

# Are “Today’s Jews” God’s Chosen & Are They The Children of God? “Gal. 3:26”

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## **Brief Introduction**

This compilation explores New Testament teachings to address the inquiry posed in the title. Queries were submitted online using an AI tool to generate content, which included scripture citations and brief analysis. This case study aims to highlight the comprehensive nature of God’s design through Jesus Christ.

In an era where rhetoric and emotions heavily influence beliefs, objectively analyzing evidence is unconventional yet essential. Historical accounts may not always be precise, and the truth is often met with opposition. This topic may be sensitive as it touches on deeply ingrained religious and cultural identities. Therefore, it is crucial to set aside political correctness to uncover the truth. The pursuit of truth is vital for comprehension, as scripture remains immutable and asserts that faith in Jesus Christ is the ultimate criterion for being part of God's chosen people.

Many believe the "Jewish people of today" are God's chosen ones and that He intends to bless them and the nation of Israel as promised to Abraham. However, this information aims to show Christians that they may have been led astray by teachings that deviate from biblical scripture. The goal is to delve into the New Testament to uncover what it truly says about God's chosen people and His blessings under the new covenant.

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## **Pertinent Scripture**

It is crucial to start by referencing scripture that is pertinent to the upcoming topic.

### **[1 Peter 2:9-10](#) -**

*<sup>9</sup>"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: <sup>10</sup>Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*

### **Not a People:**

- Before conversion, believers were like those mentioned

in Hosea 1:9, who were called “Loammi,” meaning “not my people.”

- Although God had chosen them from eternity, they were not yet recognized as His people before their conversion.
- Before being born again, they did not serve God or accept salvation from Christ. They couldn't be truly known or identified as God's people by themselves or others.
- The Syriac version of the Bible captures this by saying they were “not reckoned or accounted a people” by others.

### **Now the People of God:**

- After conversion, believers are recognized as God's people because they are regenerated (born again), called, and sanctified (made holy).
- God declares them to be His people, and they have the inner assurance from the Holy Spirit that they belong to God.
- Others also recognize and acknowledge them as the people of God.

### **Not Obtained Mercy, But Now Have Obtained Mercy:**

- Before conversion, they were like those in Hosea 1:6, called “Loruhamah,” meaning “no mercy.”
- Even though God's mercy was always planned for them, it wasn't shown to them until they were born again.
- In their new birth, they experience God's mercy clearly, receiving forgiveness and grace through the blood of Christ.

<sup>6</sup>"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: <sup>7</sup>**Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children:** but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. <sup>8</sup>That is, **They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God:** but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Romans 9:7 refers to the promise God made to Abraham, specifically that "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

### **Context:**

- Paul is discussing God's sovereign choice and the true children of Abraham, emphasizing that being a physical descendant of Abraham does not automatically make one a child of the promise.

### **In Isaac Shall Thy Seed Be Called:**

- This phrase refers to God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would come through Isaac, not through Ishmael.
- Isaac was the child of promise, born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age through a miraculous intervention by God. This contrasts with Ishmael, who was born to Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden, as a result of Sarah and Abraham's attempt to fulfill God's promise through their own means.
- God's plan was to establish the lineage through Isaac, demonstrating that the fulfillment of His promises relies on His power and timing, not human efforts.

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## Source of Deception

The conflicts and spiritual warfare we witness today have deep historical roots. Christians recognize this truth, and a simple examination of the Word of God reveals that deception and lies originate from Satan, described as “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world.”

To understand the origins of sin, we must ask: Who originated sin, and why and when did it start? The fall of Satan is symbolically described in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:12-18, explaining the why, but for the when, we refer to Genesis 3. Here, the serpent, identified as Satan or Lucifer, deceives humanity.

Theologically, many Christian traditions interpret the serpent in Genesis 3 as a manifestation or instrument of Satan, based on New Testament references. Revelation 12:9 explicitly connects the serpent in the Garden of Eden with Satan, identifying it as the Devil who deceives the whole world. However, Genesis does not explicitly name the serpent as Satan.

