

The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders  
(1 Kings 11-14; 2 Chronicles 6-7, 11, 17, 20)

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(This material explores how and why Israel was divided into two kingdoms and **why that event was important for the future fulfillment of God's great works**. We find keys from this watershed event to help us understand the words of the prophets, like Isaiah. It also gives examples how both righteous and unrighteous leaders affect mankind).

I. United Israel was divided into two kingdoms for the following reasons:

A. Due to Solomon's sins, he was forewarned some of the kingdom would be rent from his line, except for one tribe, Judah [Though Benjamin would be mixed with it].

B. Rehoboam, Solomon's son who replaced him, would not take the counsel of older, wiser men, to soften the burdens on ten tribes, but listened to younger, more rash counsel.

C. When Rehoboam placed even harsher burdens upon the other tribes, they rebelled.

So the ten tribes shouted, "To your tents, O Israel" (1 Kings 12:16). And Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

II. **As with the Fall, the Lord used this event to accomplish His great purposes.**

A. Scriptures show this division was prophesied (1 Kings 11:29-31).

B. It was even the Lord's will: For He said, "this thing is from me" (1 Kings 12:24; 2 Chron. 11:4).

III. **The Lord would eventually use the existence of two separate Israels to manifest His handiwork and accomplish His great purposes, using each in a different way.**

A. Through one division, Judah, He would *clearly* manifest His hand. He showed the whole world, by their being removed from His Promised Land, that those who disobey Him will suffer consequences. But He also showed He would extend mercy as promised, by their return. He showed through prophecy and fulfillment, that their Messiah would come among them, be crucified, and His Gospel rejected by them [but received by many Gentiles]. Thus the world would see Judah physically removed, a second time. But in the latter-days, they would be miraculously returned, again as promised. **The History of the Jews would be clear witness to the world that the God of Israel foretold, then fulfilled His word (2 Chron. 7:19-22).**

1. Thus all men have irrefutable witness that the God of Israel is the only true God, for no other *supposed* god could do or has done such amazing works (Isaiah 41:21-26).

B. Through the second division, the rest of Israel, the Lord would also show the consequences of disobedience. They would be removed from the land even before Judah. However, **they would be lost to the knowledge of the world. The Lord's works among this broken-off Israel, would be mostly hidden from the world. Therefore their eventual re-gathering would not be widely recognized, and would be mostly spiritual, though at first also physical.**

C. That portion of the gathering which was physical would be manifest by the same events used when God brought out ancient Israel: the crossing of a deep water barrier; being miraculously fed in the wilderness; being led to a Promised Land; being led by prophets; having the same organizational structures (Three, Twelve and Seventy); building temples unto their God. **In fact, the final marvel of their gathering would, in time, be recognized as greater than that of ancient Israel from Egypt. “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no longer be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he hath driven them;”** (Jeremiah 16:14-16).

D. These marvelous works of the Lord would be less understood at first, testing the faith of the world. But His promises of a gathering would be just as real. He would send prophets to restore the truth. Those accepting the truth would gather into His Kingdom, but which would now be a Church. Then they would help others gather in ever increasing numbers (See 2 Chron. 6:24-39).

IV. The Lord also had His great purposes for this second Israel and its scattering and re-gathering.

A. By scattering this portion of Israel among the world, **one of His purposes was to spread their enlightening influence among the Gentiles, to “lift” the world, “to be a light unto the Gentiles.” “The Gentiles shall come to thy light”** (Isaiah 60:1-3).

B. We can see a perfect example of how this happened through one distinct group

1. There was a wealthy man named Waldo living in France in the 1170’s. That he was of Israel and his long lasting influence among the Gentiles can be seen from the two following accounts, which began during the time when the people could not read the Bible in their own language, it being only in Latin.

“A certain rich man of the city [Lyons], called Waldo, was curious when he heard the gospel read [in Latin] since he was not much lettered, to know what was said. Wherefore he made a pact with certain priests, the one that he should translate to him the Bible: the other, that he should write as the first dictated. Which they did; and in like manner many books of the Bible ... which when the said citizen had often read and learned by heart, he ... sold all his goods, and despising the world, he gave all his money to the poor, and usurped the apostolic office by preaching the gospel, and those things which he had learned by heart.”<sup>10</sup>

Waldo’s “preaching” among the people consisted mostly of reciting passages from the scriptures in the common tongue. Evidently he did not set out with the intent to oppose the church, but merely to enlighten the people. An eyewitness at the Lateran Council of 1179 wrote of Waldo’s initial attempts to get church approval for his activities—and of the church’s negative reaction:

“We saw the Waldensians [supporters of Waldo] at the council celebrated at Rome under Pope Alexander III. They were simple and illiterate men ... and they presented to the lord pope a book written in the French tongue, in which were contained a text and gloss on the psalter, and on very many other books of both testaments. These besought with great urgency that authority to preach should be confirmed to them, for they thought themselves expert, when they were scarcely learned at all.”<sup>11</sup>

Their requests were vehemently denied. But the Waldensians were not easily dissuaded from seeking and promoting scriptural knowledge. While they were not “lettered,” nor had they access to many copies of scripture, they overcame this obstacle by *memorizing* surprising lengths of scripture when they were given the opportunity.

