

BRITAIN AND AMERICA DO NOT COMPRISE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Over a period of time, some have claimed that the U.S.A., Britain and other West European and British commonwealth nations, comprise the descendants of 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel. It has been asserted that this so-called “fact” is the “lost master key” of a true understanding of Biblical prophecy. It is claimed that the end time prophecies concerning “Israel” are fulfilled in events that happen in those nations, particularly in Britain and the U.S.A.

During the twentieth century, Herbert Armstrong, founder of the World Wide Church Of God and the Plain Truth magazine, advocated this view, and produced a 220 page book supporting these claims, entitled: “The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy.” Many accept it as Biblical truth. The impression is given in the book that its teaching is a doctrine discovered by the author, set forth for the first time as a “lost key.” But that is not so.

This view was taught back in the nineteenth century and those who advocated it were called “British Israelites.” Unlike Armstrong, they were non-denominational and never set up a church, but formed themselves into a “federation” with members in many different churches. Even today, individuals can be found with this view in different churches in Christendom.

It is natural to wonder how and why this particular view eventuated. Well, as we know, there are many prophecies in the Bible promising that God would bless Israel, making her the pre-eminent nation in the world and an everlasting kingdom. But back in the nineteenth century and up until almost half way through the twentieth century, the nation of Israel did not exist; its 12 tribes were scattered, submerged among the nations.

Devout people who read their Bibles said: “It’s over 2,000 years since these prophecies were given; surely they should have been fulfilled by now. Where is the promised nation of Israel? Have these prophecies failed? Can Israel be lost? Surely the despised and persecuted Jews cannot represent all that is left of God’s nation. Maybe we have been looking in the wrong direction by expecting these prophecies to be fulfilled by the Jews.”

At the time, Britain was riding supreme, with colonial possessions in all parts of the globe. It was not too difficult for enthusiastic and patriotic Britishers to draw an impressive list of superficial resemblances between

the might and possessions of Britain, and the glory and supremacy promised to Israel. This basically, is what gave birth to the theory that Britain was Israel. And, in view of the migration of people from Britain to America and other countries, those countries also came to be regarded as Israel.

“A COMPANY OF NATIONS”

God’s promise in Gen. 35:11 to Jacob (the progenitor of the 12 tribes of Israel) that “a company of nations” would develop from him, is regarded as proof that the one nation of Israel would become many nations in different parts of the earth. But this passage of Scripture provides no proof that the “company of nations” refers to Britain and America etc. Such a conclusion is just an assumption. There is not even a hint in the statement that the “company of nations” would be in different parts of the earth. Jacob, like his father Isaac and his father Abraham, was promised the land of Canaan, and this is where the 12 tribes of Israel were planted. The promise that they would become “a company of nations” indicated that the numbers in each tribe would multiply to such an extent, that each tribe would have the population of a nation, making the 12 tribes like 12 nations.

A contrast can be seen between Jacob’s statement in Gen. 34:30 that he was “few in number,” and God’s promise in 35:11 that he would become “a company of nations.”

N.B. there is a saying: “two are company,” and Israel became “two nations” (Ezk. 37:22). “A company of nations” could simply refer to that. The promise in Gen. 48:16-19 that Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh would “grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth,” and that Ephraim and his seed would “become a multitude of nations,” are also regarded by British Israelites as referring to the development of Britain and America and other nations out of these tribes of Israel.

Regarding Ephraim and Manasseh growing into a multitude: several centuries later, Moses referred to “the ten thousands of Ephraim and thousands of Manasseh” (Deu. 33:17). In Num. 26:34 we read that those in the tribe of Manasseh above the age of 20 who were able to go to war, numbered 52,700. The number in Ephraim was 32,500 totalling 85,200. Later, Joshua said to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh: “You are a great people and have great power” (Josh. 17:17).

Regarding the reference to Ephraim becoming a multitude of nations:

the Hebrew word “melo” which is translated “multitude,” is not the word normally used for multitude. It means “to be full” or “fullness” and is mostly translated that way. The marginal reference in the Authorised Version gives “fullness” as an alternative translation: “His seed shall become a filling up of the nations” or “his seed shall become a fullness ...”

The fullness of Ephraim can be seen in the way it became the leading dominant tribe among the tribes (nations) of Israel, especially the northern tribes. In fact all the northern tribes became known as “Ephraim.” Being the head of the 10 tribes, the name Ephraim is used to represent all 10 (Isa. 7:2-17. 9:9. 17:3. 28:3. Hos. 4:17. 5:3. 9:3-17). As we shall see, there is no Biblical basis for the belief that nations such as Britain and America are tribes of Israel. There is only one nation called “Israel” and it is in the Middle East where it belongs. Basically, the British Israelite theory has its roots in human pride and national prejudice. Evidence of this is often detected in the propaganda put forth to support it.

TIME DISPROVES FALSE THEORIES

There are a number of minor variations in the teaching on this subject, and from time to time the basis of their reasoning has had to be shifted due to the fluctuating fortunes of the British Empire in particular. What is set forth one day is disproved the next due to time and circumstances proving it incorrect.

To give an example: the year 1936 was regarded by British Israelites to be of great significance when the Prince of Wales (called Prince David) became king. To British Israelites his name was significant, for they believed that the British throne was the throne of the Biblical David. Here, for the first time since the first David ruled, was another king with the same name upon the throne. They predicted a long and prosperous reign for the young prince, that would consummate in the return of Christ.

But alas, the marriage of the Prince of Wales to Mrs Simpson, who had been divorced several times, resulted in his abdication and eclipse; and put an end to British Israelites’ expectations!

Instead of the elevation of the Prince of Wales marking the beginning of a gradually rising scale of glory to the British throne, his presence on it was an embarrassment to the empire in all parts, and seemed to mark the beginning of troubles that have not ceased since. Since that time, Britain has fallen in the scale of nations, and her one-time far-flung possessions have been considerably reduced.

It was common at one time, to quote Ps. 1:8 and apply it to Great Britain: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." British possessions in China, India and Africa were pointed to as evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecy. But where today are those possessions? What use did Britain make of her domination over the African "heathen" when she controlled those parts? The country was opened to the slave trader, who exploited the Negro to his own profit and with much cruelty. Was this the fulfilment of Ps. 1:8? By no means! The Psalm does not concern Britain as the context shows. It is prophetic of the coming reign of Christ from Jerusalem, not London, which will extend into all the earth and embrace all nations, including Britain, and will not involve exploitation and oppression.

FALSE APPLICATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

This is the greatest fault that can be found with the theory of the British Israelites: it takes promises of God which relate to Christ and applies them to Britain! For example, the "little stone" in Dan. 2 which grows into a kingdom - the kingdom of God on earth, is said to be fulfilled in Britain. This is a preposterous claim and makes a mockery of Scripture.

