

WHY EPHRAIM?

By C. C. Morris

“And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren (Deuteronomy 33:16).”

“The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein (Psalms 24:1).”

“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof (Psalms 50:12).”

“For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof...for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof (1 Corinthians 10:26 and 10:28).”

EPHRAIM, the son of Joseph, was a grandson of Israel, not one of his own sons. Ephraim is mentioned in the Old Testament (OT) 175 times and once in the New Testament (NT). 1 and 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, and Hosea speak of Ephraim 76 times, over 43% of all references—nearly half of all the references to him. Then, toward the end of the OT kingdom of Israel, prior to the Babylonian captivity, say in the time of Isaiah and Hosea, why did Jacob’s grandson become so prominent, even figuring into latter-day prophecies? To find out, we might do well to examine Ephraim from the very beginning.

Introduction: God Owns the Earth and All That Is In It

The above texts establish the Lord's ownership of the earth or this world. No one should have a problem with that. The first verse quoted, Deuteronomy 33:16, also provides a direct connection to Ephraim.

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? (Matthew 20:15)" Owning the earth, then, God may dispose of it however He so chooses. Does anyone among us have a problem with that?

"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men. (Psalms 115:16)." That is, He gave the earth to men in general to occupy it. He did not deed Italy to the Italians, China to the Chinese, England to the English, Russia to the Russians, or France to the French. In His sovereign will He has "...made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation (Acts 17:26)."

The only specific title deed to any land that God ever gave was the deed to the Promised Land that He gave unconditionally to Abraham and to his descendants through Isaac and Jacob (NOT through Ishmael and Esau!) forever. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Genesis 15:18)." The Promised Land was not merely a little strip from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan River valley on the east and from Lebanon on the north to the Sinai

Peninsula on the south. The Creator God gave Israel all the land from the Nile River in Egypt all the way to the Euphrates! If the Muslim terrorists really knew how much land God has given to Israel, they would be more violently murderous than they already are.

Furthermore, even though He has freely given that land to Israel as an everlasting possession, Jehovah Elohim still retains the guardianship of that land as its divine Administrator and protector. Even though He has granted certain occupancy rights and other privileges to Israel, It is still HIS land. In this regard, Jehovah Elohim mentions in Joel the third chapter seven things that are HIS, that, down through history, the nations of this earth (including our own nation) have violated:

1. MY people (verse 2)...MY people (verse 3);
2. MY heritage Israel (verse 2), whom they have scattered among the nations;
3. and parted MY land (verse 2);
4. MY silver (verse 5) and
5. MY gold (verse 5);
6. MY goodly pleasant things (verse 5);
7. MY holy mountain (verse 17).

All these are most serious violations; woe be to the individual or the nation that has participated in any one of them, is participating now, or ever will. One of the most prominent current violations is that of parting God's land, the present-day partitioning of this land between Israel and the Philistine

("Palestinian") usurper-invaders. No nation or group of nations, including the "United Nations," has any authority whatsoever to partition God's land and give it to anyone other than Israel's descendants.

The United States of America will never secure their (former) borders, because of her dominant role in pushing Israel to give her land to the current-day self-styled Philistines. Remember: In 2005, the USA's President signed away her own borders between herself, Mexico, Canada, and indeed all of Central and South America and the nation-islands of the Caribbean. Legally, now, by international treaty, it is no more "illegal" for a Mexican to come into Texas that it is for someone from Louisiana or Oklahoma to come into Texas. (See The Remnant, November-December 2008, pages 14-17, for details; you might as well read all of that article. It could be re-published today and be more timely than it was over five years ago, without taking back a word. It is on the Internet at <http://www.primitive-baptist.com>: Go there, go to The Remnant button; click on Issues of The Remnant; go to 063-ND08, select.) What our nation has done to push Israel to destroy her borders, God as sovereign has done to our own borders by our own "leaders."

Jehovah's curse of Genesis 12.3, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee," applies to both individuals and to nations, including the USA and her inhabitants. This curse also applies to religions and religious orders, whoever they are, who misappropriate the Lord's promises to Israel, misapplying them to the church; that is, those religious leaders who teach replacement theology (those who say, "God has replaced Israel with the Church"; and/or, "God is through with Israel as a nation, and in this time God's Old Testament promises to Israel are now to be applied spiritually, only to the Church").

Caveat: We know God has made some of the same (and even greater) promises to the church that He made to Israel, that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through the Lord Jesus Christ: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (Galatians 3:16-18)."

NONE OF THIS MEANS OR IMPLIES THE CHURCH IS ISRAEL, SPIRITUALLY OR OTHERWISE, OR THAT THE CHURCH REPLACED ISRAEL IN ANY WAY.

The deed to the Promised Land has nothing to do with the keeping of the law; that promise is secure to the nation of Israel, secured in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad (John 8.56)." However, the occupancy of the land was linked to a conditional covenant, and that, in the wisdom of God, for His purpose to demonstrate that no man and no nation can keep a conditional covenant between God and men. For the sake of space and time, we cite here but two examples:

A. At the foot of Mount Sinai, "all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD (Exodus 19.8)."

About a month later, or a little more, before Moses returned from the summit with God's law, the Lord told Moses, "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt

(Exodus 32.8)." Paul's commentary on what happened there is found in 1 Corinthians 10.

B. Israel's Restoration before Their Conversion: Arminians,

Conditionalists, and amillennialists have slightly different ways of expressing their position on this subject, but they all alike say that Israel must repent and believe in Jesus before God will restore the land to Israel and restore Israel to the land. The amillennialists among us thereby prove their deepseated Arminian-conditional belief in man's ability to meet certain requirements before God will bless a person, group, or nation. They obtained this fantasy directly by drinking liberally at Rome's poisoned well.

Ezekiel 36.24-29 makes it plain that Israel will first be restored to their land before God converts them:

FIRST, "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land (verse 24)." "25 THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your

God. 29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.”

This is the unwavering way God saves all of His elect: First, He brings them to Himself and regenerates them. Only after that does He give them faith, repentance, His indwelling Spirit producing the fruits of His Spirit (Galatians 5.22f) and leading them in paths of righteousness for HIS NAME’S sake (Psalm 23.3). This is reflected in earlier verses of Ezekiel 36: “...when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes (Ezekiel 36.17-23).”

Yet, in the face of this biblical principle, untold millions of Arminian Conditionalists insist to this day that their chief hope for temporal and eternal blessings is rooted in their earning them by meeting whatever conditions God has set forth.

And, since the Lord's gracious promises are truly unconditional, they are timeless; they are as firm as the throne of the Lord of Hosts and as valid today as they were when He first spoke to Abram and gave the land to him.

Let us look more closely at the biblical history of God's land-grant covenant:

1. Abram/Abraham: God called Abram and gave him promises that were eternal and unconditional, including His perpetual land-grant, the title deed to the Promised Land, free and clear. It is hard for men steeped in Roman amillennial tradition to comprehend the Lord's eternal, unconditional, gracious promises to Israel, but they truly ought to try, if they would present themselves as sovereign grace authorities. Even as we say this, we know it is impossible for them to try or to do what they ought to do if God has not determined to graciously work in their hearts and souls, to give them both the will to do and the doing of His own good pleasure: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)."

Genesis 12.7: And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land....

Genesis 13.14-17: 14 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. [We ask those who say "God is through with national Israel": Do you

understand what “for ever” means?] And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

Genesis 15.18-21: In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Genesis 17.3-8: And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, “As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

God’s changing Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah by the adding of the H-sound to each of their names was highly significant. The Hebrew “H,” a huffing, rough-breathing sound (“huh” or “heh”), signifies God’s Holy Spirit (Who is also typified by the breath or the wind): “And

suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2.2-4).”

Again, “Then said Jesus to them again, ‘Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost’...(John 20:21f).” This is basically the same act He used in Genesis 2.7: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” In Genesis it was physical life; in John it was spiritual empowerment.

