

## Chapter 14— Blessings and Responsibilities

### ***The Apostles and the Ten Tribes— Traditions and Legends***

When we move from the realm of factual history to that of tradition and legend we do so gingerly. We must attempt to sort out the wildly mythical and the purely fictitious from tasty kernels of genuinely salty factual information, that has a taste, odour, and feel of distant times.

But one source that Christians can trust is the evidence of scripture. Early in the biblical accounts of the disciples we learn that Jesus sent his apostles to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6). This commission was probably not directed primarily at the tribe of Judah. They would not have been considered “lost” by Matthew’s audience. After all, the Jews knew who they were, and their knowledge of their covenant relationship with God had not been forgotten (cf. John 4:22). Rather, Jesus’ statement seems a clear reference to the exiled Ten Tribes who after 600 years of exile had largely lost the understanding of their own identity. Certainly the Ten Tribes’ identity was lost to most of the Greco-Roman world with only a few exceptions.

Flavius Josephus, one of the most famous historians of antiquity, wrote that the vast multitude of the Israelite Ten Tribes were then living beyond the Euphrates. To the average man of the first century CE, this statement clearly and unambiguously referred to the Parthian Empire. The Euphrates River was the well-known border between the Roman and Parthian empires.

The Scriptures seem to provide corroborating evidence to Josephus’ statement. The Magi, who had been led to seek out the Messiah at his birth, were members of the ruling class in Parthia. As wise men and counsellors, they were aware of and concerned about the fulfillment of prophecies. After all, the Hebrew’s Scriptures played a key role in the Jewish community, and the Jews were one of the major ethnic groups in the western end of the Parthian empire. So knowledge of Israel’s covenant and its prophecies was still available for those who searched for it in Parthia.

Parthia, hosted a large Jewish Diaspora for historic reasons and because it was a great place to do business being at a hub on the Silk Road. It also didn’t hurt that Parthia was relatively free from religious persecution, because the state was secular. Consequently, there were many Jews from Parthia and Mesopotamia who had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the spring Holy Days when the apostle Peter spoke to the crowds on the day of Pentecost in 31 CE.

It was logical that the apostle to the “circumcision,” the house of Israel, should take his ministry to Parthia. First of all, there was a large, thriving Jewish community there, but secondarily he could also reach some of the descendants of the exiled Ten Tribes. Did you know that Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon, which was part of the Parthian empire (cf. 1 Peter 5:13)?

In the letter we call the First Epistle of Peter, Peter addressed this message to “strangers” scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythnia. It would not have made much sense for Peter to address his fellow Jews or the native Gentile communities of these regions as strangers. Perhaps Peter was allegorically referring to Christians residing there as being strangers in this world? But, when we realize these areas south of the Black Sea also

hosted communities of Scythians and Celts, whose name meant ‘stranger,’ wanderer, hidden, or concealed, then perhaps we have found additional information to identify Peter’s intended audience. It is also noteworthy that the apostle to Israel makes a point of reminding his readers that they were a ‘chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation destined to be a light to the Gentiles.’ This was certainly something that the Ten Tribes needed to remember as a people of the covenant, for they had forgotten much during their long years in exile as strangers and pilgrims among the nations (cf. 1 Peter 2:9-12, 25).

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, understood that the Scythians were kin to the Jews. Having lived in Tarsus in Asia Minor he would have been familiar with the Black Sea Scythians to the north, though as an apostle to the Gentiles he never targeted the Scythian areas during his ministry as recorded in the book of Acts. In his letter to the Colossians he contrasts barbarian or foreigner with Scythian (cf. Colossians 3:11). The Scythians were not inherently foreigners to the tribal confederation of the children of Israel. They were not from Paul’s Jewish perspective “barbarians” or outsiders like the Samaritans, for instance. Rather the Scythians were part of the covenant people.

