



LEVEL 7  
7·4  
LESSON 4

# Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



The Identity of Two Peoples

# A Nation and a Company of Nations

**T**he kingdom of Israel was under attack. The Assyrian Empire invaded the northern kingdom in 721 B.C. It started with the weak tribes, moving on toward the stronger tribes and toward the capital city, Samaria. The vicious army of Shalmaneser v besieged all the tribes of the kingdom for three brutal years (2 Kings 17:5). It overpowered one city after another after another, killing huge numbers of people and enslaving the survivors.

Looking out over their fortified walls, the inhabitants of Samaria saw the dark masses of thousands of Assyrian soldiers approaching. They moved closer and closer, pouring through the streets of the surrounding villages. Then the battle erupted. The invaders cast ladders against the walls, rolled siege towers and battering rams into place, and dug tunnels under the foundations. Israelite defenders fired arrows, cast down heavy objects and struck with swords and spears when Assyrian troops came over the top.

A day passed, then another, then more. At each onslaught, the walls and the defenders continued to hold.

As the sun rose, the Israelites again prepared for battle. But the Assyrian formations had changed. They now fully encircled the city. Instead of approaching the walls, the troops were setting up a more permanent camp. They were preparing for a siege.

Day after day, month after month, the Assyrians kept the inhabitants of Samaria *in* and everyone and everything else *out*. No food or supplies entered the city. For two years, the inhabitants of the city fell deeper and deeper into hunger, conflict and crisis. The Assyrians remained firmly in place. In 718 B.C., the city fell.

The last Israelite survivors of the Assyrian conquest were killed or taken into captivity. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed.

## STRANGE LAND

The enslaved Israelites never saw their homeland again. Weakened, humiliated and hungry, they walked in large masses, guarded by Assyrian slave masters. They walked through neighboring lands, then into regions that they had never seen. The Assyrians finally resettled them in a strange land on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.

The Israelites had turned away from God. They had been conquered and taken captive. God had prophesied that this would happen. But what was happening to them in captivity—and what was still to come—was also prophesied.

Fill in the prophecy from Amos 9:9: “*For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the \_\_\_\_\_ among all nations, like as \_\_\_\_\_ is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain \_\_\_\_\_.*”

This first generation of defeated and enslaved Israelites lived and died in captivity. Their children were born slaves, as were their children after them. These 10 tribes of Israel were being scattered “among all nations,” and their history became obscured. They would become known as the “lost 10 tribes of Israel.”

But they were not destroyed.

The Israelites’ kingdom was destroyed. Their connection to their land, their culture, their history and their language were destroyed. Their identity was destroyed. (Eventually, even they themselves did not know they were Israelites.) But the actual Israelites were not destroyed. Nor were they completely absorbed into other nations through intermarriage, which is what happened to almost every other conquered people in the ancient world. For the conquered Israelites, God had prophesied something else.

As Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, understanding this prophecy makes up the most important key to understanding Bible prophecy. About one third of the Bible consists of prophecy, and almost all of that prophecy focuses on the descendants of Israel. Researchers and historians have not confirmed what happened to these descendants, but God has confirmed it through revelation.

Mr. Armstrong emphasized this key to understanding prophecy in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (Chapter 9). He wrote that although many of the Israelites from these 10 tribes remained scattered for centuries, a portion of them “had become established in a definite location of their own” 140 years after being conquered by Assyria.

What happened to the “lost 10 tribes of Israel”? Where did they go?

### PROMISES THROUGH HISTORY

About 1,300 years before the Assyrian captivity is when God had first called Abram. He had promised that if he obeyed, “I will make of you a great nation ...” (Genesis 12:2). God later added to this promise, saying that He “will multiply you exceedingly,” “you shall be a

father of many nations,” “and kings shall come out of you” (Genesis 17:1-6).

Fill in God’s additional promises from Genesis 22:17: “[I]n \_\_\_\_\_ I will bless you, and in \_\_\_\_\_ I will multiply your seed as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the heaven, and as the \_\_\_\_\_ which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the \_\_\_\_\_.”

God made even more promises when speaking to Abraham’s grandson Jacob. Fill in the blanks by using Genesis 28:13-14: “And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the \_\_\_\_\_ your father, and the \_\_\_\_\_: the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed; And your seed shall be as the \_\_\_\_\_, and you shall spread abroad to the \_\_\_\_\_, and to the \_\_\_\_\_, and to the \_\_\_\_\_, and to the \_\_\_\_\_: and in you and in your seed shall all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

These incredible promises set apart the descendants of Abraham from all other nations. And you can trace them through history: from Abraham’s son Isaac, to Isaac’s son Jacob, to Jacob’s 12 sons, to the 12 tribes that descended from them, to their enslavement in Egypt, to their liberation under Moses, to their conquest of the Promised Land, to their time under the judges, to their united kingdom under King David, to their split into the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah, to the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, to the survival of the people of Israel in Assyrian slavery.

