

Kingdom Bible Studies



ADULT LEVEL

LESSON 4

WHO'S WHO?

THE DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL

We learned in lesson three that God referred to His people Israel as "sheep" in the Old Scriptures, and Jesus used this same comparison in the New Scriptures. These "sheep" were also described as "lost." We know that God "divorced" (put away) Israel and brought about her captivity and deportation into Assyria and Babylon. Only a small remnant later returned to Jerusalem. What, then, happened to the vast majority of Israelites taken into captivity? Did they disappear from history and cease to exist as a people (as is commonly taught throughout Christendom), or can their descendants be identified today? And, what about the blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob regarding their descendants? Did those promises end with the captivity, or has God continued to honor them? These questions will be the subject of this lesson.

GOD'S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE

The first eleven chapters of the Bible cover many centuries, including awesome and terrifying calamities. Then in chapter twelve God speaks to one man, Abraham. From this chapter on, for over a thousand pages, the Bible is about Abraham and his descendants.

God made **promises** to Abraham, and He repeated those promises (**covenants**) to Isaac and Jacob. All of these promises and covenants have to do with the future of Jacob's children. The vast majority of the Scriptures deals exclusively with these "heirs" of the covenants and the promises. The Bible calls these people "the children of Israel."

COVENANT

A **covenant** is an agreement between two or more parties to do or refrain from doing some act. It is sometimes called a compact or a contract. According to Strong's Concordance the word **covenant** is translated in the Old Scriptures from the Hebrew word **beriyth** (#1285), meaning "a compact;" in the New Scriptures it is translated from the Greek word **diatheke** (#1242), meaning "a disposition, i.e. a contract."

Covenants can be "unilateral" (where the party on one side is solely responsible to perform the terms) such as God's promises to Abraham and his descendants; or they can be "bilateral" (where parties on both sides must perform) such as the Law covenant made between God and Israel at Mount Sinai.

In effect, any promise made by God is a covenant; it is certain to be carried out; it can be relied on with confidence for its fulfillment. A covenant is in force as long as the terms of it are operative and obligation to perform rests on one or both parties. The results or the blessings brought about by the covenant may continue indefinitely. It was common practice to ratify or confirm a covenant by swearing an oath or by arranging a sign or witness.

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. In Genesis 12:2, God promised Abram (Abraham) that He would make of him a great _____.
2. God told Abraham, in Genesis 13:16, that He would make his seed as the _____ of the earth.
3. God, in Genesis 15:5, promised Abraham that his _____ would be as the stars of heaven.

Read Genesis 17

4. In verse 2, God told Abraham that He would make a **covenant** with him and would _____ him exceedingly.
5. In verses 4 and 5, God told Abraham that he would be a father of many _____.
6. In verse 7, God's covenant with Abraham was that He would be a God unto him and to his _____ after him.
7. God said, in verses 19 and 21, that He would establish an everlasting covenant with _____ and with his seed after him.
8. According to Genesis 28:3-4, Jacob was to become a _____ of people and was to receive the blessing of _____.
9. In Genesis 28:14, God told Isaac's son, Jacob, that his seed shall be as numerous as "the _____ of the earth." (Compare with Gen. 13:16.)
10. God told Jacob (Israel), in Genesis 35:11, that a _____ and a company of _____ would be of him.
11. After the people of Israel cried unto God because of their bondage in Egypt, Exodus 2:23 says that God remembered His _____ with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
12. Considering the promises made in the above verses, would it make any sense that God would destroy the majority of His people who went into captivity? ___ Yes ___ No

The verses above, along with others, make it plain that the covenants pertaining to Abraham's blessings were passed to Jacob and his descendants (Israel). It is repeated over and over again that these descendants of the patriarchs of Israel would be a great number of people and would become a multitude of nations.

