

There is no Israel Without Joseph

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Abstract

In this paper I will seek to show that historically, archeologically and biblically, the name *Israel* is associated with what was called the *Northern Kingdom*. Biblically, this kingdom is further associated with the family of *Joseph* thru his son *Ephraim*, therefore, there should surely be some outward acknowledgement of these facts in modern day Israel, yet this is far from true; neither of the names *Joseph* or *Ephraim* receives any formal honor or recognition in the country that bears the name that was bequeathed to them, because the northern kingdom – *Israel* – has been sublimated within *Judah/Judaism*.

It is time to rectify this unfortunate situation.

Keywords: Israel, Judah, northern kingdom, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, southern kingdom, exile, Saul, David, Solomon, Jeroboam, Biblical prophecies, steles, YHWH, Mt. Ebal, 10 lost tribes, Israelite, Israeli, Israel's Declaration of Independence

There is no Israel Without Joseph

Introduction

In an article published recently in the *Times of Israel*¹, Professor Israel Finklestein made the following statement:

“As far as I can judge, it dates to the 11th century BCE. As such, it can be understood as representing the groups which established the kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) in the 10th century BCE. In other words, it is an early Israelite site,” he told The Times of Israel.”

The kingdom that Professor Finklestein speaks of is more popularly known as the *10 lost tribes*, and has pretty much been written off as having no real significance today. Be that as it may, this does not detract from the historical truth of its past existence and prominence; Archeology has proven conclusively that the northern kingdom was known as *Israel* and that it rose to ascendancy before its southern brother, *Judah*, enjoying wide ranging respect as a kingdom. The article in the *Times of Israel* if verified would mean that the worship of YHWH within the borders of Caanan/Israel originated in the north, which is another reason for understanding the importance of the place of the northern kingdom in the history and legacy of the people known as the *Children of Israel*, as well as its place in today's *State of Israel*.

¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/archaeologist-claims-to-find-oldest-hebrew-text-in-israel-including-the-name-of-god/?utm_source=The+Daily+Editio%E2%80%A6

Historically

“In the first half of the eighth century B.C.E., Israel ruled over the lion’s share of the territory of the two Hebrew kingdoms (fig. 1), and its population accounted for three quarters of the people of Israel and Judah combined (Broshi and Finkelstein 1992). Israel was stronger than Judah both militarily and economically, and in the first half of the ninth century and in the first half of the eighth century—almost half the time the two kingdoms co-existed—Israel dominated the southern kingdom. Nonetheless, Israel has lingered in the shadow of Judah, both in the story told in the Hebrew Bible and in the attention paid to it by modern scholarship.”²



Fig. 1

² I. Finkelstein, *THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*, © 2013 by the Society of Biblical Literature, intro.

I am neither an archeologist or historian, therefore I have no “new” information to present in these areas. What I will do is quote various writings from authors who are recognized experts that prove the existence of the northern kingdom both archeologically and historically. In particular I recommend the writings of Professor Israel Finkelstein – quoted above – and those of Professor Nadav Naaman. Professor Finkelstein's quoted book in particular gives a very through explanation of the northern kingdom and what he views as its significance today. Their works contain references to other experts in their fields whose writings can thereby additionally be consulted.

- Samaria was captured by Assyria in 722–720 B.C.E. (for details, see Becking 1992). The northern kingdom disappeared forever, groups of its elite population were deported to Mesopotamia, and foreign groups were settled by the Assyrians in the territories of the fallen kingdom.

This was the end. Or was it? In a surprising twist of history, a short while later Israel was back, not as a kingdom but as a concept.¹ In fact, the fall of one Israel opened the way for the rise of another Israel—the children of Israel—composed of twelve tribes, encompassing the territory ruled by the two Hebrew kingdoms. In the course of this transformation, texts that originated in the northern kingdom were incorporated into the Bible, to form part of the great Hebrew epic.³

- During its short period of existence, the Northern kingdom challenged its southern neighbor Judah in virtually every domain. As early as the late 10th century B.C.E., the North Israelite monarchs established control over territory with improved environmental conditions, important land routes and other essential resources. A few decades later, Israel was already engaged in global politics and actively participated in the resistance to the growing power of Assyria.⁴

³ Israel Finkelstein, *THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM The Archeology and History of Northern Israel*, © 2013 by the Society of Biblical Literature, pg. 165

