

Is America in End-Time Bible Prophecy?



What Scripture Prophecies Will Happen to America Economically, Politically, Militarily and Spiritually Just Prior to the Second Coming

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“The Bible teaches us that to understand where you’re going, you must first understand who you are and where you’ve come from, and that the key to gaining your spiritual inheritance is in understanding your spiritual heritage.”

LIKE CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN, venturing onto new prophetic ground is not without its perils. When climbing a mountain, you may get injured, die in the attempt or otherwise fail to summit, or you may achieve your goal to stand victoriously atop the peak. If such ventures are not risked, then how are new heights and depths in human achievement to occur? How is any body of knowledge to be advanced be it in fields of exploration, science, technology, understanding, spiritual understanding or biblical prophecy if risks aren’t taken by the few who boldly go where others perhaps have never gone?

There are those few who feel it is their destiny to venture beyond the comfort zones and paradigms of conventional and acceptable knowledge in an effort to move human understanding forward. The line between success and failure when pursuing such endeavors is often razor thin. Some fail because they are dead wrong in what they are proposing. Others fail, however, *not* because the revolutionary ideas they propose are incorrect, but because the world is not yet ready to receive what they have to give. We pray that neither be the case with what we propose below.

Attempting to identify America in the ancient prophecies of the Bible is a risky venture. If the prophetic teacher is proven to be wrong in his assertions, then his entire ministry may be discredited. If he is proven to be correct, then he may well be regarded as an especially gifted and insightful Bible expositor.

With these things in mind, we step forward, by YHVH’s grace onto the almost virgin ground of attempting to identify America in Bible prophecy in light of the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith. There is much to be learned in this area. The author claims no monopoly on this knowledge. Where he is shown to be incorrect, he will make the necessary corrections. Until then, what we have learned to date we humbly submit to the careful and prayerful scrutiny of the biblically-minded Berean-like student. At this point, we are reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:20–21, “Despise not prophesying [inspired teachings from biblical teachers]. Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.”

A Summary of What We Will Discover

In this study, we will discover the following from the pages of your Bible:

- ☞ We will identify who the descendants of Ephraim became and what amazing things biblical prophecies declared would happen to this people-group in the end times.
- ☞ Because of spiritual apostasy, the descendants of Ephraim were scattered to the four corners of the earth with a large number of them ending up in North America.

- ✎ The prophecies of the Bible describe America geographically, politically and historically.
- ✎ The Bible describes America's political, economic and military greatness.
- ✎ America's arch-enemies in the end times will be the Islamo-Facists nations and their communist allies; Elohim will use America's enemies to bring it to its knees spiritually.
- ✎ America's fall from greatness is a necessity for its repentance and spiritual revival. That revival will occur just prior to the second coming of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.
- ✎ America and the nation of Israel will have a special brotherly relationship and together they will defeat their mutual enemies.
- ✎ America's and Israel's victory will result in helping to prepare the way for the return of Yeshua the Messiah, the return of the lost ten tribes of Israel to the Promised Land as prophesied in the Bible, and the unification of Jews and Christians under the kingship of Yeshua.

Who Is End-Time Ephraim in Biblical Prophecy?

Before exploring the concept of America in Bible prophecy, we must go back in time in order to help us to understand the future. The Bible is the foundation of *all* spiritual truth. With this in mind, let's first go backward in history so that we can take a giant and quantum leap forward in our prophetic understandings. So let's now go *back to the future!*¹

Jacob's Prophecy Over Ephraim and Manasseh

While prophesying over Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob crossed his hands over their heads making the symbol of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav* ✎ (like our letter *t* or *x* in our English alphabet), which resembles a cross and in that ancient Hebraic script and pictographically means "sign of the covenant."¹ Jacob then spoke of the Heavenly Messenger (the Hebrew word *malak* mistranslated as "angel" in most Bibles) of YHVH (i.e., the preincarnate Yeshua) who had redeemed him from *all* evil (see Gen 31:11-13). Jacob then prophesied that the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh would become like "fish in the midst of the land" (literal translation of Gen 48:14-16; see *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Tanach*).

In light of this prophetic symbolism, which religious group on earth today would qualify as having fulfilled Jacob's prophecy as to who the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh are today? Which religion on earth today uses the fish as their symbol, speaks of a Messenger from YHVH as their Redeemer, and has the sign of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav*, which looks like a cross? The Buddhists? The Moslems? The Hindus? Even the Jews? No! Only Christianity fits this enigmatic criteria. Many Christians are without a doubt the literal descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. Those who are not, according to the Apostle Paul, once they come to saving faith in Yeshua in some unique sense become the descendants of Abraham (e.g., Gal 3:7,29). Many of these unsaved descendants of Abraham will recognize Yeshua their Messiah on the day that he returns to Jerusalem (e.g., Zech 12:10).

Which nation on earth is without a doubt still the greatest Christian nation? It is the United States of America. Having an understanding of how Jacob's prophecy to Ephraim and Manasseh was fulfilled is the first piece of the puzzle in identifying America in Bible prophecy.

Yeshua Came for What Group of People?

To whom did Yeshua come with the message of the gospel? To what people group did he proclaim the message of "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 4:17)?

But he answered and said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." (Matt 15:24)

In this passage, Yeshua said that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt 10:6)

Here, Yeshua instructs his disciples to carry on his mission of taking the message of the gospel to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Who are these lost sheep?

Yeshua came to regather to himself the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The prophets of the Bible said that because of sin and rebellion against YHVH and his Word, they would be scattered to the far corners of the earth, but

¹ Hebrew Word Pictures by Dr. Frank Seekins; Living Word Pictures Inc., Phoenix, AZ, 2003, p. 11.

that in the last days, YHVH would regather them. Eventually, at the coming of the Messiah in the end times, they would make their way back to the land of Israel where Messiah would rule over them.

The lost sheep of the House of Israel not only included the Jews, descended from the Southern Kingdom of Israel, which was comprised principally of the tribe of Judah, but also of those of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel, as well, who comprised the ten northern tribes of Israel. Regathering ALL twelve tribes of Israel was Yeshua's intention based on his last instructions to his disciples just before his ascension in Acts 1:8. There he commands them to take the gospel not only to the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea, but to the mixed raced peoples of Samaria, and eventually to all of YHVH's people who would be scattered to "the uttermost part of the earth."

Keep this point in mind. This is yet another piece of the puzzle in identifying America in Bible prophecy.

Paul Identifies Israel

The Apostle Paul also gives us some more pieces of the puzzle as to the identity of end-time Israel. Follow with us as we present more road signs that will help us to identify America in Bible prophecy.

- In Romans 4:16, Speaking to both Jewish and non-Jewish believers in the church of Rome, Paul states that Abraham is "the father of us all."
- Paul in Galatians 3:7–9 speaking to the believers in Greece says that those who have faith in YHVH are the children of Abraham, and this includes the heathen to whom the gospel is preached in all nations (see verse 8).
- Paul says in Galatians 3:14 that as children of Abraham, the believing Gentiles are entitled to all the blessings YHVH promised to Abraham's descendants.
- In Galatians 3:28–29, Paul states that in YHVH's view with regard to his plan of salvation, there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Yeshua the Messiah. If one is a redeemed believer in Yeshua, then one is the seed (or literally, *sperm*) or offspring of Abraham and heirs to all of the promises YHVH made to him and his descendants.
- Paul clearly states in Ephesians 2:11–19 that the saints were *in the past* a part of the people-group the Bible calls the peoples of the nations (or *Gentiles*) and as such were at that time without Elohim (God) and (spiritual) hope. As such, they were *not* a part of the nation of Israel, and were *outside* of the covenants of promises YHVH had made to Israel, but now, thanks to the redemptive work of Yeshua the Messiah, these people of the nations are no longer considered to be Gentiles, but are actual Israelites through their faith in Yeshua, and have become one people along with spiritually redeemed Jews. This people group is now called "the one new man."

Believers in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, are the seed of Abraham, or what we might call "redeemed Israel" regardless of their specific ethnic origin. Period. Our understanding of Paul's passages in this light is confirmed by the Apostle John writes concerning the New Jerusalem. It is a fact that in the New Jerusalem there are only twelve gates named after—you guessed it—the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev 22:12)! It may come as a shock to some, but there is no "Gentile Gate"! Gentiles are not permitted into the New Jerusalem—only Israelites. So if you call yourself a redeemed believer in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah of Israel, we ask you the following question: Through which gate will you enter the New Jerusalem, or stated another way, to which tribe of Israel do you belong?

Paul Connects the Gentiles Believers in Yeshua to the Prophecies of Hosea

More clues as to the identity of America in Bible prophecy can be found in the Epistle to the Romans chapter nine. Here Paul, again writing to both the Jewish *and* non-Jewish believers in Rome, makes the point that in YHVH's spiritual economy the way things seem that they should be are not always the way they actually are. For example, in the Bible, often the first born children did not obtain the first born's inheritance (e.g., Ishmael, Esau and Reuben), and that YHVH in his sovereign power can accomplish his purposes however and with whomever he chooses (e.g., Pharaoh, see Rom 9:17–18); he can spiritually call anyone he chooses.

Paul then goes on to make the point that YHVH has not only called some Jewish people to be partakers of his spiritual glory, but also Gentiles (Rom 9:23–24). Paul then equates these Gentiles or non-Jewish believers in Rome to the very same people to whom Hosea had prophesied in Hosea 2:23. How is this possible? Was the brilliant and learned Paul ignorant of the fact that Hosea prophesied to the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who were later taken captive to Assyria and become known in biblical and Jewish rabbinic terminology

as “the lost sheep of the House of Israel?” Didn’t he know that these “lost Israelites” from the Northern Kingdom had been lost to history, as many today claim? Or had they? In Paul’s mind if they *had not* become lost to history how could he think of equating first-century Gentile believers in Yeshua with the supposed lost tribes of Israel? Yet he does. In Romans 9:27–29, Paul stresses that the Gentiles believers of Rome, Italy were actually “lost Israelites” returning to YHVH. As biblical proof for his assertion, Paul then references the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah (Isa 10:22–23) which, was also directed specifically to the lost and scattered Israelites or northern kingdom of Israel. This indicates that, at least in Paul’s mind, the Gentiles’ coming to faith in Yeshua was a fulfillment of these prophecies in these Old Testament prophetic writings regarding the Northern Kingdom, or lost sheep of the House of Israel.

With what Paul writes in Romans nine coupled with what he wrote in Romans four, Galatians three and Ephesians two along with what Yeshua stated in Matthew 10 and 15, the conclusion is inescapable that Yeshua and his disciples viewed that their mission was to not only preach the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel, but that those Gentiles who responded to the gospel message and would come to faith in Yeshua the Messiah *were* Israelites. Many of these Gentiles *were* actual Israelites whose ancestors in times past had forgotten their Israelite identity and had mixed with the Gentile nations, become Gentiles, but were now repenting of their backslidden condition and were returning to the Elohim of Israel whom their fathers had forsaken so many generations earlier.

Who the Jewish Rabbis Say End-Time Ephraim Is

Now let’s examine another piece of the puzzle in helping us to determine if America is in Bible prophecy. What do the Jewish rabbis have to say? What we are trying to do here is to identify some biblical people-groups to ascertain whether their descendants would be on earth in the last days. To accomplish this feat, we must bridge a gap spanning several thousand years of history and link some ancient biblical prophecies with end-time realities. Stay with us, and hopefully a picture will begin to emerge that will bring to life some deep prophetic truths of Scripture that have remained hidden until the time of the very end.