In Deut. 28:12 the tribes of Israel are promised that if they prove obedient to God they would be so blessed as to "lend unto many nations and not borrow." Over 100 years ago when Britain was in this category, this verse was torn from its context by British Israelites to support their theory. It is seldom heard today because Britain has fallen on hard times. Her empire and economy have shrunk. Instead of being a creditor nation, she has become debtor to other powers. Such a misapplication of Scripture also ignores the fact that the promise to be able to lend to other nations and not borrow, was made to all 12 tribes, not just 10.

If, as British Israelites claim, Great Britain and company limited constitute the "lost 10 tribes of Israel," why are they not known as Israelites? In answer to this, the British Israelites point to the statement in Deu. 32:26 which says: "I said, I would scatter them into corners; I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men." They claim that this prophesies the loss of Israel's name and identity among the nations, and for this reason they are not called Israelites in Britain. But the context of the statement reveals that God is stating something that would never happen, not something that would happen! This is what God

declared: "I would scatter them and make the remembrance of them to cease from among men, were it not that their adversaries would misconstrue it and take the credit for it, saying: Our hand is triumphant; the Lord has not done this." By checking the context, we see that this verse actually proves the very opposite to what the British Israelites claimed. In fact, it is safe to say that in almost every reference advanced by British Israelites the very context of the verse will provide its own refutation of what they affirm.

Consider Isa. 62:2: "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." British Israelites apply this to the 10 tribes, and claim that having lost their original identity, the "new name" is that of "Great Britain." But the context shows it is speaking of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, and the British Israelites reject all identification of Britain with Judah! Isa. 62 is a prophecy of the new status of Jerusalem when Jesus returns and reigns therefrom. The British Israelites have completely misapplied this Scripture.

A FARCICAL THEORY

As history testifies, the British nation is a conglomeration of many nations. The Normans, Vikings, Danes, Huns, Romans, Anglo-Saxons and others, all played a part in producing what we today call: Great Britain. Every Englishman knows something of the mixture of races from which his own nation has been derived, and consequently how untenable is the suggestion that they are, in fact, descendants of one Israelitish tribe (Ephraim). If this is the case with Britain, it is even more so with America. The identity is not only unproven; it is unprovable.

If Britain constitutes Israel, then so also do the Dutch, Norwegians, Swedes, French, Germans and Italians. In fact, there is no end to the so-called "lost tribes." A place must be found therein for all the nations of Europe. Under the cold scrutiny of logic and reason, the theory becomes farcical. This is illustrated by an action of the British-Israel world federation itself.

In the year 1930 a great drive was made to extend its teaching, even to foreign parts. India came under particular attention, and the newspaper: "Times of India" for 14 July 1930 carried a full page advertisement setting forth the claims of British Israelites. The following appeal was made: "This appeal is also to you, O brethren - who are yourself Indians, but are verily also sons of Jacob." So it seems that the sky is the limit as

to who can be a descendant of Jacob as far as the British Israelites are concerned.

It is significant that no Jewish historian has ever suggested that his people have migrated to other shores and become Britain or America. Surely a nation should know its own history! No other well-known celebrated and reliable historian in the world has ever attempted to identify the sons of Jacob with other Gentile races and nations. Why? Because it would be against historical facts.

Is it not a remarkable fact that wherever communities of the descendants of Jacob live among the nations, they are recognized as Semites; and have been persecuted as such. They retain their Israelitish features; their dietary laws, their names and habits, and they practise Mosaic laws such as keeping the Sabbath and the rite of circumcision. The Israelites write from right to left, but the British and Americans don't. They don't look like Israelites, they don't act like them or speak like them.

The view that "Israel" represents the U.S.A., Britain, the commonwealth countries and western European nations, would demand that all these nations leave their lands and return to the land of Israel, for the prophets predicted the re-gathering of both Judah and Israel (Jer. 33:7-8. Ezk. 37:15-27). If all these nations, involving hundreds of millions of people, migrated to Israel, there would hardly be standing room - major congestion. It is clearly a false theory.

Ezk. 38 predicts that the people of Israel will be dwelling in their land when it is invaded by Gentile nations in the latter days. It is around this time that the return of Jesus takes place and the battle of Armageddon. Once again, this prophecy would require Britain and the U.S.A. etc. to migrate to the land of Israel if they constitute 10 of the tribes of Israel.

However, Jesus declared that Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Lk. 21:24). Now, among the nations that have occupied and dominated Jerusalem has been the British power. They were given a mandate over the holy land and actually opposed the re-establishment of the nation of Israel. Britain obviously fits into the category of "Gentiles" not "Israel."

FANCIFUL THEORIES

Now, the main argument underpinning the view that Britain and the U.S.A. etc. are Israel, is that when the 10 northern tribes were taken into captivity by the Assyrians around 700 B.C. they never returned to the

land of Israel, but became lost, and eventually migrated to western Europe; became the ancestors of the Saxons, who later invaded England, and became Anglo-Saxons. Many of these eventually migrated to America, resulting in the lost 10 tribes being in both Britain and America etc. A popular view in some circles is that Britain is Ephraim and the U.S.A. is Manasseh.

The British Israel theorists need an argument so badly that they sometimes go to fanciful theories to prove their case. For example, some have said that the word “British” in Hebrew means “a man of covenant.” But anyone with even a little knowledge of Hebrew would not entertain such a perversion. Even English schoolboys would know that though the etymology of the word Britannia is uncertain, most writers think it is derived from the Celtic word Brith or Brit, meaning painted, referring to the custom of the inhabitants of staining their bodies to look more fierce in battle (Smith’s Classical Dictionary).

“Saxon,” according to some British Israelites means Isaacson i.e. son of Isaac. But the Hebrew word for Isaac is yitschaq and means laughter or mockery. “Son of Isaac” in Hebrew is “ben-yitschaq.” No intelligent reader will see any likeness or connection with “Saxon.” A Hebrew would indeed laugh and mock at the thought. In his original booklet on the subject, Herbert Armstrong captioned every page with the question: “Where are the lost 10 tribes?” But he failed to prove that they were really lost, and has given his readers a very unbalanced picture of the Biblical record. The phrase “lost 10 tribes” is not only unscriptural, but contrary to Scripture.

“THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL”

However, the phrase “lost sheep of the house of Israel” is Scriptural. Jesus used it when he sent his disciples forth with this instruction: “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5-6). (N.B. The lost sheep were not among the Gentiles). In relation to this, Armstrong writes: “Yes! the lost 10 tribes ... yes the British Isles heard Christ’s Gospel.” In another paragraph on the same page he further alleges: “Jesus of Nazareth, well knowing they (the 10 tribes) had migrated, sent his 12 apostles to make known to them his precious gospel of God’s kingdom.”