The Apostle James addressed his message to the scattered brethren of the twelve tribes—both the Jewish Diaspora and the Ten Tribes.<sup>1</sup> His instruction concerning the cause of wars and fighting would certainly strike a chord among those fractious Ten Tribes. The Celts, Scythians, and Germani were regularly pillaging and plundering each other. The plight of the poor, the abuses of the rich, and the class consciousness among the tribes, especially in Parthia, was also condemned by James. It would seem that his message did not fall on deaf ears because the growth of eastern Christianity in the areas occupied by the Ten Tribes was noteworthy.

The travels of the apostles are not recorded in scripture. But they are recounted in apocryphal tales among the works of early church historians, and their later medieval commentators. These writings contain both fact and fantasy. Yet by using the biblical instructions as our guide we should not be surprised to find these men preaching among Parthians, Scythians, and Celts, who were all descendants of the Ten Tribes. And this is exactly where tradition places them. Matthew, assisted by Andrew, is said to have laboured among the tribes on the coast of the Black Sea. Mattias was supposed to have preached in Cappadocia, south of the Black Sea and some claim his remains were carried to Trier an area inhabited by Germanic tribes.

Simon and Jude were both reported as being in Persia (then Parthia) prior to their martyrdom. Thaddaeus was said to have had a profound affect on King Adar of Edessa in Mesopotamia, healing him of an incurable illness. His city became one of the earliest Christian cities in the Parthian sphere. A previous ruler of Edessa, Abgarus, was said to have sent a message to Jesus himself, according to the third century church historian Eusebius who claimed to have seen the correspondence. Thomas was reported as having also worked in the Parthian Empire eventually serving the King of the Indians, Gondophares, in the Parthian province called White India. Eusebius reported that Simon the Zealot was among the apostolic missionaries who went to the Britannic isles. However, Joseph of Arimathea is credited with establishing the first Christian

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<sup>1</sup> James 1:1.

community in England. James, the son of Alphaeus, was affirmed to have done a great work among the tribes in Spain, Britain, and Ireland. Peter also seems to have travelled to the north according to Metaphrastes the Greek historian who reported that Peter was a long time in *Britain*, where he converted many nations to the faith.<sup>2</sup>

Andrew was proclaimed as the patron saint of Scotland. But whether he journeyed there or only preached to the Scots in Greater Scythia we can only surmise. The Scots, however, tell us plainly in their Declaration of Arbroath, a plea written to the Pope in 1320 CE, that the Scots “journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain among the most savage tribes...Thence they came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea to their home in the west where they still live today.” Here they also claim that it was Andrew that first brought Christianity to the Scots. Other legends place Andrew in the land of the Scythians by the Black Sea, the Scots prior eastern homeland.

Based on these reports it should come as no surprise that the early church found its most enthusiastic support among the formerly pagan Celts, Scythians, and Parthians. The gospel message was indeed sent by many of the original apostles first to the Jews and then to their kin the exiled Israelites of the Lost Ten Tribes. Only one of the apostles, Paul, preached mainly to the Gentiles, but even he journeyed to Gaul and Britain. But with the rise of the political power of the Roman church and the later combination of church and empire, the other apostles’ work among the ‘barbarians,’ who were frequently Rome’s greatest enemies, was mostly forgotten.



#### Apostles' Travels in Scythia, Parthia, and Celtic Lands

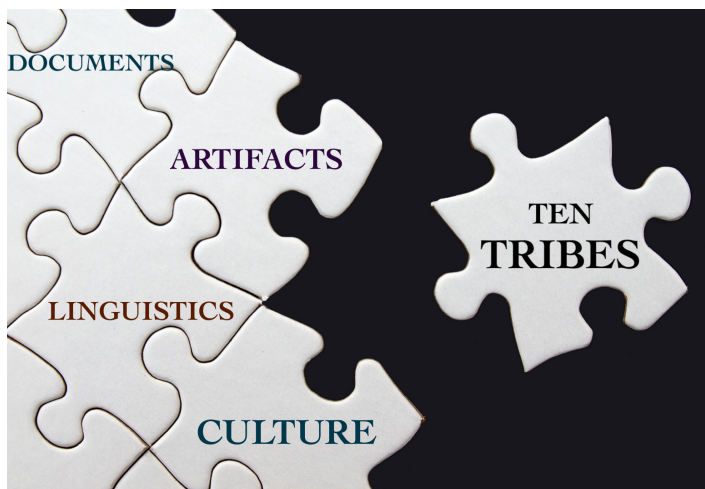
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eurasian\\_mass.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eurasian_mass.jpg) — Annotated cogwebcast.com

