

THE TRIBE OF JOSEPH AND “THE LATTER DAYS”

By Steven M. Collins

Many Christians and Jews have an expectation that we are living in momentous times. This expectation is based upon the belief that world events indicate we are living in a climactic period of time called "the latter days" in many biblical prophecies. This prophetic phase will be climaxed by the arrival of a new period of time known by such names as the Messianic Age, the Millennium, the Kingdom of God, etc.

Do I believe we are living in the biblical "latter days?" Yes, I do. In this column, I will discuss several aspects of the prophecy regarding the tribe of Joseph which strongly confirm that we are living in the biblical "latter days."

Joseph and the Latter Days:

Genesis 49 lists prophecies for all of the tribes of Israel in the latter days, but this section will examine three aspects of the prophecy about the tribe of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). Since this is a prophecy for the latter days, we must demonstrate that all three aspects of this prophecy are fulfilled in modern times to confirm that we are living now in "the latter days." As many readers of this article likely know, the tribes of Joseph are Ephraim and Manasseh, and these two tribes are primarily linked to the modern English and American nations.

Genesis (Bereshith) 49:22 prophesies in the King James Version concerning Joseph: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." A Hebraic translation (The Complete Jewish Bible) captures, I believe, the sense of this prophecy better by translating it: "Yosef [Joseph] is a fruitful plant, a fruitful plant by a spring, with branches climbing over the wall." (Emphasis added.) Here the tribes of Joseph are likened not to a tree which stays in one place, but rather to a vine which spreads out and sends branches elsewhere. Applying this imagery to modern nations, Joseph's tribes should be nations which have "vined out" or spread elsewhere in the world from a home base. This has come to pass in the Anglo-Saxon nations. The home base for the tribes of Joseph in the modern world was in the British Isles.

The tribes of Joseph, indeed, "branched out" to plant new nations in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and part of the South Africa. In doing so, they fulfilled the prophecy of Genesis 48:19 that Ephraim would become a "multitude of nations" (the British nations) and a "single [great] nation (the United States of America)." They also fulfilled the prophecy of Genesis 49:22 which indicated the tribes of Joseph would be a colonizing people who had founded new nations by the time the "latter days" arrived. This has also come to pass.

This verse also foretells that Joseph will be located "by a well" (some versions of the Bible say "by a spring" or use other language). What is clear in that this prophetic imagery indicates that all the people of Joseph's tribes will *dwell by the water*. All the nations of modern Joseph (the USA, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are seacoast nations located

along the water. Indeed, the British Isles, Australia and New Zealand are island nations completely surrounded by water, and the USA and Canada have very extensive seacoasts along the oceans. This prophecy (combined with the one below that the nations of Joseph will be made "strong" by God in the latter days, indicates the nations of Joseph will be maritime nations and naval powers. The British Navy dominated the oceans for centuries and the US Navy now is the most powerful fleet on earth.

Genesis 49:23-24 prophesy that: "...the archers have sorely grieved [harassed] him, and shot at him and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob...who shall help thee." This prophecy indicates that the tribes of Joseph will be "hated" in the world by many other nations, and that those who hate the nations of Joseph will "shoot at" or "harass" them. The nations of Great Britain and the United States have attracted so much hatred and envy in the world that it has commonly been called an "anti-Anglo" or "anti-American" attitude. Much of this hatred has resulted from the envy of other nations who covet the "birthright" promises of the Abrahamic Covenant which were given primarily to the tribes of Joseph (Genesis 48:14-22).

This prophecy also indicates Joseph will have wars forced upon them by "archers" who "shoot" at Joseph. In the last half-century, the United States and the British nations combined to defeat Hitler and the Nazis in World War II, and they were allied again in the Korean War and the Persian Gulf War against Saddam Hussein. The British had the Falklands War against Argentina forced upon them. The Viet Nam War was somewhat of an exception to this rule as no one actually attacked the American nation or its interests. That war resulted from treaties and a desire to contain communism, and the American people had little support for a war which threatened no vital US interests. Now the United States has been attacked and victimized by a terrorist war perpetrated by those who "hate Joseph." Great Britain has stepped forward to be America's most visible ally in this war against terrorism, and Canada and Australia have both pledged ships and/or troops to fight with the Americans.

Genesis 49:24 also prophesies that God will make the tribes of Joseph "strong" (not weak) against these attacks in the latter days. The tribes of Joseph have been generally (but not always) successful in their wars, and the alliance of the tribes of Joseph (the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) currently constitute the most powerful and cohesive alliance in the world today. God has certainly "strengthened" Joseph as first the British Empire (Ephraim) dominated world geopolitics and now the United States (Manasseh) is the dominant "superpower." This prophecy indicates that the USA and Britain (with their allies) will likely win the war against terrorism.

The final aspect of the latter days prophecy about Joseph's tribes is in Genesis 49:22-26. For the sake of brevity, I will not reprint it all here, but readers can confirm the content for themselves. These verses extensively describe the extensive blessings which the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh will enjoy during the latter days. This prophecy indicates the "birthright" blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant will be especially poured out on Joseph's nations in the latter days. The prophecy mentions favorable climates for growing crops (the blessings of heaven), extensive natural resources (the blessings of the deep) and large populations (blessings of the breasts and of the womb).

The "blessings of the deep" could mean natural resources which are dug out of the ground or wealth and prosperity that comes from the oceans ("the deep" has an oceanic application elsewhere in the Bible). The modern nations of Joseph have derived much of their wealth from their seacoast locations (not just in fisheries industries, but also in their control of world maritime trade). This prophecy is quite expansive in its description of the wealth and power which will accrue to Joseph's tribes in the latter days.

Given that these blessings are divinely ordained, we should expect the nations of Ephraim and Manasseh to be the wealthiest and most blessed nations on earth. This has come to pass as first the British Empire long dominated the earth's nations and resources with the USA assuming that role since World War II.

In conclusion, the specific prophecies about the tribes (nations) of Joseph have been fulfilled abundantly in the modern world by the British people and the United States of America. This not only confirms that they are the modern nations of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh), but the fulfillments of the prophecies in Genesis 49:22-26 indicate that we are living in the prophetic period of time known as "the latter days."

Greetings and Shalom to All!

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