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The Lost Sheep

Regardless of ones background, Jew or gentile, our goal in this teaching is to show how there is ONE God, ONE body, ONE faith! The time will soon come when He will gather us all together as ONE flock, and He will be our Shepherd.

Because we believe this teaching is so important and vital to understand, we will walk through this teaching in a systematic form. Our goal is to explain the history found in the Scriptures that we believe has been overlooked or just ignored by many today.

Matthew 15:24

²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

There have been many assumptions as to who or what Israel is. Many would say it's a small country in the middle East. Others say it's another name for the Jews. Yet still others say that it's now the church. While these answers may have an element of truth to them, they are still lacking the full picture as to what the Scriptures give us in recognizing the true Biblical Israel.

Many forget that just like the US, Israel ended up being divided in two with a northern and southern kingdom. Yet unlike the US, Israel never came back together. In fact, after some time, these two kingdoms were both banished from their land and taken into captivity. The northern kingdom was taken into Syria and the southern kingdom into Babylon. Then, only the southern kingdom, the majority of it anyway, returned to its land. The Scriptures normally define the *Northern Kingdom* as the “*House of Israel*” and the *Southern Kingdom* as the “*House of Judah*”. However, at times, “*House of Israel*” or just “*Israel*” can refer to both.

As we read the Scriptures concerning the House of Israel and the House of Judah, we simply assume that it is in reference to all 12 tribes of Israel every time. Yet, this is not always the case.

The Scriptures are quite clear in distinguishing these divisions of Israel as two separate entities, kingdoms or nations. The question is ... How is this relative to us today? And the answer? ...More than you can imagine.

Understanding the division of Israel is paramount and absolutely foundational. When one comes to this understanding, the Bible becomes self-explanatory and their comprehension of the Scriptures will go beyond what has ever been imagined. Even illustrations like that of the prodigal son will reveal what has been missed for all these years. Even the two sticks that come together in Ezekiel 37.

Before we begin to examine this topic of the division of Israel in the Scriptures, let's look at one verse in Isaiah chapter 1.

Isaiah 1:18

¹⁸“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

Ask yourselves the question ... *"Am I willing to reason with the Scriptures or am I wanting to debate my perspective?"*

This is imperative that we answer this question now:

Are you willing to examine the Scriptures from the view point that some of your existing beliefs COULD be wrong? Could you actually entertain the thought that something you have believed in for years ... may not be true? This is difficult, especially for pastors, but something that needs to be honestly addressed.

So again I say, ask yourself ... *"Am I willing to reason with the Scriptures or am I wanting to debate my perspective?"* You, and only you, can answer this question.

Isaiah 1:18

¹⁸“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD...

During the early days of the New Testament times, only the Old Testament existed. So, when the New Testament was being written, they only had one source to explain themselves. One source to give the definitions to the words and phrases they were using. One source to put to the test all that was being written, the Old Testament, or what they called the *Tanakh*.

Just as the Bereans tested everything Paul said to the Scriptures, we need to do the same to our own beliefs.

In order for us to truly understand the full context of the New Testament, we have to obtain a firm foundation and understanding, that which can only be grounded in the Old Testament.

It's the Old Testament that serves as the road map to guide us through all that came to be called the New Testament and that which is still yet to come. If we are holding to something that does not line up in agreement with the Old Testament, then we are saying that God's Word contradicts itself and it shows that we are off the map and going in our own direction.

So let us begin examining the Scriptures to enable us to honestly determine where we are with our understanding concerning the full context of the Scriptures.

For us to best understand why and how this topic of Israel being divided is SO relevant to us today, let's go back to Abraham, the one noted as the "father of the faith." Starting with Abraham, we'll begin a broad overview of history through the Scriptures to show us how we arrived to where we are today. In so doing, we'll better understand what lies ahead of us in the future.

God said to Abraham...

Genesis 22:17-18

¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.

Here we see that Abraham's descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Not too hard to grasp.

Let's continue forward with what was promised to his son Isaac. We must note here that Isaac was the second born to Abraham, yet he received the first born blessing...

To Isaac, God said...

Genesis 26:4-5

⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.

Here we see virtually the same promise given to Isaac as Abraham. Again, not too hard to grasp. Let's move forward with Isaac's son Jacob. We must note here, like with Isaac, that Jacob was the second born, yet received the first born blessing...

To Jacob, God said...

Genesis 28:13-15

¹³ There above it stood (Yahweh) the LORD, and he said: "I am (Yahweh) the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Again, we see virtually the same promise continuing down the line of Abraham. And we see here in this text that Jacob started in the land of Canaan. He and all his sons first lived in Canaan.

Jacob's name was eventually changed to Israel.

Genesis 35:10

¹⁰ God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel.

The name "Israel" means *"He that strives with God."* Not striving with God in the sense of opposing God but rather in the sense of serving and assisting God.

It was through Israel's twelve sons that the promise given to him, his father Isaac, and grandfather Abraham, began to take root.

The twelve sons of Israel are: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin.

Because of a famine, Israel moves all of his family FROM the land of Canaan to the land of Goshen, just outside of Egypt.

It is here where Israel blesses the sons of Joseph. Israel even declares that Joseph's sons are to be treated as his...

