

Response to DeBoer's Seriously Flawed Book

By Lloyd Dale
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In my quest for specific information about the history of the northern kingdom tribes of Israel I contacted, Dr. James B. Jordan, Biblical Horizons, P.O. Box 1096, Niceville, Fl. 32588. Upon the recommendation of Dr. James B. Jordan, I purchased the book The New Phariseeism, by Louis F. DeBoer and have studied it carefully.

Although the book was of no value for my purposes, I found some things of great interest in it.

For several years and countless hours I have been researching the history of those tribes and needless to say was quite shocked when, during the course of our telephone conversation, Jordan cavalierly commented "who cares" what happened to those tribes.

I called Jordan to ask him for information because I had read a statement that he had written (see enclosed document entitled "introduction") in a chapter entitled "the Worlds of Exile and Restoration" in which he stated:

All the children of Israel come to be considered as part of these "Judahites," even those of the already-exiled **NORTHERN TRIBES who joined back up with Judah during the Babylonian exile.**"¹³ (Emphasis added)

I called because I wondered if he had any primary documentation for that statement. During our telephone conversation I learned that he did not and that DeBoer's book was the best he had to offer.

Please permit me the opportunity to comment on that book.

DeBoer's book is essentially a well done refutation of British Israelism. However, I was extremely disappointed with his third chapter entitled "the lost tribes."

Contrary to Jordan's comment "who cares," DeBoer acknowledges that "(t)here are probably few questions in human history which have attracted so much interest,..." (p.21) And he states that "a complete study of this aspect...is far beyond the scope of (his) book" (p.21). However, it is not beyond the scope of my book.

DeBoer states that "it (his) intention to review those **things that the scriptures clearly teach** concerning this subject (i.e. the lost tribes)." (p.21, emphasis added)

It is extremely unfortunate that *he did not accomplish his intention*. I am in complete agreement with DeBoer that “those things we can glean from the word of God are on a better footing” (p.21) than historical opinion. In the last paragraph of page 21 he gets off to a really good start, however, before he got to the end of that paragraph he egregiously departed from the word of God and seldom found his way back in the remainder of chapter three.

DeBoer postulates:

In the days of Rehoboam, a constitutional crisis over taxes, at a convention called to elect the next king, led to the legal secession of **some of the Northern tribes** from the federal compact. (p. 22, emphasis added)

According to Holy Scripture, Rehoboam began to reign at the time of Solomon’s death (1Kings 11:43; 2Chron.9:31). He became king by **birthright, as a right of primogeniture**, he was not elected. In accord with this he is identified as king (1Kings 12:6, 12, 13, 15, 16; 2Chron. 10: 6,12,13,15, etc.) throughout the record of these events.

The gathering at Shechem was not a “convention called to elect the next king.” It was a meeting called for the purpose of conferring with the new king (Rehoboam) about the issue of excessive taxation, and ultimately ended with a new kingdom composed of ten tribes, with a new king (Jeroboam of the tribe of Ephraim); i.e. the “northern kingdom” now know as the house of Israel (a.k.a. Israel, Ephraim, the house of Joseph, the house of Rachel, etc.).

The fracture that was to occur as a result of the conflict over that issue was divinely ordained, for Yahweh informed Rehoboam through the prophet Shemaiah that “**this thing is from me.**” (1Kings 12:24) DeBoer obviously missed this point.

DeBoer continues:

This fracture of the Hebrew Republic led to the formation of a Northern Kingdom know as Israel, or Ephraim, after its chief tribe, and was composed basically of **nine tribes**. The Southern Kingdom...known as Judah...was basically composed of **four tribes**. (Ibid)

Although DeBoer speculates at length about the division of the tribes into two kingdoms, I do not know where DeBoer got his notion for the numbers of tribes that formed the northern and the southern kingdoms that came about as a result of this fracture, but it certainly was not from the Bible.

