

REFUTING THE TEN LOST TRIBES THEORY

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The so-called ten lost tribes to which we have reference are the tribes which made up the Kingdom of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, which came into existence at the division of the Kingdom in the days of the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and which were taken into captivity by the Assyrians some 120 years before the Kingdom of Judah, the Southern kingdom was taken into the Babylonian captivity.
2. The basic tenet of the premillennial system of doctrine is that the ten tribes which separated from Judah under the leadership of Jeroboam, identified as Israel, were taken captive by Assyria about 722-721 B.C. and were consequently lost to view as a nation.
 - a. "Lost" is not used here in a symbolic or metaphoric sense but literally.
 - b. It is held that these Jewish people have had no sure identity, have not returned from captivity, and that some O.T. prophecies are yet to be fulfilled in them, namely, those dealing with a "return from captivity."
3. A statement from Hurlbut's Story of the Bible says: "As in their own land, the children of Israel had forsaken the Lord and had worshipped idols, so after they were taken to these distant lands, they sought the gods of the people of those lands and ceased to be Israelites; and after a time they lost all knowledge of their own God, who had given them his words and sent them his prophets. So there came an end to the Ten Tribes of Israel, for they never again came back to their own land, and were lost among the peoples of the far east."
4. Central to the materialistic, man-made doctrine of premillennialism is the supposition that the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, are to be restored to Jerusalem at the time of Christ's so-called 1,000 year reign here on earth, during which there is to be a period of universal righteousness here on earth.
 - a. Those who hold the theory try to use the prophecies which clearly refer to Israel's return from Babylonian captivity to teach their false theory.
 - b. They postpone these prophecies to the "end time" without any scriptural authority to do so, ignoring the fact that they have already been fulfilled.
 - c. They allow for Judah's return from captivity; however, they reject the idea that the Jews who returned included the ten northern tribes.
5. Another aspect of their erroneous restoration theory is the assertion that the land promises made to Abraham as early as Gen.12 were never completely fulfilled; thus, the original twelve tribes are yet to occupy the land, are yet to be restored to and will yet dwell safely in their land, and that the Jewish nation, National

- Israel, will be restored, the Jewish temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and Jesus Christ will reign on David's literal throne in that city for a literal 1,000 years.
6. They seem to be unaware of or refuse to believe the plain Bible statements concerning the land promise made to Abraham concerning their continued occupation of it once they occupied it in fulfillment of the promise.
 - a. That it was a conditional promise, dependent upon their continued obedience to God, Josh.23:14-16; Exo.19:5.
 - b. That the land promise to Abraham and his descendents was fulfilled; that they did receive and occupy the land – all of the land; all was fulfilled, Josh.21:43-45; 24:13,14.
 - c. The very fact that they were warned not to become disobedient lest they “perish quickly from off the good land” is undeniable evidence that the land promise had been granted, Josh.23:16.
 - d. Moses had earlier warned that disobedience would cause them to be consumed “from off the land” by Jehovah, Deut.28:21.
 7. Eventually, because of rebellion and idolatry – because of their sins – Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians; some 120 years later Judah was carried into Babylonian captivity.
 8. Also, for emphasis, the premillennial theory that the so-called ten lost tribes are yet to be restored to Palestine is false; their theory that God's restoration promise to any part of Israel to Palestine is yet future, is yet to be fulfilled, is false.
 9. Consider the evidence with me that clearly refutes the ten lost tribes theory, which is were we are placing the emphasis in this study.

II. DISCUSSION

A. BACKGROUND EVIDENCE CONCERNING GOD'S PROMISE REGARDING THE RESTORATION OF THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL IN DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE BEEN RESTORED.

1. First, consider Deut.30:1-4.
 - a. God through Moses prophesied that his people Israel – all of his people Israel – would be scattered among the nations, “whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee,” v.1.
 - b. That they would be restored – all of them – to their land, or be restored from captivity, or be gathered from all the nations, “whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee,” but only after, or if an when, they returned to the Lord thy God, and obeyed his voice

- “according to all that I command thee this day, thou and they children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,” vv.2-4.
- c. In other words, when they were brought to repentance for their sins that caused them to be taken into captivity by these nations. See Dan.9:1-27.
2. Second, the restoration prophecies clearly reveal that only a remnant would be restored.
 - a. Because of the influence of sin and idolatry in their lives, only a remnant would be restored to Palestine; the rest choosing to stay in sin rather than choosing to return to God.
 - b. But it would be a remnant of all the tribes that would be restored!
 - c. Isa.10:20-22; Cf. Rom.9:27.
 - d. Jer.23:3.
 - e. Zech.2:6,7, through whom God, some 20 years after the return under Cyrus, king of Persia, pleaded for more of the Israelites to return home. However, most would not give heed, but chose not to return.
 3. Third, not all the people remained in Assyria when Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was taken into captivity; for some escaped and returned to Judah.
 - a. 2Chr.30:1-6.
 - (1) Some years after Israel fell, King Hezekiah of Judah sent messengers with letters to all Israel, also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God unto the Lord God of Israel, v.1.
 - (2) The messengers were sent to all the area of the original Israel – from Dan to Beersheba – inviting Israel and Judah, 2Chr.30:10,11,18,25; 31:1; 35:17,18; 34:9; 1Kgs.12:23; especially 2Chr.30:5,6.
 - b. During Asa’s time, and may we say constantly, there was a gathering of the people from all the ten tribes who rallied to Judah, 2Chr.15: 8-15.
 4. Fourth, the restoration of the ten tribes was clearly prophesied by the O.T. prophets.
 - a. Amos 9:14 said that the captivity of Israel – the remnant – would return to Palestine and would rebuild the destroyed cities and live in them.