Genesis 48:5

⁵ And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

When blessing the two boys, as the pattern has shown, his first-born blessing goes to the second born Ephraim and not to the first-born Manasseh...

Genesis 48:17-19

¹⁷ Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "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."

And so here is where things begin to get interesting. Israel said that Ephraim will become a *"multitude of nations."* The Hebrew for "multitude of nations" is *"melo ha' goyim,"* meaning "the fullness of the nations."

From a Greek mindset, "nations" means "gentiles." The name "gentile" simply means *"of the nations"* or "not of the ONE nation – Israel." From God's perspective, you are either of His nation (singular) or you are of the nations (plural).

So even though Ephraim received the first-born blessing, he was also prophesied to be the fullness of those not belonging to God. We'll come back to this a little later.

While in Egypt, the Israelites continued to increase...

Genesis 47:27

²⁷ Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

And after Joseph died they were enslaved...

Exodus 1:8-11

⁸ Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.” ¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

The rest of the book of Exodus details how Yahweh delivers His people from Egypt through Moses and uses Moses to lead them.

It was at this time that the Law was given in written form to His people on Mt. Sinai. His people being all twelve tribes of Israel and the aliens who had left and joined with them.

Yet they rebelled against God and did not have the faith to take the promised land. Thus, they were not allowed to enter into it...

Numbers 14:20-23

²⁰ (Yahweh) The LORD replied, “I have forgiven them, as you asked. ²¹ Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of (Yahweh) the LORD fills the whole earth, ²² not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times — ²³ not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

It was only the children of this generation that was to enter the promise land under Joshua. Just before entering the promise land we see God adding a NEW covenant to that which was given to the generation before. What exactly is this NEW covenant?

The covenant that came to the first generation under Moses was not so much the instructions but rather the blessings and curses that would result, pending the obedience or disobedience to those instructions. And we see that this NEW covenant is simply an expansion of those blessings and curses.

First, compare what Moses says to this next generation...

Deuteronomy 4:7-8

⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way (Yahweh) the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? ⁸ And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

In this same chapter he gives a brief summary of the added covenant being given to them.

Deuteronomy 4:25-27

²⁵ After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time — if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of (Yahweh) the LORD your God and provoking him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will

not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. ²⁷ (Yahweh) The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which (Yahweh) the LORD will drive you. (Heaven and Earth * see Matthew 5:18)

Toward the end of Deuteronomy we see him giving another view, the blessings...

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

¹ If you fully obey (Yahweh) the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, (Yahweh) the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ² All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey (Yahweh) the LORD your God: ...

Then after he gives the blessings that would come from the obedience, he then gives curses that would come resulting from disobedience ...

Deuteronomy 28:15

¹⁵ However, if you do not obey (Yahweh) the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ...

After explaining the curses, He THEN explains how this is an added covenant with them...

Deuteronomy 29:1

¹ These are the terms of the covenant (Yahweh) the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb.

So we see that this was a covenant that was added to the previous covenant. Not doing away with the previous covenant, just adding a NEW along with it.

As a part of the curse in this new covenant we see that the Father declares he will literally spread His people into the nations if they choose to disobey...

Again

Deuteronomy 4:27

²⁷ (Yahweh) The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which (Yahweh) the LORD will drive you.

Deuteronomy 28:36

³⁶ (Yahweh) The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. ³⁷ You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where (Yahweh) the LORD will drive you.

Yet immediately following, He mentions what will happen when they choose to return to His ways...

Deuteronomy 30:1-5

¹ When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever (Yahweh) the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, ² and when you and your children return to (Yahweh) the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, ³ then (Yahweh) the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. ⁴ Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there (Yahweh) the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. ⁵ He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.

We'll cover this more a little later.

Some have said that the covenant was made too difficult for them to follow - on purpose. Could that be true? Was it an impossibility to follow these commands in complete obedience? Of course not.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

¹¹ Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. ¹² It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" ¹⁴ No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

These are the verses Paul quoted in Romans chapter 9. For a further study on these verses, please see our "Prayer of Salvation" teaching under the "Video Teachings" tab at TestEverything.net

Yet to whom does it say that this new covenant was given?

Deuteronomy 29:14-15

¹⁴ I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you ¹⁵ who are standing here with us today in the presence of (Yahweh) the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.

So this covenant was given not only to that generation but to ALL generations who would come after them.

After receiving this added covenant the Israelites began taking back the land of Canaan and eventually desired to have a king over them.

First there was Saul.

Then David. Then Solomon.

It must be noted that all twelve tribes and the aliens, (or gentiles) who joined them, were governed by all three of these three kings.

But then Solomon began leading the people of Israel to follow other gods. Remember, God said he would scatter them among the nations if they didn't follow His instructions.

So after Solomon died, God gave ten tribes of Israel to Solomon's servant Jeroboam.

Thus, the beginning of the spreading of Israel across the nations would begin.

1 Kings 11:31-33

³¹ Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what (Yahweh) the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. ³² But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. ³³ I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

So Jeroboam was given ten tribes of Israel. It's interesting to note that Jeroboam was actually from the tribe of Ephraim...

1 Kings 11:26

²⁶ Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

He was also in charge of the whole labor force of the house of Joseph as given just a couple verses later.

