

This month's article is about Israel, its history and importance in our times. This article will give you the true history help you understand what is really going on biblically, historically and politically.

ISRAEL—What Difference Does It Make?

By

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Once again the people of the world are trying to fix Israel. Why is such a tiny speck of land a hot button for the entire world? Who is right, President Obama, the UN, the Church, or the State of Israel? Whose land is it? Why has the "two state" solution never worked and never will? Why has the Land of Israel always been fought over? Why does the State of Israel only allow Jews to immigrate? Why do they call themselves a Jewish State? What happened to the other tribes?

In all the confusion the most important question really is: **When will the punishment for the sins of the House of Israel, the Northern Kingdom or Lost Tribes be over?** This question might surprise you but remember the exile for the Northern Kingdom or House of Israel is not yet over.

Let me try to answer all these questions. Let's take a very brief look at history from a biblical and historical view point.

First, **Who is Israel?** When we define who Israel really is then we are on our way to the answers.

Many claim you have to be a Jew to be an Israelite. Even the State of Israel calls themselves a Jewish State. So who is a Jew and who is an Israelite? In other words who is the House of Judah and who is the House of Israel referred to in Jeremiah 31:31.

Biblically a Jew is a person from the Tribe of Judah. The House of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and part of Levi. The House of Israel was the Ten Northern (Lost Tribes) tribes along with part of Levi. Biblically a Gentile is a pagan, someone who is not in covenant with YHWH, the God of the Bible. Biblically, there are not two classes of people called Jews or Gentiles based on race. Biblically, there are two classes of people based on relationship to the One God of the Bible, YHWH; 1. Pagan/Gentile or 2. Hebrew /Israelite. Thus a Jew can be a pagan or a gentile if they are not in relationship with YHWH.

Since there are only two classes of people this applies to all of us. Are you a gentile/non-believer or and Israelite/believer?

Let's look at Scripture to see how this plays out.

Abram was a pagan/gentile who chose to follow YHWH thus becoming a Hebrew. The word "Hebrew" means to "cross over" from following pagan gods to following the One true God, YHWH. Abram left his father's land and gods and chose to follow YHWH and go where YHWH told him to go. (Genesis 11-12, about 4000 years ago) In doing this YHWH made a covenant or promise to Abram (Genesis 12-15). In His Covenant YHWH gave Abram and his descendants, all the land from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River.

Over time Abram broke His Covenant with YHWH two times, once with Eliezer and once with Hagar. Each time YHWH renewed His Covenant with Abram, the final time with the sign being circumcision. In doing this He also changed Abram's name to Abraham and his wife's name, Sari to Sarah, by adding the letter "Hey" to both names. This change in names is really about a change in heart and adds the meaning of "behold the Covenant seed". YHWH required that the children of promise would come from a circumcised, sanctified vessel. It is interesting to note that Abraham never broke the covenant. Abraham also had a very large household and they were not all his physical seed but they were still his heirs according to the promise. They were all circumcised, which was the sign of the covenant. And they all lived in the Land of Israel (Genesis 18, Gal. 3:29). Isaac is this child or seed of promise and He was married in the land.

Isaac's son, Jacob, the supplanter, deceived his brother Esau and his father, Isaac. He then fled the Land in fear. Scripture records that on his way to his uncle Laban's he stopped at Bethel and made a sacrifice seeking YHWH's protection (Genesis 28). Later we learn that Laban deceived Isaac with the promised wives, Leah and Rachel, and changed his wages ten times. After 20 years Jacob left Laban to return to the Land. While Jacob was with Laban he had 11 sons outside of the Land with his two wives and two concubines.

When Jacob was returning to the land he became afraid of what might happen with Esau so he divided his family in two parts at Penuel. This is prophetic of what happens to Israel later on. At Penuel Jacob also wrestles with Elohim, another name for YHWH. This was a turning point in his life. He became a "new man". He left his home and the Land with nothing and returned prosperous. He left with his brother hating him and returned to find his brother Esau rejoicing to see him. He returned with 11 sons who would be joined with the 12th son Benjamin who was to be born in the Land. At Penuel His name was changed from Jacob, the supplanter, to Israel, the chosen of YHWH (Genesis 32). His 12 sons would become the 12 tribes of Israel because of a change in his heart. These 12 sons all grew up in the land and were given specific lands to live in.

Israel (Jacob) then moved to Shechem (now called Nablus by Muslims) where he bought a grave site for himself that is still there today. He then traveled again to Bethel where Elohim appeared to him and blessed him. Elohim confirmed that his name was Israel and gave to him and his descendants the land that he had also given to Abraham and Isaac. (Genesis 35) Abraham and Isaac are buried in Hebron, where you can visit their graves today.

