

THE JEWISH NATION IN JUDAH

We have seen previously that Ezra creates a barrier between those who returned from the exile and that part of the nation which did not go into captivity, by confining the people within Judah, introducing fundamental changes in the interpretation of past culture (and values), and by changing the Hebrew script. In the course of time because of this enforced confinement a new nation is formed – The Jewish nation. Which is isolated from the rest of the nation of Israel and comprises mostly the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. But what became of the other remaining part of the nation which did not join the movement of Ezra and Nehemiah? Since no change befell them, we must assume that they continued to worship the idols they had worshipped before then, and that their cultural and linguistic heritage remained as in the past, distinct from those of the people abiding in the region of Judah. In the course of time the ties linking the two parts are severed completely. Moreover, the rejected part profoundly hates the Jewish part for their rejection, and so two different nations emerge from the one stem of Israel¹. Some generations later the people living in Judah emerge from their narrow boundaries. They call themselves Judeans, and their country Judah. It must be assumed that historians were faced with two facts: 1. The names "Phoenicia and Phoenicians" given by their predecessors to this region and its inhabitants.

2. The names "Judah and Judeans" which is the name given to a part of this same region and its inhabitants.

Being aware from their predecessors (Homer and others) that cities like Sidon and Tyre are in Phoenicia they continue calling the regions of Tyre and Sidon "Phoenicia". Since the inhabitants of these regions use a different script and their culture is different from that of the Judeans, therefore the name "Phoenicia" continues to be applied only to a part of the former land of Israel while the other part is called Judah. In other words: a part of former Phoenicia (= Israel) they call Judah and the name Phoenicia remains attached only to the remaining part. Thus a division is formed between Judeans and "Phoenicians" which grows deeper and deeper with the passing of time. ALTHOUGH THE NAME "PHOENICIANS" WAS ORIGINALLY

1 Such a division may have taken place also in the rejected part. Those neighbouring Judah accepted some values from the Judeans without departing from former values therefore were not accepted by the Judeans and formed The Samaritans.

THE APPELLATION GIVEN BY THE GREEKS TO THE ISRAELITE NATION AS A WHOLE. The Jewish people and the subsequent generations were confronted by a queer situation. According to tradition there were twelve Israelite tribes, two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) form the Judean (Jewish) nation. Where therefore are the ten other tribes? To answer this question, a legend is woven about the ten lost tribes, which an angel of God led out of the country etc. Later Jewish historians, like Josephus, for example, already speak of Sidonians and Tyrians as of another nation having nothing to do with the Israelites. However, Josephus in his writings is bewildered about certain facts which he cannot explain satisfactorily². Herodotus³ remarks that: "The Colchians and Egyptians and Ethiopians are the only nations that have from the first practised circumcision. The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge of themselves that they learnt the custom from the Egyptians...Those Phoenicians who hold intercourse with Hellas cease to imitate the Egyptians in this matter and do not circumcise their children".

Therefore, according to Herodotus we can conclude that there are two kinds of Phoenicians. 1. Those who hold intercourse with the Greeks and they do not imitate the Egyptians. 2. The other Phoenicians who do imitate the Egyptians, but do not hold intercourse with the Greeks. Herodotus lived about 400 B. C., Whereas the period of the differentiation of those who returned from Exile from the other Israelites, occurred in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, i. e. in the same period, Therefore Herodotus must have written his words when the difference between the two parts of the nation had already been formed, though the ties were still not completely cut. He therefore writes about two kinds of Phoenicians and not about two different nations.

To sum up: The Israelite nation was surnamed by the Greeks "Phoenicians". Because of a religious – cultural division two religious trends were formed, which in time became two political entities, One receiving a new name, i. e. Judah and Judeans (Jews), Whereas the name "Phoenicians" remained attached to the people of the other entity which continued with their idolatrous worship. Yet the name Phoenicians was originally applied to the whole of the nation of Israel before the differentiation.

2 For example: Ant. VIII, 260 ; Cont. Ap. I, 22.

3 Herodotus II, 104. See: Trans. by Rawlinson, p. 115; Trans.: Godley, Loeb Classical Library.