We must remember here that it was Ephraim, son of Joseph, that was promised to become the fullness of the nations ... the gentiles. The fullness of those NOT belonging to - God's nation. And so, here we see the prophecy to Ephraim begin to manifest.

It is here that Israel is divided in to two divisions. A northern and a southern kingdom:

The northern kingdom, that being the ten tribes that left with Jeroboam, often referred in Scripture as the "*House of Israel*", "*House of Joseph*" or "*Ephraim*".

And

The southern kingdom, that being Judah and Benjamin - with Benjamin eventually assimilating into Judah, referred to in the Scripture as the "*House of Judah*."

The northern kingdom eventually established their capitol in Samaria. And yet for over 200 years the northern kingdom did nothing different than that of Solomon in the eyes of the Lord. They disobeyed God's instruction and followed after other gods. It came to the point that God no longer called them His people...

Hosea 1:9

⁹ Then (Yahweh) the LORD said, "Call him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God."

In 721 BC, God had Assyria conquer Samaria and take the northern kingdom captive to Assyria.

2 Kings 17:6

⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

The king of Assyria then brought in foreign people into the land of Samaria. He later sent a priest back to teach them the ways of God.

2 Kings 17:28-34

²⁸ So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship (Yahweh) the LORD. ²⁹ Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places. ³⁰ The men from Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men from Cuthah made Nergal, and the men from Hamath made Ashima; ³¹ the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire as sacrifices to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. ³² They worshiped (Yahweh) the LORD, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. ³³ They worshiped (Yahweh) the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought. ³⁴ To this day they persist in their former practices. They neither worship (Yahweh) the LORD nor adhere to the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands that (Yahweh) the LORD gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel.

God had warned Israel just before crossing the Jordan with the added covenant that this would happen if they didn't obey. But they ignored the covenant of God that said...

Deuteronomy 28:36

³⁶ (Yahweh) The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. ³⁷ You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where (Yahweh) the LORD will drive you.

And so now we see in 721 BC this Scripture in Deuteronomy beginning to unfold as the people of Israel no longer remain a people but begin assimilating into the nations. Even Isaiah said...

Isaiah 7:8

⁸ for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.

They were no longer a people. They were no longer God's people.

In sending the northern kingdom off to Assyria, God declared He divorced her through Jeremiah. ...

Jeremiah 3:8

⁸ I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries...

Let us remember that the reason God divorced the ten tribes of the northern kingdom was because they hardened their hearts and rejected God's law in *pursuing other gods*. As a result of this divorce, they were truly no longer Israel - His people.

It is because they are no longer his people that we see in the New Testament, and modern day as well, that Israel, *as a whole*, is only known by the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern Kingdom was no longer Israel. Only the southern kingdom of Judah could truly go by that name anymore.

And in all of this, we see the unfolding of that which was spoken over 1,100 years earlier to Joseph's son Ephraim by Jacob himself.

Genesis 48:19

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "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."

In the midst of the northern kingdom's turmoil, you would think that Judah would make it a lesson learned for themselves. But they didn't. As the last half of Jeremiah 3:8 says..

Jeremiah 3:8

⁸ I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. *Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.*

2 Kings 17:18-19

¹⁸ So (Yahweh) the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, ¹⁹ and even Judah did not keep the commands of (Yahweh) the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced.

Since the kingdom of Judah did not learn their lesson from the northern kingdom, it wasn't much longer that they were taken captives as well. Yet they were taken to Babylon...

2 Kings 20:17

¹⁷ The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says (Yahweh) the LORD.

2 Kings 24:20

²⁰ It was because of (Yahweh's) the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence...

So Jerusalem and the first temple is destroyed and the people of Judah are taken captive to Babylon in approximately 586 BC. The Scriptures tell us it would be for 70 years.

Daniel 9:2

² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of (Yahweh) the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10

¹⁰ This is what (Yahweh) the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place."

We find 70 years later that the return is recorded in the book of Nehemiah and Ezra. It is at this time we actually see some of those who the King of Assyria sent to live in Samaria ...

Ezra 4:1

¹ When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for (Yahweh) the LORD, the God of Israel, ² they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." ³ But Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for (Yahweh) the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us."

These were the ancestors of the Samaritans of Yeshua's day. This should shed some light on why the Jews were so at odds with those of Samaria during the time of Yeshua.

It is only because of this return of the southern kingdom to the land, that we see the Jews in the land of Israel today. The very name "Jew" became slang for those who were of the house of Judah and lived in the land of Judah, which later became known as Judea. Thus, those who lived in Judea were considered "Jews."

Judah had every intent of returning to God's ways found in His law when they returned to the land of Judah. However, Judah ended up adding "barriers" or "fences" around the law of God in order to keep from breaking it. They did this because they were so concerned about breaking the law of God, that they made extra commandments around God's commandments to try and make sure they never even came close to breaking God's law.

In fact, we see this mentality beginning during the return of Judah in the book of Nehemiah...

Nehemiah 13:15

¹⁵ In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. ¹⁶ Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. ¹⁷ I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing — desecrating the Sabbath day? ¹⁸ Didn't your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath." ¹⁹ When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day.