So then, Armstrong interprets Christ’s commission to his disciples to

go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to be a command to leave the land of Palestine and preach to the lost 10 tribes. It is claimed that Jesus preached to the 2 tribes, or to Judah, and that the disciples later went to the 10 missing tribes.

This is another perversion of Scripture which ignores the context of the passage quoted. The context leaves us in no doubt as to where the apostles went to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They did not go outside the borders of Palestine. Lk. 9:6 tells us they preached “in the cities of the land.” It is clearly narrated in the gospels that the apostles went through the land of Palestine preaching and performing miracles, after which they returned to Bethsaida in the land. In preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they never left the land of Palestine. It is evident from this that the lost sheep of the house of Israel were living within the compass of Palestine.

Jesus also said that he himself was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24). But he likewise never went outside Palestine. Israel was not “lost” as far as identity is concerned, but as far as the way of salvation. They were lost in a spiritual sense not in a racial or geographical sense - lost because they were as sheep without a shepherd until Jesus appeared among them.

THE TEN TRIBES WERE NEVER LOST

Coming back to what was said earlier, about the 10 northern tribes of Israel being taken into captivity by the Assyrians around 700 B.C.: whether or not they survived and eventually migrated from the land of their captivity to other lands and lost their tribal identity, Scripture does not say. Fortunately it is not important or necessary to know. The continuance of the 10 tribes does not depend on them surviving the Assyrian captivity. Therefore, whether or not they migrated, and to which parts of the earth they migrated is unimportant and immaterial. For this reason Scripture is silent on the matter.

There is however, reference in Scripture to another migration involving members of the 10 tribes, which proves conclusively that the 10 tribes were never in fact ever lost at all in the sense that British Israelites claim they were.

The history involving this particular migration is recorded in a number of different Scriptures relating to the reign of the kings of Israel. After 120 years as a united kingdom under Saul, David and Solomon, the

10 tribes in the north of Israel broke away from the 2 tribes in the south, during the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam. The larger northern kingdom, led by Jeroboam the son of Nebat, was called "Israel," and its capital was at Samaria. The smaller southern kingdom was called, by way of distinction, "Judah," and retained the original capital, Jerusalem; which God had appointed and ordained as the only acceptable centre of worship for all 12 tribes. However, although the southern kingdom was called "Judah" by way of distinction as a result of the division, the 2 tribes involved never ceased to be Israelites. Being descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, and who was the progenitor of all 12 tribes, the 2 tribes in the southern kingdom were just as much "Israelites" as the other 10.

It should be pointed out that these 2 sections of Israel, known as Judah and Israel, were actually known by these names even before the division, when the kingdom was a unity under Solomon (1 Kng. 4:20). And one thing is certain: all 12 tribes were regarded as "Israelites," not just the northern ones.

Despite Herbert Armstrong's theory of the superiority of Israel over Judah, it should also be pointed out that not one of the kings of the northern tribes is described as "good." The northern kingdom of Israel never had one godly king. For nearly 300 years it lived in idolatry and was destroyed over a century before the southern kingdom due to being more corrupt.

Now, we read in 1 Kng. 12:26 that when Jeroboam separated the 10 tribes in the north from the 2 tribes in the south, he realized that the people in his northern kingdom would expect to continue going down to Jerusalem to worship. He was afraid that as a result, they would be drawn to the southern kingdom and end up killing him and turn to Rehoboam the king of Judah.

So Jeroboam set up rival centres of worship in the northern kingdom, involving a false idolatrous religion and priesthood. He made the city of Dan at the north of the kingdom and Bethel at the south, the main centres of his apostate religion. Jeroboam then commanded the people to go to these centres for worship, and to stop going south to Jerusalem. He rejected the priests and Levites appointed by God and appointed his own.

MANY FROM THE TEN TRIBES MIGRATED TO JUDEA

As a result, we read in 2 Chr. 11:13-14 that the priests and Levites living in the northern kingdom, defected and migrated to the southern kingdom and took up residence there. Then in v16-17 we read that others from all the tribes who were set on seeking God the proper way, followed the priests and Levites to offer sacrifices at Jerusalem. These also defected from the northern kingdom and took up residence in the southern kingdom, where “they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong” (v17).

It is evident from this that very early in the piece, not long after the division took place between the northern and southern kingdoms, people from all 12 tribes were living in the southern kingdom of Judah. This point is clearly implied in 2 Chr. 11:3 where we read that God said: “Speak to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin.” Here, we are plainly told that all the tribes of Israel were represented in Judah. The same point is made in 2 Chr. 10:17 where we read about “the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah; Rehoboam reigned over them.”

Later, during the reign of Asa, one of the good kings of Judah, a great number of people deserted the northern kingdom and migrated to the southern kingdom to be under his rule, for they could see that God was with him. (He had actually conquered some of the cities in the northern kingdom. This piece of history is recorded in 2 Chr. 15:8-).

It is obvious that all the God-fearing people in the idolatrous northern kingdom wanted to be in contact with the southern kingdom, where the temple at Jerusalem kept true worship alive. This again becomes evident in 2 Chr. 16:1 where we read that king Baasha, one of Jeroboam’s successors, made his iron curtain by fortifying the border between the northern and southern kingdoms, to try and prevent those in the northern kingdom from defecting to the southern kingdom.

But Baasha’s iron curtain was obviously ineffective. A later chapter (2 Chr. 19:4, 8) tells us of another good king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, who also received a wave of immigrants from the north. They must have been very numerous, because Jehoshaphat is actually called “king of Israel” in 2 Chr. 21:2.

It is evident from this that he reigned over people from all 12 tribes. There was clearly an ever increasing nucleus of all 12 tribes being established in the southern kingdom. Whatever happened to those left in

the 10 tribes in the north, is immaterial. Their tribes were all represented in the south.

The result of all this immigration was a rapid increase in the size of Judah's army. At the time of the division, king Rehoboam had only 180,000 men (1 Kng. 12:21). The next king, Abijah, had 400,000 (2 Chr. 13:3). His successor, Asa, had 580,000 (2 Chr. 14:8), and Jehoshaphat had 1,160,000 (2 Chr. 17:14-18).

This rapid increase can only be explained by the large number of people who migrated from the 10 tribes in the northern kingdom to the southern kingdom of Judah. Later during the reign of Hezekiah, letters were sent to all the tribes in the northern kingdom inviting them to come to the temple at Jerusalem to keep the Passover. The invitation was met with scorn and ridicule by some, but many humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem (2 Chr. 30). During the reign of Hezekiah, the point is made again in 2 Chr. 31:6 that there were people from Israel as well as Judah, living in the cities of Judah.

Many decades after the 10 tribes were taken into captivity and ended up becoming supposedly lost, reference is made in 2 Chr. 34:9- to king Josiah of Judah, receiving tribute from "Manasseh, Ephraim and all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin." According to British Israelites, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh at this stage were on a migration trail which ended up in Britain and America, having lost their tribal identities. But according to Scripture, these tribes were still known and represented long after the northern kingdom went into exile.