In *The ArtScroll Bereishis Genesis Commentary*, in its commentary on Genesis 48:19 regarding the House of Ephraim² (the Northern Kingdom of Israel—the northern ten tribes of Israel), we read:

“R[abbi] Munk explains: ‘while it is true that the dispersion [of the descendants of Ephraim³ and Manasseh] was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim’s descendants (Hos 7:8ff), Jacob’s blessing was not in vain for “they will return⁴ to [Elohim]” and will have their share in the world to come ([*Talmud*] *Sanhedrin* 110b).’ And R. Eliezer adds: ‘Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day’ (according to the version of *Avos d’Rabbi Nosson* 36). And in the perspective of history, did not these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of [Elohim], ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah, the Mashiach ben Yosef, Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah* 52a), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity’s redemption, for he will be the precursor of the Mashiach ben David, Messiah Son of David. It is therefore not surprising to find that the prophet Jeremiah (3:12) speaks affectionately of Ephraim. In this light, Jacob’s words, *his offspring will fill the nations* nation,’ assume the significance of a blessing.”⁵

Can there be any doubt as to which modern religious group the rabbis are equating with the descendants of

² *House of Ephraim*: This phrase is used once in Scripture (Jud 10:9) where it specifically refers to this one tribe. Elsewhere the prophets often use the term *Ephraim* (q.v.) to denote the Northern Kingdom.

³ *Ephraim*: This name is used 180 times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and is referring to this specific Israelite tribe or is used as a metaphor for the Northern Kingdom of which the tribe of Ephraim was the leading and largest tribe (Isa 7:9, 17; 9:9; 11:13; Ezek 37:19; Hos 4:17; 5:12,13,14; 6:4; 7:1; 10:11; Zech 9:13).

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

⁵ *ArtScroll Series Bereishis/Genesis*, vol. 1(b), pp. 2121–2122.

Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh and the other tribes of Israel? Are the Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems or even the religious Jews preaching the message of the Isaiah 53 Messiah—the Suffering Servant? Are they instrumental in bringing humanity a message of redemption and of even teaching the fundamental principles of loving Elohim—the God of the Bible? Are any of these religious groups preparing their followers for the second coming of the Messiah? Again, the answer is obvious. Only Christianity has been doing these things. It is simply a process of elimination. Those religious groups who are not doing these things cannot qualify as the lost ten tribes of Israel by the rabbinical Jewish sages’ own criteria. This is the next piece in this exciting puzzle! As when putting together a real puzzle, little-by-little, mosaics and small pictures begin to slowly form until the puzzle’s whole picture comes into view.

Who Is End-Time Judah According to the Rabbis?

We have identified who the lost sheep of the house of Israel are. The Jewish rabbis equate them with the Northern Kingdom of Israel. But to be sure that we are not talking about the Jews (the tribe of Judah) here, let’s allow the same Jewish rabbis to tell us who the modern Jews are.

On the phrase in the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men....” (Deut 32:26, KJV) *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* states,

This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.”⁶

The modern-day Jews are descended from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who were part of the Southern Kingdom of Israel. There was the Northern Kingdom with the ten northern tribes that went into captivity and became known as the ten lost tribes of Israel. And then there was the Southern Kingdom comprised of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and part Levi from which the modern Jews trace their lineage.

Because of Sin, Israel Was to Be Scattered and to Return to YHVH

Let’s now quickly review some history in Israel’s past that will help us to identify who Israel in the future is.

YHVH made a national marital covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai when he gave them the Ten Commandments. That covenantal agreement was ratified in Exodus 24 when Israel said “I do” to all of its terms and conditions (Exod 19:8; 24:3,7). YHVH promised to bless Israel in every way if they stayed faithful to his Torah. If not, they would suffer many curses with the end result being their overthrow and captivity. As a result of their captivity, they would end up being scattered to the four corners of the earth where eventually they would repent of their sinful ways and return to him. As this prophesied scenario was transpiring and as each step was coming to pass, YHVH sent prophets to warn Israel and to urge them to repent and to turn back to him. Numerous Scriptures from many biblical prophets could be referenced here, but in Deuteronomy 4:27–31 we find an overall summary of this scenario of events.

And YHVH shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither YHVH shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But if from thence thou shalt seek YHVH thy Elohim, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to YHVH thy Elohim, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For YHVH thy Elohim is a merciful Elohim;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

Scripture reveals that Israel is to return to YHVH in the last days from the nations where she has been scattered, but *not* without much difficulty and tribulation. Israel will return *after* YHVH’s judgment has come upon her, and then upon the nations who have held her captive. This event (or series of events) will be a repeat of how YHVH redeemed Israel out of Egypt where she was held captive thirty five hundred years ago. At that time, Israel was judged (it appears that Israel suffered in the first three plagues on Egypt, but after that, only the Egyptians suffered, see Exod 8:22 and 9:4), then Egypt was judged and destroyed by the mighty arm of YHVH, and the Israelites were set free. This time, Israel is in Babylon—greater spiritual Babylon—where she has been held spiritually

⁶ *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 1107 commentary notes.

captive. Now YHVH, in these end times, is pleading with his people to leave spiritual Babylon before his plagues of judgment begin to fall upon Babylon the Great (Rev 18:4).

Scripture likens the return of Ephraim (who has mixed itself with the Gentile nations of the world) to the Promised Land to a second or greater exodus than the first exodus out of Egypt. In Isaiah 11:10–12 we read,

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that YHVH shall set his hand again **the second time** to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (emphasis added)

The process by which Israel will come out of Babylon and return to the Promised Land is called “Jacob’s trouble” since it is a replay of the events surrounding Jacob’s leaving Laban (in Babylon) and returning to the land of Israel in Genesis 32. We will discuss and define Jacob’s Trouble further below.

Israel Is to Be Regathered to the Promised Land in the Last Days

In the Last Days Scattered Israel Is to Return from All Directions

Because of sin and rebellion against YHVH’s (Torah) commandments and covenant, Israel went into captivity some 2700 years ago. If the prophecies of the Bible are true, and we believe they are, then Israel is to return to YHVH and to the land of its inheritance in the last days. During their 2700 years of rebellion, they have been scattered to the four corners of the earth as the Bible prophesied they would, but in the end times, they will be regathered from those four corners as well. We see that ...

- the exiles of Ephraim are to return from the west (Hos 11:9–10),
- the exiles of Ephraim are to return from the north (Jer 3:18; 16:14–15; 31:8–10),
- the exiles of Ephraim are to return from the isles of the sea (Jer 31:9–10; Isa 24:15; 42:4; 51:4–5),
- Israel is to inherit the desolate heritages and far places (Isa 49:8; see also 49:6,12),
- Israel is to be scattered to the ends of the earth (Isa 41:5,9; 43:6; 45:22; 52:10; Jer 16:19; Acts 13:47).

Scattered Israel to Return from the Isles of the Sea by Way of the Ships of Tarshish

Little-by-little, we are beginning to put the various pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together in an effort to identify America in end-time biblical prophecy. Though Israel (both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms) was scattered to the four corners of the world and were not isolated to one country or geographical region alone, we find in Scripture some interesting clues about a single nation that was to be representative of the greater nation of Ephraim or the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As Scripture uses the single tribe of Ephraim as a symbolic metaphor for the entire ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the single tribe of Judah as a representative for the Southern Kingdom, so this one end-time nation being more powerful, larger in size and more populous (like the tribes Ephraim and Judah were in their day) has become a metaphor for *all* of Ephraim (and by extension, all the ten tribes in accordance with the biblical usage of the term).

Let’s now look at some prophetic Scripture passages that give us a clue as to the geographical location of that single nation.

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto you, “Are you come to take a spoil? Have you gathered your company to take a prey, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ezek 38:13)

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

First Kings 10:22 mentions the ships of Tarshish. These were likely a heavy ocean going cargo ship as well as the name of a city in the Western Mediterranean Sea area near modern Gibraltar (which lies between the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean). The Israelite fleet no doubt ventured from both its Mediterranean and Red Sea

ports, the former trading in Europe and the north and west coasts of Africa, the latter on the east coast of Africa over toward India.⁷ According to the late and eminent ancient language linguist and archeologist Prof. Cyrus Gordon in his book *Before Columbus—Links Between the Old World and Ancient America*, the distant land called “Tarshish” must have been located along the shores of the Atlantic, because it too could be reached via the Red Sea as well as via the Mediterranean. It yielded silver, iron, tin and lead.⁸ During the early part of the sixth century B.C., Tyrian fleets intrepidly sailed the seven seas bringing untold wealth from distant lands, including iron from the far-off Atlantic land called Tarshish (see Ezek 27, the entire chapter, especially noting verses 12 and 19).⁹

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

Israel Migrated to the New World?

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

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

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

America Identified in Biblical Prophecy?

We have thus far discussed who Ephraim is, that Ephraim or the Northern Kingdom of Israel, also called the

⁷ *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 1030 and *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, pp. 674-675.

⁸ *Before Columbus*, p. 113

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115

House of Israel, lost their inheritance in the Promised Land due to spiritual apostasy and was taken captive into the land of Assyria (the area of modern Syria and northern Iraq). From there, they migrated to many distant lands throughout the world, where, according to biblical prophecy, in the last times, they will return to the Promised Land in Israel from which they were exiled so long ago.

A Land Beyond Ethiopia

We have also briefly touched on some biblical passages and quoted some rabbinic writings that link these very same Israelites with the Christian peoples of the earth. Is it now possible to find the actual land of America, which is the largest and most notable Christian nation on earth today, in Bible prophecy? If so, can we determine that perhaps a disproportionate number of Ephraimites who had been scattered to the four corners of planet earth at some point in time somehow ended up in America? If so, perhaps America, because of its large number of Ephraimites, might be identified in some of the biblical prophecies that pertain to Ephraim. Let's now see if we can find some answers to these enigmatic questions. Let's first look at Isaiah 18:1-3.

Alas, oh land of whirring wings which lies beyond the rivers of Cush/Ethiopia, which sends envoys/ambassadors by the sea, even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters. Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth/to a people terrible from their beginning, to a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation/an aggressive nation of strange speech whose land the rivers divide. All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, as soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see it, and as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear it. (a compilation of the KJV, NAS and NIV)

In the chapter heading in some Christian Bibles, Isaiah chapter 18 is titled "Ethiopia." Is this an accurate chapter heading? Isaiah 18:1 refers to "the land ... which is beyond [on the other side of] the rivers of Ethiopia." The traditional view among many biblical commentators (both from Christian and Jewish sources) is that this prophecy is referring to the area of modern Ethiopia, which is just south of Egypt. It is believed that the river mentioned in this passage is the Nile with its tributaries, while the ships are a reference to boats that regularly ply those waters, and the whirring wings refer to either locusts or to tsetse flies, which are abundant in that region. These same commentators offer various views on how this prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in ancient times. In these commentaries, no explanation was given of the meaning of the word *sea* in verse two and how that relates to Ethiopia, or how Ethiopia was a nation that was feared far and wide (verse 2). Perhaps another interpretation could be offered that would better fit the descriptions of the land and its people given in this prophecy.

It would be presumptuous to base our entire premise that America is in Bible prophecy on this passage alone, but united with other similar passages that speak clearly of end-time Ephraim, perhaps Isaiah 18:1-3 should be considered in this context. This is all the more plausible when we consider the fact that the scholarly views that this prophecy pertains *only* to ancient Ethiopia are from before the twentieth century when America was not yet a world power, and airplanes were yet to be invented. Also consider the fact that as rabbinic Jewish scholars do not know *who* end-time Ephraim is, so Christian scholars do not know *who* Ephraim is either. Neither group relates Ephraim to "Gentile" Christianity.

Now with some of these things in mind, let us take another look at Isaiah 18:1-3 and see how several well-known Bible translations render these passages.

- **Verse 1**, This verse literally refers to "a land buzzing/whirring with wings" beyond Cush (Ethiopia, Africa), or to "clamorous wings" (ASET), or to "whirring wings" (NAS). Could this be a reference to the modern airplane and the role of aircraft in end-times America? Which nation on earth has more aircraft than America? Where was the airplane invented? What nation is the world's leader in the aero-space industry and technology? Where can one not go in America without hearing aircraft overhead? What nation of people fly more than any other people?
- **Verse 2**, This country sends ambassadors by sea, is a nation which has been feared from its beginning, is feared far and wide (KJV and NAS), is a powerful and oppressive nation (NAS) whose land is full of rivers meaning there are many mountains and lakes, as well—it's a well-watered land, and it is a land where people speak a strange language. English is a very recently developed language! Additionally, America has been a mighty nation from its founding. It twice defeated the mighty British empire in the Revolutionary

War and the War of 1812. America is also a land of many large and small rivers flowing out of numerous mountain ranges.