However, it is a common teaching throughout Judeo-Christendom that when God caused Israel to be driven from the land of Palestine into captivity in Assyria and Babylon, He destroyed the majority of His people forever; thus, they no longer existed as a people. According to this distorted line of reasoning, all that remained of the vast numbers of God's people were a small number of "Jews" who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Did God, in fact, cast away the majority of His people, thus negating the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. According to Romans 11:1-2, did the Apostle Paul say that God had "cast away" His people? ___ Yes ___ No
2. According to the Psalmist in Psalms 94:14, would God "cast off" and "forsake" His people? ___ Yes ___ No
3. According to Jeremiah 32:40, will God "turn away" from His people? ___ Yes ___ No
4. Considering the above verses, does it make sense that God would forever cast away and forsake His people Israel whom He sent into captivity? ___ Yes ___ No
5. Ezekiel 34:6 tells us God's sheep (Israel) are scattered. In verse 11, does God say that He will "search" and "seek" them out? ___ Yes ___ No
6. In Luke 19:10, Jesus said He came to "seek" and "save" that which was _____ .
7. According to Matthew 15:24, Jesus said He was sent to the "lost" sheep of the house of _____ .
8. Considering the above verses, does it make sense that God would send Jesus to a people that no longer existed? ___ Yes ___ No
9. In Matthew 10:6, the disciples were sent to the "lost" sheep of the house of _____ .
10. In light of the above verse, would it make any sense for Jesus to send His disciples to people who no longer existed? ___ Yes ___ No

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

11. Prophesying to the Israelites in captivity, God says in verse 31 that He will make a new covenant with the House of _____ and the House of _____. (Heb.8:8)
12. That new covenant with the House of Israel, according to verse 33, states that God would put His _____ in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and that He would be their God and they (Israel) would be His _____. (Heb. 8:10)
13. Considering the above two verses, is it logical that Jesus' new covenant would be for a people who are destroyed? ___ Yes ___ No
14. In the closing book of the Old Scriptures, Malachi 3:6, God says to Israel, "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are NOT _____ .
15. Would the above statement have much value if the majority of Jacob's descendants had ceased to exist because of the captivity? ___ Yes ___ No

The preceding verses of Scripture show that God did not cast away His people. In fact, He made additional promises to them while they were in captivity. If God did not cast away and forsake His people Israel, then how is He fulfilling the promises He made to their forefathers?

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Luke 1:67-73

1. Speaking of Jesus' birth, Zacharias said in verse 72 that Jesus had come to perform the mercy promised to Israel's _____ and to remember God's holy _____.
2. In verse 73, Zacharias said that Jesus had come to remember God's oath which He swore to father _____.
3. Would the above statements have any real meaning if Jesus had been sent to non-Israelites? ___ Yes ___ No
4. In Romans 9:4, the Apostle Paul said the covenants and promises of God pertained to _____.
5. In Romans 15:8, Paul stated that Jesus Christ confirmed the _____ made unto the fathers (of Israel).
6. Considering the long-range implications of God's promises to the Israel fathers, would the above statements by Paul make any sense if most of the Israelites taken in the Assyrian captivity ceased to exist? ___ Yes ___ No
7. Chapter 36 of Ezekiel describes the future restoration of scattered Israel. In verse 26, God said He would give them a new _____ and put a new _____ in them.
8. God, speaking of the future of captive Israel, said in Isaiah 62:2 that they would be called by a new _____.

NOTE: The descendants of captive Israel later became known as "Christians." The "new covenant" has been instituted by King Jesus, whereby He is renewing (quickening) their hearts and minds by the power of His spirit. (See Heb. 8-10.) This subject will be covered in more detail in later lessons.

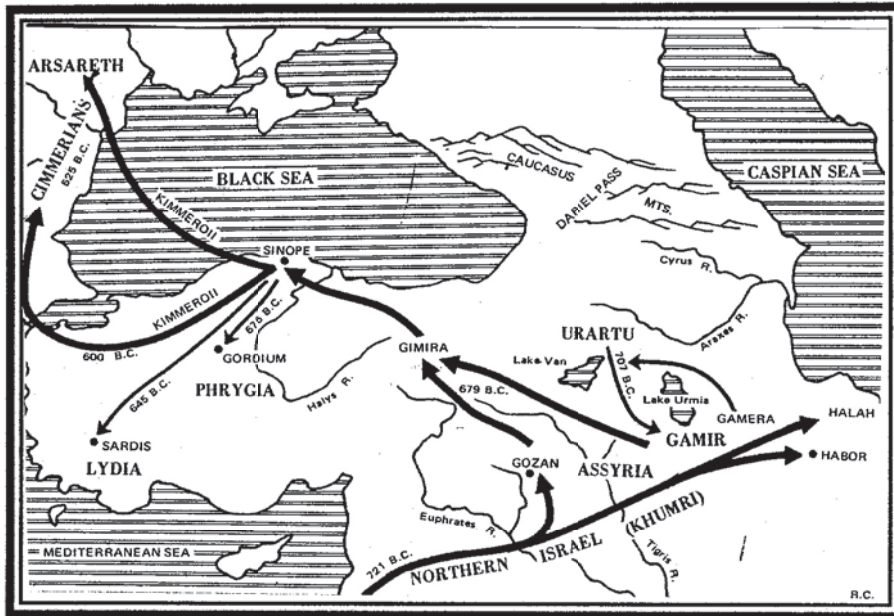
The promises God made to Israel's fathers included great national development, a great increase in numbers, blessings of the earth and of the sea, that God would be their God, and they (Israel) would be His people. He also promised them a new and better covenant. These promises would have little significance if the majority of Israelites ceased to exist after the Assyrian captivity. To embrace the theory that only a handful of Israelites remained after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities would make a mockery of God's tremendous promises and mercy. This position drastically diminishes the significance of Jesus' magnificent redemptive work in confirming God's covenants with His people Israel throughout the nations of the earth.