God had promised specific, history-changing blessings to Abraham’s descendants. By the time of the Assyrian captivity, they had multiplied, but not exceedingly; they were a people, but not a great nation or many nations. They did not even know who they were. How could God keep His promises to Abraham?

About 700 years before Assyrian captivity, the Israelites had been preparing to inherit the Promised Land. God inspired Moses to tell them that they would receive blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28). God is a Father, and He punishes for disobedience to help people turn away from sin. Abraham’s descendants had failed to follow his example and had chosen instead to sin





against God. God was punishing them, but He had not forgotten His promises.

In fact, God used Israel’s punishing enslavement to help keep His promise. Even when you are suffering from punishment or trial, God can use even the suffering to ultimately *bless you*.

The Assyrian Empire had taken the Israelites captive and had moved them to different parts of the empire. The Israelites were still slaves, but they were beginning to “spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south” (Genesis 28:14).

**SPECIAL PROMISE TO TWO TRIBES**

The Israelites are called Israelites because they came from Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Israel had 12 sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Isaachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. The descendants of each of these sons would grow into tribes containing many people.

Fill in the blanks from Genesis 49:1, 3-4 to see how God prophesied that He would carry out His promises

through these descendants: “And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ . ... \_\_\_\_\_, you are my firstborn, my \_\_\_\_\_, and the beginning of my \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_, you shall not excel; because you went up to your father’s bed; then defiled you it: he went up to my couch.”

Reuben had committed a terrible sin: God punished him by withholding the promises, which would normally have been inherited by him and his descendants because he was the firstborn. God instead gave the birthright promises to Jacob’s second-youngest son, Joseph, who strove to obey God. Joseph had been “made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob” and would inherit “blessings of heaven above” (verses 24-25).

Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob actually adopted them as his own sons (Genesis 48:5). This meant that each of them was not just considered part of their father’s tribe, but full tribes of their own. It was through these two sons and their descendants that the blessings of Abraham would continue to be passed down.

God inspired Jacob to say that the descendants of Manasseh, the elder, would become a great nation, and that the descendants of Ephraim, the younger, would become “a multitude of nations.”

These two sons, and the two tribes that descended from them, held the birthright blessings of national greatness. This lesson focuses on tracing those tribes through history to see when and how God fulfilled His promises to Abraham.

**COMBINING THE CLUES**

The Bible indicates where the descendants of Abraham, including Ephraim, Manasseh and the other tribes, would migrate over time. The Bible is a coded book, and its clues on this subject are scattered in several different places “here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

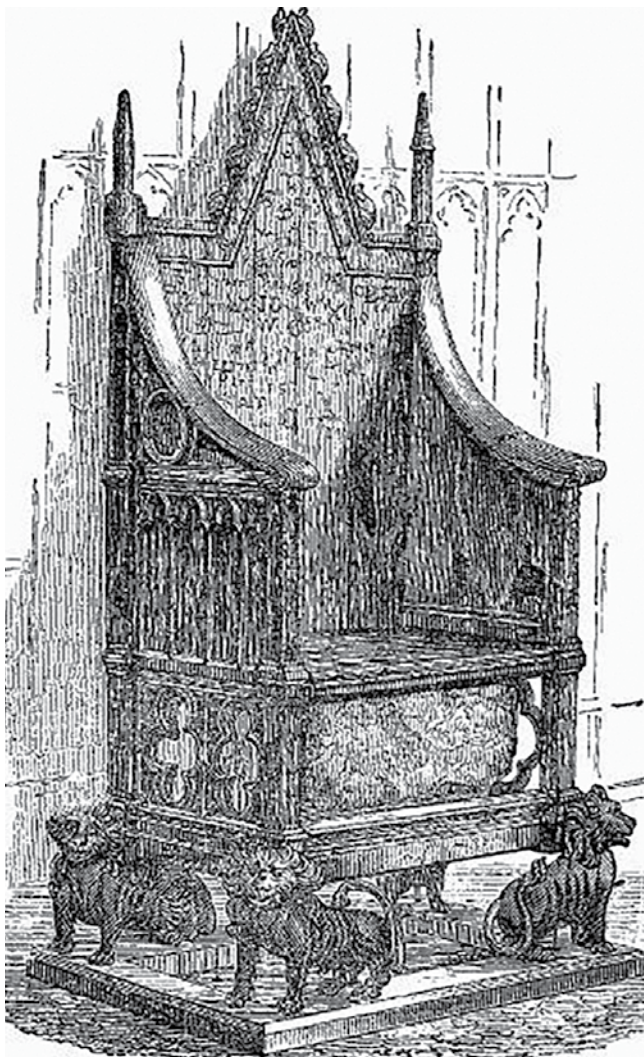
For the next clue to discovering what happened to these tribes and God’s promises, use 2 Samuel 7:10 to fill in the blanks: “Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may