Attracted to Things Eastern

In Hosea 12 we find that Ephraim would be drawn to the east, which means a large portion of scattered Ephraim must be found west of the land of Israel.

Ephraim feeds on wind, and pursues the east wind continually; he multiplies lies and violence. Moreover, he makes a covenant with Assyria, And oil is carried to Egypt. (Hos 12:1, NAS)

For thou hast abandoned Thy people, the house of Jacob, because they are **filled with influences from the east**, and they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike bargains with the children of foreigners. (Isa 2:6, NAS, emphasis added)

What does it mean that Ephraim feeds on winds from the east? Ephraim was attracted to eastern religions in ancient times (see also Isa 2:6; Ezek 8:16). In modern times, with the decline of the Christian church's influence on our society, Americans have been drawn increasingly to eastern religions and New Age spirituality. More and more, in America, one is anathema if one is a "born-again" Bible believer. Conversely, many pagan religions such as Islam and eastern religions are becoming increasingly accepted, promoted and honored.

Furthermore, Hosea 12:1 states that Ephraim will make covenants (treaties and alliances) with the Assyrians (modern day Syria and Iraq). America invaded and took over the nation of Iraq (part of the ancient nation of Assyria) and has formed alliances with that nation for the purpose of achieving world peace. Additionally, American political leaders view modern Syria as a key player in establishing peace in the Middle East. Because of this, some of our congressional leaders (including the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives) have recently visited the president of Syria and have returned praising him. Some of America's religious leaders have a special relationship with Syria's political and spiritual leaders, as well (e.g., Rick Warren, Robert Schuller, the late Pope John-Paul II).

In the same passage, Hosea mentions that somehow Ephraim's (America's?) oil interests and those of Egypt would be tied together. It is a common belief among many more skeptical Americans that this nation's military interventionism in the Middle East is somehow tied to our oil interests.

Ephraim's Economic Greatness

Scripture refers to Ephraim as being a merchant nation in whose hands are false balances. As a wealthy nation, it thrives on oppressing others financially. And finally Ephraim brags, "Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they will find in me no iniquity, which would be sin" (Hos 12:7-8, NAS). It is a fact that America and England control much of the world's banking system and economic policies. America consumes 25 percent of the world's oil, is 25 percent of the world's economy, and is the world's only remaining superpower.

Ephraim's Support of Israel (Judah)

The prophet Jeremiah gives us some additional clues as to whom modern Ephraim might be. In Jeremiah three we read that Ephraim and Judah, though at odds with each other, they would eventually begin to work together again as brothers.

In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance. (Jer 3:18, NAS)

Verse 18 is a description of a rapprochement that is to occur between Ephraim and Judah. This is occurring now between American evangelical Christians and Jews. In the past, Jews and Christians have been at odds with each other. Over the centuries, Christians have been the principal persecutors of the Jews. Only recently has this been changing. This is an end-time prophecy being fulfilled, and it mostly involves evangelical Christians in America reaching out to the Jews. Christian groups such as Christian Friends of Israel, Christians United for Israel, Bridges for Peace, the Christian Coalition and the National Association of Evangelicals and numerous other Christian groups along with Christian leaders such as Jack Hayford, or the late Jerry Falwell, John Hagee and Pat Robertson are activist leaders in their pro-Israel/Jewish positions. No other nation on earth supports Israel or is a closer ally than America. No other religious group on earth is more pro-Israel than American evangelical Christianity.

Next let's look at Isaiah 11:11-14, which expands on the idea of Ephraim and Judah drawing together in the last days.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that YHVH shall set his hand again the *second time* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up a standard for the nations, And will assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Then the jealousy of Ephraim will depart, and those who harass Judah will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, and Judah will not harass Ephraim. And they will swoop down on the slopes of the Philistines on the west; together they will plunder the sons of the east; they will possess Edom and Moab; and the sons of Ammon will be subject to them. (emphasis added)

Here we see that Judah and Ephraim (a) will become outcasts and dispersed throughout the world, (b) will be supernaturally regathered from the nations of the world in what may be called a *second* or *greater Exodus*, (c) that they will envy and vex each other, and (d) that they will reconcile, and (e) will unite to defeat their common enemies: the Philistines (or Palestinians) who are a part of greater Edom—Israel’s perpetual foe and antagonist.

What Is Jacob’s Trouble?

This is a phrase that has been bandied around by both Christian and Jewish prophecy teachers, yet few have taken the time to explain it in its historical biblical context. Allow us to shed some light on the subject that will help us to understand America in Bible prophecy.

The phrase “Jacob’s trouble” is found in Jeremiah 30:7. For context, we will cite verses two through nine. This is an end-time prophecy pertaining to both Ephraim and Judah.

2 Thus speaks YHVH Elohim of Israel, saying, “Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come,” says YHVH, “that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah,” saith YHVH, “and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.” 4 And these are the words that YHVH spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus says YHVH, “We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask you now, and see whether a man does travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of **Jacob’s trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day,” says YHVH of Hosts, “that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. 9 But they shall serve YHVH their Elohim, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” (emphasis added)

Now let’s analyze this passage verse-by-verse for more clues as to ascertain whether America is referred to in this biblical prophecy.

- **Verse 3**, This is a future prophecy concerning Israel and Judah involving their returning to the land YHVH gave their fathers.
- **Verse 5**, This period of time is a time of trembling and fear and of dread and terror (terrorism?), and not of peace (shalom).
- **Verse 6**, It is likened to a woman’s birth pains.
- **Verse 7**, It is a time of Jacob’s trouble (the Hebrew word for trouble means “straits, distress, tribulation, affliction, adversity”); YHVH will save Jacob “**out of it.**”
- **Verse 8**, YHVH of Hosts will break the yoke off from Israel’s neck.
- **Verse 9**, David will be resurrected and will be their king (this sets the time period to that of the Ezekiel 37 Valley of Dry Bones and the two sticks prophecies pertaining to Ephraim’s and Judah’s “resurrection” and reunification at the coming of Messiah when David will rule over the united kingdom!).
- **Verses 10–11, 17**, YHVH will bring the seed of Jacob (the outcasts, verse 17) back from afar from the land of their captivity and will judge the nations where he had scattered them.

The Source of Jacob’s Trouble: A Brief Commentary on Genesis 32

Genesis 32 is the story of Jacob’s return to Canaan after having been exiled from his homeland for 20 years. His

exile occurred after he obtained Esau's birthright through unscrupulous means resulting in his having to leave Canaan for fear of his life due to Esau's vengeance. Jacob found refuge in Babylon at his Uncle Laban's home where he married Laban's two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Genesis 32 recounts Jacob's encounter with Esau who, along with his small army, physically stood in Jacob's way from entering the land of his promised inheritance—later to be known as the Land of Israel or Promised Land.

The Jewish rabbis believe that this encounter between Jacob and Esau is prophetic in nature and will happen again in the end times, but this time on a much larger scale and this time involving the numerous descendants of Israel and Esau. The Israelites will be attempting to return to their ancestral homeland, while the descendants of Esau will be attempting to block their way. As we proceed in this study, we will see if this prophecy is coming to pass in our days.

Rolling the film backwards a little, Laban chased Jacob out of Babylon, and yet Jacob was being blocked from entering Canaan by Esau (or Edom meaning "red"). This is reminiscent of Pharaoh chasing the Israelites out of Egypt only to find themselves blocked by the Red Sea, which is a picture of Edom (meaning "red"). In both instances, YHVH's people were forced to totally rely on him for deliverance from their enemies who were before and behind them.

Chapter 32 is a study in how we often deal with major trials and stressful situations in life. Jacob (a) was gripped by fear, (b) resorted to fleshly schemes to appease his brother's wrath and "to save his own hide" and that of his family, and (c) at the same time he expressed faith in YHVH by uttering what some consider to be the first prayer in Scripture (verses 9–12). Jacob resorted to the "shotgun approach." He was afraid, he schemed, and he prayed in hopes that *something* would work out to his favor and that he would live to see another day.

Jacob figured that by bribing angry and bloodthirsty Esau with wave after wave of gifts, that he might appease Esau and assuage his brother's desire for revenge (Gen 32:13–20).

Yet Jacob's half-in-the-flesh and half-in-the-spirit approach to his present danger by resorting to both appeasement and prayer was not acceptable to YHVH who wanted in Jacob a man of unmitigated faith. To bring Jacob to this point, a part of Jacob had to die. His reliance upon his own ability at craftiness and scheming to extricate himself from difficult situations had to stay on the east side of the Jordan where Babylon was, and in its place a spiritual man who would totally trust YHVH in all things had to rise up. Only a mighty man of faith would be worthy to enter the Promised Land. The old man would not die without a fight, however.

Jacob had to come to grips with his own limitations and overcome the ugly side of his flesh nature. This occurred during a dark-night-of-the-soul-encounter when he wrestled all night with the Messenger of Elohim (Gen 32:22–32).

The result was that in the struggle Jacob became permanently lame in his hip (Gen 32:32). He became physically injured, but more importantly, he became humbled in his heart. Out of the wrestling match, he gained a new identity, a new heart and a new name. Jacob the "heel catcher" became Israel "the prince of El [God]." By wrestling and overcoming his own limitations he became a broken and changed man—truly a vessel that YHVH could use to further his purposes, since he was about to birth the nation of Israel through this man's seed.

Jacob's attempts at appeasing Esau gained him nothing except a lighter pocket book. His surrendering to the Messenger of Elohim—the preincarnate Yeshua—gained him not only the Promised Land and a nation, but the whole world and a place in YHVH's eternal kingdom.

Interestingly, in an attempt to save his hide, Jacob divided his family into two camps with the hopes that if Esau killed one, the other would survive and vice versa. This was another one of his schemes that did not work, but which has tremendous end-time prophetic implications. Genesis 32:2 records that Jacob called the name of the place where he split his family into two camps *Mahanaim*, which is a Hebrew word meaning "two camps" and is the plural of the root word *machanah* meaning "encampment, camp, camp of armed host, army camp, company, body of people." This spot is near the River Jabok, which is a tributary to the Jordan River located on the east side of that river in the modern country of Jordan. During the time of the nation of ancient Israel, it was located in the Gilead region on either the border between Gad and Reuben or Gad and Ephraim. The Song of Solomon makes reference to *mahanaim* in 6:13 where we read,

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you. What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were the company/*m'kolah* of two armies/*mahanah*.

The Hebrew word *m'kolah* means "dance." Song 6:13 is definitely related to Genesis 32:2 since *Mehanaim* in Genesis

and Machneh or “two armies” in the Song of Solomon are the same word; the former is the plural and the latter is the root word.

We believe that Genesis 32 is a prophetic shadow-picture of just *how* Jacob’s descendants will come back into the land of their inheritance prior to Yeshua’s return. The people of Israel will be divided into two camps as they enter the land of Israel and will have to confront Esau or Edom—many of whose descendants comprise the modern Palestinian-Arabs who will be blocking the way. Both camps (Judah and Ephraim, currently represented by the Jewish and Christians peoples) are returning out of spiritual Babylon (as per Rev 18:4) where they have been in servitude to the Babylonish world system even as Jacob was a servant to Laban (who lived in the area of ancient Babylon). They will not defeat Esau through appeasement (Gen 32:20) as Jacob tried to do with Esau. Appeasement got Jacob nowhere except monetarily poorer, and the modern state of Israeli is dealing with the Palestinians as Jacob did with Esau by giving in to their demands in exchange for a peaceful existence in the land. Appeasement didn’t work for Jacob, and it’s not presently working for the Jews.

As our father Jacob did, so the end-time Israelites will have to wrestle with man and El (Gen 32:28) in order to return to the Promised Land. YHVH’s people will have to prevail with YHVH and demonstrate to him that they are serious about wanting to possess their promised inheritance, and at the same time, overcome themselves (the carnal man within) with their pride and self-reliance, and the notion that they will return to the land of Israel by their own strength and prowess apart from YHVH’s divine direction and empowerment.

