

[Note by James Bruggeman: The following article was originally published in the June 1894 issue of *The Messenger*]

A Caution

TO THE DESCENDANTS OF THE LOST TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

GOD has destined the offspring of Israel to become great. Their fate is fixed then. And yet God has made their greatness dependent upon their righteousness. Since that is so, where lies the guarantee that their grand destiny will not be thwarted, being, as it is, conditional to their well-doing? It lies in this, that, God will always be able to find some representatives righteous, out of whom He will make the nation great. "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings xix. 18).

The Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled, but let us listen and give heed to what John the Baptist says thereon: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. iii. 9). "Now, therefore, let me alone (said God), that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee (Moses) a great nation" (Ex. xxxii. 10). Doubtless, God could have done so, by reserving Caleb and Joshua and others as representatives of the tribes, and still have kept inviolate

the Abrahamic covenant. God recreated the Adamite out of Noah. But God spake in His wrath, and Moses mediated. Nevertheless, although Moses mediated, "there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (ver. 28). And none of that generation, save Caleb and Joshua, reached Canaan. We read in the close of the Book of judges about the tribe of Benjamin being nearly obliterated. Yet it arose again out of a remnant.

What is the secret of Israel's greatness? Is it Israel being Israel? Or is it Israel being righteous? Evidently it is mainly Israel being righteous. For Israel being wicked is accursed, but Israel being righteous is blessed.

It was because of their wickedness that they were cast out of Canaan, and it can only be because of their righteousness that they will ever return. "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isaiah xxvi. 2).

If Israel has advantages that the Gentiles have not, Israel has the greater responsibility. And so, in the light of Christ's teaching that that transgressor who knew his Lord's will shall be beaten with more stripes than that transgressor who knew not, then the government of God is justified.

Alas! what profit to Saul now that he was king over Israel? And though God should never want Him a man of the House of David to sit upon the throne, yet the sword should never depart from the same House because of David's sin (a Sam. xii. 10). So it is not so much because of being Israel that Israel is blessed, but because of Israel being righteous. And the righteous ones God will

increase, but the wicked ones God will destroy. This unravels the great problem of Election and Free Will with a momentous warning. In fact, being of Israel and being wicked, is immeasurably worse than being a Gentile and being righteous.

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