God, unlike man, is faithful and just in keeping His promises, covenants and oaths. He did not cast away His people Israel; He is continuing to honor His promises to them, even to this day. The descendants of the vast numbers of Israelites taken into captivity have continued to increase and multiply over the centuries. In the following brief summary, taken from the works of Biblical historian and archaeologist E. Raymond Capt, we will trace the history of these Israelites from the captivity period to modern times.

ISRAEL IN HISTORY

In tracing the steps of the Israelites after their captivity and deportation to Assyria and Babylon, it is important to realize that secular history has not used the terms "Israel" and "Israelites" in referring to these people and their descendants. We must look for other secular names if we hope to follow them through history.

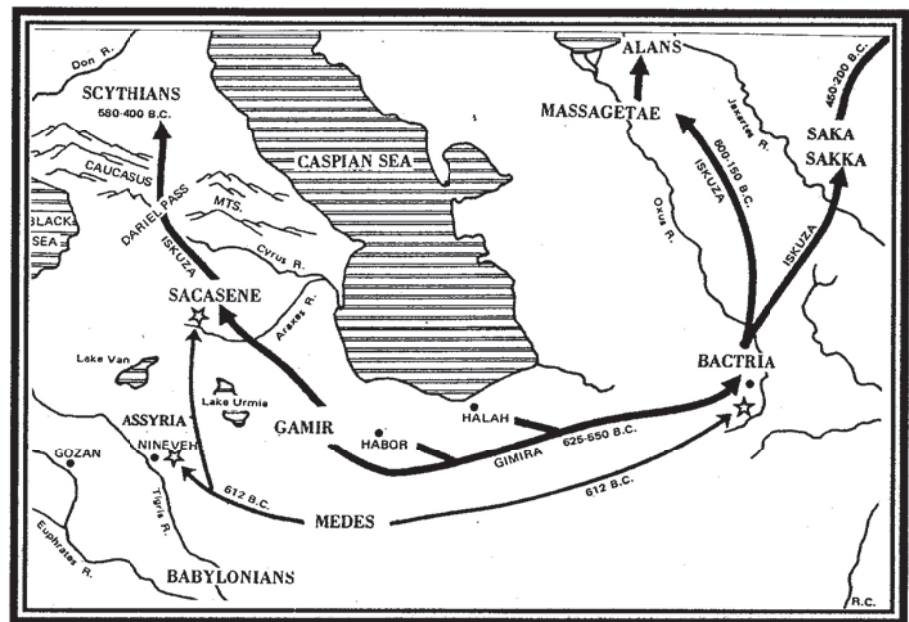
For example, Assyrian historical stone writings found by archaeologists at Nimrud refer to the Israelites as "Khumri." Later Assyrian cuneiform writings, in the form of frontier post reports (707 B.C.), refer to these same people as "Gamera" or "Gimira."



Israel – Khumri – Gamera – Gimira – Kimmeroi – Cimmerians

A later Assyrian tablet recorded (about 679 B.C.) that the Assyrian army defeated the Gimira with large numbers of Israelites escaping to the shores of the Black Sea. Greek records refer to these Gimira as "Kimmeroi" which is translated into English as "Cimmerian." Greek historical records indicate that the Cimmerians captured the Kingdom of Phrygia (695 B.C.) and later Lydia (662 B.C.). Subsequently the Lydians (about 600 B.C.) drove them out of Asia Minor into the Carpathian regions, called Ar-sareth or Mountains of Sereth. The map at the left traces the movements of these Israelites according to their secular names.