Here we see Nehemiah commanding the gates to be shut so no one could sell at the market place in the city. Was this a bad thing. Of course not. But they should have just obeyed. There should have been no need to do something to prevent disobedience. However, this mentality eventually grew, not only in adding more fences to keep from breaking God's law, but the fences themselves became equated TO God's law. Thus elevating man's law equal to or even higher than God's. We can witness some of the rabbis elevating their decrees higher than God's commandments in the Talmud, which originated from the "oral law" of the Jews.

Consider...

“My son! Be careful concerning rabbinical decrees even more than the Torah...the Torah contains prohibitions...But anyone who violates a rabbinic decree is worthy of death”
(*Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin, 21b*)

And

“if there are 1000 prophets, all of them the stature of Eliyah and Elisha, giving a certain interpretation, and 1001 rabbis, not according to the 1000 prophets, Elohim did not permit us to learn from the prophets, only from the rabbis who are men of logic and reason.” - Rambam’s
Introductions to the Mishnah

So that which started out with a good motive and intent to keep from breaking God's law, developed into disobedience to God's law.

Compare...

Deuteronomy 4:2

² Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the (Yahweh) LORD your God that I give you.

And

Deuteronomy 12:32

³² See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

So, although Judah had God's law, as opposed to the northern kingdom, they eventually held their own law in equal or higher value. It was this very sin that Yeshua rebuked the Pharisees for.

Mark 7:8-9

⁸ “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.” ⁹ And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ...

Mark 7:13

¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.” (see also *Matthew 23:1,2*)

So although Judah returned, they soon started adding their own laws to follow, which as we mentioned earlier, would later become known as the "Talmud.”

The northern kingdom, on the other hand, never returned. Esar Haddon, king of Assyria, finished what his predecessor had started in taking the northern kingdom into captivity. After this, the northern kingdom is rarely, if ever, acknowledged as a unified entity in Scripture again. This is because they were eventually dispersed and never returned to Samaria - like the Southern kingdom returned to the land of Judah.

So where did these tribes go? No one really knows. There is no doubt that fragments did return to the area, but as a whole, they became truly lost, at least in the eyes of man.

Though in the New Testament, not all of those in the northern ten tribes had fully been lost just yet. Eventually they became scattered and fully assimilated amongst the nations. They were truly lost in the eyes of man. The Scriptures even prophetically referring to them with a new name...

Jeremiah 50:6

⁶ My people have been *lost sheep*; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.

Ezekiel 34:6

⁶ My *sheep* wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

Ezekiel 34:11-12

¹¹ For this is what the Sovereign (Yahweh) LORD says: "I myself will search for *my sheep* and look after them. ¹²As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so I will look after *my sheep*. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness."

Here is where we begin seeing an issue that needs to be understood. God says that He will rescue the sheep He scattered. Yet, how can this be?

God said in Jeremiah that He divorced Israel. The northern kingdom.

Again...

Jeremiah 3:8

⁸ I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries...

This may seem like a non-issue to many, but let's consider what God's own law says about one who divorces a woman and the command given regarding remarrying her.

Deuteronomy 24:4

⁴ then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of (Yahweh) the LORD.

The Lord's own Law forbids Him to remarry the one He has divorced. So, are we looking at a "Do as I say, not as I do" type of situation? Surely not.

For we know that the northern kingdom did indeed defile herself...

Ezekiel 20:43

⁴³ There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done.

The mere fact that they did not return to Yahweh right away shows that they continued in their rebellious ways of fornication with other gods.

Hosea 4:17

¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

Hosea 5:11

¹¹ Ephraim is oppressed, trampled in judgment, intent on pursuing idols. (Ephraim had no heart of returning but continuing after the idols)

Hosea 6:10

¹⁰ I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel. There Ephraim is given to prostitution and Israel is *defiled*.

This verse alone shows that Ephraim is defiled and thus cannot return according to Deuteronomy 24.

Remember, Deuteronomy 24:4 says “is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled”

Hosea 8:9

⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey wandering alone. Ephraim has sold herself to lovers.

Here we see that Ephraim clearly became a prostitute in the eyes of Yahweh.

There is little doubt that this was Ephraim’s intent. And it obviously continued as such even after the years of banishment to Assyria...

Isaiah 7:8

⁸ for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.

There was no repentance to return and they continued in their ways.

Another point to consider, why God could not re-marry Ephraim after they were divorced, is this....

We know that a priest could only be a priest if he was a descendant of Aaron.

Speaking of those priests, in Leviticus 21:14, Yahweh says...

Leviticus 21:14

¹⁴ He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people,

If this is the case for the priests, how much more is this to be the case for Yahweh Himself.

As we made mention of in our teaching titled “Nailed to the Cross.” It is very easy to see how Yahweh is truly the first High Priest as he was the first to offer a blood sacrifice for Adam and Eve to atone for their sin. To further illustrate this point as God being Priest, consider this...

Hebrews 5:4-5

⁴ No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

Meaning what? He was a priest because He was God’s son.

Just as the priests, through the Levitical priesthood, had to be descendants of Aaron, here we see in verse 5 that Yeshua is established as a priest first... by being the son of God. Again, verse 5...

Hebrews 5:5

⁵ So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

Because he was His son, he was a priest; just as the descendants of Aaron were, in the earthly priesthood. Declaring God Himself a priest.

And what is said of *US* in regards to being priests?

