

# Are the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel Really Lost?

by Pastor Dan Gayman

Millions of Church people throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, especially in America, make their way, Bible in hand, to a public worship service every week. These people primarily look to the New Testament as the basis for their faith. They are vaguely aware that the bulk of Scripture is tucked away in the 85% of the Bible that makes up the Old Testament. They also know that this 85% of the Bible concerns the twelve tribes of Israel.

They are also vaguely aware that somewhere in the New Testament, Jesus Christ Himself said, "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matt. 15:24). Many Christians also recall that the final Book in the New Testament calls for a sealing of 12,000 from every tribe in ancient Israel and points to Israel as being the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9-12). At least many Bible readers recall that both James and Peter addressed their epistles to the lost sheep of Israel in dispersion.

In the back of their minds, they know that ten of the twelve tribes became swallowed in the historical abyss after the Assyrian invasion and captivity of millions of these people a little more than seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Most church people readily admit to believing that the only portion of ancient Israel presently known are those who claim descent from the tribes of Judah, Levi, and a portion of Benjamin. These Israelites populated the Kingdom of Judah in the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Jesus Christ.

The remaining body of ancient Israel, indeed the great majority of them, more than three-fourths of twelve-tribed Israel, were simply swallowed up in the vast landscape occupied by the Assyrian Empire and the area to which the ten tribes were taken captive.

So what happened to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel? Where did they go? How could millions of people become lost to historians and theologians? Where do you stand on this important question? What about your church, your minister? Did God lose the very people who are the subjects of the covenants and promises of Scripture?

No theological question has ever trumped the quest for what happened to millions of Israelites taken by the Assyrians into captivity between 771-721 BC. The very honor and integrity of God's name is at issue in this question. All of the unconditional covenants of the Bible rest upon the physical survival of these people throughout time and history. The unbroken continuity of **twelve-tribed Israel** is imperative in order for the Bible to have credibility.

What does your minister say regarding this question? Most theologians simply skirt this profound theological question by saying that modern Jews are all that remains of ancient Israel, and the rest became absorbed among the nations of Central Asia in the centuries before Christ. Others just pass off the question as though it were irrelevant. And there are always those who simply say, *what difference does it make?* Finally, many theologians simply say that God replaced the lost tribes of Israel with Gentiles and transferred the covenantal promises given Israel to the Gentiles.

If you were a person of great wealth and importance and were the parents of twelve sons who were the beneficiaries of all your wealth, promises, covenants, and charters, and somehow ten of your twelve sons were seized and transported into a foreign land, do you suppose you would simply forget these sons as though they no longer mattered? And suppose you had written a family history of these twelve sons, carefully detailing all of the parental promises made them in your last will and testament? Suppose you had given each son a patriarchal blessing of wealth, personal fame, and glorious future? And what if these promises were based upon unconditional covenants and sealed in the undying love of a devoted parent? If ten of these twelve sons were suddenly taken from you, would you simply write them off, discard your family history, and adopt other people to take their place?

This is precisely what millions of Christians and the clergy who lead them want us to believe happened to the lost ten tribes of Old Testament fame. They readily acknowledge that the Old Testament corpus is indeed the history of twelve-tribed Israel and their division into two tribes, the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel. They admit that the Old Testament is the family history of Israel and no other people. That the covenants, conditional and unconditional, were made with ancient Israel of the twelve tribes is not disputed. Thousands of evangelical ministers admit that the voluminous promises and covenants of the Old Testament can never be fulfilled with any other people.

What, then, should we do with the lost ten tribes of Israel? Where in the Old Testament did Jehovah say He was going to cancel His divine contract with the twelve tribes of Israel and choose another people to take their place? Did Jehovah abrogate His last will and testament with ancient Israel, forget His unconditional covenants, and choose another people? Did a loving God cast away His people and replace them with Gentiles? Where are the ten lost tribes of Israel? Can anyone read the canon of the Old Testament and believe that God somehow lost the majority of the people He loved so dearly? Could this great and marvelous God suddenly lose the people He had tenderly cared for from the call of Abraham to their multiplication into two sovereign kingdoms in the land given Abraham by unconditional promise? Would you dare open the pages of the New Testament and determine for yourself whether God did indeed lose ten of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel?

If God has not lost His people, we have before us a marvelous truth: the unconditional promises of God in the Abrahamic, Davidic, Levitical, and New Covenant still stand! If God has not lost His people, the voice of the Prophets of God are still waiting fulfillment

for the regathering of the twelve tribes of Israel, their reunification into one Body, and their restoration into the Kingdom in the land of their fathers. If the lost ten tribes are not really lost, Jehovah God has indeed been keeping the unconditional promises made to His people. Do the last will and testament of a sovereign God remain valid if biblical Israel has not been lost from history?

God will not be mocked, nor will His Word return unto Him void (Isa. 55:11). The voice of the Prophets, Isaiah to Malachi, will not be trumped by modern day theologians who have forged a replacement theology for physical Israel and the covenants and promises God made with them. The grand vision of the restored Kingdom of God presented in the Old Testament cannot be transferred to a Gentile Church which modern theology has attempted to forge from the New Testament. Nor has Israel, the people of the Book, been replaced by the Gentiles of the New Testament.

