

The Hand of God

Understanding the Past to Discern the Future

By Clay Willis

Introduction

What is the Bible? It most certainly is neither a history of the universe or even of this planet nor is it a history of the human race. If God inspired the writing of the Bible, He chose to tell us very little about the origin of our universe and our planet. He told us the earth was in a state of devastation ("without form and void" - Genesis 1:2 KJV¹) before He changed this world into habitable form for life. He then created the sun, the moon, flora and fauna and last He created man. In terms of origins, that's essentially all the Bible tells us.

Only the first 11 chapters of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, are devoted to that creation. That text must be understood as being allegorical ("having hidden spiritual meaning that transcends the literal sense of a sacred text"²) and a story handed down over hundreds of generations before it was committed to writing.

Those who interpret the time spans given in the first 10 chapters of the Bible - using the genealogy recorded in Genesis chapter 5 for instance - find themselves at odds with science and secular and archeological history. Those who attempt to extrapolate or justify those time lines to fit with science create more problems than they solve. The Bible tells us that a "day" with God is "as a thousand years" [II Peter 3:8]. This too is allegory and does not mean a day is *equal* to a thousand years but that the human concept of measured time is meaningless to an immortal being.

God does not give us historical specifics but He gave mankind intelligence and a sense of curiosity. In our search for such origins, we come to realize our relative individual insignificance in the scheme of things. We come to understand that there are things we probably will never know and things we seem incapable of comprehending, no matter how advanced our knowledge and science becomes.

Albert Einstein wrote, "science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind ... a legitimate conflict between science and religion cannot exist." (Einstein 1940, pp. 605-607)

As the wise man that wrote the book of Ecclesiastes stated:

I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know

that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. NIV¹ Ecclesiastes 3:10-12

Our curiosity about our origins and the quest for understanding of the origin of the universe leads a great many people to believe that there must be a Creator behind it all. The ubiquitous nature of religion throughout all cultures and civilizations shows that man has an innate sense of intelligent forces at work that we cannot fully comprehend and thus religions were developed to offer explanation.

The first 10 chapters of the Bible deal with this enigma with a brief description and little explanation. That a Creator exists, that He deals with mankind, that He created mankind for a purpose, that He gave us laws and that He influences or directs what happens to mankind are all matters of faith and not science. The Bible makes no pretense in the latter direction.

Most of the 11th chapter of Genesis traces the genealogy of Noah after the great flood to the time of a man called Abraham and the rest of the Bible is devoted to his descendents. The only time other nations and people are mentioned or described in the Bible is a result of their contact with Abraham's descendents.

Three major religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - sprang from the events that transpired with Abraham. The Bible, of course, is the prime source for the religions of Judaism and Christianity and the writings included in the canon were completed before the end of the 1st Century A.D. Islam originated in the 7th Century A.D.

Though neither Judaism or Christianity have ever held sway over a majority of the earth's population, secular history shows that these religions are interwoven into almost every major event in the last 2,000 years. Western Civilization is the result of a combination of the influences of Judaism and Christianity. Our world today would be drastically different but for the underpinning of the tenets of these religions.

Christianity and Judaism not only affected the moral character of the people of Western Civilization but also were the basis of the legal and social foundations of its institutions, political character and governments. The common law of the nations comprising Western Civilization can be traced to laws given in the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament with the teaching of Jesus and His disciples and apostles.

While adherents to both religions have done some bad things, the basic beliefs of the religions have had profound effect upon the nations in which those adherents dwelt.

Islam, which traces its origins to Abraham in its sacred writing, the Quran, is very much in the news today and most of the current friction and armed conflict is a result of the actions of radical, militant adherents to that religion. The conflict between the Islamic nations and the nation of Israel and the nations of Western Civilization can be traced to events that happened about 4,000 years ago. The current Middle Eastern

conflicts are a direct result of the Israelite claims to the land of Palestine and the Islamic denial of that claim.

It is important to understand how those conflicts impact our world today. Along with other points, this paper examines their Biblical origins, how they impact the whole world, show up in the headlines of our newspapers and most likely hold the key to a great many events in our future.

If the Bible is truly the word of God, what happens in our future will largely be played out among Abraham's descendents. This is not to dismiss the actions of the Oriental people or the Indian people or the African people as inconsequential but things directly affecting Western Civilization in our near future will most likely be shaped by the conflicts between the nations that claim descent from Abraham.

If we who live in Western Civilization are to understand the big picture - the great social forces that will shape our future - we must first attempt to understand their origins and the forces that have brought us to this day.

The Bible presents a vista of the last 4,000 years in which it is apparent to the author of this paper that there have been forces in play that are not human in origin. The Bible traces select portions of the history of Abraham's descendents and those forces are displayed down to the time of Jesus and the New Testament. If the Bible is true, we can be certain that those forces have continued in play since that time as well.

When taken as a whole - and to truly understand it, it must be taken as a whole - the Bible gives us the picture of divine guidance of a people - the descendents of Abraham - and the manipulation of entire nations and major events to bring about His divine will for those people.

It is my belief that the "hand of God" is behind those forces and that we can only understand what will happen in our future by understanding how He has shaped the past. To get to the present, we must turn to the past and examine how those forces have worked and find a correlation to the present.

Abraham - The Father of Nations

*Abram*³ is a Hebrew word meaning "high father" or more likely "original father" in this context. God spoke to Abram in his home in Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia (Iraq on today's maps) and told him to go in to the land of Canaan (Israel or Palestine on today's maps) and began to make promises to Abram.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." NIV Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."
NIV Genesis 13:14-17

God began to show Abram the future including the fact that his descendents would become slaves for 400 years.

Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. NIV Genesis 15:13-15

Since Abram and his wife Sarai had no children to fulfill the promises God was making, they decided to "help God out" (a common human trait) and Sarai had Abram sleep with her servant, Hagar, who bore Abram a son named Ishmael [Genesis chapter 16].

Adam and Eve were not content to live in paradise and wait upon God to decide when and how they should be taught about good and evil. They "helped God out" by disobeying Him and trying to become as wise as gods [Genesis 3:5] without attaining the character and personal growth necessary. So this facet of human nature has been with mankind since the start.

It is from Ishmael (or Ismail as some Quran translations spell it) that the Islamists claim their heritage⁴. God told Hagar the future of Ishmael.

The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." NIV Genesis 16:11-12

When God began to make "covenants" with Abram, He changed Abram's name to `Abraham⁵, which means "father of a multitude" or "father of many nations" in this context.

"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to

be your God and the God of your descendants after you." NIV Genesis 17:4-7

God told Abraham that the covenant was not to be established through Ishmael but through a child to be born to him and Sarai in their old age. God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah. *Sara*⁶ in Hebrew means, "high ranking person" but *Sarah*⁷ means "queen".

God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?"

And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." NIV Genesis 17:15-21

God kept His promises concerning Ishmael. Ishmael had 12 sons [Genesis 25:12-18]. God indeed made Ishmael into a "great nation". In 750 A.D. the Islamic caliphate - made up of the descendents of Ishmael, Esau and others descended from Abraham - conquered Spain, northern Africa, most of central Asia and even into parts of India. That nation established great libraries and centers of learning and the decimal system we use today along with algebra and trigonometry were developed by the scholars of this Islamic Caliphate.

Furthermore, at this time the culture was rather kind to the Christians and Jews in the lands they conquered, considering them "people of the book" and they were allowed to keep their religion and considerable freedom in return for their paying taxes to the government.

God also kept his promises to Abraham. Isaac was born the next year just as God had promised. Several years later when Isaac was still a young boy, God tested Abraham. After making promises for so many years about the future of his descendents, God told him to offer his covenant son, Isaac, as a "burnt offering".

Both Abraham and Sarah were well beyond the normal child bearing years when Isaac was born. They considered this miraculous but it was still a human function to have children and *could* have happened naturally. The Bible explains why Abraham was willing to obey God without question and kill that son through whom the covenant was to be kept.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. NIV Hebrews 11:17-19

When it was apparent that Abraham's faith was so strong that he would kill his only son simply because God told Him to, God stopped Abraham at the last minute [Genesis 22:1-14].

Afterward, God made the strongest promise yet to Abraham. God took an oath⁸, swearing by Himself, that He would fulfill His promises to Abraham.

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities ["gates" - KJV is the more accurate translation] of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." NIV Genesis 22:15-18

God later made another covenant with the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai that was *conditional*. God promised certain blessing to the Israelites if they kept the terms of the covenant and the Israelites promised to follow those terms. God also promised punishment if those terms were broken. In that covenant, there were promises from both sides and such a covenant may be annulled if broken by either side.

In the covenant described above with Abraham, it was only God who made the promises and "swore by Himself", thus making the covenant *unconditional*.

It would matter neither what Abraham's descendants did nor how evil they might become, nor where they might be located; *God was still obligated to bestow those covenant blessings*. For added emphasis, I repeat: *It was unconditional*.