1 Peter 2:4

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And

Revelation 20:6

⁶ Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

So why are we going to be considered as priests?

Because we will be adopted as sons by God, the first High Priest...

Romans 8:23

²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our *adoption as sons*, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 9:4

⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the *adoption as sons*; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

Ephesians 1:5

⁵ he predestined us to be *adopted as his sons* through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

And those who are adopted as sons will truly be a priesthood in Yahweh.

So, it is in this that we see God cannot bring Ephraim back. Yahweh Himself, a priest, will not break His own law that he gave regarding the priests. Again...

Leviticus 21:14

¹⁴ He must not marry a widow, a *divorced woman*, or a woman *defiled by prostitution*, but only a virgin from his own people,

However, we see elsewhere that bringing Ephraim back is definitely His intent...

Ezekiel 34:15

¹⁵ I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Micah 2:12

¹² I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people.

This was a great mystery to all the prophets and rabbis. They wondered how He could remarry the very one he divorced and declared to have given herself over to prostitution.

God can not break the very righteous laws that define His own righteousness. Breaking the law of God is sin, the law defines sin according to God's own words!

God CANNOT sin!

How, then, can God remarry the lost sheep of Israel without breaking His own law, without sinning?

You are now understanding the GREAT MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL that Paul wrote about. The way God was going to accomplish this was hidden from His people for so long. So many do not even understand Paul's teachings on this matter today.

How could God remarry who He divorced, when God says it was a sin to do so?

For there was only one way He could be released from that particular commandment of the law...

Death.

Paul himself expounds on this, in solving this mystery of the gospel.

Romans 7:2

²...for example, by law a married, woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him...

Likewise, Paul goes on to say, that we die in Christ when we come into the faith, releasing both us, and God, from the requirement of the law, as it relates to divorce and remarriage.

So Christ, came down and died for the lost sheep in order to bring them back into the fold.

It is really the “greatest love story, NEVER told”

And just as many Egyptians joined the Hebrews in leaving Egypt in the Exodus by way of the Passover lamb, Christ has opened the door that whosoever would call upon him can be saved.

He came as the Word to die in our place. The only way the covenant could be annulled was through death of either partner. This was His goal. To die as the Son of God to restore that which was lost.

Luke 19:10

¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

What was lost? His people.

Thus the words of Yeshua in John 15.

John 15:13

¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

So when you die in Him, you are dead to the sins of our disobedience.

If you live in Him, you can be reunited with the Father, but if you are not in Him you are still in the divorced state. Considered dead in your sins and cannot be united to God the first High Priest.

Even Hosea 13 mentions this...

Hosea 13:1

¹When Ephraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died.

Notice that Ephraim was declared dead by the Baal worship. Spiritually dead. Declared dead before even being divorced.

So, would that not be enough to annul the covenant? No. This spiritual death just left them dead in their sins and now out of covenant with the Father because of those sins.

At the point of their rebellion, they were no longer considered God’s son anymore....

Hosea 1:9

⁹Then the LORD said, “Call him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

Thus, in the eyes of God, they were dead because they were no longer His.

And this is why we see Paul’s writings say...

Colossians 2:13

¹³When you were *dead in your sins* and in the *uncircumcision of your sinful nature*, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

“Dead in your sins” and “uncircumcision of your sinful nature” meaning, out of covenant. Circumcision represents covenant here.

Ephesians 2:1

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

This is what the story of the prodigal son is all about...

Luke 15:24

²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

The prodigal son is Ephraim. Considered dead.

It wasn’t until the perfect Son, Yeshua, came and died as the Son of God to annul the covenant to establish the new. Or as some like to refer to it as the renewed covenant.

So He died in our place, since He came AS the Son of God.... Israel.

Remember, Israel was considered the first born of God...

Exodus 4:22-23

²² Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what (Yahweh) the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.” But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.’”

Israel was called the first born of God. The son of God. But as a whole they rebelled and was no longer considered the son of God. Yeshua was called the Son of God because He obeyed perfectly.

When He died on the cross, the marriage covenant was made void because He died ... as the true son... Israel. So now we are enabled to be united again to Yahweh... If we are in Him.

Some have said... “How can Yeshua be the Bride groom then? Isn’t there a law saying that a man is not to marry his father’s wife?”

The verse that is often referred to here is...

Deuteronomy 22:30

³⁰ A man is not to marry his father’s wife; he must not dishonor his father’s bed.

First, the problem with referring to this text is that it clearly implies the father is still married to the woman as the act would dishonor his bed. This is not the case with Ephraim. Ephraim was divorced and is no longer the Father's wife.

Second, we must understand that we are dealing with metaphors here. Metaphors are all over the Scriptures.

The problem that we believe is an issue for some is that, metaphorically speaking, Yeshua had several roles to fill. Many could be trying to force one metaphorical role over another. When, in reality, He is truly filling all these roles, but one is not necessarily “over” another.

I hope that makes sense.

For example, He is mentioned as the ...Good Shepherd. Yet at the same time... He’s the lamb of God. So is He shepherding himself? Of course not. They’re just metaphors.

He’s also our Bride groom, the Son of God, the Word of God and even the Cornerstone (or capstone) and much more.