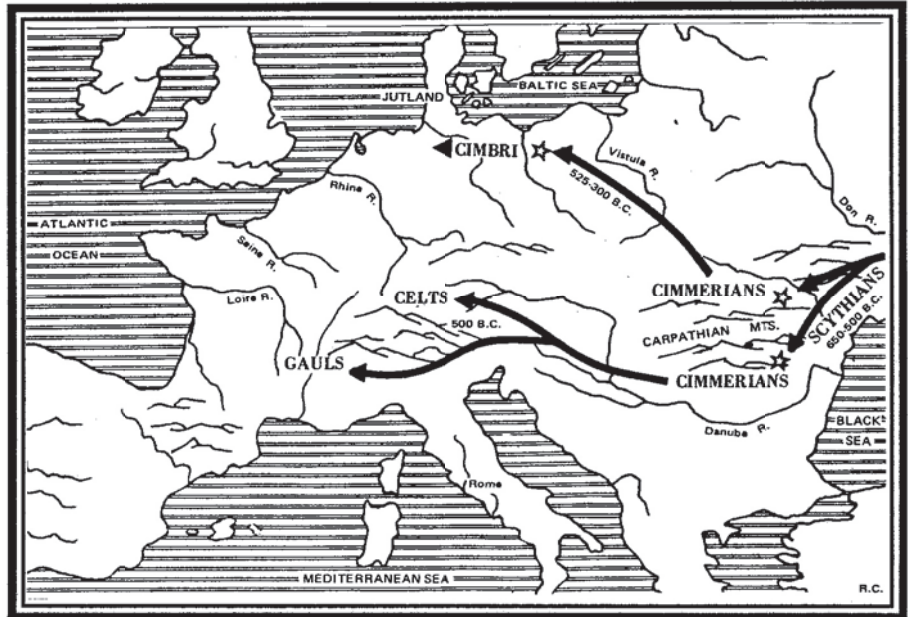
When the Assyrians were under attack by both the Medes and Babylonians, the main body of Israelites in Media accepted an alliance with Esarhaddon which allowed them to establish colonies in Sacasene in the north and Bactria in the east. (see map at the right) The two colonies came under pressure from the Medes after Assyria fell in 612 B.C. to the Medes and Babylonians, causing the main body of Israelites in Sacasene to cross the Araxes River, pass northward through the Dariel Pass in the Caucasus Mountains and occupy the steppe regions of South Russia. There they became known by the Greek name "Scythians."



(Israel - Khumri) – Gimira – Iskuza – Scythians – Saka – Massagetae

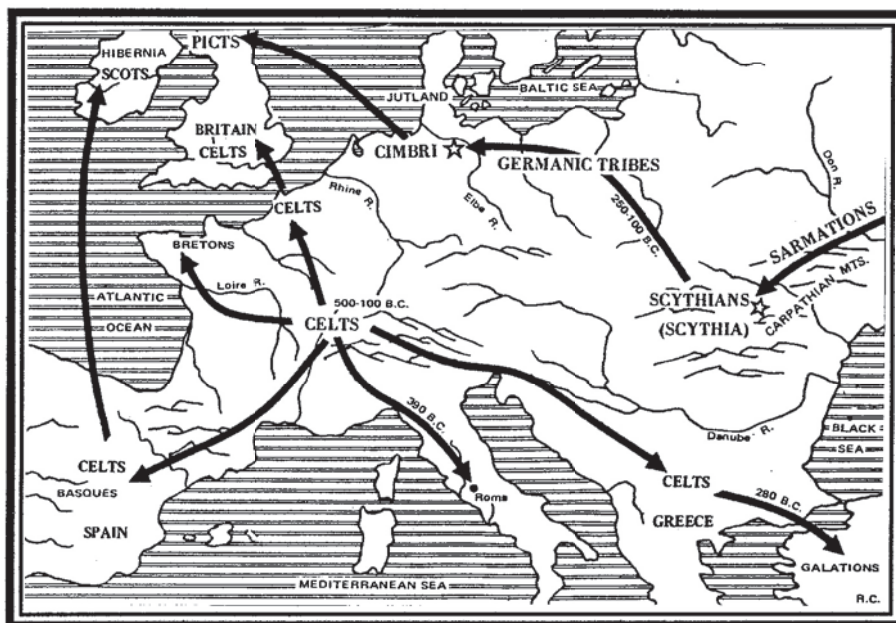
Those Israelites that had settled east in Bactria migrated still further east into Central Asia, some even as far as the borders of China. Most of our history of this eastern division of Israelites is found in Persian inscriptions which refer to the Israelites as "**Saka**" or "**Sacae**." The Assyrians called these colonies **Gimira**, but later "**Iskuza**," a name which may have been derived from Isaaca, or house of Isaac, the name which the Israelites called themselves. In the famous Behistun Rock tri-lingual inscriptions of Darius I (522-485 B.C.) the name **Saka** in the Persian and Elamite inscriptions is rendered **Gimira** in the Babylonian version.

When Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. the Assyrian Empire was split between the conquering Medes and Babylonians, with the Medes taking over the territory to the north and northwest and the Babylonians assuming control over the lands to the south and southwest. The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, in a series of invasions against the Southern Kingdom of Judah, captured and deported the remnants of Israelites missed by the Assyrians. Finally moving against Jerusalem, he fulfilled God's prophecy against Israel by capturing the city and taking the balance of the Nation of Judah to Babylon. In 539 B.C. Cyrus, King of Persia, overthrew the Babylonian Empire and permitted the remnant of Judah to return to Jerusalem.



Cimmerians – Celtic tribes

Between 539 B.C. and 500 B.C., during the rebuilding of the Temple, the **Scythian** Israelites, who had been pushed north through the Dariel Pass, began moving westward and came into collision with the **Cimmerian** Israelites who had earlier migrated around the west of the Black Sea. The Cimmerians were consequently driven north and west. A small group moved into the regions of the Baltic, where the Romans called them by the abbreviated name of **Cimbri**. The main body migrated as scattered bands into south Germany between 500 and 450 B.C. and became known as **Celts** and **Gauls**. (See map above.)

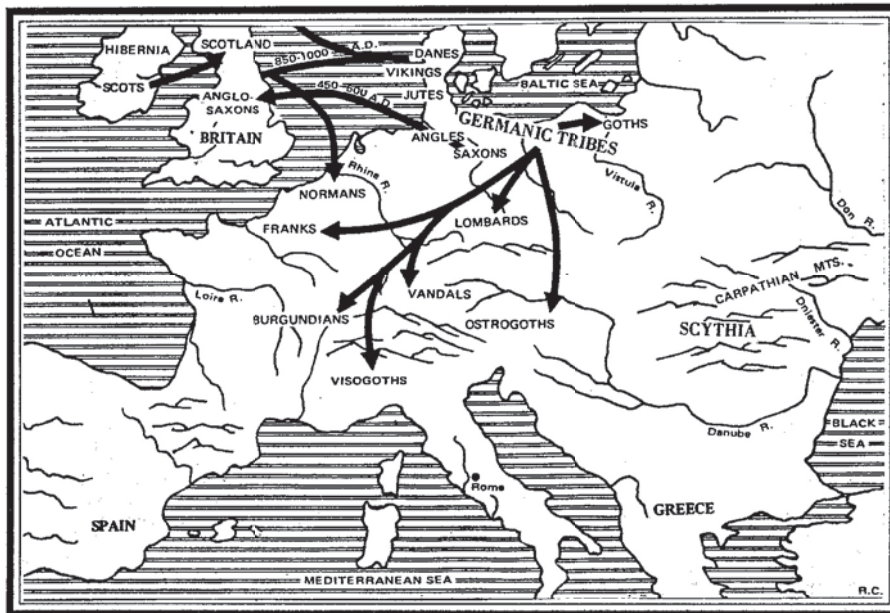


Israel Peoples

By the end of the 4th century B.C., the **Scythian** Israelites in South Russia came under attack by a people, called "Sarmatians," and were driven north toward the Baltic regions, pushing the **Cimbri** Israelites ahead of them, west to Jutland and the coasts of Holland and France. As the **Celts** spread west and north across France, some moved across the English Channel into Britain. About 390 B.C. one group invaded Italy and sacked Rome. Around 280 B.C. others reached Greece, and as they migrated back into Asia Minor, the Greeks called them "**Galatians**." (See map at the left.) This would indicate that Paul's letter to the "Galatians" were to his kindred Israelites.

