

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-10104

Two Distinct Prophetic Histories

August 26, 2010

The last issue referenced the breach between the house of Judah and the house of Israel that came about after Solomon's death. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with most of the Levites, formed the southern kingdom centered in **Jerusalem**. This was **the kingdom of Judah**. The other ten tribes formed the northern kingdom centered in **Samaria**. This was **the kingdom of Israel**. The sons of Joseph were blessed by Jacob-Israel with the name *Israel*, given to Jacob by the Lord at Peniel and Bethel. This is explained in issue #04-10102, August 24, 2010, *Israel Shall Be Your Name*.

Judah received the scepter, prophesying of Christ's first coming to take the scepter as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that is, the King of Judah, and Joseph and his sons received the birthright and the name *Israel*, prophesying of Christ's second coming to receive His kingdom of conquering sons, the true spiritual Israel.

Now, as long as the tribes were identified with Ephraim or Manasseh, they could take the name *Israel*. Technically, Ephraim, the younger of the two, was placed before Manasseh (Genesis 48:20), and the name *Ephraim* became synonymous with the name *Israel*. Obviously, since Judah was the predominant tribe for the southern kingdom, they took the name *Judah*.

This is a very important distinction when it comes to prophetic history. This distinction was made by the prophets that came along after the split. Generally, they used the names *Judah* and *Israel* to refer to each respective kingdom. Thus, when the prophets referred to **Judah**, they meant the **southern kingdom**, and when they referred to **Israel**, they meant the **northern kingdom**. Of course, there are some exceptions to this, so it is always best to consider the context.

To illustrate the distinction, let us consider the prophecies of Jeremiah who was in the midst of the house of Judah as it was about to be taken captive and deported to Babylon. He was the prophet for Judah; nevertheless, he also prophesied over Israel as a distinct house.

(6) Then the LORD said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there. (7) I thought, 'After she has done all these things she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. (8) And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also. (9) Because of the lightness of her harlotry, she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. (10) Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception," declares the LORD. (11) And the LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel has proved herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. (12) Go and proclaim these words toward the north and say, 'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD; 'I will not look upon you in anger. For I am gracious,' declares the LORD; 'I will not be angry forever. (13) Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God and have scattered your favors to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,' declares the LORD. (14) 'Return, O faithless sons,' declares the LORD; 'For I am a master to you, and I will take you one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.'" (Jeremiah 3:6-14 NASB)

Metaphorically speaking, Israel and Judah were referred to as sisters, both of whom were in trouble with the Lord, one more so than the other. The Lord acknowledged that He was married to Israel, but He gave her a writ of divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1).

The fact of the matter is that He sent her out of His house (Hosea 9:15) when He called for her deportation to the land of Assyria, beginning in 745 BC and leading to the destruction of her capital city Samaria in 721 BC. It was at this time that she lost her national identity as Israel and became known as the lost sheep of the house of Israel; not in the sense of loss of eternal salvation but in the sense of loss of national identity. In other words, the loss occurred as a result of a name change. Simply, she ceased being a united nation that stood on her own, for she was scattered to the nations where she assumed other names, such as Omri, Ghomri, Gimirri, Saka, Scots, Saxons, Celts, Caucasians, and Welsh.

Later, the Lord spoke another word through Jeremiah about the house of Israel. Again, it is clear that the following was directed to the house of Israel, not to the house of Judah.

(1) The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, (2) “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will announce My words to you.” (3) Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. (4) But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. (5) Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, (6) “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. (7) At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; (8) if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. (9) Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; (10) if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it. (Jeremiah 18:1-10 NASB)

The house of Israel was described as a vessel of clay that was being formed by the potter. When he saw that it was spoiled while it was still wet clay, meaning it had not been fired to harden it, he reformed it.

This is not only a prophecy revealing judgment of the house of Israel but also its restoration many years hence, which is confirmed by the prophecies of Hosea and others. Although God divorced Himself from Israel, it is clear that He will marry her once again. By the way, Hosea made the distinction between the two houses (e.g., Hosea 1:11; 4:15; 6:10-11; 11:12).

In the sight of the Lord, Israel was faithless, but she also proved to be more righteous than her sister Judah. Israel made no pretense about her faithlessness; however, Judah pretended to return to the Lord with all her heart. She tried to deceive the Lord by giving Him lip service. Thus the indictment: **“Faithless Israel has proved herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.”**

With this judgment in mind, Jeremiah prophesied that the house of Judah, specifically the people and the city Jerusalem, were not likened to wet clay that will be remolded but to a hardened jar that will be broken, never to be repaired. Consequently, the destiny of Jerusalem is not very encouraging.

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial.” (Jeremiah 19:11 NASB)

Its final judgment is Topheth, which is the judgment of *gehenna fire* or destruction (not torture in a place called *hell*). Based on Jeremiah, the modern, rebuilt city of Jerusalem in the heart of the ancient land of Israel has a destiny with destruction. Some believe this will come through a nuclear bomb. As Paul said, the present Jerusalem, allegorized as Hagar and her son Ishmael, must be cast out (Galatians 4:22-31). I believe one of the reasons is discovered in a law given through Moses that requires an idolatrous city to be ruined forever and never to be rebuilt (Deuteronomy 13:12-16). We could call this **the law of the idolatrous or harlot city**. Jerusalem stands today in order for prophecy to be fulfilled and for God’s just law to be upheld. After all, the **present Jerusalem**, called **the great city**, is likened to **Sodom** and linked to the **harlot city** called **Mystery Babylon, the great city** (Revelation 11:8; 16:19; 17:5, 18). The present Jerusalem must fall so that **New Jerusalem** is all that remains.