

UNDERSTANDING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING

ISAIAH 46:10

Ephesians 3:1-9

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles 2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the *mystery* made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

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which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This *mystery* is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

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7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this *mystery*, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

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Ephesians 6:19

¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the *mystery* of the gospel,

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Colossians 1:25-27

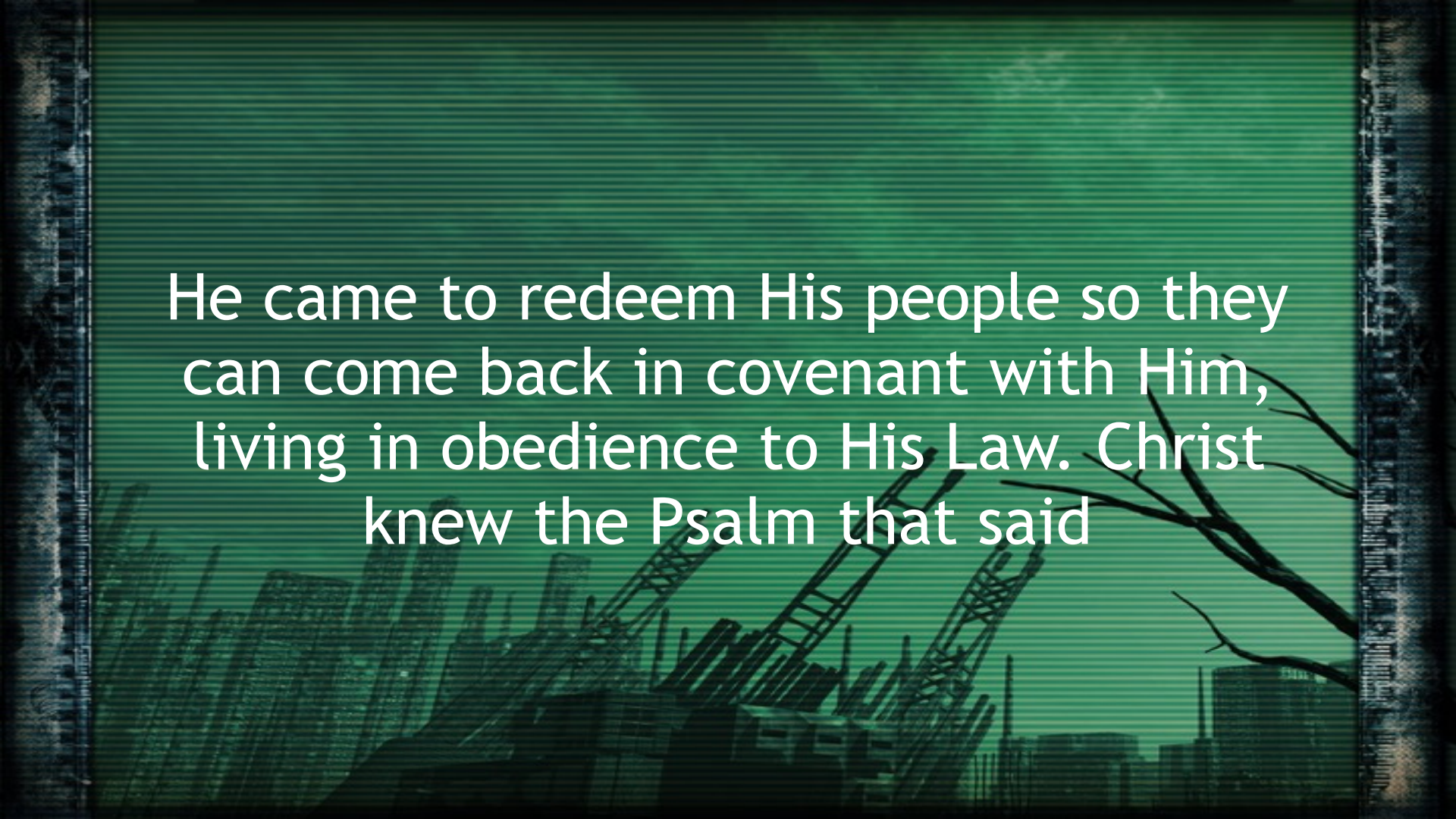
²⁵I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness ²⁶the *mystery* that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

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Christ came to bring His people back into the relationship that was established in His covenant.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.



