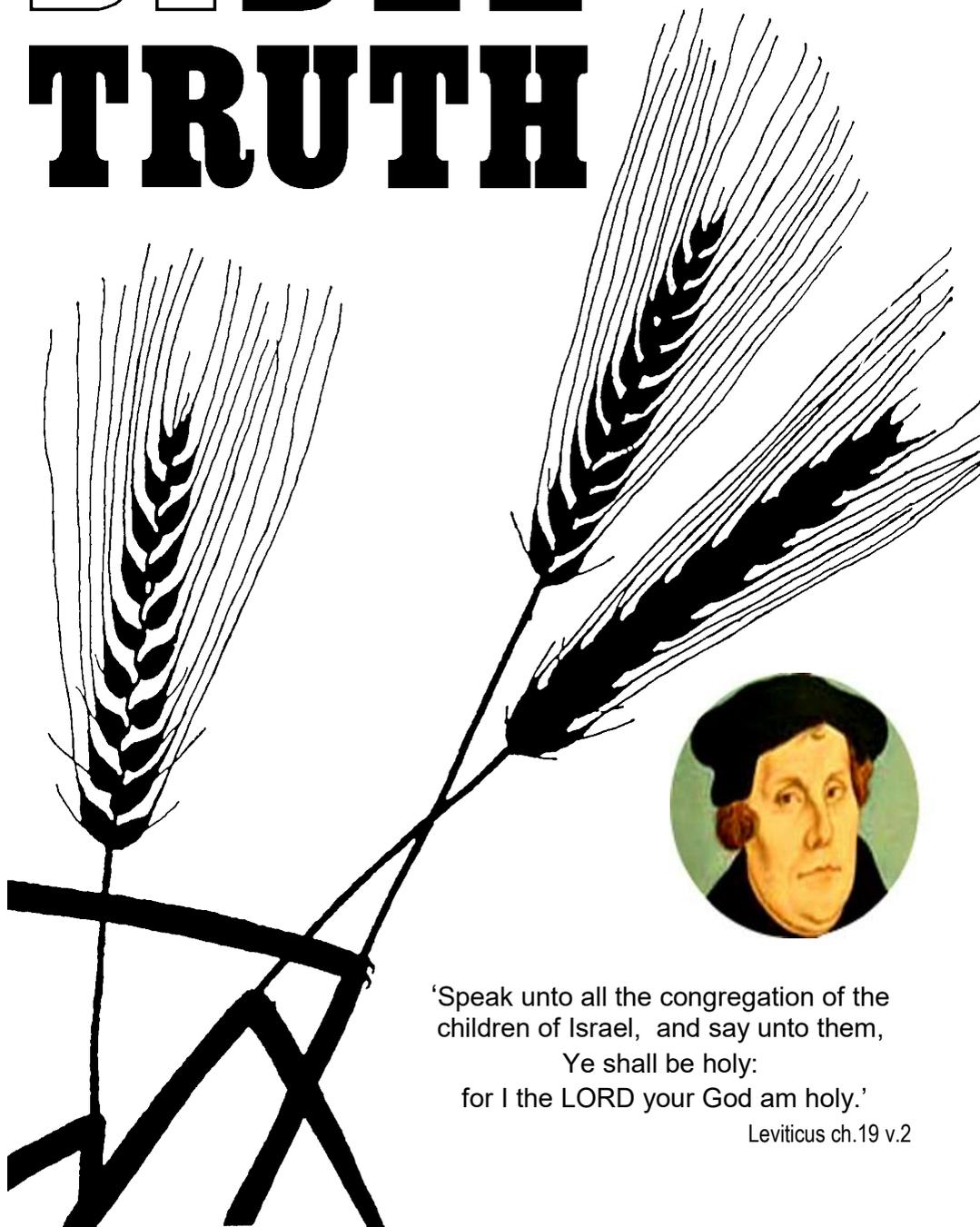


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 287
July/September 2017



'Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.'

Leviticus ch.19 v.2

A Place For Israel in The Dividing of the Nations

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When discussing in public the Israelite ancestry of European peoples, we are often confronted with an assertion that all of Europe, including the British Isles, was already populated by non-Semitic peoples long before the dispersion of the House of Israel in the early pre-Christian centuries. Some disputants even bring up the subject of Cro-Magnon men who roamed ancient Europe supposedly millions of years ago. Historians are now convinced that these ancient men (pre-humans?) died out before meeting or intermingling with any of the ancestors of today's European peoples. Yet the claim is still often made that all of Europe was densely crowded with a multitude of people and cities thousands of years ago. Was that really the case? The Biblical statement that Israel's lost tribes escaped from their Mid-east bondage and went to a land 'where never mankind dwelt' (*Apocrypha*, 2 Esdras

ch.13 vv 40-45) would then appear to eliminate Europe from consideration. At least ten Hebrew tribes (and portions of the other two) did not return to Palestine after the captivities and were not a part of the Jewish nation at the time of Christ. Where did they go?

This conundrum caused numerous writers of past centuries to assume that these lost tribes migrated to the unsettled forests and valleys of the North American continent, and that the American Indians were their descendants. Authors such as Evan Smith, in his *View Of The Hebrews*, 1825, tried to find cultural or language connections between American Indian tribes and the Biblical Hebrews. Even the Mormon Church, a large Christian denomination, still teaches that the lost tribes of Israel came to early America. Years ago, when reading through a number of old books that made the Hebrew-Indian claim, I was saddened by the obvious lack of truthfulness in dealing with the Biblical promises. For example, were the American Indians the 'chief of the nations', or fulfilling the role of 'God's Battle Axe', or were they 'as the stars of heaven for multitude' (see Amos ch.6 v.1, Jeremiah chs 31 v.7 & 51 v.20, Genesis chs 15 v.5 & 22 v.17)? Of course not, but the people of Europe and their world-wide descendants were, and are!