Rehoboam was from the tribe of Judah. In 1Kings 11:11 Yahweh told Solomon that because of his sin He was going to take the kingdom of Israel away from him and give it to his servant (Jeroboam). However, in verse 12 and 13 Yahweh explains that He will not do it while Solomon is alive, but that He would take the kingdom of Israel (ten tribes)

“out of the hand of his son,” (Rehoboam) and he would leave one tribe (Benjamin) with Judah. Then in verses 29-38 Yahweh, through the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite (v.29), instructed Jeroboam that He was going to take the kingdom of Israel of Israel way from Solomon and that He was going to give the Kingdom of Israel (v.38) to Jeroboam, and in verses 31 and 35 Yahweh tells Jeroboam that he will be given **ten tribes**, and he shall “**be king over Israel**” (v.37).

Thus Israel was constituted by Yahweh as a kingdom composed of ten tribes and Judah as a kingdom composed of two tribes. The tribe of Benjamin (meaning “light bearer”) was given to Rehoboam in order that “David My servant may have **a light always before me in Jerusalem...**” (v.36). In 1Kings 12:19 we read that “Israel (the ten tribes) rebelled against the house of David unto this day (the day that Kings was written during or after the Babylon captivity). and in verse 21 we read that Rehoboam “assembled all the house of Judah with Benjamin” (the two tribes) to build an army with which he intended to fight Israel into submission. Thus Benjamin faithfully remained with Judah through the years in the land, into the Babylon captivity, through the return, and down to the first century. Thus, in Acts 2:7 we read that “all these which speak” are “Galileans.” Those from Galilee were of the tribe of Benjamin. These “disciples” were bearing **the light** of the Christ of the tribe of Judah in fulfillment of that promise.

Although the Bible never refers to these two kingdoms as the northern and southern kingdoms, this has since become common terminology. As DeBoer acknowledges, the ten tribed kingdom was in fact called Israel by the Bible writers and was also known by several other titles such as the house of Israel, Ephraim, Samaria, the house of Joseph et al.

The two tribed kingdom was named Judah, and was also referred to as the house of Judah, Jerusalem, etc.

After making his incredulous commentary on the divisions of the two kingdoms, DeBoer gets more Biblical (except were marred by his division of the tribes) in the balance of pages 22 and 23.

Although DeBoer does not explicitly state that the entire population of the northern kingdom was carried away into the Assyrian Diaspora, **it is certainly implied by what he did write**. The deportations of the southern kingdom “did not entirely depopulate the Southern Kingdom...” as they did the northern kingdom (2Kings 17:18ff).

“While the history of the (southern kingdom captivity) is fairly well profiled by historians, (they, including DeBoer) **have yet to deal** with the fate of the other (ten) tribes.”

Contrary to assertions by Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible, DeBoer, and many others; the Bible provides **no evidence that any portion of the ten tribes that were taken captive and dispersed by the Assyrians returned from Babylon with the tribes of Judah,**

Benjamin, and some Levites! Contrary to DeBoer's assertion that "this seems to be the scriptural (sic) position,..." **it certainly is not the Scriptural position.**

The ten tribes were not "lost." About this DeBoer is correct. Thus, it is true that "the authors of the New Testament certainly do not seem to recognize the idea of any 'lost tribes.' Actually the New Testament clearly acknowledges the existence of the "ten tribe" and identifies their location¹. "The (Biblical) record clearly shows that those who returned from the Babylonian captivity were...from the tribes of the Southern kingdom." Not "predominantly," but completely.

Certainly "in the scriptures (sic) the sacred writers continually call them 'the children of Israel' and 'the seed of Israel'" because the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and the Levites **certainly were children of the patriarch Jacob/Israel!** Why shouldn't "the sacred writers continually call them 'the children of Israel' and 'the seed of Israel?'" That fact **in no way establishes that any of the people of the ten tribes returned from Babylon with Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites.**

Ezra, Nehemiah, and the other post exilic writers knew full well that the returnees from Babylon were not "all Israel." They certainly knew that there were thousands possibly even millions of Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites still residing in Babylon. It is clearly not their intention to state or even infer that all the children of Israel had returned to Judaea and Jerusalem. Their intention is clearly established in Ezra 8:25: "...all Israel *there present*,..."

