

# 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)

#04-10106

***Hebrew Migration #1***

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I have been posing two questions: **What happened to ancient Israel? Where is Israel today?** These have been answered in part in previous issues. Frankly, there is so much history, as well as etymological (study of the history of words) and anthropological (study of cultures) evidence, that could be cited to answer these questions that it is overwhelming. All I can do is skim the surface and trust that if you have an interest in this topic, you will do your own research.

The last issue made the point that the word *Hebrew* traces its roots back through Abraham to Peleg to Eber. The Israelites and the Judahites were all Hebrews as well, for they all came from the loins of Abraham. Abraham is the first in Scripture to be called a *Hebrew*, a name that carried forward to his descendants. Thus, the word *Hebrew* could be called the oldest term or name for God's people. Actually, we see a hint of a Hebrew in Shem, the father of them all, for the record states: "**Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem**" (Genesis 9:26).

However, as we have seen, the name *Israel* (or ***Israelite***) has a broad and a restrictive meaning. The broad meaning refers to **the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel** as long as they remained united as one kingdom. However, the restrictive meaning refers to the **birthright name** given to Joseph's two sons. As long as all the sons of Israel remained together, they were Israelites. However, once they were split apart into two kingdoms following Solomon's death, the name *Israel* went with the northern kingdom of ten tribes of which Ephraim and Manasseh were part, and the name *Judah* went with the southern kingdom of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Interestingly, in recounting his pedigree, Paul said he was of the nation of Israel, meaning he was of the united nation of all twelve sons; of the tribe of Benjamin, meaning he was of the Judahite nation; and a Hebrew of Hebrews, meaning he was a descendant of Abraham (Philippians 3:5).

Of course, this is all on the natural level. There is a spiritual meaning to a Hebrew (just as there is for the word *Jew*), for it refers to ones who seek to migrate from their earthy land of mortal bodies [from the soil of the earth (Genesis 2:7)] to their dwelling out of heaven, that is, immortal, spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-49; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5).

In a spiritual sense, as Christians, we are Hebrews, for we have a genetic code within us as well. When we are born from above with the seed of God (1 John 3:9) taking up residence in us, we are given a spiritual genetic code that drives us to go beyond as well, except our land is not a tract someplace on earth. Our new land is an immortal body in the image of Christ. In other words, our genetic code drives us so that one day we can and will migrate from mortality (death) to immortality (life) through resurrection and transfiguration. In another sense, it is a migration from the earthly Jerusalem to the heavenly New Jerusalem.

This is a bit of a diversion from the immediate topic at hand, which is the natural aspect of the Hebrew; however, it is vital that we continually remind ourselves of the spiritual, even as we seek to understand the natural. After all, Paul said **the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual** (1 Corinthians 15:46).

Now, as we have seen, the word *Hebrew* has built into its meaning "one who migrates" and also has come to mean "one who is a colonist." So, a Hebrew is a migrator and a colonist.

What needs to be realized is that the sons of Israel, especially during the time of Solomon's kingdom, were not a static people, as if they were all neatly compacted into the land of Israel and remained there from birth to death. It is true they had their inheritance in the land, but this should not have restricted them to this land, nor should it have constrained some of them from migrating to and exploring other

lands, either to colonize some or to plant some seeds of Hebrew or Israelite life, culture, language, and religion.

Some believe that there was Hebrew colonization of Spain during Solomon's reign. Solomon **had at sea the ships of Tarshish** (1 Kings 10:22), which is similar to *Tartessus*, one of the ancient names for Spain. It is also believed that Solomon's ships sailed to Britain to obtain tin from the mines of Cornwall. Later, as the Assyrians began their siege of the northern kingdom of Israel, it is thought that some migrated as far away as Britain to escape these cruel invaders.

However, even before Solomon's reign, during the time of the Judges in which the sons of Israel faced attacks from the surrounding "ite" nations, it is believed that some of the tribes were seafarers who traveled not only the Mediterranean but also up the coast of Europe to Britain.

**"Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; and he shall be a haven for ships, and his flank shall be toward Sidon." ... "Gilead remained across the Jordan; and why did Dan stay in ships? Asher sat at the seashore, and remained by its landings. ...** (Genesis 49:13; Judges 5:17 NASB)

So, in Jacob-Israel's blessing of his sons, Zebulun was prophesied as one who would help his seafaring brethren. Later, during the time of the Judges, both Dan and Asher are associated with the sea, with Dan staying in ships. Thus, most likely, at least two and possibly three tribes of Israel set out to sea, giving them the opportunity to migrate and colonize. This was no static culture.

Some scholars have provided evidence, based on the seafaring people called *Tuatha de Danan*, that the tribe of Dan may have founded civilizations in Greece, Spain, Britain, and Ireland. Scholars claim that the word *Tuath* means "tribe" and that *an* was added to the name *Dan* to make up the name *Danan*. Thus, these scholars believe the European colonists were of the tribe of Dan. Further, Cyprus was called *Ia-Danan* or the *Island of Dan(an)*. According to Greek tradition, their founder (eponymous ancestor) migrated from the Nile to Greece and was named *Danuna*. Of course, as we know, all the tribes of the sons of Israel were delivered (migrated) out of Egypt.

But there is other evidence as far back as the days of Moses and the sons of Israel when they sojourned through the wilderness. I imagine that most of us think the twelve tribes remained intact during those 40 years. After all, God revealed Himself to them through many signs and wonders and even spoke directly to them from the midst of the mountain. By our way of thinking, they must have been so awestruck by these things that they all would have stuck it out in the wilderness. Maybe, or maybe not! Let us not forget that they worshipped the golden calf and grumbled and rebelled their way through the wilderness. It would seem more likely that some could have decided to take their chances elsewhere. After all, they knew they couldn't enter the land of Canaan.

In his article *The Missing Simeonites*, Steven M. Collins makes the argument that some of the Simeonites, along with some from the other tribes, did just that. He makes his conclusion based on the change in population of the tribes between their first and second census (Numbers 1:20-46; 26:1-51). Since their numbers showed normal growth, most of the tribes were rather static. However, Simeon, Ephraim, and Naphthali showed abnormal reductions in their populations. Plagues and other events do not necessarily explain these significant drops, at least based on the Biblical record. The plague that occurred before the second census took 24,000 lives, and the combined reduction of these three tribes after the plague was over 48,000; but the overall total for all twelve tribes had been reduced only by a little over 1,800 due to significant increases in some of the other tribes. For example, Manasseh increased by over 20,000. So where did some of the members of these three tribes go?

One possibility is they left the camp and migrated to other lands outside that region. In particular, there is some evidence that the Simeonites became the **Spartans** of ancient Greece who were known to be non-native to Greece, descendants from ones who had migrated there. The Spartans lived by the sword, which fits Jacob-Israel's prophecy over his son Simeon: **Their swords are implements of violence. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel** (Genesis 49:5, 7). Truly, they were scattered to a foreign land. The most compelling proof comes from the book of 1 Maccabees 14:16-23. In a correspondence to Simon, a Jewish High Priest, the Spartans claimed the Jewish people (i.e., of the tribe of Judah) as their kinsmen. This is only one migratory clue among many.