<sup>2</sup> Cave's *Antiquitates Apostolicae*. P.45

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## Ten Tribes Sifted Through Time and Space

Is God faithful? Does he keep his promises? The evidence of history viewed from a perspective of faith in the Scriptures shouts a resounding, “Yes!” The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who chose Israel to be his servant has overseen their development from their humble beginnings as the 12 sons of one man to their status today among the chief of the nations. He accomplished his purpose for his glory, because of his faithfulness to his promises and in spite of Israel’s weakness and unfaithfulness.



**The Puzzle Reveals the Mystery**

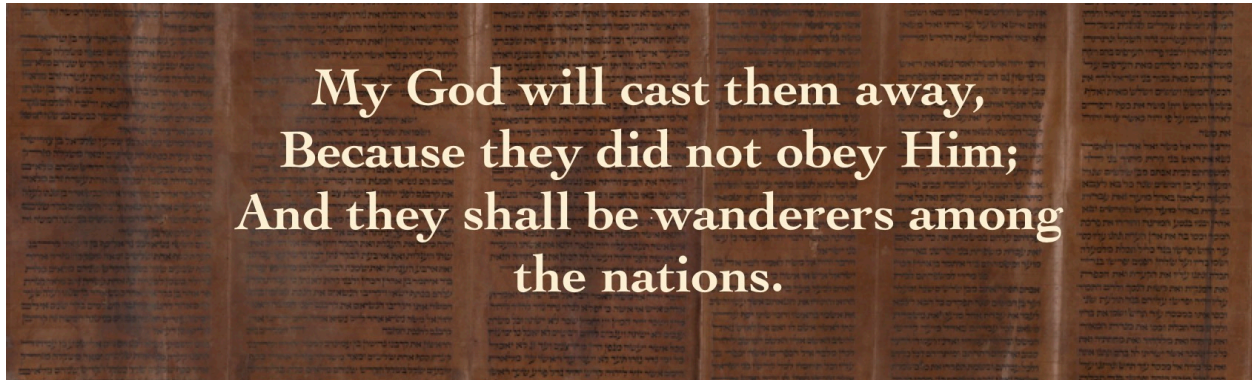
This work has presented a multitude of biblical and extra-biblical facts to consider. With so many puzzle pieces now on the table we have reassembled them to reveal a surprisingly different, iconoclastic big picture from what most are accustomed to seeing. The material we have presented resolves the great mysteries of what really happened to the “Lost” Ten Tribes of Israel, and explains the origins of the Northwestern European nations. To many readers this information will represent a complete paradigm shift from the ordinary understanding of history, and perhaps, also of their family origins.

While there are yet many additional clues to be discovered in order to add extra detail to the overall picture, still we have presented in this work enough solid archaeological, historical, and linguistic evidence to lend veracity to the prophetic foretelling of events made by the Scriptures. The facts presented are true. The conclusions are logical, even if they do dramatically overturn the basic framework of the typical scholarly worldview, and perhaps, even our own personal identity. We must not be afraid to escape from the common widely held beliefs, especially when they are incorrect. It does well to consider the minority report in any case.

As our brief history has shown, God exiled the Ten Tribes from their Promised Land, and they became wanderers among the nations. He sifted them as one would sift wheat, shaking them as if in a sieve. This sifting produced a lot of lateral and vertical movement of the tribes before they eventually landed in their present homelands.

Individuals, families, clans, and tribes were spurred into moving to new lands— their own “Arzareth,” lands other than the one originally promised—at different times and for different

reasons over the centuries by both land and sea routes. They moved as heavily laden nomadic villages at the speed of a plodding team of oxen in great, slow-moving wagon trains. They fled in small groups having only the clothes on their back riding swift steeds in desperate bids to save their lives. Sometimes they traveled leisurely downstream in traders' wood-frame skin boats, or across roiling seas in substantial, wooden sailing vessels. But wherever they went and however they traveled, they carried with them their common cultural heritage.



