Who Is the True Israel? A Biblical Response to Modern Assumptions

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As believers, we often hear that standing with the modern state of Israel is the same as standing with God's chosen people. But what does the Bible actually teach about who Israel is today? This study walks through Scripture to uncover the true identity of God's covenant people—and why faith in Christ, not nationality or ancestry, is what defines the Israel of God.

Introduction

In recent years, global attention has increasingly turned toward the modern state of Israel, especially during times of war and conflict. Many Christians interpret these events as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and view the nation of Israel as God's chosen people. But is this assumption rooted in Scripture—or in tradition? This study aims to examine the biblical identity of "Israel" by answering critical questions: Who is the true Israel of God? Is modern Israel a continuation of the covenant people from the Old Testament? What is the role of faith in identifying God's people today? How should we understand terms like "the fullness of the Gentiles" and the "children of promise"? And most importantly, what does this mean for believers in Christ today—both Jew and Gentile? By comparing Scripture with Scripture, this essay offers a clear biblical answer that shifts the focus from political borders and genealogical descent to the heart of the gospel message: faith in Jesus Christ as the defining mark of God's covenant people.

1. Who Is the True Israel of God?

This foundational question sets the trajectory for understanding everything else. The Apostle Paul—himself once a devout Pharisee—offers clear guidance. In Romans 2:28–29, he states: *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly..*[1]

Paul reinforces this in Galatians 3:7: *"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith…"*[2] and concludes in Galatians 3:29, *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed…"*[3]

Thus, *faith in Christ—not lineage or nationality—makes one a child of Abraham and an heir of the promise*. The Bible is clear: the promise to Abraham was fulfilled spiritually in Christ, not in any modern nation-state. The *"children of the promise"—are those born again by the Spirit, just as Isaac was a child of miraculous birth* (Romans 9:6–8).[4]

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2. Can One Receive Israeli Citizenship? Spiritually Speaking

Paul also addresses this in Ephesians 2:11–13, reminding Gentiles they were once *"aliens from the commonwealth of Israel…"* but are now *"made nigh by the blood of Christ"*.[5] He goes on in Ephesians 2:19, *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners…"*[6]

Paul emphasizes again in Philippians 3:3 that *our confidence is not in the flesh, but in worshipping God in the spirit and rejoicing in Christ.*[7]

3. The Mystery of God: Gentiles as Fellow Heirs

In Ephesians 3:3–6, Paul reveals a mystery once hidden: *"that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs… and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel"*.[8]

Even after the resurrection, the disciples still asked in Acts 1:6–8, *"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"* Jesus instead redirects them to *witness to the world through the power of the Holy Spirit*.[9]

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4. What Are the Times of the Gentiles?

Jesus speaks of the "times of the Gentiles" in Luke 21:24, stating that *"Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"*.[10]

What follows? Jesus answers just a few verses later in Luke 21:27: *"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory"*.[11]

This shows that the times of the Gentiles *extend until Christ's second coming*. During that time, *the Gospel is preached to all nations* (Matthew 24:14).[12]

This is confirmed by Romans 11:25, where Paul writes, *"blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"*.[13]

The *“all Israel”—that is saved is not an ethnic bloc but the totality of believing Jews and Gentiles who form the spiritual body of Christ*—true Israel.

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5. What Does This Mean for You and Me Today?

This entire teaching comes down to one glorious truth: *in Christ, all believers are the children of God and fellow citizens in the kingdom of God*. Galatians 3:26–28 declares, *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus…”*[14]

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6. Avoiding the Deception: The Political vs. the Prophetic

Many are deceived into thinking *modern political Israel is equivalent to the Israel of God*. But mere profession or genetic descent is not what constitutes biblical Israel. Jesus told the leaders of His day:

“The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43),[15] and *“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”* (Matthew 23:38).[16]

The physical temple was left desolate. Today, 1 Corinthians 3:16 reveals, *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God…?”*[17] God’s people are now His dwelling place.

To make a point that is profoundly important to everything discussed so far, we must pause and consider more deeply the significance of Jesus' words in *Matthew 23:38—"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."* This was not merely a pronouncement about a physical temple; it was a declaration of covenantal judgment. It marked the end of the old system of worship, the rejection of national Israel's role under the Old Covenant, and the withdrawal of God's presence from a people who had rejected His Son. But there's more to these words than a surface reading reveals. What lies beneath is a pattern—hidden to many because of incomplete understanding—regarding how God views covenants, names, and spiritual identity. This understanding prepares us for what follows next: a story from the Old Testament that prophetically mirrors what we see today in the modern state that claims the name "Israel."