He came to redeem His people so they can come back in covenant with Him, living in obedience to His Law. Christ knew the Psalm that said

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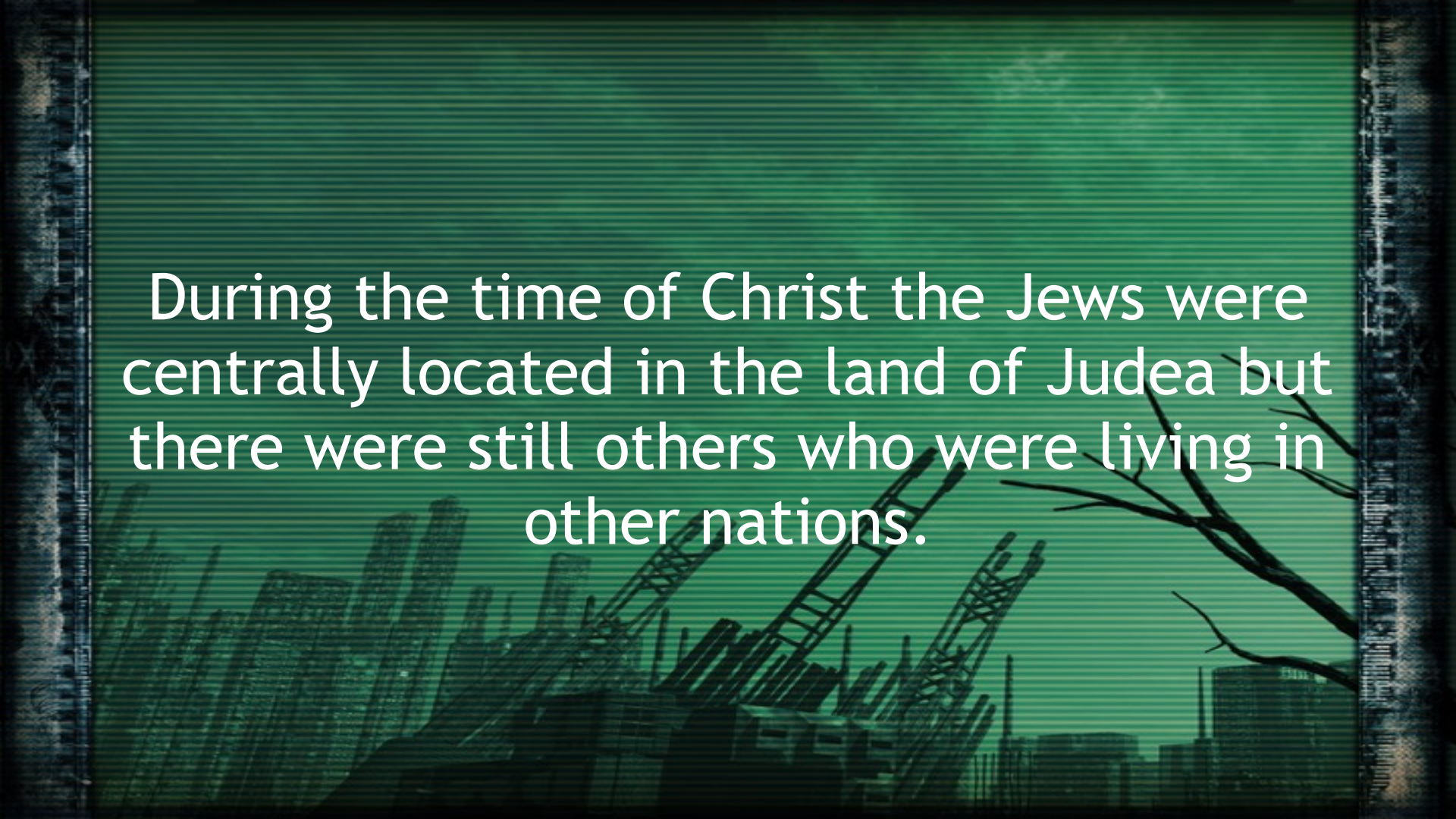
Psalms 103:17-18

¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's
love is with those who fear him, and his
righteousness with their children's children ¹⁸ with
those who keep his covenant and remember to obey
his precepts.

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Isaiah 24:5

⁵The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.



During the time of Christ the Jews were centrally located in the land of Judea but there were still others who were living in other nations.

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John 7:35

³⁵ The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?”

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These are those who would make their pilgrimage
for the feast days as we see here in **Acts**.

Acts 2:5

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-
fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

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These are the ones to whom Peter said in the same chapter...

Acts 2:39

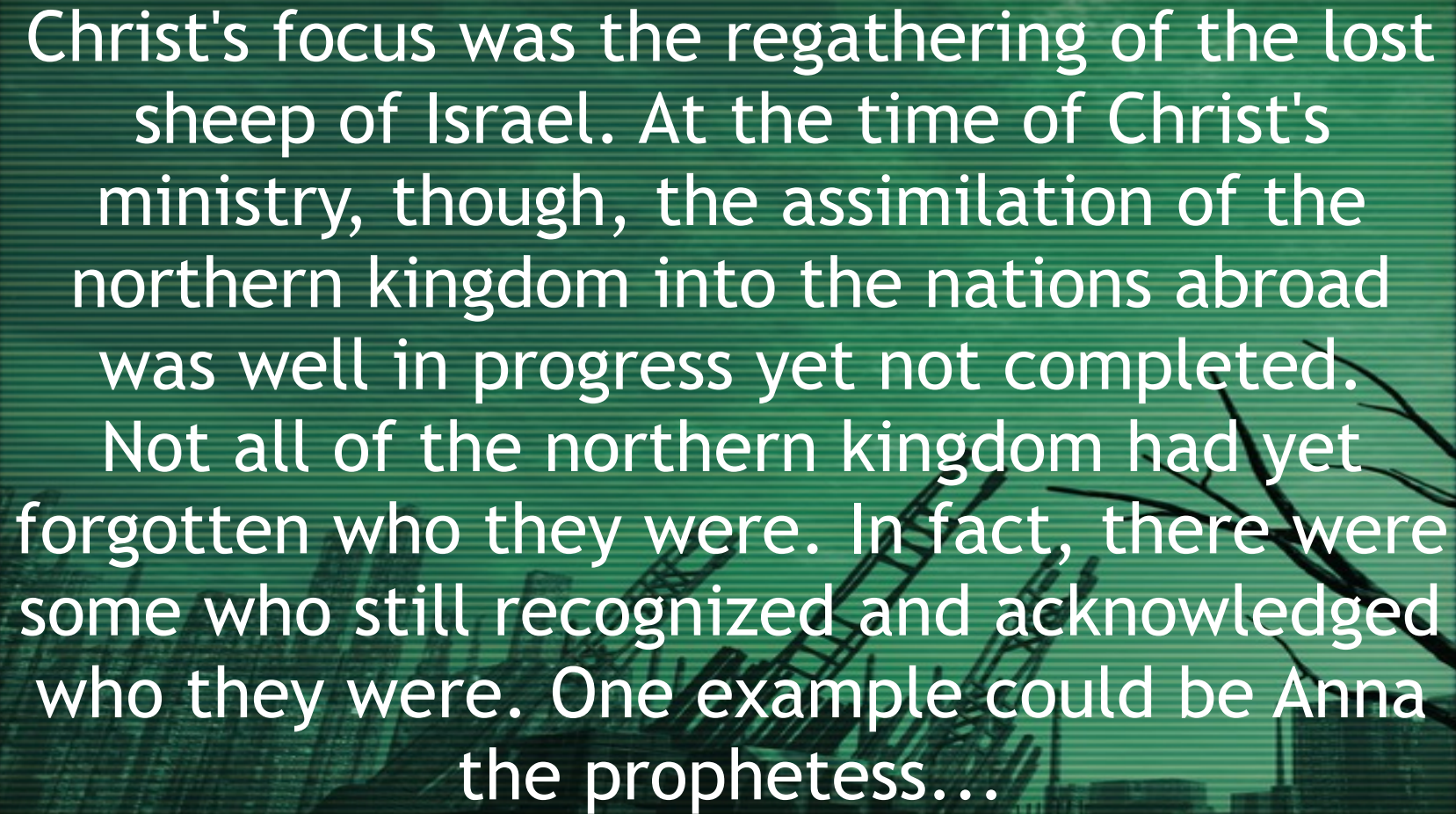
³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off for all whom the Lord our God will call.