**Cause and Consequence - Hosea 9:17**

The customs and character of the people remained amazingly consistent over time. Like their forbears in the Land of Promise they traveled in search of new lands for their flocks and herds. Wool held an important place in their lives. They developed distinctive woven and felt fabrics, including twills, tapestries, and plaids. Their clothing, suited to their nomadic lifestyles, showed amazing consistency over thousands of miles and hundreds of years. Once settled in an area they became major exporters of agricultural commodities, especially wheat and honey. Yet old preferences were not easily lost, and their centuries-old love of wine and olive oil accounted for the import of these exotic commodities into new northern homelands.

Lured by visions of striking it rich, some searched for their mother lode in the metal-rich areas of Europe and Asia. Renown for their metallurgy and smithing skills they built great smelting establishments to fuel an ever growing demand for armaments and ornaments. They lived and died by the sword, putting a heavy emphasis on their military prowess. These “barbarian” peoples were feared for their armoured cavalry, skillful archers, and hit-and-run tactics. Always innovators in the realm of weaponry, they developed distinctive bows, arrows, spears, lances, mauls, swords, scabbards, and protective armour. These artifacts provided important archaeological evidence linking these Tribes through time and over vast territories. The horse burials common to these Tribes before their adoption of Christianity were testimony to the military importance of this animal to all the Tribes. Just as their ancient ancestors in the Kingdom of Israel, they spent much effort on the care and breeding of their horses.

When not at war, the descendants of Israel used their expertise in sea and land travel to establish flourishing trade routes, becoming merchandising giants in the ancient world. They continued their historic connections with the Phoenicians and the lucrative sea trade via Spain and North Africa to the British Isles. For a time they controlled the Silk Road to China and the caravan trade to India, dominating overland trade across Eurasia in tin, gold, silver, amber, furs, luxury goods of all sorts and other precious commodities like salt. Whether selling their own resources of fish, timber, grain or honey, middlemen in the transfer of goods, or skilled manufacturing craftsmen they represented a vast commercial complex.



**Scythian/Gothic Bird Motifs**

Internet images Pinterest

The artistic heritage of the Tribes maintained much of the imagery, symbolism, and vibrancy of their original Near Eastern traditions. And though their art developed over time and adopted ideas from other cultures, still the distinctly Scythian qualities of the subjects and their representation were not lost through the centuries. Scythian motifs and decoration can be clearly seen to have greatly influenced later developments among the Celts, Parthians, Goths, and other Germani including the Anglo-Saxons. Some of the depictions had religious significance common to all the Tribes, whether the tree of life, the bulls, big beaked birds, deer or mystical animals.

There were many common elements among the Tribes in terms of religious belief and practice, especially prior to the almost universal adoption of the Christian faith in its eastern and western forms. Most curious was their reliance on oral teaching and a general prohibition against writing down their religious works. Like their forbears before the exile who had forsaken the worship of the God of Israel at his Temple in Jerusalem, they put special importance on the grove, the oak tree, and sacred pillars called dolmen (Ezekiel 6:13). They had no temples or fixed places of worship, but built temporary altars for special religious occasions which sometimes included human sacrifices. Their pantheon of gods bore striking similarities to that of Baalism. The chief of their gods being the Lord of War was represented symbolically by an ancient naked sword. The goddess consort of the Lord of War was also held in high esteem as were her priestesses. Both the sibyl and the soothsayer were honoured.

