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China in Prophecy

by Ernest L. Martin Ph.D., 1995

Edited by David Sielaff, May 2009, updated February 2021

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There is more in the Bible about China as a people and as a nation than most people have imagined. It is time we all realize what role China will play in the history of the world in the next few years ahead. This Prophetic article presents biblical and historical evidence to show who the Chinese people are and how important they will soon become in matters dealing with the prophecies of the end time. There is a prophetic role for China that most people know nothing about. This is the fact that the Chinese people before the Second Advent of Christ are destined to accept Christianity in a very strong way. If we hope to realize what the future holds for the world in the next three decades, we will have to be aware of the real importance of “China in Prophecy.”¹

All people on earth need to know just who the Chinese people are in matters dealing with the biblical revelation. This is important because the Holy Scriptures are not only interested in the welfare of people who are now known as Christians, Jews, and Muslims (people indebted to Abraham and Moses for their basic religious teachings), but the Bible makes it clear that God through Christ has designed His plan to bring a salvation to all people on earth, no matter who they are or where they live. This certainly includes the people of China.

It would seem odd if the Bible did not include some essential information about this great nation and its people since the Holy Scriptures purport to be the divine document which informs all people in the world

¹ Since written 25 years ago in 1995 by Dr. Martin, and revised by me 11 years ago, much has happened in China. The nation has not repented, and few Chinese have become Christians in a biblical sense. A small percentage of Chinese are Christian in any form — perhaps 100 million out of 1.4 billion people. That percentage and number will dramatically increase when God intervenes in China, as you will learn as you read further.

about the plan of God for mankind. And true to form, the Bible does not abandon China and other peoples in the Far East or the islands of Oceania in its theme of salvation or in matters of prophecy. We need to understand just how significant these peoples are in the prophetic scenario that is to occur just on the horizon to us before the Second Advent of Christ back to this earth.

[Editor’s Note (not on the audio): As of May of 2009, China was the most populous nation on earth today with approximately 1.3 billion people.² One out of every five people alive on earth at this moment live in China. That is 20% of all men, women, and children alive today. Even more important, consider that one out of every five geniuses live in China.³ Those geniuses will be better educated than ever before, and they will receive the finest of education and career promotion. That has not happened in China in the past 200 years.

Within 10 or 15 years, by virtue of its increasingly productive huge population, the total gross national product of China shall exceed that of the United States and Europe in most all measures. If current trends continue, China will not only be the most economically powerful nation on earth, but it will also be a major political power.⁴

Update: In February 2021 China is not the most powerful nation. The United States remains the most powerful economic, political, and military power on earth. This may change according to God’s whim and will. China’s population growth continues, but its communist government continues to be repressive against its own people, and persecution of Christians will increase. As in the past, God will use this situation to His purpose and the *ekklesia* of God in China shall grow. DWS]

Who Are the Chinese People?

The place to start our research on the origin and destiny of the Chinese people is at the beginning of the biblical revelation. That is where God gives an overview of who the peoples in the world represent, as they relate particularly to the people of Abraham to whom God made special spiritual covenants, and most specifically to the people of Israel, who represent a type of priestly people to the rest of the nations on earth (Exodus 19:6). In fact, the Holy Scriptures pertain essentially to the people of Abraham and more specially to Israel.

This maneuver by God was to make Israel in particular responsible for teaching the ways of God to the whole of the human race. In a real sense, Israel is the nation which has a type of priestly mission to relate the messages of God to the rest of the world (Exodus 19:5–6; Isaiah 61:6; Deuteronomy 7:6).⁵ The nation of Israel

² For population figures in China, see “[CountryMeters: China.](#)” China’s population will rise unless there are major catastrophes, a nuclear war, or a civil war. China’s birthrate is less than India’s. Around 2050 India will be the world’s most populous country.

³ Regarding geniuses in China, I presume the Chinese have the same ratio of genius as other nationalities, just as they have the same ratio of left-handed to right-handed people. I also presume that the ratio of geniuses is consistent throughout the human race. We all come from Adam. People are people. Yes, the measure of genius is subjective, measured by such things as Nobel Prizes, number of advanced degrees, number of inventions and patents, etc. As the Chinese middle class grows, economic opportunity increases. That allows talent, ability, and genius to be recognized, promoted, and not stifled by culture, bureaucracy (an age-old problem in China), economic deprivation, and brain damage from lack of food. All such factors are changing for the positive in China today. The goal of China’s government is to regain power. The goal of Chinese society is economic well-being and prosperity — a better life for individuals who care little about the Chinese collective rule. Such is the eventual nature of prosperity. DWS

⁴ See the article “[China’s Economic Growth, 1978–2025](#)” accessed May 2009. COVID-19 in 2020 may upset trends for China as will losing a major war, civil unrest, major natural disasters, or the breakup of China (as the Soviet Union broke into several separate nations) each could cause a projection to change. After the recession of 2008/2009 China still grew (according to Chinese economic data) while other economies were in recession. DWS

⁵ God enlisted Paul, Timothy, and others to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles, not to convert the world. See my July 2017 Commentary “[Kingdom of God, Old Testament Sources](#)” and Dr. Martin’s “[Salvation and the Kingdom of God.](#)”

Other passages show Israel’s status and purpose among Gentile nations: Leviticus 11:44–45, 19:2, 20:24–26, 21:7–8; Deuteronomy 7:6, 26:19, 28:9–10; Isaiah 62:12. Israel’s purpose is to serve as intermediaries between YHWH and the nations. DWS

is called **“God’s servant”** (with a purpose for them):

“... [1] to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and [2] to restore the preserved [or *Diaspora*] of Israel;

I will also give you [3] for a light to the Gentiles, that you [4] may be [or bring] my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

• **Isaiah 49:6**

This responsibility of Israel to bring the teaching of salvation to the ends of the earth certainly includes that message being given to the Chinese people. China is destined soon to be evangelized.