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Who were those who were far off that Peter was referring to?

Ezekiel 11:15

¹⁵ Son of man, your brothers - your brothers who are your blood relatives and the whole house of Israel are those of whom the people of Jerusalem have said, 'They are far away from (Yahweh) the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.'



Christ's focus was the regathering of the lost sheep of Israel. At the time of Christ's ministry, though, the assimilation of the northern kingdom into the nations abroad was well in progress yet not completed. Not all of the northern kingdom had yet forgotten who they were. In fact, there were some who still recognized and acknowledged who they were. One example could be Anna the prophetess...

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Luke 2:36

³⁶ There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

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Knowing that there were these living in the surrounding areas, Christ's focus centered on them.

Matthew 10:5-6

- 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions:
“Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

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We see several times that the New Testament addresses those sheep scattered in the nations. Consider...

1 Peter 1:1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

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1 Peters 1:22-25

²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

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²⁴ For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

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He then confirms who he is talking to by these next verses...

1 Peters 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

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Exodus 19:6

‘you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.

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1 Peters 2:10

¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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Peter here uses the same language as found in the Scriptures regarding the lost sheep of Israel.

Isaiah 7:8

for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.

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Hosea 1:9

Then the LORD said, “Call him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

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James 1:1

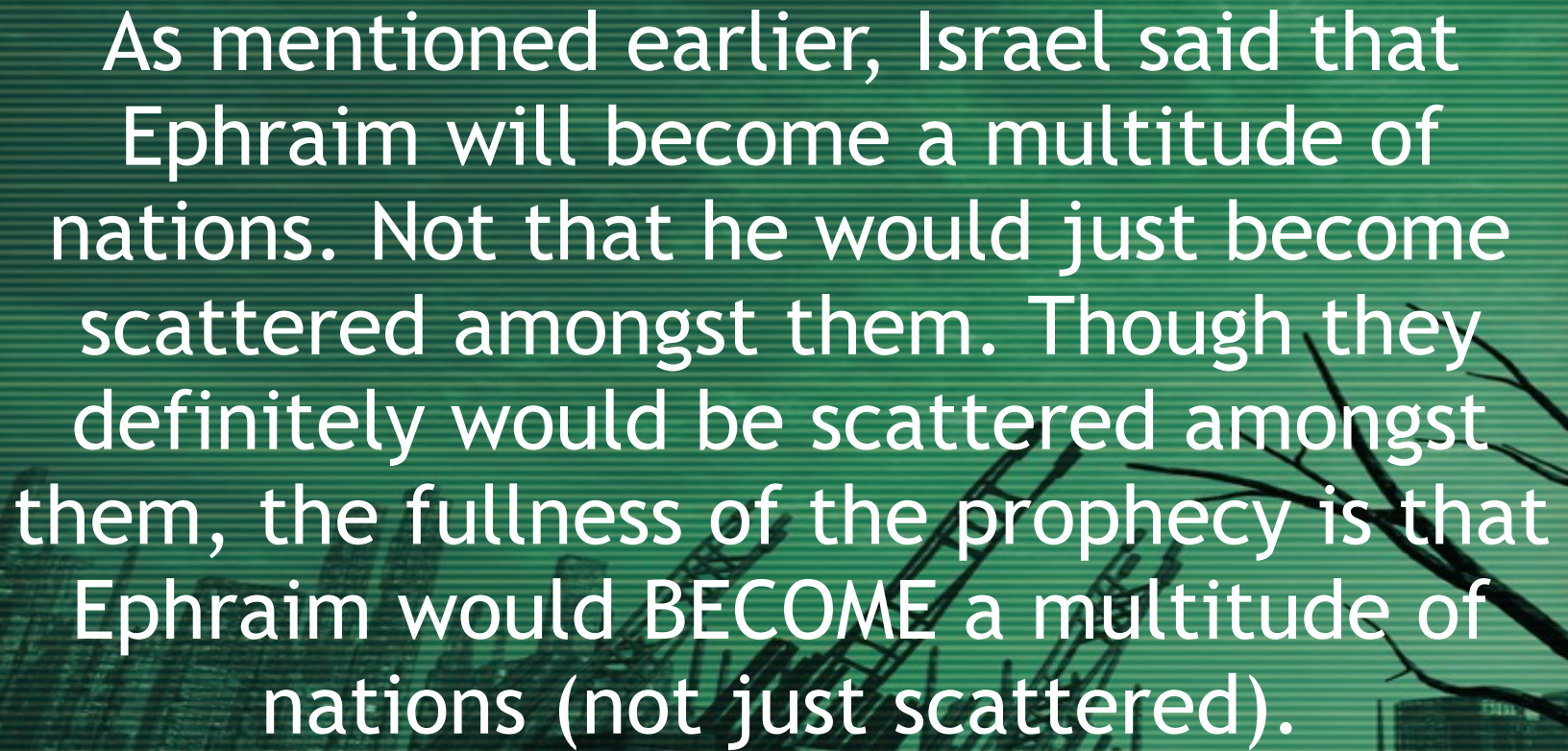
James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

