

Cimmerians, Scythians and the “Lost” Tribes of Israel—Part Three

Were the Cimmerians named for King Omri of ancient Israel? Did the Scythians get their name from Isaac? Are the Cimmerians and Scythians to be identified with the lost ten tribes of the house of Israel? Will the descendants of these ancient peoples play a role in future world events?

In bringing the good news of the kingdom of God to the people of Israel the apostles initiated the establishment of congregations within several of the regions where we would expect to find the displaced twelve tribes of Israel. And it is reasonable to expect that those same congregations would at times reflect the societal and cultural attributes acquired by the twelve tribes, which required the apostles to write admonishing letters to the church of God.

The Apostle John, for example, wrote to seven of the churches in western Asia Minor to address specific problems that had arisen within all the church congregations. And in doing so, John used words and expressions familiar to the history of ancient Israel.

Also, Paul, in writing to the congregations in Asia and in Greece, reminded the church of the promises made to Abraham, while explaining the covenantal responsibilities of the Commonwealth of Israel in regard to salvation for all of humanity. His letters were written to the Philippians, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and also to the Galatians, with the latter being in a region associated with those later called Gauls and Celts.

The Apostle Peter also wrote to church congregations in Asia Minor, sending them greetings from his son and the

congregations that then existed in Babylon, which gives us some insight into the extent of the apostles' mission to the twelve tribes of Israel (I Pt. 5:13).

So we may conclude then that the apostles' mission—as verified by their letters—confirmed the existence of the twelve tribes of Israel in the apostolic period, even though nearly 800 years had passed since the Assyrians initiated the diaspora of the Commonwealth of Israel. (The work of the apostles was nearly at its end by AD 70 when the Roman Empire crushed the remnant of the Commonwealth of Israel at Jerusalem.)

What then became of the twelve tribes of Israel?

To answer this question we need to understand what happened to the apostles in the 1st century AD.

They all died.

What remained were the individuals and congregations whose responsibility it was to uphold the teachings and agreements of the prophets and the apostles. And this responsibility was accomplished in part by the early preservation of the apostles' letters that became part of the scriptural record, wherein we also find the preserved messages of the prophets and their writings that would continue to uphold the promises made to the descendants of Abraham. (Scripture also contains the related message of the coming kingdom of God and the testimony of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.)

However, because of the church's inherent proclivity to evolve, the church began to cultivate diverse and questionable doctrinal interpretations. This understandably led to continuing conflicts and divisions within the church of God.

But why would this happen to the church?

It is simply because the church has always been—from the beginning—influenced by the societies and cultures of every

generation from which people have been called. Therefore the church's diversity, disunity and instability would naturally reflect the influence of the twelve tribes, who from their beginning as a commonwealth lacked unity and stability as a nation.

And being that the church was intended to be diverse spiritually from the beginning there has always been an expected disunity and instability within the church congregations, which makes it easy to see why Israel's journeys, their social and cultural changes, and their conflicts with other peoples in the diaspora—along with the evolving teachings of the church—continually muddled Israel's perspective of their origin and covenantal responsibilities, particularly so for some generations of the tribes of Israel.

Therefore any attempt to identify the twelve tribes as nation-states today would mean sifting through the bits of truth and embellishments acquired through oral traditions that are typically found in ancient annals and chronicles. And so it would not be unexpected to discover that the ancient lore of the present-day twelve tribes contains colorful and varied descriptions of a flood, of rebellious kings, of a tower reaching to heaven, and of men of valor performing feats of great strength. And within these histories and legends there would be the expected stories of heroes and patriarchs likened to those found in Scripture.

So with that being said, it should be understood that the ability to confirm the existence of the twelve tribes of Israel today is only possible by the evidence presented in Scripture. And based on that evidence it is reasonable to conclude that the twelve tribes are no longer in those lands associated with the Davidic Dynasty and the apostolic period, with the exception of those who currently represent a remnant of the tribe of Judah in the geopolitical region called Palestine.

This then would allow us the reasonable supposition that several of the twelve tribes as nation-states today would most probably be found—by reason of four notable empires—among nations formed from the later descendants of earlier Indo-European peoples.

So let's examine this further.

Now it is sometimes assumed that the "Table of Nations" is addressing three major racial distinctions and divisions that stemmed from the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen. 10).

This is not the case.

What is being presented by what is commonly called the Table of Nations is a limited geopolitical framework of the post-Flood ancient world that would inevitably shape some ancient and modern-day civilizations, implying that each of Noah's sons would assert themselves by creating world-ruling dynasties. And we can base this conclusion on what is stated about Japheth's descendants, which applies in principle to all of Noah's sons, who would be "divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Gen. 10:5).

Consequently, Japheth's sons and grandsons became fathers of families, and progenitors of nations and even world empires, which is what we discover from secular history.

And so from Japheth we have the Median Empire, the Persian Empire, the Greco-Macedonian Empire, and according to some historical accounts the Roman Empire, with its foundation grounded in Etruscan culture. These empires, along with the Assyrian Empire and the Neo-Babylonian Empire, dramatically shaped the boundaries, cultures, religions, societies and languages of many nations, including the twelve tribes of Israel. (The four empires symbolically represented in Nebuchadnezzar's vision were predominantly Central Asian,

Southwest Asian, Asian Turkey and Near Eastern.)