Isaac

The Bible tells us much less about Isaac than about Abraham but tells us that God spoke to him and continued the covenant blessings with him.

That night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham." NIV Genesis 26:24

Isaac married Rebekah and they had twin boys - Esau, the first born, and Jacob. Before they were born, God told Rebekah that the younger would be the inheritor of the family blessings.

The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." NIV Genesis 25:23

This is clearly a harbinger of the enmity that would exist between the descendents of Esau and the Israelites, the descendents of Jacob.

Esau, as the firstborn, was the rightful heir of the birthright. Though the story clearly depicts the duplicity of Jacob and his mother in obtaining the *birthright blessing*, Jacob had already obtained the actual birthright from Esau. Esau is said to have "despised" his physical birthright. Indeed, Esau thought so little of his birthright that he *sold* it to Jacob for food.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."
"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"
But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright. NIV Genesis 25:29-34

This is important in understanding today's conflicts because in our time the descendents of Esau are counted with the descendents of Ishmael as part of the Arab nations and are constantly at war with the present nation of Israel. At stake in that war is the "birthright" - the ownership of the land of Canaan (Palestine).

Just as Esau willingly gave up his birthright and yet still blamed Jacob for his loss, so today much of the Islamic/Arabic population of the Middle East blame their poverty and many of their other problems on the Jews, who had nothing or at least very little to do with those problems.

The word "Arab" has interesting origins. Webster's² dictionary offers this listing under Arab:

Etymology: Middle English, from Latin *Arabus*, *Arabs*, from Greek *Arab-*, *Araps*, of Semitic origin; akin to Akkadian *Arabu*, *Aribi* desert nomads, Arabic *A`rAb* Bedouins
1 a: a member of the Semitic people of the Arabian Peninsula **b:** a member of an Arabic-speaking people

Yet an examination of a Hebrew/English lexicon offers a far different, more ancient etymology. The Hebrew word *`arab*⁹ is of Chaldean/Babylonian origin and its root form means "to mingle" or "to mix". As it came to be used in the Hebrew vernacular, it meant, "to grow dusky at sunset", "to be darkened as at the end of the day"⁹. It was used by the Chaldean/Babylonians to refer to Arabia or the people of

Arabia because the people were a mixture of many races including some of those of sub-Saharan Africa.

The Hebrew word is translated as “mixture” or “mixed” in these verses from Daniel:

Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed [*`arab*⁹] with clay.
And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture [*`arab*⁹] and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes [*`arab*⁹] with clay. NIV Daniel 2:41,43

Easton's Bible Dictionary helps explain who the Arabs were and are:

The whole land [Arabia] appears (Gen. 10) to have been inhabited by a variety of tribes of different lineage, *Ishmaelites*, *Arabians*, *Idumeans*, *Horites*, and *Edomites*; but at length becoming amalgamated, they came to be known by the general designation of Arabs. The modern nation of Arabs is predominantly *Ishmaelite*. Their language is the most developed and the richest of all the Semitic languages, and is of great value to the student of Hebrew.

“Edom” was another name for Esau [Genesis 25:30].

Esau and Ishmael and their descendents were intertwined from the start because Esau married Ishmael’s daughter. Esau was married to two Hittite women and this was a source of a lot of grief for Isaac and Rebekah [Genesis 26:34-35]. Esau tried to please Isaac by marrying Ishmael’s daughter.

Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman, and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had. NIV Genesis 28:6-9

Throughout history the descendents of Ishmael and Esau have despised the descendents of Jacob (Israel).

Jacob - Who Became “Israel”

Jacob received the birthright blessings from Isaac through subterfuge (*Ya`aqob*¹⁰ in Hebrew means “heel catcher” and also “one who supplants” as in tripping someone by the heels to win a race). When the time came for Isaac to pass along the birthright blessing - it should have gone to the eldest, Esau - Jacob “supplanted” Esau with the help of his mother, disguising himself as Esau so that Isaac would give the birthright blessings to him [Genesis 27:1-29]. He had already obtained the birthright from Esau through an oath [NIV Genesis 25:29-34].

Yet it is clear, according to the Bible (including Genesis 25:23 above), that this happened with God's blessing.

An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.
"I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."
Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins." But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD." NIV Malachi 1:1-4 (quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 9:13)

It is also clear that the transaction met with God's approval because He began to repeat the promises to Jacob that He first made to Abraham and Isaac.

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." NIV Genesis 28:10-15

God changed Jacob's name to Israel¹¹ [Genesis 32:28] removing the stain of the name "the supplanter". God gave him a name that is a combination of the Hebrew word 'el¹² (God) and Sarah⁷ (the masculine form means "prince") which means, "one who prevails with God" or "a prince before God". Jacob had 12 sons from his two wives and their two servants. These sons' descendents became the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jacob was tricked by his future father-in-law, Laban, into marrying Leah, his oldest daughter, first rather than Rachel, with whom Jacob had fallen in love. Jacob worked for 7 years to earn the right to marry only to wind up married to Leah. Laban allowed Jacob to marry Rachel also, but only after Jacob spent the first week with Leah. He had to work for another 7 years for Rachel and agreed to work another 6 years to accumulate flocks of animals that formed the dowry for the daughters.

In the order of their sons' births, from Leah was born Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Then Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naphtali and from Zilpah came Gad and Asher. (When their childbearing stopped, the two brides had Jacob sleep with their servant girls, Zilpah for Leah and Bilhah for Rachel.) Leah then gave birth to Issachar

and Zebulun. For all of this time, Rachel was barren but she finally conceived twice giving birth to Joseph and a few years later died giving birth to Benjamin.

The whole story of Jacob's marriages and the birth of his sons may be read from Genesis 28:10 through 35:29.

God continued to repeat His promises to Jacob and even expanded them.

God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel. " So he named him Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations ["company of nations" - KJV is again the more accurate translation] will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." NIV Genesis 35:10-12

Israel - the 12 Tribes

The story of Jacob's son Joseph is well known. Joseph was Jacob's obvious favorite and the brothers were jealous. He was sold into slavery by his brothers, taken to Egypt where he eventually became a high official in the Egyptian government and later brought Jacob and his 11 brothers there because of a famine in their land. This story may be read from Genesis 37:1 through 47:31.

A few generations after Joseph died, the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites for almost 400 years before God raised up Moses to bring them out of Egypt and eventually back to the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This story can be read in the first 12 chapters of the book of Exodus.

Before leaving the Egyptian period, there is a very important Bible story that must be examined because one cannot understand God's plan for Israel without understanding the important difference between the physical (birthright) promises God made and the spiritual promises having to do with the royalty of the Israelites and the ancestors of Jesus [Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38].

Before the Israelites were enslaved, Jacob was an old man still living in Egypt. When he realized he was soon going to die, he called for his son Joseph to come and receive the birthright blessing that was traditional with the patriarchs.

Now the eldest son, Reuben, would have normally received this blessing and if he were dead or disqualified it would have gone to Simeon or then to Levi. Jacob explained to all 12 why those three were disqualified to receive the birthright.

"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.

"Simeon and Levi are brothers-- their swords are weapons of violence. Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased. Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel." NIV Genesis 49:3-7

Since the first three candidates were disqualified it would seem that the birthright should have gone to Judah. And indeed, a birthright blessing was pronounced upon Judah - a very important blessing.

But the Bible does not tell us exactly why the *physical* birthright went to Joseph, who was the firstborn of the wife Jacob loved - Rachel, Leah's younger sister. But that is the case. Perhaps it was Jacob's right to make that choice; perhaps it was because of Joseph's exalted position as a result of his rise in the Egyptian government and his saving of his whole family from famine; perhaps it was because of Jacob's great love for Joseph's mother, Rachel. The Bible does not say.

Furthermore, Jacob chose to "adopt" Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and he actually passed the physical birthright to them and *gave them his name - Israel*. Here is the Bible's description of that event.

Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.

Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples ["company of nations" - KJV is again the more accurate translation], and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'

"Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.

As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem). When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

"They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them." Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and

crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm --may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth."

When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations ["company of nations" - KJV is again the more accurate translation]."

He blessed them that day and said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: `May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. NIV Genesis 48:1-20

This scripture verifies the two different covenantal promises from God to Abraham's descendents.

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)KJV 1 Chronicles 5:1-2

When Jacob extended his final blessings upon all his children, he explained that Reuben (the firstborn of Leah) had disqualified himself by incest with one of Jacob's wives and likewise Simeon and Levi (also Leah's sons) had been disqualified as violent people [Genesis 49:5-6] and could not receive the special blessing he was to bestow upon the eldest qualified son. That blessing fell then to the fourth son - Judah. Jacob made this "birthright" vow to Judah:

"Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness - who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his." NIV Genesis 49:8-10

Here then, is the *spiritual* blessing of God's covenantal promises to Abraham: *The scepter will not depart from Judah until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.*

This is obviously a reference to Jesus, who was a physical descendent of Judah [Matthew 1:2-3].