dwelling in a place of their own, and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_....”

About 130 years after the kingdom of Israel was destroyed and the Assyrians took its people captive, the kingdom of Judah was destroyed and its people were taken captive. However, God saved the throne of David, which had ruled Judah. God used the Prophet Jeremiah to uproot and then plant the throne elsewhere (Jeremiah 1:10). This verse in 2 Samuel points to where God would plant the throne.

Jeremiah left the land of Judah. With him was a descendant of King David, named Tea-Tephi. God had promised King David that his dynasty would never end (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Even though the people of Judah had sinned and the kingdom had been destroyed, this princess, and David's throne, survived.

Therefore, wherever this throne was planted in the time of Jeremiah is where Israel would be located today.



Britain's coronation chair holds Jacob's pillar stone.

Why? Because God said that once they were planted in a place of their own, they would “move no more”!

Where did the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh go after Assyrian captivity? Where did Jeremiah take Tea-Tephi? Where were the descendants of Abraham and this throne “planted”?

The descendants of Ephraim and the other Israelite tribes were conquered and deported north and east to the Caspian Sea region. Where did they go after that?

Another clue is found in Hosea 12:1, which prophesied that Ephraim “followeth after the east wind.” An east wind blows east to west. So, over time, Ephraim and the other “lost 10 tribes” migrated *west* from the Caspian Sea region

But the Bible gets even more specific with a clue located in Psalm 89:25. There God prophesies that He will continue his ruling dynasty for eternity and promises, “I will set his hand also in the sea ...” “Hand” refers to David's throne. This shows that David's throne would be relocated to a place in the sea: an island.

Another clue is embedded in Jeremiah 3:11-12: “[B]acksliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the LORD ...” This gives us even further directional information as to where Israel would be located in the modern day. Anciently, the kingdom of Israel was north of the kingdom of Judah. God gave Jeremiah this charge over 130 years after the northern kingdom of Israel had been taken into captivity. And yet God still told Jeremiah to go to the north, with the purpose of delivering a message to Israel. There is a simple explanation. By this time, the nation of Israel had migrated even further north than its original territory. It was now in a new location that Jeremiah was told to go to.

In *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, Mr. Armstrong also used the ancient historical accounts of Ireland to aid in pinpointing where Jeremiah took the throne, and thus Israel's location. The history records that in 569 B.C. “an elderly, white-haired patriarch, sometimes referred to as a ‘saint,’ came to Ireland. With him was the princess daughter of an eastern king and a companion called ‘Simon Brach’ ....” This group of people lines up perfectly with the biblical account. When Jeremiah sailed from Jerusalem to Ireland, he brought with him Zedekiah's



The descendants of Ephraim became the British peoples.

daughter and his assistant, Baruch. Their final destination was the islands of the United Kingdom.

The clues in Hosea, Psalms and Jeremiah indicate that the Israelites would be located north and west of Jerusalem, and that David's throne would be re-established over Israelites living on an island. In *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, Mr. Armstrong wrote: "Israel of today—Israel of the day of Jeremiah's 'planting' of David's throne—is located specifically as northwest of Jerusalem and in the sea!"

Look at a world map. What islands are north and west of Jerusalem? The British Isles! God said, when referring to Ephraim, that "children shall tremble from the west" (Hosea 11:8, 10). Through the Prophet Isaiah, God said that Israel would come "from the

north and from the west" (Isaiah 49:12). At the start of that chapter, Isaiah addresses the people of Israel as "isles" (verse 1). There is abundant proof in the Bible as to where God relocated the tribes.

Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:22 stated that Ephraim would become a "fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." This symbolizes an empire that establishes colonies. The British Empire consisted of a *multitude* of nations, colonies and territories, including Australia, Canada, India, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Hong Kong and North America . It covered a quarter of the entire landmass of the Earth, including much of the most important, strategic and desirable farmland, trade routes, mountain passes and other "gates of his



The descendants of Manasseh became the nation of America.

enemies,” including important and strategic ports, canals, straits, capes and seaways (Genesis 22:17). It ruled a quarter of the entire population of the planet.

Even after the empire began to decline and many of its nations earned independence, about 50 of them voluntarily joined the Commonwealth of Nations to continue their relationship with Britain. Mr. Armstrong wrote that “the British Commonwealth of Nations is the *only* COMPANY OF NATIONS in all Earth’s history.”

Consider these scriptures, then look at a historical map of the British Empire, the largest and most powerful empire in the history of the world. You will be looking at the fulfillment of a 4,000-year-old prophecy made by God to Abraham and fulfilled in the descendants of Ephraim: the British Empire!

### **GREATEST SINGLE NATION**

God’s promises of national greatness started with one man, Abraham. They passed down through the birthright to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. The promises then went to Jacob’s son Joseph and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim became great first and became a company of nations. But Manasseh would also become great. In fact, his descendants would become the greatest single nation in history.

Look at world history, and you will see two nations standing out as the greatest powers, especially in modern times. One is the British Empire, the greatest empire or company of nations ever. The other is the United States of America, the most powerful and prosperous nation ever.



Immigrants arrive at Ellis Island in 1902.

The United States began as a colony of the British Empire, gaining independence in 1776. Over its history, many immigrants have settled in the U.S. It has become known as a “melting pot” of different peoples. God prophesied that the descendants of Israel would be sifted like grain “among all nations” (Amos 9:9). Most of Manasseh’s descendants came to Britain along with Ephraim, but some were scattered throughout other nations, then immigrated to America.

Manasseh was the 13th tribe of Israel. When America began, it did so with 13 colonies. God is very organized and often works in numbers to leave His mark on the history of mankind.

When considering the identity of these peoples, another fact must be observed: the actual time at which the blessings were given.

### **2,520 YEARS**

In Leviticus 26, God delivered a prophecy to Israel that applies to our day today. He said that if the Israelites obeyed Him, He would prosper their agriculture, protect them from war, and cause them to flourish abundantly. God was eager to grant these blessings; He loves to bless us. But there were requirements for the blessings to be given. The Israelites actions mattered.





God promised blessings to the descendants of Abraham, including abundant crops, sea lanes like the Strait of Gibraltar, and massive livestock herds.

If the Israelites refused to obey God, then terror would befall them (verse 16). “They would be,” as Mr. Armstrong wrote, “invaded, conquered, become once again slaves” (ibid). They would be cursed.

Time and again in history, the Israelites sinned. Time and again, God gave them an opportunity to repent. God is always patient with His people, but He expects change and obedience. In fact, God was patient with Israel for 390 years (Ezekiel 4:5). But because they continued to sin, God had to punish them.

For example, when the Israelites were traveling toward the Promised Land, they sinned against God. God punished them by causing them to wander in the desert for 40 years until the older generation died. He withheld the blessing of the Promised Land from them, but He still kept His promise and gave it to their children. This is very similar to what happened with the birthright blessings of national greatness promised to the tribes of Israel.

Notice what God says about this punishment: “And if you will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins” (Leviticus 26:18).

“Times” in the Bible refers to a year of 360 days. In God’s sacred calendar, the 12 months have an average of 30 days each, making every year 360 days (the original length of a year on Earth).

However, in this prophecy, God is using the day-for-a-year principle (Ezekiel 4:4-6). Israel would have its blessings withheld for 360 years times seven: 2,520 years!

When did that time period begin? For 390 years, from the time Israel rejected God as its king around 1100 B.C. to 721 B.C., God patiently worked with Israel to turn away from rebellion so that He could bless it with abundant national prosperity, but Israel refused. Then God sent the Assyrian Empire to punish His people. Assyria invaded Israel and conquered it from 721 B.C. to 718 B.C.

“Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight .... Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day” (2 Kings 17:18, 23). From that point forward, God no longer sent prophets to warn them. The defeat of Israel at the hand of Assyria began this punishment of “seven

times” discussed in Leviticus 26. The descendants of Israel had no chance to receive the abundant blessings promised to Abraham—for more than 2½ millennia.