Therefore the influences of Japheth's descendants cannot be underestimated in regard to the spread of the Indo-European languages, and to the divisions of lands and peoples and nations in today's greater Europe, Central Asia and the Near East. And by consequence such influences would have certainly had impact on the cultural and linguistic development of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Japheth's fame among Indo-European peoples anciently afforded him worship among the Greeks as Iapetos or Iapetus and in Roman mythology as Jupiter.)

Now let's look again at the Table of Nations.

Here we learn that Japheth had seven sons: "Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras." He also had three grandsons by Gomer: "Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah" (Gen. 10:2-3).

The dynasties and families that came from these sons and grandsons of Japheth once formed a vast grouping of peoples who lived throughout Central Asia, across Asia Minor and into the lands of the Near East. And among these peoples were the descendants of Gomer and his son Ashkenaz who were the progenitors of the Cimmerians and Scythians respectively. (A confident etymological and philological association can be reasonably made with the Hebrew גֹּמֶר "Gomer," and the Greek Κιμμέριοι or Kimmerioi, and with the Hebrew אֲשְׁכֶנַז "ashk^enaz" or "Ashkenaz," and the Greek Ἀσκάνιος or Askanios.) [Author's emphasis throughout.]

Notably then it was Gomer's descendants who became the "Gimirri" of the Assyrian records, and who according to Herodotus came from a region north of Urartu (Ararat). The Scythians proper may have had their origin near ancient Magog and were called the "Asguzaai" or "Iskuzaai" (Persian, "Sakae") by the Assyrians. It was these Cimmerians and Scythians who—for a time—dominated much of Asia Minor.

(Sometimes the Cimmerians and Scythians were viewed as one and the same tribal grouping.)

So what did this mean for the Commonwealth of Israel?

Historically, after some years, the Assyrians subjugated the kingdom of Phrygia in Asia Minor, and they defeated King Rusa I and his Urartian army in c. 714 BCE, noting that the Cimmerians who had been migrating into Asia Minor are thought to have helped the Assyrians in their conquest of Urartu.

Then in the first half of the 7th century BCE the Cimmerians—in their continuing movements throughout Asia Minor—overcame the kingdom of Phrygia. And by some historical accounts the Cimmerians were driven into Urartu and further into Asia Minor by the Scythians, which account has some merit because a leader of the Asguzaai called Protothyas (the Scythian king Bartatua) had a son, the Scythian Madyes, who defeated the Cimmerians and drove them out of southern Urartu. This made the Scythians for a time the rulers of eastern Asia Minor. (Some historians propose that the Cimmerians also came into western Asia Minor through Thrace.)

And this had consequences for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Remember that the twelve tribes of Israel were sifted out and cast by the Assyrians and Babylonians into the sweeping geographic expanse of the developing Indo-European peoples in the regions of Mesopotamia, Central Asia and Asia Minor, which in the earlier years of Israel's captivity and sojourn were being overrun and populated by the Cimmerians and Scythians.

This situation continued with the rule of Cyrus the Great whose empire represented an extensive and conflict-filled confederation of related Japhetic peoples (II Chron. 36:23). Then following the Persian Empire came the Greco-Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great, which created a cultural influence that was felt as far away as the Indus River and

throughout the Middle East into North Africa. Later the breakup of Alexander's empire caused a constant source of troubles for the twelve tribes and for those who had long since returned to Jerusalem from the Exile.

Finally the Roman Empire dominated the Middle East and the lands where the twelve tribes had come to settle during the time of the apostles, with the result being the continuing blending of the histories of the twelve tribes with the histories of the developing Indo-European peoples, which in turn influenced Christianity's evolution—respective to the teachings of the prophets and the apostles—well beyond the period of the Roman Empire.

Consequently, this gives the historical impression that the twelve tribes of Israel became “lost” because they ceased to identify themselves with their covenantal responsibilities in regard to the promises given to Abraham.

Nevertheless we can with confidence acknowledge the current existence of the twelve tribes by the acceptance of the biblical record, but not the secular record. And by the acceptance of the biblical record we have confidence in accepting the relative present-day existence of those who are descended from the [Cimmerians and Scythians](#).

How is this so?

During the early years of Israel's captivity the prophet Ezekiel received a command from God to take a message to the people of Israel.

“And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them...” (Ezk. 2:3-4). And God told him to “go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell

them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ezk. 3:11).

So the prophet Ezekiel was sent to his own people who at that time did not have an unfamiliar language or form of speech that would have made it difficult for them to understand Ezekiel's warning message (Ezk. 3:6). And this situation gives us some additional insight into the challenges faced by the apostles who were commissioned to communicate the gospel of the kingdom of God to the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Because by the apostles' time the people of Israel would have been speaking several different languages and dialects, some noticeably unrelated to the predominant language of the early years of the commonwealth.

