

Who's Who in Prophecy #2

by: Ronald L. Dart

It's too bad that more people don't read the Old Testament prophets. I know, they can be a little hard to follow at times, most of them are poets and they use a lot of imagery. But it is a little disconcerting when you muddle through some of the passages that seem to be ancient history, and then suddenly find the prophet talking about the last days of man, the end of history and the prophets are telling someone at the end of time that God is not amused with their behavior and all hell is about to come down on their heads.

Wouldn't you like to know who He's talking about just in case it happens to be you?

Where is the United States Mentioned in Bible Prophecy?

In the last article, I asked a couple of important questions. When you read the Old Testament prophets, you can get the impression that the only nations that matter at all are a tight little knot of people down in the Middle East. With the entire world in conflict, there is no mention of the most powerful forces in the world in our day. It is as though the entire English-speaking people of the English-speaking world doesn't exist. There's something wrong with this picture. Preachers have tried to resolve it in different ways. Some argue that the Old Testament is entirely irrelevant. It's hard to come away from a reading of the prophets with that conviction.

Others have argued that the United States and the British Commonwealth are the latter-day descendants of the ancient House of Israel, and that in the principle of type and antitype, the things that happen to Israel in the old days are going to happen to us, and God is just as angry with us as He was with them at that time.

Bible Identifies Nations Prophetically in at Least Five Different Ways

Now I have made the point so far, that the Bible identifies nations prophetically in at least five different ways and I have named four of them. God identifies them geographically, as when He says, the land of Egypt. He identifies them ethnically, as when He says, the children of Ammon or the children of Israel. He identifies them typologically, that is in the principle of type and antitype, or pattern and later pattern, things that God described in the past, you go looking for the pattern at the end time and the people that fulfill that pattern are the people that God is talking about. Fourth, He identifies them politically. And by that it means governmentally, who's in charge here?

Old Testament History

The fourth way of identifying people, is politically, it is often overlooked. It is surprising how many people who are quite knowledgeable about the New Testament know very little Old Testament history and without that history, understanding the Old Testament prophets is impossible. You will never get it.

After the death of Solomon, Israel divided into two political entities called the House of Israel and the House of Judah. All those people who lived under the government of the House of Judah came to be called Jews, whether they were of the tribe of Judah or not, and there were people living down there, at the time Judah went into captivity, who were Ephraimites, Manassites, of the tribes Zebulun, they were from all over Israel because many of them fled there as refugees when the ten northern tribes went into captivity, but all those people were a part of the House of Judah and prophecies that have to do with the House of Judah had to do with all of them whether they are ethnic Jews or whether they are not. That's what I mean by identifying people politically.

Now there were a lot of refugees, as I said, from the ten northern tribes that were in the House of Judah when they went into captivity and therefore, there were a lot of those, from the ten northern tribes represented when Israel came back out of captivity. A lot of people assume that the Israelites that came out of captivity were all that was left of Israel but we saw last time that was not true. The people who came out of captivity were of the House of Judah, but the House of Israel, it was still scattered among the heathen at that time.

Could The United States Be Israelitish?

One of the objections to the idea that the United States could be Israelite is that we are such a melting pot. When people say what do you mean we can be Israelites, after all, we are Germans, we are Italians, we are French, we are Irish, we are everything under the sun? How could we possibly be called Israel?

Well, actually, a Gentile living in the House of Israel in the old days, according to the law, was to be treated and to behave as one born in the land. In other words, he was a citizen of the House of Israel and therefore prophecies dealing with the House of Israel dealt with him whether he was an ethnic Israelite or not. God did not recognize their ethnic divisions in the land. They were all under one government and that government was Israelitish. There were two of them, in fact, the House of Judah and the House of Israel and anybody living in those two countries were deemed to be citizens of those two countries.

If in the latter days, a people were to live under a governmental system that was primarily Israel, they could be a melting pot and still be the House of Israel. Now understand I'm not drawing a conclusion, what I am doing here is stating possibilities.

Understand that for such a situation to exist, God would have to have brought it about miraculously. It would never happen that way naturally. The argument is, that God has

brought it about in order to fulfill some very old promises made to Abraham and to the prophets.

I have nothing in print on this subject but if you write or call I will tell you where you can get some free material covering the British Israel viewpoint on prophecy.

How Does God Identify The Nations?