When YHVH’s end-time people will repent of their pride and die to self as a people-group (both Judah and Ephraim), this will please the Father and he will give his people victory over their enemies. Appeasing the enemy, as the modern Israeli government is currently doing with the Palestinians, will get them nowhere, even as it gained Jacob nothing. They/we must confront the devil/enemy head-on in humble faith in the Abrahamic Covenant promises of YHVH. As with Jacob, they/we as collective Israel need to spend a dark night of the soul wrestling with YHVH. We need to get a good look at Elohim’s face to see who he really is, which will in turn help them/us to understand who they/we really are. Only when they/we are finally humbled, will we learn to place our trust in the promises and protection of YHVH resulting in our being transformed from being a *Jacob* (meaning “heel catcher, supplanter, a deceptive sneak thief”) into an *Israel* (meaning “a prince of El or prevailer with El”) with a new name and identity.

Similarly, Messianic Israel/Ephraim must go through the same process. The good news is that the kingdom of Israel will rise up. Jacob will get transformed into Israel. How can we be so sure of this? Because IT IS WRITTEN in YHVH’s Word! The two houses of Israel will have to learn to dance with each other before they can dance on their wedding day with King Shlomo (or Solomon, which is derived from the Hebrew word *shalom*)/Yeshua Sar Shalom (Prince of Peace)—their heavenly Bridegroom. Only then can we become the bride of Yeshua—like the Shulamite (also from *shalom*) was to Solomon—when we have found peace within ourselves and each other as the Song of Solomon (*shalom*) and Genesis 32 depict.

Jacob’s trouble was a phase through which the self-confident and self-reliant Jacob had to go. The humbling of Jacob was necessary, for he was a self-made man who had started 20 years earlier penniless, homeless and in disgrace as an exile in a foreign land, and through his own effort had now amassed a small fortune along with wives and children.

En route westward back to Canaan, Jacob went through a wilderness experience, as the children of his name-sake would do several generations later. What type of individuals does YHVH *not* permit and permit to enter into the Land of Promise? The answers are in Hebrews 4:1–11 where the writer speaks of doubt and unbelief, faithlessness, hardness of heart and not resting in YHVH, but reliance in the works of our flesh instead as factors keeping the Israelites out of the Promised Land. To come home, like the prodigal son in the parable of Yeshua, to the home of his earthly parents and to that of his Heavenly Father (*Beth-el* or *House of El*) what was required of Jacob? He had to manifest brokenness, humility, a new identity, repentance, and make restitution for past sins committed against others (Gen 34).

End-time Israel is following in their father Jacob’s footsteps leaving their exile and captivity in Babylon (false religious systems—both Christian and Jewish, which contain a mixture of both good and evil, see Rev 18:4), returning westward across the Jordan River into the land of Promise, to their spiritual inheritance, which is defined in terms of YHVH’s covenants with Israel (Eph 2:12–14). YHVH is calling out a growing remnant of redeemed believers to do just that in our time. Jacob’s life is a prophetic road map of what each individual believer must go through to obtain his spiritual inheritance. Furthermore, Jacob’s life is not only a prophetic picture of what all Israelites individually, and Israel *collectively* or *nationally*, must go through also.

The Descendants of Esau Are Ephraim and Judah's Arch-Enemy in the End Times

The Ancestry of Modern Arabs

Esau and his army stood in the way preventing Jacob from returning to his homeland. This event is prophetic of what will happen in the end times.

We have already identified who the sons of Jacob are, how they were divided into two camps, or two houses, and two kingdoms (the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Israel). But who are the descendants of Esau?

Many, if not most of the modern Moslems (especially the Arabs) trace their lineage back if not biologically then spiritually to Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar. Islam in its holy book, the Koran, claims that it was Abraham and Ishmael who built the Kaaba,¹⁰ which is the small building containing a stone that supposedly fell from heaven. This shrine is located in the midst of great mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

In Genesis 16:11-12 YHVH prophesied the following concerning Ishmael and his descendants:

The angel of YHVH said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because YHVH has given heed to your affliction. And he will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers."

The modern Moslems have twisted the biblical account of Abraham's giving the birthright blessing to Isaac and believe instead that Ishmael was the promised son of blessing. Both Israelites and Arabs, therefore, believe that they have a right to the Promised Land of Canaan, and, hence, this disagreement roots of the modern Arab-Israeli conflict.

Scripture further records that Esau, the disinherited son of Isaac, also had ought against his brother Jacob, who, in a sense, stole the birthright promise from him. Scripture also records that Esau married the daughter of Ishmael (Gen 28:9) thus combining two peoples in his descendants who had a jealous feud with the sons of Jacob or Israel.

The Bible has more to say prophetically about the descendants of Edom than about those of Ishmael. Edom is portrayed as an aggressive and bloodthirsty people who are opposed to Israel at every step. We will discover what Scripture has to say about this below.

In the mean time, let's take a closer look at Edom.

- Esau and Edom (meaning "red") are synonymous (see Gen 25:25,30; 36:1,8-9,19,43).
- Esau intermarried with the descendants of Ishmael (Gen 28:9).
- Seir is another name for the land of Edom (Gen 32:3; 33:16; 36:8).
- Esau intermarried with the people of Canaan (Gen 36:2). He intermarried with the Hittites, the Hivites, as well as the Ishmaelites.
- His descendants included the Amalekites (Gen 36:12,16) who fought against the Children of Israel upon leaving Egypt and as soon as they had entered the wilderness en route to the Promised Land (Exod 17:1).
- Esau's sons were dukes or chieftains (leaders of clans) and kings (Gen 36:15-16,40-43).
- Although Esau's direct lineage was confined to the area of the traditional land of Edom, it is clear from the biblical record that he and his descendants intermarried with many of the neighboring nations, so that his descendants were scattered far and wide over the region that later became known as the Holy Land.

The entire one-chapter Book of Obadiah is a prophecy against Edom. Let's note several key points in this prophecy that might help us to understand some things about Edom in light of end-time Bible prophecy. This will in turn help us to understand end-time world politics and give us a further clue in identifying America in prophecy. Let's analyze some key verses in Obadiah in light of end-time events.

- **Verse 2**, The descendants of Edom are greatly despised (scorned, held in contempt, disdained).
- **Verse 3**, Though they dwell in the clefts (places of concealment, retreats) of the rocks, they are proud and view themselves as invincible.

¹⁰ *The Koran*, Sura 2: 121 or 127, depending on the version.

- **Verse 4**, YHVH promises to bring Edom down.
- **Verse 7**, Esau has a confederacy (league, alliance) of nations, which include many of the modern Moslem and Arab nations.
- **Verse 11**, Edom's eyes are on Jerusalem. Edom among other foreigners will cast lots for Jerusalem (seek to divide it among the nations/religions of the world as an international city under the control of the United Nations?).
- **Verse 13**, Edom has entered into the gates of the land of Israel in the day of her calamity/disaster.
- **Verse 14**, Edom will kill Jewish refugees trying to escape the land of Israel in her time of distress.
- **Verse 15**, The time frame of the fulfillment of these prophecies is "near" the day of YHVH, when he will judge Edom and the other heathen nations.
- **Verse 16**, Edom will be drinking (celebrating?) on the Temple Mount/YHVH's "holy mountain," and as a result, they shall drink the cup of YHVH's wrath.
- **Verse 17**, The house of Jacob will get the Temple Mount back!

How many descriptions of the modern Palestinian and other Islamo-terrorists do we see in Obadiah? What other people-group fits this description? Is Esau a picture of many modern-day Palestinians and their Moslem backers who hate the Jews, the state of Israel and America?

We have learned who Jacob represents in end-time prophecy. Now we learn who Jacob's descendants' arch-enemy will be and who will attempt to prevent them from returning to the land of Israel. This will happen in the end times before the coming of the Messiah. We will learn more about this later.

Edom Has a Perpetual Hatred for Jacob (Judah and Ephraim)

As we noted, Edom's hatred for Israel has its roots in the antagonism between Ishmael and Issac, and then afterwards between Esau and Jacob. The hatred that Esau had for Israel has been passed on down to successive generations of Edomites. The biblical prophets discuss this murderous antagonism on Edom's part as being carried down generation to generation to the very end times. Let's review some of these biblical prophecies.

Ezekiel 36 speaks about the conflict between end-time Edom and end-time Israel. In verse two, we see that the enemies of Israel have regarded the "ancient high [or declared, promised] places" of Israel as "ours in possession." This is a clear reference to the holy places in Israel (e.g., the Temple Mount for the Jews and Bethlehem for the Christians—only in recent years have the Palestinians taken Bethlehem and forced—out of persecution and intimidation—the majority of the large Christian population of that city to leave). "High places" can also refer to the militarily strategic high places such as the Golan Heights and the ridges surrounding the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Next, let's look at Ezekiel 35, which is a prophecy against Edom. In verses four through five, we see that end-time Edom will be devastated because of its perpetual hatred for the Children of Israel. They have killed their enemies by the power of the sword. This is how Islam has traditionally spread—by the curved scimitar sword. Advancing Moslem armies force its captives to leave, covert or die. According to verse five, this is to be occurring at the time of the punishment (of the Children of Israel?) at the time of the end (NAS) or the end of time (lit. Hebrew). This is another example of YHVH's using Edom (Esau) to bring Ephraim and Judah to its knees in the time of the end.

In verses six through nine of the same chapter, we see that YHVH will punish Edom for its blood-thirstiness against Israel and will devastate its cities and slay large numbers of its people. Other biblical prophecies indicate that the militaries of Judah and Ephraim will be the means by which YHVH accomplishes this.

Finally, in verse 10, Edom (Islam) wants to take over or possess the two countries/nations/lands (Heb. *eretz*) of Israel: Judah and Ephraim even though YHVH was there (in the lands of his people). Their anger and hatred against Israel is based on envy or jealousy (verse 11) of Israel.

The Koran, the holy book of Islam, has taken the historic and prophesied hatred of Edom and formed a religion around it. The Koran was written by Mohammed, a Jew and Christian hater, more than one thousand years after the prophecies of Ezekiel and Obadiah. Here are some quotes from the Koran that confirm the prophecies of the Bible with regard to Edom.

Make war upon those to whom the Scriptures have been given as believe not in God [Allah] ... and who forbid not that which God and His Apostle [Mohammed] have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of the truth, until they pay tribute out of hand, and they be humbled. The Jews say, "Ezra in a son of God"; and the Christians say, "The Messiah is a son of God." Such sayings in their mouths. They resemble the sayings of the infidels of old! God do battle with them! How they are misguided! (Sura 9:29–30)

When thy Lord spake unto the angels, "I will be with you: therefore stablish ye the faithful I will cast a dread into the heart of the infidels." Strike off their heads then, and strike off from them every finger-tip. (Sura 8:12)

"O people of the Book! ... Can I announce to you any retribution worse than that which awaiteth them with God? They whom God hath cursed and with whom He hath been angry—some of them hath he changed into apes and swine; and they who worship Thagout are in evil plight, and have gone far astray from the right path. (Sura 5:64–65)

Only recompense of those who war against God and His Apostle, and go about to commit disorders on the earth, shall be that they shall be slain and crucified, or have their alternate hands and feet cut off, or be banished from the land ... (Sura 5:37)¹¹

YHVH Will Judge America (Apostate Ephraim)

Scripture is very clear that in the end times (before the coming of the Messiah and the re-establishment of the Davidic Kingdom in Israel) both Ephraim and Judah will be in a state of spiritual apostasy. Even as YHVH used Assyria and Babylon to punish ancient Israel, the biblical prophets predict that YHVH will use some of the same ancient players who disciplined ancient Israel the first time, to discipline them again. Though Edom and his allies will have their own satanic agendas against Judah and Ephraim, they will merely be a tool in the hands of the sovereign YHVH Elohim to bring Judah and Ephraim back to him spiritually. Let's examine the ancient biblical prophecies that speak of this.

