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Is Germany Mentioned in Bible Prophecy?

By Wilfred Hahn

One of the most asked prophecy questions in America by far is whether the U.S.A. is mentioned in the Bible. Given America’s influential role in the world in these last days, surely it must merit specific mention ... or so, most people reason. There is a wide range of opinion on this question, not to mention virtual terabytes of speculative comment and Scriptural misinterpretations.

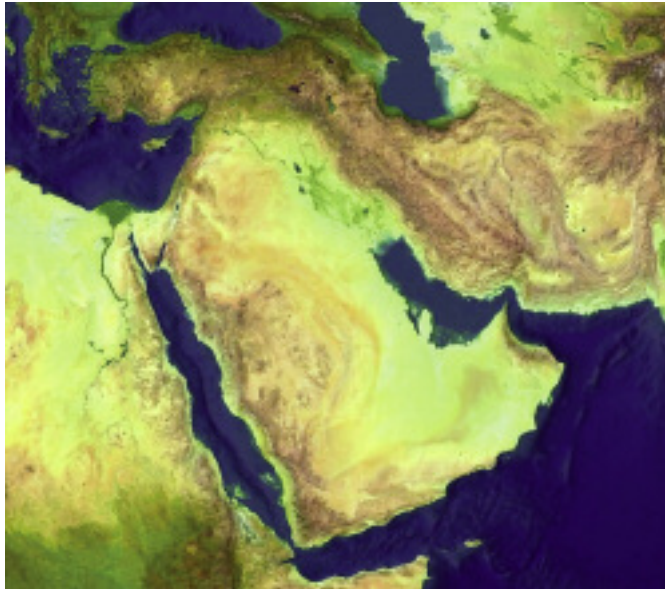


The debate continues even among learned and respected prophecy scholars. However, of late, the prophetic significance of another Gentile nation is being increasingly queried ... namely, Germany. Given the epic financial tremors in Europe, the instabilities in its Eurozone membership, and Germany’s rise in financial and economic power, just what prophecies might validate this country’s current role? As might be guessed, this topic also attracts a range of opinion. In fact, it might be more correct to say that

an increasing number of people are now being led to accept versions of British-Israelism on this view (a term we will explain shortly).

Today, there are not a small number of groups that propound these views, causing somewhat of a groundswell among Christians; drawing them into accepting their sometimes fantastical interpretations. While their teachings may not yet have mainstream acceptance, their outreach is quite prolific.

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many (the emphasis here being upon the words “specific mention”). Without a doubt, Bible prophecy encompasses the actions (collective and individual) of all Gentile nations, among which Germany and America are likely included.

Focus upon the Middle East Theatre

Is Germany mentioned in Bible prophecy? To begin, we must remember that the Bible remains an Israel-centric document. As such, its prophecies deal with the generalities of the world's geopolitical history, but only so in relation to Israel and Jesus Christ. Yes, there are indeed specific nations mentioned in end-time prophecies. However, these are all in the Middle East theatre. To provide a perspective on this issue, we here reproduce an excerpt from an earlier article series in this space (*Midnight Call* magazine August and September 2008, “Iconic Last Days: False Images and Picture-Perfect Prophecy”).

“[...] Consider the surveillance camera. Normally, these devices point at a fixed view; others move in a regular or random arc. Yet, they remain attached to one mounting spot. So it is with the Bible's perspective of prophecy and his-

torical events. It takes the view of a camera that is installed as if overtop Israel and Jerusalem.

In the Old Testament, this camera was expressly focused upon the live action in this general Middle Eastern area, swinging its angle of view as far east as Susa in Elam, north to Assyria and Babylon, and southwest to Egypt.

The world's major successive powers of those times, such as the Assyrians and the Romans, are only caught on this surveillance camera as they trample across Israel and Judah. They are bit actors, not even deserving their own camera installation. Later, in the New Testament, the arc of the camera widens somewhat, but not much, roving as far as Rome and more northern parts of Asia Minor.

In our time today, this prophecy camera would still not have captured long glimpses of America on its footage. At best, this nation would only make few and fleeting cameo appearances in the Middle East—minor interventions over the past century, and more recently, the incursion into Iraq.