In short, God has designed the historical circumstances in His plan for mankind so that Israel should be the nation to present to China and other Gentiles the teachings of God. That is what God called Israel to do as the priestly nation to the world.

However, the people of Israel are not yet doing their prophesied role of taking the message of salvation to the world. They began to do it in the time of the apostles, but because they, as a nation and as a people, failed to accept the teachings of their Messiah (Jesus Christ), Christ prophesied that the responsibility for teaching the Gospel would be given to another nation to do the job (Matthew 21:43).

This was not another “race,” but another “nation” of people (Romans 10:19). Some in that nation would bring forth the fruits of the Gospel. So, Paul said the responsibility for getting out the Gospel then fell to the Gentiles, particularly to the people of the Roman nation and its empire (Romans 11:11–17). The Gentiles of the Roman Empire (and their descendants) would take over Israel’s place until what Christ called the end of **“the times of the Gentiles”** (Luke 21:24) would occur.⁶

It is now up to us Gentiles with that European influence from Paul (made up of many races) to do the job. Still, the evangelization of the world is not the responsibility of us Gentiles. God has preserved Israel to perform that job.

Frankly, what Israel now needs is **for us** to teach the Gospel to them, and Israel needs to accept the Gospel. Because of this, we at A.S.K. (all of us working together) are trying our best to present the true Gospel to Israel and the world. I believe God is pleased with our efforts. Thus, a new age is about to dawn.

- The times of the Gentiles for teaching the Gospel to the world are about to end.
- Israel shall be sent a spirit of grace and supplication and they will then begin to take over their prophesied role in bringing the messages of God to the nations of the world.
- This was prophesied to occur once Israel would return to the Holyland and to Jerusalem.
- With their return, we are told that God would cause a miracle to occur in Israel and to the Israelites (and this miracle is prophesied to emerge before the Second Advent of Christ).
- What is this miracle? It is the fact that many of the people of Israel (including some of its top leaders) are destined to accept Christ Jesus as their own Messiah. This is shown in Zechariah 12:10–14 through 13:16.

God will send the people of Israel a miraculous spirit of grace and supplication in the not too distant future. When this develops, Israel will then begin to perform their role that God prophesied for them in bringing the message of the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6). One of the first things Israel will do according to the prophecies is to overthrow the idolatry and idolatrous customs in the Holyland that Gentile Christians (things of Roman Empire origin) have placed in their churches and shrines.

At that time, Israel will not countenance such rampant idolatry (Zechariah 13:1–6). When a great number of Israelites in the Holyland are thus converted to Christ, we shall soon see China begin to look to Israel and the Middle East (as will all nations on earth) for the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. The Chinese will not

⁶ Note also it is the **“times of the Gentiles”** that shall end. Several prophetic trends involving the Gentiles shall end at that time. These eras may also be when some *eons* end. See **“When the Eons Began.”** These matters need to be more fully understood. DWS

accede to the Roman Empire form of idolatrous “Christendom” as their example.

To discover how this will happen to the Chinese, and to intelligently understand the means by which this will be accomplished, we first have to recognize from the Bible just who the Chinese people are. The Chinese people can be identified from the teachings of the Bible. Their identification is first given in Genesis chapter 10 which shows the descendants of Noah, and how they repopulated the earth after the great flood.

A Clue that Identifies the Chinese

It is easy in a general way to discover who the people of China are from the information found in the Table of Nations. The first evidence emerges when we consider the meaning of the names of the three sons of Noah through whom all the world’s population today have descended. Note these three sons. His firstborn son was Japheth. Noah’s second son was Ham. And, his third son was Shem.

(1) Look at Noah’s firstborn son Japheth. The word “Japheth” means “Enlargement” and it signifies in a prophetic sense that Japheth’s progeny would become an enlarged population on earth. They would become the most populous people, having many more descendants than Ham or Shem. And without doubt, the people of China and their neighbors who are a part of what we generally call the Yellow Races⁷ are the most populous of the nations on earth. This meaning of Japheth’s name is the first evidence that the patriarch Japheth and his descendants describe the patriarchal origin of Chinese people.

(2) Along with this is the fact that Noah’s second son was named “Ham” which signifies “Dark Colored” and this is a clear indication that the darker peoples on earth are descended from him.

(3) The third son was Shem from whom came the Israelites, the Arabs, and other Mediterranean types of people. It is pretty easy to see that this group of people from Shem are not of the Yellow or the Black races, and they more particularly represent the White or the Olive Skinned peoples on earth.

Of course, there are variations in all the three main racial stocks and there have been blending among the original races on a wide scale, but the three general racial divisions of mankind and their standard characteristics can be easily identified from the information that we have in the Bible. The indication that Japheth would become the most populated of peoples gives us biblical evidence that the Chinese fit into the Japhetic camp.

The Dispersal of the Original Nations

About two hundred years after the Flood of Noah, the population of humans had grown sufficiently that they began to build a tower as a religious monument (like a steeple or pyramid) to keep mankind’s geographical attention centered on the region of Babylon where the main patriarchs of Noah (and Noah himself) lived and made their homes.

God did not like this scheme, so He changed mankind’s languages and sent them into all areas of the world (Genesis chapter 11). When these people left the tower in the Babylon area, they journeyed outward with mere families (just small clans of individuals) and they went into various places on earth. God must have directed them to the regions on earth to which He intended them to live and to populate. People quickly spread around the world.

