

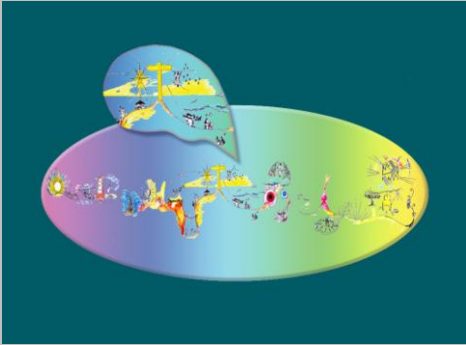
平成20年 9月 月報

フルダ・ミニストリー

一主に在る

とこしえの集い

SEPTEMBER 2008
NO 155



Eternal Fellowship News Bulletin

We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!

www.huldahministry.com
information@huldahministry.com



HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

【 ANCIENT HEBREW'S HISTORY 】

Then you saw (a man) collecting a different company, a peaceful one. They are the ten tribes which were taken off into exile in the time of King Hoshea, whom Shameser king of Assyria took prisoner. He deported them beyond the River and they were taken away into a strange country. But then they resolved to leave the country populated by Gentiles and go to a distant land never yet inhabited by man, and there at last to be obedient to their laws, which in their own country they had failed to keep. As they passed through the narrow passages of the Euphrates, the most High performed miracles for them, stopping up the channels of the river until they had crossed over. Their journey through that region, which is called Arzareth, was long, and took a year and a half. They have lived there ever since, until this final age. Now they are on their way back, and once more the Most High will stop the channels of the river to let them cross. 2 ESDRAS 13:39-47.

The Second book of Esdras, from which the above passage is quoted is known as "4 Esdras" in the Latin Vulgate. Esdras is the Greek form of the name Ezra. This book is one of the 15 books that were classified as "Apocrypha", written between 250 B.C.E. and 100 C.E. by Jewish authors, and were not included in the Hebrew canon. They are, however found in most Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible, known as the "Septuagint". Roman Catholic tradition excludes "1 and 2 Esdras" and "the Prayer of Manasseh" from its canon but accepts the rest of the Apocrypha.

The core Jewish section of 2 Esdras, the seven visions in chs. 3-14 is regarded to have probably been written in Judea in either Hebrew or Aramaic about 100 C.E.

This month we continue to trace the findings and research of an Israelite, Joseph Eidelberg over the issue of the origins of the Japanese people, along with his book entitled "*The Biblical Hebrew Origin Of The Japanese People*". Eidelberg argues that the time when the Ten Tribes of Israel became lost coincides with the time when the people of Yamato came to the islands of Japan sometime between the first and third centuries of the Common Era. He questions: 'If the people of Yamato are directly descended from the Ten Tribes of Israel, where had they been during the eight or nine hundred years separating the fall of the northern kingdom of Samaria in Israel and the rise of the kingdom of Sumera in Japan?' According to his suggestion, it would be worth looking through the national history of the Hebrews written in the Bible.

A Hebrew family of seventy members of Jacob who moved to Egypt came out of it as a nation, around 1446 B.C.E., led by Moses. The twelve tribes of Israel entered the promised land of Canaan after forty years wandering in the desert, led by Joshua. They established a federation of Hebrew tribes there, making their capital at Shiloh. After the rules by judges for centuries, the Hebrews desired to form a kingdom like surrounding nations by appointing a king. Although such an idea of establishing a human king in Israel was not in keeping with the Lord's will, as He clearly pointed out: '*it (was) not (Samuel, the then judge) they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.*' (1 Sam.8:7-9), the Lord allowed Samuel to anoint Saul, a Benjamite, as the king of Israel. Man-chosen king Saul spent most of his years in war against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the philistines and the kings of Zobah, without any time caring for the internal organisation of the Hebrews.

After Saul was killed in one of the bitter encounters with the Philistines, his son Ish-Bosheth succeeded to the throne but he did not reign for long. Instead, God himself chose David from the tribe of Judah, as the first king of Israel. Consequently, in around 1010 B.C.E., '*all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd my people Israel, and you shall become their ruler."*' (2 Sam.5:2), and David became king at the age of thirty. His first task was to unite the twelve tribes of Israel under a single banner. After capturing the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites, David turned it into a civil and religious centre for Israel. He smote the Philistines, subdued Moab, Edom and extended his territory beyond Syria, from the banks of the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt. He ruled over Israel in Hebron for seven years and in Jerusalem for thirty three years.