So when you're reading the prophets, you have to ask yourself, how is God identifying the nations your reading about? Is He speaking geographically as He is when He says the land of Egypt shall not escape? Is He speaking ethnically, as when He speaks of the children of Israel? Is He speaking typologically as identifying nations that fit the pattern that He is describing, if they look like a duck and walk like a duck and quack like a duck, maybe they are a duck. Is He speaking politically or governmentally, identifying nations by their governmental structure.

Why Prophecy?

Now I am sorry to say, it's very difficult to be certain in many cases because there simply is not enough data and God may very well intend it to be so. Why? Because prophecy is not given to satisfy our curiosity about the future, it is given so we will understand the future as it happens, so that we will see God's hand in the events that take place, and as a warning for us to change our ways, to avoid the dire prophecies that are given. And that works no matter who you think God is talking to.

I have given you four ways that God might identify nations in the last days. There is a fifth.

Fifth Way That God Identifies Nations At The End Time Is Religiously

The fifth way that God might identify nations at the end time is religiously, that is, by their religion, or if you prefer, the dominant spirit of a country. Consider this short passage from Jeremiah for what it reveals. Let's begin in verse 4 of Jeremiah 2, "Hear the word of the Lord, O House of Jacob and all the families of Israel." This is addressed to them governmentally, the House of Jacob, and to every family. {5} "Thus saith the Lord, what iniquity have your father's found in me that they have gone far from me and walked after vanity and become vain?" God is speaking and obviously is using irony, and He says, "What have I done wrong?"

Verse 6, "Neither said they, "Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, and led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, through a land of drought, in the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through and no man dwelt." Where is God? He brought us through all of that. Why isn't He still with us?

God says, in verse 7, "I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, the goodness thereof, but when you entered it, you defiled my land, you made my heritage an

abomination. {8} The priests didn't say, Where is the LORD? And they that handle the law did not know me. The pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." You went after everybody under the sun except Me.

Does a Nation Change Its gods?

Let's continue in Jeremiah 2 verse 9, "So I am going to plead with you," said the LORD, "and with your children's children, your grandchildren, will I plead. I'm am going to plead with you down through the generations. {10} Pass over the isles, look over to other nations, look diligently to see if you can find such a thing as this. {11} Has a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit." It seems astonishing to say, but God is here arguing that in the main, nations do not abandon their gods. Their religions follow them wherever they go. They carry their gods with them when they move. Even gods that are no gods, and so when they migrated into a foreign territory, they packed up their gods and they took them with them. And there may be even more than that at work.

There may be reason to believe that there is a connection between the gods of a nation, and the spirit world. Now I know that that sounds a little bit far-fetched, but there's a fascinating aside in the book of Daniel and it is very revealing of something we would like to know more about if we only could.

Daniel and The Spirit World

Daniel had been praying for days and finally an angel came into his presence. It nearly frightened Daniel to death when it came, but it came. You will find the story beginning in Daniel 10 verse four, "In the twenty-fourth year of the first month, as I was by the great River Hiddekel, {5} I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold, {6} His body was like beryl, his face was like the appearance of lightning, and his eyes like lamps of fire, his arms and his feet were like polished brass, and the voice of his words were like the voice of a multitude." This was some incredible being that had come into his presence.

Verse 7, "I, Daniel, alone saw the vision. There were men with me, but they didn't see it. A great quaking fell on them so they fled away to hide themselves. {8} I was left alone. I saw this great vision and there was no more strength in me, my comeliness was turned into corruption, I didn't have any strength, it just drained out of me. And I hit the ground on my face {10} and behold, a hand touched me and set me on my knees and the palms of my hands, I was on all fours. {11} And he said this, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, stand up, for unto you I am now sent." So Daniel stood and said to himself, "I stood trembling." {12} He said to me, "Don't be afraid, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, to chasten yourself before God, your words were heard, and

I am come for your words." I don't know if Daniel had time to think to ask, "Where have you been for the last three weeks? Because he started praying about this three weeks ago.

The angel continues, {13} "The Prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for 21 days." Now you have to think about this for a minute. This is a great angelic being in which Daniel turned to jelly and this great angelic being was withstood by somebody for 21 days, for three solid weeks, he had to fight. "But lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there fighting with the kings of Persia." They had a giant battle going on out there in the spirit world, which was preventing this angel, Gabriel, probably, from getting to Daniel with the message. This is really strange to think about and maybe as watching Star Wars, we can imagine two great beings with light sabers, or something like that, clashing out there, fighting back and forth, but they actually battled over the territory.