So, is one more important than another? Is one metaphor to be stressed over another? We don’t think so. So when one person says “He’s the good shepherd.” and another says “No. He’s the bridegroom.” and still another says “No. He’s the first born son.” We simply respond with..... “Yes.”

Psalms 91:4 says that He will protect us with His feathers and wings.

Psalms 91:4

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

And Yeshua said in Matthew...

Matthew 23:37

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

Does this make Him a big chicken? Of course not! It’s a *metaphor*.

Even though Israel is the son of God, Yahweh sometimes refers to Israel with a feminine article added. Other times it is very definitive that He is referring to Israel as a female.

For example...

Jeremiah 3:8

⁸ I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful *sister* Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.

The word in Hebrew for sister is very clear that she would be considered a sister, thus, a feminine gender.

Amos 5:2

² Fallen is *Virgin* Israel, never to rise again, deserted in her own land, with no one to lift her up.

Jeremiah 3:20

²⁰ But like a *woman* unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel,” declares (Yahweh) the LORD.

So with Israel, the son of God, being referred to as such, we see how Yeshua, the son of God, can easily fulfill the sacrifice of the female lamb for the unintentional sin in Numbers 15:27-35 as well.

The thing is this, forcing one metaphor over another can truly be counter-productive. The bottom line is that they are all right in their given perspectives.

And in this case, we see how He came as the son of God for those who were lost. He died as the son of God and nullified the covenant to make way for the new.

Let us recall the words of Christ when He said

Matthew 15:24

²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

Redeeming the divorced northern kingdom was the mystery that the prophets could not understand.

Matthew 13:17

¹⁷ For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

The mystery was revealed in the Word of God coming to die in order to rise from the dead to bring us back to him - and His eternal law.

Romans 16:25-27

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the *mystery* hidden for long ages past,²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

And ...

Ephesians 3:1-9

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the *mystery* made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This *mystery* is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this *mystery*, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

And ...

Ephesians 6:19

¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the *mystery* of the gospel,

Colossians 1:25-27

²⁵ I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness ²⁶ the *mystery* that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Christ came to bring His people back into the relationship that was established in His covenant.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷ Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

He came to redeem His people so they can come back in covenant with Him, living in obedience to His Law. Christ knew the Psalm that said

Psalms 103:17-18

¹⁷ But from **everlasting** to **everlasting** the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children ¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.

And the prophet Isaiah ...

Isaiah 24:5

⁵ The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the **everlasting covenant**.

During the time of Christ the Jews were centrally located in the land of Judea but there were still others who were living in other nations.

John 7:35

³⁵ The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?"

These are those who would make their pilgrimage for the feast days as we see here in Acts.

Acts 2:5

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

These are the ones to whom Peter said in the same chapter...

Acts 2:39

³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off for all whom the Lord our God will call.

Who were those who were far off that Peter was referring to?

Ezekiel 11:15

¹⁵ Son of man, your brothers - your brothers who are your blood relatives and the whole house of Israel are those of whom the people of Jerusalem have said, 'They are far away from (Yahweh) the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.'

Christ's focus was the regathering of the lost sheep of Israel. At the time of Christ's ministry, though, the assimilation of the northern kingdom into the nations abroad was well in progress yet not completed.

Not all of the northern kingdom had yet forgotten who they were. In fact, there were some who still recognized and acknowledged who they were. One example could be Anna the prophetess...

Luke 2:36

³⁶ There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

Knowing that there were these living in the surrounding areas, Christ's focus centered on them.

Compare...

Matthew 10:5-6

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

We see several times that the New Testament addresses those sheep scattered in the nations. Consider...

1 Peter 1:1

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

And Peter later says...

1 Peter 1:22-25

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

He then confirms who he is talking to by these next verses...

1 Peters 2:9

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Exodus 19:6

⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.

1 Peters 2:10

¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Peter here uses the same language as found in the Scriptures regarding the lost sheep of Israel.

Isaiah 7:8

⁸ for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.

Hosea 1:9

⁹ Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

Even James says...

James 1:1

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

Yet we know that the word spoken over Ephraim was indeed, again...

Genesis 48:19

¹⁹ .. but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.

As mentioned earlier, Israel said that Ephraim will become a multitude of nations. Not that he would just become scattered amongst them. Though they definitely would be scattered amongst them, the fullness of the prophecy is that Ephraim would BECOME a multitude of nations (not just scattered).

Remember, the Hebrew for "multitude of nations" is "*melo ha' goyim*", meaning "*the fullness of the nations*".

From a Greek mindset, "nations" means "gentiles." The name "gentile" simply means "*of the nations*".

Though there were those who still remembered who they were and where they had come from within the northern kingdom, there were still many who had already begun assimilating into the nations. And so to reach those who had already assimilated into the nations, God gave Paul the ministry of reconciliation to the Gentiles...

1 Timothy 2:7

⁷ And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

AND

Romans 5:8-11

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Colossians 1:20

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

It was in this ministry of reconciliation that Paul was to bring the northern kingdom back into unity with the southern kingdom. This was no easy task as the Jews had done a pretty good job in widening the existing gap with their added laws. Again, these laws later became known as the Talmud.

Along with these laws, the Jews actually created a physical barrier in the temple court. Gentile proselytes were not allowed past this wall.

In addressing this topic of uniting the two kingdoms in the book of Ephesians, Paul refers to this wall as a metaphor in addressing the law of the Jews...

