the first of the three to come into being around A.D. 200 and was the first rabbinic attempt to place in writing the Jewish Oral Law. It formed the basis for the Babylonian *Talmud*, which came into fruition around A.D. 600. The *Tosefta* (i.e., *supplement*) contains the discussions of post-*mishnaic* Jewish scholars (ca. A.D. 300). So from the earliest work to the latest we may see a development or progression of rabbinic thought on various subjects. For example, with regard to the future return of the ten tribes of Israel the *Mishnah* states,

“The ten tribes are not destined to return, since it is said, ‘And he cast them into another land, as on this day (Deut 29:28). Just as the day passes and does not return, so they have gone their way and will not return,’ the words of R. Aquiba. R. Eliezer says, ‘Just as this day is dark and then grows light, so the ten tribes for whom it now is dark—thus in the future it is destined to grow light for them.’”⁷¹

The *Tosefta* continues this discussion as follows:

“The ten tribes have no portion in the world to come and will not live in the world to come, as it is said, ‘And [YHVH] drove them out of their land with anger and heat and great wrath (Deut 29:28)—in this world; and cast them forth into another land with (Deut 29:28)—in the world to come.’ R. Simeon b. Judah of Kefar Akkum says, ‘Scripture said, As at this day, “If their deeds remain as they are this day, they will [not] reach it, and if not, they will (not) reach it.”’ Rabbi says, ‘Both these and those have a portion in the world to come, as it is said, “And it shall come to pass in that day that those who are perishing in the land of Assyria and those who are driven away into the Land of Egypt shall come and worship YHVH in the holy mountain, in Jerusalem (Isa 27:13).”’”⁷²

And finally in the *Babylonian Talmud* we find recorded the following debate between two noted Rabbis on the future of the ten tribes of Israel:

The ten tribes will not return [to Palestine], for it is said, and cast them into another land, as is this day: 10 Just as the day goes and does not return, so they too went and will not return. This is R. Akiba’s view. R. Eliezer said, As this day—just as the day darkens and then becomes light again, 11 so the ten tribes—even as it went dark for them, so will it become light for them.

Our Rabbis taught: The ten tribes have no portion in the world to come,¹² as it says, And YHVH rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation:¹³ And YHVH rooted them out of their land, refers to this world; and cast them into another land—to the world to come.¹⁴ This is R. Akiba’s view. R. Simeon b. Judah, of the Kefar of Acco,¹⁵ said on R. Simeon’s authority: If their deeds are as this day’s,¹⁶ they will not return; otherwise they shall. Rabbi said: They will enter the future world, as it is said, [And it shall come to pass] in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, [and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship YHVH in the holy mount of Jerusalem].¹⁷

Rabbinic Footnotes:

(10) Deut XXIX, 27.

⁷¹ *Mishnah Sanh.* 10:3.V.

⁷² *Tosefta Sabn.* 13:12.

- (11) Becoming dark in the evening and light in the morning.
 (12) [I.e., not in the hereafter but in the Messianic days.]
 (13) Ibid.
 (14) I.e., into a place other than the future world.
 (15) V. p. 484, n. 7.
 (16) I.e., if they do not repent, 'this day' referring to the time of their being exiled.
 (17) Isa XXVII, 13: 'the holy mount of Jerusalem' is understood here to mean the future world.⁷³

As already seen above, Rabbi Abraham Cohen in his classic book, *Everyman's Talmud*, notes the existence of this debate among early common era rabbis about the future of the ten tribes. He writes, "While we find the teaching, 'The ten tribes will have no share in the World to Come' (*Tosefta Sanh.* 13.12), the *Talmud* usually takes the opposite view. By appealing to such texts as Isaiah 27:13 and Jeremiah 3:12, the Rabbis enunciated the doctrine of the return of the lost ten tribes (*Sahn.* 110b)." So according to Cohen, by the time the *Talmud* was formalized the debate as to the future state of the ten tribes was pretty well fixed: they did have a place in the world to come.

Now, according to the *Talmud*, who were the two principals at the center of this debate? They were Rabbi Akiba (or Aquiba) and Rabbi Eliezer. Who were these two notable figures?

