

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-10103

Solomon's Kingdom Divided

August 25, 2010

In the last issue, two questions were asked: **What happened to ancient Israel? Where is Israel today?** We cannot answer the second question until we have answered the first one, and, to do this, we have to start with Jacob and the name *Israel*, which is what the last issue is about.

As stated previously, when many Christians hear the name *Israel*, it can be said without much doubt that they think of the modern Jewish state of Israel as a nation made up predominantly of a purebred race of people called *Jews* or *Israelites*. In other words, the word *Israel* has become synonymous with the word *Jew* or *Judah*. Scripturally speaking, it is as if many are saying that **the house of Israel** and **the house of Judah** have been brought back together as a united kingdom in the modern nation called *Israel*. I doubt that many would state it this way, but this is really what is meant when *Israel* and *Jew* are used as synonymous terms.

However, what does Scripture reveal about such thinking? Is it correct to use the terms *Israel* and *Jew* synonymously? No; it is not! History and the ancient prophets prove it.

So, let us begin with some history, starting with Solomon doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

(6) Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. ... (8) Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. (9) Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, (10) and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded. (11) So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. (12) Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. (13) However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen." (1 Kings 11:6, 8-13 NASB)

The kingdom under the rule of David and Solomon could be called the **United Kingdom of Israel**, for all twelve tribes were united as one people in Jerusalem and Judea. It could be said that both Judah and Joseph dwelt in the same tent, so to speak. As we have seen in previous issues, the scepter and **kingship** identified with the name *Judah*, and the kingdom and **sonship** identified with Joseph and his father's spiritual name, *Israel*. As long as the two brothers dwelt in the same tent, the name *Israel* was associated with a united kingdom. In fact, after Jacob was called *Israel*, his sons were called **the sons of Israel** (Genesis 32:32). Thus, it was established that the name *Israel* is associated with all twelve tribes. In fact, starting with Saul and David, they were known as the **kingdom of Israel** (1 Samuel 15:28; 24:20).

However, Solomon was not like his father David, and he turned from the Lord by not keeping His covenant and statutes. As a result of his evil, Solomon was told by the Lord that, when he died, his kingdom would be torn apart. Only one tribe would remain in Jerusalem for the sake of David. Prophetically, this was necessary, for there had to be a Judahite nation (a remnant of Judah) in Jerusalem when the Son of God came to earth to take the scepter of Judah, claiming His right as the King of Judah. One from the tribe of Judah had to sit upon David's throne (Luke 1:32-33), as promised to King David (2 Samuel 7:16).

More detail about this split of the kingdom came through Ahijah as he spoke to Jeroboam, an Ephraimite (i.e., from the tribe of Ephraim, Joseph's son).

(30) Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak which was on him and tore it into twelve pieces. (31) He said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes (32) (but he will have one tribe, for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel)....'" (1 Kings 11:30-32 NASB)

In other words, the kingdom of twelve tribes would be torn apart with ten of them coming under the rule of Jeroboam and one tribe, namely **Judah**, remaining in Jerusalem for the sake of David and the line of kings that would lead to the rightful heir of the tribe of Judah, namely **Jesus**.

So, the split came about after Solomon's death when his son Rehoboam became king over the kingdom. A revolt led by Jeroboam took place when Rehoboam refused to reduce the heavy yoke (taxes) that had been placed on the people by Solomon; instead, based on the unwise counsel of his young friends, he was determined to increase the taxes. Thus, a tax revolt took place and the cry went forth to divide.

When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; To your tents, O Israel! Now look after your own house, David!" So Israel departed to their tents. (1 Kings 12:16 NASB)

As an Ephraimite, Jeroboam carried the name *Israel* as given to Joseph's sons. In this verse, we see the division of the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms, with the ten tribes taking the name *Israel*. Thus, this reinforced the fact that the name *Israel* resided with the house of Joseph (i.e., his sons), and wherever they resided and whoever resided with them was called *Israel*.

(19) So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. (20) It came about when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, that they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. None but the tribe of Judah followed the house of David. (21) Now when Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. (1 Kings 12:19-21 NASB)

The Lord told them not to fight with their brothers, **so they listened to the word of the Lord and returned and went their way according to the word of the Lord** (1 Kings 12:24). Thus, the United Kingdom of Israel was torn apart into the house or nation of Judah and the house or nation of Israel, and, spiritually speaking, it remains so to this day.

Benjamin remained with Judah as a prophetic sign that the breach would be repaired one day. Benjamin is made up of two words: *ben*, which means "son," and *jamin*, which means "right hand or side." In other words, Benjamin signifies *sonship* that will come to Judah as well, but only when Judah and Israel are reunited. The Levites also remained because the temple remained in Jerusalem.

Contrary to the way Christians might view Israel today, the fact of the matter is that, after the breach, the ancient prophets uniformly referred to the two houses or nations as separate entities with different histories and prophecies. Judah went into captivity and returned to Jerusalem; Israel went into captivity and never returned. Keep these straight as you read the prophets and it will keep you from the error that states modern Israel is the fulfillment of ancient prophecy regarding the house of Israel.

Again, it is vital to our understanding of prophecy to know that this breach has not been repaired and it has continued to our day. Spiritually speaking, the twelve tribes have not been reunited. They can only be reunited when the King of Judah comes to establish His Kingdom on earth and among the nations. This breach will be repaired when the voices of heaven declare: **"The kingdoms of the world did become those of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign to the ages of the ages!"** (Revelation 11:15 YLT). May this declaration come soon!