Yet today, the video camera of Bible prophecy still remains fixed to its pedestal above Israel, limiting its arc of view to the general surrounding area. It has not moved from its spot. This perspective is often overlooked by Bible readers, given that the majority of the world's Christians (also the greater world populations and economies) lie outside the line of this camera's view. Given this dominance, we might therefore think that most of the important action in the world is in America, in



China, Europe or perhaps other wealthy or populous countries. But where do we see these countries in our prophetic videotape? The Bible at best only gives mention to these countries as either ‘islands of the seas,’ the ‘kings of the east,’ or perhaps Gog from the far north (Ezekiel 38), without even turning its camera in their direction. Imagine this insult to the developed, high-income countries supposedly running the world order of today. They hardly even merit mention in the final credits of Bible prophecy.”

Signs of Germany’s Rise

Lately, offshoots of the British Israelite persuasion, have been proudly proclaiming that they “told you so” in respect of recent gyrations in Europe.

If you missed their admonitions, just what have they been saying?

They see recent financial and economic tremors in Europe, as the final staging to the emergence of the power structure prophesied for the endtimes, this being the Holy Roman Empire in which Germany plays a ruling role. The economic rise of Germany in recent years, along with the advent of financial meltdowns in some of the periphery European countries, is proof-positive to them that their Bible interpretations are correct. They see Germany using its economic power to consolidate its leadership position, then to rule a new European coalition of countries. To this point, likely few prophecy scholars will disagree with these observations. The British Israelite groups, however, come to these opinions by a completely different set of beliefs.

Just what is British-Israelism? In answering, we must acknowledge that there are a wide number of groups that will fall under this broad umbrella (each with some significant theological dis-

tinctions). Other names for offshoots from British Israelism include Celtic Israelism and Anglo Israelism. A later term often used is Armstrongism, named after the 20th century teachings of Herbert Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God. However, the common foundation that distinguishes them from orthodox Christianity, is that they consider many of the Old Testament prophecies that are addressed separately to the House of Judah and the House of Israel (the ancient Northern Kingdom) as applying to the last days.

In their view, the House of Judah (comprised of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah) are the Jews of today, whereas the House of Israel is represented by the lost 10 ten tribes of Israel, who in present times are “discovered” to exist incognito in the form of mostly northern European peoples. The 10 tribes of Israel (those that were deported and dispersed abroad by the Assyrians in the 7th century B.C.) lost their identity and were eventually also lost to antiquity. These “lost” Israelites then emigrated to other parts of the Middle East, the Caucasus, to Northern Europe and, importantly, England and Ireland. British Israelite groups generally view Britain as modern-day Ephraim and America as the tribe of Manasseh.

Some groups go a step further, and identify the Germany of today as Assyria. Just as the lost 10 tribes supposedly ended up in Europe and America, so did the ancient Assyrians once they were vanquished by the Babylonians. Is all this plausible?

British Israelism: Is It Harmful?

The objective of this article is not to provide an all-points refutation of British-Israelism and its offshoots, but rather to show that the interpretations with respect to modern-day Germany

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among its more prominent factions are incorrect. In our view, the 10 northern tribes were never lost. Clearly, 12 tribes of Israel are shown to exist in the Book of Revelation (Chapter 7, 12 and 21), these references applying to the future. The debate centers on whether all the Israelite tribes are represented by the Jews of today. The New Testament, which documents a time over 700 years after the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed, specifically mentions the House of Israel tribe of Asher as being the ancestor of Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:36). After the breakup of the northern tribes from the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, at least some of the northern Hebrews, who remained faithful to the teachings of the Law, fled to the south.

Therefore, the Israel of today is considered to be a blend of the House of Judah and the House of Israel. As such, the prophecy found in Ezekiel 37:19-22—the two houses of Israel and Judah being made into one stick—has already been fulfilled rather than will yet occur in the future. British Israelism was popularized as a Christian interpretation

early in the 19th century. It no doubt was influenced by the much earlier academic interests in Irish Orientalism and Phoenicianism. A large number of secular treatises on these influences were written as much as a century earlier.