Moreover, just before the southern kingdom was taken into captivity by the Babylonians, which was over 100 years after the northern tribes went into captivity, the prophet Ezekiel describes the inhabitants of Jerusalem as "all the residue of Israel ... the house of Israel and Judah" (Ezk. 9:8-9). He also describes the ruler in Judah not as "prince of Judah" but as "prince of Israel" (Ezk. 21:25). All 12 tribes were clearly represented by those over whom he ruled.

JEWS WHO RETURNED FROM BABYLON CONSISTED OF ALL TWELVE TRIBES

Eventually the southern kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians and after 70 years they returned from Babylon to their land. In view of the fact that those who were taken into captivity involved a mixture of all 12 tribes, it was to be expected that the return

from captivity would involve the same. Jeremiah indicated that both Judah and Israel would return from captivity in Babylon when he said that neither Israel nor Judah would be forsaken by God, but would flee from Babylon (Jer. 51:5-6). And the book of Ezra speaks of the “children of Israel” returning from the Babylonian captivity (Ez. 6:16).

But Herbert Armstrong claims that this only means Judah. He does not accept that all 12 tribes were involved. He gives no evidence from Scripture, only a number of dogmatic assertions. His only attempt at evidence is to claim that “names and genealogies are given in Ezra and Nehemiah of those who went back to Palestine from Babylon, and none are from any of the 10 tribes.”

Let us test the evidence: Ez. 2 gives all the names, with their families, and lists them under the general heading of “men of the people of Israel.” Verse 2 and verse 70 refers to “all Israel in their cities.” However, the book of Chronicles records the return from Babylon more specifically. This is what we read in 1 Chr. 9:1-3: “Now the first inhabitants (i.e. first to return) that dwelt in their possessions in their cities were the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims. And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh ...” Reference here to people from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh being among those who returned from Babylon is particularly interesting in view of British Israelite teaching which says that these tribes lost their identity and eventually ended up in Britain and the U.S.A. Armstrong’s claim that none of the 10 tribes returned is therefore completely wrong, and the very foundation is removed from his teaching.

Reference is made in Ez. 8 to not only “all Israel” being back in the land (v25) but also refers to them offering “12 bullocks for all Israel” (v35). The number of offerings that were made shows beyond doubt that all 12 tribes were included in the regathering from Babylon.

Also in Ez. 6:17 we read that “12 he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel” were offered by the returned exiles when they dedicated the temple they had rebuilt at Jerusalem. There were 12 offerings because the 12 tribes were represented among the people. This is the only reasonable way of understanding these statements, and they completely undermine and refute the British Israelite theory. Ezra actually refers to those who returned from captivity as “Israelites” 40 times and as “Jews” 8 times. Nehemiah refers to those who returned from captivity as “Israelites” 22 times, and “Jews” 11 times.

If, as British Israelites claim, the word “Jew” only refers to a person of the tribe of Judah and never to all Israelites, then the return of the Jews from Babylon would not be considered a return of “all Israel.” Yet, in referring to the people who had returned, the words “all Israel” are used 7 times: (Ez. 2:70. 6:17. 8:25, 35. 10:5. Neh. 7:73. 12:47).

It should be quite clear from all this that the 10 tribes were never lost. Only the dregs of those tribes were lost i.e. those who remained in the apostate northern kingdom which was taken away into captivity by the Assyrians. The cream of the 10 tribes, i.e. those who wanted to worship according to God’s way at Jerusalem, migrated to the southern kingdom.

However, having said that, it is possible that among those who returned from Babylon as a result of the decree of the Persian king Cyrus, were not only those taken captive by the Babylonians, but also some of those taken captive earlier by the Assyrians. The reason for saying this is because Cyrus ruled not only over those taken captive by the Babylonians, but also those taken captive by the Assyrians, and his decree inviting all who so desired to return to their land, was made to all of them.

You see, Scripture not only refers to Cyrus as “king of Persia” (Ez. 4:5), but also “king of Babylon” (Ez. 5:13) and “king of Assyria” (Ez. 6:22). The reason for this is because he not only ruled over Persia but also the territories that previously constituted the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. This means that he ruled over the countries where both the Assyrian and Babylonian captives were taken. And this means that all the tribes of Israel were among his subjects.

Therefore, in view of the fact that, as we read in Ez. 1:1, Cyrus’ decree inviting all of God’s people to return to their land, was made throughout his whole kingdom; it is evident that this included those who were taken captive by the Assyrians. It is possible therefore, that among those from the 12 tribes who, as we have seen, returned, were some who had been taken captive by the Assyrians. The same applies to a later decree made by the Persian king Artaxerxes. This decree, recorded in Ez. 7:11-13 invited “all the people of Israel ... in my realm” to return to the land with Ezra. The king’s “realm” was of course the Persian empire which embraced the territories of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.

Now, because British Israelites believe the 10 tribes were lost, they conclude that in the time of Christ, the Jews living in the land were only of the kingdom of Judah, consisting merely of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. Armstrong assumes that at that time the 10 tribes were in Great Britain or migrating across Europe in the direction of Great

Britain. But such reasoning is incompatible with New Testament teaching.

For example, we read in Lk. 2:36 that Anna the prophetess was of the tribe of Asher. Asher was one of the 10 tribes that was supposed to have been lost, so how was Anna living at Jerusalem 700 years later? The answer is simple: she was a descendant of those belonging to the tribe of Asher who migrated to the southern kingdom back in Old Testament times. Or, she may have been a descendant of those from the tribe of Asher taken captive by Assyria who responded to Cyrus' or Artaxerxes' decree.

“ISRAEL” AND “JEW” ARE SYNONYMOUS

Underpinning the British Israelites' theory is the belief that the term “Jew” as used in Scripture, is merely a nickname for “Judah,” and only applies to the 2 tribes in the southern kingdom, whereas the term “Israel” only applies to the 10 tribes in the northern kingdom.

It is argued that the terms “Israelite” and “Jew” are not synonymous, and therefore the statements and prophecies relating to “Israel” do not apply to those who are called “Jews.” Herbert Armstrong contended that: “It is wrong to call the Jews of today “Israel.” Israel and Judah are not 2 names for the same nation. They are 2 separate nations.”

In view of the fact that in 1948 the providence of God saw to it that the nation that formed as a result of the Jews returning to their land was called “Israel,” it is rather arrogant to say “it is wrong to call the Jews of today Israel.” Some people, unfortunately, can't see the wood for the trees! They can't see a miracle even when it is staring them in the face!