We read, for example, in Isaiah 17:1 and 3,

1 The oracle concerning Damascus. "Behold, **Damascus** is about to be removed from being a city, and it will become a **fallen ruin/ruinous heap**... 3 "The **fortified city will disappear from Ephraim**, and sovereignty from Damascus, and the remnant of Aram; they will be like the glory of the sons of Israel," declares YHVH of Hosts. (emphasis added)

Note that verse one states that Damascus is to become a ruinous heap. This prophecy *has not* been fulfilled yet. This establishes the fact that the prophecies that follow are for the end times.

Next, note verse three above, which states that Ephraim's (America's?) military ability to defend its homeland will be greatly weakened.

Finally, let's look at Isaiah 18:5–7. This is the same passage the first three verses of which we examined in identifying what we believe is speaking about the land of America east of Ethiopia. With this in mind, let's see what else it seems to say about America.

For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms and the flower becomes a ripening grape, then **he will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives and remove and cut away the spreading branches**. They will be left together for mountain **birds of prey**, and for the beasts of the earth; and the birds of prey will spend the summer feeding on them, and all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them. At that time **a gift of homage will be brought to YHVH of hosts** from a people tall and smooth, even from a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of YHVH of hosts, even Mount Zion.

In verse five, we see that America will be spiritually "pruned" or judged by YHVH to help her bring forth a greater spiritual harvest. We then read in verse six that the nations of the earth (lit. birds of prey and beasts) will feast on the spoils of America during the time YHVH is judging (or "spanking") her. Finally, in verse seven, we see that out

¹¹ All quotes are from *The Koran*; Ivy/Ballentine Books, New York, 1993)

of her calamity, America will be humbled and turn to honor YHVH and will pay homage to him at Mount Zion, in Jerusalem where YHVH has placed his name!

All this occurs during the summer time leading into the fall harvest. This seems to be prophetic language speaking of the events leading up to and during the biblical fall feasts, which are prophetic indicators of end-time events and which have not yet been fulfilled prior to and at the second coming of Yeshua. If our understanding of this is correct, then the judgments to fall on Ephraim will occur during this same time.

YHVH to Use Edom as a Giant Paddle to “Spank” Apostate Ephraim

As noted above, YHVH will drive Ephraim (and Judah) to a place where in their state of spiritual apostasy they will be forced to bend their knees before the Almighty Elohim. They have forgotten who they are as YHVH’s people, they have forsaken their covenants and spiritual heritage believing instead that their power, wealth, and world prestige has been gained through their own efforts. Out of the depths of spiritual, economic, political and military despair, they will be forced to look up to the Elohim of their forefathers and acknowledge that their blessings have only been a result of his grace and his promises to their forefathers.

Getting Ephraim and Judah to acknowledge this will not be an easy task. They will both have to go through great hardships and will doubtless face near annihilation before they acknowledge their sin of apostasy and repent and turn back to YHVH. The Scripture verses that follow present this understanding.

In Ezekiel 35:15, we see that the House of Israel (America and other Christian nations) will become desolate (devastated, wasted), but so will Edom. YHVH will be glorified in the midst of all this, as we shall discuss below.

As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am YHVH.

Ezekiel 38 gives us much detail concerning end-time prophecy that is yet to occur about a nation called Gog, which seems to represent all the Satanic forces of an Antimesiah (Antichrist) figure. Let’s look at some of these prophecies verse-by-verse.

- **Verses 2,5–6**, We see here a confederation of peoples from Turkey and north of Turkey extending into the southern Russia area, along with the countries of northeastern Africa along with Iran and Iraq. All are Islamic or Communist states today, or have tendencies in that direction.

2 “Son of man, set your face toward **Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal**, and prophesy against him, 3 and say, ‘Thus says Adonai YHVH, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. 4 “And I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; 5 **Persia, Ethiopia, and Put [Libya] with them**, all of them with shield and helmet; 6 Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you. (emphasis added)

- **Verses 15–23**, Edom and their allies are to come upon the mountains (nations) of Israel out of the north. Turkey is Gog and Russia is greater Gog. Both nations are north of Israel, and Russia is north of America (over the North Pole). They shall come militarily against YHVH’s people and YHVH shall sanctify his name among his people when this happens. In this incident, it seems very likely that both Judah and Ephraim will be judged. In the world today, we are seeing the formation of political, military and economic alliances between Russia and many of the Islamo-Communist nations.

- **Verses 15–16**, These prophecies are to occur “in the latter days.”

And you will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; and you will come up against my people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. **It will come about in the last days that I shall bring you against my [YHVH’s] land**, in order that the nations may know me [YHVH] when I shall be sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog. (emphasis added)

- **Verses 21–23**, Nuclear holocaust will come upon Edom and its allies.

21 “And I shall call for a sword against him on all my mountains,” declares Adonai YHVH. “Every man’s sword will be against his brother. 22 “And with pestilence and with blood I shall enter into judgment with him; and I shall rain on him, and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, **a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire, and brimstone.** 23 “And I shall magnify myself, sanctify myself, and make myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am YHVH.” (emphasis added)

Next, let’s note Hosea 11:8–9.

“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? **How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim?** My heart churns within me; my sympathy is stirred. I will not execute the fierceness of my anger; **I will not again destroy Ephraim.** For I am El [God], and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror. (emphasis added)

In verse eight, we see YHVH’s attempts to get backslidden Ephraim to return to him. It appears that he may even allow (nuclear) fire to come down upon some cities of Ephraim, though it grieves him greatly to do so. Verse nine tells us that Ephraim will *not* experience the full fierceness of YHVH’s anger and be totally destroyed.

YHVH Will Allow America to Weaken

As a way to bring America back to YHVH and to its Israelite heritage, he will allow America to come under some terrible judgments. These judgments will occur not only in America, but to other Christian nations, as well. But Christian America will likely feel the brunt of these judgments since it is the leader of the Christian world, and the leading Christian nation.

The Book of Hosea contains prophecies largely directed to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, also known as the House of Israel and Ephraim. Some of the prophecies in Hosea concerning Israel have come to pass, but many have not. The context of the prophecies along with a knowledge of Israel’s history will determine which prophecies are yet to be fulfilled.

Hosea 7:8 and 8:8 set the timing of this prophecy. It occurs *after* Israel has been swallowed up by the Gentiles. What follows Hosea 7:8 is the end results of Israel’s being scattered and lost.

How Do We Know That the Prophecies of Hosea Are for the End Times?

How do we know that many of the prophecies in Hosea are for the end times? Perhaps they were fulfilled in ancient times and that what we now read is simply historical in nature. Before proceeding, let’s quickly review a few passages in Hosea that point to end-time fulfillments of these prophecies.

In Hosea 3:5, we find the words “in the latter days,” which is a phrase often used by the biblical prophets denoting an end-time fulfillment. The same verse states that the children of Israel will return (to the land of Israel) and David will be their king. Some have indeed returned to Israel, but David is not yet resurrected, nor is he king. These things are to occur at the second coming of the Messiah.

“In that day,” which is a similar phrase that often points to a last days fulfillment, is found twice in Hosea (2:18 and 21). This has to do with YHVH-Yeshua marrying his bride Israel at his second coming (Rev 19:7–9). Hosea 2:7 states that Israel would return to YHVH, her first husband, and then in verses 18 through 20 YHVH speaks of betrothing Israel forever. This prophecy was fulfilled at the last supper when Yeshua had communion with the disciples and ratified with them the renewed covenant in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31,33.

In Hosea 1:5 and 11, a reference to the Battle of Armageddon is made, and in verse 11 we see that the two houses of Israel will be reunited and will have one spiritual head. This will happen at the second coming of Yeshua.

Then in Hosea 5:14–15 and 6:1–2 we find a clear reference to the spiritual breach that would exist between Ephraim and Judah, to the first coming of Yeshua, and to his second coming two thousand years later, and to the reconciliation that will occur between the two houses of Israel as they worship YHVH-Yeshua together during his millennial rule. None of these prophecies have been fulfilled yet.

Finally, Hosea 11:10 says that Ephraim will tremble from the west as they return to YHVH and seek to walk with him. When Hosea wrote this, Ephraim was not in the west. In fact, they were taken captive to Assyria, which is north and east of Israel. Somehow, many of them had to migrate from northeast of Israel to west of Israel so this prophecy could be fulfilled. Due west of the land of Israel is the African continent. Due West of that is North America.

America to Be Weakened Economically

Verse nine of Hosea chapter seven declares that strangers have devoured Ephraim's strength. America's economic strength has been its manufacturing base, which, in the last generation, it has largely exported to Gentile nations such as China. Foreign banks and nations own our debt and can sink us financially if they were to choose to sell off our debt instruments, which they own. This, along with the outsourcing of much of our labor to foreign countries has weakened the dollar to an all-time low while increasing our trade deficit and federal government deficits to unimaginable levels. Of this sad state of affairs, Hosea prophesies,

Aliens have devoured his strength, but he does not know it. Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him,
Yet he does not know it. (Hos 7:9)

America to Be Weakened Politically

On the political front, in verse 11 of Hosea 7, we learn that Ephraim's political leaders will be seeking peace and diplomatic solutions with their sworn enemies, and those of Judah. Presently, and in fulfillment of this prophecy, America looks to Egypt and Syria as key players to instigating peace in Israel, yet they are the chief instigators of terrorism who are bent on destroying the nation of Israel. America is like a "silly dove," and is naive, ignorant, and stupidly innocent. Political appeasement with Edomite countries such as Egypt and Syria is pointless, foolish and dangerous.

"Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without sense—they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria." (Hos 7:11)

Ephraim's spiritual state of affairs is no better, either, for in verse 13, we read that though YHVH has redeemed Christian Ephraim, they still teach theological lies about him and refuse to acknowledge the Torah.

"Woe to them, for they have fled from me! Destruction to them, because they have transgressed against me! Though I redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me." (Hos 7:13)

America to Be Weakened Spiritually and Morally

In Hosea 7 verses 14 through 16, we learn that the Christian church is more concerned about potluck and food-driven church meetings than true repentance! They draw near to YHVH with their lips, but their hearts are far from him.

14 They did not cry out to me with their heart when they wailed upon their beds. They assemble together for grain and new wine, they rebel against me. 15 Though I disciplined and strengthened their arms, yet they devise evil against me. 16 They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a treacherous bow. Their princes shall fall by the sword for the cursings of their tongue. This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt. (Hos 7:14–16)

Hosea 8:1–14 continues chronicling the lamentable state of affairs in Ephraim. In verse one we read that Christian Ephraim is Torahless. Indeed, the Christian churches teaches that the Torah-law of YHVH has been "done away with," "nailed to the cross" and has "ended with Jesus." It is taught that Gentiles no longer need to keep the laws of God [Elohim], that those who do so are "Judaizers" who have gone back "under the curse of the law." Some 2700 years ago Hosea saw that this would happen and prophesied the following:

Set the shofar to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of YHVH, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my Torah.

As was the case with the ancient Israelites who mixed the religion of the Bible with golden calf worship, Christianity as also a religious system is a mixture of biblical truth syncretized with pagan traditions that are antithetical to the Word of Elohim. The prophet continues prophesying in verse six that Ephraim's golden calf of idolatry and false religion will be broken in pieces.

For from Israel is even this: a workman made it, and it is not Elohim, but the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

Because America has largely forsaken its Judeo-Christian spiritual heritage and become a secular nation, YHVH has allowed it to be over-run by the heathen Gentiles. Now the Gentiles (Moslems, Eastern religions, and illegal aliens) are swallowing up our Christian nation. In verse eight, we read,

Israel is swallowed up; now they are among the Gentiles like a vessel in which is no pleasure.
(Hos 7:8)

As an indicator of the West's spiritual sickness, some of our leaders (political and spiritual) are "kissing the feet" of Syria/Assyria (or spiritual Babylon), which is spiritual adultery. Christian leaders such as Rick Warren, Robert Schuller and the late Pope John Paul II have made spiritual pilgrimages to Damascus, Syria where they have paid obeisance to the political and spiritual leaders of that wicked nation. Hosea prophesied this in verse ten.