⁴ Assaf Kleiman

- Therefore, Aharoni did not consider it necessary to propose an argument for the existence of tax collection in the Northern Kingdom in general, or an argument for the assumed taxes as an explanation for the Samaria Ostraca. I have maintained that we can speak of a developed state in Judah only at the end of the 8th century at the earliest, and in Israel only from the middle of the 9th century (Niemann 1993).⁵
- In an effort to contribute to the study of the early Israelite traditions, I here examine some episodes that I propose we identify as fragments of a lost North Israelite conquest story. These episodes are imbedded now in various biblical narratives that relate the early history of Israel, and I suggest combining and treating them as pieces of a lost story, reflecting the way in which the conquest of the Land was memorialized in the Northern Kingdom.⁶
- The Tel Dan stele consists of several fragments making up part of a triumphal inscription in Aramaic, left most probably by Hazael of Aram-Damascus, an important regional figure in the late 9th century BCE. The unnamed king boasts of his victories over the king of Israel and his apparently the king of the "House of David" (b y t d w d). It is considered the earliest widely accepted reference to the name David as the founder of a Judahite polity outside of the Hebrew Bible, though the earlier Mesha Stele contains several possible references with varying acceptance. A minority of scholars have disputed the reference to David, due to the lack of a word divider between *byt* and *dwd*, and other translations have been proposed. The Tel Dan stele is one of four known inscriptions made during a roughly

A North Israelite Royal Administrative System and its Impact on Late-Monarchic Judah, pg. 2

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel, © 2017 Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG, Tübingen

⁵ *A New Look at the Samaria Ostraca: The King-Clan Relationship*, © 2015, Ugarit-Verlag – Buch- und Medienhandel GmbH, Münster ISBN Print: 978-3-86835-117-0 – ISBN E-Book: 978-3-86835-145-3

⁶ Nadav Naaman Tel Aviv University, *Rediscovering a Lost North Israelite Conquest Story*, Rethinking Israel: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel in Honor of of Israel Finkelstein © Copyright 2017 Eisenbrauns.

400-year period (1200-800 BCE) containing the name "Israel", the others being the Merneptah Stele, the Mesha Stele, and the Kurkh Monolith.⁷

There is no controversy concerning the references in the Tel-Dan stele to the *king of Israel*, because it is a well-established and accepted fact that the northern kingdom was known as *Israel* and the southern as *Judah*, which further shows that this historical dichotomy simply is not commonly known today or when it is probably not seen as that important, because the 10 tribes that comprised the northern kingdom are considered *lost* in today's world. However, archeology and history can only reveal what was, they cannot cast any light on the future. This is when we must turn to the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew Bible

“This Bible has a long and complicated history. It was not written by a single author as a single book, the way modern books are, but reflects ancient Israelite or Jewish literature written over a one-thousand-year period by a small civilization that existed on the margins of the great ancient empires of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Greece...

In reconstructing the history of ancient Israel, it is important to remember that history does not write itself: The people who write history' decide what did or did not happen and the ways in which events are connected. Judgments are made about what is worth remembering and what can be discarded, as well as how to organize events and impose a story line on complex occurrences. Long time spans are reduced into more manageable blocks. Every historian faces difficult decisions, but this is particularly so for historians grappling with the history of ancient Israel. Given its sheer length and diversity, the Bible cannot be ignored when attempting to reconstruct this period. However, while the Bible is essential for reconstructing the history of earliest Judaism, this does not mean that it is especially reliable. Modern historians of ancient Israel cannot simply

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Dan_stele#Interpretation_and_disputes

paraphrase the Bible, or accept its accounts at face value, and they must consider extrabiblical sources, as well.”⁸

While the Hebrew Bible may not be a reliable historical source- as stated above- when studying the history of ancient Israel, it has to be considered, especially because it not only relates its version of that history, but also predicts the future of the Israelite people! The future it predicts is based on the history it relates, and most people today are more concerned with that future, particularly since the establishment of the State of Israel. With the passing of the *Jewish State Law*⁹, the nation officially defined itself as *Jewish*, which raises the question, what does this mean in terms of our understanding of the historical *Israel* that we know existed as a distinctly different polity from the *Judeans/Judahite* historical ancestors of today’s *Jewish* people?