The Waldensians suffered because of their desire to read and understand the scriptures. They were tried by the Inquisition, excommunicated, imprisoned, and burned as heretics. Their books were banned—and when found, burned. At their trials and in the tracts written against them, their great “crime” as stated was that they “translated the New and Old Testament into the vulgar tongue and this they teach and learn. For I have heard and seen a certain unlettered countryman who used to recite Job word for word, and many others who knew the whole New Testament perfectly.”<sup>13</sup>

“All men and women, cease not to teach and learn, night and day. The workman, who toils by day, learns or teaches at night. . . . They teach and learn without books . . . and even in leper-houses. . . . To those who excuse themselves, saying that they cannot learn, they say; ‘learn only one word a day, and in a year’s time you will learn three hundred, and thus you will grow proficient.’”<sup>14</sup>

In spite of attempts to stifle it, the Waldensian movement, and others similar to it, spread into neighboring Italy and Spain. And upon their heels followed official pronouncements against their work—banning the preaching, reading, memorizing, *or even possessing* of scriptures.<sup>15</sup> Penalties for disobedience were extremely severe. According to one inquisitor general’s record in an area near Toulouse, France, 930 sentences against heretics were pronounced during a period of fifteen years, and 114 heretics were destroyed by flames.<sup>16</sup> [Taken from *How the Bible came to Be*, by Lenet Hadley Read, *The Ensign*, June 1982).

[We should note that included in this historical account are definite examples of the influence of both wicked and righteous leaders].

D. The Waldensians did have a great effect upon the world during their times, for eventually their struggles to have a Bible in the common languages was **won**.

E. Now we discover that these were God’s people, to be re-gathered in the Latter-days, as shown in the June 2014 Ensign pp. 44-45.

“In 1849, Elder Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was called to establish a mission in Italy. As he was contemplating where to commence, he learned about the Waldensians, a religious community in the Piedmont mountains of northwestern Italy.

The Waldensians had endured extreme persecutions over seven centuries because of their beliefs. Predating the Protestant Reformation by several hundred years, they preached that Christ’s early Church had fallen into apostasy. They separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church and were declared heretics, driven from cities, tortured, and slaughtered. Rather than renounce their faith, they fled to the upper mountains.<sup>1</sup>

“A flood of light seemed to burst upon my mind when I thought upon [the Waldensians],” recorded Elder Snow. In a letter home he wrote, “I believe that the Lord has there hidden up a people amid the Alpine mountains.”<sup>2</sup>

In other regions of Italy, laws were not favorable for missionary activity. But two years before Elder Snow arrived, the Waldensians in the Piedmont region had been granted religious freedom after centuries of persecution.<sup>3</sup> Not only that, but several among them had received remarkable dreams and visions preparing them to receive the missionaries' message.<sup>4</sup> . . .

The Italian Mission was active only 12 years, but during that time, 12 families and seven individuals were converted and immigrated to Utah. The Waldensians who embraced the gospel infused the Church in Utah with strength, **and today tens of thousands of members trace their heritage back to the 72 faithful Waldensians who left the home of their forefathers to join the Latter-day Saints in the Rocky Mountains.**<sup>6</sup> (Emphasis added).

Through the Waldensians, we can see how the Lord used the scattering and eventual re-gathering of Israel to do as he purposed, bring light to the Gentiles.

V. Bible readers should now be motivated to read God's word carefully, remembering there are *two* Israels being spoken of and to. **In reading prophecy, we must recognize that often prophetic words have double meaning, and the Lord is often speaking to both Israels at the same time, yet with different connotations.** That is, His words are a blending of prophetic meaning to both. (For example, we must remember that Judah's gathering, until the very end, would be almost entirely physical. The gathering of "Israel" (mostly of Ephraim and other tribes, though including some of Judah and even believing Gentiles), would be mostly *spiritual*. *But most often His words carry prophecy for both Israels.*

The Lord's prophecies regarding both Israels are murky for the same reason many prophecies concerning Christ were murky: that the eyes of many would be hindered, requiring sincere seeking for truth, and humbly seeking for the spirit to recognize truth when it is found.

VI. Much of the Christian/Jewish world have lost faith that the ten tribes will be returned. Fortunately, through Latter-day prophets **we know that the promises for them are as real as the physical gathering of many Jews back to the land of Canaan has been.**

A. "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon this the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory" (The Tenth Article of Faith.)

B. **In fact that gathering is going forward today, though unrecognized in the eyes of the world!** Some persons of every tribe have now been identified. The Second Israel is now a body of Saints; God's Kingdom has been established and is now actively, faithfully, preparing for His Coming.

The Lord began preparing for these "marvelous works and wonders" when Israel became divided into two separate Israels; ***someday to return into one people under His Rule.***