6b. Misusing the Blessing: Does Genesis 27:29 Justify Support for Modern Israel?

One of the most frequently cited verses to justify unconditional support for the modern political state of Israel is Genesis 27:29, which says:

> *"Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."*

At first glance, this seems to affirm Genesis 12:3 and support the modern claim that those who bless Israel—by which many mean the current state—will be blessed. But does this

interpretation hold up in context?

This verse is part of the blessing that Isaac gave Jacob, **intended for Esau**, but acquired by deception (Genesis 27:1–29). It is a patriarchal blessing given to Jacob **as an individual**, not to a political nation in the distant future. While it echoes Genesis 12:3, it was never a command for all future nations to bless a state bearing the name "Israel."

The deeper fulfillment of this blessing flows through God's redemptive plan in Christ, not through Jacob's physical lineage alone. Paul clarifies in *Galatians 3:16* that the promise was made *"to Abraham and his seed… which is Christ,"* and in Galatians 3:7, *"they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."* This blessing—and the curse—rests upon how one responds to the covenant fulfilled in Jesus, not on national alliances with geopolitical Israel.

Genesis 27:29 vs. New Testament Fulfillment

Genesis 27:29 (Isaac's Blessing to Jacob)	New Testament Fulfillment
"Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee"	Christ is exalted above all nations; every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:10)
"Be lord over thy brethren"	Christ is Lord of all; believers are co-heirs with Him (Romans 8:17)
"Let thy mother's sons bow down to thee"	Fulfilled in Christ's supremacy, not Jacob's descendants (Colossians 1:18)
"Cursed be every one that curseth thee…"	Applied to those who reject Christ and the gospel (John 3:18; Galatians 1:8–9)

Genesis 27:29 (Isaac's Blessing to Jacob)	New Testament Fulfillment
"…and blessed be he that blesseth thee"	Blessing comes by faith in Christ (Galatians 3:9); those who receive Him are blessed (John 1:12)
Physical Jacob (by deception)	**Spiritual Israel (by faith in Christ)**

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7. Jacob's Transformation: The Pattern of True Israel

To understand the spiritual identity of true Israel, we must go back to the moment God gave the name "Israel" to a man. That man was Jacob—a man who began his life grasping for what was not his, scheming with his mother to steal the blessing of his **brother Esau** ((*read footnote* [18]), Genesis 27:6–29). While Isaac conferred the blessing in ignorance, it is important to note that God had not endorsed Jacob's methods. What Jacob secured by deception was not what God honors; God does not bless according to manipulation, but according to divine promise and faith.

The turning point came when Jacob found himself alone and desperate, wrestling with a divine being—later understood to be the Angel of the LORD (Genesis 32:24–30). In that moment, Jacob was confronted not only with God, but with himself. When asked, *"What is thy name?"*, Jacob confessed his identity—the deceiver, the supplanter. This moment of truth was a moment of repentance. He clung to God and said, *"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."* (v. 26). It was then, and only then, that God changed his name to *Israel*—a prince who prevails with God—not because of cunning or flesh, but because of surrender and faith.

This encounter with God marked Jacob's spiritual transformation. The new name *Israel* symbolized a new birth—a prophetic foreshadowing of what it truly means to become God's covenant people. Just as Jacob was not truly Israel until he repented and was renamed by God, so too are we not God's people until we are born again by the Spirit (John 3:3). The name *Israel* carries divine meaning, but it is not one that can be claimed by fleshly lineage or political designation alone.

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8. Modern Israel: A Name Claimed Without the Blessing

The story of Jacob helps illuminate the present confusion surrounding the modern state of Israel. In 1948, the United Nations approved the establishment of a political nation that would bear the name *Israel*. But unlike the transformation of Jacob, this naming did not come from God. It came through the schemes and efforts of men—diplomatic votes, political pressures, and military actions. The result was not the restoration of the biblical Israel of promise, but the formation of a secular state bearing a spiritual name it had not received through faith.