In its *Declaration of Independence*¹⁰, the State of Israel’s founding fathers gave voice to their belief in the words of the prophets of Israel (“*it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel... the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.*”), therefore, we should examine the words of those prophets and what they had to say about *Judah* and *Israel*.

“14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said: ‘The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath been my shepherd all my life long unto this day,

⁸ Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Hebrew Bible and the Early History of Israel*, The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS 2010

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic_Law:_Israel_as_the_Nation
State_of_the_Jewish_People#cite_note-:0-2

¹⁰ <https://m.knesset.gov.il/en/about/pages/declaration.aspx>

16 the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named in them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”¹¹

Here, in Genesis 48, Jacob/Israel bestows a blessing upon Joseph by giving the inheritance of his name to Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim- the youngest- and Manasseh. He further states that this name would also represent the names of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac; thereby *the Children of Israel* comes to mean, *the Children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and set Ephraim before Manasseh as the first-born in the stead of Reuben. After the separation of the nation with the death of Solomon (ref. 1 Kings 11:26-37), the names *Israel* and *Ephraim* become almost synonymous (Ref. The book of Hosea; Jeremiah 31:8; Ezekiel 37:16, 19), and the distinction between the two kingdoms a major focal point of prophecy (ref. Amos 1:1, 7:10-12; Isaiah 11:12, 13; Jeremiah 30: 3, 4, 25, 31:26, 30, 33:7, 14; Ezekiel 37).

These Biblical accounts support the revealed archeological and historical records that *Israel* and *Judah* were distinct, and go even further to predict their presence in the land at a future date as two separate polities before being united. Both the historical and biblical records tell us that, after the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel, many residents of that area migrated to the territory of Judah and resided there.

“It was only the fall of the northern kingdom and the move of a large number of Israelites to Judah that brought about the rise of pan-Israelite ideology in the south. The new vision promoted the idea of the supremacy and sole legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty and the Jerusalem temple among the mix of Judahites and Israelites that now constituted the population of Judah. Still later, with the withdrawal of Assyria, this ideology was expanded to include all people and territories that were once ruled by the two Hebrew kingdoms. As part of this ideological process, and in competition with the

¹¹ <https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0148.htm>

remaining Israelites, the Samaritans, and their temple at Mount Gerizim, the term Israel was transformed from the name of the kingdom to a concept of a future unified nation living under a Davidic king and worshipping in the Jerusalem temple. The short, two-century-long history of the kingdom of Israel gave birth, then, to the millennia-long concept of the people of Israel.”¹²

While it may be said that the unification of the two kingdoms took place after the return from Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 2:70: Nehemiah 7:72), to me this period fails to fulfil the prophecies because there was no formal representation of the northern kingdom at that time nor afterwards until this day. The prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel clearly express a return to the land by both Hebrew nations as separate entities that would recognize one another as equals and be reunited. This has yet to occur, though the seeds of such a return are within the state of Israel’s *Declaration of Independence* (THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles), where the word “Exiles” should be understood to mean those of the northern kingdom taken by the Assyrians, as it would be redundant to read “Jewish immigration”, and “Exiles” as referencing the same people. The founding fathers of the State knew of the difference, and took it into account without directly stating that the “Exiles” were of the northern kingdom, Israel, perhaps in light of the fact that their intent was to give that name to their new State!

¹² Israel Finklestein, *The Forgotten Kingdom, The Archeology and History of Northern Israel*, Copyright © 2013 by the Society of Biblical Literature



As *Yehudim/Jews*, the people who founded the new State should be seen as representative of the ancient kingdom of Judah, all of whose citizens would have been viewed as such. The new State, because it is called *Israel*, should give the name *Israelites* to its residents, however, the term that is used today is *Israelis*, which avoids—in my opinion—connecting today’s residents with those of ancient *Israel*, i.e., the northern kingdom. Within the religious Jewish community, the difference between the two kingdoms is well known and recognized:

אין ישראל בלי יוסף
"There can be no Israel without Yosef"
 אין גאולה בלי יוסף (עשרת השבטים)
 There can be NO Redemption without the
 Return of the Lost 10 Tribes
 זאת שנת השובע (Return) - אמת שנת השובע



Joseph & Asenath were the rulers of Egypt and other foreign lands for 48 years
 2 Sons of Joseph & Asenath: Ephraim & Manasseh (left & right)

Who is Yosef?
 Yosef was sold into Egypt...
This is the Jubilee Year for Yosef's Return!
 Since the end of the 10 Tribes...
Who is out there pushing for Return?
 While much confusion reigns...
Yosef is ALIVE!