Consequently we have reason to understand what occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

As the apostles were meeting together there came a sound-like a rushing wind—and there appeared flame-like "cloven tongues," and so from that moment the apostles were given the skill of languages and related linguistic understanding that enabled them to fulfill their mission as instructed by Jesus (Acts 2:3-4). Because when those who were assembled heard them speak on that day, "they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:7-8.) (The miracle was not in the hearing, but in the speaking of languages and specific dialects relative to where some of the people were born.)

And as this happened on the Day of Pentecost, some of the descendants of Israel, particularly devout Jews, who were from Parthia, Medea, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, Rome, Crete and Arabia all witnessed the apostles speaking in their dialects "the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:9-11). And judging by the places wherein these

people were born, we can better understand the scope of the apostles' mission as they were to take the gospel message to the twelve tribes of Israel.

But let's review more about Ezekiel's prophecy.

Now the people of Israel would not have had trouble understanding Ezekiel's message, but it was peculiar that Ezekiel was speaking of a time of captivity to those who were already in captivity. But Ezekiel makes a distinction regarding this coming time of trouble because then the people of Israel "shall remember me [God] among the nations whither they shall be carried captives" (Ezk. 6: 9).

This was not the situation in the time of Ezekiel.

Now among the prophecies of Ezekiel we find that he gives warning messages regarding other nations and peoples because they come into conflict with the people of Israel. One such prophecy is directed to an apparent personage referred to as Gog.

There is much speculation about this individual, and also about when these events will occur in the future, because the context speaks of a time when the people of Israel have been "brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them" (Ezk. 38:8).

Some have concluded this to be a time early in the millennial reign of Jesus, but there is reason to consider that it is during the time of Satan's release following the millennial period.

So let's take a closer look at this prophecy.

There is a related prophecy in the book of Revelation that tells us that after a period of 1000 years Satan will be

released to influence the nations. He then brings a vast confederation—Gog and Magog—against the people of Israel. However this confederation will almost be completely destroyed by the intervention of God, who will at some time cast Satan into a lake of fire. (The consumption of the beast and false prophet by fire does not mean that they will be resurrected to receive this form of punishment and death, which can ultimately deny them and others a resurrection to eternal life.)

Then Ezekiel's prophecy states this about Gog and Magog: "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" (Ezk. 38:2-3). (See also Ezk. 39:1.)

One of the things we notice about Gog is that he is a future leader of peoples whose ancestors anciently formed nations and empires. And it also says of Gog: "Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?" (Ezk. 38:17.) (There is reason to accept that Gog also represents a particular group of people who are addressed as Gog.)

Such a statement would seem to indicate that Ezekiel's prophecy will be viewed in retrospect from a time when Israel dwells safely in the land. But it also indicates that other prophets had spoken of this individual and his people in other prophecies.

For example, the Apostle Paul spoke of an individual who may be likened to a former king of Tyre, who also may be likened to a king of the north and also to an ancient king of Babylon. Such typologies have no mythical or mysterious qualities as some try to grant them, but they do indicate that Satan's influence engenders such leaders, and it may be that

each reflects a relative typology to Nimrod, even though the description apparently refers directly to Satan (Gen. 10:9; Ezk. 27; II Thes. 2:4).

So it would not be unexpected if this Gog reflects a similar typology to those individuals noted in other prophecies as they may all be understood in a context provided by the Apostle John: “And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon” (Rev. 9:11). (See also Isa. 14; Ezk. 28; and Dan. 11:40.)

This leads us to think that Ezekiel’s prophecy would be fulfilled after the millennial period because Ezekiel also writes: “Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee” (Ezk. 38:9). (See also Rev. 20:8-9.)

These “bands” and “many people” are stated to be from the regions of Persia, Ethiopia (Cush), Libya (Phut), Gomer, and Togarmah, with perhaps some alliances to Sheba, Dedan and even Tarshish. And among those of this confederation are: “Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee” (Ezk. 38:6).

This of course would mean that Scripture not only confirms that the twelve tribes exist today as nation-states, but it also acknowledges that the descendants of the Cimmerians—the descendants of Gomer—are likely to be found within modern-day nation-states today, and by a familial reckoning we might well include the Scythians along with several other descendants of Japheth. (It is thought by some that the people of modern-day Turkey—as descendants of Turcoman tribes—have an ancestry in Togarmah.)

Now from the biblical perspective we may conclude that the

role of the Commonwealth of Israel, respective to the promises given to Abraham, gives us a larger geopolitical view of what was destined for the descendants of Noah because at the beginning of the post-Flood world we find that Noah's three sons continued on a course of world dominance until their collective purpose was thwarted at the Tower of Babel. (Several of the world's greatest conflicts recorded in history have revolved around the descendants of Noah.)

Fortunately for this world a hope was provided from the beginning of creation in that God would have a son, Jesus, born in the family line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who would prevail over Satan and be qualified by God to rule this world, bringing about a lasting peace among all the nations as a result of the establishment of the kingdom of God (Mt. 4:3).



(andrewburdettewrites.com) (Final in the series.)

See: [Resources & Notes](#)

Also see: [Cimmerians, Scythians and the "Lost" Tribes of Israel-Part One](#)