To prevent the confusion between the "Sarmations" (who now occupied "Scythia") and the original "Scythians," the Romans introduced the name "German" for the genuine "Scythian" ("Germanus" being the Latin word for "genuine"). Thus, in Roman records, the name "Scythian" was dropped in favor of **German**. The **Cimbri** were finally driven out of their area by the **German** Scythians. A residue of one group reached Spain, while the main body reached Italy where they were almost wiped out by the Roman legions. A few Cimbri did escape to northern Britain to become the **Picts**. The Celts continued to pour into Britain to form the "bed-rock" of the **British** race. One group in Spain, known as the "**Iberes**" (the Gaelic name for "Hebrews"), moved into Ireland as **Scots**. Those remaining in Spain became known as **Basques**; others, in France, became known as **Bretons**.

During the succeeding centuries the Scythian **Germans** broke up into many divisions, possibly in some instances into their original Israel tribal families. These groups formed the **Goths, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes** and **Vikings** (to name just a few). Then, other Germanic tribes poured into the lands vacated by the Celts and established the Gothic nations of the **Vandals, Lombards, Franks, Burgundians** and **Ostrogoths**.



Scythians – Germanic tribes

Between 450 and 600 A. D. some of the Angles and Saxons moved into Britain as **Anglo-Saxons**. Between 850 and 1000 A. D. the Danes and Vikings raided the coasts of Britain, establishing some colonies, while others settled in Iceland and Greenland. One group moved into France as **Normans**. The Celtic **Scots** of Ireland, for the most part, moved into northern Britain and established the Nation of Scotland.

(The preceding information and maps are taken from the works of E. Raymond Capt, Biblical archaeologist, speaker and author.)

The preceding "synopsis" helps to answer two great mysteries of history: (1) What happened to the countless thousands of Israelites who seemingly "disappeared" from history south of the Caucasus; (2) Where did the countless thousands of Scythians and Cimmerians come from that seemingly "appeared from nowhere" north of the Caucasus – both at the same time in history. There is no longer any "mystery." They were one and the same people. **They were Israelites.** The so-called "lost tribes of Israel" really were never lost. They only lost their identity as they migrated westward over the centuries from the land of their captivity.

Here we see the fulfillment of God's Covenant with His people as they migrated to their "appointed" places: to western Europe, to the Isles in the west, and then on to America. God indeed has kept His promise to regather His scattered people Israel "as a shepherd doth his flock."

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ISRAEL

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His disciples preached the gospel (good news) of the Kingdom of God upon the earth and the present reign of King Jesus. This good news was delivered first to the Israelites in Judea (Judeans) and then carried to dispersed Israel ("Gentiles" - or Israelites in the nations), beginning what we know today as the "Christian" era. The new and better covenant promised to "lost" Israel was beginning to unfold.

FIND THE ANSWERS (Refer to map on page 40)

1. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told the disciples they would be His witnesses in _____ , and in all _____ , and in _____ , and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Note the geographical order given for the spreading of the news of Christ's reign.)
2. When and where did the disciples first preach the Gospel following Jesus' resurrection? (Acts 1:12 and 2:1) _____
3. Who was Peter preaching to in Acts 2:22 and 3:12? _____
4. In Acts 8:5, where does it say Philip went to preach Christ? _____
5. According to Acts 9:20, where did Paul first preach Christ? _____
6. Acts 11:19 indicates that the word was preached as far as _____ and _____ , and _____ .
7. Acts 11:26 tells us the disciples were called _____ first in Antioch.
8. According to Acts 14:1 and 6, where did Paul and Barnabas preach? _____
9. Acts 16:11-17:9 records the preaching of Paul and Timothy in the cities of _____ and _____ in the area of Macedonia.
10. According to Romans 1:7, Paul wrote this letter to the Christian Israelites in _____ .
11. 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 2 Corinthians 1:1 indicate that Paul wrote these letters to the Christian Israelites (ecclesia) in the city of _____ .
12. According to Galatians 1:2, Paul wrote this letter to the Christian Israelites (ecclesia) in the Roman province of _____ .
13. Ephesians 1:1 tells us that Paul wrote this letter to the Christians Israelites (saints) which were at the city of _____ .
14. According to Philippians 1:1, Paul wrote to the Christian Israelites (saints) at the city of _____ .

FIND THE ANSWERS (Refer to map on page 40)

1. According to Colossians 1:2, Paul and Timothy wrote to the Christian Israelites (saints and faithful brethren) in the city of _____ .
2. The first verses of First and Second Thessalonians indicate that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were writing to the Christian Israelites (ecclesia) in _____ .
3. According to James 1:1, this letter was written to the _____ tribes (of Israel) scattered abroad.
4. Peter 1:1 indicates that Peter wrote his two letters to the _____ scattered throughout the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (all in Asia Minor).