R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was a faithful disciple of Rabbi Johanan Ben Zakkai the rabbinic sage who barely survived the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and went on to found the Academy at Yavneh from which modern (Temple-less) rabbinic Judaism traces its origins. Ben Zakkai was a pupil of Hillel the Great who was the founder of one of the two great schools of Phariseism, the School of Hillel, in the early first century. According to Ben Zakkai, Eliezer was equivalent in wisdom and knowledge to all the other sages of Israel combined. In the *Talmud*, he is called Eliezer the Great. He is the first rabbi quoted in the *Talmud*, in the very first *Mishnah* of the very first tractate. In fact, the entire *Talmud* begins with the words of R. Eliezer. He was a priest and knew the Temple service and its inner workings from training and personal experience. He was a leading rabbi in the School of Shammai and he was the brother-in-law of Rabbi Gamaliel who was the grandson of Hillel and mentor to the Apostle Paul. He apparently even dialogued with Messianic Believers.⁷⁴

Rabbi Akiva, on the other hand, was a pupil of Rabbi Eliezer and helped to depose Eliezer. He later helped to lay the foundations for what would become the Oral Law and for the hermeneutical exposition of Scripture. Akiba more than anyone else helped to sever Judaism from its dependence on the professional Levitical priesthood transferring it to that of non-Levite lay ministers who were then given the title "rabbi," which literally means "my great ones." He also had little regard for the divine inspiration of the written Torah and was more concerned about reworking Judaism into a religious system that would survive, regardless of whether it lined up with the written Word of Elohim or not.⁷⁵

Additionally, Akiba was no friend of the followers of Yeshua, but made great efforts to eliminate every challenge to rabbinic authority, including the message of the disciples of Yeshua. Sometimes Akiba intentionally held to certain doctrines just to contradict the beliefs of the disciples of Yeshua, a tactic he had also used with success against fellow rabbis who had opposed him earlier in his ascent to power.⁷⁶

According to Gruber, "Other Jews were hearing, reading, and believing the message of the *Talmidei* [disciples of] *Yeshua*. To further isolate them, Akiba forbade the reading of such books. *Mishnah* tractate *Sanhedrin* 10.1 begins, 'All Israel has a part in the world to come,' and then enumerates exceptions. 'R. Akiba added, "He who reads in external books, also he who whispers over a wound, and says, 'None of the diseases which I sent in Egypt will I lay upon you, I am YHVH your healer.'" ⁷⁷

"Rabbi Akiba decided, apparently while the war of Bar Kokhba was still going on that 'whoever is reading in "outside" books (the Babylonian *Gemara* explains this as meaning 'in the books of the *Mimim*' [i.e., heretic followers of Yeshua]) and whoever whispers over a wound (as the Judaeo-Christians were doing while healing by faith) has no share in the word to come."⁷⁸

In summary, what we see is the anti-Judeo-Christian Akiba contradicting the written Word of Scripture in

⁷³ *Mas. Sanhedrin* 110b, Soncino Press.

⁷⁴ Gruber, p. 104.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 104-106.

⁷⁶ Gruber, p. 153.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 10.1F.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 153-154.

his assertion that the ten tribes and Christian heretics (which we find him lumping together and simultaneously denouncing) have no place in the world to come. This was not the opinion of R. Eliezer, Akiba's mentor and elder, whose views reflected a more literal and traditional view of Scripture with regard to the fate of the ten tribes. We see that, despite Akiba's great influence, the *Talmud* eventually accepted the earlier and more traditional view pertaining to the ten tribes—that they would have a part in the world to come.

Therefore, it is very interesting to note that in our day, those Messianic Jews and any others who hold to the view that the ten tribes of Israel have disappeared, or are irrelevant actually hold to the minority view of R. Akiba—a Christian hater and a rabbi who was strident in his efforts to sever Judaism from its reliance on the written Word of Elohim if that was what was required to further his political agendas.

