

# Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,  
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

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## The Serpent and the Lion, Part 2

Solomon ignored Yahweh's word for the king of Israel concerning Egypt, horses, wives, and riches:

- 16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as Yahweh has said to you, You shall henceforth return no more that way.
- 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. -Deuteronomy 17

Soon after Solomon became king, he made an alliance with the king of Egypt, taking his daughter for a wife:

- 1 And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of Yahweh, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. -1 Kings 3

Adding to the foreign influences upon Israel, Solomon also made an alliance with Hiram, the king of Tyre:

- 12 And Yahweh gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together. -1 Kings 5

We recall that King Hiram had sent a man, also named Hiram, who was a descendent of both Tyre and Dan, to help Solomon in his building endeavors. After building the house of Yahweh, Solomon was enriched with foreign wealth. He received 666 talents of gold in one year:

- 14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, -1 Kings 11

Seeking even greater wealth, Solomon joined navies with King Hiram in search of more earthly goods:

- 22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.
- 23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. -1 Kings 11

Having more wealth and wisdom than any other king on earth, Solomon went back to Egypt to buy horses:

28 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

- 29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring *them* out by their means. -1 Kings 11

Yahweh warns of the consequences of trusting in earthly power, as represented by the horses of Egypt:

- 1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are* many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Yahweh! -Isaiah 31

Solomon was not content with his great wealth, or his Egyptian horses, or even his Egyptian wife. He acquired a thousand foreign wives and concubines, who turned his heart away from Yahweh:

- 1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites;
- 2 Of the nations *concerning* which Yahweh said to the children of Israel, You shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you: *for* surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clung to these in love.
- 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.
- 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with Yahweh his God, as was the heart of David his father. -1 Kings 11

While the prophesy of Jacob that called Dan a serpent that would cause the horse's rider to fall backward (see Genesis 49:17) might be fulfilled through the subtle influences of Tyre and Egypt, what about the prophesy of Moses? How might Dan also be a lion that leaps from Bashan?

- 22 And of Dan he said, Dan *is* a lion's cub: he shall leap from Bashan. -Exodus 33

To understand the importance of Bashan in this prophesy, recall that Manasseh and Ephraim were the sons of Joseph, born in Egypt to the daughter of the priest of On:

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,  
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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20 And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bore to him. -Genesis 41\*

Jacob blessed Joseph's sons as his own. Therefore, both Manasseh and Ephraim's descendants received part of the inheritance of the promised land. Theirs was in the northern regions of Israel. Manasseh's land included Bashan:

13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I to the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. -Deuteronomy 3

Long before Israel had kings, both Ephraim and Manasseh had a major influence on the religion of Dan. Micah, a man of Ephraim, set up a house of gods in Laish. Since Laish means "lion," it was the "city of the lion." Dan captured Laish, along with Micah's gods, and "the city of the lion" was renamed "the city of Dan."

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel: however the name of the city *was* Laish at the first. -Judges 18

Dan then installed the descendants of Manasseh\*\* (people of Bashan) to serve as the priests of the image worshipping religion developed by the man of Ephraim:

30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh. -Judges 18

\*Potipherah, whose name means "he whom the Ra gave," was a priest of the city of On. Later named Heliopolis, On was the center for worshipping the sun god, Ra. Therefore, it is most likely that Potipherah was a priest of the sun god. Vertically erect images representing the fatherhood of the sun god are known as obelisks. Famous ancient obelisks taken from Heliopolis now stand in New York and London. An ancient obelisk also adorns St. Peter's Square in the Vatican.

\*\*Contrary to what the Hebrew manuscripts read, some modern Bible versions (e.g. NIV and NRSV) reason that Dan's priests should be called descendants of Moses instead of Manasseh.

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King Solomon installed Jeroboam, who was also a man of Ephraim, as the ruler of the "house of Joseph." He thus ruled Manasseh and Ephraim, which included Bashan:

26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up *his* hand against the king. -1 Kings 11

28 And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. -1 Kings 11

As Jeroboam became a threat to the power of Solomon, he fled into Egypt because the king sought to kill him:

40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. -1 Kings 11

After Solomon died, Jeroboam returned from Egypt and became the king of the northern kingdom of Israel, thereby taking the ten tribes away from the house of David:

19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come again, that they sent and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. -1 Kings 12

Jeroboam set up golden images of calves, such as those worshipped in Egypt, in both Dan and Bethel. By now, the religion of Dan, under the authority of the priests Manasseh (from the land of Bashan), had become well established. The people loved to worship in Dan:

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves *of* gold, and said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* to Dan. -1 Kings 12

The religious practices of Israel, which were centered around Dan, became known as the "sins of Jeroboam:"

16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin. -1 Kings 14

Jerusalem, which is the city of David, is called "Ariel." The name means "lion of God:"

1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt! add you year to year; let them kill sacrifices. -Isaiah 29

There are two lions. One is of the tribe of Dan and the other, which is the Root of David, is of the tribe of Judah. While the lion of Dan is also called a serpent, the Lion of Judah is also called the Lamb of God. Are we able to see the difference between the lion of Dan and the Lion of Judah?