The apostle Paul confirms that the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham but benefiting all of mankind came to fruition in Jesus.

Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. NIV Galatians 3:6-9; 14-18

And yet the Bible and history both tell us that Jesus never sat on a throne ruling over Israelites or anyone else.

Keep this in mind: the (spiritual birthright) "scepter" will not depart from Judah until Jesus comes to sit on that throne. If God's promises are true, that throne is in existence somewhere today. Somewhere today there is a descendent of Judah sitting as a ruler over people who are the descendents of Abraham.

But the (physical) birthright belonged to Joseph and through him to his sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

A Synopsis of the History of the Israelites

Over the next few hundred years the nation of Israel lived under judges until the time of Samuel - the last judge - but they eventually wanted a king like the nations around them [I Samuel chapters 8 - 10].

God allowed them to set up a kingdom only after having Samuel tell them that this was a rejection of God as their king. The prophetic warning Samuel gave the Israelites was extremely accurate and profound.

And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are

doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.

He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day." NIV 1 Samuel 8:7-18

Israel prospered and was ruled in its heyday by King David and his son Solomon. David was of the tribe of Judah. After Solomon's death the kingdom split in two parts with 10 tribes remaining as the Kingdom of Israel and the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and much of the tribe of Levi forming the Kingdom of Judah - the Jews. This story can be read in the 11th and 12th chapters of I Kings and the 10th chapter of II Chronicles.

Here is also a point vital for understanding the later history of the Israelites.

Before the split, Israelites were not called "Jews" - that name belongs to those who were part of the Kingdom of Judah. *The people of the 10-tribed nation of Israel were never called "Jews". The 12-tribed Israelite nation was never called "Jews".* That word "Jews" does not even appear in the Bible until the "historical" book of Kings at which time the Israelites were at war with the Jews [II Kings 16:6]. The word "Jews" comes from the name Judah.

As *Easton's Bible Dictionary* explains:

Jew: the name derived from the patriarch Judah, at first given to one belonging to the tribe of Judah or to the separate kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 16:6; 25:25; Jer. 32:12; 38:19; 40:11; 41:3), in contradistinction from those belonging to the kingdom of the ten tribes, who were called Israelites.

I cannot understand why almost all Christian preachers and teachers and even secular Bible scholars continue to refer to the nation of Israel as "Jews", even before the split of the kingdom into Israel and Judah. The Bible never calls them "Jews". Even secular sources like *Easton's* state the above information clearly and as a matter of fact and yet almost all preachers, teachers and Bible scholars refer to the entire nation of Israel as "Jews".

It is, in fact, almost impossible to understand the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the other prophets without understanding the difference between the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. All Jews were Israelites but only those of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and however many Levites and members of other tribes that joined them in the Kingdom of Judah were Jews.

The northern 10 tribes are often referred to by those prophets as Ephraim or Israel while the Kingdom of Judah is called by that name - Judah. On occasion the two kingdoms were called by the names of their two capitols - Samaria for Israel, Jerusalem for Judah. Both nations are occasionally referred to together as Israel but the northern 10 tribes and their kingdom are *never* called Jews.

Over a period of several decades, the armies of Assyria besieged both Israel and Judah and often took large numbers of captives from both kingdoms. As was their custom with captives, Assyria relocated them far away from their homes and placed them in the northeastern parts of the realm of Assyria near the Caucasus Mountains. They also brought in people from various other nations to settle the land from which the captives had been removed. The descendents of those people became the "Samaritans" of Jesus' day and is the reason why they were so scorned by the Jews of that time.

Finally in about 721 B.C., Assyria completely decimated the kingdom of Israel and took all the remainder of the 10-tribed kingdom's people captive and relocated them also in the northern and eastern parts of what is now called Asia Minor or Afghanistan. The Israelites lost the knowledge of their identity and disappear from the pages of the Bible and from secular history.

In about 587 B.C., Babylon overran the Kingdom of Judah and took most of the Jews captive and kept them in Babylon for about 70 years. The Medo-Persian Empire arose and conquered Babylon and in about 539 B. C. and the ruler of that empire allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. *We will show below a secular source that verifies that the 10-tribed Israelites never returned to Palestine.*

In about 333 B.C., Alexander the Great conquered the whole area, including Palestine and the Greeks ruled until the Roman Empire arose around 133 B.C. After Alexander's death, the Greek Empire was split in four parts and retained control of the area though with diminished power individually and a lot of wars between them.

Rome controlled Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth and the Roman Empire remained the dominant power around the Mediterranean until the 1400's. It split into two parts around 350 A.D. with the eastern capital at Constantinople and the western capital at Rome and it remained divided until both capitals were eventually overrun.

From around 600 A.D. the people of the Arab nations (descendents of Ishmael and Esau) began conquering parts of the Roman Empire and the Empire was gradually

conquered by a host of other nations. Most historians count the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 A.D. as the official end of the Roman Empire.

Some of God's Promises not Fulfilled

This very short synopsis of the history of the Israelites and a few of the nations who affected them is presented to make a most important point: while Israel became a nation or perhaps even two nations - Israel and Judah - some of God's physical promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were never fulfilled during this time.

Look at what God promised:

1. To make Abraham's descendents into a great nation;
2. That He would give Abraham's descendents the land of Palestine
3. To make an "everlasting" covenant between God and Abraham's descendents;
4. That Abraham's descendents would "possess the gates of their enemies";
5. That Abraham's descendents would spread over the whole world
6. That Abraham's descendents would become "a nation and a company of nations"
7. That all the people of the world would be blessed through those descendents.

God did make Israel into a "great nation" (1) and He gave them the land of Palestine (2).

Certainly sending His son Jesus into this world to provide salvation is a great blessing for all the people of the world (7) in a spiritual sense but all the rest of the covenant promises were *physical* promises. Not only that but it has only been in the last 200 years that a majority of the earth's population has even *heard* of Jesus and there still remains a great majority of the world's population that have not received any blessings from the religions of Judaism or Christianity.

Did God lie? God cannot/does not lie.

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. NIV Hebrews 6:13-18

If this is true, sometime after the 1400's A.D., God has kept or in our future will keep His physical, birthright covenant promises to the descendents of Abraham. As we will show during the discussion of a prophecy from the book of Daniel, it *must* be sometime after 1500 A.D. The veracity of the Bible and God, Himself - if one believes it to be the word of God - is called into question if this is not so.

Where In The World Are Abraham's Descendents?

Let there be no misunderstanding here: As we have shown above and the apostle Paul verified, God *did* at least partially fulfill the spiritual side of His covenant promises by sending His "only begotten" son, Jesus to this earth to bring salvation to all mankind.

Jesus established His church and that church experienced phenomenal growth over the next several centuries and was even declared the official religion of the Roman Empire by Constantine, the Roman emperor in the 300's A.D. Certainly the hope of salvation taught by that church was and is a great blessing to all mankind but the early adherents were persecuted from its inception and the people of the church have never received the *physical blessings* promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - at least not as a nation.

The spiritual promise in the covenant came through Judah, as we've shown above and those promises assuredly apply to the Jews. And as Paul wrote to the church in Rome of Israel's eventual salvation:

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." NIV Romans 11:26-27

History shows that after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 67 - 70 A.D., the Jews have spread throughout the world. The largest concentrations today are in Israel (Palestine) and the United States. Though many are successful and wealthy, it is quite certain that the Jews have never "owned the gates of their enemies" nor become "a nation and a company of nations" nor have they been responsible as a nation for physical blessings upon all of mankind.

The Nazis killed 6 million of them during the course of World War II and they've been among the most repressed and hated of all people over the last two millennia. Ishmael's and Esau's descendents - the Arab/Islamic nations of the world - have been trying to destroy their little nation since its inception in 1948 and that *jihad* is still going on today.

Perhaps the re-establishment of Israel was part of God's plan but it may well have been the Zionists and Christians in Western Civilization attempting once again to "help God out" by reestablishing Israel as a nation. Again, it is certain that the Jews in Palestine today have not received the *physical blessings* promised to the patriarchs.

We know that the nations of Africa and Asia do not qualify as Abraham's descendents. Their histories and cultures make that a certainty. The nations that made up the former Soviet Union and the nations of South America, including the indigenous peoples of both American continents have never "possessed the gates of their enemies" or "spread all over the world" nor have the "people of the whole world been blessed" by the actions of those nations and people.

When we find Abraham's descents today, they will be a nation and a "company of nations" that have shared the "physical blessings" of Abraham's covenant promises from God with all the people of the world.

Bible Prophecy and History

What does Bible prophecy have to say about our time? Many Bible scholars say there is very little that can be applied to our time. Some Christian religions teach that all Bible prophecy has been fulfilled, even the "second coming" of Jesus. Others teach that the New Testament contains prophecies for our future and still others search the Old Testament prophecies as well trying to find the parts that apply to our future.