## **BLESSINGS GIVEN, PROMISES KEPT**

By 718 B.C., Assyria had completely wiped out Israel. The 2,520 years of punishing Israel “seven times more” for its sins had begun. Count forward 2,520 years from 721 to 718 B.C., and you arrive at A.D. 1800 to 1803. What happened at this point in world history? A stunning new development.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was just beginning. The United States rapidly expanded in size. The U.S. purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. This purchase was America’s single biggest expansion in territory. It included the Mississippi Basin, acres and acres of farmland, rich mineral resources—all of these prime commodities were now under America’s control.

Two insignificant nations began to suddenly increase in power and wealth: the British Empire and the United States.

After delaying these blessings as punishment, God was now giving the blessings He had promised. The Americans and the British received unprecedented power and wealth not because they were better than anyone else but because God had made a promise to obedient Abraham. God always keeps His promises.

During the following two centuries, America and Britain gained nearly three fourths of all the world’s resources and wealth. All other nations, including the other tribes of Israel, possessed only one fourth. This was a magnificent time in world history!

Britain and the United States have been powerful forces in the world. They have spread education, Bible translations, culture, sanitation, health, humanitarian aid, development, wealth and civilization. They have promoted peace, won world wars, and suppressed oppression and terrorism.

## **WHY IMPORTANT?**

When looking through history, there is no denying that Britain and the United States have been a blessing to other nations and peoples.

Historians and everyday individuals can easily recognize how great these two nations became. Yet they miss the truth revealed in the Bible. They

miss the truth restored by Herbert W. Armstrong (Matthew 17:10-11). Yet you, as set apart and sanctified by God, can have the understanding that so many lack (1 Corinthians 7:14).

The most amazing aspect of Britain and America's greatness is that *God said* it would happen and *God made it happen!* God's prophecy was fulfilled. Follow the history, from Abraham through Ephraim and Manasseh all the way to the rise of the British Empire and the United States, and you are witnessing the power of God.

When God makes a promise, He keeps it! One of the greatest proofs that God exists is *revealed prophecy*. The power that Britain and America obtained is one of those fulfilled prophecies that points to the existence of God.

Just as God blessed Britain and America, so too will He bless you. How do you know? Because He promises to do so—just as He promised that two seemingly insignificant peoples would become the greatest empire and the greatest nation in the history of the world.

## WHO ARE THE 12 TRIBES TODAY?

Just as we can identify the identities of Ephraim and Manasseh, we can also accurately identify the modern-day descendants of the other “lost” tribes. Using the Bible and other secular evidence, these seemingly unidentifiable people are revealed in our day. Notice the complete list below:

1. **Reuben:** France
2. **Dan:** Ireland and Denmark
3. **Benjamin:** Norway and Iceland
4. **Zebulun:** The Netherlands
5. **Issachar:** Finland
6. **Gad:** Switzerland
7. **Asher:** Belgium and Luxembourg
8. **Naphtali:** Sweden

**Levi and Simeon:** Scattered among the other Israelite nations

**Judah, Benjamin and Levi:** The kingdom of Judah was comprised of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. The kingdom of Judah is separate from the kingdom of Israel. The small nation of Israel in the Middle East today is actually mostly the descendants of Judah.



# BIBLE MEMORY Tribes of Israel

Reuben  
Dan  
Zebulun  
Issachar  
Gad  
Asher  
Naphtali

Levi  
Simeon  
Judah  
Benjamin  
Ephraim  
Manasseh

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## Ephraim and Manasseh Word Search

J P M S Z E D E K I A H S E H Y Y G E C  
P E U K S I S K T C O H B A E J E H P O  
E R H N S E A I C N K V H C S M T D H N  
T N O L I U N A M J A U L I S L H G R C  
A H A P Z S P T H O Z L G R A Z E N A F  
E N R Y H T H H A T R D P E N H I F I I  
D C M O I E A M A E N P W M A H C E M S  
Y T W V N I C S E A R N L A M P J F N R  
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B T S E R Y Y G D M T G V K I E O V A E  
Y T R D R I N Z M S G N I S S E L B R L  
E E G I Z E J O S E P H G K W V X A U I  
J C A R R I C S H A L M A N E S E R C T  
B O Q X C J G F M A H A R B A B B R H E  
G Y L J H Y P Z L V H H L L V P B B A K

ABRAHAM  
AMERICA  
ASSYRIA  
BARUCH  
BLESSINGS  
CAPTIVITY

COMMONWEALTH  
ENGLAND  
EPHRAIM  
GREATNESS  
ISLAND  
ISRAELITE

JEREMIAH  
JOSEPH  
JUDAH  
MANASSEH  
PLANT  
PROMISE

PROPHECY  
PUNISHMENT  
SHALMANESER  
THRONE  
ZEDEKIAH