Among the people who began to leave Babylon were those of Japheth. Let us look at them. Japheth had seven sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras (Genesis 10:2). Gomer’s three sons were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. They and Javan’s four sons Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim were singled out for distinction by Moses in his Table of Nations. This is because these particular descendants of Japheth were those who came in contact with Israel in the early generations up to the time of the Exodus.

⁷ Dr. Martin used older technical terms such as “Yellow Races” and “Mongoloid” to identify people groups. These terms are in disfavor today but they are in the original lecture. DWS

Throughout the annals of Jewish history, it has been known that Gomer, at first, went into Central Europe into the area represented now as Germany and Poland. As for Togarmah, son of Gomer, we find that they went into the extreme north part of the earth (Ezekiel 38:6) and became what we call Eskimos today.

These historical indications I have given in my Prophetic Report for September, 1992, titled “[Prophetic Geography and the Time of the End](#).” In that Prophetic Report, I have given maps to show in a graphic manner how these movements and settlements of peoples were made from the Tower of Babel into all areas of the world, and that includes the Chinese.

What we find is the fact that the people of Japheth developed into the Mongoloid types of races within the first eight to ten generations from the time of the Flood of Noah. The information on how this could happen in a genetic way is given in the above mentioned Prophetic Report. The main point, however, that we should remember in this present Report on China is the fact that the people of Japheth became the most populous of people. Recall that the word “Japheth” means “Enlargement.”

In actual fact, the Bible and history as understood by the early Jews show that the people who finally developed into the people living in China and Japan (the Mongoloid types of people that we know today), stemmed originally from Japheth. These Japhetic peoples developed various racial characteristics that became associated with them. This was especially noted in the shape of the eyes, the yellowish type of skin, and the straight black hair which predominates in these racial groups. These three general classifications of races are well known today.

We should understand that there are different types of ways in showing variations in races, but in simple terms the people of Japheth can be classified as being basically Mongoloid in appearance. And on this fact hinges the evidence that the majority of the population in the world today is actually Japhetic in origin and most of them now live in China, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Though this is true for this present age, historical records involving biblical peoples and early Jewish accounts show that several of the clans of the people of Japheth journeyed to eastern Asia in a roundabout way. Indeed, some of them right after the Flood of Noah first went into southern and central Europe. It was only later, when Semitic tribes began to invade Europe from the east, did the original Japhetic clans move north and then east into the regions of the world that we normally associate with Mongoloid peoples today.

Some Japheth Races First Went to Europe

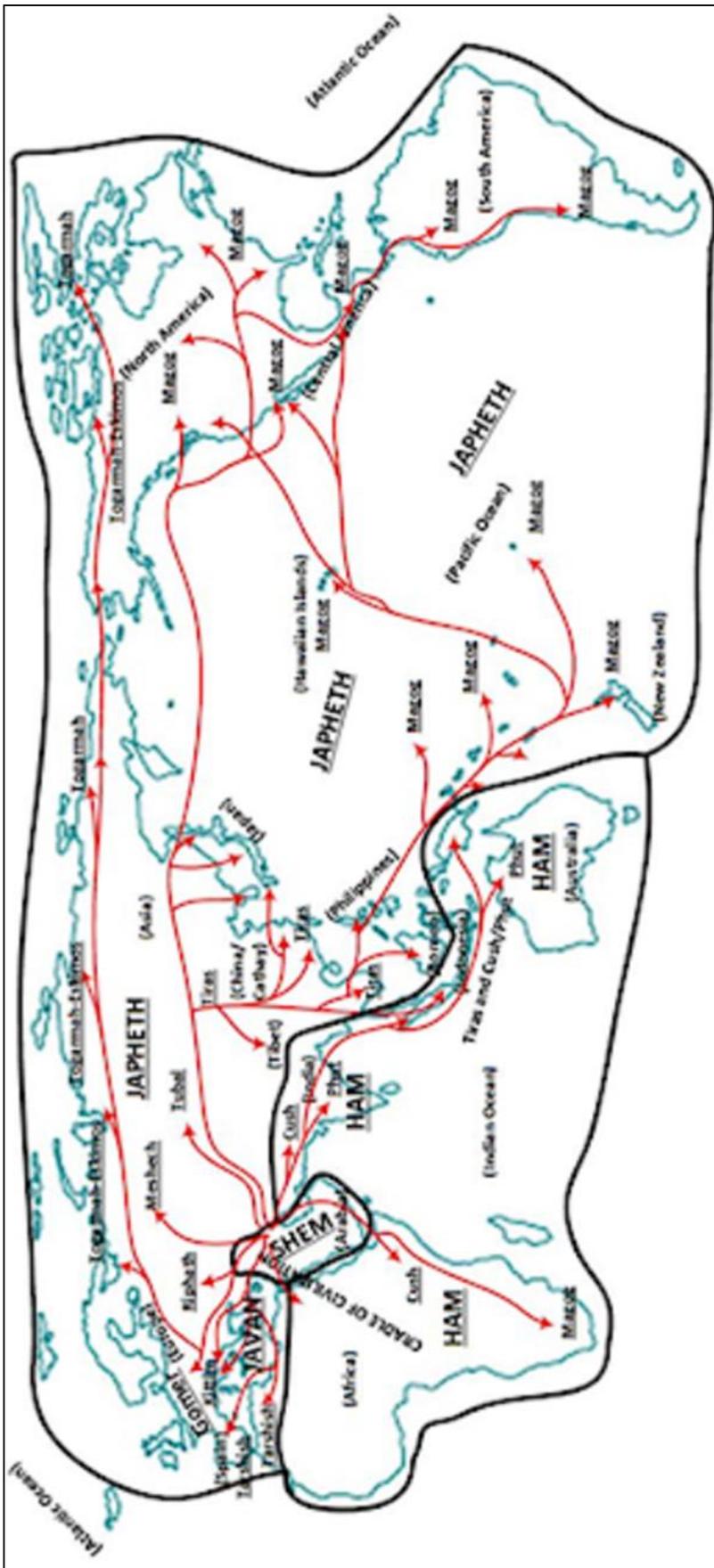
What is not often realized is the fact that the Bible and early Jewish history show that several of the chief sons of Japheth first went into Europe, and from there they journeyed north and east and finally settled in East Asia. Gomer was certainly one of them.