The Lord’s adding an H to a person’s name signifies His giving them His Holy Spirit—either in the new birth (regeneration) or in preparing someone to serve Him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Isaac: God’s promises to Abram/Abraham He confirmed in Isaac. Before Isaac was born, God named him and promised, “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year (Genesis 17.19ff).”

We might ask our “replacement theology” friends, who believe the landgrant covenant is no longer valid: How long is “everlasting”?

3. Jacob/Israel: God's promises to Abraham and Isaac were confirmed in Jacob, whose name God later changed to Israel.

Isaac, in blessing his son Jacob, said: "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham (Genesis 28.3f)."

Remember—that is from the Nile to the Euphrates, forever.

God told Jacob, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. (Genesis 32:28)." Later He told him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land (Genesis 35.11f)."

Later, the nation that came from this man was known as "the children of

Israel," or simply "Israel." When the nation lapsed into idolatry or other sins (or for other reasons), the nation is often referred to as "Jacob," his natural or fleshly name, reflecting this people's fleshly nature.

Laws of the Firstborn

Before we continue with Jacob's offspring ("the children of Israel"), we must momentarily digress, long enough to examine the God-given rights of firstborn sons. Those rights and privileges are pertinent to Ephraim's ascendancy among the tribes of Israel.

Remember what Laban told Jacob about marrying off his younger daughter Rachel before her older sister Leah? "And Laban said, 'It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn' (Genesis 29:26)."

The customs concerning the rights of firstborn sons were even more strict. The first son born to a couple receives the title of Firstborn. When the old head of the clan died, his eldest or firstborn son became "the prophet, priest, and king" of his family and received a double portion of the inheritance, all of which put added responsibility upon him.

As the Firstborn son,

(1) he became the ruler (king), leader, or head of the clan-family when his father died. As "king," he was to rule the family-tribe in righteousness with absolute final authority.

(2) he became prophet of the clan-family: He was responsible to guide the family spiritually, teaching them the laws and the true worship of God. He was to make sure (as well as he could, under God's sovereign blessing) that they worshipped only the one living and true Creator God and that they did not go into idolatry and other sins.

(3) he became priest of the clan-family: He was responsible for the spiritual leadership of the family, praying for the family-members and providing sacrifices to God in their behalf.

As "priest," before the Lord established the Levitical priesthood, he was to offer whatever sacrifices JHVH required in behalf of the family. This was the exact role Job fulfilled for his children: "...Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually (Job 1.5)."

(4) For these reasons (and others) the eldest son was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance, partly because of the additional expenses related to his duties.

The son declared to be a man's firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance: The double portion was figured by adding one to the total number of heirs, dividing the inheritance by that number, and giving the firstborn son two of these shares. The other heirs got one share each. Example: A man with four sons and one hundred acres would not divide the land equally among his four sons (twenty-five acres each). The land would be divided into five parcels (twenty acres each), of which the Firstborn received two (forty acres total). The younger heirs would receive twenty acres each.

Note that nationally, David was a king and a prophet, but not a priest.

Elijah was nationally a prophet and a priest, but not a king; and

Melchizedek (spelled Melchisedec in the NT) was nationally a priest and a king but not a prophet.

No OT “type of Christ” was nationally all three—prophet, priest, and king. As no OT saint ever filled all three offices of prophet, priest, and king, even so, none of Jacob’s twelve sons received all the blessings of the firstborn son.

Next we will examine

Jacob’s Wives, Concubines, and Children

Although he had two wives (Leah and Rachel) and two concubines (Bilhah and Zilpah), and children by all four, Jacob truly loved only Rachel and wanted her son Joseph recognized as his firstborn son. By legally declaring Joseph to be his firstborn son, he could pass God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on to Joseph, but he had to find a way to do this according to God’s laws and the laws and customs of the day.

Small Harem, Big Problem

With the firstborn title and honor, Joseph would be the prophet, priest, and king of this growing family, and would inherit a double portion of whatever inheritance Jacob would leave to his heirs. But Jacob could not

simply and arbitrarily eliminate his older sons from consideration. To disinherit the children of Leah, he must have legal reasons to do so.

Jacob had a big problem. He had a small harem, consisting of a senior wife

(Leah), a second, younger wife (Rachel), and two concubines (Bilhah and Zilpah). Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah had given him a total of ten sons before his favored wife Rachel bore Joseph.

Therefore, Jacob tried to legally eliminate the sons of the other three women: Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah. Because those ten sons were older than Joseph, they would be in line for the firstborn's blessing before Joseph.

Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher

The sons of the concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah (Dan and Naphtali of Bilhah, and Gad and Asher of Zilpah), were no problem to eliminate, as they were the children of the concubine servant-girls, "second class citizens" who did not have the full privileges of wives.

Four down, six to go.

Reuben

Next, he began eliminating Leah's sons Reuben, Simeon, Levi.... In truth,

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn son. Should anything ever happen to Reuben, however, Simeon was next in line for the firstborn's blessings; and so on.

That's the way it worked.

But something did "happen" to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi.

First, Leah's oldest son, Reuben, was eliminated because he had committed fornication with the servant-girl Bilhah. "And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it...(Genesis 35:22)."

(In those days, it was not all that uncommon for the heir apparent to take his father's wives or concubines to prove he was the heir. Absalom took

David's concubines to prove he had succeeded his father—see 2 Samuel

16.20ff. Later, the fact that David's son Abijah asked for David's concubine Abishag was sufficient grounds for King Solomon to kill Abijah, his older halfbrother. The complete account of that is in the first two chapters of 1 Kings.)

And Jacob never forgot Reuben's disqualifying himself by presuming to take Bilhah. When Jacob heard about Reuben and Bilhah, he took this opportunity to exclude Leah's firstborn from the birthright. Israel's deathbed pronouncement on Reuben was, "Unstable as water, thou [Reuben] shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch (Genesis 49.4)."

Five down, five to go.

Simeon and Levi

Next he removed Leah's two sons Simeon and Levi from consideration. They had frightened him badly when they destroyed the entire Canaanite town of Shechem (Genesis 34). Jacob feared that the other Canaanites would retaliate by destroying his entire little family. Israel never forgot his fright over that incident, nor would he ever forgive these two sons for what they had done. On his deathbed, Israel cursed Levi and Simeon instead of blessing them. Rather than give them a specific land inheritance among their brethren, he divided them in Jacob, and scattered them in Israel (Genesis 49.5-7).

Seven down, three to go—Somehow Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun must next be eliminated before he could declare Joseph his firstborn.

He was down to Judah, but he could go no further.

WHY EPHRAIM?

PART II

By sovereign election God called (1) Abram/Abraham and gave him promises: eternal and unconditionally free, irrevocable and eternal, including (a) the promised Seed (the Lord Jesus Christ) in whom all nations would be blessed, and (b) the perpetual land-grant of the Promised Land.

God's promises to (1) Abram/Abraham were confirmed in (passed on to) (2) Isaac. God's promises to Abraham and Isaac were confirmed in Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel. The name Israel became the identifying name of the nation descended from this man. The term "children of Israel" has nothing to do with age (as "little children") but only means their descent from the man (3) Jacob/Israel.

The promises God made to these three men and their descendants are as valid today as they were four thousand years ago.

The Blessing of the Firstborn Son

The father as head of the family had three primary responsibilities to the Lord, to the nation, and to his wife, children, and entire household. The firstborn's honor was ordinarily bequeathed to the eldest or firstborn son. At the death of the family's father, his eldest son assumed his father's position as leader of the family and/or clan in the roles of (1) prophet, (2) priest, and (3) king. In addition, the firstborn son received (4) a double portion of the inheritance.