His dynasty was succeeded by his son Solomon who reigned from 970 to 930 B.C.E. However, concerning the year of the enthronement of David and Solomon and other kings, there are some other reckonings. 1Kings 6:1 tells us: '*in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.*' The fourth year of Solomon's reign is also said to be fixed at 966 B.C.E. as a result of synchronisation of certain events in the reigns of later Israelite kings with Assyrian chronological records, which accordingly fixes the year of Solomon's enthronement at 1000 B.C.E. This reckoning leads us to fix Israel's Exodus at 1446 B.C.E. during the rule of the 18th-dynasty Egyptian pharaoh, Amunhotep II. With this recognition of different year reckonings in some parts of historical events as inevitable premises, further looking through Israel's history, after Solomon's death, his glorious and prosperous empire did not last long. When his son Rehoboam ascended to the throne, the ten tribes of Israel formed their own kingdom apart from the rest of tribes. Thus, one of the divided kingdoms, Judah set its capital in Jerusalem and the other, Israel in Shechem.

The kingdom of Israel later changed its capital to Samaria. It only lasted a hundred and fifty years and then, in 721 B.C.E. Samaria fell into the hands of Assyrians. 2 Kings 17:1-6 describes what triggered Assyrian's attack on Israel in the following: ***'In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria and he reigned for nine years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him. Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.'*** The then Assyrian king was Sargon II .

Eidelberg has come to the conclusion that 'The fate of the kingdom of Israel was sealed. Exiled from their homeland, and banished to faraway lands, the people of Samaria mysteriously vanished somewhere in the East, and in the course of time became known as the "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel." Sargon II , the Assyrian king who was responsible for the exile of the people of Samaria, relates the story as follows: I Sargon, the Great King, the Mighty king who crushed countries like earthen pots, who subdued cities from the Valley of Egypt; the Wide Westland, the land of the Hittites, and the land of the distant Medes where the sun is rising...at the beginning of my government I besieged and conquered the city of Samaria; the 27,290 inhabitants who were living in it I led into captivity, and people from all the countries whom my hands had made prisoners I caused to dwell there.' He points out the fact that even the Book of Chronicles that is believed to have been written after the exile, in the latter half of the fifth century B.C.E., thus possibly within Ezra's lifetime, states ***'God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria (that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria), who took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh into exile. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan, where they are to this day.'***(1 Chr.5:26, Line added) and that it indicates that nearly 300years after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Samaria, some of the exiled Hebrew tribes who lived in the region of ***'Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan,'*** still maintained their tribal structure, rather than having completely lost their national identity, in spite of some popular conjecture that the people of the northern kingdom and their kings, after their banishment to the distant lands, were absorbed into the population of these foreign lands.

There are some more ancient writings referring to the information about the existence of the ten tribes of Israel after the first century of our era, i.e., more than 800 years after the exile of the people of Samaria. Josephus Flavius, a Jewish historian in the first century C.E. wrote in his book "Antiquities of the Jews" that 'the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates until now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers.'" (bk.11, ch.5, sec.2.) The book of 2 Esdras, some parts from which have been quoted at the beginning of this letter, also gives us a piece of information as to where the ten tribes were headed for. It indicates in which direction and how far they travelled from Assyria, leaving ***'the country populated by Gentiles and (going) to a distant land never yet inhabited by man.'*** Concerning ***'Arzareth'***, through which they journeyed it is usually interpreted among scholars as being a shortened transliteration of the Hebrew word for ***"arets-aheret*** (another land)," taken from Deuteronomy 29:28: ***'In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now.'***