And not only Gomer, but we find the fourth son of Japheth also had a connection with Europe. His name was Javan. He is mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 10:2, 4. The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, **Kittim**, and Dodanim. Of these were the isles, or the coasts, of the north Mediterranean settled not long after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10:5). Now when it says “**nations**,” it doesn’t mean huge nations that we know today. By the time of Moses, when Moses wrote the Book of Genesis, the clans of the earth were just starting to become nations.

Notice that there were four sons of Javan. They were Elishah, Tarshish, **Kittim**, and Dodanim. We know from history that the people of Tarshish were first located in Spain and some of the islands of the Western Mediterranean, and also North Africa. There is a good deal of historical information to show this fact, and I have given it in the above Prophetic Report.

Also, the people of Dodanim (called Rodaniym) have the name “Rhodes” in its variant reading. They first settled on that island in the Mediterranean. Elishah is connected with Ellis, an early tribe who settled on the Greek archipelago in the Aegean Sea and in Western Asia Minor. These early settlements were achieved before Israel’s Exodus from Egypt.

But this is not all. Look especially at the people of Kittim in this first migration. Kittim was geographically associated even in later times (in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC) with the Mediterranean region. This shows that



the people of Kittim first settled this area and then moved into other parts of the world.

I explain in the Prophetic Report what happened. The people of Kittim moved into other areas of the world while they left their name on the region of their first settlement after the Flood of Noah. The Syriac Version of Genesis chapter 10 (called the Peshitta Version, which was written about the 4th century or 5th century AD), rendered the word “Kittim” as “Cathay.” This clearly denotes an early name for China. By the 4th century AD, the people of Kittim had been fully replaced in Europe, and they had gone farther east, even into China and adjacent areas.

[[Click here to view a larger map.](#)]

What we find is the fact that the people of Japheth are today primarily Mongoloid people, or connected with the Mongoloid strain, or race, that finally developed after the Tower of Babel.

The Descendants of Japheth

The first sons of Japheth were given special references in the early history of the Bible. But in studying carefully, you will notice that only Gomer, and especially Javan, are presented with more elaborate descriptions. That is because the Israelites in Moses’ time were coming in contact with those people. They were closer in a geographical sense to Israel, and Israel was more acquainted with them.

The other sons of Japheth, for example, Magog, the Madai, the people of Tubal, of Meshech and of Tiras, were already far distant from the Israelites in Egypt and the Land of Canaan. In the Bible you find little information about them because they had spread far from the cradle of civilization.

Look at these Japhetic peoples for a moment. We know that Meshech and Tubal are associated with Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Some people have even connected the city of Moscow in Russia with Meshech.

That is a possibility. These nations of Japheth moved north and then on farther east. Later on, we find that Gomer and Javan and the others of Japheth followed them into the east into the region of what we call China today. They also went into Southeast Asia, and then through the Malay archipelago into various islands of the ocean. Indeed, many of Japheth's descendants went throughout the Pacific and into the New World. These movements of peoples are more particularly covered in my Prophetic Report mentioned above. But look at what this means in regard to the Chinese who were once known as the people of Cathay or Kittim.

Believe it or not, the Kittim people were the original ones who first settled the island of Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean after the Tower of Babel incident. From there they went further westward and made settlements in Italy.

Editor's Note ... Genesis 10:2, **Japheth** had seven sons ...

<p>1. <u>Gomer</u> —> 2. Magog 3. Madai</p>	<p>Gomer had three sons (Genesis 10:3): 1. Ashkenaz 2. Riphath 3. Togarmah</p>
<p>4. <u>Javan</u> —> 5. Tubal 6. Meshech 7. Tiras</p>	<p>Javan had four sons (Genesis 10:4): 1. Elishah 2. Tarshish 3. <i>Kittim</i> 4. Dodanim</p>

Japheth's fourth son was Javan. Javan had four sons; his third son was named Kittim, the ancestors of the Chinese people.

In Daniel 8:21, 10:20, and 11:2 the word "Greece" in the King James Version is "Javan" in Hebrew. The geographical name Javan remained long after the descendants of Javan left Greece. Greek people today are not from Javan. DWS

The Kittim Move to the Land of China

Then they were pushed northward and then eastward by Semites coming from the eastern Mediterranean areas. The people of Kittim journeyed even further north and then eastward into the central areas of Asia, and finally winding up in the region we now call China. Indeed, an early name of China was *Cathay* which comes from the root word *Khitai* which also answers to *Kittim*, the "-im" suffix is plural.

Though Gomer (the firstborn of Japheth and the uncle of Kittim) was the first to settle central Europe after the Flood, the biblical revelation shows that at the end of the age, his descendants are found in Asia — in the Far East. In Ezekiel 38:16 we find Gomer associated with Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Ethiopia (eastern Cush of the Hindu Kush), Phut in India and Ceylon (not as the King James Version states as "Libya"). This means that Gomer and all his bands went eastward long ago and became Asiatic powers. The Bible shows they are still Asiatic powers at the time of the end.

