

"ALL THE ISRAEL OF GOD."

A Brother writes: I have been in the habit of speaking of the true Church as *spiritual* Israel; recently the propriety of so doing has been called in question by certain "advanced teachers" who claim that since the time of Rehoboam the name Israel is Scripturally applied to the revolting ten tribes only. I have looked up the question in Young's Concordance, but find nothing satisfactory. I cannot find that the term Spiritual Israel is used a single time in the Bible. Please give us some help on this question.

We reply: We are aware that there are a few who confine the term Israel to the *ten tribes* which revolted from Rehoboam and the *two tribes* (Judah and Benjamin) which upheld him. And they have an object in so doing, – they have a theory about the *ten tribes* having been "lost," and claim that they have now "found" them; – that the English-speaking people of the world are the ten lost tribes – Israel. Earthly *patriotism* no doubt has much to do with the theory in those who have not taken a strong enough hold upon the heavenly citizenship. Although we also are Saxons according to the flesh, yet we have learned that as there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, in Christ Jesus, so there is neither French nor English, German nor Spaniard; for all who are in Christ are *one* "royal priesthood," a holy nation, a peculiar people, of which Christ is the Head. The spread of British influence during the past century and a half has indeed been remarkable; but let us not forget that similarly Spain "ran over the wall" three centuries ago, and ruled much of North America, all of Central and South America, and many of the isles of the sea; and that her language still dominates a territory almost or quite as extensive as that in which English is the prevailing tongue. Did Spanish prosperity prove them to be Israel? If not, why should Anglo-Saxon prosperity be recognized as a foundation for such an assumption?

The endeavor to uphold *their theory* (which is not even a "tradition of the elders"), seemingly blinds those who become interested in it, so that they ignore, and apparently *cannot see* the plain teaching of the Scriptures on this subject, – Israel. The fact is that the phrase, "ten lost tribes," cannot be found in the Bible; it can only be found in the writings of those who have adopted the theory by which they are blinding themselves. Nor is the term, "lost Israel," nor any analogous expression, found in the Scriptures. The expression, "lost sheep of the house of Israel," twice used by our Lord (Matt. 10:6; 15:24), has no reference to lost *tribes*, but to individuals who had wandered from the Lord and were lost in the wilderness of sin and darkness.

As is well known to Bible students, there was a split in the twelve tribes for four hundred years, – ten tribes separating from the king's tribe, Judah, on the ground of kingly oppression.

It was natural enough that at the time of the revolt of the ten tribes the name Israel should be held by the majority, while Rehoboam's kingdom was naturally known as Judah, the name of his tribe, which constituted the majority of his supporters, – the tribe of Benjamin being very insignificant in numbers. This distinction continued for several centuries – until the captivity to Babylon. The ten tribes were captivated first, and their people scattered throughout Babylonia; the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) were captivated later, and were similarly scattered in Babylon. From that time the pride and rivalry between the two divisions of Israel grew less and less. Common adversity made them feel their kinship again, and the name Israel became, as at first, the common name for "*the whole* house of Israel."

OLD TESTAMENT PROOFS OF THIS FACT.

If in the Old Testament writings which recount the return from the Babylonian captivity we find the returning ones no longer recognizing themselves as two nations (Judah and Israel), but, on the contrary, find the whole people spoken of as *one*, and called "*Israel*," "the *twelve*

tribes of Israel," etc., it is proof positive that the two sticks (representing the divided people – Ezek. 37:16,20) had become reunited in Babylon before the return from the Babylonian Captivity. Indeed, as already shown,* the proclamation of King Cyrus releasing the captivity proves that at that time the petty jealousies between the two divisions had subsided, and that the two parts had again become one nation with the common name Israel; for the proclamation ignored Judah entirely, and was to *all the people* of the Lord God of *Israel*. And, as already shown,* people of various tribes did return to Palestine, although the tribe of Judah appears to have been specially loyal to the city and land; probably because to that tribe belonged the kingly promise, and because the "scepter" of influence, by divine intention, was to remain with that tribe until "Shiloh" should come. Besides, the ten tribes had gone into captivity more than one hundred years earlier, and their children had become more settled and rooted in the various parts of Media and Babylon than the tribe of Judah, a few of whose youth, who had seen the city of Jerusalem and the temple, lived long enough to return. However, many people – the vast majority [**R2084 : page 6**] – of the various tribes, including Judah and Benjamin, although reverent toward God and his worship, did not return to reside in Palestine. The total number of those who returned *of all Israel* was less than fifty-five thousand, whereas we have reason to suppose that "Judah" numbered several hundred thousand at the time of the captivity, and the ten tribes still more. – See 2 Chron. 28:6,8,15.