The British Israelites' theory has resulted in going to such extremes as claiming that Israel did not crucify Christ for they were not in the land. But the Jews were and they did it. Only a mischievous manoeuvring of Scripture can come up with such a theory as this. It is a particularly satisfying and gratifying doctrine to those who are British and American and who believe that Britain and America are Israel today. This doctrine conveniently lets them off the hook!

But Scripture plainly testifies that the whole house of Israel was guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. In Act. 2:22 Peter addresses the Jews of his day as: “Ye men of Israel,” and in v36 he states that “all the house of Israel ... crucified Christ.”

A careful reading of Scripture soon reveals that the terms “Israel” and

“Jews” are used synonymously. For example: In Act. 21:39 and 22:3 Paul said: “I am a Jew.” But in Rom. 11:1 he also said: “I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” And, in 2 Cor. 11:22 he says he is a Hebrew. If it had become the custom to only refer to those in the northern tribes as “Israelites,” why does Paul who was from the southern tribe of Benjamin, refer to himself as both a Jew and Israelite?

Referring to John the Baptist’s ministry to the Jews, Paul says he had preached to “all the people of Israel” (Act. 13:24). On another occasion Paul called the Jews: “our 12 tribes,” and said they were “earnestly serving God day and night” (Act. 26:4, 7).

It does seem that originally the term “Jew” was a nickname for those who belonged to the tribe or kingdom of Judah. At that time, a Jew was of course also an Israelite, being a descendant of Jacob. But not every Israelite was a Jew, because not all were of the tribe or kingdom of Judah. However, as history testifies, words have a habit of changing or broadening in their scope and meaning. Such has been the case with the word “Jew.” The term ultimately developed into an interchangeable word with “Israelite.” “Jew” and “Israel” became synonymous.

It is not difficult to see how this happened. As a result of members of the 10 northern tribes migrating to the southern kingdom of Judah to live with those who were called Jews, they came to be called by the same name. The term “Jew” ended up becoming an all-embracing name which was applied to all the 12 tribes that resided in Judah. It is even possible that while the 10 northern tribes were still in the land in Old Testament times, before Assyria invaded, that they might have used the name “Jew” contemptuously to stigmatise those from their own tribes who migrated to the southern kingdom of Judah, who they probably regarded as defectors and traitors.

Going a stage further, Scripture indicates that even those in the northern kingdom who were taken into captivity by the Assyrians, were called “Jews.” We read in 2 Kng. 17:6 that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria “carried Israel away into Assyria.” But when Ahasuerus, king of Persia, sent his decree to the 127 provinces of his dominion, which embraced the territory of Assyria, it was sent to Jews (Est. 8:8-9). The decree was not addressed to “Jews” in Babylon and “Israelites” in Assyria, as one would have expected if the British Israelites’ theory were true. The word “Jew” was used to encompass members of all 12 tribes of Israel!

We read in Neh. 2:1 that Nehemiah, a cupbearer to a Persian king, was concerned about the “Jews” who returned to their land. When he

returned there himself to check them out, Neh. 2:10 refers to him coming to seek the welfare, not of the Jews, but of “Israel.” Here again we see that “Jew” and “Israel” are used synonymously.

WHERE ARE THE TEN TRIBES?

It is natural to wonder what happened to the members of the 10 tribes who were taken away into captivity by the Assyrians, who didn't return to their land. The most credible answer is that they stayed in the land of their captivity, built houses, planted gardens, and adopted it as their homeland, as did those from the southern kingdom who did not return from Babylon (Jer. 29:4-7).

It is to be noted that the Jewish magazine “Zion,” in 1947 reported the return of Jews from the hills of Kurdistan. Evidence pointed to them being members of at least 3 of the northern tribes who had lived there in those remote regions since Old Testament times.

So then, there can be no doubt that the Jews living in Israel at the time of Christ, included all 12 tribes, seeing they were the descendants of those who returned from Babylon, who consisted of all 12 tribes.

In A.D. 70 these Jews were uprooted from their land by the Romans and were dispersed throughout the world for centuries. It is evident therefore that when they returned to their land and became a nation again in 1948, that the nation consisted of all 12 tribes. It was fitting and appropriate therefore that this nation was named “Israel” not Judah. “Israel” is certainly the name used in Bible prophecy to describe the nation in the end time. See Ezk. 38:8, 14:19.

That all 12 tribes would be represented among those living in the land of Israel in the end time period prior to the second coming, is actually prophesied in the Bible. Rev. 7 refers to 144,000 being sealed from all the tribes of Israel, and it is evident from v14 that this occurs around the time of “great tribulation.” According to Jesus (Matt. 24:21), the great tribulation occurs prior to his second coming, and his reference to “the holy place” (v15) which is in Jerusalem, along with his reference to Jews in Judea (v16), indicates that the land of Israel not Britain is the focal centre of the prophecy, and the vortex of the tribulation. Reference to the 12 tribes and the great tribulation in Rev. 7 clearly implies therefore that all 12 tribes of Israel will be represented among the Jews living in Israel in the end time.

This is confirmed in Rev. 12 where the nation of Israel is represented

as a woman and the 12 tribes are represented by a crown of 12 stars upon her head. An anti-Israel enemy represented by a dragon is depicted casting one third of the stars down. This represents the destruction of one third of Israel's secular population as a result of invasion and war, and pertains to the tribulation period.

The fact that the arch-angel Michael comes to the rescue and casts the enemy out, confirms the woman with a crown of 12 stars represents Israel, because it is clearly taught in Dan. 12 that Michael's mission is to defend Israel.

DAVID'S THRONE NOW IN LONDON?

Another reason why some believe that Britain is Israel, relates to the promises God made to David. These promises indicated that David's throne would be established forever; i.e. exist continuously throughout all generations, with a king always sitting upon it.

Seeing that the throne in Jerusalem was overturned and ceased when the last Jewish king Zedekiah was taken captive to Babylon in 587 B.C. it has been concluded by British Israelites that it must be in existence somewhere else today. The throne is no longer at Jerusalem and the Jews do not have a king, so it is argued that the throne and kingdom cannot relate to them.

It is on the basis of this reasoning that it is concluded that Britain is the kingdom of Israel and the throne upon which Queen Elizabeth sits in London, is David's throne.

The argument is based on 3 main texts of Scripture: 2 Sam. 7. Ps. 89. Jer. 33. Let us look at them:

1. 2 Sam. 7: The relevant verses are v12-14. Speaking to David, God says: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

British Israelites believe that the "seed" promised to David whose throne and kingdom would be established forever, means "dynasty" - an unbroken line of successors starting with David's son Solomon, reaching down to Queen Elizabeth, who would sit on the throne of David ruling over Israel. But it is completely overlooked that we have an inspired comment on 2 Sam. 7 in the New Testament telling us that the promise applies to Christ, not a "dynasty" starting with Solomon. The words: "I

will be his Father and he shall be My son,” in 2 Sam. 7:14 are quoted in Heb. 1:5 and applied to Christ.