While we are not convinced to adopt the foundational viewpoints of British Israelism, at the same time we also do not see them as being heretical. These views alone do not affect the gospel or essential doctrine. That said, a ragtag set of beliefs with respect to last-day prophecies, Sabbath-keeping, Judaical ordinances ... etc. can be found among them. Of course, the same could be said about the rest of Christianity.

Where Is Germany?

One of the more prolific churches today teaching British Israelism (more specifically, Armstrongism) is the Philadelphia Church of God (PCOG). As such, we will here focus on their statements in regard to Europe, Germany, the Holy Roman Empire and end-time prophecy.

According to them, just as the 10 northern tribes of the House of Israel supposedly migrated to America and be-



came the founders of the European nations of Britain, France and others, so apparently also did the Assyrians. The Armstrongites claim that they migrated to the environs of modern-day Germany (specifically, former Prussia). As Assyrians were a war-loving, cruel people, the



PCOG is sure that Germany will be the country that will rule brutally over a new Europe, this taking the form of a group of 10 kings.

Recent events in Europe, of course, only add fuel to the PCOG's conviction (and boasting, we may add). Indeed, Germany, which has the largest economy of all the 17 Eurozone countries, is in a position of large influence. To the PCOG, this is all a prelude to a Fourth Reich (a revived Holy Roman Empire), a state of organization where Germany will rule over Europe. An evil strong man (Antichrist) will come from this empire, as he is said to be an Assyrian (Isaiah 10:5, Micah 5:5). Moreover, the PCOG interprets various Old Testament prophecies as revealing that Germany will in fact punish all the 10 tribe descendants, also oppressing and dominating America. Really?

These views are not altogether in agreement with Bible prophecy. We observe faulty and confused interpretations on a number of levels.

To begin, Bible prophecy expressly reveals that the rule of the 10 kings (a power coalition of 10 nations) emerges before the Antichrist is revealed. In other words, 10 kings come first, then the 11th who is revealed as the An-

tichrist enters the scene. Shown as a king (the Old Testament's parallel to today's rulers), he must therefore represent a country. Thus, if Germany is today to be one of the 10 kings that are to arise as a revived Roman Empire, then their leader cannot then emerge to be the Antichrist. He must be the leader of yet another country and not of the 10. How so?

Daniel expressly says, "there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among" the first 10 horns (Daniel 7:8). (A horn is used in the Old Testament to symbolize the sovereign power of kings.) Clearly, it is an 11th and different king (likely representing a smaller nation) who arises while the previous 10 remain in existence. At a later time, he does indeed subjugate three of them (Daniel 7:8). Germany clearly does not fit this story line. Germany already exists ... and it is not small. We can cite more verses that demolish the Philadelphian (PCOG) fixation with Germany, their view on a Holy Roman Empire, and interpretation of the Bible's statements on historical and end-time geopolitics.

Overall, the PCOG framework with respect to both the historical and last day sequence of rulers as laid out in the

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Bible, is also flawed. For example, they take an incorrect interpretation of the seven heads shown on the beast of Revelation 17. As we have outlined in the past, the 7 heads (who are also 7 kings) represent the historical lineage of the major Gentile powers that have ruled and suppressed the Hebrews. On the other hand, the group of 10 kings, which are also mentioned in Revelation 17 (and symbolized four other occasions in Scripture), exist at the same time. Whereas the kings (rulerships) that are represented by the 7 heads are consecutive (not in dominance at the same time), the 10 kings represented by the horns exist contemporaneously.

Revelation 17:10 says that the 7 heads “are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.” Just who are these kingdoms? Quoting the November/December issue of the *Trumpet*, the PCOG assigns the identity of the “five fallen” as follows: Justinian (A.D. 554); Charlemagne (A.D. 800); Otto the Great (A.D. 962); Charles V; and Napoleon who crowned himself emperor in 1804. Such interpretations are highly imaginative and subjective ... not to mention Scripturally unsound.