For they have gone up to Assyria, Like a wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers.

In verse 12, Hosea comes back to the issue of the Torah. He says that is a strange thing to Ephraimite Christians.

I have written for him the great things of my Torah, but they were considered a strange [loathsome] thing.

In spite of her spiritual apostasy, Ephraim America continues to construct huge churches (mega churches), and Judah (the nation of Israel) constructs fences. The American church hides feeling protected and untouchable behind its Crystal Cathedrals and pre-tribulation rapture doctrines, and the Jews place their confidence in 25-foot high walls. But YHVH through the prophet Hosea is telling them that because they have forsaken him and trusted in themselves for protection from their enemies instead he will send fire upon their cities to destroy their castles, palaces, citadels or fortresses. In verse 14 we read,

For Israel has forgotten his Maker, and has built temples; Judah also has multiplied fortified cities;
But I will send fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his palaces.

Apostate Ephraim will refuse to return to YHVH, but instead will turn to her enemies, Egypt and Assyria for political solutions. Instead, in Hosea 9:3 we read that Ephraim shall return (turn back) to Egypt, and in Assyria they will devour uncleanness. YHVH does not want Ephraim to play political footsies with these two nations who are her former captors and slave masters. He repeats this warning in Hosea 11:5.

In Hosea 9:8–10, YHVH continues warning Ephraim against her false prophets who are a spiritual snare to her, against homosexuality by which YHVH's people have deeply corrupted themselves, and against other abominable and illicit sexual practices, which have brought shame upon the nation.

America in Weakness Will Resort to Political Appeasement

Next let's proceed to explore Hosea 11:5 where it is prophesied that Ephraim will have strange bedfellows politically. Even as ancient Israel sought political alliances at various times with Egypt and Syria (or ancient Assyria) for the sake of political expediency, YHVH warns against this in our day. Notwithstanding, both America and Israel will run after these two nations (though they will not physically return to Egypt) viewing them as key to achieving Mideast peace, when in reality, they are part of the problem. This verse indicates that the king of Assyria will play a key role as a leader to which Ephraim looks for political sagacity. In effect, Ephraim will be submitting to the will of the king of Assyria

"He shall not return to the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to repent." (Hos 11:5)

In verse 6, it appears that Ephraim will not be blessed as a result of its political alliance with Assyria (Syria), but instead, will come under judgment. Some of Ephraim's cities will come under the sword.

And the sword shall slash in his cities, devour his districts, and consume them, because of their own counsels. (Hos 11:6)

Hosea 12:1 repeats the prophecy that Ephraim will make covenants (treaties and alliances) with the Assyrians.

"Ephraim feeds on the wind, and pursues the east wind; he daily increases lies and desolation. Also **they make a covenant with the Assyrians**, and oil is carried to Egypt." (emphasis added)

Again, we know these events are end times related thanks to a corollary passage in Zechariah nine, which sets the timing of these events at the second coming of Yeshua. In verse nine we read,

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Then in verse 10 we read that Ephraim shall be weakened militarily by YHVH's design, as will Judah. Both nations will seek peace (appeasement!) with the heathen. This is happening now: America is struggling militarily in Iraq as of this writing and Israel lost its first war ever in Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. (Zech 9:10)

Ephraim and Judah to Be Humbled Resulting in Spiritual Revival

The purpose of YHVH's judgments on Israel are not to destroy his people, but to bring them back to him spiritually. As a loving Father (Heb 12:5–11), YHVH wants to have a loving relationship with Israel. This cannot happen as long as his people are walking in sinful rebellion against him. Like a loving parent who has to spank his wayward child to bring him back to the right path, so our Heavenly Father will be true to his promises and redeem Israel and bring her back into covenantal relationship with him. Together Israel and Messiah Yeshua will rule over YHVH's kingdom in the millennial or messianic age to come.

The process of redeeming apostate and scattered Israel is not an easy one. But the prophecies of Scripture are clear. Israel will be redeemed. It is written! It will require the infinite wisdom and sovereign power of the Almighty to accomplish this seemingly impossible feat, but YHVH, through his prophets has declared it so. After being brought low and humbled, the people of Israel will repent of their sins and return to YHVH their Elohim.

In Ezekiel 35:10–11, we read that YHVH will make himself known among Judah and Ephraim because of his jealousy over them, and through his judgment against Edom.

“Because you have said, ‘These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess them,’ although YHVH was there, “therefore, as I live,” says Adonai YHVH, “I will do according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them when I judge you.”

Ezekiel the prophet then declares that YHVH will have pity on his scattered people, not for their sake, but for his sake and for the honor of his set-apart name. He will sanctify his name among his people as a witness against the heathen who will learn that Adonai (the Lord) is YHVH.

21 “But I had concern for my set-apart name, which the House of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. 22 “Therefore say to the House of Israel, ‘Thus says the Adonai YHVH: “I do not do this for your sake, O House of Israel, but for my holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 “And I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am YHVH,” says the Adonai YHVH, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. (Ezek 36:21–23)

Ezekiel 36:25–28, states that this will mark the beginning of a spiritual cleansing and revival for greater Israel (both Ephraim and Judah). She will receive a new heart spiritually—a heart of flesh, be cleansed of her filthiness, will receive the Spirit of YHVH, and will return to Torah. At the same time, she will return to the land YHVH gave her fathers.

25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 “I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them. 28 “Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your Elohim.

A full restoration of Israel is prophesied with her repenting of her evil ways. YHVH will fully redeem her and her land will become like Eden (a picture of the Millennium).

29 “I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 Not for your sake do I do this,” says Adonai YHVH, “let

it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O House of Israel!" 33 Thus says Adonai YHVH: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. 34 The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. 35 So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' 36 Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, YHVH, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, YHVH, have spoken it, and I will do it." 37 Thus says the Adonai YHVH: "I will also let the House of Israel inquire of me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. 38 Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am YHVH." (Ezek 36:29–38)

As a result of Israel's revival and redemption, Ezekiel 39:6 says that YHVH's name will be glorified among the isles or coastlands (where Ephraim has been scattered?). This may well be a reference to Christian America and the other Christian nations to where Ephraim has been scattered. At the same time, YHVH will punish Israel's enemies.

"And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am YHVH."

Spiritual revival is coming to the people Israel (Ephraim and Judah). YHVH will glorify himself in the midsts of his people!

"So I will make my set-apart name known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let them profane my set-apart name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am YHVH, the Set-Apart One in Israel." (Ezek 39:7)

The time setting of YHVH's redeeming his people and glorifying himself in their midsts seems to be at the final redemption of Israel, which occurs at the second coming of the Messiah just near the beginning of the Millennium.

21 "I will set my glory among the nations; all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid on them. 22 So the House of Israel shall know that I am YHVH their Elohim from that day forward. 23 The Gentiles shall know that the House of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to me, therefore I hid my face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. 24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden my face from them." 25 Therefore thus says Adonai Elohim: "Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole House of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name 26 after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid. 27 When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, 28 then they shall know that I am YHVH their Elohim, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. 29 And I will not hide my face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out my Spirit on the House of Israel," says Adonai YHVH." (Ezek 39:21–29)

YHVH confirms his promises to Israel through another witness—the prophet Hosea. Hosea 11:10–11 declares that as a result of Ephraim's punishment, she will begin to walk after Elohim. (This prophecy has not been fulfilled yet, for in times past, Ephraim never did return to YHVH.) The children of Ephraim shall tremble (be afraid or discomfited, or come trembling [NAS]) from the west. Who is west of the nation of Israel? Africa. West of that? The east coast of North America!

10 "They shall walk after YHVH. He will roar like a lion. When he roars, then his sons shall come trembling from the west; 11 they shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses," says YHVH.

Judgment to Fall on Edom

YHVH Will Use Ephraim and Judah to Destroy Edom

YHVH is the Just Judge of the universe. The enemies of YHVH's people will be punished for their arrogance against YHVH and his anointed people.

The nation of Assyria (an ally and backer of Edom), one of the terrorist ringleaders who has continuously and arrogantly defied YHVH and his people, will have Damascus, its pride and joy, destroyed. Damascus, one of the oldest and longest continually inhabited cities on earth, which has never been destroyed, will become a ruinous heap (Isa 17:1). This prophecy has not been fulfilled yet. Because of this fact, the prophecy of Isaiah 17 is for the end times.

Ezekiel confirms Isaiah's prophecy about Edom's destruction. In Ezekiel 35:4, we read that Edom's cities have yet to be laid waste (ruined) and made desolate (devastated), and Edom has yet to learn who YHVH is, even as Damascus has yet to be made a ruinous heap (Isa 17:1).

Then in Ezekiel 35:5 the prophet declares that Edom will be devastated because of its perpetual hatred for the Children of Israel. They have killed the Children of Israel by the power of the sword. This is how Islam has traditionally spread historically—by the curved scimitar sword. Moslems force their captives to leave, convert to Islam or die. This is to be occurring at the time of the end (see the NAS translation of this verse) or at the end of time (according to the literal Hebrew). This is another example of YHVH's using Edom (with a reference to Islam) to bring Ephraim and Judah to their knees in the time of the end.

But then YHVH will turn the tables on Edom, for in Ezekiel 35:6–9, we read that YHVH will punish Edom for its blood-thirstiness against Israel and will devastate its cities and slay large numbers of its people. Other biblical prophecies indicate that the militaries of Judah and Ephraim will be the means by which YHVH will accomplish this.

YHVH will judge Edom (Islam and its allies) because it wants to take over or possess the two countries (nations or lands) of Israel (i.e., Judah and Ephraim) even though YHVH was there (in the lands of his people) (Ezek 35:10). Their anger and hatred against Israel is based on Edom's envy or jealousy (verse 11) toward Israel.

Then in Ezekiel 38:16, we read about a confederacy of nations coming up against the mountains of Israel (verse 8) in the last days (or the end times), but that it is YHVH who will bring greater Edom up to Israel so that YHVH may be sanctified in Israel in the eyes of Israel's enemies. What will be the end result? Either horrific conventional weaponry will be unleashed against Edom, or a nuclear holocaust. YHVH says of Edom,

And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood, and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am YHVH. (Ezek 38:22–23)

There is some question as to the time frame of the fulfillment of the Gog prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and 39. This prophecy could have an end-time—before Yeshua's return—fulfillment, or an end of the Millennium fulfillment, since in both cases Gog is destroyed by fire from heaven (see Ezek 39:6 cp Rev 20:9).

We believe that the Ezekiel 38 and 39 has an end-time fulfillment because in the final verses of chapter 39 there is a discussion about the return of the House of Israel to the land of Israel. Perhaps not all Israel will have returned by the end of the Millennium and some will still need to be flushed out of the nations, but in light of other prophetic passages pertaining to the regathering of Israel (e.g., Ezek 37) we believe that this is an end-time prophecy. Whatever the case, Satan and his human forces will array his armies against the saints and Yeshua at the second coming. They will also repeat this move at the end of the Millennium just prior to the White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:7–10.

Assuming the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is premillennial, we see that YHVH will turn Gog and the confederacy of nations accompanying it back and five-sixth of them will be slaughtered upon the mountains of Israel (verses 2–6). As a result, YHVH's name will be glorified among the isles (verse 7). As noted earlier, the isles could well be a reference to Christian Ephraim of which America is the spiritual leader.

The little Book of Obadiah is a one-chapter indictment against Edom. After judgment comes upon Edom, verse 17 says the House of Jacob will get the Temple Mount back! Verse 18 then prophesies that Ephraim and Judah as a unified force will destroy Edom with fire. This is confirmed by the prophet Zechariah, as well (Zech 9:13). Ephraim and Judah in their time of despair will rise up (by YHVH's grace) and will defeat Edom. Few if any from the house of Edom will survive (verse 18).

Obadiah nineteen says that those Israelites of the south or Negev desert area of Israel will possess Mount Seir (the land of Edom), the plain of the Philistines (Gaza) along with the country of Ephraim and Samaria.

