THE ENIGMATIC HEBREWS: Judah: Hebrews, Jews, Christians, Jesus

What is most impacting on the human personality and soul: religion or race? Also, how does the original man fit into this scheme of religion and race?

Dec. 4, 2008 - PRLog -- Greetings Brethren:

Are you who you are? Yet, can one be who his Father was? What is most impacting on the human personality and soul: religion or race? Also, how does the original man fit into this scheme of religion and race? Have they manipulated the historic position of the people of God (The Hebrews) for material gain?

Peace,
Carl A. Patton, FreedomJournal

THE ENIGMATIC HEBREWS

Part 5: Judah: Hebrews, Jews, Christians, Jesus

In the name of God, Master of the universe, Ruler of the earth.

The Kingdom of Judah has a direct relationship to the origin of the word Jew and Judaism. Therefore, Judah most likely is a key element in determining the origin of the confusion of the Hebrew race with religion. All people of a particular race do not automatically embrace a certain religion. However, God chose the Hebrew people to speak to the Gentile nations about God. They were also told of the coming Messiah. Therefore this historical relationship with God is a good argument for the notion that all Hebrews are Jews. Thus those that accept this position also argue that all Jews, Hebrews, and Israelites ascribe to the religion of Judaism. For the record the Godliness of a man or woman is noted in Love, Respect, and the will to coexist with other people of the world. People of God do not abuse, exploit and dehumanize other people. God created all of humankind and all people are eligible for God's grace and mercy.

Canaan was one of the old names for Palestine. The settlement of the Hebrew people in Canaan after the exodus from Egypt was a time of division and disunity. Most of the Hebrew tribes were independent and did not want to yield tribal sovereignty to a central ruler. However there was a period when all the Kingdoms were united. Saul was the first King of Israel (I Samuel 8; II Samuel 1). The rule of Saul was not a great success, when he died around 1000 B.C. civil war developed among the Hebrew tribes. Out of this division and strife emerged David (II Samuel 1; I Kings 2). David was a member of the tribe of Judah. His dynasty ruled in Jerusalem until the destruction of the Babylonians in 587 B.C.

David and his son Solomon (I Kings 2-11) unified the Hebrew nation. This was the period of greatness among the Hebrew people. However, with the death of Solomon the Hebrew nation was divided. Most of the tribes seceded from Judah and formed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Meanwhile, the descendants of David continued to rule over the few tribes left. This small remnant was called the Kingdom of Judah.

The Biblical sources for the history of Judah are found in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. The history of Israel and Judah are often tied together, but Israel is often the most dominant element in the historical accounts. Therefore we bring up for review the relationship of Judah to race and religion among the Hebrew people. The following is a brief look at the history of Judah.

We may divide the history of Judah from the death of Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians into three periods:
1. Judah from the death of Solomon to the mid-eight century, 922-742 B.C.
For almost two centuries Judah and Israel lived side by side. However, the first two generations the various kings of Judah fought against Israel to reunite all of the Hebrew nations.

2. Judah during Assyrian ascendancy, 742-687 B.C.
The Assyrian conquests to capture the civilized world destroyed Israel in 722 B.C. Also, Judah was damaged. As Judah was brought under Syrian control spiritual and religious subordination resulted. The Assyrians brought paganism to Judah. As paganism plagued Judah the prophets Micah and Isaiah sought religious reforms.

3. The last century of the Kingdom of Judah, 687-587 B.C.
During the last century of Judah's existence there were on-going wars until the Babylonians conquered Judah. Thus with the fall of the Assyrian empire (612 B.C.) the new Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar ruled Judah. Meanwhile Jerusalem was destroyed and the people taken captive.

Josiah the last good Hebrew King tried to revive Judah. The rediscovery of the Mosaic Law in the temple aided him. Meanwhile, Josiah tried to rid Judah of paganism. The great prophet Jeremiah began his career during Josiah's reign and it extended into the period of captivity. Jeremiah also predicted the fall of the nation because of her sins. By 587 B.C. the Babylonians destroyed all of the cities of Judah. Some historians argue that the Hebrew nation was annihilated. Also the record shows that the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians ceased to exist. However, the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people.

"A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, became the basis on which they would build a new Israel.
Meanwhile, how is the new Israel distinguished? Also did the word's Jew and Judaism originate in Judah? What impact did the assimilation with the Gentiles have on the Hebrew people? The word Jew does not occur before the period of Jeremiah in the Old Testament. Most sources note that it originally identified one belonging to the tribe of Judah or the two tribes of the Southern Kingdom (II Kings 16:10; 25: 25). It is also recorded that they later extended the meaning of Jew to include any one of the Hebrew race who returned from the Captivity. The record further notes that most of the exiles came from Judah. These exiles were also the main historical representatives of ancient Israel.

Thus the term Jew became the word used to define the entire Hebrew race throughout the world (Esther 2: 5: 3: 2-6; 10: 3 and Matthew 2: 2).

Early in the history of Judah and Israel the language of Judah was called Jewish. Also in the Old Testament the adjective Jewish applies to the Jews language or speech (II Kings 18: 26, 28: Nehemiah 13: 24; Isaiah 36: 11, 13). In the New Testament Gospels "Jews" is always plural and is the usual term for Israelites. The Apostle Paul warns us of Jewish fables in Titus 1: 14; he also speaks of the Jews religion in Galatians 1: 13, 14. Thus if we then accept the notion that Jew, Hebrew and Israelite are concerning race there is no confusion. However, they often note a Jew as race and religion. Thus, are all Hebrews, Israelites and Jews automatically followers of God? For example are all Black Americans Christians? Are all Arabs Muslims? Does race then identify religious preference? Also, what is Judaism?

Judaism is the religious beliefs of many people described and labeled as Hebrews, Jews and Israelites. Also, one does not have to be a Hebrew to become a Jew. Nor do you have to be Arab to become a Muslim and embrace Islam. The teachings of Judaism come from the Old Testament, especially the Law of Moses found in Exodus 20 through Deuteronomy. Judaism is also described in Mark 7: 3-13, and some of which the Lord condemned. However the major elements of Judaism include circumcision, a strict monotheism a rejection of idolatry and the keeping of the Sabbath.
Cont. Part 6: Judaism: Christ and Christianity

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