

## **A TURNING OF THE SHADOW**

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The Apostle James tells us that with Jehovah, there is no “variation of the turning of the shadow.” (***James 1:17***) However, with men, that is not so. Though the typical arrangement of the Aaronic priesthood continued pretty much in tact for decades, at the end of the reign of King Solomon, it was challenged.

At that time, the nation divided into two parts – the southern kingdom under the reign of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam of the tribe of Judah, and the northern kingdom under the reign of one of Solomon’s officers, Jeroboam of the tribe of Ephraim. Jacob had earlier prophesied:

“The scepter will not turn aside from Judah, neither the commander’s staff from between his feet.” – ***Genesis 49:10***

So, although all 12 tribes were Jehovah’s people, the legitimate kingdom was the kingdom under Rehoboam of the tribe of Judah.

Rehoboam sat on Solomon’s throne in Jerusalem and retained the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; whereas Jeroboam set up his kingdom in Samaria with the remaining 10 tribes. This move separated the 10 tribes, not only from their brothers of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but also separated them from worshipping Jehovah at his temple which was in Jerusalem, in Judean territory. This presented a challenge to the priestly tribe of Levi, as well as all lovers of true worship who were dwelling in the territory of the breakaway kingdom of Jeroboam. How did the people react?

“And the priests and the Levites themselves that were in all Israel took their stand by [Rehoboam] out of all their territories. For the Levites left their pasture grounds and their possessions and then came to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his sons had discharged them from acting as priests to Jehovah. And he proceeded to put in office for himself priests for the high places and for the goat-shaped demons and for the calves that he had made. And following them from all the tribes of Israel those that were giving their heart to seek Jehovah the god of Israel came themselves to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Jehovah the God of their forefathers.” – ***2 Chronicles 11:13-16***

Jeroboam’s solution was to set up his own form of worship – considered to be idol worship – in the cities of Bethel and Dan. Instead of using Jehovah’s authorized priests, Jeroboam installed unauthorized non-Levitical priests to lead the breakaway nation in worship of their false gods. The faithful Levite priests, and the Israelites among them who wanted to serve

Jehovah, left the 10-tribe kingdom and returned to Jerusalem to pursue true worship, leaving behind a large portion of the nation of Israel who apostatized from Jehovah.

So, in addition to having the legitimate kingdom, the 2-tribe southern kingdom also had the legitimate priesthood. As such, the typical representation continued to work out its

fulfillment within the southern kingdom. Sadly, in time, the southern kingdom polluted the priesthood and, like the northern kingdom, left Jehovah's prescribed manner of worship.

A noteworthy development leading to the pollution of the priesthood occurred during the second century B.C.E. when certain learned men among the Jews began to challenge the authority of the Levitical priests to teach and interpret the Law. These non-priestly Jews were the scribes and Pharisees. They felt that the right to teach the nation should not depend upon one's birth or descent (as was the case with the Levitical priesthood), but rather on academic merit. They set up their own schools of higher learning, usurped the role of teachers and leaders among the people, and successfully relegated the priesthood to a secondary position, violating the Covenant of Levi. (***Malachi 2:7-8***)

Further, the teachings of these men placed more emphasis on their own man-made doctrines than on those specifically set forth by Jehovah. For example, they set up their own law code, the Talmud, and placed adherence to it above adherence to the word of God; they believed that because God was omnipresent, it minimized the need to worship Jehovah at His temple; with respect to the Day of Atonement, they transferred the power of atoning for sins from the high priest to the day itself; they even established their own ceremonial rituals in connection with the temple, thus setting themselves up as priests, of a sort, by carrying out these newly created "priestly" duties.

This pollution of, and rebellion against, Jehovah's typical representation of his promised Holy Nation served to obscure its meaning. The people who were not awake to what was occurring were led along in the apostasy. Thus, the nation of Israel as a whole had apostatized from Jehovah. And by failing to "strictly obey" Jehovah's voice (***Exodus 19:5***), the nation of Israel had broken their covenant with Him.

Although Jehovah allowed the nation to continue worshiping at the temple, He began making other arrangements for the fulfillment of his word. It is as Jesus said, 'every particle of the letters of the Law must be fulfilled.' There was to be a Holy Nation. To that end, Jehovah spoke of a New Covenant:

"Look! There are days coming,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, which covenant of mine they broke, although I myself had husbandly ownership of them,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.'" – ***Jeremiah 31:31-33***

To summarize thus far:

- (1) Jehovah promised Abraham that by means of his seed, all nations of the earth would bless themselves;

- (2) When Abraham's seed grew into a nation, Jehovah covenanted with the people, offering an opportunity to be the promised Holy Nation if they would strictly obey his voice;
- (3) Jehovah distinguished the people into two "classes" as a microcosm of the world of man – the Levitical priesthood typifying the Holy Nation – and the non-Levitical tribes typifying mankind as a whole;
- (4) The priestly class would work to reconcile the remaining tribes to Jehovah;
- (5) The nation as a whole failed to obey Jehovah, thus breaking the Levitical Covenant;
- (6) Jehovah promised to make a New Covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah that would bring about a people who would served from the heart and not based on law.

Until these new covenants were entered into, the typical "two class" arrangement would continue. However, when the new covenants are instituted, we would begin to see Jehovah's purposes more clearly. Instead of just a shadow, we would be able to see a hazy outline as through a metal mirror. (*1 Corinthians 13:12*) Let continue with **Letter No. 4.**

***"Elaia Luchnia"***