Ephesians 2:11-16

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, *the dividing wall of hostility*, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to *reconcile both of them to God through the cross*, by which he put to death their *hostility*.

Their hostility? What hostility? And where did it originate?

Leviticus 26:21

²¹ If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve.

Christ removed their hostility and rebellion towards the Father, and one another, through the cross, enabling the two to become one again.

This happens to be the same law Paul refers to in the book of Colossians...

Colossians 2:15

¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

As we noted earlier, God's law says...

Deuteronomy 12:32

³² See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

The southern kingdom added to it and the northern kingdom took away from it. Either way, it's rebellion against God's law.

This is why Isaiah said to the **southern** kingdom...

Isaiah 53:6

⁶ *We all*, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and (Yahweh) the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Incidentally, it just so happens to be the same pattern today as it was in the day of Paul's ministry. The Jews add to the law and the gentiles take away from it,

both groups violating Deuteronomy 4:2, just in their own way.

Deuteronomy 4:2

² Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

And today we see some of the same issues that Paul struggled with in his ministry.

For there are some who still remain hostile to God's law just as those that did in Paul's day.

Romans 8:6-8

⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

And

Romans 9:30-32

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness (they rebelled against it), have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works (not from a heart to obey but rather out of duty and that of works of man). They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.”

And again in Romans 11 he says...

Romans 11:25-27

²⁵ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶ and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.” ²⁷ “AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

Two key phrases must be noted here. First, "the fullness of the gentiles". This is a direct reference of the prophecy spoken over Ephraim in Genesis.

Genesis 48:19

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, “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.”

The "*melo ha' goyim*," the *fullness of the nations... the fullness of the gentiles*.

And second, "**ALL Israel will be saved**". Meaning the southern kingdom and the northern kingdom. The Jew and the gentile all coming together.

Romans 11:26

²⁶ and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written...

Romans 11 is all about the two olive trees, the cultivated and the wild, representing the two kingdoms. The emphasis being that the kingdom or olive tree that was broken is now coming back together. For it was said...

Jeremiah 11:16

¹⁶ The LORD called you a thriving olive tree with fruit beautiful in form. But with the roar of a mighty storm he will set it on fire, and its branches will be broken.

But now we see as spoken in Ezekiel...

Ezekiel 37:15-24

¹⁵ The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶ “Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, ‘Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.’ Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, ‘Ephraim’s stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ ¹⁷ Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. ¹⁸ “When your countrymen ask you, ‘Won’t you tell us what you mean by this?’ ¹⁹ say to them, ‘This is

what the Sovereign (Yahweh)LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph which is in Ephraim's hand and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.' ²⁰ Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on ²¹ and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign (Yahweh) LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. ²² I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. ²³ They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. ²⁴ My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.

The focus of Christ was to bring His Kingdom back together as one. One in the faith of Abraham, obedience.

Christ was not concerned with what one's physical lineage was or the boasting that came with it. His concern was obedience.

Compare...

John 8:39

³⁹ "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did.

This is HUGE. Christ is saying here that ANYONE who does what Abraham did is considered the children of Abraham. Well, what did Abraham do?

Genesis 26:4-5

⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵ *because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.*"

According to the words of Christ, those who obey God's commands are those who can truly call Abraham their father.

Think about what He said later to the Jews ... the physical descendants of Abraham...

John 10:24-27

²⁴ The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Even of those who may be actual descendants of Abraham, if they do not obey God's commands, then they are not considered children of Abraham.

Again, the focus of Christ was to bring His kingdom back together as one. One in the Faith of Abraham. Not just together as one, but one in obedience to the Father.

It truly makes no difference what tribe one may be from ... or if they have any Hebrew heritage at all.

This is why Paul said ...

1 Timothy 1:4

⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work which is by faith.

The faith that produces the obedience of Abraham...

James 2:21-24

²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for **what he did** when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and **his faith was made complete by what he did.** ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

One's genealogy did not guarantee salvation. For even when they left Egypt there were foreigners who came along with Israel:

Exodus 12:38

³⁸ A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.

Numbers 11:4

⁴ Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat?"

This mixed multitude, is defined by God Himself, to be as Children of Israel.

And, all are to follow the same law of God.

Numbers 15:15-16

¹⁵ The community is to have the same rules for you and for the alien living among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the alien shall be the same before the LORD: ¹⁶ The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the alien living among you."

Consider also Ruth, she was a Moabite, yet in coming into the faith, she considered Israel's God to be her God, and His ways to be her ways.

What mattered then, and still today, is that we are walking in the faith of Abraham.

The faith that produces the obedience of Abraham.

Obedience to God's Law.

It was in **this** that Paul saw many struggle. The question then becomes, "Why did they struggle with this? "

As Paul says...

2 Corinthians 3:13-16

¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ **But** their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

They struggled because of the veil. Exactly what veil though? The same veil that covered Moses' face? Did that veil keep them from understanding the law that Moses gave at that time?

Of course not. The law was given **at the time his face shone!**

Exodus 34:29-35

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that **his face was radiant** because he had spoken with the LORD. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. ³² Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

And we know they obeyed for some time after that.

Verse 14 here says their minds were MADE dull.