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. III, Chap. 8.

Even before the captivity a fellowship had sprung up between the people of the two divisions, so that when Josiah, king of Judah, instituted reforms, repaired the temple and made the great Passover celebration, the *remnant* of the *ten tribes* (for the mass had gone into captivity nearly a century before) joined in the work of repairing, by contributing money, etc., and joined in the feast of Passover at Jerusalem. (See 2 Chron. 24:9,10; 25:18.) And at a still earlier date the

piously inclined of the ten tribes left their king and allied themselves with the tribe of Judah, and were known as "Jews." – 2 Chron. 15:9.

The record of the return from the captivity is given by Ezra and Nehemiah; and if the breach were not already healed it would show itself in their accounts. But as Cyrus set free "*all the people* of the God of Israel," so the records show that Ezra and Nehemiah and the people regarded themselves as *Israel*. Let each one prove this for himself, by turning to and noting their use of the words "children of Israel," "people of Israel," "tribes of Israel," "all Israel," and the offering of sacrifices for all Israel, according to the *twelve tribes*, in the following passages:

Ezra
2:2,59,70; 3:1,11; 4:3; 6:16,17; 7:7,11,13,28; 8:25,35; 10:5,10.

Nehemiah
1:6; 2:10; 7:7,61,73; 9:1,2; 10:33,39; 11:3,20; 12:47; 13:3,18.

NEW TESTAMENT PROOFS THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT TEN TRIBES, BUT TWELVE, AND WAS NOT LOST IN THE DAYS OF OUR LORD AND THE APOSTLES.

The term, "lost sheep of the house of Israel," twice used by our Lord (Matt. 10:6; 15:24) most positively contradicts the theory that the ten tribes were *lost* in the days of our Lord's first advent; and also contradicts the thought that the term "Israel" *now* belongs [R2085 : page 6] to the *ten tribes* only. Read the passages cited, and see that the "lost sheep" were *individuals* – not tribes, and that Israel was not *lost*, because Christ had come to the *only Israel* whom he recognized; and, with his disciples for three and a half years, he went through "the cities of *Israel*" seeking therein "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." – Matt. 10:23.

That the term "Jew" had come to be synonymous with the term "Israel" is proved by the fact that those terms are repeatedly used

interchangeably. For instance, Pilate wrote for the cross – "Jesus, the King of the *Jews*," while the soldiers and others mocked, saying, Let Christ, "the King of *Israel*," come down from the cross. – See Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:32.

Nathaniel was an "*Israelite* indeed," and his testimony to our Lord was, "Thou art the King of *Israel*." (John 1:47-49.) The people never thought about a king of Judah, but rather, when the Lord rode on the ass as King in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, the people strewed the way with palm branches, etc., shouting, "Blessed is the King of *Israel*." (John 12:13.) Neither were the disciples thinking of Judah as a kingdom; for they asked the Lord, "Wilt thou at *this time* restore again the kingdom to *Israel*?" And talking over the matter on the way to Emmaus they said, sorrowfully and disappointedly, – "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed [recovered, delivered] *Israel*." (Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6.) Is it reasonable to think that these all erred in their choice of language and *said* Israel but *meant* Judah? No! but it is proof positive that they recognized no "lost" tribes, but a reunited Israel – part "dispersed among the Gentiles," but coming to Jerusalem occasionally to keep the national festivals, and part at home in the land of Israel, in the cities of Israel, also trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

The angel, when directing Joseph to return from Egypt with Mary and the infant Jesus, said, "Go into the land of *Israel*." And the Apostle Matthew says, "He arose, and...came into the land of *Israel*." (Matt. 2:20,21.) Were the angel and the apostle mistaken? What would they answer present-day teachers who would say to them, "You were mistaken, the *land* of Israel was then Great Britain and Ireland, and the savages of those islands were the true Israelites, and they had the only genuine king of Israel represented in 'King Fergus' or some of his posterity, and today represented by Queen Victoria?"