- (1) It is claimed by the Premillennialists that this prophecy pertaining to the ten “lost” tribes was not fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian captivity.
 - (2) That it is yet to be fulfilled. That it will not be fulfilled prior to the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth and his millennial reign here on this earth on David’s throne in the city of Jerusalem.
 - (3) Consequently, the establishment of the modern state of Israel and later migrations of Jews to that land have become “signs of the times,” or “signs of the end time,” signaling the imminent return of Jesus to the earth to begin his millennial reign as a fulfillment of O.T. prophecy.
- b. Ezek.37:15-23 also prophesied of this restoration. And it is clear that this prophecy includes both Israel and Judah. Thus the destiny of Israel and of Judah are prophetically pictured as being inseparably linked or joined in their restoration to their land.
 - c. Question: Has the prophesied restoration taken place? Or, is it still in the future as Premillennialists claim?

B. BIBLE EVIDENCE THAT THE TEN TRIBES WERE RESTORED TO PALESTINE AFTER THE TIME OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY; THAT THE RESTORATION OF THE TEN TRIBES IS A MATTER OF HISTORY IN FULFILLMENT OF O.T. PROPHECY.

1. Isaiah, prophesied concerning “the burden of Babylon,” her destruction, her fall, and the release of God’s people in captivity there, Ch.13:1,6,9-19,20.
2. Cyrus, King of Persia, was chosen to overthrow Babylon and build the Lord’s house in Jerusalem, 2Cor.36:20-23.
3. During the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, the restoration of Israel –the ten tribes – as well as Judah, took place; it is a clear matter of Bible history.
 - a. Ezra, in Ezra 1:1-4, recorded what took place during the 1st year of Cyrus’ reign, who had overthrown or conquered Babylon.
 - (1) V.1 states that this fulfilled all the prophecies of Jeremiah relative to Israel’s restoration to their land after the 70 year Babylonian captivity (Cf. Jer.25:11-14;2Chr.36:22,23; See also, Jer.29:10; Isa.44:21,24,26,28).
 - (2) Vv.1-3

- (a) The Lord God of heaven had given Cyrus all the kingdoms of the earth, and he made a restoration proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing.”
 - (b) This proclamation revealed to the captives that God had charged Cyrus with the responsibility of seeing that God’s house was built at Jerusalem.
 - (c) He asks, “Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem
 - (d) Since this decree was proclaimed throughout “all the kingdoms of the earth,” every Jew on earth was included in the restoration proclamation.
4. The prophet Nehemiah in Neh.1:8-10 quoted the words of Moses in Deut.30:1-4 to **all of Israel**, God’s people, regarding God’s promise to restore them to Palestine, or gather them from among the nations where he had driven them or scattered them because of their sins.
- a. In quoting and applying this prophecy of God through Moses, Nehemiah thus affirmed that this prophecy was fulfilled in their return from Babylonian captivity.
 - b. This would include the so-called ten “lost” tribes. For it was “all Israel” according to Moses, not part of.
5. The book of Ezra recorded that all twelve tribes returned from captivity. For it clearly indicates the continued existence of twelve tribes after the return from captivity under Cyrus, King of Persia.
- a. Ezra 2:1,2, speaking of those who went up out of the captivity, records the names of those who “came with Zerubbabel” – naming a total of eleven. A parallel account in Neh.7:7 names twelve.
 - b. Ezra, according to Ch.8:24-30, received tribute from the people for the purposed temple, to be built in Jerusalem.
 - (1) He appointed or charged 12 men with responsibility of bringing this tribute “to Jerusalem unto the house of our God,” or to be responsible for it during the trip home.
 - (2) As the tribute is received, he mentions that it came “from all Israel,” v.25.
 - c. Then, in Ch.8:35, he records that upon arrival in Jerusalem, the “children of the captivity” worshipped God, offering “**twelve bullocks for all Israel**,” and “**twelve he goats for a sin offering**.” Cf. Ezra 6:16,17.