Since Jacob could not give the complete blessing of the firstborn to Joseph, he did what he could; he blessed Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, including them as though they were full tribes equal with his own

twelve sons. Further, he replaced his first two sons, Reuben and Simeon, with Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48.5). By adopting Joseph's two sons as his own, he made sure that Joseph and his sons would receive the double portion of his inheritance. By blessing these two boys as he did

(elevating both Ephraim and Manasseh each to full tribal rank), the wily Jacob made sure that Joseph (and his sons) received the double portion of his inheritance.

Summary of Israel's Firstborn Blessings

1. Joseph, through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, received the double portion by Jacob-Israel's making each of these two grandsons a full tribe among his other sons. (Neither Joseph, nor Ephraim, nor Manasseh received the kingship or the priesthood for the nation of Israel.)

2. Judah became the kingly tribe (Genesis 49.10): Through Judah came David, then Solomon, and in the fullness of time came Jesus, the Lord and Messiah/Christ, the eternal King of kings and Lord of lords.

3. The Lord made Levi the priestly tribe, turning Jacob's curse on him (Genesis 49.5-7) into this blessing.

4. God in His sovereign wisdom placed the office of Prophet in whatever tribe suited His purpose.

How Jacob Blessed Joseph; Jacob's blessings on Ephraim and Manasseh: From Jacob's Viewpoint

As his appointed time to leave his earthly sojourn drew near, Jacob/Israel still wanted to name Joseph as his legal firstborn son, thereby passing on to Joseph the promises Jehovah made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but, for reasons touched upon herein, this proved impossible for him to do.

The elderly man Israel eliminated the sons of his two concubines: Bilhah's sons Dan and Naphtali, and Zilpah's sons, Gad and Asher.

The four sons of these two concubines were no problem to remove from consideration for being chosen as his firstborn, because they were the offspring of servant-girls who were not considered to be wives with all the attendant rights and privileges. (In later life Bilhah and Zilpah were elevated to the status of wives—Genesis 37.2—but they were never recognized as equals to Leah, or above all else, to Rachel.)

Next, Israel tried to eliminate the six sons of Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi,

Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun). He found reason enough to dispossess

Reuben and Simeon (replacing them with Ephraim and Manasseh), and Levi. He got as far as Judah but could go no further. We will address why in a moment. But first we will consider his blessings on Joseph and Joseph's sons.

From Joseph's Viewpoint

"And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 48:1)." When Joseph came, Jacob recounted the Lord's dealings with himself to his son (verses 3-4) and then passed the Lord's promised blessings on to Joseph's sons (verses 5-20).

"And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn (Gen 48:13-14)."

"And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head (Gen 48:17)." But even the beloved Joseph could not prevail over the old man's intent.

Joseph, desiring his father Jacob's blessing on his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, brought the boys facing the old man with Manasseh—picture this carefully—Manasseh the older, on Joseph's left (and therefore on Jacob's right), and the younger Ephraim on Joseph's right, placing him on Jacob's left. This would mean Jacob, if he naturally reached his hands straight out, would place his right hand on Manasseh's head (signifying the stronger and primary blessing), and his left hand would have been on the younger

Ephraim's head (signifying the weaker or secondary blessing). Doubtless, Jacob remembered God's dealing with Esau (the older) and himself (Jacob the younger) and God's saying, "The elder shall serve the younger." Jacob used this same principle to bless Ephraim and Manasseh.

He crossed his hands, placing his right hand (signifying the greater blessing) on the younger Ephraim's head. Thus Ephraim was blessed to rule over his older brother Manasseh and eventually over most of the other tribes.

"And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as

Reuben and Simeon [Jacob's two eldest sons], they shall be mine (Genesis 48:5)." With that declaration, he (1) placed Ephraim in Reuben's stead and Manasseh in Simeon's stead, and (2) made Joseph (through Ephraim and Manasseh) his heir as firstborn—at least as far as the land grant territory was concerned.

Jacob blessed them that day, saying, "In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before

Manasseh (Gen 48:20)."

With that, Joseph had to be content.

The Story of Judah; The Scepter in Genesis 49

We now examine why Jacob gave up on trying to eliminate Judah, his fourth son by Leah, from the firstborn inheritance.

The explanation is long and complex, involving the entire account of Joseph in Egypt, his brethren's coming to seek food during the famine, Joseph's threatening to keep Benjamin as his slave, and Judah's magnificent sacrificial substitution of himself so that Benjamin would be freed. The entire account occupies chapters 37-46 of Genesis.

Because of their envy and hatred of Joseph (they despised him because he was Israel's favorite son), his older brothers had conspired to kill him; they ended up selling him into Egyptian slavery. They took Joseph's robe, drenched it in an animal's blood, and deceived their father into thinking some wild beast had killed Joseph.

Jacob, brokenhearted, mourned his loss from then on, for years. Now the only remaining tie he had to his beloved Rachel was his youngest son Benjamin. Rachel had died giving birth to him. Having lost Joseph (as he thought), Jacob would now protect Benjamin at all costs.

Jehovah in His perfect providence sent a famine into the Promised Land. In His all-pervading sovereignty He had exalted Joseph from Egypt's prisonhouse to Pharaoh's right hand, to be ruler over Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. Jehovah as always worked at both ends to bring about His purpose. In His own good time He would bring the wicked brothers and Joseph together, bring about their reconciliation, and restore Joseph to his father. God would do it in such a way that would prove He had meant it all unto good, and in so doing would give perhaps as clear a statement of Romans 8.28 as can be found in the Old Testament (OT): "But as for you, ye thought

evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive (Genesis 50.20)."

With God-given wisdom, Joseph forced his brethren to bring Benjamin to Egypt above Jacob's protests. Jacob finally yielded when Judah promised him, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go...I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever (Genesis 43.8f)."

Joseph then "framed" Benjamin by having his special cup planted in the boy's sack of grain, and then accusing him of stealing it. He told his brothers (who as yet still did not know Pharaoh's right-hand man was their brother Joseph), "What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

And Judah said, "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." Joseph said, "God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." (Talk about killing someone with kindness!)

Then Judah came near unto him, and said, "Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.' And we said unto my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.' And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord."

Judah continued: "And our father said, 'Go again, and buy us a little food.' And we said, 'We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.' And thy servant my father said unto us, 'Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

"Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant," said Judah, referring to himself, "became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, 'If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.' Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant" (Here Judah again spoke of himself) "abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?

lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

In that glorious story, Judah became a clear picture of his descendant (after the flesh), our Lord Jesus the Christ, who in the fullness of time would come as the substitute for His brethren, here represented by Benjamin, bearing their guilt for them, thereby freeing them from their slavery in sin. Judah had vowed to his father, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever (Genesis 43.8f)," as Christ bore the blame of His people for all eternity.

The heart of Judah's fulfillment of his vow to his father Israel is embodied in his later statement to Joseph in Genesis 44.16-34, of the entire story of why Benjamin was so important to their father. Judah's beautiful substitution of himself to save Benjamin is summed up in his closing statement in verses 32-34: "For thy servant [himself, i.e., Judah] became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant [himself, i.e., Judah] abide instead of the lad [Benjamin] a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?"

What a beautiful picture this is of the Lord Jesus Christ's being the surety for His brethren, His people, before His Father, by bearing their blame in order to set them free and return them to their Father, even God. The Lord Jesus is prefigured in Judah's "How shall I go up to my Father and the lad [God's Children, Christ's brethren] be not with me?" In Christ's bearing their blame, He now presents them blameless before their Father: "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming [Greek apokalupsis, the Revelation] of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1.8)." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and your

whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5.23f).” (The italicized I pray God is not in the original text, nor should it be! If you have an interlinear Greek New Testament, check it out for yourself. The saints’ complete sanctification and preservation has nothing to do with Paul’s—or any other man’s—prayer, other than the Man Christ Jesus, who ever liveth to make intercession for the saints.) “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless [Greek amomos; without blame in Ephesians 1.4; unblameable in Colossians 1.22 and 1 Thessalonians 3.13] before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen (Jude 24f).”