John the Baptist, when introducing Christ, declared that his ministry was to *Israel*. (John 1:31.) His ministry surely was to the Jews;

and if they are not Israel John was mistaken and told an untruth; yet the power of God was upon him from his mother's womb, and there never was a greater prophet. (Luke 7:28; Matt. 11:11.) If John erred, how great a prophet must he be who could be relied upon to correct him?

Our Lord sent his disciples throughout Palestine to seek "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and he went also himself to "all the cities of Israel," and when commending the faith of the Gentile centurion, he said, "I have not found so great faith, – no, not in *Israel*." And, addressing Nicodemus, he called him "a ruler in *Israel*." Was our Lord mistaken? Had [R2085 : page 7] he missed the place in not going to the British isles? Or shall we not conclude that those who would pervert these plain testimonies of Scripture to support a *theory* are greatly mistaken? "Let God be true!"

APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY RESPECTING ISRAEL.

The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, preaching the gospel under the influence of the holy spirit, addressed himself to the Jews, saying, "Ye men of *Israel*," hear these words, – Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God *among you* by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the *midst of you*, as ye yourselves know: Him...ye [men of *Israel*] have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. ...Therefore, let *all the house of Israel* know that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye [men of *Israel*] have crucified, both Lord and Christ. – Acts 2:22,23,36.

John was with Peter at the healing of the impotent man, a few days after the above discourse, and therefore joined in the statement, – "Ye men of *Israel*, why marvel ye at this?" (Acts 3:12.) The same two were together preaching a few days later, when they were arrested and agreed in the testimony of Peter recorded in Acts 4:8,10: "Peter, filled with the holy spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and *elders of Israel*, ...be it known unto you and unto *all the people of Israel*," etc. Evidently these Apostles knew nothing about any "lost ten tribes" nor of any other people than the Jews entitled to the name *Israel*. Further

along, verse 27, a prophecy which specifies *Israel* is quoted as fulfilled by the Jews, in the crucifixion of Christ; and proves to whom the name Israel belongs in prophecy.

All the Apostles were together when "*all the senate* of the *children of Israel*" convened, and Gamaliel, a leading doctor of the law (of whose pupils Saul of Tarsus was one), a man noted among the people for his learning, showed that if Israel were lost he did not know of it, for he said to all the senate of the children of Israel, not, Ye men of Judah, but, "Ye men of *Israel*," etc. – Acts 5:21,35.

The Apostle Paul, one of the learned men of his day, and one of the most exact and logical men of any day, did not know of it if the ten tribes were "lost," and surely thought quite the contrary, as is proved by the following statements of his respecting *Israel*: –

He went to Antioch in Pisidia – among the Gentiles – and had no trouble in finding the "dispersed" *Israelites*, "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," and their synagogue; and getting opportunity to speak to the people (being recognized by the ruler of the synagogue as a man of education) he said, "Men of *Israel*, and ye [Gentiles] that fear God, give audience: The God of *this people of Israel* chose our fathers;...God according to his promise raised unto *Israel* a Savior, Jesus, when John [the Baptist] had first preached before his coming [manifestation] the baptism of repentance *to all the people of Israel*." (Acts 13:16,17,23,24.) In verses 43,45 and 50 these "men of Israel" are called by the common name by which all Israelites are known to-day; namely, Jews. And it is worthy of note that, while a small band of Jews recently returned to Palestine claim to be of the tribe of Dan and another band claiming to be of the tribe of Gad, yet, as a rule, the Jews to-day do not know from which of the twelve tribes they sprang – so completely have the twelve tribes amalgamated into one nation.

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after several years' absence among Gentiles, and especially among the people of Israel *scattered*

abroad and dwelling everywhere among the Gentiles as to-day, he went into the temple and was recognized; and a tumult was raised by a man crying out, – "Men of *Israel*, help!" etc. (Acts 21:28.) That Jew evidently thought the same as all the rest, that Israel was again a united nation, and that all Jews were now, as before the rebellion, – "men of Israel."