Note: all of these sites and many others are now in what some call the West Bank or occupied territories.

One of Israel's sons was Joseph. Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelite's, Hagar's relatives, by his brothers. The Ishmaelite's then sold him as a slave to the Egyptians. In Egypt, Joseph married a pagan/gentile Egyptian woman. They had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Later Joseph's father, Israel, adopted both boys, made them his sons and elevated the youngest, Ephraim to first born. (Genesis 48) The ten Northern Tribes are also called Ephraimites.

Many years later Moses also married a pagan/gentile woman (Exodus 2).

I hope you are getting the point that Hebrew people or Israelites are people from every nationality. YHWH has never been concerned about race, skin color, or ethnicity, only the heart. There is more:

Exodus 12:38 says that 600,000 descendants of Israel put blood on the door post, and also a Mixed Multitude did the same thing. Why 600,000? Were there more that did not believe and put blood on the door post? The descendants of Israel and the Mixed Multitude had all forgotten who YHWH was or never even had heard of Him. These were all gentile/pagans/non-believers from every nation on the earth. They all put the blood on the door post or in other words got saved and partook of Passover. Then they all were considered native born and called Israelites from that day on. (Read the rest of Exodus)

More examples:

Caleb, the faithful spy, was a Kenzanite, a pagan/gentile who became a member of the tribe of Judah by accepting His Covenant (Numbers 22, 32). There is not a tribe for the pagan/gentiles or the mixed multitude. They all joined into or in other words were grafted into one of the 12 tribes.

Ruth was a pagan/gentile Moabite who accepted His Covenant and became a member of the tribe of Judah and an ancestor of Jesus, the Messiah (Ruth 1).

These are examples of what Paul was explaining in Romans 11, about being grafted into His Covenant or Israel. Romans 3 teaches that a true Jew or Israelite is only found in a Covenant relationship with the Messiah. Galatians 3:29 teaches that the Children of Promise are those in Messiah. With YHWH it has always been about the condition of the heart, not race or works.

The land of Israel is the focal point in the war between good and evil. YHWH, the God of the Bible has chosen to declare to the world who He is, but many do not and will not believe. In one way or another they choose to make the Land theirs because they worship a different god. While YHWH says that it is His will that anyone and everyone can become His people or Israel. He does have a chosen people but anyone can become the chosen. Anyone can be Israel. It is a matter of the condition of your heart. His Covenant relationship and Land is available to all. Anyone who will accept the duties and responsibilities of His Covenant can also receive the promises of His Covenant and become a part of or grafted into His Israel.

There is only one way. There is only one Israel. There is only One true God, YHWH. This is great news! This is His plan of salvation!! There is room for all peoples!!

The governments of man tries to divide what YHWH has not divided. The State of Israel says the land is only for Jews, forgetting the other tribes, the Torah and His plan of salvation. Other governments and the UN want to give the land to pagan peoples. Remember YHWH says the earth is His.

The book of Exodus or Shemot in Hebrew, is all about proclaiming His name to the world. In fact the Hebrew word "Shemot" means names. YHWH is declaring to all the gods and peoples of the earth that He is the One true God and that the Land is His and He will give it to whom He chooses. The book of Revelation demonstrates the exact same thing.

Second, More History:

- The land of Israel has been the homeland of a people called Israel since Abraham over 4000 years ago.
- Shiloh was the "capitol" of Israel for over 400 years when the nation was led by Samuel and other prophets from about 1400 B.C. to 1000 B.C. This is over 3500 years ago. The ruins are still there in what some call the West Bank.
- When King Solomon built the first temple in the tenth century the capitol was moved to Jerusalem. This is over 3000 years ago.
- After Solomon died the nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms, the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Over time the word "Judah" was shortened to "Jew". Thus the name or term "Jew".
- In about 720 B.C. the Assyrians captured the Northern tribes, The House of Israel taking them into captivity and exile. These people were spread all over the world and were called Anglo-Saxon and Caucasian. Saxon means the sons of Isaac.
- In about 600 B.C. the Babylonians captured the Southern Kingdom and destroyed Solomon's temple. The House of Judah or the Southern Kingdom was primarily the Tribes of Juda (Jews), Benjamin and Levi, but many from the Northern Kingdom, the House of Israel joined because of the sins of Jeroboam. Jewish people still lived in Jerusalem but it was occupied by the Babylonians.
- Then the Romans came and captured Jerusalem and the land of Israel; destroyed the second temple of Israel in Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and then changed the name of the land from Israel to Palestine in 134 A.D. The House of Judah or Jewish people continued to live in the land.
- Mohamed started Islam in the seventh century in Mecca and Medina. Later they expanded to capture Jerusalem and other countries. The land of Israel was fought over by the Christians and Muslims (Crusades) until the Ottoman Empire took control in the 13th century. The Ottoman Empire (Turks) was a Muslim Caliphate that ruled Israel until the end of World War One. At this time only about 10,000 people lived in the deserted, wasted land. Many of whom were Jews.
- After WW1, England was given the authority in the Balfour Declaration to divide the Ottoman Empire into countries providing a homeland for the Arabs that were subjugated by the Ottomans and a home land for the Jews. Not just the Jews lining in Palestine but those all over the world. In the 1940s Britton finally established the