John the Revelator wrote down the visions given to him late in the first century. Just how could the five kingdoms that had already fallen, all yet come to power in later centuries, as the PCOG

claims? Moreover, just how is it possible to name Hitler as the sixth head (which the PCOG does)? John the Revelator told us that the “sixth” kingdom (the Roman rulership) already existed at the time that he was writing his prophecies. And, just how is it that the PCOG

determines that the 1930s to 1940s period qualifies as the time that “is”? If so, there must have been a second coming of John this past century which all of Christianity missed.

The Bible very clearly reveals that the sixth and seventh heads, as well as the 8th king (6th through 8th kings/kingdoms mentioned in Revelation 17) are all of Roman origin. While it is possible that this 8th king could be some type of Assyrian entity, he comes out of the Roman rulership. The previous 5 kingdoms pictured in Revelation 17 (the five that are fallen) are not Roman.

According to our deductions, the prior five “kings that are fallen” (Revelation 17:10) are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. (We plan to provide our arguments for this interpretation at a future time.) As for the sixth head, there can be no doubt about its Roman identity. Scripture then proves that the coming 7th head (the one with 10 horns, which signifies a ruling power, in this case the collective of 10 contemporaneous kings) and 8th king who emerges later as the Antichrist, are also of Roman heritage.

Here we must go to Daniel 7:24, which substantiates this view. The book of Revelation, after all, fits hand in glove with the prophecies in the Book of Daniel. “The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After



them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones.” The kingdom that Daniel is referring to here is the fourth kingdom that he sees in his visions—namely, the terrible beast—that follows the previous ram that represented Greece (see Daniel 7:7). Therefore, indeed the 10-king global power coalition will emerge from the Roman peoples. If this is so, we present this conclusion: the 10 kings cannot include Germany if it really is the modern-day Assyria, as the PCOG claims. According to Daniel 9:26, the 10 kings must be of Roman origin, not Assyrian.

Crucially, consider this important point: Revelation 17:12 says that the 10 kings had “not yet received a kingdom” at the time of John the Revelator. This verse then disqualifies Assyria as being one of the 10 nations (and, for that matter, also modern-day Iran and Egypt). Why? They had already received a kingdom in past history. They are therefore disqualified as members of the final 10 kings.

Points to Ponder

We conclude as follows: indeed we believe that events today in Europe will ultimately play a factor in the emergence of the last-day, 10-king power coalition. We are not at all convinced that this will take the form of a Holy Roman Empire, one that is in complicity with the Roman Catholic Church. Revelation 17 shows the “prostitute” on the back of the beast that represents all 7 historic kingdoms, from Egyptian to Roman. The Roman Catholic Church hasn’t been around that long.

To be sure, European financial instabilities today very likely will play a role in the emergence of the next world order. However, there is no way of anticipating the various convolutions that may unfold in the interim. One should

not forget that we live in a globalized world where international financial markets, politics and economies are tightly intertwined. There is no telling just what event might prove to be a catalyst for further instabilities. Geopolitical events do not occur in a vacuum.

As we have shown, British Israelite perspectives on Germany’s specific role in end-time prophecy are not Scriptural. Furthermore, if it is not possible to identify Germany as modern-day Assyria from Scripture, then one must question of what value such a perspective would have for Christians. Isn’t the Bible the full record of what the Holy Spirit considered essential to reveal to Christians? The same Assyrians that persecuted the Hebrews (destroying the Northern Kingdom and persecuting Judah) in the Old Testament, have decamped and followed the 10 lost tribes to Europe, there to persecute and oppress the descendents of the 10 Northern tribes once again? That would mean that the 2nd head shown on the beast in Revelation 17 must be revived and come back to global dominance. This does not agree with the sequence that is shown in Scripture.

Finally, the Bible does not allow us to make any specific predictions as to what countries will be involved or the timing and exact sequence of last-day events related to the emergence of the 10 kings, and nations outside the Middle Eastern theatre that are not specifically named. That said, careful study of Bible prophecy does allow us to uncover incorrect interpretations, speculations and false prophecies. As such, one should always examine the Scriptures for oneself to test all views, whether from the Philadelphia Church of God *Trumpet*, or *Midnight Call* or any other publication. (MC)

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