

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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A Wild Olive Tree

After Jacob wrestled with an unnamed Man throughout the night, the Man gave him a new name, which is “Israel:”

- 27 And he said to him, What *is* your name? And he said, Jacob.
28 And he said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed.
-Genesis 32

The descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob are called the twelve tribes of Israel (see Genesis 49:28). Although Israel eventually had three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, only David repented of his sins to be restored to right standing with Yahweh (see Psalms 51). Both Saul and Solomon lost the kingdom of Israel because of their unrepentant sin of disobeying the Word of Yahweh. Saul, who even consulted with the spirits of the dead, known as “familiar” spirits (see 1 Samuel 28), lost the kingdom to David. Solomon was deceived into worshipping other gods and goddesses besides Yahweh (see 1 Kings 11). After he died, the kingdom of Israel was divided in two (see 1 Kings 12).

The northern kingdom, which consisted of ten tribes and retained the name “Israel,” was a sinful nation that practiced idol worship until their eventual destruction by Assyria (see 2 Kings 17:23). The southern kingdom, which consisted of two tribes, along with the Levite priests, was called “Judah” and, therefore, became known as “Jews” (see 2 Kings 16:6). Even though some of the kings of Judah tried to follow the Word of Yahweh, Judah also fell into the sin of idol worship and, following their worship of the idol known as the “queen of heaven” (see Jeremiah 7:18), were eventually destroyed by the Babylonians (see 2 Kings 25:9).

Even though a remnant of the people of Judah were eventually allowed to return and rebuild their land (see Ezra), the kingdom of Israel was not restored. Many years later in 1948, a modern political nation was established under the name of Israel and was largely settled by people who identify themselves as “Jews.” Even so, the united kingdom of Israel was never restored and the identity of most of “Israel” remains lost even to this day.

Yahshua, who is also called Jesus, called them the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” After He chose His twelve disciples, He specifically sent them out to preach to the “house of Israel” about the approaching “kingdom of heaven:”

- 5 These twelve Yahshua sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter you not:
6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
7 And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. -Matthew 10

James specifically directed his epistle to the “twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:”

- 1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Yahshua the Messiah, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings. -James 1

His epistle was not only directed to the house of Judah, those who are known as “Jews,” but it was also directed to all of the descendants of the sons of Jacob. These people are those who bear the name that was given to Jacob, which is Israel. They have, however, lost their identity. They are the “lost sheep” who are “scattered abroad,” not knowing who they are.

Ironically, just as the twelve tribes of Israel lost their identities, James also lost his. He was the brother of Yahshua (see Matthew 13:33; Galatians 1:19). The Greek text of the Bible says James’ name is *ιακωβος* (iakovos), which is a Greek translation of the Hebrew name Ya‘aqob (Jacob). He bore the name of Israel, which is Jacob. His identity, however, somehow became hidden as his English name became known as “James!”

Paul, who was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, also identified himself as being part of the house of Israel:

- 1 I say then, Has God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. -Romans 11

He was among the natural descendants of one of the sons of Jacob, Benjamin, who was finally able to hear and believe the gospel. He was among the “remnant” of Israel who had been reserved unto God according to the “election of grace:”

- 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. -Romans 11

**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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Except for the remnant, who by the grace of God were elected, the eyes of the rest of the house of Israel have been blinded to the truth of the gospel:

- 7 What then? Israel has not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded
- 8 (According as it is written, God *Yahweh* has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. -Romans 11

God blinded the eyes and closed the ears of Israel so that salvation could come to the Gentiles:

- 11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *has come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. -Romans 11

Even though the eyes of Israel were blinded and they remain scattered throughout the world, it is through Israel that salvation was brought to the Gentiles of the earth. As Isaiah prophesied:

- 5 And now, says Yahweh that formed me from the womb *to be* his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel is not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Yahweh, and my God shall be my strength.
- 6 And he said, It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation unto the end of the earth. -Isaiah 49

The Gentiles, who walked in darkness, were finally able to see the Light of their salvation. Those who were deceived were able to hear the gospel and be adopted into the family of God, into the spiritual house of Israel. Paul says that the people of God, known as Israel, are not all natural Israel. They are those who inherit the “word of promise” that Yahweh gave to Abraham, which would be brought to the world through Isaac, the son of Sarah:

- 6 Not as though the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:
- 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.

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8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

- 9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. -Romans 9

The “children of the promise” are those who believe that Yahweh fulfilled His promise through the Messiah:

- 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is the Messiah. -Galatians 3

They know that Yahweh is the Savior:

- 3 For I *am* Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior: I gave Egypt *for* your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you. -Isaiah 43

By His name Yah, Yahweh has become our salvation:

- 2 Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for Yah Yahweh *is* my strength and *my* song; he also has become my salvation. -Isaiah 12

As Yah the Savior, which is the name of Yahshua, He is the Redeemer of Israel:

- 7 Thus says Yahweh, the Redeemer of Israel, *and* his Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of Yahweh that is faithful, *and* the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose you. -Isaiah 49

As the branches of natural Israel were broken off from the holy olive tree through unbelief, Yahweh grafted the branches of a “wild olive tree,” which were the Gentiles, onto His holy root of Israel:

- 16 For if the first fruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches.
- 17 And if some of the branches are broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
- 18 Boast not against the branches. But if you boast, you bear not the root, but the root you. -Romans 11

Paul, however, cautions that even those who are grafted onto the holy root can still be cut off through their unbelief:

- 19 You will say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.
- 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Be not high minded, but fear:
- 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not you.
- 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *his* goodness: otherwise you also will be cut off. -Romans 11

However, God can graft back again onto the holy olive tree those who had fallen off, *if* they repent of their unbelief:

- 23 And they also, if they continue not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. -Romans 11

It is faith which binds both the natural and wild branches to God’s holy tree. His tree is the Tree of Life.