nations of Syria, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, and Israel and others under the authority of the League of Nations and the UN in The Mandate for Palestine Article 22.

- In 1948, on the day that Britton finished removing all their troops, Israel declared its independence, and it was attacked by Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and other neighboring Muslim countries and some of its land was lost.
- Prior to the 1948 war there was never a distinct territory called the West Bank, so named because it is on the west bank of the Jordan River. The territory took on that name only after Jordan occupied it after the 1948 war. For 1000's of years before that, it was called Judea and Samaria and was considered part of the national home land for the Jewish people under the Palestine Mandate.
- In 1967 these same nations again attacked Israel. This time Israel took back the "West Bank" that was illegally occupied by Jordan since 1948.
- Historically there has never been a people called "Palestinian" until after the 1967 war. The UN Security Council Resolution 242 passed after the 1967 war did not mention a "Palestinian People." The "Palestinian People" are a made up group that did not exist 50 years ago. They are Jordanians who were illegally occupying the "West Bank" that were left behind when Jordan lost the 1967 War. Israel has taken care of them and even allowed them to be citizens, to vote and be members of their parliament.

I hope this brief history will help you understand that no pagan person or nation has any claim to the Land of Israel. Historically for over 4000 years it has been the homeland of Israel, which are those who have chosen to follow the YHWH, the One true God. When people choose not to continue to follow YHWH, He removed them from the land.

Finally: Where are we now in human history—Why is this history is so important for today?

After the Israelites finally entered the Promised Land, they did not follow *YHWH's* instructions for long. They soon went back to their old ways learned in Egypt. Israel was created to be one nation, one people, His people. But sin caused separation from YHWH and created the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. After Solomon (Shlomo in Hebrew) died, his son Rehoboam took over. The 10 Northern Tribes petitioned for tax relief. Shlomo had taxed the people very heavily to build the pagan temples for his 700 wives and 300 concubines in the last years of his life. (1 Kings 11)

Instead of granting relief, Rehoboam chose to raise the taxes and burdens on the people. (1 Kings 12) This resulted in a revolt and the 10 Northern Tribes aligned with Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was Shlomo's right hand man. Now we have the Southern Kingdom or The House of Judah and the Northern Kingdom or the House of Israel or Ephraim. Over time both kingdoms sinned and fell away and were removed from the Promised Land. But their punishment was different because their sins were different. (Ex. 4) How were they different? Herein lies an incredible lesson for each of us.

The House of Judah fell away by adding pagan Babylonian gods to their worship of YHWH. They turned the Temple Mount into a Pantheon. (Ez. 8:1-18) They were removed from the Land by the Babylonians for 40 years. (Ez. 4)

The leader of the House of Israel, Jeroboam was promised the kingdom by YHWH if he would obey and walk in His ways. But he was afraid that the people would leave the north and join Judah when they went to Jerusalem to worship. (1 Kings 12:26-33) So he established new places of worship at Bethel and Dan and he also brought in gods from Egypt, and worst of all he created new times to worship. He changed YHWH's Appointed Times to dates that suited himself. (1 Kings 12:32-33) 209 years later (a picture of His grace and mercy) they were removed from the Land by the Assyrians in 5 captivities that occurred between 723 and 714 BCE for 390 years. (Ez. 4)

Because neither House repented their punishment was multiplied by 7. (Lev. 26:18) The House of Judah's 40 years was increased to 280. The House of Israel's 390 year punishment was increased to 2730 years. Judah's punishment is over and they have returned to the Land. Israel's punishment has not yet ended, but will shortly. Then we will return.