It is important to understand that Christ was not a descendant of David through the high line of Solomon. He came through his mother Mary, through the low line of a younger son of David (and Bathsheba) named Nathan (Lk. 3:31. 1 Chr. 3:5). It is clear from this that the “seed” promised to David who would sit on his throne forever related to a descendant of Nathan, not Solomon. This was prophesied in Ezk. 17:24 where reference is made to the Lord bringing down the high tree and exalting the low tree.

The last descendant of Solomon to sit upon David’s throne at Jerusalem was Zedekiah, and this is what God said to him through the prophet Ezekiel: “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end. Thus says the Lord God; remove the diadem, and take off the crown; things shall not remain as they are; exalt him who is low, and abase him who is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall no longer exist until he comes whose right it is and I will give it to him” (Ezk. 21:25-27).

This is a prophecy predicting the termination of the rule of Solomon’s successors and the overthrow of the throne of David at Jerusalem until Messiah sits on it. It was during the reign of Zedekiah that the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and overthrew the throne (587 B.C.). Since that time, no descendant of David has ever restored the throne and sat on it. And, according to that prophecy in Ezk. 21, no one will sit on it until Messiah comes, whose right it is and it will be given to him. This is made clear in the promise given to him in Lk. 1:32-33: “He shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his Father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

In view of these facts, there is no way in which the throne in London upon which Queen Elizabeth sits, can be the throne of David, even if she was a descendant of Solomon. Firstly, because David’s “seed” to whom the throne was promised was Christ, a descendant of Nathan, not Solomon’s dynasty. Secondly, because the rule of Solomon’s dynasty was terminated with Zedekiah. Thirdly, because the throne was overthrown by the Babylonians and will never exist again until the promised Messiah returns to Israel, restores it and sits upon it.

In passing, it is interesting to note that reference is made in Zech. 12:12 to descendants of David and Nathan living contemporary with

Christ's return. It is of particular interest that the context teaches they are living in the land of Israel, not Great Britain!

AN UNBROKEN DYNASTY?

Herbert Armstrong says in his book that in the promises to David, God made an absolutely binding covenant with David, unconditionally guaranteeing that there would never be a single generation from David's time forward, when there would not be a descendant of David sitting on his throne, ruling over the children of Israel. It was, says Armstrong, a promise of a continuous, unbroken dynasty - all generations forever.

There is a mixture of truth and error in this teaching. It is true that the promise made to David was unconditional, but it is not true that it demanded an unbroken dynasty reigning on a continuous throne. If God unconditionally guaranteed a continuous throne, David would not have warned Solomon, as we read in 1 Kng. 2:1-4, that it would only be "if" i.e. on the condition that he and his sons walk in God's ways and keep his commandments, that there would always be a man on the throne. The same condition is stated again in Ps. 132:11: "If thy sons keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their sons shall also sit upon thy throne forevermore."

David clearly declared that the continuance of the throne until the promised seed (Messiah) came, was conditional upon obeying God. There was no unconditional guarantee about it at all. The guarantee only applied to Christ, the special promised seed who would eventually reign forever.

As history testifies, many of the kings (Solomon's successors) who sat upon the throne of David at Jerusalem, were evil and corrupt and failed to walk in God's ways and obey His commandments. The last king, Zedekiah, was no better, and as we have seen, it was during his reign that God said He was going to overturn the throne, causing it to "be no more (cease to exist) until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it to him." The personal singular pronouns "he" and "him" indicate that the prophecy relates to a specific individual, not a dynasty.

The prophecy will of course, be fulfilled at Christ's second coming when he returns to Jerusalem. Matt. 25:31 relates to this: "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Until that time comes, the throne must remain non-existent as is taught in Ezk. 21:27. To affirm that it

exists in Britain and that Queen Elizabeth sits upon it, is to contradict Scripture and make a liar out of God.

When Jesus returns he will obviously restore and re-establish the throne at Jerusalem where it used to be and has to be by Divine appointment. From that throne Jesus will rule and reign over all nations. This is a major theme in Scripture and many verses could be quoted in relation to it. For example: Isa. 2. Jer. 3:17. Zech. 12 to 14.

The restoration of David's city, throne and kingdom by Christ, was prophesied in Amos 9:11: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen and repair its breaches; and I will raise up its ruins and will build it as in the days of old." This prophecy is quoted in Act. 15:14-18 and informs us that it will be fulfilled by Christ when he has finished calling a people out for his name from the Gentile nations. As we read in Rom. 11:25-: "When the full number of Gentiles has come in, the deliverer will be manifested from Zion."

In the meantime, as we read in Hos. 3:4: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king ..." This clearly implies the throne will be non-existent for a long period of time. Hos. 3:5 goes on to say that it will not be until "afterward, in the latter days, that the children of Israel will return to God and seek Him and David their king." This implies that there will be no throne of David or a king sitting on it until the Messiah comes. The fact that Britain has not been, and is not now without a sovereign, disqualifies her from being Israel.

2. The second passage of Scripture referred to earlier, upon which British Israelites base their argument that David's throne would exist continuously until Christ comes, is Ps. 89. But what has been said about 2 Sam. 7 equally applies here. Verses 34-37 of this Psalm refer to God's covenant with David which he will not alter or break, that his seed and throne shall be established and endure forever. Armstrong seizes on the fact that Moffatt translates the word "seed" as "dynasty," but as mentioned before, this statement is quoted in Heb. 1:5 and is applied to Christ. It unmistakably refers to him, not a dynasty.

DAVID SHALL NEVER LACK A MAN TO SIT ON HIS THRONE

3. The third passage of Scripture used by British Israelites to prove that David's throne was to be continuous from Solomon onwards is Jer. 33:17. It reads like this: "For thus says the Lord; David shall never lack a

man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” But, as the saying goes: “A text without a context is a pretext.” Taking this verse in its context, it is talking about the future reign of Christ on David’s throne. It relates to the time when Jesus sits on the throne forever. It does not refer to the time when Solomon’s successors sat on it. The section to which v17 belongs, commences at v14-16 which says: “Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah (N.B. not just Judah). In those days and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness (Messiah) to spring forth for David; and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name by which she (Jerusalem) shall be called: The Lord our righteousness.”

There can be no doubt that this all relates to the time of the second coming and reign of Jesus from David’s throne at Jerusalem. It is in this light that the very next statement in v17 must be understood: “For thus says the Lord, David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” Once again, the personal singular pronoun “he” which is used in relation to “the branch” in this prophecy indicates that it relates to a single individual and not a successive line of kings.

It is interesting to note that after saying David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne; the very next verse, which is a continuation of God’s promise, says: “Neither shall the priests the Levites lack a man before God to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.” (A similar reference is also made in v21).