Israeli Government Investigation
 The recent phenomenon of...
The Future for Israel
 On the 10 Tribes...
How YOU can share in this Awareness Campaign...
 If YOU are a Torah...
Join the 100-million lead
 Support...
For FULL DETAILS of Project Independence...

A Rift Extending Across History

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The conflict between Joseph and his brothers, particularly that between Joseph and Judah, runs like a seam across the entire history of Israel. At times Joseph gains the upper hand, at times Judah prevails, but the schism always resurfaces. Our sages even speak of two messiahs, each with a role to play in the final fulfillment of Israel's mission—a messiah descended from Joseph, and a messiah from the royal house of David, from the tribe of Judah.



The Jerusalem Post - 27.09.2015

The religious have anticipated the return of the house of Joseph/Israel, with many believing this must take place before the return of the Jewish Messiah (ref. *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, Joseph Klausner, 1956, pg. 11). The unexpected arrival in 1969 of a group of people from America via Liberia, West Africa, has served to highlight this ambiguity.

“When the first group arrived in Israel at the end of 1969, Interior Ministry representatives did not know the members of the community, who had American citizenship who arrived on flights from Liberia in West Africa. Therefore, it was decided to give them an absorption basket and a residence in Dimona until this becomes clear. At that time, they were granted only work visas and not citizenship. It soon became clear that the members of the group were not Jews, were not entitled to return **and did not**

even claim to be Jews. On the contrary, **they claim to be the true descendants of the children of Israel** who returned to the Promised Land "in which at this time the State of Israel now resides". Members of the community were even offered to convert, but they refused on the grounds that **they were the original Israelites.** From then on, the state began to oppose the entry of more groups.”¹³ (Emphasis mine)

The arrival of this group in 1969 caught the government and people of Israel totally by surprise; they did not know how to deal with the claims of the group because they never anticipated anyone coming and wanting to reside in Israel under the law of return without considering themselves *Jewish!* Yet, this is what happened in 1969, and we can see here the fulfilling of the words of the prophet, Amos 9:

*“9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift **the house of Israel among all the nations**, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*

***14 And I will turn the captivity of My people Israel**, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.*

***15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the YHWH thy God.”**¹⁴ (Emphasis mine)*

The house of Israel, i.e., the northern kingdom, was “sifted”/widely and thinly dispersed, among **all the nations!** In the course of over 2,000 years, they became intermingled with the peoples of those nations and were thereby *Israelites* more in spirit than culturally. This is why they were/are often referred to as the *lost tribes of Israel*; no one knew where they were because they were too scattered to maintain a conscious identity as a nation of people; they could only be recalled/resurrected by their God. (ref. Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 31:6-8; Ezekiel 36:17-24, 37:11-14) The only way the government

¹³ <https://israeli-ipc.org.il/blackhebrew/>

¹⁴ <https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1509.htm>

and people of the state of Israel could know whether the declaration of the new arrivals as the returned of the house of Israel was true or not would be by their works; time would either verify their claim or condemn them as liars who would eventually leave the land.



https://www.academia.edu/61509857/Reclaiming_our_Heritage_as_Hebrew_Israelites

Nearly 53 years later, 153 members of the community of Hebrew Israelites which arrived in 1969 are being threatened with deportation, having voluntarily revealed to government officials their continued “illegal” presence in Israel for many years, some as long as 30 or more. The case is currently in the courts as the community seeks to avoid the deportation of these individuals and families, and while it is true that they were living here in violation of the law of the state, it is hoped that the government will show clemency and allow them to stay in some legal manner.

The issue has brought attention to the Hebrew Israelites, whose numbers have grown over the course of the years and who continue to live in many ways exemplary lives. As they have continued practicing their Hebraic lifestyle, they have garnered much attention from the public of Israel and the international press. That they say they are Israelites but not Jewish has naturally raised many questions in light of the fact that Israel is “officially” a Jewish state, and this has provided the opportunity to bring forth information similar to that contained in this writing to a broader base of people, to highlight that there is no contradiction in being *Israelite* while not being *Jewish*.