Why were they trying to get into Persia? Well, that is where Daniel was. He was in captivity among the Babylonians. He was within the realm of the Prince of Persia and he didn't want him coming in.

The angel spoke to Daniel, verse 14, "Now I'm come to make you understand what shall befall your people in the latter days, for this vision is for many days." This thing is a long way off that you are inquiring into, the angel said to him. Now this was apparently Gabriel, who came to Daniel and completely apart from the point of the visit, he reveals the spirit world with territories, with wars, with battles. It's astonishing to think that the Prince of Persia was able to hold off Gabriel for three weeks until Michael had to come along and join him.

As you read on, Michael comes and engages the Prince of Persia, while Gabriel comes on through to deliver the message to Daniel. After the message is delivered, the angel has a little more to say about this battle and it also is revealing.

Let's continue in Daniel 10 verse 20, "Then he (Gabriel) said, "Do you know why I have come to you?" You got it now. You have the purpose. "Now I'm going to return to fight with the Prince of Persia. And when I have gone forth, the Prince of Grecia is going to come." Good grief, Michael was back there fighting with the Prince of Persia and Gabriel is going to go back and join him, but he knows about the time he gets there, the Prince of Grecia is going to show up so we will have four of these great angelic beings fighting it out there.

"He said, "I just want you to know, {21} I show you what's noted in the Scripture of truth, and there's nobody that holds with me in these things, but Michael your prince. We are the only ones out there fighting this battle against these other spirits"". It's amazing. It's hair-raising stuff actually when you think about it. I visualize a Star Wars type of scenario with powerful spirit beings defending their territories with light sabers battling back and forth, and probably it's nothing like that, but apparently they have territory. They guard the borders and Daniel was held captive in the territory of the Prince of Persia.

These princes exist in another dimension, parallel to our own, if I may borrow terms from science fiction. They are powerful spirits and they probably have a lot to do with the underlying religion of the lands they dominate.

Michael Your Prince and the Abomination of Desolation

One striking thing about this passage is a remark about Michael your prince. Why was Michael concerned? Well, later in Daniel, we find out more about him. In Daniel 11 verse 40, we read this, "At the time of the end shall the King of the South push at him and the King of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen and many ships, he shall enter into the countries and overflow and pass over. {41} He shall also enter the glorious land, many countries shall be overthrown, but these shall escape out of his hand, Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." Now remember, Jesus warned at the very end, we would see Jerusalem encompassed about with armies. This is probably that very same event. When the King of the North comes rolling in, surrounds Jerusalem and goes all the way to the border and beyond the border of Egypt.

Now verse 42 of Daniel 11, "He shall stretch forth his hand upon the countries, the land of Egypt shall not escape. {43} He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, over all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." He will have enormous economic power. {44} "But tidings out of the East and the North shall trouble him, therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly annihilate many. {45} He shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain and he shall come to his end, and no one will help him."

Now this almost has to be a reference to what Jesus talked about in the Olivet prophecy in Matthew 24 verse 15, when he said this, "When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads this, let them understand), {16} Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Jesus spoke of a time when Jerusalem would be encompassed with armies and Jerusalem would fall. He warned people that as they saw it coming to get out of there and He spoke again of the 'abomination of desolation' which had been set up before and is going to be set up again at the very end time. And sure enough, Daniel looks at the same time.

Then continuing in Daniel 12 verse one, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which stands for the children of your people." Michael is the Prince that stands for the children of Israel. "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation to that same time." This is the great tribulation! "And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone found written in the book. {2} And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt. {3} And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever." Now does it take a lot of knowledge of the Bible to figure out that we finally found that this is talking about the last days, the end time, the return of Christ and the resurrection from the dead?

There was, and surely still is, a Prince of Persia and a Prince of Grecia and a Prince of Israel and for all we know, God identifies these people by the Prince that governs them and they may well be known by their religion. For their gods may change their names, but their character remains the same, the spirit that dominates remains the same and the old gods of Persia made their way from Babylon to Greece to Rome. Complicated? Oh yes, to be sure, it's very complicated, but it's also very believable. So where's Michael now?

Where Is Michael Now?