- (1) How can there be any doubt that the people thought of themselves as a complete nation composed of twelve tribes at this time, rather than two tribes and the Levites?
- d. In Ezra Ch.10, after the return, Ezra remonstrates with them because of the foreign wives they have taken unlawfully during their captivity, and insists that they put them away.
 - (1) First, he addresses those of Judah and Benjamin, Vv.1-3,9-12.
 - (2) Then, those of Israel, vv.25-44.
- e. Ezra 2:70 states that all the tribes – “all Israel”-- resettled their own native lands.
- f. After their return from captivity, as they began to build the temple, the ten tribes joined in with Judah in worshipping God, Ezra 3:1,2.
 - (1) “The children of Israel wee in the cities”
 - (2) “The people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem”
 - (3) The Jews and Israel were “one man”
6. Further evidence. In 1Chr.9:1-3 a distinction is made between Israel and Judah (v.1), and where each had returned to his own possession according to the genealogies.
 - a. Included in this number are those of Ephraim and Manasseh, two of the ten Northern tribes supposedly lost in toto, and yet to be restored at “the end time.”
 - b. Returned to his own possession, or “dwelt in their possession” (1Ch.9:2) is fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer.12:14,15) that when they returned to Palestine from captivity, they would return “every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.”
 - c. This, of course, was mandated by God’s law governing their inheritance – their land could not be sold; it was to be inherited only through family estate, Lev.25:13; 27:24.
7. Furthermore, God, through his prophet Jeremiah, tells the house of backsliding Judah and Israel that if they will repent “they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers,” Jer.3:18,23; Cf. Zech.8:13; 10:6,7.
8. Ezekiel in Ch.3:5,11,15 spoke of the “house of Israel” captivity in Babylon by the river Chebar and to this house only throughout the book.
 - a. Then in Ch.47:13,14, to the same captives, he stated, “Thus saith the Lord God; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another...”

- b. This was fulfilled through the return at the time of Cyrus, king of Persia, else the ten tribes are not part of “all his people” – the “twelve tribes.”
- c. See Ezra 1,2; 2Chr.36:20-23; Neh.1:8-10; Deut.30:1-4.

C. N.T. EVIDENCE THAT THE TEN TRIBES RETURNED FROM CAPTIVITY. OR, N.T. EVIDENCE OF THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE AND ONENESS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES AFTER THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

1. Lk.2:36-39 gives the account of Anna, the prophetess, meeting Jesus and his parents when he was taken to Jerusalem for them to “perform all things according to the law of the Lord.”
 - a. Anna, according to Luke, as of the tribe of Asher, one of the so-called “lost” tribes.
 - b. Here is positive proof that the lineage of the tribe of Asher was not lost, but all through the years from the captivity and the restoration was identified along with the two tribes of Judah.
2. Jesus, in Lk.22:30, declares that his chosen apostles were to “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
 - a. It is understood that a figurative idea is implied here.
 - b. But also recognize that Jesus still through and spoke of Israel in the collective sense of twelve tribes, not of two tribes only.
3. The apostles on the limited commission were sent “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Mt.10:5,6. Thus the twelve tribes were in Judah during the time of Christ on earth. Cf. Mt.15:24f.
4. Jeremiah, in Jer.31:31-34, prophesied that the Lord would “make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”
 - a. Paul, in Heb.8:8-13, affirms that covenant is in existence now as the New Testament of Christ.
 - b. It is now our rule of faith and practice.
5. Paul, in Ac.26:6,7, in his defense before Agrippa, makes mention of the hope of Israel – “the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers” – (namely, the hope of Jesus as the Messiah), “unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain.”
 - a. That is, the Jews of all the tribes, generation after generation, hoped to see and receive the fulfillment of that promise which God made to their fathers.
 - b. This is not a figurative expression.

- c. Paul speaks of action in progress among all tribes of the Jews in times past as well as now.
 - d. Even though the Jews as a whole failed to recognize him as the Christ when he came, they still looked for the Messiah to come according to God's promise to the fathers.
6. Hosea, in Hos.1:10,11; 2:23, prophesied that the children of Judah and the children of Israel would be gathered together under one head.
- a. Paul, in Rom.9:24-26, said this prophecy has been fulfilled in the N.T. church, the "Israel of God." Cf. Gal.6:16; 3:26-29; Eph.2:12-15.

III. CONCLUSION

1. When one looks objectively at the evidence from God's word, he must be impressed with the fact that the "lost ten tribes" theory is but a figment of some men's imaginations, is totally destitute of evidence, is but a perversion of scripture, is a false theory.
2. A "remnant" of the ten tribes who went into Assyria and of the Jews who went into Babylon returned from captivity to Palestine, and by the time of Christ, the remnant had grown substantially, into millions of "Jews."
3. All twelve tribes were present on Pentecost in Ac.2.
4. The O.T. prophecy did not fail, neither were they postponed, which is tantamount to failing. Everything has gone according to God's infallible and immutable plan and promise, Heb.6:13-20; Ac.2:22-24; 4:23-28. The so-called "mystery parenthesis" is a renegade doctrine, which strikes at the very nature of God.
5. Nothing remains of a material fulfillment for National, fleshly Israel today, or for the fleshly seed of Abraham yet to be received in a future millennial reign of Christ here on this earth.
6. Both Jews and Gentiles are made one in Christ when by faith they obey the gospel of Christ and saved thereby; for it the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe on Jesus, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-41; Gal.3:8-29; Rom.1:14-17; 3:19-28; 10:1-3; Eph.2:11-22; Jno.3:3-5.
7. There is one hope; it is in Christ by means of the gospel; it is for both Jew and Gentile alike, Eph.4:4-6; Rom.8:24,25; Heb.6:13-20.