Because of Judah’s selfless sacrifice of himself to satisfy his father and set free his brother Benjamin, the old man Israel pronounced the blessing of kingship upon Judah and his descendants. That kingship resides today in

Judah’s (and David’s) oldest living heir, the Firstborn among many brethren, Jesus of Nazareth, King of kings and Lord of lords, who announced, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen (Revelation 1.18).” Being so, He is also King for evermore.

WHY EPHRAIM?

PART III

In the Years that Followed...Prominent Ephraimites

Joshua was an Ephraimite. His inheritance was the city of Timnath-serah in Mount

Ephraim where he was later buried (Joshua 19.50, 24.30).

Centuries later, after Judah's tribe had been established as kings in David's dynasty (David, Solomon, Rehoboam, etc.), ten of the twelve tribes revolted against Solomon's son, Rehoboam, under the leadership of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, another Ephraimite.

Here continues the ascendancy of the tribe of Ephraim conferred upon them by Jacob himself in Genesis 48. After becoming the first king of the rebellious ten tribes, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, rebuilt the city of

Shechem as his new capital in Mount Ephraim (1 Kings 12.25). The tribe of Ephraim became increasingly prominent, eventually becoming the dominant tribe of the northern ten.

At first the ten rebel tribes kept the name of Israel. Because Ephraim had grown into a mighty warrior tribe and had taken a lead in many battles against Israel's enemies, the northern ten tribes were often collectively called Ephraim. His name became associated with the rebel ten tribes as

Jacob/Israel's name was associated with the entire nation. Only the tribe of Benjamin stayed with Judah. Eventually Benjamin's tribe was more or less absorbed by Judah. Judah's name was eventually shortened to the nickname "Jew."

Isaiah and Hosea were contemporaries, prophesying during the reigns of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isaiah 1.1, Hosea 1.1). During their time, around the eighth century B. C., Ephraim became the lead tribe of the rebels. After that, the ten northern tribes commonly were known as both Israel and Ephraim (These ten northern tribes also retained the name of Israel).

Hosea refers to the ten tribes as Ephraim 37 times, more than any other book in the Bible. (compare Isaiah 7.2, 5, 9, 17; 9.9; 17.3, 28.3; Hosea 4.17; 5.3, 9.3-17, etc.)

In the all-pervading providence of God, it was fitting that these rebellious and idolatrous ten tribes would be known as Ephraim rather than Israel, Jacob's God-given spiritual name, which means Prince with God.

Hosea, His Life and Times

In his opening statement Hosea gives the entire historical setting of his time: "The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beer, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash [there were two Jeroboams. This was the second Jeroboam, not the first who was Jeroboam the son of Nebat], king of Israel."

Isaiah wrote "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham,

Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isaiah 1.1)." Isaiah prophesied to Judah, the southern two tribes, so he does not mention Jeroboam II; Hosea,

prophesying to the northern ten tribes (known as both Israel and Ephraim), mentions their current king. The prophet Hosea was given a strange commission from the Lord God: "the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD."

Hosea's Wife and Children; Their Significance

When Hosea's wife Gomer bore him a daughter, God assigned the little girl the symbolic name of Lo-Ruhamah—"No Mercy," or "Not Pitied." God explains: For Israel's idolatry, she will be no longer pitied; "...for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away." The particle "Lo-" is a Hebrew negative prefix meaning no, not, negative.

Next, Gomer bore a son whom God named Lo-ammi, explaining: "for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God."

What names to put on little children! There are many women named Mercy, but how many are named "No Mercy"? And the name for the poor little boy— Israel's present-day enemies (whether within the church or in world politics) love texts like these, using them to try to prove God will forever have nothing more to do with the Jews. These short-sighted enemies might benefit by reading the rest of Hosea, if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; otherwise they will not.

The Lord's saying, "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away," and "ye are not my people, and I

will not be your God” are taken by those with an anti-Israel agenda to mean forever more God is through with the nation. The primary three rules for reading the Bible with understanding of its meaning are (1) context; (2) context; and (3) context.

Read on, after the text. Before this chapter is complete, the Lord said, “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” (1.1011. Note: Unless otherwise indicated, references in this article without book names will be in Hosea.)

So the verses saying “I will no more have mercy” and “ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” prove temporary, applying to the coming captivity, after which God will bring them back to the land.

This text is quoted in the New Testament (NT) in Romans 9.25f and referred to in Hosea 2.23: “And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”

What of Jezreel?

What of this "Jezreel" referred to in 1.11? He is first mentioned in 1.4, the oldest son of Hosea. "And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel (1.4)." His name is the same as the town Jezreel where King Ahab lived when his wife Jezebel framed Naboth, arranging his murder, so the king could take his vineyard. Jehu later killed Ahab and Jezebel and usurped the throne of Israel for a while. This in part, along with Naboth's blood, is "the blood of Jezreel" referred to in verse 4. In Hebrew, Jezreel, meaning the seed of God, is a play on words, a pun. The Hebrew pronounces the letters I, J, and Y much alike, so Jezreel is pronounced almost exactly like Israel. The word itself, Jezreel, means both to scatter and to sow (as grain); to sow grain is to scatter it. In Hosea the word is used prophetically in both senses, and with a near fulfillment and a far fulfillment. The near scattering was to be in the captivities of Israel and Judah, and the near sowing was their regathering and being sowed back into their land at the end of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. The far scattering refers to the scattering throughout all nations that began in A.D. 70 and lasts throughout the church age; and the far sowing of Israel is the regathering and sowing Israel in their land at the end of the church age. If we are not mistaken, we saw the beginnings of this regathering of Israel in the twentieth century.

Hosea makes these things clear enough in 2.22f: "And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

Zechariah (in 13.9) makes it equally clear that Israel's nationally confessing

Jesus as their Lord is yet future, that this restoration is not limited to Israel's Old Testament (OT) return, but its final fulfillment is yet future: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

As proof this text (Zechariah 13.9) has a future fulfillment at the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, we offer the context. This text, having to do with Israel's recognizing Jesus as their Christ/Messiah—

(a) is preceded, in that day, when the fountain shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (13.1); in that day the Lord will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also He will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land; And one shall say unto Him, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" Then He shall answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." And,

(b) is followed by the coming of the day of the Lord, when the Lord will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: and His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (which was begun as the Lamb of God in Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, and John 12) will be completed as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Israel will then recognize Jesus as their Messiah and Lord after asking Him, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" Then He shall answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends (Zechariah 13.6)." Finally, the Lord Jesus Christ will be manifest as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS and acknowledged to be so by all the earth; at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2.10f).

"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one (Zechariah 14.9)."

The boy Jezreel (and his name) calls Israel's attention to the crimes of their king Ahab and queen Jezebel. Even though both Ahab and Jezebel had been killed in God's providential administration of His divine law of sowing and reaping, the people of Israel had widespread sins and crimes for which they must yet answer. "And I will visit upon her [Israel] the days of Baalim

[idols], wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with

her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD (2.13)." " My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: they change my glory into shame [marginal correction]. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings (4.6-9)." "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone. Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye (4.15-18).”

Hosea shows Ephraim is synonymous with Israel, and Judah is linked as a sinful partner. Ephraim is the name God often uses to identify Israel. “...there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.” “When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered....”

Even though they were a country divided by civil war, in four passages he names all three together in the span of only two or three verses:

1. (Hosea 5:3-5) I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

2. (Hosea 5:9-10) Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

3. (Hosea 6:10-7.1) I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled. Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people. (Hosea 7:1) When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

4. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints. (Hosea 12:2) The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him (11:12-12:2)

Gomer, a Picture of Israel

1. She is presented in chapter 2 as unfaithful to her husband, a harlot (harlotry or whoredom in the Bible is a picture of unfaithfulness to God, or idolatry).

2. Neither Gomer nor Israel knew the source of their blessing: "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal (2.8)." "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them (11.3)."

3. God will allure, comfort, and restore Israel as Hosea wooed Gomer: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence...(2.14f)."