British Israelites quote the first part of the promise to prove their theory that there would be an uninterrupted continuance of the throne of David, maintaining that the throne upon which British monarchs have sat is that throne. But they do not give the second part of the promise the same application. They do not argue that there has been an uninterrupted continuance of the ministry of the Levitical priests, offering burnt offerings at the altar of God.

If the statement that David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel means an uninterrupted throne, we would be forced to conclude that there would also be an uninterrupted Levitical priesthood and burnt offerings on an altar. It would not be “rightly dividing the Word of truth” to separate the 2 statements and give them different applications. It is to be noted that Armstrong applies the reference to the Levitical priesthood and burnt offerings to the period of Christ’s return, and I agree

with this. But if this statement is applied to the age to come when Christ has returned; to be consistent the other statement about a man on David's throne should also be applied to the same period. All honest truth seekers should see the plain truth of this.

It is impossible and ridiculous to apply the prophecy in Jer. 33 to the throne or monarchy in Great Britain. No monarch in the history of Great Britain has been entitled to the title: "The Branch," and none have executed judgement and righteousness in the land. These descriptions can only apply to Jesus. There has certainly never been a Levitical priesthood operating in Great Britain, offering burnt offerings. Neither can Britain be called: "The Lord our righteousness" or be described as being "saved."

Britain today is rife with pseudo religions, atheism, agnosticism, apostasy, heresy, homosexuality etc. It is an unholy, unrighteous decadent society, deeply in need of being saved and of receiving righteousness. When Jesus returns and sets up the throne of David at Jerusalem and rules the nations, Britain and all other nations will then experience a salvation and righteousness as never before when her own monarchs ruled!

Scripture never refers to the throne of David being removed from Jerusalem to any other country. Neither is there a reference in Scripture to the throne returning from another country to Jerusalem at the time of Christ's return. Jerusalem and Jerusalem alone is the place appointed by God for the throne of David. Ps. 132:13 declares: "The Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. This is my resting place for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Ps. 2:6. 48:1-). Ps. 78:67-68 makes the point that God "rejected the dwelling of Joseph, the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved." Those in the northern kingdom understood this because when they broke away from Judah, they never attempted to transfer the throne of David to any of their cities. They rejected the throne of David saying: "We have no share in David; neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse (David); you can look after your own house David" (1 Kng. 12:16).

If God did not want the throne of David to be in the tribe of Ephraim or any other northern tribe in the holy land, and if the tribe of Ephraim and the other northern tribes in the holy land didn't want the throne of David in their cities (Ps. 78); it is not very likely that the throne could or would be transferred to a city in an unholy Gentile land, even if members of the tribe of Ephraim or any other northern tribe lived there.

THE CORONATION STONE

No detail seems to be too trifling to be used in support of the theory that Britain constitutes “lost tribes” of Israel. This is exhibited by the claim made in relation to the Coronation Stone in the chair in Westminster Abbey, which is supposed to prove the genuineness of the theory. It is claimed that this is the “stone of Israel” referred to in Gen. 49:24. But the context of this verse shows that the “stone of Israel” is none other than the Lord Jesus himself, referred to in 1 Pet. 2:4 as “a living stone ... chosen by God and precious.”

By taking these words from their context, some very extravagant claims have been made by British Israelites concerning the Coronation Stone. They claim it was originally the pillow used by Jacob as he journeyed to Syria (Gen. 28). Tired out, he lay down to sleep in the open fields close to the town of Bethel, and chose a stone to use as a pillow. According to this theory; when Jacob arose in the morning, he carried the stone with him on his journey and looked after it during the 20 years he lived in Syria.

But according to the Bible (Gen. 28:18) when Jacob arose in the morning, he took the stone and used it as a head stone, putting it on top of a heap or “pillar” of stones that he erected at that place as a memorial to God, and he sanctified and dedicated it by pouring oil upon it. He did not take the stone away with him on his journey, but left it behind to be a reminder of the experience he had in that place where God revealed Himself to him in a dream. To affirm that Jacob took the stone with him is not only a contradiction of Scripture but a blatant lie. British Israelites claim that Jacob took the stone back to Palestine when he returned, where it remained and was eventually used in the throne of David until the Babylonians invaded and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and took many of the Jews into captivity.

OUTRAGEOUS CLAIMS

Some Jews were allowed to remain in the land of Judea, including the prophet Jeremiah, but they later fled against the will of God, and went south to Egypt. The British Israelites make some outrageous claims from this point on, claiming that “history” supports these claims; but no recognized historical authorities such as Encyclopaedia Britannica are quoted to support the assertions. British Israelites claim that Zedekiah,

the last king of Judah who was taken captive to Babylon, had a daughter named Tea-tephi, who, with the help of Jeremiah, took the stone to Egypt. It is then claimed that Tea-tephi later left Egypt, sailing away on a ship with the stone to Ireland where she married Eochaidh, a prince of Judah who had migrated there earlier and who had been elected heremon of all Ireland. The pair were crowned standing on the sacred stone.

Herbert Armstrong asserts that: "When Assyria captured Israel, Philistine Danites struck out in their ships and sailed west through the Mediterranean and north to Ireland." As proof he goes on to say that they left their trail along the shores of the Mediterranean in names incorporating "dan," "don," "din," and Irish history refers to them as "tuatha-de-dannaas" which means "tribe of Dan." But the question is: What about the other 9 northern tribes. He does not provide evidence of them doing the same. He only makes a big deal about the one tribe of Dan.

According to a book called: "The Irish in Ireland" by Constantine Fitzgibbon (p26-29), the people who sailed to Ireland who Armstrong claimed were from the tribe of Dan, were in fact maritime, nomadic Greeks according to Irish legend who began colonising Ireland about 3,000 B.C. and were well settled by 1,200-1,100 B.C. i.e. 400-500 years before the Assyrian invasion of Israel! The name of the pre-Olympian god of justice was Dan (the Olympian period being about 776 B.C.). So the name "Dan" in Greek settlers was well in vogue long before the Israelite tribe of Dan is supposed to have settled in Ireland. And so Armstrong asserts that Israel in Ireland had already a kingly line onto which Zedekiah's daughter could be grafted when she sailed across. In an earlier publication, he alludes to a genealogical chart that allegedly traces this line of descent from Zedekiah's supposed daughter through to the kings (and queen) of Great Britain.