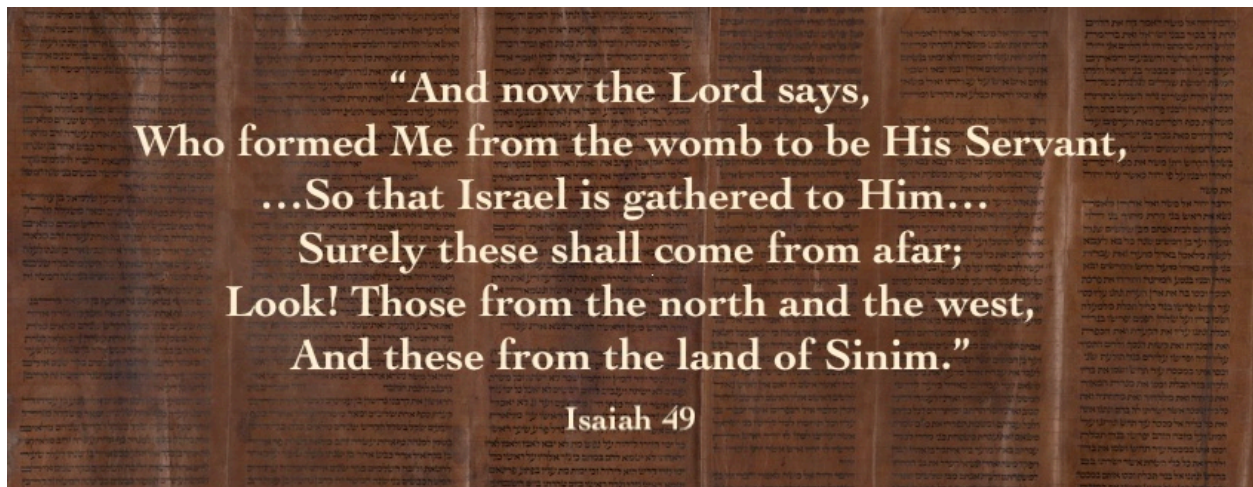
The social and civic organization among the Tribes reflected their varied experiences. Some tribes preferred the pomp and ceremony of king, court, and an aristocratic confederacy of tribal leaders and their retainers. These developed a class-conscious social stratification typical of the feudal state. Yet the kings of the Tribes never held absolute power. Their kings were dependent on the good will of the tribal chiefs. Indeed, other tribes developed along more egalitarian lines.

But, whatever their preferences concerning governance forms, they all had much in common when it came to their rule of law and strong family-clan ties. These were a source of strength when attacked by a common foe. However, clan particularism was also a cause of much internal turmoil among the Tribes during times of peace when one clan vied with another for pasture land or some other economic advantage.

Common to all the Tribes was the relatively high status of their women who, unlike most of the women of the ancient world, held substantial power, not just at home but even in terms of political position and hereditary rights. At times they even fought valiantly in battle alongside their men folk. They gave inspiration to the ancient legends of Amazons!

Having examined many of the clear historic, archaeological links between the Ten Tribes, the Scythians, Celts, Parthians, Goths and Germanic tribes we can add to this scholarly evidence the folk traditions and legends that lend support to these facts. Though no proof of themselves, these oral and written remembrances add detail and color to the puzzle.

The Tribes were pushed by economic, political, and military pressures; they were sifted into other lands as God prophesied. We find them today occupying areas to the west, north, and northwest of their ancient homelands, including the isles and coast lands of Europe and North America (Hosea 11:8-11, Jeremiah 31:8-10, Isaiah 49:1,12). They were scattered like seed to the far ends of the earth: South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia.



As the God of Israel promised the patriarchs, their descendants would multiply until they became like the very stars in heaven for number. This Lord of Hosts has not failed in his word. But as scripture foretold the Tribes have been given strategic importance, and military might, having gained possession of the gates of their enemies. The Tribes have had an abundance of material goods, and agricultural lands flowing with milk and honey, wheat, wine, and oil. God gave the blessings not because these people were a “pet” people, but because they had a special task to

perform. Israel was to be the firstborn among the nations—for all nations are God's children! Like the firstborn of any family this position brought with it the weighty responsibilities of leadership. In God's view a leader was to be first and most importantly a servant to those being led. The Lord of Hosts made his covenant with Israel first among all the nations, but it was not to be forever exclusive. After all, his ultimate goal was to bring all peoples, not just the firstborn, into a relationship of love with himself.