The promise of Amos 9:15 is that the God of Israel would return His people, *Israel*, back to their land and that they would never again be plucked up from there. When we look at the prophet Isaiah, we see that he foresaw difficulties in the reunification of the two kingdoms.

“13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”¹⁵

Ephraim is not to envy the position of Judah, but, also, Judah is not to place stumbling blocks before Ephraim! The house of *Joseph* must be recognized as distinct from that of *Judah*, which is to say that it must be said that not all the family of Jacob are *Jewish*, and that the promises given to the patriarchs are the collective inheritance of all the sons (if the Bible is true!). This also means that, biblically, ***there is no Israel without Joseph!***

Conclusion

In his article, *The Battle for Old Testament and History*¹⁶, Doctor Gary Gromacki states:

¹⁵ <https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1011.htm>

¹⁶ THE BATTLE FOR OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

“The battle for Old Testament history and archaeology is a battle for the Bible and the historicity of the people, places, and events described in the Bible. Archaeological discoveries have confirmed the historical accuracy of the Bible. The Bible is a source of historical information and is itself an ancient document that must be consulted in order to understand the ancient Near East.”

He argues in favor of accepting the Bible as a creditable source of historical information, despite the current lack of archeological information to substantiate some of its claims. He uses the *Tell Dan Stele* as evidence that time will verify what has not been yet been substantiated of biblical history, because until its discovery, there was no “proof” of a “historical” king David.

“In the summer of 1993, Dr. Avraham Biran and his team were excavating a site labeled Tell Dan, located in northern Galilee at the base of Mt. Hermon. He discovered in the ruins a stele or stone slab containing Aramaic inscriptions. The stele contained thirteen lines of writing, but none of the sentences was complete. Some of the lines contained only three letters while the widest contained fourteen. The letters that remained were clearly engraved and easy to read. Two of the lines included the phrases “The King of Israel” and “House of David.”

The Tell Dan stele is the first ancient reference outside of the Bible to mention David. It dates to about 820 BC. In this inscription, Hazael, King of Aram, boasts, “I killed Joram, son of Ahab, King of Israel, and I killed Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, king of the House of David.” Second Kings 8:28-29 records Joram’s being injured in battle against Hazael. But the Bible tells us that Joram was later actually slain by Jehu (2 Kgs 9:14-26). The Arameans knew he was injured in battle and mistakenly assumed that he

died later of his battle wounds. Hazael was victorious over Israel and Judah and erected this stele to celebrate the defeat of the two kings.

In 1994 two more pieces were found with inscriptions which refer to Jehoram, the son of Ahab, ruler over Israel, and Ahaziah, ruler over the House of David or Judah. These names and facts correspond to the account given in 2 Kings 8-9.

The find has confirmed a number of facts. First, the use of the term “House of David” implies that there was a Davidic dynasty that ruled Israel. Here is external affirmation that King David did really exist. Second, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were prominent political kingdoms. Critics viewed them as insignificant states.”¹⁷

His conclusion that the find confirms a “*Davidic dynasty that ruled Israel*”, is flawed; the information he quotes from the stele clearly makes a distinction between *the King of Israel*, and *the King of the House of David*. He does go on to acknowledge that there were two kingdoms, *Israel* and *Judah*. What we learn from this, once again, is that the distinction between *Israel* and *Judah* is widely known and accepted as historical and biblical truth. The question that arises, therefore, is do these Bible maximalists who view the Bible as historically valid, also believe in the prophetic accounts there as well?

Ultimately, everyone chooses what they want to accept as “truth”; to have “faith” implies a belief that at some point what is “believed to be true” will actually be proven as such. I am going to close this with two quotes from the New Testament; I don’t believe the person who is said to have voiced these words was/is God in the flesh, but I do believe he was an Israelite/Judahite/Jew who believed in the God of Israel and the prophecies.

¹⁷ THE BATTLE FOR OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
Dr. Gary Gromacki Associate Professor of Bible and Homiletics Baptist Bible Seminary Clarks Summit,
Pennsylvania, *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 24-55, pg. 50

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, **or the prophets**: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law (or the prophets!) till all is fulfilled.¹⁸

“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”¹⁹

(My emphasis)



¹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/matthew/5-17.htm>

¹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/matthew/15-24.htm>