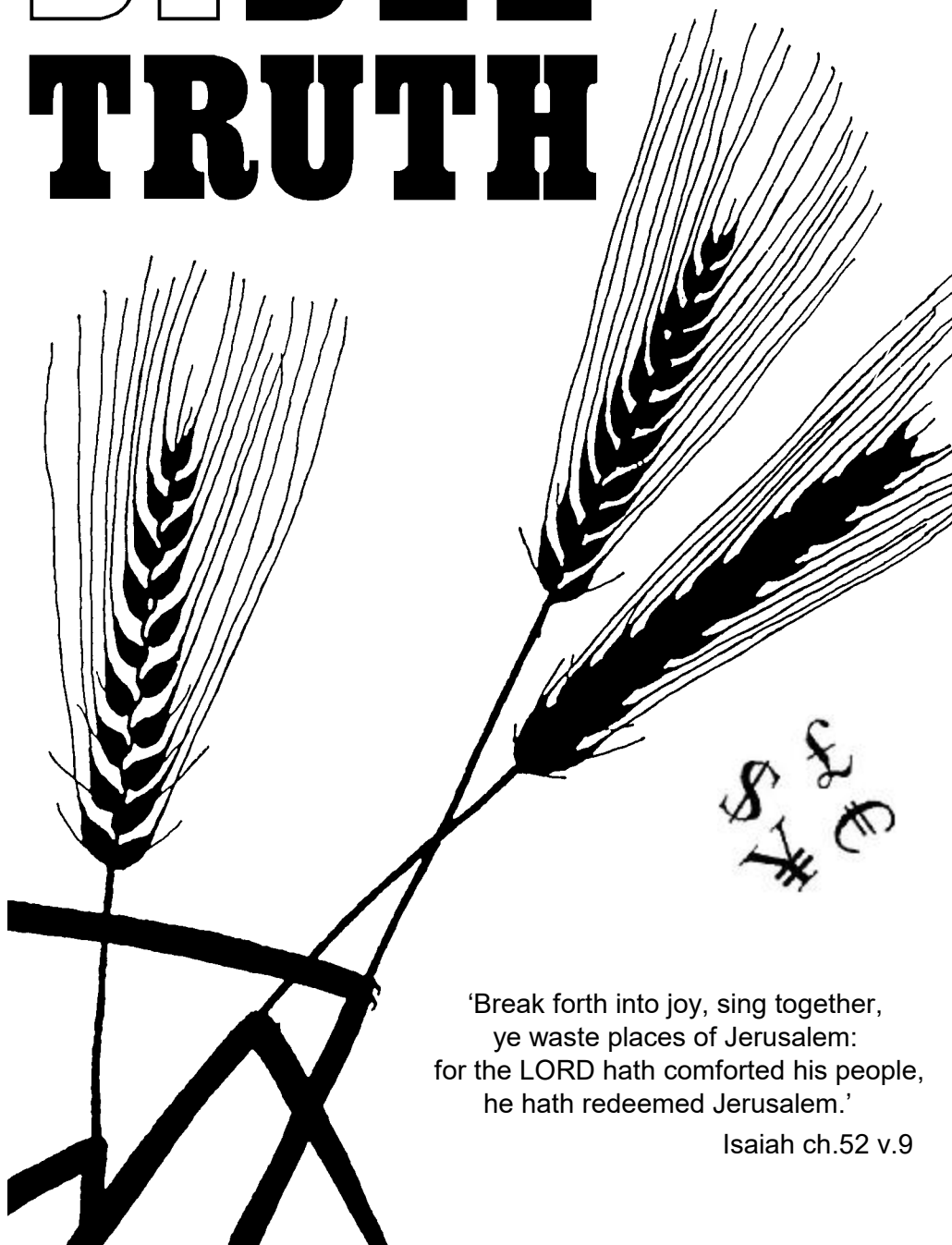


BIBLE TRUTH

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'Break forth into joy, sing together,
ye waste places of Jerusalem:
for the LORD hath comforted his people,
he hath redeemed Jerusalem.'

Isaiah ch.52 v.9

HAS JESUS' COMMAND COMPLETED ?

by John Trotter



The answer is a definite 'YES' even though the following occurred. For about two hundred years after the Ascension the command to go to the 'lost sheep' was performed under difficult circumstances with persecution and an influx of false teaching from myths and paganism. The interference of Jewry from Judah and Edomite influence also hampered the progress. Equally as destructive was the Latinizing of beliefs towards the end of the third century,

The phrase 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' is only found in the Gospel of Matthew.

'But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

Matthew ch.10 v.6

'But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

Matthew ch.15 v.24

The 'Lost Sheep' have been previously explained so this article has been based on the following verse from the book of Jeremiah.

'My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.'

Jeremiah ch.50 v.6

A cross reference to this verse can be found in the First Epistle of the apostle Peter.

'For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.'

1 Peter ch.2 v.25

The reference to 'mountain and hill' are symbols for large and small nations. A number of authors have shown that many of Israel had left the land of Israel a long time before the deportation of both houses of Israel to Assyria and Babylon. The trade routes, along which the Gospel travelled, had been opened for hundreds of years as far away as France, Spain and even Britain. The Gospel also was taken into the Eastern countries, some say, as far as Japan.