When Paul pleaded his cause before King Agrippa, he said, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee,... especially *because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews.*" When therefore he said, "Our *twelve tribes* instantly serving God, day and night, hope to come" to the promises which God made to our fathers, it proves conclusively that neither the Jewish scholar and lawyer, Paul, nor the well-informed Roman governor, had any knowledge of the ten tribes being longer separated from the two tribes; nor did they know that the ten tribes were "lost;" nor did they in any manner or degree recognize the then heathen savages of the British isles as any part of the twelve tribes; for of the latter he expressly says, that they were *serving God* and *hoping in the promise* made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Acts 26:2,3,7.) The Epistle to the *Hebrews* was written to those same "twelve tribes instantly serving God" and hoping; especially such as were Israelites indeed and had accepted Christ: it is applicable therefore also to all those who from among the Gentiles have been grafted into the promises of God to Abraham, by *union* with Christ, the true, faithful "Seed." Similarly, the Epistle of James was addressed to the "*twelve* tribes scattered abroad." – James 1:1,2.

In his epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul has much to say about *Israel* having rejected Christ and thus having brought blindness upon herself, unquestionably referring to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ by [R2085 : page 8] the Jews, "*all Israel.*" He points out that so it was foretold by the prophets, and thus shows that the prophets are in accord with *this fulfilment*; and that they, when speaking of Israel, have no reference to our savage forefathers who, when found by "Saint

Patrick" and "Saint Augustine," were totally devoid of knowledge of Jehovah, and of Moses and the Law, and of David, and of Solomon, and of the prophets, and of all expectation of a Messiah. Such total ignorance and forgetfulness are not supposable in any people, even in longer period; – much less in Israelites who never lose their respect for Abraham and circumcision, nor for Moses and the Law – even when they become "Free-thinkers."

The Apostle then proceeds to show that it is the *same Israel* that *was blinded* because of rejecting Christ that is to be saved from that blindness at the second coming of Christ. (Compare Rom. 9:27,31-33; 10:1-3; 11:2,7,15,24-28.) Is it supposable that if there were *another* Israel recognized by the holy spirit and [R2086 : page 8] the Apostle they would have been ignored in the comprehensive statement of the entire plan of God from first to last, given in this wonderful and logical Epistle to the Romans? It is not supposable!

Furthermore, the Israelite according to the flesh who would lay claim to anything under God's Covenant with Abraham must indicate his adherence to that Covenant by observing the ordinance of circumcision. If, therefore, it could be proved that the Anglo-Saxon people have any Israelitish blood in their veins (and we deny that this has been proved), we may know that from the time they failed to perform the Israelitish ordinance of circumcision, that long they have been *cut off* from all share in the promises made to Israel. The law on this subject is found in Genesis 17:14 and is very explicit. It says: "The uncircumcised man child... shall be *cut off* from his people [from Israel – shall no longer be an inheritor of the promises made to Israel; for in neglecting thus to indicate his fealty to the covenant] HE HATH BROKEN MY COVENANT."

So then, if it could be proved that the Anglo-Saxons are descendants of Abraham (which we deny), it would avail nothing for them; for, having been uncircumcised for two thousand years, or as far back as their history extends, the *covenant of God would be broken*,

so far as they were concerned, and they could inherit nothing under it. Neglect of circumcision by an Israelite constituted him an alien, a foreigner to the covenant of promise, – a Gentile.

Our conclusion, therefore, respecting the blessing upon the Anglo-Saxon people is that, whoever their fathers may have been, they have no hope for any divine favor or blessing as Israelites according to the flesh; for such they are not. Their blessing has resulted from the fact that some of them became members of the body of Christ – the higher, the spiritual Israel; and that a larger number have been blessed through the influence of these, and become members of "the household of faith"; and that in general the light of the gospel, and the spirit of liberty which it always induces, has been shed abroad abundantly upon that people – bringing with it great responsibilities, as well as great blessings.

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL.

Freed from some false conceptions on the subject, we come now to our correspondent's principal question – "Is there a spiritual Israel which has taken the place of natural Israel? And, if so, Why cannot I find frequent references to her in the Scriptures?"