Why different punishments? Look again at their sins. Following pagan gods is a terrible sin, but YHWH considers changing His Appointed Times, (the times He has said He wants to meet with us), His Holy Days and their dates a greater sin. The "church" has replaced Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost, Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot with Christmas, Easter and Sunday. The "church" has added to and taken away from Scripture in these and many other ways. What will you do? Remember, as one who has accepted His Covenant you are a Hebrew/Israelite.

In Ezekiel chapter 4 YHWH asked Ezekiel to lay on his left side for 390 days to demonstrate the 390 years of punishment the House of Israel would suffer if they did not repent. Then he was asked to lay on his right side for 40 days to demonstrate the 40 years of punishment that the House of Judah would suffer if they did not repent. YHWH wanted them all to repent. He even warned them in Leviticus 25 and 26 if they did not repent the consequences would be multiplied 7 times. All of YHWH's warnings were given in His grace and mercy, for it is not His will that any perish. YHWH is not an evil tyrant. Through it all, He continues to call out for repentance. True life only comes through observing what He has asked us to do.

But as we know, neither Israel nor Judah repented. Judah's punishments and exile have long since come to an end. That is why today we see Judah, or the Jews, returning to the land.

The House of Israel was scattered to the nations. According to Leviticus their 390 years of consequences were multiplied by 7, bringing 2,730 years of exile. When will their exile come to an end? 2,730 years from when Israel's exile began. The exile began over a period of years from 723 to 714 B.C. when the Assyrians removed them from The Land. Counting forward brings us to sometime between 2007 and 2017. The exile of Israel is coming to an end! What a beautiful time we live in!

On the biblical calendar, we just finished what is called a Shemitah year, or a year of release last fall. It ended on the Feast of Trumpets! Ten days later on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, began a Jubilee Year. Jubilee years happen every fifty years. This is YHWH's calendar system that He started in the very beginning. Many believe this is the 120th or final Jubilee, which marks 6000 years of human history! What an incredible time to be alive!

What does all this mean? Ezekiel answered this question in the following passages:

Ezekiel 36: YHWH told me to prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the streams and the valleys that YHWH Elohim says this: ...you, mountains of Israel, you will sprout your branches and bear your fruit for my people Israel, who will soon return... I am not going to do this for your sake, House of Israel, but for the sake of My Holy Name, which you have been profaning among the nations where you went...

(23) I will set apart my great name to be regarded as holy, since it has been profaned in the nations —The nations will know that I am YHWH,' says YHWH Elohim, 'when, before their eyes, I am set apart through you to be regarded as holy. (24) For I will take you from among the nations, gather you from all the countries, and return you to your own soil. (25) Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. (26) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them. (28) You will live in the land I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

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Ezekiel 37:1-22: YHWH carried me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley, and it was full of bones. (2) He had me pass by all around them — there were so many bones lying in the valley, and they were so dry! (3) He asked me, "Human being, can these bones live?" I answered, "YHWH Elohim! Only you know that!" (4) Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones! Say to them, 'Dry bones! Hear what YHWH has to say! (5) To these bones YHWH Elohim says, "I will make breath enter you, and you will live. (9) Next he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath! Prophesy, human being! Say to the breath that YHWH Elohim says, 'Come from the four winds, breath; and breathe on these slain, so that they can live.' " (10) So I prophesied as ordered, and the breath came into them, and they were alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army!

(15) The word of YHWH came to me: (16) "You, human being, take one stick and write on it, 'For Judah and those joined with him [among] the people of Israel.' Next, take another stick and write on it, 'For Yosef, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel who are joined with him.' (17) Finally, bring them together into a single stick, so that they become one in your hand. (18) When your people ask you what all this means, (19) tell them that YHWH Elohim says this: 'I will take the stick of Yosef, which is in the hand of Ephraim, together with the tribes of Israel who are joined with him, and put them together with the stick of Judah and make them a single stick, so that they become one in my hand.'

(21) Then say to them that YHWH Elohim says: 'I will take the people of Israel from among the nations where they have gone and gather them from every side and bring them back to their own land. (22) I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them.

The punishment of Israel is over! YHWH is declaring that it is time for all of His people to return to the Land. He is declaring that Land will become fertile and fruitful so that all His people who

are called Israel will have a home and sustenance. He is declaring that His Land, the Promised Land is for His people. He is declaring that all the peoples of the earth will know His name; that we will have a heart of flesh; that He will sprinkle clean water of the Word on us and cleanses us; that Judah and Ephraim will again be one in His hand, one nation in the mountains of Israel!

This sounds like the second coming!! What an incredible time to be alive!

Now the question is are you ready? What is your relationship with YHWH? The greatest harvest of souls is about to begin. Are you a part of Israel? If not you can be...