As a matter of fact, even after the Millennium is over, the Book of Revelation refers to the geographical regions associated with Magog. They are shown to be in the four extremities of the earth which primarily refer to the regions of the antipodes from Jerusalem (the North and South American continents, Southern Africa and the extreme northern regions of Eurasia). What must be understood is that most of the European tribes of Japheth, who first went to Europe at the dispersal of the nations at the Tower of Babel, left the European region and went into Asia. Others went further eastward into the Pacific Islands and then to the Americas.

But, as for the people of Kittim, they finally settled in China and gave their name to the region. China is even called in their own language "Cathay" (after the word "Kittim").

A Further Biblical Reference to China

There is even more on China. The Bible prophesies that, along with all other nations, the people of China

will be given the truth of God before the Second Coming of Christ. And who performs the task of taking the teachings of God to China? The Bible says it will be Israel. As mentioned earlier in this Prophetic Report, the people of Israel are destined to take the Word of God to all areas of the world before the Second Advent of Christ, and China will not be left out. God shall ...

“... raise up the tribes of Israel, and to restore the preserved of Israel [those Israelites in the Diaspora, scattered around the world]: I will also give you [Israel] for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be [bring] my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus says YHWH, the Redeemer of Israel ...”

• *Isaiah 49:6–7*

It will be the people of Israel (once the **“times of the Gentiles”** end) who will bring the light of the Gospel to all the Gentiles. The Gentiles of the world will turn their attention to Israel in the Holyland and the Gentiles will begin to listen to the Israelites about Jesus Christ and how idolatry should be shunned. Indeed, the people of the world who are Gentiles will then want to attach themselves to Israelites and to their teachings that God will inspire. Look up Zechariah 8:22–23:

“Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek YHWH of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before YHWH. Thus says YHWH of hosts;

‘In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.’”

• *Zechariah 8:22–23*

This is a time when the waste places that once made up Jerusalem will be repaired and rebuilt.

“Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem: for

[1] **YHWH has comforted his people [Israel],**

[2] **he has redeemed Jerusalem.**

[3] **YHWH has made bare his holy arm [rolled up his sleeves?] in the eyes of all the nations; and**

[4] **all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”**

• *Isaiah 52:9–10*

Gentile nations from around the world will want to go to Israel and to Jerusalem to hear the words of truth that will then come from the Israelites once they are converted to the truth as Zechariah 12:9–14 prophesies. And what is a major area from whence these Gentiles will come? God singles out a special region of the earth for His interest.

Look at Isaiah 49:12. It says that people will come to Israel **“from the land of Sinim.”** Where is Sinim? *Lange’s Commentary* says **“this name [Sinim] must represent an entire quarter of the heavens and probably the east”** (vol. VI, p. 535).⁸ And what major people are in this region? China is in an easterly direction from Jerusalem and would fit the prophet’s intentions very well.

Indeed, in modern Hebrew, *Sinim* means “China,” and well it should because even the single letter we render as “Ch” in “China” has the soft sound of an “S” and the Chinese call themselves the people of “Sina” or “Sino” with the vowel at the end usually unsounded.

Chinese history recognizes that in the 10th to the 12th centuries AD, major parts of China were ruled by what they call the “Sino-Khitan Empire” (the Chinese area was dominated by the Khitan people — or, as I have shown, the Kittim people). Thus, the Kittim and the Sinim of the Bible are found together in major

⁸ *Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah*, (New York: Scribner, 1878). (reprinted, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 195–). The context of Isaiah’s prophecy describes the return of Israel from foreign lands after the Babylonian captivity, with Jews returning from the **“the land of Sinim.”** Traveling with them are people from Sinim who want to learn about YHWH’s greatness as God. Lange also wrote, **“the land of Sinim [is meant] ... as the remotest eastern land.”** DWS

historical events that formed the Chinese nation and its people.

There is a further prophecy that illustrates this. Look at a predestined event that will also occur not long before the Second Advent of Christ. Malachi records future events that have not yet happened in history:

“For **from the rising of the sun** even unto the going down of the same,

- **my name shall be great among the Gentiles** [the nations, *goyim*]; **and**
- **in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and**
- **a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen** [the nations, *goyim*],

says YHWH of hosts.”

• **Malachi 1:11**

There is no doubt this prophecy will be fulfilled before the great and terrible Day of the Lord because Malachi later speaks of that very Day as yet future to him in the context of the prophetic teaching he was giving (Malachi 4:5–6). And note that the above prophecy is directed to the farthest easterly direction from the land of Israel that one can go, to the very rising of the sun itself. The “**Land of the Rising Sun**” is, even in our modern parlance, Japan, and in the same region is China and Southeast Asia.

Those areas of the world are soon going to be evangelized with the Gospel of Christ, and they will begin to accept it on a wide scale. This will occur once Israel itself begins to accept Christ Jesus as Zechariah 12:9–14 says will occur. We will not have many years left to see these very things beginning to happen.

We Christians in the west need to focus our primary attention on presenting the Gospel of Christ to the Jewish people in the best way we know how. They at first gave us the Gospel by their Jewish apostles, and now it is our turn to return it to them.

There are some exciting times to happen on earth in the not too distant future. The prophecies show that even the Gentile nations in the Far East and to the West will be given the Gospel of Christ as shown in the New Testament revelation (and Gentiles will accept it in a basic sense). This is as certain as the rising of tomorrow’s sun.

Just as South Korea is now experiencing a new and revolutionary interest in Christ and the New Testament, a groundswell of proper regard to Christ will soon begin to sweep many areas of the world. China will begin to accept the teachings of the Gospel.