We answer, There is a spiritual Israel, but she has *not taken the place* of the fleshly Israel: her hopes are spiritual, not earthly; they are built upon heavenly or spiritual promises, not upon earthly promises: they are therefore called by the inspired writers "better promises." Nor does spiritual Israel *desire* to take the place of fleshly Israel: rather, she rejoices that, although fleshly Israel for the past eighteen centuries and more has been treated as *enemies* of God and blinded, for spiritual Israel's sake, yet the time is coming when she (fleshly Israel) shall obtain mercy through spiritual Israel's mercy and inherit the chief earthly blessing as the natural Seed of Abraham, when spiritual Israel, with Christ Jesus her Lord, shall have been exalted to heavenly glory. – Rom. 11:25-30.

Some who see that Christ and his Church, "his body" or "bride," constitute the real Seed of promise (Gal. 3:16,29) are blinded to the fact that there is also an earthly "seed" which through Christ shall inherit earthly good things of divine favor, and be used also in blessing all the families of the earth; – as earthly representatives of the spiritual (Seed) Israel. During this Gospel age the "elect" Church is constituted the Seed by being *joined to Christ Jesus* as his bride or joint-heir. During the next age fleshly Israel will be favored with the opportunity to be the *first-born of the children* of Christ – who, as "the man Christ Jesus," gave his human *life* for them and for all of Adam's race; and will give the human life, thus purchased, to all who will receive it (by restitution) on the terms of the New Covenant; – "to the Jew first."

There is the best of reason, therefore, for the holy spirit by the apostles not wholly appropriating the name Israel to spiritual Israel: it will be wanted later on by the natural seed. We do, however, find just what we should expect with a proper view before our minds; namely, the suggestion that the Gospel Church is the higher Israel, the spiritual, which gets blessings which [R2086 : page 9] natural Israel never possessed, but which she was given the first opportunity to possess, and failed to obtain through unbelief and lack of consecration. – See Rom. 11:7; 9:31,32.

For instance, the Apostle (1 Cor. 10:18) mentions the customs of the Jews, and calls them "Israel after the flesh," which implies a spiritual Israel, or Israel after the spirit; especially when he draws a comparison, as here, between *their* customs and *our* higher, more spiritual customs and arrangements. Again (2 Cor. 3:7,13-18) he refers to Israel's Law Covenant and Israel's mediator, Moses, and the vail he put on to hide the glory, and shows that those who are only *fleshly* Israel are still hindered from seeing anything more than the *vail*, the *outward*, the *ceremonial*, while we (spiritual Israel) may see with open face the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same glory as his joint-heirs. "Nevertheless," the Apostle declares, "when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" from the eyes of

Israel after the flesh; – after spiritual Israel has been selected and changed to the Lord's glory. Again (Gal. 6:16) the Apostle evidently refers to spiritual Israel, when he speaks of "the Israel of God." Again (Eph. 2:12,13), writing to the Church concerning the time when they were Gentiles, he says: "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers;... but now...ye...are made nigh by the blood of Christ." This means that by God's grace the middle wall of partition has been broken down, and that the new creatures in Christ are made sharers of those spiritual blessings and opportunities first offered to fleshly Israel. Indeed, that we get the choicest portion of blessing proffered to fleshly Israel is clearly stated by the same writer. (Rom. 11:17-24.) He describes our relationship to the promises under the illustration of an olive tree whose natural branches have been broken off, and into which wild-olive branches have been grafted, and whose natural branches may yet later be reengrafted. The Gospel Church, as the engrafted branches, are partaking of all the fat and richness of the root – the Abrahamic promise. Evidently, then, these engrafted branches constitute spiritual Israel.

Besides, have we not on a higher or spiritual plane all that Israel after the flesh ever had? They came under a Covenant with God – the Law Covenant sealed with the blood of bulls and goats: we come into covenant relationship to God under the New Covenant sealed with the precious blood of Christ. They had a mediator between God and them – Moses: we have a better "mediator between God and men – the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all." They had typical sacrifices for sins: we have the "better sacrifices" – the real, efficacious sin-offering. They had a priesthood under a high priest, and holy places made with hands, with their vails, candlestick, table of shew bread and a golden altar and incense and a mercy seat: we have the realities therein typified; for the fullness is of Christ (head and body), the antitypical "Israel of God," the "Royal priesthood," the promised seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We might multiply such proofs which

clearly identify the true Church as the higher or spiritual Israel, but more is unnecessary. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear!