Christian Israel

The preceding verses of Scripture clearly show that the Gospel was carried to dispersed Israelites in the areas of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. As we saw earlier, these were the same areas into which the Israelites migrated after coming out of the Assyrian captivity. God was preparing these areas to receive, centuries later, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ and His Kingdom and the establishment of the new covenant. These descendants of dispersed Israel were the so-called "Gentiles" (Israelites in the nations) spoken of in the New Testament. These were the people (nations) to which Christ sent Paul and the disciples to "bear His name." (Acts 9:15; Acts 1:8)

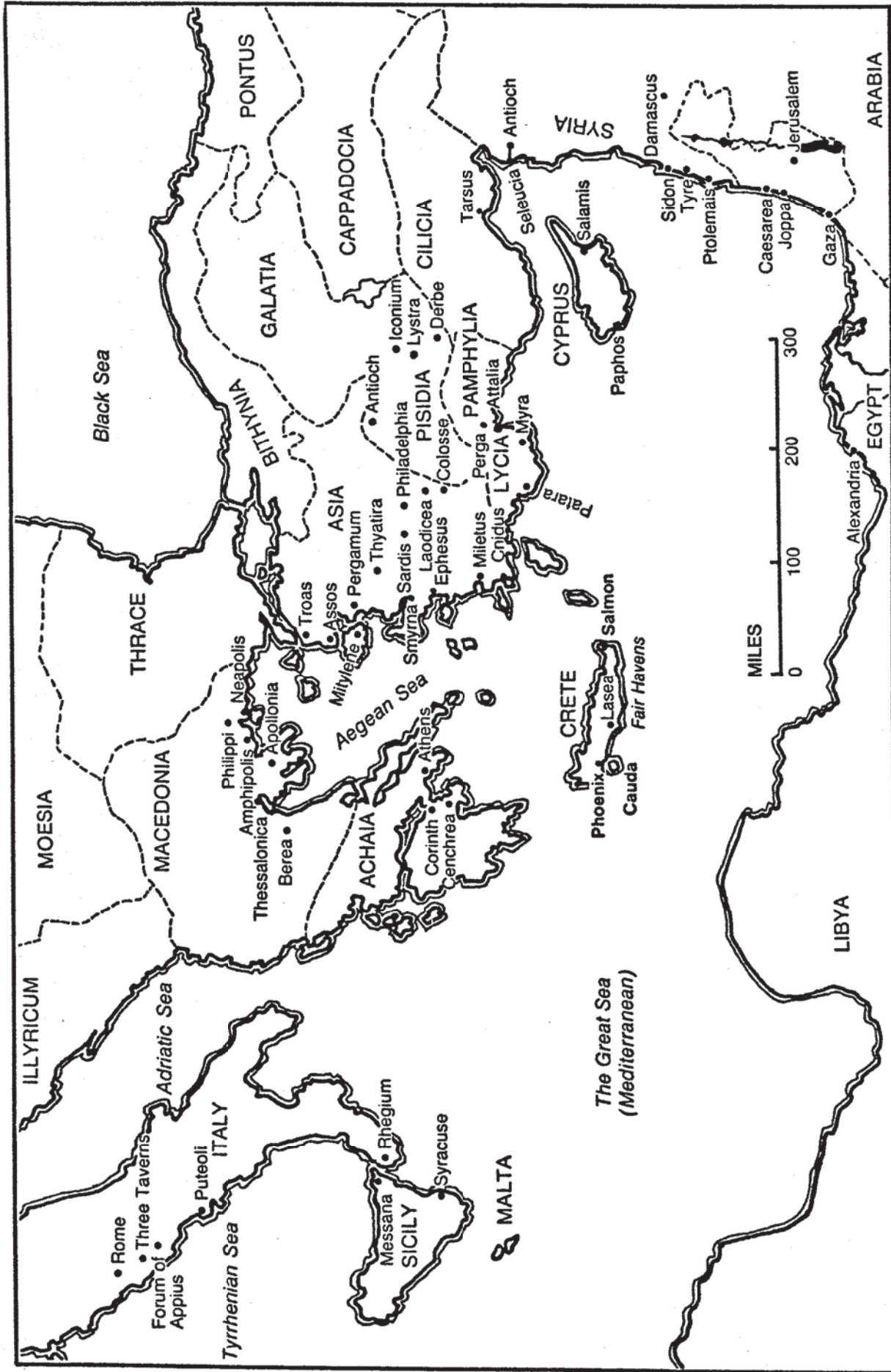
Secular history records the preaching of this same Gospel in Spain, Ireland, Scotland, and Britain. With the invention of the printing press, God provided the means by which the Scriptures were made available to all of dispersed Israel throughout Europe, bringing with it the Age of Enlightenment, the Reformation, and the Age of Discovery.