Before China Is Converted

According to Zechariah 13:1–6, people in the Land of Israel will commence a campaign of getting rid of the idols and idolatrous ways that our western Christian churches have placed in their false shrines in the Holyland, and this will have a rippling effect from Jerusalem throughout the world. All of us in Christ who now love the Gospel are privileged to be the precursors for bringing forth the fruits of the Gospel to Israel and then the world. That teaching from Israel will then reach out to embrace the whole world. The result? All in China are destined to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and you and I are having a part in bringing this to pass. [**End of Dr. Martin’s article and *Byte Show* program.**]

Ernest L. Martin, 1995

David Sielaff, May 2009, February 2021

Addendum — David Sielaff, February 2021

Information about China today can help us understand the verses regarding “the world” Christ talked about when He said the Gospel will go to “**all the world.**” This will occur before Christ returns. I begin by reviewing the history of Christianity in China, starting with the commission the apostles received from Jesus.

The Commission from Jesus to His Apostles Includes China

Jesus said to His disciples, “**For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:17). The world needs to know Christ’s message and His acts of redemption for every person. Jesus declared that “**the Gospel,**” the “Good News,” would be preached and the world would surely learn the truth. He commissioned them to begin and lead that effort. Each verse presents small bits of different information:**

“**And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.**”

• *Matthew 24:14*

“**Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.**”

• *Matthew 26:13*

“**Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.**”

• *Mark 14:9*

“**And he said unto them, Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature** [to all creation].”

• *Mark 16:15*

“**Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But NOW is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, [NOW] made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.**”

• *Romans 16:25–26*

“**In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**”

• *2 Corinthians 4:4*

Given Christ’s command for His Jewish apostles and disciples to spread the Gospel to the world, Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, never said every Christian should evangelize, or must preach the Gospel to unbelievers. It is in the minds of many Christians that they are less devout toward God if they do not have the same drive Jesus gave to the apostles and disciples when He was with them. That is the job of Israel.

However ... if you choose or feel led by God to do that, you are free — in Christ — to train and learn if that is truly a calling God has given to you. Learn truth and increase your personal freedom. Pay close attention to the words Jesus said to Jews who believed on Him:

“**Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; And [1] you shall know the truth, and [2] the truth shall make you free.**”

• *John 8:31–32*

First you learn truth, then you slowly gain freedom to make informed choices in areas of your life. Freedom is one of many important blessings we gain as believers as we study and learn God’s Word over time. One such blessing we gain is increased freedom in our hearts and minds.

Christian History in China

There are numerous traditions of the apostles going far and wide in the world preaching, teaching and establishing Christian *ekklesias*. Little information involves China. The article “[The Church in China](#)” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1913 edition, Volume C, gives an early history of Christianity in China. However,

there is no scriptural or direct historical evidence that the apostles evangelized in China.⁹ Better evidence exists for Christian evangelism a few hundred years later:

“The introduction of Christianity into China has been ascribed not only to the Apostle of India, St. Thomas, but also to St. Bartholomew. In the third century, Arnobius, in [his book] ‘Adversus Gentes’, speaks of the Seres,¹⁰ with the Persians and the Medes, as among the nations reached by [quoting Arnobius] ‘that new power which has arisen from the works done by the Lord and his Apostles.’”

Though there is evidence that Christianity existed in Mesopotamia and Persia during the fourth century [the 300s AD] ... there is no proof that it spread to China.”

Few other sources tell of apostolic teaching in China. Arnobius lived in the 4th century AD. His account fits the widespread travels of the 12 apostles (after Matthias replaced Judas, Acts 1:12–26) to spread the Gospel, particularly to where Diaspora Jews were to be found. No sources tell us there were any Jews in China.

After that time, little is said about any Christian teaching to China until the establishment of a Nestorian church in the early 700s AD. Continuing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* article ...

“After the condemnation of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, at the Council of Ephesus (431 [AD]) and his banishment [for heresy], his disciples ... seemed to have reached China in the seventh century, according to the Si-ngan-fu inscription.”

The “inscription” was on a stele (a commemorative stone with carved words) that recorded events from 635 AD, and carved in 781 AD by the order of the Chinese emperor. The writing commemorated the arrival of Nestorian Christians to China in the early 635 AD. It was discovered in 1623. Western Jesuit scholars deciphered the writing that may be the earliest confirmed information about Chinese Christianity.

The Nestorian congregations flourished in small numbers with the favor of the Imperial court in China. This favor lasted until the rise of Islamic Turkic-speaking Uighurs which persecuted the Nestorians. The Nestorians survived through the 13th century AD era of the Mongol conquest from north of China.¹¹ Surprisingly, the exceptionally vicious Mongols respected religious people and allowed them to teach their beliefs to Mongols and their subjects. Christian missionaries and clergy were free to travel through Mongol territories, as were Christian merchant caravans and traveling adventurers like Marco Polo.¹²

During the native Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), nativist sentiments rose to make Nestorian and Catholic teaching undesirable and unpopular. Later, Roman Catholics from the Dominican, Franciscan, Augustinian, and Jesuit religious orders arrived in China in the early 1600s and established moderate followings around China. Christian growth remained small until the early-1800s when Christian Protestant missionaries began to evangelize and establish their churches in large cities in China alongside isolated Roman Catholic churches.

“The first Protestant missionary on Chinese soil won only ten converts in twenty-seven years of work. Yet Protestantism within a half century would very nearly overthrow the dynasty with quasi-Christian rebel forces. And in just over a century it would provide China with a revolutionary leader who was a Christian believer [Sun Yetsen, who died in 1924].”