The words of Matthew ch.15 v.24 are interesting. A number of translations all say the same, as shown by Ferrar Fenton, 'I was not sent to other than the lost sheep of Israel's house'. A cross reference to Matthew ch.15 v.24 can be found in the Epistle to the Romans which reads as follows.

'Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (House of Judah) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles (nations or tribes) might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.'

Romans ch.15 vv 8-9

The cross reference to this verse is found in the Gospel of John where it mentions 'other sheep'.

'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.'

John ch.10 v.16

The other sheep mentioned are the lost sheep of the Northern House of Israel plus the descendants of the thousands taken from the Southern House of Israel with the Northern House which occurred when Sennacherib was King of Assyria (see the Assyrian Taylor Prism). By the time of Christ they had been dispersed amongst the nations. The reference to 'this fold' refers to the House of Judah.

'These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.'

Matthew ch.10 v.5

In the above verse we are told that Jesus commanded the Twelve Disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles and not to go to the cities of the Samaritans. Like many Bible verses, it shows that you have to replace the word 'Gentile' with the word 'nation or tribes' as shown by *Strong's Concordance*. It is important that you must not only read the verse within the surrounding verses, but also go back to the Old Testament if that verse is quoted from such. Equally as important use the equivalent English word that best defines the Hebrew or Greek word. It is when you do this that you will find that Gentiles can also be Israelites or even Jews.

It is not emphasised enough that the destiny of the two houses of Israel are very different. For about 3000 years the Israel people have gone through many changes to the extent that their blindness and

deafness has greatly erased obvious association with the distant and cloudy past. The following quote from the book, *The Zionist Connection* by Alfred Lilienthal, a Jew, is of great interest as it shows that many Gentiles are Hebrew.

‘Here’s a paradox, a paradox, a most ingenious paradox, in anthropological fact, many Christians (Gentiles) may have much more Hebrew - Israelite blood in their veins than most of their Jewish neighbours.’

In the Book of Isaiah it is promised that the blindness and deafness will be removed, when like Thomas he was confronted with the evidence of a risen Christ.

‘Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.’

Isaiah ch.35 v.5

The New Testament has many verses showing the Southern House, which was largely represented by the Tribe of Judah, was a thorn in the side when it came to the teaching of the Good News of the Kingdom.

‘Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Nations).’

Acts ch.13 v.46

(See also Acts ch.18 v.6.)

‘Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?’

John ch.7 v.35

The above verse shows that the religious leaders were aware of the dispersed Israelites among the Helenes. It is true many of Judah did believe but many experienced threats. It was over this issue that Peter and Paul argued. Finally Peter understood the broader scope of the message when the sheet coming down with unclean animals was fully understood.

‘ ... Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.’

Acts ch.10 v.28

Peter's second Epistle clearly shows his greater understanding.

The word 'rather' (Matthew ch.10 v.6) suggests that Jesus was saying 'it would be better if '. Jesus appears to be saying that results for believing would be better if you went to the 'lost sheep'. As regards the word 'lost' one must ask, did God know where the lost sheep were? The answer is a definite 'yes'. The word 'lost' is another example of poor choice for the real meaning of lost means, those who were 'cast off, put away or separated to be punished'. Also to lose something infers that in the past it was 'not lost'.

It would have been an incredibly cruel joke if Jesus was sending off His disciples to a people who did not exist. One could say that there are three ways in which this command could have been carried out. The first is that Israel by then had already been absorbed into other nations and therefore genetically did not exist. In this case the word Gentile has taken the place of Israel. The other possibility is that the Church has taken the place of Israel and all the Covenant matters have been transferred to that institution. This is called Replacement Theology and even though taught today in many sermons, its origin of thought goes back to the third century. This arose because the 'Jews' had rejected Christ and His message as a nation. As the promises were still intact these were transferred to the Church. It is the first two beliefs that have done more to fulfill the words of Psalm 83 v.4 which reads, 'They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance'.

The third approach is the one I follow, namely that Israel existed during the time of Christ when on earth. They were a scattered people unto the ends of the earth. Nevertheless all the twelve tribes were represented in Palestine and much of the Middle East. From the call of Abram to the last chapter of Revelation the Bible tells the story of Israel. The promises of curses, blessings and the covenants are still with us. They were not done away at the Cross, except for the 'law of commandments contained in ordinances'.

'Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;'

Ephesians ch.2 v.15

If the twelve tribes of Israel don't exist why does the first verse of James say, 'to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting'? Or to whom is the book of Hebrews written to, other than the Hebrews? Who are the 'strangers', the 'elect' as mentioned in 1 Peter

ch.1 vv 1-2? Space does not permit to mention the hundreds of verses that clearly show a reunion of all the twelve tribes under the rulership of Christ in His earthly Kingdom. Because of the Covenant relationship with Israel it is more relevant to have the heart circumcised for it is only then that Kingdom citizenship will be granted. Not only the buying back or redemption of Israel will be realised but so will the saving grace of Christ, for all mankind. It will only be then that knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

‘They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.’

Isaiah ch.11 v.9

So be it.
