

What's In A Name?

by **Richard T. Ritenbaugh**

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After reading several books on prophecy written by evangelicals, it became evident that they are missing the key that unlocks understanding of biblical prophecy. Many of them see a Beast rising in Europe in tandem with a "revived" church. Others understand the 200 million-man army from the east being a confederation of Asian nations. A few seem to stumble onto the correct timing of events, as far as we know.

What do they lack? The knowledge of the identity of Israel!

They assume Israel is composed only of the Jews, living in Palestine and scattered across the globe. It never seems to occur to them that, though they consider the Ten Tribes "lost," God knows exactly where they are! And surely He would not leave the bulk of His chosen people out of prophecy for the "last days."

But God has revealed to us the knowledge of their whereabouts. The Ten Tribes, after their captivity in Assyria, migrated to their present location in northwestern Europe. Joseph, prophesied to be a colonizing people (Genesis 49:22-26), can be found in the British Commonwealth (Ephraim) and the United States (Manasseh).

Yet, often in our reading and studying of the prophetic books, we get confused about what nations God is speaking. Important to our understanding of prophecy is identifying the subject(s) of the message.

For instance, Micah says that his prophecy concerns both Samaria and Jerusalem (Micah 1:1). As the respective capitals of Israel and Judah, these cities represent their nations (Isaiah 7:8-9). Most of Micah's prophecy deals with both nations, meaning all twelve tribes of Israel, yet he often speaks to them individually, so a careful reading of the context is necessary.

In Micah 1:5, the prophet uses the term "Jacob." Hebrew writers often used parallel phrases to restate and develop their message. "All this is for the transgression of Jacob" parallels "and for the sins of the house of Israel." Therefore, "Jacob" and "Israel" name the same people, the northern Ten Tribes. A similar construct can be seen in Micah 2:12 and 3:1, 8.

Another term used by the prophets is "Ephraim." When Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, he said, "Let my name be named upon them" (Genesis 48:16). "Ephraim," then, also parallels "Jacob" and "Israel" (Hosea 6:10), as do "Joseph" (Obadiah 17-18), "Jeshurun" (Deuteronomy 32:15) and "Oholah" (Ezekiel 23:4).

"Judah" is often opposed to "Israel" (Hosea 11:12), which indicates that the prophecy should be applied separately to the Jews. Other words used to name Judah are "Ariel" (Isaiah 29:1), "tabernacle of David" (Amos 9:11), "Oholibah" (Ezekiel 23:4) and "Zion" (Isaiah 1:8).

"Zion," however, may stand for Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9), the church (Isaiah 40:9) or both (Zechariah 1:17)! At other times, a prophecy written to an ancient people (the antitype) will also

apply to a modern people (the type), so great care needs to be taken when assigning prophecies to particular peoples. As in all cases of trying to understand the Bible, read the prophecy in its context to determine its subject, time frame and purpose.

Because they cannot identify the subjects of most of the prophecy of the Bible, Protestant authors fail to see the true reason the U.S. and Britain are rapidly collapsing under their sin. Without this key, the present freakish weather patterns are unexplainable. Nor can they see that God will again use "the rod of [His] anger" (Isaiah 10:5) to punish these nations.

Using this major principle of identifying the subject of the prophecy should help increase our understanding as we watch world events fulfill God's Word.