However, Eidelberg argues 'This conjecture does not indicate anything, for it is known that exiled Hebrews were exiled to "another land." On the other hand, it is quite possible that Arzareth is a corruption of the name Hazarajat, a mountainous area in central Afghanistan, not far from Habor and the river of Gozan,

which might well be the Ghazni, which flows through the town of Ghazni, situated about 120 kilometres southwest of Kabul; and Habor (pronounced Khabor) is the Khyber area, about two hundred kilometres east of Kabul.' Eidelberg continually argues how Hebrew tribes started settling down in Afghanistan and changed their religion to Islam, to which the name "Afghans" is attributed. 'That Afghanistan was inhabited by Hebrew tribes in the remote past can be corroborated, perhaps, by the fact that even today there are several Afghan tribes who claim to be the descendants of the Hebrews who were exiled by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. H.W.Bellew, in his book *Journal of a political Mission to Afghanistan in 1857*, says that the Afghans as well as the Pathan tribes, style themselves Bani-Israil, meaning "Children of Israel," and trace their descent on a direct line from Saul the Benjamite, king of Israel. And although they can adduce no authentic evidence in support of their claim, their own books, describing their origin and early history, lay such stress on their wars with the biblical Philistines and Amalekites, and present such minute details of the Ark of the Covenant, that only descendants of Hebrews, well acquainted with the Bible, could set forth. It may be interesting to point out here that most of the Afghan tribes are Moslems today. And it is quite possible that they began styling themselves "Afghans" after adopting Islam: for "afkhan," in Aramaic means "one who has changed (religion)." Having found some descendants of Hebrew tribes in Afghanistan, it should be relatively easy for us to identify the "distant land never yet inhabited by man," to which, according to Esdras II, the Ten tribes had to journey one and a half years. Using the biblical scale, which says that it took a group of Hebrews four months to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem¹, a journey of one and a half years east, at about the same pace, should have brought the Ten Tribes to the Issyk-kul basin of ancient Halah (pronounced Khalakh). And indeed, Halah together with Habor and Gozan, is mentioned in the Bible as being the abode of the exiled Hebrew tribes. Judging by the information we do have, the Ten tribes must have lived in the area of Halah for about eight hundred years². There through many centuries of intermarriage with such Mongoloid tribes as Khalkhas³, Uighurs, Uzbeks and Tuklmen, who lived in their vicinity, they gradually acquired Mongolian features. Yet in spite of their becoming externally "Mongolian" looking, they seem to have continued to preserve their national identity and to send from time to time greetings to their ancient homeland.' (quoted from ps.36-39)

Eidelberg believes that the caravan route from China to the Mediterranean, known as the "Silk Road," which was opened for silk trade in the second century B.C.E. could help the exiled Hebrew community in Afghanistan exchange information with their brethren in Judah. All caravans travelling between the Mediterranean and China had to pass through either Halah or Habor (Khalakh and Khyber), both of which Eidelberg called the "Hebrew territories". Thus, after dwelling in central Asia for more than eight hundred years at least up to the first century of our era, Eidelberg argues, such similar devastating climatic changes took place in central Asia as they hit in Takla Makan Desert sometime between the first and third century C.E., and it must have forced people to abandon their towns and villages so as to seek refuge in other places. This exactly might have happened to the ten tribes of Israel and Eidelberg concludes that leaving their abode in central Asia, they immigrated into the islands of Japan and they were considered "lost".

¹ *'He had begun his journey from Babylon the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him.'* (Ezra 7:9)

² Since the Ten Tribes of Israel had been deported in 721 B.C.E., and the book of Esdras II describes a situation existing in about 90 C.E., it seems therefore, that the ancient Hebrews lived in Arzareth (Hazarajat), Halah (Khalakh) and Habor (Khyber) for more than eight hundred years after their exile from Samaria.

³ The Khalkha tribes, who may have inhabited Khalakh in the past, dwell in Mongolia today.

NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS-NEWS

Last month Money gift of £**** has been sent to Mary Jane in the Philippines, and also, £**** has been sent to Frederic in Burundi. Mary Jane has been engaged in an outreach to the disadvantaged and the poor through children's ministry in her country. Frederic, acquiring a diploma to enable him to establish a Bible school, launched on materialising it in Burundi. He has been helping the Christian repatriate amongst the present mess of his country after the end of the recent twelve year civil war. Pray for the Lord's guidance upon their ministries. Their reports can be seen on the Huldah Ministry web site.