A new continent to the west, a New World, was then discovered. Persecution of the Christian Israelites in Europe initiated a migration to this new land, that began as a trickle and later became a flood. Our pilgrim fathers, who were Christian Israelites from Europe, according to God's promises were called to this North American continent which was called "The Wilderness" and "New Canaanland." They said they had come to establish the Kingdom of God.

God called His sheep (Israel) out from among the anti-Christ's in Europe; He took them one of a city and two of a family and brought them to Zion. He gave them Christian pastors who fed them with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:14,15). In the early histories, they called themselves, "this wandering race of Jacobites," "a vine out of Egypt," and "the seed of Abraham." They gave their children and villages Israel names, and God blessed them abundantly.

Yes, the Christian nations of the world are the modern-day descendants of the Israel forefathers – God's chosen people. The marks of Israel's blessings can be seen in them. However, most of these Israelites are still blinded as to their true identity; the majority have accepted the false Judaized teaching that they are not Israel. They are also blinded to the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, to the present reign of King Jesus and to the meaning of the new covenant. They have been Judaized on these crucial doctrines as well.

The majority of Israelites today are living as "children of the flesh" rather than as "children of the spirit." What do these terms mean? What did Paul mean when he said in Romans 9:6 that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel?" Are all physical Israelites "children of promise" and "heirs of the kingdom?" Who is the "remnant" and the "elect" spoken of in the New Scriptures? These questions will be the subject of the next lesson.



MAP OF PLACES MENTIONED IN ACTS AND THE EPISTLES



LESSON 4

WHO'S WHO?

Page 32

1. nation (speaking of Israel)
2. dust (indicating vast numbers)
3. seed (speaking of his descendants)
4. multiply (indicating many descendants)
5. nations (primarily Israel nations)
6. seed (referring to Israel)
7. Isaac
8. multitude; Abraham
9. dust (indicating vast numbers)
10. nation; nations
11. covenant (promises of blessings)
12. No (they would be empty promises)

Page

1. No (God forbid)
2. No (nor forsake His inheritance)
3. No (speaking to captive Israel)
4. No (God is faithful and just)
5. Yes (God will cause this to happen)
6. lost (physically and spiritually)
7. Israel (Christian Israelites)
8. No (Jesus is King of all Israel)
9. Israel (Israelites)
10. No
11. Israel; Judah (both houses)
12. laws; people (see Ezk. 36:26-28)
13. No (God is not a liar)
14. consumed (ceased, ended, destroyed)
15. No (God's promises are complete)

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1. fathers; covenant
2. Abraham (father of the Israelites)
3. No (Jesus is Redeemer to all Israel)
4. Israelites (the covenant people)
5. promises (pledge of performance)
6. No (the promises were for all Israel)
7. heart; spirit (Compare with Jer. 31:33)
8. name (Christians)

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1. Jerusalem; Judea; Samaria
2. during Pentecost in Jerusalem
3. men of Israel (Israelites)
4. in the city of Samaria (in Samaria)
5. Damascus (in Syria)
6. Phoenicia; Cyprus; Antioch
7. Christians (followers of Christ)
8. Iconium and Lycaonia (in Asia Minor)
9. Philippi; Thessalonica (in Greece)
10. Rome (in Italy)
11. Corinth (in Macedonia – Greece)
12. Galatia (in Asia Minor)
13. Ephesus (in Asia Minor)
14. Philippi (in Macedonia – Greece)

Note: It may be helpful to locate the above mentioned cities and areas using the map on page 40. Also note that these are the same areas into which dispersed Israel migrated.

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1. Colossae (in Asia Minor)
2. Thessalonica (in Macedonia – Greece)
3. twelve (all the tribes were dispersed)
4. strangers (dispersed Israelites)

(Note: Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines the Greek word which was translated into "strangers" (#3927) as "one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives." This is exactly what the dispersed Israelites did when they moved into Asia Minor after the Assyrian captivity.

Notes:

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