4. In the last day, God will give to Israel "...the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt (2.15)." At the valley

of Achor, Israel stoned Achan to put away the sin that had brought God's judgment upon the nation (Joshua 7; 22.20).

In the last day, Israel will be turned back to the Lord and by His grace will put away their sin once more, as they did in Joshua's day.

"And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day (Joshua 7:26)."

5. She will be bought back: "Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee (3.1-3)"; a beautiful picture of God's gracious love to His unfaithful wife Israel as He brings her back to Himself.

God's visitation/punishment on Israel in Hosea's day and her restoration after the church age: "And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim," the false gods of Canaan's idolaters, "wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD (2.13)."

THE ENTIRE CHURCH AGE IS BETWEEN VERSES 13 and 14 of Hosea chapter 2.

After this, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness [Revelation 12.6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days [three and a half years]." The woman of Revelation 12.1, interpreted by God Himself through Jacob in Genesis 37, is Israel. Hosea and Revelation merge here, in the wilderness.], and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt (2.14f)."

But First, God will cause Israel "to cease" "I [the Lord]...will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel (1.4)." "Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God (1.9)." Squint-eyed "interpreters" assume this means for ever and for ever more.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

But not Judah? "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints (1.7)."

Yes, Judah also will fall:

"And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them,...(The

princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water...Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.)" (5.5, 10, 12).

"The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound [a reference to removing old landmarks in order to steal land—see Isaiah 5.8, and Proverbs

22.28 and 23.10]: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment [that of Jeroboam II; this does not refer to the commandment of God].

Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness (5.10ff).

Is this a contradiction about Judah? Of course not. He is saying Judah will not fall at this time. The difference between Ephraim (Israel) and Judah is this: Because of their excessive idolatry and grievous sins, Israel would go into Assyrian captivity in 721 BC. Judah was following Israel's sins, but more slowly. Like repentant Nineveh in Jonah's day, Judah would be spared for another century before God's judgment would arrive. Judah would indeed go into Babylonian captivity over a century later.

Hence the Lord says in fine, "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God." For the time being (in Hosea's day), "Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints." In "the last day" (Armageddon), Judah and Israel will be saved with an

everlasting salvation. "But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (Isaiah 45.17)." Note, if you will, dear reader, world without end.

God's Controversy

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the [Promised] Land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood ["blood toucheth blood" might be translated as "one murder right after another."] Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away (4.1-3)."

"The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will He recompense him (12.2)."

"For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion (Isaiah 34.8)." "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 25.31)." The final judgment is worldwide, not only on Israel.

Israel During and After the Church Age

For almost two millennia Israel has been an outcast in the world, yet supernaturally preserved as God's elect nation. At the end of this present age, when Christ returns, God will reactivate Israel's time-piece.

Perhaps the Crux of Hosea's prophecy as it relates to Christ's Second Advent and Israel is nowhere more plain than in the striking passage found in Hosea

5.14 through 6.3. Chapter 5 ends with Christ's prophetic words to Israel:

"For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."

The first three verses of Chapter 6 give Israel's response to Him: "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hosea 5.14-6.3)." Let us consider this important passage verse by verse: 5:14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5.5). In this case, He as a Lion will be fighting against Judah for their rejection of Him. Specifically He fought against them in their destruction that followed the forty years of their testing, from His first presentation of Himself to Judah, the Jews, in AD 30 ("And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age"—Luke 3.23), until He destroyed them as a nation in AD 70. The number 40 is the biblical number of testing. For

forty years, from AD 30 to AD 70, Israel was tested, as to their Messiah King; the book of Acts is the record. "...they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ (Acts 17.1ff)." "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first...(Romans 1.16a)."

15 I will go and return to my place... For the Lord "to return to His place" two things must be true: (1) He must have a place that is His place, and (2) He must have left it. Both are true. His rightful place is on the throne of the universe with His Father (Hebrews 1.1-3). He left His throne to come to this earth and fulfill the predestinated purpose of God. Paul remarkably describes all this in Philippians 2: "...Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Thus He left His place.

He then returned to His place: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He will remain in His place ("...sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high") until Israel acknowledges their offense: till they acknowledge their offence...He will

stay there, in His place, "till they acknowledge their offence," singular, not "their offenses." We all have offenses, Jew and Gentile alike; but their offense was their national rejection of Him as their Messiah King.

and seek my face...: The only way Israel will ever seek the face of Jesus of Nazareth is by God's effectual bidding them to do so, for "there is none that seeketh after God (Romans 3.11)." But when God speaks, it is done (Psalm 33.9), for "Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest Thou? (Ecclesiastes 8.4)."

God will but speak the word and the quickened elect among the Jews will hear. The collective heart of the national remnant of Israel will respond,

"When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek (Psalm 27.8)."

in their affliction they will seek me early. Reduced to their wit's end (Psalm 107.27), they will desperately seek His face as they are faced with imminent destruction at the hand of their enemies, led by the Beast of Revelation 13. Christ's answer will be to come to their rescue, destroy their adversaries in the war of Armageddon, and bring His people Israel to Himself. Their response to Him at His appearing and His speaking to them is found in verses 1-3 of the sixth chapter:

6.1 "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." They will see clearly why they have suffered so grievously for most of their national existence. Finally, they will be given repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2 Timothy 2.25), because "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a

Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5.31).”

2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight... These two days are not Monday and Tuesday, or Friday and Saturday. Following the principle that one day is with the Lord AS a thousand years, and a thousand years AS one day (2 Peter 3.8), these two days are the two thousand years of exile the Jews have gone through since

AD 70. The third day spoken of here is the thousand-year “millennium” of

Revelation 20, which follows the two days (2,000 years) of the church age.

3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: The supplied italicized if only confuses an otherwise clear text. Here the Jews are saying,

“Then shall we know we follow on to know the LORD!”

His going forth is prepared as the morning; This is the dawning of a new day, the Day of the Lord!

...and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth: This is “the times of refreshing” spoken of by Peter: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of restitution of all things, which God hath

spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3.19ff).”

Now, since this has been spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began, why do we hear brethren say from time to time, “I never heard that before!”?

Is God “Through With National Israel?”

The Lord is no more through with the nation of Israel than He is through with Christ’s bride, His church. If He were to break His unconditional eternal promises to Israel merely because of their sin and the passing of two or three thousand years, why could He not also break His unconditional eternal promises to the church, and then, why could He not cease to be the everlasting, unchangeable God presented to His people in the Scriptures?

Malachi 3.6, “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed,” was spoken not to the church but to the sons of Jacob. (This text, we believe, has been rightly applied to the church, but its interpretation must be, first and foremost, to the sons of Jacob, or Israel. There may be many applications of a Scripture, but there is only one bona fide interpretation: it is exactly what the words say and mean—or else words, including those of God’s word, have no meaning.)

These foes of national Israel within “religion” teach that the Jews/Israel must be “good people” before God will bless them, saying that in order for them to be saved, Israelites must produce the fruit of salvation before they are saved, in order for God to save them! Everything anti-Israel

amillennialists have ever said advocating free sovereign grace breaks down before their own view of national Israel. They unwittingly fall into the

Arminian/Conditionalist trap of saying, "God will not bless national Israel until they obey Him." They thereby abandon the sovereign grace principle that no one can obey God unless and until He blesses them to obey Him. Therefore Amillennialists cannot apply the doctrine of grace to the Jews even though God promised unmerited grace forever to that blessed nation. Israel's foes must revert to the Arminian works-system of Rome: "Be good and God will bless you for it." We can expect such from all Arminians, Conditionalists, and other religions of the world, but who would have thought those who profess sovereign grace principles would have reverted, in their anti-Jewish posture, to a "works to earn God's favor" doctrine? Yet they have.

We read Isaiah 53. Who hath believed our report? Read Isaiah 54 along with it. The entire portion is addressed to Israel. Chapter 54 is a continuation of

Isaiah 53. Read large portions of the Scriptures repeatedly to get their drift.

