

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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SPIRITUAL ISRAEL BETTER LEARN HER LESSON

When one considers the New Testament, it becomes clear that Christians comprise God’s holy nation – spiritual Israel (1 Pet. 2:9; Rom. 9:6; Plp. 3:3). What makes for an interesting and rewarding study is to note some of the comparisons between physical and spiritual Israel. One particular point of interest unearthed in such a study is as follows: just as ancient, fleshly Israel’s residence in their promised land was conditional upon their obedience to God’s will (Deut. 29:10-28), so too does the citizenry of spiritual Israel’s hopes for the incorruptible inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4) hinge upon their choice for righteousness or evil.

Now any capable student of scripture knows that the ancient Israelites, by and large, blew it when it came to obeying God – they blew it big time. Sadly, those folks suffered severely for having to have it their own way (cf. Prv. 1:20-32; et al).

In this article, we’ll note some of the reasons why the ancient Israelites, especially the Northern Kingdom, failed before God via the pen of the prophet Hosea. Application will also be made for members of the Israel of God; i.e. the church (Gal. 6:18).

FLESHLY ISRAEL DID NOT PUT A PREMIUM UPON STUDYING GOD’S WORD

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children (4:6).

I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing (8:12).

Honestly now, how many in the church today take Bible study – especially personal Bible study – very seriously?

FLESHLY ISRAEL ENGAGED IN IDOLATRY

...for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink... For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal (2:5, 8).

And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves (13:2).

Today, despite Eph. 5:5, “citizens” of spiritual Israel bow to gods they’ve established in their hearts (Col. 3:5; Plp. 3:17-19).

FLESHLY ISRAEL DOWNPLAYED MORALITY

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood (4:2).

...for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away (6:4).

Today, is it not so very obvious that many who call themselves Christians fail to cling to the moral compass of God’s Word?

FLESHLY ISRAEL ACTED WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORITY

They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not... (8:4).

Those who really know the Bible understand there are many claiming to be part of spiritual Israel who do all sorts of things without the Lord’s authority (cf. Col. 3:17).

FLESHLY ISRAEL WAS PROUD AND UNREPENTANT

And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this (7:10).

Through proper judgment (John 7:24), it’s easy to see that some “members of the church” are abominable to God (Prv. 16:5).

FLESHLY ISRAEL WAS BLIND TO HER TRUE CONDITION

Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee (8:2).

So many in the church today (both liberal and “conservative”) who think they have heaven sown up, will be awfully and eternally surprised one day to learn of their true status (Matt. 7:21-23).