In Zechariah 9:13, we read that Ephraim and Judah will destroy their enemies. Judah will be the bow, and Ephraim the arrow against Greece, which may very well be a biblical metaphor for western non-Christian Europe. This is YHVH's arrow of judgment that will go forth like lightning and he shall sound the shofar, and like the storm winds or a whirlwind of the south, he will go forth (verse 14). (It is possible that his whirlwind of the south may be a reference to the fight between the king of the south and the king of the north of Daniel 11.) Judah and Ephraim will be in YHVH's hand to destroy their enemies (verse 15; see also 10:5).

Then in Zechariah 14:12, we have the well-known passage that many Bible commentators believe is a direct reference to nuclear war that YHVH will use as a means to defend his people and destroy the enemies of Israel. All this is to occur in the time period called "the day of YHVH" (verse 1), and in the general time period of the second coming of Yeshua when his feet will touch the Mount of Olives (verse 4), and when YHVH will be king over all the earth (verse 9).

Ephraim's and Judah's Humbling Will Precipitate the Second Exodus

Good things will happen to Ephraim and Judah as a result of being brought to their knees nationally. Not only will YHVH glorify his name in their midsts because they have returned to him, and not only will YHVH give the Israelites victory over their enemies, but YHVH will regather Israel from the lands where he has scattered them and bring them back to the Promised Land—the land of Israel.

Hosea 11:10–11 declares that as a result of Ephraim's (America and other Christian nations') punishment, Ephraim will return to YHVH to walk after him. (This prophecy has not been fulfilled yet, for in times past, Ephraim never did return to YHVH.) The children of Ephraim shall tremble (be afraid or discomfited, or come trembling, according to the NAS) from the west. Who is west of the nation of Israel? Africa. West of that? The east coast of America! They will also come out of (spiritual) Egypt and Assyria where they have been scattered throughout the world.

"They shall walk after YHVH. He will roar like a lion. When he roars, then his sons shall come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses," says YHVH.

Zechariah 10 elaborates further on what will happen to Ephraim and Judah *after* they have destroyed their enemies. In verse five, we see that YHVH will join with Judah and Ephraim to tread down their common enemies in the mire of the streets.

They shall be like mighty men, who tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because YHVH is with them, and the riders on horses shall be put to shame. (Zech 10:5)

Then in verse six, we see that YHVH will strengthen the House of Judah and the House of Joseph and have mercy upon them, and they shall be as if he had not cast them off (he will restore them spiritually).

I will strengthen the House of Judah, and I will save the House of Joseph [or Ephraim]. I will bring them back, because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; for I am YHVH their Elohim, and I will hear them. (Zech 10:6)

As a result of YHVH's mercy upon Judah and Ephraim, they will rejoice in YHVH (verse 7), and he will whistle for them and gather them, for he has redeemed (ransomed, rescued, delivered).

I will whistle for them and gather them, for I will redeem them; and they shall increase as they once increased. (Zech 10:8)

YHVH will remember his people from all the far countries to where they have been scattered.

I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember me in far countries; they shall live, together with their children, and they shall return. (Zech 10:9)

YHVH will bring Israel back out of (spiritual) Egypt and (spiritual) Assyria (the places of their enslavement and captivity) to the land of Israel. There will be so many returning that there will not be room for them in the land of Israel.

I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, until no more room is found for them. (Zech 10:10)

They shall cross seas and rivers to get there. Just as the Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea and the Jordan River on their way to the Promised Land, so when the second or greater exodus occurs, YHVH will bring his people back to the land of Israel supernaturally through oceans and rivers.

He shall pass through the sea with affliction, and strike the waves of the sea: all the depths of the river shall dry up. Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart. (Zech 10:11)

The prophet Ezekiel describes these happy events in the following prophecy:

4 “In those days, and in that time,” saith YHVH, “the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek YHVH their Elohim. 5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, ‘Come, and let us join ourselves to YHVH in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.’ 6 My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. 7 All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, ‘We offend not, because they have sinned against YHVH, the habitation of justice, even YHVH, the hope of their fathers.’ 8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.” (Ezek 50:4–8)

Historically, these prophecies *have not* been fulfilled. They are future in nature and will occur just prior to the day of YHVH’s wrath upon the nations (Zech 14:1–3) and the return of Yeshua (see Zech 12:10; 13:1; 14:4). In that day, many wicked will be killed, many of Judah and Ephraim will be saved, and many Israelites will return to the land of Israel. The return of Israel out of the nations of the world to their Promised Land is often referred to as the greater or second exodus (Jer 16:14; 23:7–8; Isa 11:11,16; 27:13).

Ezekiel 36: An Overview

This chapter provides an overview of much of what we have discovered to this point with regard to the nation of Israel being scattered around the earth and remaining there until the end times. We see that Israel’s enemies have sought to take from Israel its Christian and Jewish holy places (e.g., the Temple Mount, Shechem, Joseph’s Tomb, Bethlehem, etc.), have terrorized the Jewish state of Israel on every side, and have tried to take away her land.

YHVH will allow this to go on for only so long, and then he will answer with wrath, jealousy and fire on behalf of his covenant people. The Whole House of Israel (both Ephraim and Judah) will be restored as a powerful nation by YHVH’s grace and will destroy Edom, its perennial enemy. Though Israel has been scattered because of her idolatry, YHVH will have pity on his people, and will sanctify his name among the heathen. At this point, the heathen will learn that YHVH is the one and only true Elohim (God) to the exclusion of all other demonic spiritual imposters (e.g., Allah, Krishna, New Age Christs, etc.) and false prophets (Joseph Smith, Buddha, etc.).

These events will mark the beginning of the final or second exodus (Jer 23:7–8; Isa 11:16; 27:13) of lost and scattered Israel from the lands to where they have been scattered, and they will return to the land of Israel. At the same time, YHVH will pour out his Spirit upon Israel, circumcise their hearts spiritually, and cleanse them from their sins. They will return to YHVH’s Torah and he will give them their land inheritance from the Nile to the Euphrates rivers. Let’s quickly review Ezekiel 36 to cement these diverse end-time prophetic concepts into one cohesive and chronological flow as outlined by the prophet in this chapter.

- **Verse 1**, The target group of this prophecy is identified: it is a prophecy to the “mountains” or nations of Israel.
- **Verse 2**, The enemies of Israel have regarded the “ancient high places” of Israel as “ours in possession.” This is a clear reference to the holy places in Israel (e.g., the Temple Mount for the Jews and Bethlehem for the Christians—only in recent years have the Palestinians taken Bethlehem and forced—out of persecution and intimidation—most of the large Christian population of that city to leave.)
- **Verse 3**, Israel’s enemies have made her desolate (i.e., to cause horror, to ravage, to astound, to appal) and swallowed up (crushed or trampled) her on every side as they have tried to take over her lands.

- **Verses 5–6**, Here YHVH speaks in the fire and anger of his jealousy against Edom who leads the pack of nations that will seek to take YHVH's land as their own possession causing Israel to be shamed (i.e., confused, disgraced, dishonored) by the heathen.
- **Verses 7–11**, Instead of Israel being shamed, the heathen nations will be brought to shame, and the mountains (nations) of all the House of Israel (verse 10) will once again be restored from devastation and will flourish. Her male population will be restored (apparently due to diminishment through war), she will receive back her ancient estates and Israel shall know YHVH.
- **Verse 19**, YHVH scattered the House of Israel among the nations because of their sinfulness (verses 17–18).
- **Verses 21–23**, YHVH will then have pity on his scattered people, not for their sake, but for his sake and for the honor of his set-apart (holy) name. He will sanctify his name among his people as a witness against the heathen who will learn that Adonai (the Lord) is YHVH.
- **Verse 24**, The nation of Israel must be humbled or devastated first by Edom, and then she will be restored as she triumphs over her enemies by YHVH's grace. This will mark the beginning of the final or greater exodus (also understood by rabbinic Jewish scholars to be an aspect of what they refer to as “the final redemption”) of lost Israel.
- **Verses 25–28**, This will mark the beginning of a spiritual cleansing and revival for Israel. She will receive a new heart spiritually—a heart of flesh, be cleansed of her filthiness, will receive the Spirit of YHVH, and will return to Torah. At the same time, she will return to the land YHVH gave her fathers.
- **Verses 29–38**, Finally, a full restoration of Israel is prophesied with her repenting of her evil (Torahless) ways. YHVH will fully redeem her and her land will become like Eden (a picture of the Millennium). Is this in part or in full the restoration of all things to which the Apostle Peter makes reference in Acts 3:21 that must occur before the second coming of Yeshua? It most likely is.

Ezekiel 37: The Reunification of Israel and The Return of the Messiah

Key Names Defined

Before we start studying this passage, let's identify and define the key players who are mentioned in Ezekiel 37. They are:

- **Judah**: This name refers to both the tribe of Judah and to the Southern Kingdom. Scriptural context will determine which is meant.
- **Children of Israel**: This term is found 603 times in Scripture and is used 472 times from Genesis through Second Samuel in obvious reference to the united kingdom (prior to the split of the Northern ten tribes from the Southern two tribes [in addition to the Levites]). There are times, however, when, after the division of the kingdom, this term refers specifically to either the Kingdom of Israel (Northern Kingdom) or the Kingdom of Judah (Southern Kingdom), but not to both (e.g. in reference to the Southern Kingdom only see 1 Kgs 18:20; 19:10,14; 20:15,27,29; and in reference to the Northern Kingdom only see 2 Kgs 17:7,8,9,22,24).
- **Joseph**: The eleventh son of Jacob and the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, who fathered two tribes of their own. These two tribes took the place of what might otherwise have been known as the “Tribe of Joseph.”
- **Ephraim**: This name is used 180 times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and is specifically referring to this specific Israelite tribe or as a metaphor for the Northern Kingdom of which the tribe of Ephraim was the leading and largest tribe (Isa 7:9,17; 9:9; 11:13; Ezek 37:19; Hos 4:17; 5:12,13,14; 6:4; 7:1; 10:11; Zech 9:13). When blessing the two sons of Joseph, Jacob placed his right hand of power and strength upon the head of Ephraim signifying the position of primogeniture for him and his descendants (Gen 48:17).
- **House of Israel**: This term is used 146 times in Scripture. Prior to the division of the united kingdom after the death of Solomon this phrase referred to all twelve tribes of Israel. Afterwards (during the time of the prophets) it was used in contradistinction to the phrase “House of Judah” in reference to the Northern Kingdom. In the Messianic Scriptures, Yeshua makes reference to the “lost sheep of the House of Israel”

(Matt 10:6; 15:54). In some references in the Messianic Scriptures this term refers to all twelve tribes of Israel (Acts 2:36; 7:42; Heb 8:10) in some references it refers to just the Northern Kingdom (Heb 8:8). The context of the passage of Scripture surrounding this phrase determines its meaning.

- **Mountains of Israel:** This is a poetic metaphor referring to the twelve tribes of Israel (Ezek 34:13,14; 36:1,4,8).

The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 37 continues where chapter 36 left off by giving us two prophetic visions focusing on the (spiritual) rebirth and reunification of the nation of Israel. The first part of the chapter recounts Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, while the second half of the chapter is his vision of two sticks or trees being reunited and becoming one tree.

Both prophetic visions concern the same people: the *whole* House of Israel comprised of Judah (the modern Jews) and Ephraim (the modern Christians). Both visions speak of restoration of the nation of Israel, and both are for the end-times period (at the second coming of Yeshua).

In the first vision, the prophet sees a valley of dry bones representing the whole House of Israel (all twelve tribes). In verses 2 and 11, we learn that these bones have been there a long time; their hope is gone (NIV), they have been completely cut off (NAS) or doomed (ASET)—they are dead and in their graves (verses 12 and 13). YHVH then instructs Ezekiel to prophesy over the dry ones and to command the wind to blow from the four corners of the earth and cause the breath of life to come back into these bones that they may live. This done, the bones come to life and a great army, company or force of people stands up. These are the people of Elohim (verse 12) and the whole House of Israel (verse 11). YHVH promises that he will open their graves and cause them to come up out of their graves and that he will put his spirit in them and that they shall live in their own land of Israel (verses 12–14).