Of course, some Bible prophecy is so esoteric and convoluted that passages can be lifted out of context - without bothering to compare the prophecies with secular history and the rest of the Bible to find their fulfillment - and applied to our times or to our future. Some even "spiritualize" prophecy that has provable, historical fulfillment and they rationalize this by offering the doctrine of "dual prophecy" - prophecy that can be fulfilled more than once. This "twisting" of the scriptures sometimes leads their followers and students into such things as setting dates for the return of Jesus or the "end of the world".

Many people have become disillusioned because of these forays into imagination and dates for Jesus' return and the "end of the world" that have come and gone and have turned away from religion or at least organized religion in large numbers.

In this article, I attempt to avoid such speculation and manipulation of the scriptures and the use of fables. The speculation that is included is based on logical extrapolations of accepted historical events and the fulfillment of promises made by God. It is my belief that the ideas, extrapolations and conclusions are at least possible and should be at least thought provoking if not convincing.

There is one prophecy in the book of Daniel that I believe may well have application to discovering what happened to the "lost tribes" because it is quite succinct and clear and lends itself well to objective interpretation and understanding. The Bible itself offers interpretation of much of that prophecy. Some may claim it was fulfilled in a different fashion from my interpretation but there are at least as many Bible scholars who agree with my interpretation as disagree.

Before discussing that prophecy from Daniel, I should relate what the Bible and secular history says about the "lost tribes". We should also keep in mind that the Assyrians, who were the ones who dispersed the 10-tribed Kingdom of Israel, also took many of the citizens of the Kingdom of Judah captive prior to the final overthrow of the Kingdom of Israel so when we think of those "lost tribes" we must remember that there would have been members of all 12 tribes in that dispersion.

The prophet Amos writing sometime about 20 years before the fall of the Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. spoke of what would happen to the Israelites.

Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. KJV Amos 9:8-9

Amos prophesied that the Israelites who were dispersed by Assyria would be mixed with ("sifted among" - KJV) many nations. So there is no reason to believe that they would have any distinguishable physical characteristics today. When harvested grains are brought to the threshing area and the chaff separated from the grain with a sieve, it becomes impossible to separate the individual grains according to the plant or field in which they originated. Their heritage would be that of many nations and people.

And yet these people would still carry the bloodlines of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - the Israelites. They are descendents from all 12 tribes including some from Judah (the "Jews") but all of them have lost their sense of identity as Israelites.

The "historical" book of Kings describes the fall of the Kingdom of Israel.

The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria [the capitol city of the Kingdom of Israel] and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes. NIV 2 Kings 17:5-6

So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence. NIV 2 Kings 17:18-20

The only secular historical account of this event was written sometime in the late 1st Century by Flavius Josephus (a Jewish army officer who was captured by the Romans during their siege of Palestine in 67 - 70 A.D. and later granted full Roman citizenship) in his Antiquities of the Jews Book IX, Chapter XIV¹³. This book can be read in its entirety on the Internet.

WHEN Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, had it told him, that [Hoshea] the king of Israel had sent privately to So, the king of Egypt, desiring his assistance against him, he was very angry, and made an expedition against Samaria, in the seventh year of the reign of Hoshea; but when he was not admitted [into the city] by the king, he besieged Samaria three years, and took it by force in the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, and in the seventh year of Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem, and quite demolished the government of the Israelites, and transplanted all the people into Media and Persia among whom he took king Hoshea alive; and when he had removed these people out of this their land he transplanted other nations out of Cuthah, a place so called, (for there is [still] a river of that name in Persia,) into Samaria, and into the country of the Israelites.

So the ten tribes of the Israelites were removed out of Judea nine hundred and forty-seven years after their forefathers were come out of the land of Egypt, and possessed themselves of the country, but eight hundred years after Joshua had been their leader, and, as I have already observed, two hundred and forty years, seven months, and seven days after they had revolted from Rehoboam, the grandson of David, and had given the kingdom to Jeroboam. And such a conclusion overtook the Israelites, when they had transgressed the laws, and would not hearken to the prophets, who foretold that this calamity would come upon them, if they would not leave off their evil doings. What gave birth to these evil doings, was that sedition which they raised against Rehoboam, the grandson of David, when they set up Jeroboam his servant to be their king, when, by sinning against God, and bringing them to imitate his bad example, made God to be their enemy, while Jeroboam underwent that punishment which he justly deserved.

The last historical mention of the "lost tribes" also comes from the same Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews Book XI, Chapter V¹³, where he relates the Jewish leader Ezra's reading of a letter from Xerxes, the ruler of Persia, at a time when the Jews were about to be released from Babylonian captivity and allowed to return to Jerusalem.

So he read the epistle at Babylon to those Jews that were there; but he kept the epistle itself, and sent a copy of it to all those of his own nation that were in Media. And when these Jews had understood what piety the king had towards God, and what kindness he had for Esdras [this is Josephus' name for Ezra, to whom one of the books of the Old Testament is attributed], they were all greatly pleased; nay, many of them took their effects with them, and came to Babylon, as very desirous of going down to Jerusalem; but then the entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country; wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers.

Please notice that Josephus says it was the "Jews" in Media who were "greatly pleased" and many of who "took their effects with them, and came to Babylon, as very desirous of going down to Jerusalem". The distinction between the "Jews" and the "Israelites of the 10 tribes" - pointed out with some care above - explains why, in Jesus' day, the only member of one of the ten tribes mentioned in all of the Gospels and the book of Acts is one "prophetess" from the tribe of Asher [Luke 2:36]

Saying that the "ten tribes" of Israelites were "beyond the Euphrates till now" indicates that near the end of the 1st Century A.D. when Josephus was writing, the Israelites had moved to the north out of the borders of the Medo-Persian Empire and were still located in large numbers somewhere in the northern and eastern parts of what is today called either Asia Minor or perhaps Syria or Afghanistan.

There is no further mention of these people either in the Bible or in secular history. So what happened to them? As Amos prophesied, they were "sifted" among the nations and completely lost their identity as Israelites. Is it possible that they migrated to Western Europe and the British Isles? Certainly! Is there any way to *prove* that this migration happened? Not from the pages of the Bible or history.

However, if the Bible is truly the word of God and if God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not lies, then we can still say by our faith in the Bible and the Creator that their descendents would be the nations and people who received the physical, birthright promises made to the patriarchs.

There are only two nations *until this date and time* in world history since the 1400's that meet the requirements of having received those blessings and through whom all the people of the world have been blessed.

The British Empire and the USA - the "Stone Kingdom"?

The Prophecy of Daniel

The people of the Kingdom of Judah - the Jews - were taken captive by Babylon in about 587 B.C. under the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar. Sometime later, the king had a dream that troubled him. He called his "wise men" and "seers" and asked them to interpret his dream.

Nebuchadnezzar was obviously pretty savvy and realized that if he told these charlatans the details of the dream they could "wing it" and offer various interpretations.

He insisted that they first tell him what he had dreamed and that way - by their knowing what he had dreamed - he could be surer that their explanation was accurate. When none of the "wise men" and "seers" of his court could describe the dream to him, he ordered them all executed.

One of his entourage told him that there was a captive Jew - Daniel - who claimed to be able to decipher the king's dream. Daniel asked that the execution be delayed and asked God to tell him about the dream. Then Daniel went before the king and told him of his dream and the interpretation giving all the credit to God.

The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"
Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

"As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

"You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. NIV Daniel 2:26-35

Daniel then told Nebuchadnezzar how God interpreted the dream.

"This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

"After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron--for iron breaks and smashes everything--and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy." NIV Daniel 2:36-45

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he (Babylon) was the "head of gold". Who are the other three kingdoms represented in that statue? History shows that the Medo-Persian Empire conquered Babylon and the Persian Empire was in turn conquered by Alexander the Great and the Macedonian/Greek Empire, which was also, in turn, conquered by the Roman Empire. Are these three Empires the other three kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

The chest and two arms of silver correspond well with the combined Empire of the Medes and Persians.

The NIV, the KJV and many other translations say the "belly and thighs" are of brass or bronze but I think they may have been using "delicate" language in their translations. The "thighs" do not really go with the "belly" as arms go with chest. The belly is part of the torso but the thighs are not. A perusal of *Strong's Hebrew/English lexicon* explains this as a slight mistranslation.

The Hebrew word *yarka*¹⁴, translated by most as "thighs", comes from the Hebrew root word *yarek*¹⁴ as does the Hebrew word *yrekah*¹⁴, which is translated as "rear" in Exodus 26:27, I Kings 6:16 and is translated as "remote parts" in other scripture. It is translated as "loins" in Genesis 46:26 and Exodus 1:5 and according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Hebrew-English lexicon* is said to be a euphemism for "the generative parts".

