

HEBREW ISRAELITE, OR JEW?

A Study by Frank W. Dowsett

IT will no doubt come as something of a surprise to most Christians to find that the literal word 'JEW' does not appear in the entire original text of the Bible, neither the Old nor the New Testaments. The original Hebrew of the Old Testament uses the word 'Yehudim', meaning 'Judahite'. The original Greek of the New Testament uses the word 'Ioudaios', meaning 'Judean'.

These original words were used in the earlier translations of our Bible, and only seem to have been replaced by the word 'Jew' in fairly relatively recent times.

Dr Young, in his '*Analytical Concordance of the Bible*' says of the word 'Jew';

"A descendant of Judah. Strictly speaking, the name is only appropriate to the subjects of the kingdom of the two tribes after the separation of the ten tribes."

I cannot too strongly emphasise that point. The word 'Jew', even as it is presently used in the Bible, was only ever applicable to the southern House of Judah, and in fact, only to a small portion of even that section of the overall people of Israel. The Northern House of Israel was **NEVER** referred to as 'Jews.' In fact, the major portion of the House of Judah was also **NEVER** referred to as 'Jews.'

The word 'Jew' was only ever used in the Bible, and then only by modern translators, in regard to the descendants of the portion of the Southern House of Judah who returned from the Babylonian captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah. The word could not have been applied to the balance of the House of Judah, nor to the Northern House of Israel, for the simple reason that they were not there! These people, who formed the major part of Israel, were in captivity to the north-west of Palestine, and included the whole of the northern ten tribes which had been previously taken into captivity, together with the major section of the southern two tribes who had subsequently been taken captive into the same regions long before the Babylonian captivity. The Apostle James was fully aware of this fact, because he addressed his epistle to, "*The TWELVE tribes scattered abroad.*"

It is absolutely essential for a correct understanding of the Bible that we acknowledge the difference between "*The Hebrews*" "*The House of Israel*," "*The House of Judah*," and "*The Jews.*"

God never ever confused these terms in the Bible. And if God considered it so necessary to make such careful distinction between them, **THEN THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO EXCUSE FOR US NOT TO DO LIKEWISE.** The '*House of Israel*' is **NOT** synonymous with the '*House of Judah*'. What is more important is that the terms '*The House of Israel*' and

'*The House of Judah*' are **NOT** synonymous with the term '*Jew.*' The House of Judah and some of the Jews are **OF** Israel, that is, descended from Jacob. But the distinction which we wish to emphasise is that whilst some Jews may be Israelites, **ALL ISRAELITES ARE NOT JEWS**. In a similar way, for example, all Scots are British, but all British are not Scots.

When the general blessings were apportioned by Jacob to his twelve sons just prior to his death, the dominion which was to come from the promise of the development into a Nation and Company of Nations, was given to Joseph. But the kingship over this dominion or nation, including the Great King Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, was to come from and through Judah. Thus, the northern House of Israel, which came from Joseph, and the southern House of Judah, which came from Judah, each had their **GOD-APPOINTED** tasks and destinies to fulfil.

The prophets displayed meticulous care in their address to "*The House of Israel*", "*The House of Judah*", and "*The inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Jews.*"

To apply to one House a prophecy which refers to the other, only confuses both the message and its understanding.

But in regard to the "*Jews*", it is essential to note that this name is used in the New Testament of those who resided in the portion of Palestine called Idumea. Thus they were, in the main, the Idumeans. It is also interesting to note that not once did our Lord ever have a good word for these people. On the contrary, He constantly referred to them as His greatest enemies.