YHVH's Seven-Thousand-Year Plan of Redemption for Mankind

In Jewish thought, the seven-day week is a prophetic picture of a seven thousand year plan of redemption culminating in the Messianic Era during which the final redemption occurs. Accordingly, the first 6000 years is subdivided into three periods: the first two days or two thousand years are called the "Age of Desolation," days three through four are called the "Age of Torah," and the last two days (days five and six) are called the "Age of Messiah"⁷⁹ culminating in the final redemption when the **Israelite exiles will return to the land of Israel and Messiah Son of David will assume rulership** over the earth and the Messianic Age will be established upon this earth for 1000 years. In this regard, *The Babylonian Talmud—Mas. Sanhedrin* 97a and b (Soncino Press) states,

"R. Kattina said: 'Six thousand years shall the world exist, and one [thousand], it shall be desolate,' as it is written, 'And YHVH alone shall be exalted in that day.' Abaye said: 'it will be desolate two [thousand],' as it is said, 'After two days will he revive us: in the third day, he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.'"³³

"It has been taught in accordance with R. Kattina: Just as the seventh year is one year of release in seven, so is the world: one thousand years out of seven shall be fallow, as it is written, 'And YHVH alone shall be exalted in that day,' and it is further said, 'A Psalm and song for the Sabbath day,'³⁴ meaning the day that is altogether Sabbath—³⁵ and it is also said, "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past."³⁶

"The Tanna debe Eliyyahu teaches: The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation;³⁷ two thousand years the Torah flourished;³⁸ and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era,³⁹ but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost." (emphasis added)

Rabbinic Footnotes:

(33) Hosea VI, 2: the 'two days' meaning two thousand years. Cf. Ps XC, 4, quoted below.

(34) Ps XCII, 1.

(35) I.e., the period of complete desolation.

(36) Ps XC, 4; thus 'day' in the preceding verses means a thousand years.

(37) I.e., no Torah. It is a tradition that Abraham was fifty-two years old when he began to convert men to the worship of the true [Elohim]; from Adam until then, two thousand years elapsed.

(38) I.e., from Abraham's fifty-second year until one hundred and seventy-two years after the destruction of the second Temple. This does not mean that the Torah should cease thereafter, but is mentioned merely to distinguish it from the next era.

(39) I.e., Messiah will come within that period.

(i) He should have come at the beginning of the last two thousand years; the delay is due to our sins.

Additionally, we read in the *Babylonian Talmud—Mas. Avodah Zarah* 9a (Soncino Press),

"The Tanna debe Eliyyahu taught, The world is to exist six thousand years; the first two thousand years are to be void; the next two thousand years are the period of the Torah, and the following two thousand years are the period of the Messiah. Through our many sins a number of these have already passed [and the Messiah is not yet].

"From when are the two thousand years of the Torah to be reckoned? Shall we say from the Giving of the Torah at Sinai? In that case, you will find that there are not quite two thousand years from then till now [i.e., the year four thousand after the Creation], for if you compute the years [from the

⁷⁹ See *ArtScroll Beresheis/Genesis Commentary*, pp. 359.

Creation to the Giving of the Torah] you will find that they comprise two thousand and a part of the third thousand; the period is therefore to be reckoned from the time when Abraham and Sarah had gotten souls in Haran for we have it as a tradition that Abraham was at that time fifty-two years old. Now, to what extent does our Tanna encroach [on the other thousand]? Four hundred and forty-eight years! Calculate it and you will find that from the time when they had gotten souls in Haran till the giving of the Torah there are just four hundred and forty-eight years.

“Said R. Papa: ‘If the Tanna does not know the exact number of years [of the period of the Messiah] that have passed let him ask a notary what year he uses in his writings, and on adding forty-eight to it he will find his solution.’”

The Final Redemption Is to Occur at the Beginning of and During the Messianic Age or Millennium

The concept of the Messianic Age in Hebraic thought encompasses the concept of the first and final redemptions, which are two separate events. The first redemption occurred when the Israelites left Egypt or spiritually when the Believer leaves their spiritual Egypt at the time of their salvation. By contrast, the final redemption occurred when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, which spiritually and prophetically corresponds to the Believer being resurrected at the end of the age and receiving their spiritual inheritance, i.e., glorified bodies and rulership with Messiah in the Messianic Age for 1000 years.⁸⁰

The “final redemption” is a Hebraic concept that is sprinkled throughout rabbinic and earlier Jewish writings and derives from YHVH’s promises to restore to exiled Israel their land and their kingdom. These prophetic promises are based on YHVH’s promise to Israel in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 where he says,