The parts representing the third kingdom should be translated as "belly and flank" or "belly and buttocks", or - probably even more accurate - "belly and private parts". This image fits a bit better with what we know of the decadent culture of the Greek Empire.

The rest of the body, all of the two legs and two feet and even the 10 toes, then fits better metaphorically with the Roman Empire that split into two parts - the Eastern part headquartered at Constantinople and the Western part headquartered at Rome - for most of its existence. The Hebrew word *shaq*¹⁵ related to the Hebrew word *showq*¹⁶ translated as "legs" actually refers to hips and thighs as well as legs. This image also fits the Roman Empire perfectly - being one at the beginning and then splitting into two well-defined parts.

This interpretation is given veracity by the angel Gabriel in his explanation of a dream Daniel had some years later related in Daniel chapter 8, which dream only covered the future through the breakup of the Greek empire into four parts.

[The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. NIV Daniel 8:20-22](#)

Daniel chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are a remarkable prophecy of the time between the Babylonian captivity of the Jews and the time of Jesus with details that even secular history can verify for the most part - the conquering of the Persian Empire by Greece, the split after Alexander's death into the Ptolemy dynasties, the Seleucids, etc. (4 kingdoms), and their being conquered by Rome, all of which gives great credence to Daniel's prophecies.

Near the end of chapter 11, the prophecy speaks of a final conquering of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. This can only be referring to the Roman Empire as

they destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 67 - 70 A.D. - the same event prophesied by Jesus in Matthew chapter 24, Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21.

There is also a prophecy included that almost certainly gave the timing of Jesus appearance on this earth - the "seventy weeks" prophecy [Daniel 9:22-27]. There are some who think the "wise men from the East" who came searching for Jesus just after His birth got their information from the book of Daniel.

These are good reasons for giving credence to Daniel's prophecy and for interpreting the prophecy of Daniel chapter two as I have done: the four human kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

All four of these empires - Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman - are physical empires. For what reason should we think that the fifth kingdom - the "Stone Kingdom" is not a physical kingdom?

Some think the statement that this kingdom is a "rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands" indicates that this was a "spiritual" kingdom and has or had no "physical" reality. Many assume that this kingdom may be the church Jesus established and that He rules over the members of that church. The latter part is true.

But Jesus' statement that "all authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me" [Matthew 28:18], is more likely a statement that God, the Father had restored Him to His previous station [John 1,2, 14] than any indication that Jesus had begun directly ruling over the physical kingdoms of this earth. The scope of history for the last 2,000 years certainly does not indicate that Jesus has been or is presently ruling over any governments over that time.

Furthermore, it is not logical that this kingdom is "spiritual", because this "rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands" was to destroy the Roman Empire and whatever remained of the earlier three empires. That indicates a physical presence and leaves speculation that the "Stone Kingdom" of Daniel's prophecy might be the church that Jesus established without logical foundation.

The first four kingdoms were formed by the political machinations of men. The "Stone Kingdom" was "cut out of a mountain" by God.

There are many instances in Bible prophecy where the term "mountain" is used to represent a nation or a people [Jeremiah 51:25; Ezekiel 17:22,23; Amos 4:1,6:1; Zechariah 4:7 et al]. The Stone Kingdom was formed by God and "not by human hands". It was He who caused it to come into being and not something planned and executed by men by themselves.

I believe it was the "hand of God" directing the fate of the descendents of Abraham.

The Stone Kingdom was to be set up “in the time of those kings”. The prophecy says the rock “struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them”. “Those kings” logically has to refer to the last kings of the fourth kingdom - the Roman Empire - who ruled until the 1400’s A.D. The structure of the statue is from the 1st kingdom - Babylon - to the last of the 4 kingdoms - Rome.

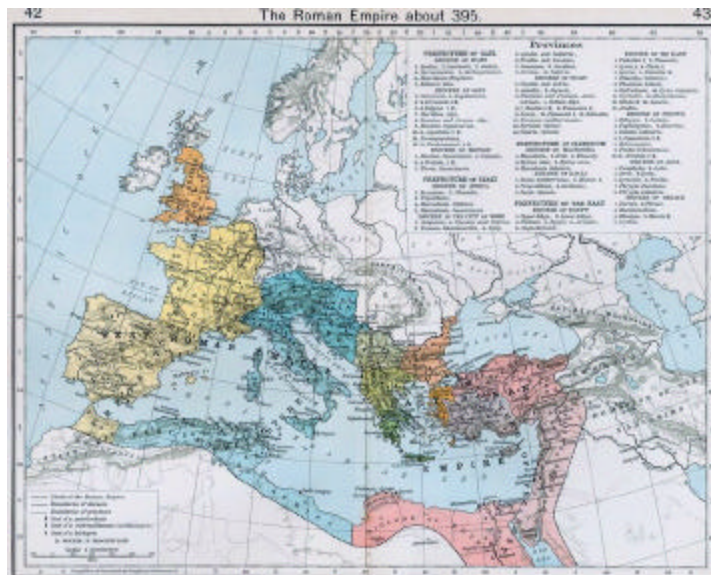
By the time of those kings, the Stone Kingdom was to be established and in place to grow to become a world-ruling empire. It was to receive all those physical, birthright blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Furthermore, the Roman metaphor - the “iron” kingdom - is completed in the “ten toes”. The scripture says the Stone Kingdom “struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.” [Daniel 2:34]

While there were many political subdivisions that changed from time to time, the Roman Empire was composed primarily of 10 major political divisions, each with its own “king”:

1. Sicily
2. Sardinia & Corsica
3. Spain
4. Illyricum
5. Macedonia/Cassander
6. Carthaginian territory
7. Thrace/Lysimachus (was known as the Province of Asia)
8. Gaul
9. Syria/Seleucid
10. Egypt/Ptolemy

The Roman Empire map looked like this:



Over the years from the height of the Empire until its final destruction in the 1400's, various "barbarian" armies continually attacked the Empire. These people were known under various names as recorded by Roman and Greek historians.

Huns, Ostrogoths and others eventually destroyed the Byzantine (Eastern Roman Empire) while the Vandals and the Arabic peoples decimated the Empire's holdings in Palestine and throughout North Africa eventually giving way the Ottoman Turk Empire.

Among those who attacked the Western Empire (Rome) out of Europe were the Scythians, Teutons, Cimbri, Saxons, Gauls, various Germanic tribes and others, all of who can be traced in some way to the people called the Celts.

Since almost all the secular history of the period was written by Greeks or Romans writing from their point of view, it is literally impossible to determine the exact origins of the Celtic people.

There are many historians who trace the origins of these people - the Celts - to the very areas north of Mesopotamia where the captured Israelites of the Kingdom of Israel and some from the Kingdom of Judah were relocated by the Assyrian Empire in the 700's B.C. This is the area called Medea by Josephus¹³. On today's maps, this would include roughly the areas of Kurdistan, Hamedan, Tehran and Azarbaijan.

Those like J. H. Allen^{17, 18} who have studied the history extensively and attempted to trace the migration of the Israelites make a good case that these Celts were primarily descended from those Israelites mixed with the people they were "sifted" among. History and archeology show that the first discernable culture in the British Isles was Celtic.

In any event, the Celts were a major part of the forces that destroyed the Roman Empire including the "ten toes" that were the last kings of that Empire.

The time span of those four empires prophesied in the second chapter of Daniel lasts until the 1400's A.D. Is it coincidence or evidence of the hand of God that the Israelites were in large portion responsible for destroying the Roman Empire?

I repeat this scripture for emphasis:

While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. NIV Daniel 2:34-35

Who Has Received the Physical Birthright Promised To Abraham?

Historically, only one group of people and one nation qualifies as the "Stone Kingdom". This nation spawned a "company of nations" and another "great nation" but it started as one nation and one people. These people have received the physical blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and those blessings have been spread around the whole world.

Since the 1500's, from where have all the great advances in the things that make life better for the "average man" come? From where have the great advances in agriculture, medicine, transportation, clothing, housing, and the other every day needs of the "common man" come?

How is it that the average lifespan of all of humanity has more than doubled in the past 300 years? From where came the knowledge and techniques to eradicate or at least treat most of the diseases that were a sure death sentence in the 1500's?

Which was the first country to eliminate and outlaw slavery? Which nation and "company of nations" spread the laws of Western Civilization (based on Bible principles) throughout the world? Which nation has become the greatest exporter of Christian "missionaries" to the world?

Which nation and "company of nations" set up the principles of private property coupled with a banking system that allows free trade throughout the world and placed the accumulation of personal wealth within reach of the "common man"?

Which nation and "company of nations" defeated the Axis powers in World War II thereby stopping the extermination of not only the Jews but also dozens of other peoples considered "inferior races" by the Axis powers?

Which powerful nation is the first on the scene with aid wherever natural disasters strike throughout the world, thereby forestalling the many diseases that usually follow in the aftermath of those disasters?