"3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband [like Hosea was to Gomer]; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused [like Gomer?], saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but

with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

“For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD (Isaiah 54.3-17).” Read on.

Remember: This was written to Israel. It has its applications to the New Testament church, right enough; but it was written to Israel, about Israel in her latter days and into eternity. He said somewhere, “world without end.”

—CCM

Ephraim, Part IV

by C. C. Morris

Review

Previously, we have observed Ephraim from his beginnings in Genesis to his prominence in Hosea, where he represents Israel both in history and in prophecy. Although Ephraim was Jacob/Israel's grandson, Jacob adopted Ephraim as his own firstborn son. Much later, Ephraim's tribe became the leader of the ten rebellious tribes.

Hosea (as the other prophets) makes it clear that in Ephraim/Israel's near future, there would be punishment for her idolatry and sin, but she would be restored to her God-given Land of Promise. Not only in Old Testament (OT) times, which was done, but also there would be a final restoration of Israel in the day of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ "in the latter days." The prophecies of Ephraim/Israel's restoration and glory would not be limited to their return from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah), but there would be a final national salvation and glory that will remain, not only during the thousand years following Christ's

Second Advent, but on into the eternal state. This is spoken of by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and "the minor prophets," it is reiterated by Paul in Romans 11, and confirmed by John in the Revelation of Jesus

Christ. It is part of that "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3.21)."

Contrary to all this, rebellious "Churchianity," in the form of amillennialism, has sowed the seeds of hatred for national Israel, relegating her to their dustbin of history if it were possible. Modern religion has refined their antiIsrael error into what is now called "replacement theology," saying, "God is through with national Israel forever; He has replaced Israel with the church, which is now 'spiritual Israel.'"

A-millennialism's Beginnings: Pagan Greek Philosophy, Gnosticism, Origen, Augustine, the Church of Rome

None of this is new. Early in church history, after an ugly break between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles, the church began blaming the Jews not only for the crucifixion of their God and Messiah, but for just about every evil in the world. The unbelieving pagan world gladly went along with this, as worldlings instinctively hate the idea of an elect nation and a chosen people or anything else having to do with God's sovereign election of a people to be saved by grace alone.

Origen (Origenes Adamantius, 185-254) [see *The Remnant*, Mar-Apr 2011] combined Greek Platonic philosophy, Talmudic Judaism, and New Testament Christianity into one grand religious system. He was a prolific writer, but he dictated much of his writing to a bevy of young female stenographers. Since all these people were young and healthy, he and the girls were mutually attracted to each other; too much so, he thought. This was a source of serious concern to him, enough so that he became obsessed with this worrisome problem. In his younger days he was literal-minded enough

to take Matthew 19.12 (“...there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake....”) literally, enough so that he emasculated himself. Those who know about such bizarre behavior say there is but a narrow line between genius and insanity. Some conclude he stepped over that invisible line. Being the either/or, obsessive-compulsive case that he was, and realizing the grizzly deed he did to himself was irreparable, he went to the other extreme. He went from saying “everything in the Bible is literal” to “nothing in the Bible is literal.” Before he was through, he sowed the seeds of “spiritualizing the Scriptures” and of “replacement theology” with its attendant evils. From what this man sowed, the church has reaped the likes of “the church is ‘spiritual Israel,’” “the church is the kingdom of God,” “the kingdom of God is Zion,” “Zion is the kingdom of heaven,” “the church is the kingdom of heaven on earth,” and “we, as the church, must take the world for Christ,” and on and on. In a word, he introduced a totally figurative, allegorical approach into Bible “interpretation,” which has increasingly plagued the Lord’s people in what would eventually become, by the courtesy of the Roman Catholic church, the full-blown amillennialism with which we are inundated today.

Eusebius (263-339), according to The Catholic Encyclopedia, wrote a defense of Origen. According to Wikipedia, “Eusebius stands entirely upon the shoulders of Origen.” He laid more of the foundation for amillennialism within the Roman Catholic Church.

Jerome (347-420): Catholic Online says, regarding Jerome’s method of Bible interpretation: “...he indulges in allegorical and mystical subtleties after the manner of Philo and the Alexandrian school.” The Alexandrian school was that of Clement and Origen. Jerome used the non-literal approach to the Bible, adding his part to the growing amillennialism.

Augustine (354-430): If Origen cranked the engine, Augustine shifted into second gear and floor-boarded it. In his book, *The City of God*, Augustine did not wait until he began "interpreting" prophecy to allegorize the Scriptures; he began in Genesis 1, saying the seven days of creation were not literal days. In the account of the fall of man (Genesis 3) he says Man represents the spirit and Woman represents the flesh. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was, he said, a symbol of "the order of creation" (whatever that means).

By Augustine's time a-millennialism was fully entrenched in the Church of

Rome. Their official doctrine (enforceable by pain of torture and death) was that the Church is the Kingdom of God, which is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and their mission on earth was to take the world for God—hence we have the origin of Roman Catholic missionaries and missions, Protestant missions, and Missionary Baptist missions. His book, *The City of God*, put the amillennial icing on Rome's allegorical cake.

Nowadays, most churches have automatic transmissions and are cruising full speed down the amillennial highway, spiritualizing their God-given roadmap, scarcely knowing from whence we came or whither we are going.

In his time, the great German reformer of the Roman Catholic church, Martin Luther, with his amillennial anti-Jewish fanaticism, furnished ammunition enough to encourage another German centuries later, Adolph Hitler, to attempt the extermination of Israel's entire race.

Shallow “intellectuals,” loving to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Romans 12.3), delude themselves with false reasoning such as, “Any simple-minded fool can read the Bible literally. Only we, though, can perceive the deeper, spiritual meaning of these things which are not meant to be believed in any literal sense.”

When the “reformers” like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and others, tried to reform the doctrines of Rome, they championed the complete finished work of Christ to save His people from their sins and the rest of the doctrine of sovereign grace; that is good. But they also blindly brought with them Roman Catholic amillennialism; that was bad. Yes, it served God’s predestinated purpose, but so did Judas’ betrayal of Jesus, which was evil. So is amillennialism. The Reformers brought with them Roman Catholic amillennialism and anti-Jewish sentiment. These were two areas of many in which the Reformers failed to complete their Reformation.

It was not the intention of Henry VIII for the Church of England to be “Protestant,” but his successors thought otherwise. The Anglican church made the mistake of bringing Rome’s amillennialism along with them, as did the other protestant “reformers.”

Every time an a-millennialist is called upon to face the facts of the Romish origin of their scheme and he nevertheless refuses to do so, he proves one of several things: Either

- (a) he has not yet searched the history of amillennialism for himself;
- (b) he is unwilling to do the search;
- (c) he is unwilling to face the facts;

(d) he is unable to admit he and a host of his friends have been wrong;

(e) he does not care about what the truth of amillennialism's roots is; or (f) he is content to continue sleeping in Rome's bed and drinking the wine of her fornication (Revelation 17.2).

More; sincere a-millennialists who value God's word more than man's traditions within the church will find they must reevaluate their understanding of countless Scriptures, such as:

A. The future of the nation Israel: The Bible plainly states that Israel will be eternally restored as God's earthly people. This is in sharp contrast to the church, as the bride of Christ, being God's heavenly people. Israel, as the divorced wife of Jehovah (Isaiah 50.1), will be eternally reconciled to her Husband (Isaiah 54.3-14, 62.4).

B. Defenders of amillennialism should explain to us how God could make everlasting, unconditional promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then break those promises. They should be able to explain this contradiction clearly and simply or be willing to abandon it.

C. Prophecy: Sincere amillennialists must realize the millennial glories predicted for Israel are not to be spiritually applied to the church. Christ's bride will be partaker of His glory, which is far greater than the millennial glory of Israel. They should stop applying prophecies of Christ's second coming to His first coming figuratively. (For one example: Isaiah 63.1-7 is plainly Armageddon and not the cross.)