1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, wherever YHVH your Elohim has driven you, 2 and shall return unto YHVH your Elohim, and shall obey his voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul; 3 that then YHVH your Elohim will turn your captivity, and have compassion upon you, and will return and gather you from all the nations, whither YHVH your Elohim has scattered you. 4 If any of you be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will YHVH your Elohim gather you, and from thence will he fetch you: 5 and YHVH your Elohim will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and he will do you good, and multiply you above your fathers. 6 And YHVH your Elohim will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live. 7 And YHVH your Elohim will put all these curses upon your enemies, and on them that hate you, which persecuted you. 8 And you shall return and obey the voice of YHVH, and do all his commandments which I command you this day. 9 And YHVH your Elohim will make you plenteous in every work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your land, for good: for YHVH will again rejoice over you for good, as he rejoiced over your fathers: 10 If you shall hearken unto the voice of YHVH your Elohim, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the Torah, and if you turn unto YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul.

The final redemption is an event (or series of events) that occurs at the end of the age prior to the return of Messiah (Yeshua) son of David and at the beginning of the Messianic Age (Millennium). The Jewish sages teach, based on their understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, that the following notable events are to occur in conjunction with the final redemption:

- There will be an ingathering of the dispersed remnant of Israelite exiles to the land of Israel including both the exiles of the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom and those of the Southern Kingdom of Israel.
- Messiah Son of David will assume rulership over the earth and the Messianic Age will be established upon this earth for 1000 years.
- The Davidic dynasty (Tabernacle of David) will be reinstated with the observance of the Torah and its commandments (*mitzvot*) to be restored in its totality.
- The resurrection of the dead will occur just at the coming of the Messiah.

⁸⁰ *Messiah vol. 2*, pp. 186, 191-192.

Restoration of the Tabernacle of David to Occur During The Millennium as Part of the Final Redemption

There is much debate as to what is the “Tabernacle of David.” It is the opinion this author that this is referring to the “kingdom of David,” which during his reign consisted of his ruling over all twelve tribes of Israel, something he will again do in the Millennium (Ezek 37:24–25).

After the death of David’s son, Solomon, as we have seen, the united Kingdom of Israel was divided between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms or Houses of Israel. They have yet to be reunited to this day and there are numerous Scriptures in the Tanakh (OT) prophesying that a time is yet to come when they will be reunited in the land of their promised inheritance. The time frame of those prophecies (e.g., Ezek 37) is pre-Millennial, which has been the opinion of the Jewish sages for thousands of years as we have seen above. Listed below are the several Scriptures pertaining to the raising up of the Tabernacle of David:

And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the **Tabernacle** [*ohel*, tent, dwelling, covering, nomad’s tent symbolic of wilderness life] **of David**, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness. (Isa 16:5, emphasis added)

In that day will I raise up the **Tabernacle** [*sukkah*, Strong’s H5521, tabernacle, booth, pavilion, etc.] **of David** that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. (Amos 9:11, emphasis added)

After this I will return, and will build again the **Tabernacle** [*skene*, Strong’s H4633, tent, tabernacle made of green boughs] **of David**, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up. (Acts 15:16, emphasis added)

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, ‘Master, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’ And he said unto them, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. But you shall receive power, after that the Set-Apart Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.’ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:6–9)

These were the last words that Yeshua spoke on this earth before ascending to heaven. Mark that! Before leaving this earth for two thousand years, he gave to his hand-picked and personally trained disciples their most important commissioning statement—called the Great Commission. He told them to wait in Jerusalem to be filled with the power of the Spirit of Elohim. Why? They needed that supernatural and divine empowerment of the gifts of the spirit so that they would be able to fulfil the great commission to restore the kingdom of Elohim to those who had been scattered to the far corners of the earth.

The message they were to preach was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” That was the same message that John the Baptist, who had come in the spirit of Elijah the prophet preached, and the same message that Yeshua himself preached (Matt 3:1; 4:17). That same spirit of Elijah, through YHVH’s chosen end time vessels, will go forth in the last days before the great and terrible day of YHVH’s wrath to help turn the hearts of the children back to their spiritual Hebraic fathers (Mal 4:4–6). All this, called the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21), must happen before Yeshua can return again.

What are you doing to follow Yeshua’s commissioning command to his disciples to advance the kingdom of Elohim and to help prepare the way for his return by helping to raise up the Tabernacle of David?

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