The chart is supposed to show that David's throne was preserved by the daughter of Zedekiah as a result of fleeing to Egypt with the stone and being replanted in Ireland. The theory goes on to say that after 800 years it was "overturned" a second time and replanted in Scotland, having been carried to Iona where it became the Coronation stone of Scotland. In 1296 it was overturned a third time. Edward 1, warring against Scotland, conveyed the stone to England, where it was placed in Westminster Abbey, London, and used with the Coronation chair for Coronations of kings and queens of England. It is claimed that Elizabeth the second is descended from the marriage of Zedekiah's daughter Tephi to Eochaidh, and is therefore related to the throne of David and is heir to the "national"

promises. British Israelites believe the stone cannot be overturned or moved again until the coming of Christ, at which time it will be overturned for the fourth and final time and be transplanted back at Zion in Jerusalem. Armstrong affirms that “many kings in the history of Ireland, Scotland and England have been crowned sitting over this stone - including the present queen. The stone rests today in Westminster Abbey in London, and the Coronation chair is built over and around it. A sign beside it labels it: “Jacob’s pillar-stone” (Gen. 28:18).

Where is the evidence for all this? Armstrong admits that: “The real ancient history of Ireland is very extensive, though coloured with some legend. But with the facts of Biblical history and prophecy in mind, one can easily sift out the legend from the true history in studying Irish annals.” What an amazing admission! Armstrong admits that legend is mixed up in Irish history and that anything quoted as evidence from that history is only valid when confirmed by Bible history and prophecy. But he doesn’t supply any confirmation from Bible history or prophecy to support what he takes out of Irish “legend” in relation to the throne of David being transferred to Ireland.

A FABRICATION AND FANTASY

The Westminster stone story is built merely upon an Irish legend, like the story about Jeremiah and his Jewish princess which is also built upon a legend in the same country. And anyone who has had experience with Irish legends, knows that you cannot believe many of them. In fact, the Irish people themselves do not believe them! Most of the so-called evidence produced by Armstrong to support his theory is coloured by Irish legend and so-called genealogies, which the Bible warns us against: 1 Tim. 1:4: “Do not pay attention to fables (legends) and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than Godly edifying ...”

The whole British Israelite theory is all just a fabrication - a fantasy which fits into the same category as Raiders of the Lost Ark and the DaVinci Code. It reminds us of Paul’s warning in 2 Tim. 4:3-4 that some would not tolerate sound teaching but would turn their ears away from the truth to fables.

The following points should be noted in response to the theories we have been considering: As already pointed out, Jacob placed the stone he had used as a pillow, on top of a pillar of stones as a headstone. He did not take it with him on his journey!

The coronation stone in Westminster Abbey is red sandstone, but the stone at Bethel where Jacob built his pillar, is white limestone. The stone at Westminster Abbey clearly did not come from Bethel!

The Coronation stone is some 78cm (2ft 3in) long, 28cm (11in) wide, and 18cm (7in) deep, and weighs about 180kg (400lbs). It is not easy to imagine Jacob, who travelled by himself on foot without a pack horse, donkey, camel or wheel-barrow, carrying this stone by hand, all the way from Bethel to Haran in Syria, a distance of about 800kms (500 miles). It is clearly testified in Gen. 32:10 that when Jacob went to Bethel he only had a staff in his hand. The whole narrative in Genesis which covers his journey makes it clear that he walked. No animals went with him. So then, if he had a staff in one hand and no animals with him, how did he carry a 180kg stone for 800kms under his arm?! The whole idea does not tie in with the Biblical record. It is clearly a fable -fiction - myth - legend.

As for the king of Jerusalem's daughter taking the stone with her to Egypt, and then on to Ireland: Scripture not only says nothing about this, but reveals facts which show that such speculation is absolutely untenable. You see, Armstrong presents the escape of the daughters of king Zedekiah as a providential move of God to preserve the "royal seed."

Scripture however, makes it clear that the move to Egypt was for punishment because it was in defiance of God's instruction through the prophet Jeremiah who told them not to go. As a result of going, they ended up worshipping false gods there (Jer. 42:44).

Those who went down to Egypt either died there or returned to Palestine. This is what God declared to them through the prophet Jeremiah: "I will take the remnant that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, and fall in the land of Egypt ... from the least unto the greatest" (Jer. 44:12). Verse 26-28: "All the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them. Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah ..."

NO BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

Armstrong says that the small number of Jews which fled to Egypt included king Zedekiah's daughter Tea-tephi and other "royal seed." But there is no reference in the Bible to the king having a daughter by that name. The name never occurs in the Bible. It is unbiblical. Reference is

made in Jer. 41:10 to the captain of the Babylonian guard leaving king Zedekiah's daughters in the care of Gedaliah, who they appointed as governor of the Jews that were allowed to remain in the land. But the daughters names are not given. They were later taken down to Egypt with the other Jews (Jer. 43:6). Reference is also made in Jer. 44 to other women among the Jews who went to Egypt. We read in v15-18 that "all the women" told the prophet Jeremiah that they would not listen to him and messages from his God, but preferred to worship the pagan's queen of heaven. The fact that it is specifically stated that "all" the women rejected Jeremiah and his God, indicates there were no exceptions, such as a king's daughter named Tea-tephi as alleged by Armstrong.

It is specifically taught in Jer. 44:14, 28 that: "None of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return to the land of Judah ... for none shall return except for a few fugitives."

In view of the importance and significance of the throne of David in the Divine scheme of things you can guarantee that if a member of the royal family escaped, and the throne was preserved through her, reference would be made to this in Scripture, as in the case of the movements of the ark of the covenant in other Scriptures. It would be completely out of character for the Word of God to not mention it. The theory that a daughter of the king was among those who went to Egypt and took the throne-stone with her and escaped to Ireland, is bizarre. The whole story smells of fable and fiction from start to finish!

Even if Zedekiah's daughter had escaped, she was not in the royal line appointed by God out of which the Messiah, the promised seed of David was to come. Not only was Zedekiah not a descendant of David's son Nathan, but he was also an interloper - a usurper. He was installed upon the throne by the Babylonians (2 Kng. 24:17). He was not the rightful successor to the throne, and for this reason is not mentioned in the genealogy in Matt. 1. This evidence completely destroys the argument about the transplantation of the "royal seed" to Ireland etc. Any claim to the throne through Zedekiah is spurious.

The British Israelite theory has distorted many aspects of the Word of God and has diverted many minds from truth into error. Its teaching is a major distraction from the real Israel, and God's promises and prophecies concerning her.

There is only one nation on the world map named "Israel" and it is in the Middle East where it was in Biblical times. When the Jews returned

and became a nation in 1948, many names were suggested, but divine providence saw to it that the nation was called "Israel." Britain is in Europe and is not Israel! Various prophecies predicted the return of Israel to her land as a prelude to the second coming of Christ and the Battle of Armageddon and the Middle East is clearly the focal centre of these prophecies not Europe.

Of more concern to us is not the identity of natural Israel, but spiritual Israel. Being a natural biological descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, doesn't immediately qualify a person for salvation. Having the same spirit and faith of Abraham which centres in Christ is what saves, which means people of all races can qualify. Many Jews will fail to qualify because they reject Jesus as Messiah. But all who believe and confess him as Lord will be saved.

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