The answer to this riddle is quite clear, although little-known and seldom discussed in mainstream historical works. European scholars have documented that a tremendous and unexpected population die-off, a wave of death in the early pre-Christian centuries, swept across the entire European continent, from the British Isles clear across to the borders of Asia. The reasons are not known, but much of early Europe was depopulated, leaving large areas vacant and open to new settlement.

Professor Bruce Kraig of Roosevelt University, in the *Journal of Indo-European Studies (JIES)* (vol. 9, no's. 1 & 2, 1981) wrote that,

'... severe population decline somewhere from the middle to later 4th millennium BC seems to have been a pan-European phenomenon'.

p.59, n.1

Dr D. Brothwell of Leicester University, in *Diet, Economy and Biosocial Change In Late Prehistoric Europe*, 1971 suggested that imprudent land use may have caused widespread starvation. Professor Marija Gimbutas, professor of European archaeology at University of California, wondered if a massive invasion caused the widespread death toll (*The First Wave of European Steppe*

Pastoralists Into Copper Age Europe, JIES 5:277-338, 1977). Yet the extensive scale of the human devastation, a death-scourge that encompassed much of the entire continent of Europe, seemingly suggests something on the order of the later Black Death plague that wiped out a third of Europe in a few short years' span in the 14th century. Or perhaps a weather-related severe drought caused widespread death from starvation.

Whatever the cause, the result was an opening up of vast areas of Europe to settlement by new tribes. Otherwise, the Israelite tribes immigrating to Europe through the Caucasus from their former Mid-east bondage might have experienced a much more difficult undertaking and, if so, this would not have fulfilled the description of the open land of the Scripture record. The scholars give a date estimate for the population die-off of circa 3000 BC or a little earlier, but this may be an educated guess. What is certain is that new tribal migrations into Europe were very significant and largely responsible for the ethnic make-up of that continent today.

Secular scholars rarely consider God's hand in history or the divine prophecies and promises of Scripture, yet these are instructive. An interesting promise in this regard is found in the important passage known as the 'Song of Moses'.

'When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.'

Deuteronomy ch.32 vv 8-9

The Complete Jewish Bible also makes the point very clear.

'when he divided the human race, he assigned the boundaries of peoples according to Israel's population.'

If there is one promise made over and over again in the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, it is that Israel's population would explode in numbers, 'as the sand on the seashore', and 'as the stars of heaven' and 'as the dust of the earth' (see Genesis chs 13 v.16, 15 v.5, 22 v.17, 28 v.14 & 32 v.12, Exodus ch.32 v.13, Isaiah ch.10 v.22, Jeremiah ch.33 v.22, Hosea ch.1 v.10, Romans chs 4 v.13 & 9 v.27, Hebrews ch.11 v.12). No other Abrahamic promise is repeated and emphasised so often in Scripture, and yet is so completely ignored by our pulpits! Since the national boundaries of Israel's tribes would be in proportion to their population, it is clear that the Abrahamic

Covenant would not be fulfilled in the little land of Palestine. God needed to clear a pathway and open up a land, indeed a continent, to hold Israel's rapidly increasing populace. Europe was unexpectedly and undeniably opened to colonisation by these tribes looking for a new homeland after their Divine time of punishment at the hands of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia was complete.

It is interesting to notice the language used in the Deuteronomy chapter 32 prophecy above. God 'divided' in Hebrew 'macha' meaning 'to inherit' (as a figurative mode of descent), or generally, 'to occupy', causatively 'to bequeath' or 'distribute'. God would bequeath a continent to the House of Israel in accord with Israel's growing population. We are also told that God 'separated' or in Hebrew 'parad' meaning 'to break through, to spread or separate, disperse, divide, scatter abroad, sever self'. Israel's tribes indeed were dispersed and scattered abroad through the nearby Caucasus region into Europe, becoming severed from their old homeland in the Mid-east.

There are many today who attempt to somehow 'spiritualise' the Abrahamic covenant, thinking that it is not literal, actual, and capable of physical fulfilment. This is perhaps best refuted by the fact that God's promises have indeed been literally and concretely fulfilled. Others ignore the actual literal fulfilment and claim that these promises are all millennial, relegating them to a future world. Scripture itself refutes this in verifying that their fulfilment would be during the 'latter days' (Genesis ch.49 v.1), the period between Christ's two comings.

Lutheran scholar John Peter Lang stated in his, *Commentary on Deuteronomy chapter 32*, 'Israel should possess a land corresponding to its population'. If we believe the Scripture promises of Israel's tremendous population growth during this age, we must locate the land that meets this requirement. When the House of Israel's tribes were ready to fulfil their prophetic destiny in the early pre-Christian centuries, God led them to a land in accord with their prophetic growth needs. Historic and Biblical evidence identifies Europe as that appointed place (2 Samuel ch.7 v.10). The assumption that early Europe at the time of Israel's exile was a bustling well-populated continent without open land for settlement is not in accord with the facts of historical scholarship.