Which nation and "company of nations" have literally taught millions throughout the world to improve their agricultural techniques and supplied food for starving populations during drought and other famine conditions? Which nation and "company of nations" advocate freedom for the "common man" throughout the world?

All the people of the world have been greatly blessed by the advances of Western Civilization and especially the benevolent hegemony of that nation and "company of nations" beginning with the British Empire and continuing currently with the world's only "superpower" - the United States.

The "company of nations" - the British Commonwealth nations - beginning in the 18th Century - became the most geographically extensive empire in world history and were

for a time the foremost global power, superseded only by the United States after World War II with the nation and “company of nations” remaining the closest of allies.

The British Empire literally controlled the “gates of their enemies” - the British dominated the sea-lanes of the world and no one could travel far without passing through one of the land or sea “gates” controlled by the British. Even today, no country and few people are long without some influence of Western Civilization, dominated by Britain and the United States.

Along with the other promises, the final four promises made by God to Abraham have been fulfilled in Great Britain and the United States.

4. That Abraham’s descendents would “possess the gates of their enemies”;
5. That Abraham’s descendents would spread over the whole world
6. That Abraham’s descendents would become “a nation and a company of nations”
7. That all the people of the world would be blessed through those descendents.

We can therefore say without reservation that *to this date and time*, only the US and the British Empire of all the nations on earth have reaped benefits like those promised to Abraham’s descendents. Because all of Western Civilization has shared in those benefits, Abraham’s descendents *must be* among the nations of Western Civilization and the descendents of Ephraim and Manasseh must have been concentrated among the English-speaking people of Great Britain and the United States.

So how do we tie the British Empire, the United States and Western Civilization in general to Abraham’s descendents?

There have been thousands of articles and hundreds of books written over the past 200 years that tie the “lost 10-tribes” of the Kingdom of Israel to the people of Western Europe and the English speaking people of the world.

One of the best of its type is called Judah’s Scepter and Joseph’s Birthright¹⁷ written by J. H. Allen, a Baptist minister, in 1902. It’s quite easy to locate on the Internet and you can read the book in its entirety.

You can read some historical background on Allen, a synopsis and comments both pro and con about his book in the Wikipedia¹⁸ - the free online encyclopedia.

Many other similar books were written before Allen’s and dozens have been written since - some based quite closely on his book.

The problem with these books and the theory and speculation on which they are based is that they rely on somewhat esoteric interpretations of certain Bible passages and speculation as to what they mean. They also interpret various names of places

across Europe and in the British Isles as having some relationship to Bible names and habits of the Israelite tribes. They also rely on fables and folklore from Ireland and other places.

Allen proposes that the Bible prophet Jeremiah brought one of the daughters of the last Israelite king of Judah to Ireland where she married a king who was a descendent of Israelite royalty. This king, whose ancestors had migrated long ago to that country, was already ruling over many descendents of the Israelite nation, though they had no knowledge of their true identity. He claims that this heals a "breach" in the line of Judah that is described in Genesis chapter 38 reuniting the royal lines of Judah's sons - Pharez and Zerah.

Over time he says this royalty wound up on the present day throne in England.

Allen attempts to trace the migrations of the "lost tribes" up from the Middle East into Eastern Europe and then into Western Europe and the British Isles. Others claim to trace the lineage of the British throne from that "Eastern Princess" brought to Ireland soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. right down to the present Queen of England.

While all of this is tremendously interesting and even - within its context - quite logically laid out, it is clear that neither the Bible nor secular history offer any real *proof* that the "lost tribes" of Israel migrated to Western Europe and to the British Isles and even to the heritage of the present Queen of England. Much of what is presented must be taken on "faith" and that does not satisfy the logical mind and *it certainly is not provable historically*.

And yet there is historical proof that the British Empire received blessings strikingly similar to those promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and specifically to the owner of the *physical birthright* - Joseph, through his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

According to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia¹⁹:

The British Empire was the most geographically extensive empire in world history and for a substantial time was the foremost global power. It was a product of the European age of discovery, which began with the maritime explorations of the 15th century, that sparked the era of the European colonial empires.

By 1921, the British Empire held sway over a population of about 458 million people, approximately one-quarter of the world's population. It covered about 36.6 million km² (14.2 million square miles), about a quarter of Earth's total land area. As a result, its legacy is widespread, in legal and governmental systems, economic practice, militarily, educational systems, sports (such as cricket, rugby and football), and in the global spread of the English language. At the peak of its power, it was often said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire" because its span across the globe ensured that the sun was always shining on at least one of its numerous colonies.

It is vitally important that - because of the timing set out in Daniel's prophecy -you understand that the British Empire began to assert its power and experienced almost exponential growth *beginning in the 15th Century*.

If it *is* the "Stone Kingdom", it has great meaning when contemplating the future for all mankind. According to Daniel's prophecy the Stone Kingdom "will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."

It is virtually impossible to separate the "company of nations" - the British Empire/Commonwealth - from the "great nation" - the United States - in terms of world history. The US was once a British colony, their language is essentially the same, they share a common heritage and they have been and remain the closest allies of all major powers in history - they could be called "brothers".

Because of this "brotherly" relationship many of those who project the "lost tribes" into Western Europe and the British Isles make the reasonable claim that the "company of nations" and the "great nation" and their phenomenal growth during this period correspond with the birthright blessings promised to Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh with the people of the British Empire being primarily the descendents of Ephraim and the US primarily the descendents of Manasseh. That prophecy is repeated for emphasis.

When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations ["company of nations" - KJV is again the more accurate translation]." Genesis 48:17-19

The United States has never formed an "empire". Even after conquering Germany, Japan and the other members of the Axis powers, the United States withdrew and not only allowed those nations to return to self-government but through the Marshall plan used the wealth of the United States to rebuild their nations and their sovereignty. As the lone superpower of the 21st Century no one can deny its status as a "great nation". But certainly in terms of territory controlled and worldwide influence, the British Empire must be considered "greater".

There is good circumstantial evidence then, that God fulfilled His promises to Abraham through his descendents among the people of the British Empire and the United States.

But why did God wait until the 1800's to bestow those blessings?

God's Promise of Punishment - The "Conditional" Covenant

Why would God have waited so long - from 721 B.C. to 1800 A.D., more than 2,500 years - to fulfill His promises to the descendents of Abraham?

To find the answer to that question it is necessary to understand the covenant God made with the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, immediately after they were freed from slavery in Egypt.

At Mt. Sinai, God gave Israel the 10 Commandments by speaking them in His own voice from a cloud that hung over the mountain [Exodus 20:1-17]. Perhaps He intended to stop after giving those commandments. Moses seemed to say so later when telling this story again to the Israelites before he died.

These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me. NIV Deuteronomy 5:22

Moses reminded the Israelites that God's voice so terrified them that they begged Moses to intercede with God and let God speak to Moses and then Moses relay God's words to the people. This event is related in both the original Exodus text as well as repeated in Deuteronomy.

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die." NIV Exodus 20:18-19

When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me. And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey." NIV Deuteronomy 5:23-27

The Ten Commandments were certainly treated differently from the rest of the law written in the Torah - the first five books of the Old Testament. The stone tablets were placed within the ark.

Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy

Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered Ark of the Covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. NIV
Hebrews 9:1-4

The rest of the Torah was placed "in the side" of the Ark, i.e., somehow attached to the outside of the Ark.

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.
KJV Deuteronomy 31:24-26

This is one reason why the Ten Commandments hold such a sacred place in the beliefs and hearts of Christians today and why many think the other laws and ordinances given to the Israelites by God are different from the Commandments and were "added" to the national laws of the Israelites because of their sins soon after the Commandments were given [Exodus chapter 32; Galatians 3:19].

The rest of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), still followed by orthodox Jews, was under the auspices of the Levitical priesthood which priesthood was changed by Jesus [Hebrews chapters 6 - 10].

God agreed to speak to Moses and then let Moses speak to the Israelites. He gave Moses the terms of the covenant between Him and the Israelites [Exodus 20:22 - 23:33] and Moses relayed those terms to the Israelites. They agreed to the terms.

When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do."
NIV Exodus 24:3

Later on God laid out specific promises if the Israelites kept their part of the covenant bargain.

"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit. Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land. I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country. You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you. I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. You will still be eating last year's harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will

not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." NIV Leviticus 26:3-12

Following that, God told the Israelites what would happen if they did not keep their part of the bargain.

"But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.

"If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of the land yield their fruit.

"If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted.

"If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied.

"If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over. You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you. I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. I will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.

"As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them. They will stumble over one another as though fleeing from the sword, even though no one is pursuing them. So you will not be able to stand before your enemies. You will perish among the nations; the land of your enemies will devour you. Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their

enemies because of their sins; also because of their fathers' sins they will waste away. NIV Leviticus 26:14-39

The 4-times repeated promise of “seven times” punishment in verses 18, 21, 24 and 28 is of vital importance for understanding the *length of the time of punishment*. This punishment was promised by God directly to the Israelites. God was, in fact, prophesying the length of their punishment.