They should stop applying God's prophesied judgments to Israel while applying the prophecies of Israel's restoration blessings to the church. As two out of countless examples:

(a) If Isaiah 63.7-9 speaks of the church, then Isaiah 63.10 ("But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them") also speaks of the church. If not, why not?

(b) If Ezekiel 16.1-14 is a picture of the church as the bride of Christ, then this text's continuation, Ezekiel 16.15-59 is also a picture of the church as the bride of Christ. If not, why not?

There are other major problems with the amillennial figurative approach to Bible interpretation, mostly involving the rejection of the plain meaning of the Bible's words and grammar. The Bible is not a word-game or a puzzle book. There are indeed biblical plays on words and puns, but such word play is not the primary method of biblical interpretation.

We have often pointed out that there may be many applications of a text, but there is only one interpretation, which is grammatical and literal, by dictionary definition. Isaiah 63.7-9 may be applied to the church, but its interpretation is "the house of Israel," as is said in verse 7. Ezekiel 16.1-14 may be applied to the church; but its interpretation is plainly Jerusalem (verses 2-3).

A-millennialism's Absurdities and Contradictions

1. If a parent makes promises to a son and a daughter, some of those promises may be common to both, while other promises are specific only to the son and others exclusively to the daughter. This does not mean that (a) the son and the daughter are the same person, or (b) the son has replaced the daughter or vice versa, or (c) the literal promises to the son are to be spiritually applied to the daughter.

It is the same with Jehovah's Israel and the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church is not Israel; the church has not replaced Israel; and the literal promises God made to Israel are not to be merely applied spiritually to the church. What we can say is this:

A. some of the literal promises to Israel may be spiritually applied to the church, while other promises may not;

B. Israel and the church remain distinct, separate entities;

C. Certain events in Israel's history serve as examples and types or figures of what happens to the church. (See 1 Corinthians 10.1-11, et al).

2. There is another absurdity of note: Those who believe the following three propositions have a serious problem:

A. the bodily resurrection, and

B. the physical world and universe will be destroyed, and

C. the eternal state in heaven will only be spiritual (whatever that means). We ask those who believe these three propositions: What will the resurrected physical body stand on in a world that is spiritual only? And if the world to come in the eternal state is indeed only to be a "spirit world," where spirits eat "spiritual food" and only do "spiritual things," then what is the purpose of the bodily resurrection? Who would need a resurrected body of flesh and bones as Christ has, and to what purpose? What would glorified saints use a physical body for in a spirit-only world? Would it not be rather a hindrance, something to get in the way? Are the non-resurrectionists right after all? (No!)

Ancient Prophecies Yet to be fulfilled

There are many unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible. There are more prophecies of the glory of Christ's second coming than there are prophecies of His first coming. Yet amillennialists try to "spiritualize" those prophecies of His second coming and force-fit them to apply either to His first coming or to the church. Barely touching these facts for now, we will only mention two groups of prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled. They are the prophetic promises made to

1. ABRAHAM: We remind our readers that Abraham never received a square foot of the Promised Land during his 175-year lifetime. He confessed he was a stranger and a pilgrim.... The only land he ever owned in the Promised Land was the cave of Machpelah, which he purchased for a burial-place from Ephron the Hittite (Genesis 23).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob died without receiving the promises (Hebrews 11.13). The only way Abraham can ever inherit the promised land is in the resurrection, first during Christ's Millennial kingdom, and then in eternity.

2. DAVID: the promise of a Son to occupy his throne for ever: "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne (Psalm 132.11)." "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9.7)." "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1.32f)." "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (Acts 2.29f)." "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men [those left alive after the plagues of the Great Tribulation, who will go into the Millennial kingdom] might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15.16ff)"; i.e., this is His predestinated purpose from when He created all things.

David's place in the Millennium: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it (Ezekiel 34.23f). "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever:

and my servant David shall be their prince for ever (Ezekiel 37.24f)."

OBJECTIONS

Objection 1: Christ will never set a foot on this earth again.

Reply 1: This is an arbitrary theory with neither scriptural foundation nor merit. Please give one Scripture on which the objector would build that doctrine.

Reply 2: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Psalm 110.1, Matthew 22.44, Mark 12.36, Luke 20.43, Acts 2.35, Hebrews 1.13, 10.13)." "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (Isaiah 66.1, Acts 7.49)." "...the earth; for it is His footstool...(Matthew 5.35)."

Do you, O man, own a footstool? Can you, do you, may you, if you please, put your feet upon it, or not? Does your wife tell you that you can never again put your feet on your own footstool? No? Who among us, then, dares to say the Creator God, the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot, may not, will not do as we do, and put His feet on His own footstool? Where do men professing belief in the God who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, "What doest thou?"—where do men who profess belief in a God like that get the brazen impudence to say He may do all of his pleasure in heaven and on earth EXCEPT He cannot set His nail-pierced foot on His tangible creation ever again? For shame, O Amillennialist, for shame!

Objection 2: "The Jews are the most wicked people on the face of the earth"; Karl Marx, Trotsky, and Lenin were Jews; the Bolshevik Revolution was financed by wealthy "American" Jews (Kuhn, Loeb, & Co.); the despicable Hollywood movie industry, including pornographic films, has been dominated by Jews; Jews have led in racketeering, gangsterism, and drugdealing; they have destroyed national economics; the traitorous spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, David Greenglass, Morton Sobell, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Leo Szilard, Morris Cohen, Robert Soblen, Jack Soble, Victor Perlo, Lee Pressman, Israel Amter, "Gus Hall" [Arvo K. Halberg], and a lot of other Communist traitors, spies, and double agents were Jews; Jews were and are some of the most treacherous, double-dealing, corrupt politicians who have been instrumental in undermining the U.S. Constitution and the national governments of this world, etc., etc.

Reply 1: Even if everything Israel's enemies have said about these Jews is true, it will not abrogate ONE of the Lord's promises to Israel. All of that may be true, and yet it will not neutralize one promise God has made to

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and national Israel. The point of salvation is that He shall save His people from their sins!

Reply 2: "Tu Quoque." You also! Do you think that we, who are Gentiles by nature, are a better class of sinners than the Jews? Are there no Gentile gangsters, racketeers, spies, double agents, and traitors, smutty Gentile movie-makers and pornographers, crooked Gentile politicians, Gentile dope peddlers and dealers in "white [and other kinds of] slavery"? Are there no Gentile young people from the USA, England, and many European countries who are even now fighting against their home countries, allied with Al Qaida, ISIL, and ISIS and beheading (or would behead) their former friends and neighbors? Has God never had mercy on the like, saved and regenerated some who were before blasphemers, and persecutors, and injurious—but they obtained mercy, because they did it ignorantly in unbelief, and the Lord graciously brought them into His church?

"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the

Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6.9ff)." "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin...(Romans 3.9)." Please tell me, how much deeper "under sin" a Jew must be to be a worse sinner than a Gentile, or how much deeper "under sin" a Gentile must be to be a worse sinner than a Jew. Please tell me, if it is indeed so, that you are a better class of sinner than the Jews are. Please say why you, a Gentile, deserve the Lord's grace, mercy, and salvation more than the wickedest Jew you can imagine. Choose

your words well. JEHOVAH ELOHIM, the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will hear your answer.

Objection 3: Those are not true Jews in Israel today—they are false Jews, Khazars, who long ago adopted the “Jewish religion” for ulterior reasons.

Reply 1: As far as that complaint goes, who can judge whether the Khazars who converted to Judaism were sincere or not? Can you? That is for God the

Righteous Judge to settle. God did not make us judges of such matters. But,

Reply 2: Even if this objection were 100% true, which it is not, there is still a nation of true Israelites whom God has preserved and knows, and He will convert them at His own appointed time. “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” (Romans 3.3)

Objection 4: No Jew really knows what tribe he or she is from. Their national and tribal identity is lost in antiquity.