For several centuries, mainstream theologians camped under almost every imaginable denominational label, have attempted to replace the Old Testament corpus of the Bible with a replacement theology. The transfer of God's covenants and promises made with ancient Israel to a multi-racial New Testament Gentile Church is labeled the *Doctrine of Supersessionism*. This doctrine is now firmly rooted in Catholicism, Greek Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestant churches. For these Christian communicants, the multi-racial, Gentile Church has assumed the full place of ancient Israel, including all the honors, covenants, and promises bequeathed to them by a Holy God.

Evangelical and Pentecostal theologians have opted to forge two separate theologies, operating in tandem and parallel with one another in Scripture. They admit that the unconditional covenants and promises made to physical Israel cannot be denied without completely rejecting Scripture. They continue to leave a place of honor at the biblical table for ancient Israel. They acknowledge that there must be a regathering, reunification, and restoration of physical Israel to the land given by promise to Abraham. This prophetic worldview, complete with a vision of the restored Kingdom of God on earth, continues to occupy a central place in evangelical circles.

At the same time, Evangelicals and Pentecostals honor the multi-racial New Testament Gentile Church theology which they inherited from their Christian ancestors coming out of Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, and Protestant backgrounds. While these people are clearly devoted to the concept of a Gentile Church, they also pay homage and fealty to Israel, whom they identify as the Jews. The face of this Jewish body is in Palestine, with remnant bodies of Jews living in scattered places throughout the cities of the world. The Christian church, irrespective of church label, has assumed and taught that modern Jews are representative of biblical Israel. The terms *Jew* and *Israel* are considered synonymous and are used interchangeably by Christian theologians the world over. No attempt is made to clarify the fact that Israel of the Northern Kingdom was *never* called Jews. The fact that *real Jews* can only be descended from one tribe, Judah, is never mentioned. The truth that most Israelites are not and have never been Jews is a foreign thought to most Christians and the clergy who lead them.

The word *Jew* in singular form (*Yee-hoo-dee*) appears only ten times in all of the Old Testament. Eight of those ten times occur in the Book of Esther, one time in Jeremiah 34:9, and one time in Zechariah 8:23. The word *Jew* first appears in Esther 2:5 about 518 BC. Except for the Book of Esther, the word *Jew* in singular form appears only two times in all the corpus of the Old Testament. In its plural form, *Jew* appears only seventy-three times in the Old Testament, forty-three of which are in Esther.

The first use of *Jew* in its plural form is found in II Kings 16:6 in about 742 BC. The Old Testament is not and never was a book written to the Jews. The name *Israel* appears hundreds of times in the Old Testament. *Israel* is applicable to all twelve tribes, while *Jew* is traced to those descended from the tribe of Judah and to those Israelites who, following the return from the Babylonian Captivity, became known as Jews. The words *Jew* and *Israel* cannot be used interchangeably when reading the Bible and history.

A quick run-through of the New Testament should suffice to demonstrate that God never lost His love or consideration for all twelve tribes of Israel. That modern theologians can simply write off the ten tribes as being lost to God and history is at best irresponsible and at worst reprehensible. Real Jews are descendants of Judah. All Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews. Indeed, most Israelites are **not** Jews! The Old Testament is the history of the Israelites along with the tribe of Judah, out of which come all real Jews. The Old Testament is not a Jewish history of the Jewish people.

Most of the people called Jews in contemporary history are not descended from Judah or from any other Israelite tribe. Modern Jews are a people of mixed ancestry, including Khazarian, Turkish, and Mongol blood. They are not now and never have been connected by blood to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve tribes descending from them.

Modern Jews readily admit that they are not biblical Israel, as we read: "*Strictly speaking, it is incorrect to call an ancient Israelite a 'Jew' or to call a contemporary Jew an 'Israelite' or a 'Hebrew'*" (*The Jewish Almanac*, Bantam Books, New York, 1980. p.3). The word *Jew* does not even appear in the Old Testament until II Kings 16:6, more than one thousand years after Abraham had lived and died. Arthur Koestler, a well-known Jewish author, traces the origin of a majority of the modern Jews to the ancient kingdom of the Khazars, which extended from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and from the Caucasus to the Volga (*The Thirteenth Tribe*, Random House, New York, 1976).

Modern Jews are not descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-Israel. Only a small fraction of orthodox Jews, and none of them Ashkenazic/Khazarian, descended from Judah, the great grandson of Abraham. Two thousand years ago, our Lord Jesus Christ clearly divided the pseudo (false) Jews from those real Jews descended from Judah. "... **and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan**" (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). Real Jews descended from Judah are indeed Israelites! Most modern Jews are not now and never were Israelites.