• **Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, 35**

⁹ There are traditions of the apostles going far and wide to preach the Gospel and establishing *ekklesias*, as Jesus told them to do. One tradition is that the apostle Thomas preached, taught, and organized *ekklesias* in western India. See the Smithsonian Institute article, “[The Surprisingly Early History of Christianity in India ...](#)”

¹⁰ Arnobius was a Christian Greek apologist. Only one writing of his exists called “Against the Nations” or “Against the Heathen.” He used the term *seres*, an ancient Greek word for China. The term was later used in Latin as a word for China. Indian sources (where the apostle Thomas did likely teach) indicate that Thomas did go to China (Wikipedia, “[Thomas the Apostle](#)”).

¹¹ The Uighur population in China has suffered persecution and genocidal acts inflicted by the Communist Chinese government.

¹² David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2003), 19–30.

The Taiping Rebellion

All through the 1800s opium was imported from India by British merchants for use by the Chinese people. The opium trade was supported by the British government that used its diplomatic influence and military power to force the Manchu Qing Dynasty to allow the opium trade from India to continue. The First Opium War of Britain against the Chinese imperial government was fought from 1839–1842. Britain won.

The missionary movement from Europe to China was also beginning during this time. There were a number of missionaries in China during the 1830s. In the mid-1800s there rose a remarkable indigenous semi-Christian kingdom in China, an enclave with a population of some 20 million people under its rule. It was known as the Taiping Rebellion against the non-Chinese Manchu Dynasty that invaded China from the north (when Manchu invaders destroyed the indigenous Chinese Ming Dynasty in 1644).

The history of the Taiping Rebellion is a sad and tragic story. It began with a man named Hong Xuiquan. Through several life failures he was given a Christian tract and began experiencing dreams and visions direct “from God.” Hong was told he was the younger divine brother of Jesus called to cleanse China of its paganism and corruption and overthrow the Manchu Qing Dynasty. In the beginning Hong was a strong leader and military commander.

“Taiping” means “heavenly peace” which Hong was to bring forth on God’s behalf. It did the opposite. There was initial Christian enthusiasm for Hong’s social movement, then they saw how he ruled through his continual dreams and visions that controlled Hong’s important moves. Then Hong withdrew from affairs to live a monk’s existence of contemplating God (with physical delights, just for himself).¹³

The Taipings claimed they were creating a biblical Davidic kingdom under God in China, but they quickly turned into a heterodox and then a severely heretical and highly regimented autocratic political empire. Very legalistic, few Christian values were practiced, except in name only.

After initial great military success, the leaders under Hong also began having dreams and visions that influenced their military actions. The Taiping armies continued to fight with enthusiasm and effectiveness. Slowly, the Manchu army (with British assistance) began to win back territory from the Taiping army. This Chinese civil war was merciless on both sides. The Taipings carved out a kingdom in the heart of the Manchu empire, itself a vicious regime.

The Manchus defeated the Taiping forces with British help that included the services of the “Christian” General Charles Gordon (who later died at Khartoum fighting Sudanese Muslim Arabs). With Manchu permission (after a Second Opium War in the mid-1850s), British opium trade within China continued. Millions died in the Taiping Rebellion, Christianity in China was diminished, returned somewhat through the mid-1940s, and then went underground after the Communist Chinese conquest of Mainland China in 1949.

To compare, in the American Civil War some 600,000 people died, the vast majority being military deaths. Estimates of dead during the Taiping Rebellion are usually given as **20 million** with great and merciless slaughter of civilians by both the Taipings and Manchu forces — half were civilian deaths and half military deaths.¹⁴ If true, that slaughter was more than 33 times the American Civil War dead.

Christianity was sustained in China until the Communist takeover in 1949. Catholic and Protestant records from before 1949 showed 4,210,000 baptized members, 429 middle schools and high schools, 16 universities,

¹³ Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, pp. 37–39. About 1,500 years before, Roman Emperor Constantine (who ruled from 306 to 337) also was guided by supernatural sources. Constantine was praised by Eusebius Pamphilus, bishop of Caesarea on the Palestinian coast, for his direct communications by his “thousand” dreams and visions, *Secrets of Golgotha*, “[Chapter 16: Visions, Dreams and Signs](#)” and “[Chapter 17: The Counterfeit Golgotha](#).” The Rapture theory originated from dreams and visions. Dr. Martin’s *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*, “[Chapter 17: The Rapture Theory - Its Surprising Origin](#).” See also the article, “[Near Death Experiences](#).”

¹⁴ A standard work on the Taiping Rebellion is told in Jonathan D. Spence’s, *God’s Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xuiquan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996). It is not an exaggeration to say that Gordon helped the British Empire make the world safe for opium distribution in China, with Manchu approval. Opium and foreign interference by European powers and Japan remained a major issue in China and caused a Second Opium war involving France, Russia, the United States, as well as Britain, during the Taiping Rebellion. The opium issue was also a factor in the Boxer Rebellion of 1899–1901. This long history of selling opium to Chinese people is a factor in China’s dislike of the western powers since those times.

with nearly 40% of qualified physicians in China trained in 538 Christian hospitals.¹⁵ Yet the Chinese Christian movement has flourished under Communist persecution since 1949 with little help from Christians overseas. God knows His own.

Recent Christianity in China

Today China's population is around 1 billion, 400+ million people, a number reached sometime in 2020.¹⁶ There are two kinds of Christian churches in China. The first is a Christian church sanctioned by the Chinese government. This "denomination," if you want to call it that, has some 49 million adherents.

The second kind of Christian church in China are the house churches, although their numbers are not accurately known because they are independent, underground and secretive small organizations not registered with the Chinese government. They are considered a threat to the authority of the ruling Chinese Communist Party and their secrecy puts them at great risk for persecution. There are discrepancies between official China estimates and scholars outside China. Eleanor Albert explains in her article, "[Christianity in China](#)," Council on Foreign Relations, October 2018:

"Much of the discrepancy between official government numbers in China and expert estimates can be attributed to Beijing's nonrecognition of Christians engaged in religious activity outside of state-sanctioned religious organizations."