Reply 1: In Revelation 7, He has sealed 12,000 Israelites out of each of

Israel’s twelve tribes, making a total of 144,000 to be saved out of The Great Tribulation. Those numbers (12,000 and 144,000) are either literal or they are figurative. Who are these 144,000 people, if they are not those

whom God says they are—Israelites from each of the twelve tribes? They cannot represent Gentiles, saved as “spiritual Jews,” because the saved Gentiles of that time of tribulation are accounted for in the next verses (Revelation 7.9-17).

Reply 2: If it is true that no Jew knows what tribe he is from, that is of no consequence. What matters is that GOD KNOWS: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His (2 Timothy 2:19).”

Objection 5: Yes, but finish that verse: “And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity,” and the Jews have neither named the name of Christ nor departed from iniquity.

Reply: Oh, but they will, at His second coming, when the nation is born in a day. “For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God (2 Samuel 7.24).” We ask this kind of objector again: Do you know what “for ever” means?

Objection 6: Hosea 8.14 says, “For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.” God destroyed Israel forever in AD 70 and scattered them throughout the world.

Reply: Not so. He did not destroy her; He has preserved her for two millennia, as no other nation in the history of the world has been so supernaturally preserved, and He has begun bringing her back into the

Promised Land. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days (Hosea 3.5)."

Get the timing of this, the chronology, correct in your mind: David lived and died over four hundred years before Hosea wrote these words, so Hosea cannot be speaking of David in the flesh any more than we of the 21st century can seek after George Washington or Miles Standish after the flesh. This prophecy was not fulfilled at the return from Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. Nor was it fulfilled in the gospel period, when Christ walked the trails of Judaea and Galilee, nor in the entire century of the New Testament era. The only way this prophecy ever can be and will be fulfilled will be in the resurrection, during the Millennium, which is part of "the latter days" Hosea here mentions.

Objection 7: The Jewish law has been abolished and we Gentile Christians are now the spiritual Jews.

Reply 1: Pardon me if I find that comment somewhat amusing. If you as a natural-born Gentile are now really "spiritual Jews," then to which spiritual tribes do you belong? Spiritual Judah, spiritual Issachar, spiritual Benjamin?

How do you know?

Reply 2: It is not "the Jewish law"; it is the Law of God you say is abolished. How can the law and the commandment of God, which Paul says is "holy, just, and good" (Romans 7.12) be "abolished"? If God in Christ has abolished that which is holy, just, and good, do you say God is the author of

its alternative—sin? Does your God now champion the cause of that which is unholy, unjust, and bad? Tell us, you who are now free from the “carnal commandments,” are you now free to have other gods before Jehovah thy

Elohim? (Matthew 4.10)

Free to multiply graven images to yourselves and to bow down to them? (1

Corinthians 10.14, 1 John 5.21)

Free to take God’s name in vain? (Matthew 6.9)

Free to forget the Sabbath and free to keep it unholy? (Mark 2.27f)

Free to dishonor your parents? (Matthew 15.4, 19.19)

Free to kill whoever crosses you? (Matthew 5.21f; 1 Peter 4.15)

Free to commit adultery? (Matthew 5.27f, 19.9)

Free to steal? (Mark 10.19; Ephesians 4.28)

Free to bear false witness against thy neighbor? (Matthew 15.19f; Ephesians

4.25)

Free to covet everything your neighbor has? (Luke 12.15; Romans 13.9; Ephesians 5.3)

Christ has indeed freed His people from the law of sin and death (Romans 8.2), and we who are by nature Gentiles have never been under the ceremonial law; but we, as Peter, are “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God (1 Peter 2.16).” “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not

without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law (1 Corinthians 9.20f).” “But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully...(1 Timothy 1.8).”

If the objector means that Christ has abolished the ceremonial law by fulfilling its types and shadows, then that is perhaps what should be said more clearly and plainly, instead of saying, “the law is abolished,” or saying, “we [Gentiles] are no longer under the law.” We Gentiles never were under the ceremonial/Levitical law, but the human race has always been under the righteous restrictions of God. (After he killed his brother, did Cain say, “I didn’t know...Moses hasn’t yet given the Ten Commandments and said, ‘thou shalt not kill....’”? Did not God institute capital punishment in Genesis 9.6, centuries before “the ten commandments”? etc.)

Reply 3: Romans 2.17-29 is written to JEWS. Jewish Christians, perhaps, but JEWS by blood and birth, nonetheless: “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law....” Read it for what you get out of it, not for what you might read into it.

Verses 28-29 were written to JEWS, Jewish Christians. The text was not at all given to tell Gentiles they are now “spiritual Jews.” “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2.28f).” The text has nothing to do with Gentiles being “spiritual Jews.” It has everything to do with Christian Jews being truly godly, spiritual Jews, following Christ as their example, “not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life (Hebrews 7.16).”

"WHY EPHRAIM?" ANSWERED

In the last issue we published, one section addressed "God will cause Israel to cease (Hosea 1.4)." The OT contrasts Israel's sin and God's judgments on the one hand with God's salvation and blessings for Israel on the other.

In the book of Hosea, Israel's sins and God's punishments repeatedly alternate with God's goodness in chapters 7, 8, and 9, for example, and to name no other. This is true throughout the OT, from the books of Moses through Malachi.

If we are unfamiliar with the OT and God's method of addressing Israel's sin and restoration, a question of time-order surfaces whenever we "jump into" such passages haphazardly.

In many Scriptures we find repeatedly sin, destruction, restoration, sin, destruction, restoration, sin, destruction, restoration.

In many other places we find restoration, sin, destruction, restoration, sin, destruction.

We might wonder: which is LAST—final destruction or final restoration? Will God finally destroy Israel, or will He finally restore her? The answer, given in the final chapter (Hosea 14), is restoration!

Jehovah says: O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.(Hosea 14.1-2).

Israel replies: Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy (verse 3).

Jehovah says: I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein (verses 4-9).

Judah, Israel, Ephraim Restored forever

The Lord does not wait for the final chapter, however, to prophesy Israel's final restoration. Hosea's first chapter predicts it: "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen (1.7)." In their final salvation (at Armageddon), they will be saved by the sovereign, intervening presence of their supreme ruler and MessiahKing at His second advent.

"Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one Head [they will have no alternative!], and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." Remember, Jezreel's name means to sow, as grain. Judah and Israel will be sown in their own land, where they will take root and finally flourish forever. "And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods (Hosea 10.11)." The picture is of Ephraim, Judah, and Jacob working together in that day in harmony.

(Someone has well pointed out that in such passages as this, God says "Jacob" instead of "Israel" so that amillennialists won't get them—Israel—mixed up with the church!)

"And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and

they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, 'Thou art my people'; and they shall say, 'Thou art my God' (Hosea 2.18-23)."

One fundamental difference between Jewish Christology and amillennial Christology is this: The Jews "spiritualize" the prophecies of Christ's first coming (as the meek, lowly Lamb of God), but they take the prophecies of His second coming (as the conquering, reigning Messiah and King of kings) literally.

Amillennialism does the exact opposite, taking Christ's first coming literally, and "spiritualizing" His second coming.

The one is as wrong as the other, because, of His comings to this earth (the first being past and the second being yet future), both are literal.

Summary

We have not tried to do a verse by verse commentary on Hosea but have gone into great detail to show that in the book of Hosea the name of Ephraim is synonymous with national Israel.

We have observed Ephraim from his beginnings in Genesis to his climactic presence in Hosea, where he represents Israel both in history and in prophecy of what God calls "the latter days": "Afterward shall the children

of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days (3.5).” We have taken the leisure to show how and why Ephraim occupies that representative role.

Rebellious Ephraim is a picture of rebellious Israel. In Hosea, the prophecy of Ephraim’s final restoration is a prophecy of Israel’s final restoration. It is that simple, if the Lord gives us the eyes to see it.

—CCM