The lost ten tribes of Israel date from the invasion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the captivity of millions of Israelites into the Assyrian empire between 771 and 721 BC.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, His Apostles, and historians of antiquity did not lose these millions of people. Jesus clearly announced His focus was with the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He instructed His chosen Apostles to avoid others and **"go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"** (Matt. 10:6). Speaking of His own mission, Jesus Christ declared: **"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."** Speaking to Zacchaeus, Jesus Christ also declared: **"This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Luke 19:9-10).

Even the Pharisees, leaders of a primary religious body in Jerusalem in the first century, clearly recognized the existence of the Israelites that were scattered in dispersion. In conversation about Jesus Christ, Caiaphas, being the high priest, **"prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad"** (John 11:51-52). These lost sheep that were scattered abroad were the same people Jesus Christ referred to when He declared: **"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd"** (John 10:16).

Close examination of the New Testament quickly establishes that the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel, not only lost in sin but obviously scattered in dispersion, were the primary people whom Jesus Christ came to evangelize. Speaking to some Jews who were obviously pretenders and pseudo, and not descended from Judah, Jesus Christ declared: **"I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:"** (John 10:25-27).

These Jews were not His sheep because they did not believe. They did not believe because they were not His sheep. The true sheep of the House of Israel had an ear to hear Jesus Christ, their Shepherd, (John 10:3), and no concern for the voice of a stranger (John 10:5). The Israelites have consistently rejected the many gods and religions of this world in preference for the only true God, Jesus Christ, in whom there is eternal life (John 17:3). Scripture confirms and history attests to the fact that Jesus Christ had not lost the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moreover, the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ did not lose physical Israel. The record of New Testament Scripture and beyond into the archives of history confirm that the Apostles went to the Israelites in dispersion, some of them traveling into Spain, Gaul, the British Isles, and Scandinavia, while others traversed eastward, seeking the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel across the steppes of Central Asia. William Steuart McBirnie did a marvelous and credible job of tracing the twelve Apostles to Israel in dispersion in his monumental work *The Search For The Twelve Apostles*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1973. This book is now in its ninth printing.

The most celebrated Apostle to the Gentiles was St. Paul. Paul traveled to the Israelites of the dispersion, then being called Gentiles. Paul wrote His New Testament epistles to the

Israelites dwelling in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica. These Greek-speaking Gentiles were Israelites of the great dispersion which now populated the vast regions of the Greek speaking world under Roman rule. Standing before King Agrippa making his defense, the battle-scarred Apostle Paul declared, "***And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come***" (Acts 26:6-7).

The Holy Spirit used St. Paul to write His epistle to the Romans more than twenty-five years after Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead and ascended into heaven. Placing the spotlight on Israel, the Holy Spirit declares this: "***I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew ...***" (Rom. 11:1-2). The Corinthian Israelites confessed that their ancestors had been in Egypt, had passed through the sea, and were baptized unto Moses (I Cor. 10:1-2). The Gauls who poured into Greece in the third century before the birth of Jesus Christ were Israelites of the great dispersion. Writing to the Israelite congregations in Galatia, Paul declared this: "***And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God***" (Galatians 6:16).

The Apostle Peter addressed his first general epistle to the Israelites of the great dispersion: "***Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...***" (I Pet. 1:1-2). James authored one of the first and oldest of the New Testament epistles. He wrote expressly to the twelve tribes of Israel. This epistle confirmed the existence and knowledge of all twelve tribes more than twenty-five years after the resurrection. "***James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting***" (James 1:1).

The lost ten tribes of Israel have really never been lost. Lost to modern theologians and historians, yes! But lost to God our Father Who elected Israel to be the people of His praise in the earth? No! Not lost to Jesus Christ, Who came to be their Redeemer. And, surely not lost to the Holy Spirit, Who effectually guided them to the great redemption work of Jesus Christ throughout the centuries.

The lost ten tribes of Israel are alive and well on planet earth today. They constitute the Caucasian population centers of the Anglo-Saxon nations of the earth. Follow the path that biblical Christianity has traversed during the past two thousand years, and you will find the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The lost sheep of the House of Israel have not been lost to the triune God of Scripture. These people have erected cathedrals and places of worship to Jesus Christ throughout Europe, Scandinavia, the British Isles, Canada, America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and elsewhere in the world.

Yes, lost Israel has been found! Check out the Caucasian populations of the nations of the Christian West, and you will find biblical Israel. Most of these people have yet to discover their spiritual and racial identity as the people of the Book, but they will in due

time. The Churches of the Christian West are primarily stocked with biblical Israel. Indeed, Israel is the Church, and the Church is Israel. Up to the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th Century, the churches of Christianity were pure Caucasian, and for a long time thereafter.

If you are Caucasian by race, a Christian by spiritual birth, a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a lover of the Word of God, there is about a 99.9% percent chance that you are a genetic Israelite. The greatest priority of the lost sheep of the House of Israel is to humble themselves in repentance before God, seek His face with all their heart, and prepare in this life to reign with Jesus Christ in the restored Kingdom to come (Luke 1:32-33).

You have no greater priority than to make peace with God through Jesus Christ and keep His Commandments unto eternal life in His glorious Kingdom