Throughout the Old Testament there is the relationship of a “day” for a “year” in prophecy from God.

For instance God punished the Israelites for not going into the Promised Land when He told them to. The Israelite scouts spent 40 days looking over the land and people and then gave the bad reports - saying that they could not conquer the land. God said:

"For forty years--one year for each of the forty days you explored the land--you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you." NIV Numbers 14:34

God told the prophet Ezekiel to demonstrate the sins of Israel and Judah and their upcoming punishment and captivity by Assyria and Babylon using the “day for a year” relationship.

"Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel.

"After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her." NIV Ezekiel 4:4-7

God’s promise to punish Israel “seven times” if they failed to live up to their promise to keep the covenant made with God follows this same scenario.

In the books of Daniel and Revelation there is an expression used - “time, times and half a time” [Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14]. That this period is 3 ½ years or 42 months or 1,260 days can be seen by these scriptures [Revelation 11:2,3; 12:6]. In prophecy a “time” is one year - 360 days according to the calendars used during Biblical times.

God was more than patient with the Israelites when they broke the covenant the first few times but He allowed them to be overrun by their enemies until they repented of their sins and called on Him for salvation.

He would raise up leaders - among them Gideon, Samuel, and Deborah et al - to restore them to their national sovereignty and freedom once again. You can read of

these times and incidents from the book of Joshua through the end of II Kings and II Chronicles.

And yet His patience was finally exhausted by the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, and He finally gave the Kingdom of Israel - which included the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the birthright holders - the punishment promised in Leviticus chapter 26 - the "seven times" punishment.

He had other plans for the Kingdom of Judah, as you have seen.

God withheld the physical, birthright promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for "seven times" just as stated in the terms of the Israelites covenant with God.

A "time" is one year; one year is 360 days; and "seven times" is 2,520 days. A "day for a year" - multiplying seven times 360 = 2,520 - means the birthright promises were to be withheld for 2,520 years.

That this time frame from the captivity and disappearance of the Kingdom of Israel to the rise of the British Empire and the United States and their hegemony over the whole world is 2,520 years is a vital part of the circumstantial evidence of their being the "Stone Kingdom".

God Keeps His Promises

And yet God promised that *after* the seven-times punishment, He would fulfill the promises made to Abraham.

"But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers-- their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies-- then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land." NIV Leviticus 26:40-42

From the time of the captivity of the 10-tribed kingdom of Israel (which included Ephraim and Manasseh to whom the birthright was promised) in about 721 B.C. until the rise to dominance of the "company of nations" and the "great nation" in the early 1800's is that time span - 2,520 years. God's punishment was carried out exactly as He promised and for the time He promised.

At the beginning of 1800 A.D., Britain and the United States were two relatively small and somewhat insignificant nations in international terms and yet they began to grow into vast national riches and power unmatched in the history of the world. Soon the British Empire had spread around the world and the "sun never set" on her possessions.

Canada, Australia and South Africa were given "dominion" status - made free and independent nations - and the British Empire truly became a "company of nations" joined together by the throne of England. I've already stated above the extent of her power and influence.

In 1803 Napoleon, the emperor of France sold all of Louisiana and the territories held by France as far north as the Canadian border to the United States for what was really a very small sum of money. The famous "Louisiana Purchase" more than doubled the territory of the United States.

President Thomas Jefferson within the next few years ordered the similarly famous "Lewis and Clark" expedition that opened the rest of the territory all the way to the Pacific Ocean allowing for an almost never-ending flood of immigrants to the United States and to its western territories.

While it cannot be proven that the citizens of the British Empire and the United States are the descendents of Abraham, the promises God made to the patriarch have certainly been fulfilled in those nations *and no others to this date*.

Yet, just as God also promised, He removed them from His sight, sifting them "among the nations" and yet not a single "grain" of Abraham's descendents was ever lost to God, though they do not recognize their ancestry and they are a conglomeration of the peoples of many nations.

We should also bear in mind that the rest of Jacob's children, all 12 tribes, were promised great blessings by God through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Though they have no knowledge of their genetic heritage, it is quite obvious that the nations of Western Europe have also been mightily blessed during this same time - not to the same extent as Britain and America but still greatly blessed. The standard of living for Western Europe is only slightly lower than that of the English-speaking people that are Joseph's descendents.

All of these things make up significant circumstantial evidence that the physical promises of God to Abraham have been fulfilled in Britain and the USA.

If this is true - that the people of Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are the "company of nations" and that the people of the United States are the "great nation" that came from Ephraim and Manasseh, then these two nations are to "endure forever".

They will physically remain until the time Jesus returns to set up His world ruling government and when He will occupy the throne of the Stone Kingdom and continue that reign as its rightful King. The people who trace the descendents of Israel to the British Isles like J. H. Allen are adamant that the throne of Britain will become the throne of Jesus when He returns and that He will simply move that throne to Jerusalem when He begins to rule.

With the fall of the atheistic, communist nations of the Soviet Union; with the Axis powers defeated and now mostly allied with the United States and Britain; with free market economies flourishing in India and spreading throughout China; the only real threats to the "Stone Kingdom" are those foretold by God to the patriarchs.

First, there are the descendents of Ishmael.

The angel of the LORD also said to her [Hagar, Ishmael's mother]: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." NIV Genesis 16:11-12

Second, there are the descendents of Esau, Jacob's twin brother who went to Isaac after realizing that Jacob had received the birthright blessings.

Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!" Then Esau wept aloud. His father Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above [Esau was to live in the desert]. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck." [The Arab nations held sway over nearly as large an empire as Rome with the Ottoman Empire. Even more recently, they broke away from the hegemony of Great Britain not long after World War II.] Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob." NIV Genesis 27:38-41

Third, there are others who can be traced back to the time of Abraham such as his nephew Lot's children, Moab and Ammon, who live in the Middle East today (the capitol of Jordan is Amman) and who have joined the descendents of Ishmael and Esau in the Islamic world and all of whom - it seems - are intent on destroying the present day nation of Israel and all of Western Civilization.

The rise of Islamo-fascism and the desire to bring the whole world under the rule of an Islamic Caliphate does not bode well for future peace for Britain and America or for any of the nations of Western Civilization.

Conclusion

As I write this document on July 4, 2007, the radio, television channels and newspapers are filled with stories of aborted attempts by Islamo-fascists to set off at least 3 car bombs in Britain and Scotland. Had they succeeded, the new Prime

Minister - Gordon Brown, who just took office - would have been faced with hundreds of deaths within a week of taking office.

There are reports that some of the group responsible - made up primarily of medical doctors from Iraq and other Arab countries - were also targeting America again, hoping to repeat the horrific events of September 11, 2001 when 3,000 Americans lost their lives in the World Trade Centers in New York, at the Pentagon in Washington and in a field in Pennsylvania.

There are ongoing, armed conflicts in Palestine, in Lebanon, in Afghanistan, in Somalia, in Darfur, in Kashmir, in Assam, in Indonesia, in Sri Lanka, in Algeria, in Chechen and in Iraq.²⁰

These conflicts are primarily the result of the rise and prevalence among Muslims worldwide of Wahabbist, fanatical Islamist ideology, which was given birth by the Islamic religious leaders in the deserts of Saudi Arabia.

All of these wars, all of the actions every militant group instigating the beheading, torture and slaughter often of innocent civilians, and every "suicide" bombing in the world today are the result of the actions of those who follow the fanatical, Wahabbist ideology of militant Islam.

In 2002 in Afghanistan and again in Iraq in 2003, the armies of the West - primarily the army of the lone "super-power", the United States of America, but supported most heavily by Great Britain and Australia - joined the first real battles against these militant Islamists.

Dozens of terrorist training camps were destroyed and thousands of combatants from Al Qaeda (the organization of Osama bin Laden) and the fanatical government of Afghanistan (the Taliban) were captured or killed within a few months in Afghanistan.

In 2003, in less than 30 days of open warfare, the socialist, dictatorial government of Saddam Hussein was toppled in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was eventually captured, tried by the freely elected government of Iraq and hung for his "crimes against humanity". His sadistic sons and many of the officials of his regime were also captured and executed or killed by coalition forces.

No military conflict in the history of the world has ever been fought with such intensity and such destruction over an 18-month period - from the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 to the fall of Hussein's government in late spring 2003 - with such a relatively small loss of life on both sides.