**Ruth “Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”**

As firstborn, Israel was to be an example of righteousness and justice. They were to be a testimony to the benefits of living according to God's norms of behavior. All strangers willing to participate in the covenant and live by its standards were to be welcomed into the family of Israel. It was not purely a matter of ethnicity. More important was a willingness to serve the God of Israel and to walk humbly in his way of life. Individuals like Ruth the Moabitess, who took Israel's God as her own, were notably included among the covenant people and chosen for a divine purpose—to have a kinship relationship with the always faithful, forgiving, and merciful Father of all humanity. The Tribes were to lead the way as the firstborn among many brethren.

What did God expect of his firstborn? We can better grasp His expectations by looking at God's instructions about the firstborn. The Lord had told Moses to explain the facts of life to Pharaoh:

Israel is my son, my firstborn. So I say to you, let my Son go that he may serve me. But if you refuse to let him go indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn (Exodus 4:22-23).

As Moses instructed the people prior to leaving Egypt, the firstborn of every family of the children of Israel was to be dedicated to God (Exodus 13:1,11-16). Later in the wilderness the Lord spoke again to Moses explaining that He would consider the Levites to be dedicated to Him in the place of the firstborn of each family (Numbers 3:12-13,40).

It is important to understand what God expected of this “firstborn” tribe. God had chosen the Levites to be messengers of God, to serve as instructors and caretakers of the Torah (the divine, written teaching), to be counsellors, advisers, and judges. They were responsible to be proper role models of the right way to live. In short, the Levites were to show reverence for God in all aspects of human life. Malachi wrote of God's expectations for his representatives, “For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” (Malachi 2:5-7, Deuteronomy 17:8-11, Jeremiah 18:18). Knowing what God wanted of his firstborn priestly tribe, we can understand more fully what He intended when He called all Israel as a kingdom of priests for the benefit of the whole world.



You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel (Exodus 19:4-6).

God redeemed Israel. He saved them from slavery. He establish his covenant with them. He taught them the best way to live, the way of truth which is called 'righteousness.' As God's firstborn, as a priestly nation, they would be like a light in a dark place (Isaiah 62:1-2). Their wisdom and freedom based on the teachings, laws, and justice of God would be a light in the darkness. They would become a beacon of hope to all humanity, guiding them away from destruction and into the safety of an eternal relationship with their Maker.

Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has God so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reasons we may call upon Him? (Deuteronomy 4:6-7).

As God's firstborn, the nation of Israel was to be a servant of God and the nations, a source of encouragement and inspiration to ultimately draw all peoples to God (Isaiah 60:1-3, 61:8-9).

Originally among the 12 sons of Israel, Reuben was the firstborn son. He was to be his father's right hand man and lead the other brothers. But because of Reuben's sin—an affair with one of his father's wives—Reuben lost both his birthright and the blessings that were normally the right of the eldest. As a result both the birthright and blessing were transferred to Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, who Israel had adopted as his own sons (Genesis 48). In this way, Joseph was given a double portion of the inheritance and an extra blessing.



**Ephraim's Birthright and Blessing**

Benjamin West 1766-1768

In the book of Genesis we find the poignant story of Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh just before his death. The two boys knelt before their grandfather with Manasseh the eldest at Jacob's right hand and Ephraim at his left. But Jacob crossed his hands and pronounced the greater blessing on the younger son, Ephraim. Joseph was perturbed and tried to correct the perceived error, but Jacob responded:

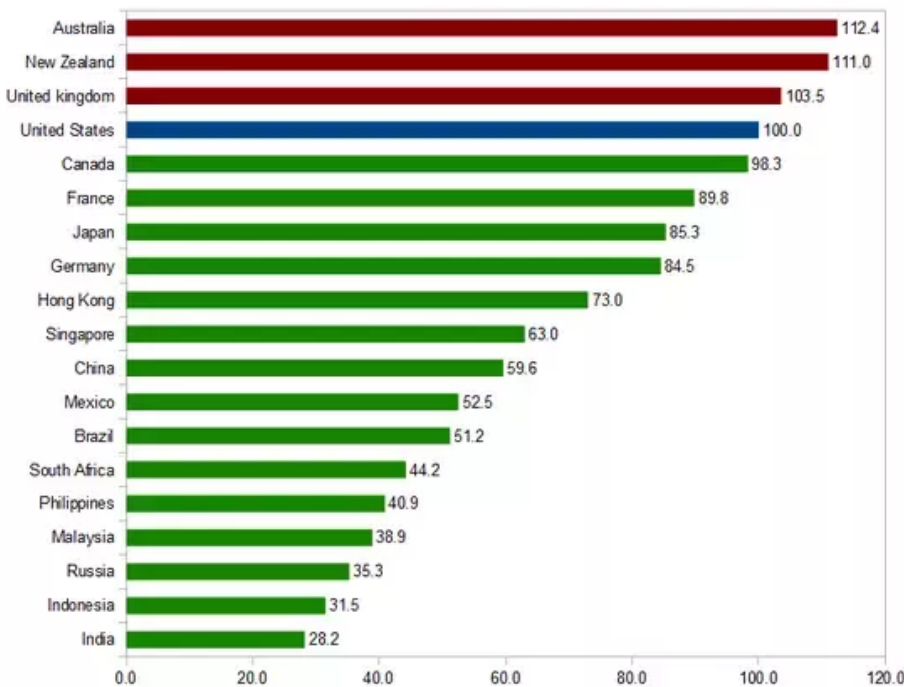
I know my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations (Genesis 48:19-20).

So now when we read much later in Jeremiah that God called Ephraim His firstborn, we can understand that among the Tribes, Ephraim was given this position of leadership from the moment that Jacob blessed him and spoke of his future.

Jacob prophesied that ultimately Ephraim's descendants would become a multitude of nations while Manasseh's progeny would become one great nation. In Jacob's final words, a prophecy about the future of all his sons' families, the burden and blessings of the firstborn fell to Joseph. And with the bounty came the added responsibility and accountability.

Joseph is a fruitful bough. A fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him. Shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), by the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers (Genesis 49:22).

Relative price levels by PPP



PPP – Purchasing Power Parity 2015

<https://businesstech.co.za/news/trending/85277/cost-of-living-south-africa-vs-the-world/>

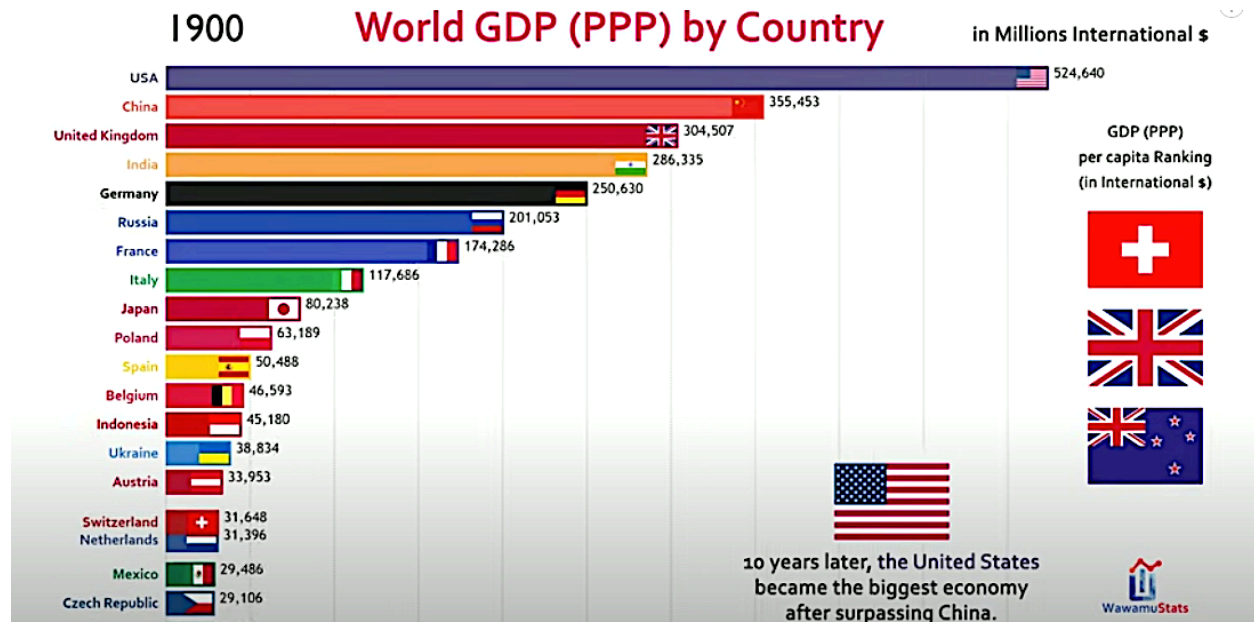
Just as Joseph was God's instrument in saving the Egyptians, his brothers, and their families from famine and destruction through heeding God's warnings and making wise preparations, so Joseph's descendants were to use their position of leadership to serve their brethren and ultimately the whole of humanity.