2 Corinthians 3:14-15

¹⁴ But *their minds were made dull*, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

It wasn't Moses' veil that made their minds dull or covered their hearts as verse 15 says. Paul here is showing that when the law was read, that the same veil came over their hearts as it did when it first began covering them in 721 BC.

Lamentations 3:65

⁶⁵ Put a veil over their hearts, and may your curse be on them! (the curse of the law)

Paul, who knew the law and the prophets, is explaining the veil mentioned by Jeremiah here in Lamentations and the curse of the law ... the curse of sin and death. It is in Christ only that this veil and curse is taken away as the verse says.

Thus, only in Christ is the Kingdom reunited.

Uniting Israel back together was a huge issue. The mere fact that Israel was divided should say **something** to us. Remember that Christ Himself said...

Luke 11:17

¹⁷... "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall."

This is why the disciples asked Christ ...

Acts 1:6-7

⁶"Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know..."

The disciples were under the impression that Christ was going to restore the Kingdom of Israel as it was before it was divided. But the prophecy of Hosea was still to come...

Hosea 6:1-2

¹Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. ²After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.

Though we know Christ made it possible for the return to begin, the restoration would not fully come to fruition until we were in the 3rd day of the punishment that was given.

Is there a way for us to know where we are in the grand scheme of this timeline? We believe so...

The tribe of Judah was to be held captive for 70 years according to Daniel and Jeremiah.

Knowing this, is there a time frame given regarding the amount of time for northern kingdom being dispersed?

Consider ...

Ezekiel 4:1-5

¹Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. ²Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. ³Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel. ⁴Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. ⁵I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel.

So, according to this Scripture in Ezekiel, the northern kingdom of Israel should have begun being restored after 390 years. This would take us to approximately 331 BC. However, history proves that never happened. So what else do the Scriptures give us that can shed light on this? The book of Leviticus also covers the penalty of disobedience to God's law, as a whole, as well...

Leviticus 26:14-16

¹⁴ But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, ¹⁵ and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, ¹⁶ then I will do this to you...

In the midst of saying what would happen to them, He then says...

Leviticus 26:18

¹⁸ If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over.

And again, three verses later to make sure they understood, he says again...

Leviticus 26:21

²¹ If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve.

So the punishment that would be declared would actually end up being 7 fold the given amount. The given punishment was 390 years as mentioned in Ezekiel. If we follow the scriptures as given in Leviticus and multiply that amount by 7, we end up with 2,730 years. Which is after 2 days and in the 3rd of the punishment. We must subtract the 721 years as the punishment started in 721 BC. There is no year "0", so we take the remaining years to see when the Father started bringing the prophecy of Hosea 6:1 and 2 into fullness. This takes us to the year 2009.

This is NOT to say that a specific event was to take place in 2009 or 2010, but we propose that it could very well be the time when the process of the hearts of the Northern kingdom begin coming back to Him in large numbers; thus concluding the time of the northern kingdom's judgment.

The captivity, and especially the disbursement, of the northern kingdom didn't happen over days, weeks or even months. It was years for it to be completed. Likewise, the returning of His people back to His ways will take time as well.

Again, the work of Christ started the restoration but it's in this 3rd day that He completes the restoration.

As Hosea says...

Hosea 6:2

² After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.

The phrase "that we may live in his presence" actually points us toward the time of the millennium.

THIS is the revival that needs to be preached today. That He is bringing His people back to His ways, back to His decrees, back to His Law.

This actually brings us to a Scripture that we said we would come back to.

Deuteronomy 30:1-5

¹ When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever (Yahweh) the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, ² and when you and your children return to (Yahweh) the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, ³ then (Yahweh) the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. ⁴ Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there (Yahweh) the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. ⁵ He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.

This is not regarding the Exodus from Egypt. This was spoken 40 years after Egypt to the second generation of those who left there. This prophecy of another exodus has yet to take place! The time is coming when the Father will bring ALL of Israel, both the southern AND northern kingdom back to the land.

Even as Micah said...

Micah 2:12

¹² I will surely gather *all of you*, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people.

(Also Ezekiel 20:34, 41)

³⁴ I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered--with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with out-poured wrath.

⁴¹ I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will be proved holy through you in the sight of the nations.

(And Jeremiah 23:7-8)

⁷ “So then, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when people will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ ⁸ but they will say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ Then they will live in their own land.”

For a further study on the next exodus, see that teaching in our End of Days series at TestEverything.net.

In conclusion, when we referred to the added covenant given in Deuteronomy at the beginning of this teaching, we left a small part off that we'd like to share now...

Deuteronomy 4:25

²⁵ After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time — if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. ²⁷ (Yahweh) The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which (Yahweh) the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. ²⁹ But if from there you seek (Yahweh) the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in *later days* you will return to (Yahweh) the LORD your God and obey him.

We are truly in the latter days as His people are returning to Him in obedience.

The day is coming when ALL 12 tribes, AND those who have joined in becoming citizens of Israel, will be back as one, prepared and ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

As mentioned at the beginning, understanding the division of Israel is paramount and absolutely foundational. When one comes to this understanding, the Bible becomes self-explanatory and their comprehension of all the Scriptures will go beyond what has ever been imagined.

We hope you have enjoyed this study. Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

John 10:27

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

1 John 2:6

⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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