Four and one-half years later, when considering the potential devastation that could have taken place, it is amazing that even the most exaggerated "body counts" done by left-wing, anti-war organizations claim less than 72,000 Iraqi *civilian and military* deaths in Iraq as of June 2007.²¹

Even that exaggerated number pales in comparison with other armed conflicts - both historical and contemporary. In approximately the same time span, somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000 people have been killed in Darfur region of Western Sudan, Africa where Islamo-fascists are participating in "ethnic cleansing".²²

It is ironic that there were more than 73,000 murders in the United States over the same four and one-half year span - 2003 to June 2007.²³

The anti-war, leftist forces and the media take no notice and never mention that the U. S., British, Australian and allied military forces have become the only military organizations in the history of the world that take casualties of their own forces rather than harm innocent civilians.

By the end of 2004 when George W. Bush was elected for a second 4-year term, the political left in the United States began organizing their forces to destroy his administration - to destroy the President of the United States in the middle of the war against Islamo-fascism.

Likewise, over the past three years the media and leftist forces in Britain have hounded Prime Minister Tony Blair unmercifully concerning Iraq, probably contributing to his decision to leave office early, in July 2007. It should also be mentioned that though the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, has had his share of sniping and criticism from the Australian counterparts of the British and American media and left, he has remained a strong ally of the United States.

These two have been the staunchest allies for President Bush and the United States.

Joined by the mass media, the political left in all three countries has highlighted and touted the death of each and every soldier in Iraq and each Islamic "suicide-bombing" incident - even those that targeted innocent Iraqi civilians - as defeat for the coalition armed forces.

These same leftist pundits, Senators, Congressmen and media in the United States had projected more than 30,000 U. S. soldiers would die in the invasion of Iraq and then they "prophesied" that there would be 10,000 American soldiers killed in taking Baghdad alone.

When the death toll in Iraq reached 3,500 among the U. S. Armed Forces in April 2007 - approaching 4 ½ years after Baghdad fell - that number was trumpeted as a sign the coalition Armed Forces had already lost.

For perspective, there were 60 million people killed during World War II; the United States lost 29,000 soldiers on D-Day alone with Allied forces losing more than 47,000 men.²⁴

The Democrat majority - elected in November 2006 - in the U. S. House of Representatives and the Senate passed several bills in the spring of 2007 that funded the fighting in Iraq but included specific dates to begin the withdrawal of U. S. forces.

In any logical terms, this is admitting defeat when the coalition forces have not been defeated!

President Bush vetoed these bills and even with some "moderate" Republicans joining the Democrats, there were still too many "conservative" Democrat defections to override the veto. But by mid-summer, even some "moderate" Republicans have begun to echo the call for withdrawal from Iraq and joined in the public criticism of Bush during a time of war.

Some of these moderate Republican politicians are facing reelection in November 2008 and they are either without principle or they evidently *believe* what is written and broadcast by the leftist media - that the war is "lost" and that the people of the United States do not have the stamina to see the war continued until it is won. The *New York Times* and other leftist media then praise these Republicans who turn against the President and offer aid and comfort to our enemies.

Some think this war must have the same outcome as the Viet Nam War, where leftist forces were able to convince politicians to give up when the U. S. never lost a major battle in that conflict and were hamstrung by politicians micromanaging the war from 7,000 miles away. Yet they seem to forget the great shame felt by the people of the United States when those Vietnamese who had fought on our side were slaughtered by the communist regime from North Viet Nam along with hundreds of thousands of others who were mostly innocent civilians.

Again, as I write this paper, Ayman Muhammad Rabaie al-Zawahiri, second in command to Osama Bin Laden in Al-Queda, has released a 90-minute television lecture in which he stated plainly that Iraq is the primary front in their battle with the United States. While exhibiting characteristic terrorist bravado, he claimed that the US was getting ready to capitulate in the war while warning terrorists world wide that they were desperately needed in Iraq to combat the Sunni tribemen there who have turned against Al-Queda and have allied with U. S. forces in the war.

Those aborted bombings in London and Glasgow, Scotland were an attempt to send a message to the new British Prime Minister that "all is lost".

Given time, the coalition forces can win the war in Iraq, stabilize that country's freely elected government and put the terrorist forces to flight. But the leftists, the media and the Democrats in the U. S. government, joined now by some Republicans, are calling for an admission of defeat.

On another front, over the past 30 years, the immigration policies of the United States have been denigrated to the point that there are between 12 and 20 million

illegal immigrants in the United States. The southern border of the USA with Mexico has become so porous that absolutely no one has any real idea who and where these people are. There could easily be *several thousand* radical Muslim militants in that group sent here by Osama Bin Laden and other Islamo-fascist leaders for the express purpose of blowing up as much American infrastructure and killing as many Americans as possible. No one knows!

While making no claim of the ability to foresee the future and especially no claim of any direct revelation from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I am one who studies history and the Bible and who attempts to discern the "hand of God" in the historical panorama disclosed.

The apostle John wrote this warning in his apocalypse:

"Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." NIV
Revelation 12:12

A "short" time in the spiritual realm is quite different from our mortal ways of counting time. But it's likely that as the time of the end of this age draws closer, the attacks by the forces of evil will be ever increasing in volume and ferocity.

Glenn Davies²⁵ and I have previously shown in our rebuttal²⁶ of The Jesus Papers that the attacks on Christianity, the Bible and the way of life in Western Civilization have been steadily increasing since the 1970's.

There are tremendous pressures being brought to bear to remove all references to God and Christianity from anything related to government and while we think religion should be taught at home and in churches and synagogues and not in public schools, we observe that from kindergarten to graduate school, the education system throughout Western Civilization is becoming openly hostile to God, Christianity and Judaism.

The most dangerous attacks on America, Great Britain, Australia and other Western nations today do not come from Islamo-fascism but from the leftist, socialist political forces within our own countries.

In the US, there are many high officials in government - in all branches - and many major figures in the mass media who eagerly blame the United States and its people for all the problems of the world from war to poverty to "global warming".

Their attacks on our way of life are prime fodder for the propaganda machines of the Islamo-fascists and the nations that envy and despise the United States, Great Britain and all of Western Civilization.

Ishmael and Esau's descendents see weakness in the descendents of Abraham and they will try their best to take full advantage of that weakness.

Will the "Stone Kingdom" be destroyed? Not if you believe the promises of God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Israelites have been fulfilled in the British Empire and the United States.

Will Abraham's descendents through Isaac and Israel become aware of their heritage? Will that recognition cause them once again to turn to the God of their fathers? Will God send us prophets and leaders for our age who understand these things and help all of us understand the vital meaning of that heritage and the importance of protecting our countries?

If He does send us prophets, will we listen?

Only God knows the answers to those questions.

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Footnotes

1. Bible Translations – KJV King James Version; NIV – New International Version
2. Miriam-Webster's Online Dictionary
3. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN0087
4. Quran [2:127], [2:140], [19:54], [38:48] et al
5. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN0085
6. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN8297
7. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN8283/HSN8282
8. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN7650/HSN7651
9. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN6148/HSN6150/HSN6152
10. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN3290/HSN6117
11. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN3478
12. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN0410
13. <http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/antjews/ajb01c01.html>
14. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN3410/HSN3411/HSN3409
15. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN8243
16. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance HSN7785
17. <http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/jsceptre/jsceptre.html>
18. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._H._Allen
19. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire
20. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0904550.html>
21. <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/>

22. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/09/060914-darfur-deaths.html>

23. <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1539046/posts>

24. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II

25. When asked for contributions to the above article and if I wanted to sign my name jointly with the 'additions' of those contributions as was done with our Baigent article which was approximately of true 50-50 'equal input', I decided that it would interrupt the 'flow' and actually might detract from our readers' understanding were I to do so.

I have no hesitation of signing and backing anything my older and wiser brother writes and in actual fact many of the concepts expressed in the first half of the article with regard to the 'Stone kingdom' were derived from our journey of discovery together and our joint studies over the past four years of our close association.

Because the latter half of the article is somewhat 'out of my league' regarding and dealing with American political trends and after giving due consideration and much thought I've opted for writing a 'companion article' instead, as after reading and assimilating the content of Clay's paper I decided to go into the bible to see what might be found by way of possible support for the 'prophecy' part of the article.

Both Clay and I check each other's work very thoroughly and it has become almost standard procedure --- the Baigent article actually taking six months and many re-writes to cut the original article from a 60 PDF or more page size to its 'essentials' only.

I believe it's of more than passing interest to our readers what I actually did discover in two rarely quoted books of the bible which did indeed confirm some interesting and pertinent parts of Clay's above prophecy and actually use the phrase 'hand of God' in a couple of instances in two books that actually show in detail and biblical historical accounts of the 'hand of God' in graphic action and the background of the setting up of the Jewish society in preparation for Jesus' first coming.

Since I felt the account almost warranted a full article in itself --- that's the path I've taken in this instance and the "Hand of God in Prophetic Awareness" will be the title of the accompanying article presented simultaneously, alongside, or placed after this one at our site.

Glenn Davies, Victoria, Australia July 6, 2007

26. <http://bellsouthpwp.net/c/l/claywillis/Baigent%20Rebuttal.htm>