So where on the face of the earth, now, is the influence of Archangel Michael? In the book of Galatians Paul identifies Christians as the Israel of God. It is plain enough that the New Testament writers thought of the Christian people as Israel, at least as a metaphor. It did not make any difference whether they were Gentile or not, if they were in Christ, they were the children of Abraham and they were heirs according to the promise. They were spiritually speaking: Israel.

Christendom

There's a term that is fallen into disuse, but used to be very important. The word is Christendom. Look it up in a dictionary. The word means, that part of the world where Christianity prevails. Christendom, and whether some people are comfortable with it or not, Christianity prevailed in the founding of this nation. The first great document of our founding, by the founding fathers, who signed their names to it and pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to it, said this: "We do hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." They recognized that men were created, not evolved. They recognized that they were endowed with the rights that we hold dear by their Creator not by someone else, not by another nation, nor by any body of people.

We hold our rights at the sufferance of God, and we see the world today divided into parts, based on who is the god they serve. There is the Judeo-Christian world, the Muslim world and the Asian religions and the gods they serve. If you take as a theory that the Judeo-Christian world is the Israel of the last days and you settle in to read the prophets, I think it may set your hair on end.

Prophets Also Had Good News

I could turn to many places in the prophets where there is bad news, where the description of the sins of the people of that time are such a close match to the sins of all nations right here, right now. That's enough to frighten you. When you see what God thinks about it and what God promises He's going to do about it.

But the prophets also have good news. They also have good things to say about the time of the end, and that is worth looking at as well.

Jeremiah chapter 33 verse 12, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, "Again in this place, which is desolate without man without beast, and in all the cities thereof, there shall be a habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down. {13} In the cities of the mountains, and the cities of the vale, the cities of the South and the land of Benjamin and all around Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hand of him that counts them," says the Lord."

Now listen to this in verse 14, "Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the House of Israel and the House of Judah." Still all the way down to the last days when God is finally going to bring peace on earth, He recognizes that a distinction exists between the House of Israel and the House of Judah, politically, governmentally, two separate entities.

Verse 15, "In those days, at that time, I will cause the Branch of righteousness (Jesus Christ) to sprout up unto David, he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. {16} In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. This is the name whereby she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness." In those days shall Judah be saved and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. We are not there yet! But these things will come at sometime in the future.

A New Covenant

Jeremiah 31, "Behold, the days come," verse 27, "the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the House of Israel and the House of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast." There is going to be a lot of people here. {28} "It shall come to pass, that as I watched over them to pluck up, break down, throw down, destroy and afflict, so I will watch over them to build, to plant, saith the LORD. {29} In those days they shall no longer say, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." You know, we are suffering for the sins of our fathers, NO, NO, NO, everyone will be responsible for his own iniquity.

"Behold," verse 31, "The days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah. {32} It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, they broke that covenant. Though I was good to them. {33} This shall be the covenant I will make with the House of Israel."

Notice, this a covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, it's a new covenant. When you go to the book of Hebrews, in the New Testament, you will find these same words cited, as a yet future covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, two distinct political entities.

What is this covenant going to be? Continuing in verse 33, "The Lord says this, "I will put my law in their minds and I will write it in their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my

people." He's not doing away with the law. He is not throwing the law out. What He is doing is moving the law from tables of stone into the hearts of men.

Verse 34, "They will no longer teach every man his neighbor, saying, "Know the LORD."" They don't have to do that, "For everyone will know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," saith the Lord. "I will forgive their iniquity. I will remember their sin no more.""

Where Is the House of Israel?

Now you have to realize that when you sit down to read the prophets and you find yourself wondering, you square into one of these instances that talk about the last days and you find the House of Israel and the House of Judah looked at as two separate and distinct entities, you have to wonder, "Where is the House of Israel? How can I find them?" And as I said, there are many ways, at least five, that God sometimes identifies nations in prophecy, it doesn't always work exactly like you and I might think it would.

I read the Old Testament prophets with a heavy heart and with hope because in fact the Old Testament prophets speak to our generation about our sins, where they are leading us, where they are taking us and where are are going to end up, but they also tell us there's hope, for Christ is coming again. He is going to establish God's kingdom and all this will pass.

Is our nation a part of Christendom? Maybe you have forgotten one of the later versus of the "Star-Spangled Banner." It goes like this,

"Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand, Between their loved home and the war's desolation! Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation. Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: "In God is our trust. And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

Sometimes I wonder, how much the world knows what it owes to the land of the free and the home of the brave?

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