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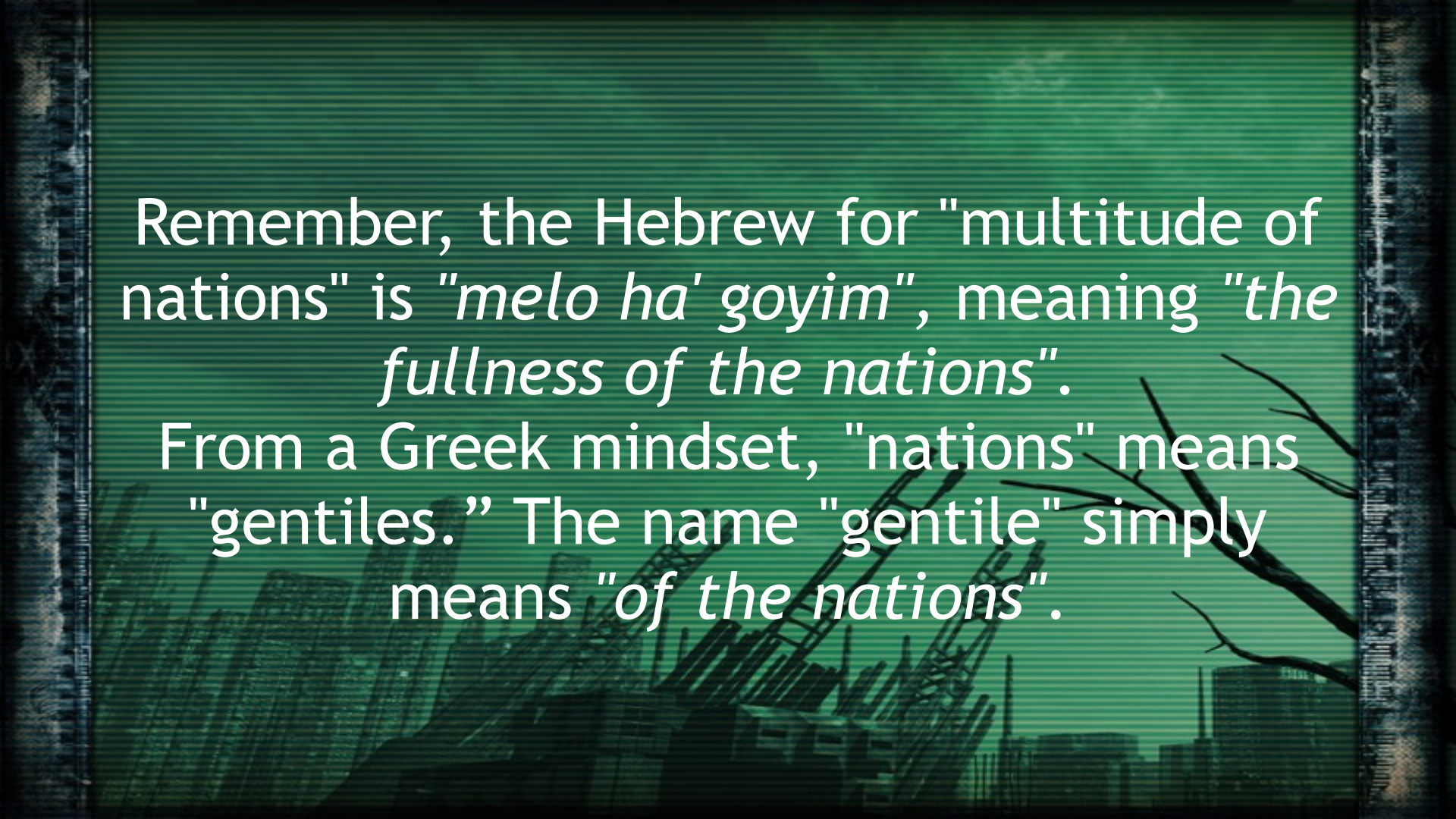
Yet we know that the word spoken over Ephraim
was indeed, again...

Genesis 48:19

¹⁹.. but truly his younger brother shall be greater than
he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of
nations.

