

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)*

#04-10105

The Hebrew – A Migrator

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In previous issues, I posed two questions: **What happened to ancient Israel? Where is Israel today?**

As already shown, the answer to the first question is that they were taken captive by the Assyrians between 745-721 BC, which led to their dispersion among the nations and their loss of national identity, namely the loss of the name *Israel*. God wrote a writ of divorce and sent them out of His house (Hosea 9:15). The ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel became known as the **Lost Ten Tribes**.

Knowing how some Christian groups think when they see the word *lost*, it must be emphasized again that the term *lost* simply means that they lost their national identity as they were removed from their ancient land, which led to their migration to foreign lands.

Actually, based on the historical record and archeological evidence, the ten tribes were not even lost in the sense of no one knowing where they were or where they had gone. They did not simply vanish as a people, never to be seen or heard from again. Quite the contrary; they left a path of migratory evidence, etymological and anthropological, that is widely accepted even amongst some Orthodox Jews today.

After all, James wrote **“to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad”** (James 1:1), and Peter wrote **“to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”** (1 Peter 1:1). These areas constituted northern Asia Minor, which is modern Turkey today. This was a pathway for the Israelites who migrated westward to Europe where they became a large population.

Lately, I have been reading about the migration of the ten tribes that answers, at least in my mind, pretty conclusively the question of where Israel is today. However, before offering a few comments on what I have gleaned, we need to go back a bit in history to the origin of the term *Hebrew* on the natural level.

The word *Hebrew* (Hebrew: *ibriy*) is a patronymic name derived from the patriarch Eber, a fourth generation son of Noah. Thus, a Hebrew is a descendant of Eber, an *Eberite*. The name *Eber* means “the region beyond.” Eber had a son named *Peleg*, which means “division” or “separation,” **for in his days the earth was divided** (Genesis 10:25). Of the families of the sons of Noah, it is said: **“Out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood”** Genesis 10:32). Obviously, this separation or division occurred during the life of Peleg.

Some say this means that the continents or land masses were divided during his day, for they believe the water from the flood fully receded during his days to form the present continents. Some of this could have occurred during this time, but this does not seem to be the primary meaning.

More commonly, it is believed that the earth being divided in Peleg’s day refers to events surrounding the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Some date the building of the Tower and the Lord confusing the language of the builders close to the birth of Peleg, and others date it in the year of his death. I am more inclined to accept the latter.

At any rate, the word *Hebrew* came to mean “opposite side of the river,” “passing beyond,” or “a region across.”

Abram was the first person in Scripture to be called a *Hebrew* (Genesis 14:13), for he was called by God to go forth from his country to a land which God would show him (Genesis 12:1). In other words, he passed beyond to another region. Another way of stating this is that Abram migrated to a new land. Given this, the word *Hebrew* has built into its meaning “one who migrates.” Some commentators state that the word also means *colonist*, as in a person who plants colonies away from his homeland.

It seems apparent that the word *Hebrew* is prophetic on several levels, starting with the fruitfulness blessing that Elohim bestowed on mankind through Adam: **“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”** (Genesis 1:28). This is the very beginning of the concept of migration that is contained in the word *Hebrew*. Actually, it was more than a blessing; it was a command and a prophecy, and God fully intended this blessing to be manifested through migration of His people throughout the whole earth.

The building of a tower and the city of Babel were impediments to this blessing, for the ancients were saying: **“Let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth”** (Genesis 11:4). This was a flagrant snubbing of Elohim’s fruitfulness blessing bestowed upon His creation.

However, God’s plan for mankind and the earth could not be thwarted. By confusing the language of the whole earth, meaning the emergence of many new languages, not only then but over time, God forced mankind to move out from the land of Shinar. But there was more to it, for, at the same time, God called forth the *Eberites* as a **migratory and colonist people** called *Hebrews*. This was prophetic of how God was going to fulfill the fruitfulness blessing.

Fast forward seven generations from Eber to Abram, and we discover how God intended to do it.

And He took him [i.e., Abram the Hebrew] **outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”** (Genesis 15:5 NASB)

Then later, after Abraham had willingly offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice, the Lord blessed Abraham once again.

(15) Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, (16) and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, (17) indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. (18) In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:15-18 NASB)

This was prophetic on two levels, what could be called short-term and long-term prophecies. Truly, in the short-term, the sons of Israel came out of Egypt as a multitude of people. This was about 363 years from God’s promise to Abraham. But this great multitude continued as one people united as a kingdom to the end of the reign of Solomon, which was about another 516 years.

“The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number.” ... “Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.” ... Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing. (Deuteronomy 1:10; 10:22; 1 Kings 4:20 NASB)

But did the blessing stop here? Obviously, not! There is a long-term prophecy built into God’s promise to Abraham the Hebrew that led to his descendants migrating outside of the land of Israel that has blessed and yet will bless all the nations of the earth.

It seems to me that it is as if God planted a genetic code within the Hebrews that compels them to migrate and to colonize. This is taken up in the next issue.