The prophetic blessings given to Ephraim and Manasseh by Jacob were reiterated by Moses before his death and the entry of Israel into the promised land (Deuteronomy 33:13-17). These tribes are today among the chief of the nations, the leaders of the English-speaking world, the custodians of the blessings of Israel, and bearing responsibility for world leadership.

But their leadership has been a mixed blessing. There are few

who would dispute the greatness of Britain and her Commonwealth, a company of nations having a common monarchy during the nineteenth century, or America's stellar role as a superpower during the twentieth century. For who else has rivalled their dominance in trade, technology, communications, manufacturing, agricultural output, natural resources, or military might in the past two centuries?

The United States has maintained its position as a world economic leader for over 100 years, and military dominance for the last 50 years. But knowing the history of the Ten Tribes it would be wise to consider the fact that world prominence can be won and lost. And losing the moral superiority of biblical values is heralding the beginning of the decline of these Tribes.



### America Begins its Economic Ascendancy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-2nqd6-ZXg>

There was a time when at least a few among the leadership of these nations understood their God-given blessings and the sense of covenant responsibility that went with them. One of these was John Winthrop (1588-1649), the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He urged his fellow pioneers at their departure from England to the North American wilderness to cling to the high moral tone set by the Scriptures in the new community they would establish:

If wee keep this covenant, wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, but if wee deal falsely with our God...wee be consumed out of the good land wither wee are going.<sup>3</sup>

The Pilgrim fathers and mothers identified themselves closely with the ancient Hebrews and looked to the God of Israel and the Bible for their inspiration and direction. Their concepts of life, law, liberty, and happiness were firmly rooted in the scriptural ethic. But today we, the modern descendants of these Tribes of migrating people, have forgotten much of what made our nations great. Our light to the world is sporadic at best. We have been both a blessing and a curse to the world that we as firstborn were called to serve.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by *The Hebrew Impact on Western Civilization*, edited by Dagobert D. Runes, The Citadel Press, 1976, p. 15,

To the knowledge of the Creator God of the Bible, we have attached the pagan gods of materialism, selfishness, and hedonism. We have encouraged a false gospel of wealth, health, and safety. Or we have denied God altogether, claiming we are the creators and source of our own wealth and goodness. We have both educated and exploited the world we were to serve. We have espoused the ideals of liberty, but subverted them with license to do a multitude of evils. We have hailed rights and neglected responsibilities. We have exported technical expertise, but also technological terrors. We have proclaimed the rule of law, then undermined it with relativism. No doubt God would say to our nations what the apostle Paul felt inspired to write to a small part of the Tribes in his day:

You boast that all is well between yourself and God. Yes, you know what he wants; you know right from wrong because you have been taught his law. You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a beacon light for people who are lost in darkness without God. You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that in God's law you have complete knowledge and truth.

Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you do it? You condemn idolatry, but do you steal from pagan temples? You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonour God by breaking it. No wonder the Scriptures say, "The world blasphemes the name of God because of you."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Romans 2:17-24.