Just as Jacob's initial attempt to gain the blessing through deceit was not blessed by God, the modern state's assumption of the name "Israel" is not evidence of divine favor. The blessing of God cannot be hijacked by politics. As Jesus warned the nation of His day: *"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"* (Matthew 21:43). The true Israel of God is not a geopolitical entity—it is a spiritual people born of the Spirit and walking by faith.

Sadly, this distinction has been hidden from many. Evangelical

churches, influenced by theological systems such as dispensationalism, have embraced the modern state of Israel as the continuation of God's covenant people. Yet Scripture teaches: *"They are not all Israel, which are of Israel… but the children of the promise are counted for the seed"* (Romans 9:6–8). The identity of God's people is not found in bloodline, but in belief. And until the modern state repents and recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, it remains like Jacob before his transformation—operating in the flesh, not in the Spirit.

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9. Transition: Reclaiming the True Identity of God's People

The modern political use of the name *Israel* has created confusion, division, and misplaced loyalties in the body of Christ. It has distracted many from the reality that **the covenant people of God are those who have been spiritually reborn, not nationally re-established**. Just as Jacob had to be renamed and remade, so too must we understand that the Israel of God is not a continuation of the flesh, but a creation of grace through faith in Christ.

This brings us to the final point of reflection: what does this truth mean for you and me today, and how should we walk in light of our true identity in Christ?

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10. Conclusion: Walking in the

Light of the True Israel

In light of everything we've examined, the conclusion is both simple and profound: the true Israel of God is not defined by geography, political sovereignty, or ancestral bloodline. It is defined by **faith in Jesus Christ**. The promises made to Abraham have always pointed beyond the borders of Canaan, beyond national Israel, and beyond the old covenant system. They pointed forward to Christ—the true Seed—and to all who would be made children of God through Him.

As Paul declares: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus… and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Galatians 3:26, 29). This is the heart of the gospel and the basis for our identity. We are not waiting for a restored temple or a national revival in the Middle East to validate God's covenant. The temple has already been raised—in Christ and in His people (1 Corinthians 3:16). The kingdom has already been transferred—from the old nation to a new people who bring forth the fruits thereof (Matthew 21:43).

To support a modern political state simply because it bears the name *Israel*, while it continues to reject the Son of God, is to misunderstand the very nature of God's redemptive plan. Our loyalty must be to the **Kingdom of Christ**, not to national interests or historical sentiment. We must walk in the Spirit, not be led by the flesh, and live as citizens of heaven—not of earthly Zion.

And so, as the world becomes increasingly entangled in political loyalties and prophetic confusion, may you—believer in Christ—stand firm in your calling. You are a child of promise. You are part of the holy nation, a royal priesthood, and a spiritual house. You are not to be swayed by appearances, but grounded in the truth. You are the Israel of God.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Let us live as those who have been transformed, renamed, and called into His marvelous light. And let us declare boldly and graciously: **only in Christ is the blessing found, and only through Him does the promise become ours.**

Additional Ending Remarks

As this study has shown, the Word of God does not define His chosen people by ethnicity, land rights, or national status, but by faith in Jesus Christ. The true Israel of God consists of all—Jew and Gentile—who are born again by the Spirit, united in Christ, and heirs of the promises made to Abraham through faith. This spiritual nation transcends geography, politics, and ancestry. Understanding this truth protects the believer from being swept into emotionally charged or politically motivated interpretations of prophecy and reinforces a Christ-centered perspective of identity and calling. As the world continues to polarize over questions of land, lineage, and loyalty, the believer must remain rooted in God's revealed will: the Kingdom of God is not of this world. Our focus must remain on Christ—our peace, our promise, and our King. May this understanding deepen your faith, clarify your vision, and give you boldness to share the truth in love.

Let your *confidence be in Christ*, not the political drama of this world. *Remember your identity*. You are a *citizen of heaven*. And *God, your King, will not fail to bring His children safely home*.

Suggested Scripture References:

- Genesis 27:6–29 – Jacob and Rebekah’s scheme to deceive Isaac
- Genesis 32:24–30 – Jacob wrestles with the angel and receives the name Israel
- Romans 9:6–8 – Not all Israel is Israel; children of promise are counted
- Galatians 3:29 – If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed
- Galatians 6:15–16 – The Israel of God
- John 3:3 – Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God
- Romans 11:25 – Blindness in part has happened to Israel
- 1 Corinthians 14:33 – God is not the author of confusion

Footnotes (KJV)