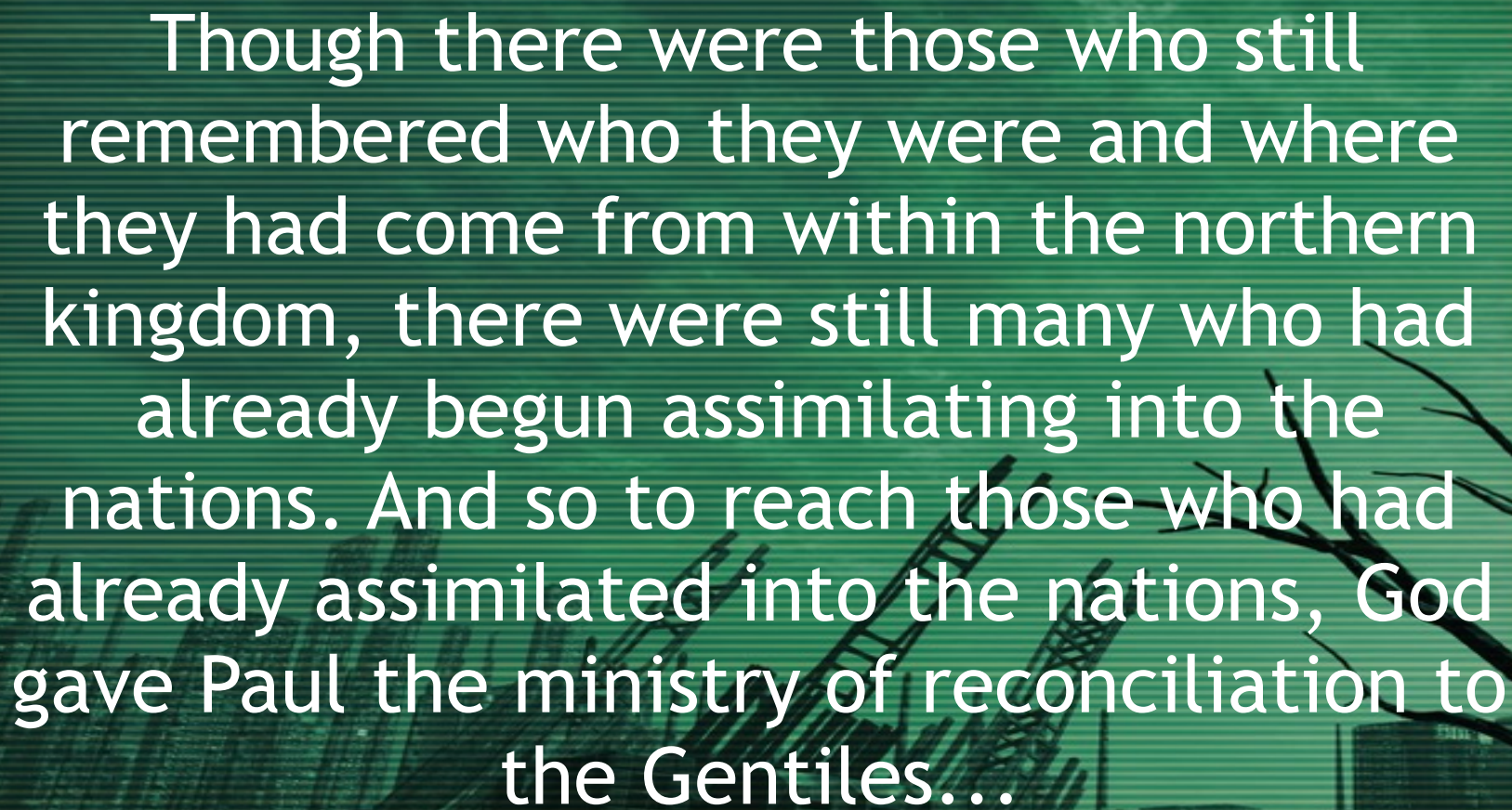


As mentioned earlier, Israel said that Ephraim will become a multitude of nations. Not that he would just become scattered amongst them. Though they definitely would be scattered amongst them, the fullness of the prophecy is that Ephraim would BECOME a multitude of nations (not just scattered).



Remember, the Hebrew for "multitude of nations" is "*melo ha' goyim*", meaning "*the fullness of the nations*".

From a Greek mindset, "nations" means "gentiles." The name "gentile" simply means "*of the nations*".



Though there were those who still remembered who they were and where they had come from within the northern kingdom, there were still many who had already begun assimilating into the nations. And so to reach those who had already assimilated into the nations, God gave Paul the ministry of reconciliation to the Gentiles...

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1 Timothy 2:7

And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

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2 Corinthians 5:18-20

¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:
¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

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²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

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Romans 5:8-11

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9
Since we have now been justified by his blood, how
much more shall we be saved from God's wrath
through him!

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„For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! „Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

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Colossians 1:20

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

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It was in this ministry of reconciliation that Paul was to bring the northern kingdom back into unity with the southern kingdom. This was no easy task as the Jews had done a pretty good job in widening the existing gap with their added laws. Again, these laws later became known as the Talmud.

Along with these laws, the Jews actually created a physical barrier in the temple court. Gentile proselytes were not allowed past this wall.

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In addressing this topic of uniting the two kingdoms in the book of Ephesians, Paul refers to this wall as a metaphor in addressing the law of the Jews...

Ephesians 2:11-16

„Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” **(that done in the body by the hands of men)**

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¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹

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¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, *the dividing wall of hostility*, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,

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¹⁶ and in this one body to *reconcile both of them to God through the cross*, by which he put to death their *hostility*.