Thus we have two distinct sections within the people of Christ's day referred to as '*Jews.*' There were the Galileans, who were mainly from the tribe of Benjamin (*The 'Light-bearing' Tribe*). It was from this section of people from whom came all of the disciples except Judas. These were the **GOOD FIGS** referred to in the 24th. chapter of Jeremiah. Most of the true descendants of Israel of the Babylonian captivity were to be found in this group. But there were also the Idumeans, comprising the '*mixed multitude*' who came back with the others from Babylon. These also mixed with the people of the land who were **NOT** Israelites, and constituted the **BAD FIGS** of Jeremiah's prophecy. It was these people who were claiming to be God's people, and whom our Lord Jesus Christ accused of being '*Children of their father the devil.*' The good section of these people, that is, the Galilean section, later escaped and joined up with their brethren of the twelve tribes already migrating westward.

The balance of them, the **BAD FIGS**, were destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus in A.D. 70, or dispersed among the nations of Europe, where they became a "*Proverb and a taunt and a curse,*" just as the Lord had spoken through Jeremiah. We read in Jeremiah, 24:9,10:

"And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers."

Our Lord Himself warned us in Revelation 2:9, and 3:9 about *“those that call themselves Jews, (original “Judeans”) but who are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.”* He knew who His enemies were even if we don’t. This automatically presumes that there were those who called themselves *“Jews”(original “Judeans”)* who were descendant from Judah.

A few centuries after this final dispersion, a nation called the *Khazars* took over in Palestine, after officially adopting the Jewish religion of Judaism. The descendants of these people and those who escaped the final destruction of Jerusalem have become the present day Zionist Jew. These people do **NOT** constitute a nation. They are held together purely by, and as, a religion. They are made up of people from every nationality under the sun. **THERE IS NOT AN OUNCE OF ISRAELITISH BLOOD IN THEIR VEINS.**

There is absolutely no relationship between the present-day Zionist/Jew and the true Judahite of our Lord’s day. To refer to our Blessed Lord as a ‘Jew’, in the modern context and usage of the term, is an insult of the greatest magnitude to our Saviour. Most Christians believe that the occupation of the land of Palestine in 1948 by the Jews was the fulfilment of prophecy wherein Israel was prophesied to return to the land which God had promised them. Nothing could be further from the truth! Israel, that is, **TRUE ISRAEL**, returned to its rightful inheritance in 1917, just as the Word of God said they would. Edom/Esau, the modern Zionist/Jew and the sworn enemy of God, posing as Israel, threw them out in 1948, **JUST AS THE WORD OF GOD SAID THEY WOULD.** Referring to this enemy as *‘the inhabitants of Jerusalem’*, (Note, NOT as Judah), the prophet Ezekiel has this to say, (Ezekiel 11:1, 5):

“Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL WHOLLY, are they unto whom the Inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Get you far from the Lord: unto US is this land given in possession.”

As Christians, we are enjoined to *‘rightly divide, or understand, the Word of God.’* We will **NEVER** be able to do this whilst we confuse the terminology of the Bible and apply the promises of God to the wrong people.

So to summarize the position we find that neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob were *“Jews”*. They were not even *“Israelites”*. They were *“Hebrews”*, a word derived from Abraham’s forefather *“Eber”*. To illustrate, it would be just as foolish to refer to my own grandfather, who was of Swedish descent, as now being an Australian, based on the fact that his grandson was born as an Australian.

The word *“Israel”* was not even used prior to Jacob being renamed *“Israel”* in Genesis 32:28. His descendants were thereafter referred to as Israelites. They were not referred to as *“Jews”*. This word was first used in 2 Kings 16:6. As previously stated, this word in the original manuscripts was *“Judahite”*, or a descendant of Judah.

There are many thousands of these TRUE *“Jews”* now living, mostly within the borders of the Christian/Israel nations, who, whilst accepting the religion of Judaism, are nevertheless of Israel. Most of these people are still blind to their heritage through true Israel.

The relationship between Israel and Judah is clearly set forth in Psalm 114:25:

"Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion."

Israel were to inherit the dominion of God's Kingdom, whilst Judah, as the Lord's sanctuary, was to provide the King over that dominion.

To misuse and wrongly apply their names and titles confounds the clearly expressed plans and purposes of God and His Kingdom, and causes a total misunderstanding of His Word.

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