Let's make several observations about this passage. Judging by the prophet's response in verse three as to whether these bones could ever live again, it appears that in man's estimation this seemed an impossible thing, and only something that could be accomplished through the divine intervention of an omnipotent Elohim.

Next, let us note that what caused the bones to come to life was the Word of Elohim as spoken by the prophet of Elohim (verse 4).

Whether this prophecy is to be taken literally or figuratively as representing the people of Israel (individually) or the nation of Israel (collectively), it is hard to say. Whatever the case, this prophecy specifically indicates that the whole House of Israel (both Judah and Ephraim) as a nation comprised of individuals will be raised up and brought back to life from a state of deadness (whether literal or spiritual or both, it is hard to say) by the divine intervention of YHVH Elohim.

Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary on these verses state that not only is it obvious that these bones represent Judah and Ephraim, but that this prophecy points to the reunion of the tribes of Israel that have been severed into two nations, as foretold in verses 15–28 (the vision of the two trees reuniting). They further note, that when Scripture says that the bones are dried, this means that their vital force is gone, since the bones are the seat of the vital force of the human body (Ps 32:3). These Christian commentators (along with Adam Clarke in his commentary on these passages) believe that this resurrection is to be viewed both literally (as pertaining to the end-time general resurrection of the dead at Yeshua's coming), but also figuratively (political and spiritual). Keil and Delitzsch view the return of the Jews from Babylon at the time of Zerubbabel as “nothing more than a pledge of the future and complete restoration of Israel.”¹² Noted rabbinic Jewish rabbis see this prophecy in light of an end-time Messianic era (millennial) fulfillment as well in what they term as the “concept of a gradually developing redemption” pointing to the “ultimate redemption” of the nation of Israel.¹³

In summary, the dry bones prophecy pertains to the political and spiritual restoration of both nations or houses of Israel (Ephraim and Judah) and will be fulfilled in its fullest sense at the end of the age during what the Jews refer to as the Messianic Era and the Christians refer to as the Millennium. Both Christian and Jewish commentators see this prophecy not only as pertaining to the symbolic resurrection of the nation of Israel, but as referring to the literal end-time bodily resurrection of the people of Elohim, as well.

The Vision of the Two Sticks (Trees)

The second vision Ezekiel records in chapter 37 involves YHVH commanding him to take two sticks (or trees)

¹² *Commentary on the Old Testament*, by Keil and Delitzsch, vol. 9, pp. 306–313; *Clarks Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 522).

¹³ *ArtScroll Ezekiel Commentary*, pp. 568–569, 571.

and writing upon one stick “for Judah and for the Children of Israel and his companions [i.e., those who have knit themselves together with or joined to the tribe of Judah],” and upon the other stick, write “for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the House of Israel and his companions.” Ezekiel was to then join the two sticks together so that they would become one stick (or tree) in his hand (verses 15–17).

How were these two nations, which separated from each other some three thousand years ago, to be rejoined into one nation? That has been the subject of much debate between both Jewish and Christian commentators for years. Some modern historical revisionists view this prophecy as having been fulfilled when the Jews returned to the land of Israel in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah after their Babylonian captivity ended. But this interpretation leaves some unanswered questions. The book of Ezra, which chronicles the return of a remnant of Jews from Babylon to the land of Israel, lists the numbers and tribes of those who returned. All the tribes listed were originally from Jerusalem and Judah and were from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Ezra 2:1; 4:1; 10:9), and there is no mention made that any of the ten northern Israelite tribes joined the Jews in resettling the land of Israel. So far as the returning Jews were concerned, it is likely that they considered their northern brothers lost and assimilated among their Assyrian captors and that only they were left of all the twelve tribes to resettle the Promised Land. If this were so, this may explain why they considered themselves to be “all Israel” (Ezra 2:70; 6:17), since they considered themselves to be the representative remnant of all the twelve tribes, even though there numbers *did not* consist of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Furthermore, how do those who teach that the prophecy of the two sticks has already been fulfilled explain how anytime in Israel’s past history the two sticks became one nation, and how the once scattered twelve tribes of Israel were regathered from the nations of the world, and how all were resettled in their own land (Ezek 37:21)? Whenever in the past did all the twelve tribes of Israel completely disassociate themselves from the pollution and defilement of paganism and start serving Elohim in perfect righteousness (Ezek 37:23)? When has David ever been resurrected from the grave to rule over the regathered and reunited Israel as this prophecy declares will happen (Ezek 37:24–25)? After all, Scripture tells us that David is dead and buried to this day (Acts 2:29), and awaits the resurrection of the saints at the second coming of Yeshua.

Ezekiel 37:23 also clearly states that, once reunited, the Israelites—the twelve tribes of Israel, will be obeying YHVH’s Torah commandments—something that the majority of Jews, with the exception, perhaps, a few of the Orthodox—have failed to do to this day. Even then, if all the Jews (who the rabbis believe to be descendants of the Southern Kingdom of Judah¹⁴) were assiduously following the Torah, this does not address who the other tribes are, nor *how* they are fulfilling this prophecy regarding Torah obedience.

Finally, if this prophecy has already been fulfilled, then we also have to explain *how* YHVH has formulated his everlasting covenant of peace with the regathered and reunited Israel and *how* he has set his sanctuary or tabernacle in the midst of them forevermore (Ezek 37:26–28).

Has this prophecy already been fulfilled? The biblical evidence above would indicate not. Christian commentator, Adam Clarke commenting on this prophecy agrees. He writes that though some out of the northern ten tribes did rejoin themselves to Judah, yet no whole tribe ever returned to that kingdom, and that united they never had a king over them from that day till now.¹⁵ Keil and Delitzsch view this prophecy as not having been fulfilled at some time in ancient Israel’s past, but as one spanning the whole future of the people of Elohim—even to eternity culminating with the New Jerusalem. These Christian commentators view these prophecies of Ezekiel to be parallel to those of Moses (Deut 32:36–43), Obadiah (verse 17), Joel (3:5), Micah (4:1; 10:21), Isaiah (4:3; 10:21; 11:9), Jeremiah (30:3), and in many other places, all of which prophesy a literal return of the people of Israel to the literal land of Israel in line with the promises of YHVH. And the fulfillment of these prophecies corresponds with the rule of Yeshua the Messiah not only over his people Israel, but over the whole earth.¹⁶ Christian scholars are not alone in seeing the two-stick prophecy of Ezekiel as having a future fulfillment.

The Orthodox rabbinic commentators similarly believe that the uniting of the divided kingdoms of Israel is a future Messianic era (millennial) event.¹⁷ We must admit that the ancient rabbis were in disagreement as to whether all the twelve tribes would actually return to take their rightful place along side the Jews of the tribe of Judah, or whether, over the years, enough members of the twelve tribes had assimilated into and joined with Judah

¹⁴ *Artscroll Stone Edition Chumash*, commenatray on Deut 32:26, p 1106.

¹⁵ *Clarks Commentary*, vol 4, pp. 524–525.

¹⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, vol. 9, pp. 318–321.

¹⁷ *ArtScroll Ezekiel Commentary*, pp. 572–573, 575.

to constitute a quorum representing all the twelve tribes. Some rabbis took the position that Judah represented all Israel, and that the ten northern tribes would not return, while other rabbis viewed in a literal sense the biblical prophecies concerning the regathering and reunification of Israel. This debate continued for some time and is recorded in the Jewish writings of the *Mishnah*, the *Tosefta* and into the *Talmud* where it was settled in favor of a literal return of *all* twelve tribes from the nations to where they had been scattered.¹⁸

What Do the Jewish Rabbis Say?

Do the Rabbinic Jews believe that they are the only ones to fulfill the Ezekiel 37, two-sticks prophecy? What do they teach about this subject? Let's read:

"Ibn Ezra: Many nations will descend from him [Abraham] (i.e., the word מְלֵא [melo], *fullness*, connotes *abundance*, the phrase meaning: And his seed will become the abundance of the nation [Neter; Karnei Or].) (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary* p. 2121 on Gen 48:19).

"R[abbi] Avraham b. HaRambam somewhat similarly: The expression denotes abundant profligacy to a point that they will have to inhabit lands of other nations it is an allusion to Ephraim's expansive territory (Ibid.).

"Radak: This refers to the Exile when the lands of others will be filled with his scattered descendants ... See also Hos. 7:8: "Ephraim shall be mingled among the nations." (Ibid.)

"What kind of blessing was this prediction that one day [Jacob's] descendants—the Ten Tribes—would be scattered among the nations? R[abbi] Munk explains: while it is true that the dispersion was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim's descendants (Hos. 7:8ff), Jacob's blessing was not in vain for "they will return to God" and will have their share in the world to come ([*Talmud Sanhedrin* 110b). And R. Eliezer adds: 'Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day' (according to the version of *Avos d'Rabbi Nosson* 36). And in the perspective of history, did not these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of God, ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah the ... Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah* 52a), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity's redemption, for he will be the precursor of the ... Messiah Son of David ... (Ibid. pp. 2121-2122).

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

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

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

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

¹⁸ Ibid.; *Everyman's Talmud*, by Avraham Cohen, pp. 354-355.

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

This refers to the exile of the Ten Tribes, who were scattered to an unknown place where they have never been heard from again (p. 1105).

On the phrase of the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men ...” the same *Chumash* states, “This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.” It goes on to say that though nations would seek to destroy Israel entirely YHVH would never allow Israel to become extinct or disappear. Israel’s perpetual existence is constant reminder of YHVH’s plan and eventually Israel will thrive and fulfill YHVH’s intention for it” (pp. 1105-1106).

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch in his commentary on the Pentateuch on the same verse translates the phrase, “I would scatter them into the corners ...” as, “I would relegate them into a corner ...” and then says that the Hebrew here refers to the “extreme end of a surface, the side or corner ...” He, too, relates this fate to the Ten Tribes who would be scattered “to some distant corner of the world, where, left entirely to themselves, they could mature towards serious reflection and ultimate return to Me, ...” (*The Pentateuch/Deuteronomy*, p. 650).

Ezekiel 37: Conclusion

It is hopefully clear from this study that the two-sticks prophecy of Ezekiel 37 is yet to be fulfilled. This is obvious from the passage itself, since many of the events it predicts are yet to occur, and this has been the interpretation of the leading Orthodox Jewish rabbis and sages over the millennia.

Whoever the House of Ephraim and his companions may be (and Scripture says that YHVH knows who they are) they will be regathered to the land of their inheritance in the last days, and reunited with their brother, Judah. As a single national entity, they will then be ruled by an obviously resurrected King David (Ezek 37:24-25), and YHVH will make a new covenant with them and YHVH’s tabernacle or dwelling place will be with them (37:26-28). It should be obvious that these events have yet to occur.

Furthermore, we know from the Book of Revelation that after the Millennium, the heavenly New Jerusalem will descend to this earth and will become the habitation of the resurrected and glorified saints of YHVH-Yeshua. It is clear that the twelve tribes of Israel and all their grafted-in companions will be regathered at this time, for the only way into that city will be through twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel. There is no “Gentile Gate” (Rev 21:12). So to which tribe of Israel do you belong?

A Call to Action: What Should We Do?

In light of the prophetic understandings we have presented above, what should be our response? It seems, if our understanding of the biblical prophecies is correct, America (and other major Christian nations) and the Jewish state of Israel are in for some rough times. What should we be doing?

- Keep your eyes on Yeshua, the Author and Finisher of our faith.
- Watch and pray like never before.
- Repent of sin (breaking the Torah, 1John 3:4) and prepare yourself spiritually.
- Learn to hear the voice of YHVH-Yeshua.
- Walk in greater love for YHVH Elohim and your brother.
- Walk in the fear of YHVH.
- Make sure that you are walking in the center of YHVH’s will for your life.
- Make physical preparations for you and your family for the rough times ahead.

List of Abbreviations

KJV: King James Version Bible

NAS: New American Standard Bible

NIV: New International Version Bible

ASET: ArtScroll Stone Edition Tanach Bible