Below is an enlightening opinion piece recently published about the challenges for Christians in China.

"Beijing's Collision With Christians"

By Walter Russell Mead, *Wall Street Journal*, December 24, 2020

Walter Mead is the Ravenel B. Curry III Distinguished Fellow in Strategy and Statesmanship at Hudson Institute, the James Clarke Chace Professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College, and the Global View Columnist at The Wall Street Journal. From 1997 to 2010, Mr. Mead was a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, serving as the Henry Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy from 2003 until his departure.

With the European Parliament threatening to block an investment deal with China over persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang, the shock waves released by Beijing's Hong Kong crackdown still reverberating, and the debate over the next U.S. administration's China policy heating up, this would seem like a bad time for Beijing to kick off another major international dustup over human rights.

But that logic holds little appeal for Chinese policy makers today; crushing domestic dissent takes priority over burnishing the country's image. This is bad news for China's Christians, who face growing hostility from a ruling party that until a few years ago was willing to turn a blind eye to the proliferation of unofficial "house churches" across the country.

That era of toleration coincided with one of the greatest expansions of Christianity in the past 2,000 years. From an estimated three million believers at the end of the Cultural Revolution, the number of Protestants in China is now believed to exceed 100 million, with another 10 million to 12 million Catholics. (The government offers an implausible figure of 38 million Protestants.) The Council on Foreign Relations [cites](#) a 2018 estimate from Purdue's Center on Religion and Chinese Society of between 93 million and 115 million Protestants in China. Much of the growth has come since 2010, and some projections suggest that by 2030 China could surpass America to have the largest population of Christians in the world.

This is one of the few competitions with the U.S. that Beijing does not want to win. Churches are increas-

¹⁵ Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, 52

¹⁶ Compare the population estimates figures in "[China Population \(2021\) – Worldometer](#)," "[Population Pyramid – China](#)," and "[World Population Review – China](#)."

ingly targets of the Chinese Communist Party's repression of free speech. Some have been demolished; others have been "secularized" as local officials tear down religious symbols such as crosses. Authorities are now demanding the installation of cameras to monitor worshippers' behavior and pastors' sermons. There are reports of Catholic churches being forced to replace pictures of the Virgin Mary with portraits of Xi Jinping.

In October, *National Review's* Cameron Hilditch pointed to a Xinhua News Agency report that the Communist Party has decided to produce a state-approved Bible. Mr. Hilditch reports that one change is to the New Testament story in which Jesus spares a woman taken in adultery from stoning by telling her accusers not to cast the first stone unless they are sinless. In the new, improved version, when the accusers have left, Jesus stones the woman himself, saying, "I too am a sinner. But if the law could only be executed by men without blemish, the law would be dead."

Long before the Communists took power, Chinese rulers feared religious cults could cause political unrest. Given the history of Western countries demanding special privileges for missionaries, Christianity was seen as an alien and threatening faith, and the Communist Party was quick to expel missionaries and persecute local Christians after 1949. Protestantism and Catholicism are, with Islam, Buddhism and Taoism, among the officially recognized religions in China, but membership in any but state-licensed and state-controlled congregations is illegal — and no longer overlooked.

The explosive growth of Chinese Christianity is on a collision course with a government determined to centralize power in the Communist Party in ways not seen since the death of Mao. China's Christians are to a great extent urban, well-educated and connected to global information networks. For these reasons, serious pressure on Christians will have an even more damaging impact on China's international standing than what happened in Tibet, Xinjiang or Hong Kong. As news spreads that the Communist Party is persecuting Christians for their faith, the effects on American public opinion will be both explosive and long-lasting, potentially ending any hope for better or even stable relations between Washington and Beijing.

China's rulers saw how the strong example of Pope John Paul II contributed to the collapse of communism in Poland, and they were horrified at the part South Korean Christians played in that country's transition to democracy. Local Christians' prominent role in the Hong Kong democracy movement provided yet another argument for those counseling a stern crackdown. Something very ugly may be in the works.

Throttling diversity at home at the cost of deepening isolation abroad. No earthly power has the ability to stop Beijing from choosing this path if that is what party leaders wish. But it is unlikely that China will like what it finds at the end of that road.

Let us hope in this season of peace and goodwill that moderation and tolerance will prevail in Beijing.



God bless His *ekklesias* in China. "[Christianity in China: Current Status of Christianity in China](#)" webpage gives an interesting update on Chinese Christianity with a possible and surprising large number of Christians¹⁷:

"What is the total number of Christians in China including the underground church? At a closed-door meeting at Peking University in 2006, Xiaowen Ye, the then head of the Chinese Communist Party's Religious Affairs Bureau reported that Protestants in China numbered 110 million. Applying the same 6.5% annual growth rate to this figure for the 12 years since 2006 indicates 234 million as the total number of Protestants in China in 2018."

God is preparing to act. If Christian adherents continue to grow, China may have more Christians than any country in the world. God knows the true number. Remember, God is on His throne, prayer changes things, we are God's children, and Christ Jesus is our elder brother. **God knows those who are His**: Numbers 16:5; Psalm 1:6, 37:18, 28; Nahum 1:7; John 10:14, 27–29; 13:18; Romans 8:28, 11:2; 1 Corinthians 8:3; Galatians 4:9.

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¹⁷ Many Chinese live outside of China. See "[Countries With Most Chinese Outside China](#)." Many of the expatriates are Christians who would return to their homeland if the communist regime ended.