By the time the returnees from Babylon had established their presence in Judaea and Jerusalem, **they were the only visible children of Israel in the land**, so naturally they called themselves Israel, and they were the representatives of Israel in the land. However, they were by **no means all the children of Israel then in existence!**

When the apostle Peter declared, "therefore let **ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL** know assuredly, that Yahweh has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:5-11, emphasis added), the phrase "**all the house of Israel**" *is not a reference to tribes of Israel!* It is clearly a reference to "THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD" that DeBoer identifies so well in chapter 6 of his book.

According to the text, the Jews "crucified...Jesus" they did not "know assuredly, that Yahweh has made that same Jesus...Lord and Christ. They had "denied that Jesus is the Christ" (1John 2:22) and according to John they are "lairs" and "antichrist" (2John 7).

¹ The fourth Gospel records: "Then said the Jews among themselves, Where will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto *the dispersed* among the *Nations*/Gentiles, and teach the Nations/Gentiles?" (Joh 7:35)

"and not for the nation (of the Jews) only, but also to gather into one the children of God *who were scattered abroad* (the ten tribes)." (Joh 11:52) Both of which clearly identifies the ten tribes; as "scattered among the Nations, just exactly as the OT prophesied and records that they should be.

According to Paul "...not all Israel...is Israel...the children of the promise are counted for the seed (Israel)." (Romans 9:6-8)

Peter declared, let **ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL** know assuredly, that Yahweh has made that same Jesus...both Lord and Christ." The Jewish liars and antichrists did not know assuredly that Yahweh had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. **ONLY THE BLOOD BOUGHT BELIEVERS**, as DeBoer so capably demonstrates in his book, **ASSUREDLY KNEW THAT YAHWEH HAD MADE JESUS BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.**

Both Old Testament and New Testament writers confirm that this is the true understanding of that passage for they state:

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make **A NEW COVENANT** with **the house of Israel** and with **the house of Judah**: 10 For this [is] **THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL** after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Jer. 31:31 & 33; Heb 8:8 & 10, emphasis added)

In the passage quoted above, the Scripture very plainly declares that **new covenant Israel** shall be known as **THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!** Peter, applying this understanding thus properly declared that "the whole house of Israel" (that is, all believers) shall assuredly know that Yahweh has indeed made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

In speaking about these believers of Israel, Isaiah states that they "*shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified" (Isa.60:21). In Isaiah 61 Yahweh states that He: "will make an everlasting covenant with them" to accomplish this. Of this new everlasting covenant Yahweh states:

9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that **they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.**

10 ¶ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath **clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**

11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; **so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.** (Isaiah 61:9-11, emphasis added)

And then to sum up this new everlasting covenant Isaiah writes:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until **the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp [that] burneth.** 2 **And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name**, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. (Isa 62:1-2)

In context the passages quoted above clearly declare the **salvation in Jesus Christ** event of the first century. Isaiah also declared that at the time of that event the righteous of the whole house of Israel “shall be called by a new name.” That is the old name Israel would be downplayed and the new name would become the common name. That is, the followers of the Messiah would be called after the Messiah.

Thus Luke the author of Acts of the Apostles writes:

Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: Ac 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And **the disciples were called Christians** first in Antioch. (Ac 11:25-26)

The true Israel of Yahweh then received there new identity as the Christ followers “Christians.”

Thus, “IT IS THE ELECT, THE CHOSEN OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS, THAT ARE HIS PEOPLE AND CONSTITUTE THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD” AND THE NEW TESTAMENT “WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!”

That Truth may prevail.

Sincerely in the service of the present and reigning King,

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