

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)

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by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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Fullness of the Nations

What follows is an abbreviated version of this subject, as presented in article #64. See link for a more complete presentation: *Fullness of the Nations*: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art64.pdf>

In Romans 11:25, what does Paul mean by the phrase *until the fullness of the nations has come in*? Was he referring to non-Jewish nations, that is, gentiles, as so many translations imply? What follows proposes that Paul actually referred to the house of Israel that was dispersed among the nations and gradually became known by other national or ethnic names, many of which became Christian nations, especially in the Western world.

We need to throw off the tradition of men that sees the word *Israel* through the lens of a single nation, most notably the ancient one that was located in Canaan and the one now sitting in the Middle East that is misnamed *Israel* and presumed to be made up of blood descendants of Jacob-Israel.

When Jacob was sick, Joseph went to see his father, along with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob took Joseph's sons to be his own as Reuben and Simeon were his own and blessed them with his spiritual name *Israel*, meaning "God rules."

"The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and may my name [Israel] live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."
(Genesis 48:16 NASB)

Although Manasseh was the firstborn, Israel placed Ephraim before his brother so that he would have the greater blessing, at least in terms of numbers.

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." He blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. (Genesis 48:17-20 NASB)

Ephraim was blessed to become a multitude of nations, not one nation, and was blessed, along with his brother, to possess the name *Israel*. Manasseh was blessed to become a great people, and his nation would be Israelite, along with all of Ephraim's nations. Together, they would all be identified with the name *Israel*. Thus, the stage was set for not only one nation called *Israel* but for many nations that are *Israel*, regardless of whether they are called by this name or by any other name.

But how did these two brothers become a multitude of nations known as *Israel*? It started when the Lord scattered the house of Israel. The Lord told Moses and the sons of Israel that, if they rebelled against His commands or were unfaithful to Him, He would scatter them among the nations (Leviticus 26:33; Nehemiah 1:8); a warning that He repeated many times. Israel failed and was cast out of the land and scattered among the nations, just as the Lord had promised. Although this might seem to be a great tragedy, it actually was part of the plan of God to bring forth a multitude of nations that would be a blessing to all the nations on earth.

This scattering was a sowing; something revealed through Hosea the prophet when the Lord commanded Hosea to take a wife of harlotry who gave birth to a son.

And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God." (Hosea 1:9 NASB)

Israel was to be scattered among the nations without a name identifying them as belonging to the Lord. In other words, "You are not My people."

Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. (Hosea 1:10-11 NASB)

However, it is among the nations as "not My people," that it would be said of them **"You are the sons of the living God."** As the Sower, the Lord scattered Israel throughout the earth in order to reap a great harvest in the world. Even though it is plainly presented in scripture, it appears that even in our day, this is not well understood or acknowledged. Today, the ones who identify with "My God" are what the world calls *Christians*.

And I will sow her to Me in the earth. And I will have mercy on No Mercy. And I will say to Not My People, You are My people! And they shall say, My God! (Hosea 2:23 LITV)

The same picture is given of this sowing in the parable of the Sower in which Jesus sows the good seed in the field, which is the world, in order to reap a great harvest of sons of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:18-23; 37-43). Thus, the sowing is to produce sons, which is what *Ephraim* signifies.

When His disciples questioned why He spoke in parables regarding the **Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens**, Jesus responded by telling them Isaiah 6:9-10 was being fulfilled. The people were blind, deaf, and dull (Matthew 13:10-17). Paul picked up this theme in Romans 11:25 by declaring that a partial hardening has happened to genealogical Israel. They were blind to the truth. But why? It was so the scattering would continue until the appointed time set by the Father, which is when the promise to Ephraim is completed. The sons of Israel had to become as the sand of the sea; a reference to the many nations.

Down through the millennia, the house of Israel that was scattered in the earth has become many nations. Undoubtedly, countless descendants of Israel helped to form many of the nations on earth today, especially those that sprung up in Europe and in other lands, such as North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Only God knows how the sowing has progressed and through whom, so this is not an exclusive list. But the point is that the fullness of the nations refers to the nations (plural) of Israel coming forth out of the earth, which, in turn, means that these nations must be brought into the Stone Kingdom with Jesus as King, until the Kingdom fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:35).

Keep in mind that becoming an Israelite, on an individual level, is not a matter of bloodline but of a changed heart, one that believes on Jesus and declares Him to be Lord and King, even though many of the Israelite nations might have been founded or colonized many centuries ago by blood descendants of Israel. **It is not about a gene pool; it is about a heart pool.** On the national level, a nation becomes one of the nations of Israel by coming under the sovereignty of God and declaring His Son Jesus as King over the nation. Based on its founding, the United States had great potential of this happening, but like all that have gone before, we too have failed. Why? So that **He may show mercy to all** (Romans 11:32)!

Only when all the nations have come into the Kingdom of Christ to become Israelite nations will Paul's prophetic word be fulfilled: **So all Israel will be saved.** Thus, the fullness of the nations refers to the full complement of the nations coming under the Kingship of Jesus. This is the true Israel on a national level; the nations that declare God rules and willingly submit to His righteous rule.