Satan’s deceptive nature has infiltrated the church, exposing members to twisted teachings filled with half-truths and lies. Moving forward, it is essential to shift focus from Satan’s tactics to the origins of the content presented and the reason for sharing it.

### – [Revelation 12:9](#) –

*“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, **which deceiveth the whole world**: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”*

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## Format Explained

This examination involved an online investigation to evaluate the accuracy of artificial intelligence (AI) relative to Biblical scripture. Queries on this subject have been raised and answered in the subsequent content.

As you study the topic, you will encounter a series of queries with corresponding answers. Queries / comments labeled as #3-#6 that will follow, were nested together, with combined answers in the AI response. This progressive questioning technique was used to determine if AI provides appropriate responses aligned with the historical context of the subject.

While AI is not a replacement for traditional study methods or the guidance of theologians, it can serve as a helpful supplementary resource, providing immediate access to a wealth of information and insights. Utilizing modern technology like ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, can enhance biblical studies.

The initial question below, followed by additional queries, was thoroughly explored and answered by AI, with subsequent questions resulting in clear and insightful responses.

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### **#1 – Initial Question**

*What is the difference of God's chosen and children of God? Please give references from the KJV bible.*

### **– Response –**

In the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, the terms "God's chosen" and "children of God" are distinct but related concepts.

**God's Chosen:** This term generally refers to the people God has

selected for a specific purpose or covenant. In the Old Testament, this often refers to the nation of Israel, or Jacob.

- [Deuteronomy 7:6](#): *“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: **the LORD thy God hath chosen thee** to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”*
- [Isaiah 41:8-9](#): <sup>8</sup>*“But thou, Israel, art my servant, **Jacob whom I have chosen**, the seed of Abraham my friend. <sup>9</sup>Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; **I have chosen thee**, and not cast thee away.”*
- [1 Peter 2:9](#): *“But ye are a **chosen generation**, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” **Note:** (This verse emphasis is on the status that was **once unique to Jacob “Israel”**, not to a resident of Judea or one who converted (voluntary or involuntary) and was called a Jew and practiced Judaism, but is now extended to Gentile believers through Christ).*

**Children of God:** This term refers to those who have a relationship with God as their Father, particularly through faith in Jesus Christ in the New Testament context.

- [John 1:12](#): *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power **to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name.”*
- [Romans 8:14-17](#): <sup>14</sup>*“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry,*

Abba, Father. <sup>16</sup>The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, **that we are the children of God:** <sup>17</sup>And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

- [Galatians 3:26](#): “For **ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**”

## Summary

- God’s Chosen: Refers to those selected by God for a specific role or purpose, often highlighting the collective identity of Israel in the Old Testament **and the church as a chosen people in the New Testament.**
- Children of God: Refers to individuals **who have a personal, familial relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ,** highlighting the personal and relational aspect of being part of God’s family.

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## #2 – Follow-up Question To #1

*Somewhere in the old and new testament it says that a new covenant will come and Israel would be renewed with this new covenant. Please add to the last response.*

### – Response –

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of a new covenant that would come and renew Israel. This new covenant is a significant theme in the Bible, promising a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. Here are relevant references:

### Old Testament Prophecies

1. [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#):



- <sup>31</sup>“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make **a new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: <sup>32</sup>Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: <sup>33</sup>But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

## 2. [Ezekiel 36:26-28](#):

- <sup>26</sup>“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. <sup>28</sup>And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

## New Testament Fulfillment

1. [Luke 22:20](#):

- *“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”*

2. [Hebrews 8:6-13](#):

- *“<sup>6</sup>But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of **a better covenant**, which was established upon better promises. <sup>7</sup>For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. <sup>8</sup>For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: <sup>9</sup>Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because **they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not**, saith the Lord. <sup>10</sup>For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: <sup>11</sup>And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. <sup>12</sup>For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. <sup>13</sup>In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”*

## Summary

The concept of a new covenant, prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament through Jesus Christ, represents a renewal of the relationship between God and His people, Israel. This new covenant promises an internal transformation, characterized by God's laws written on hearts, a personal relationship with God, and forgiveness of sins. This new covenant extends the promise to all who believe in Christ, thus expanding the notion of God's chosen to include both Jews and Gentiles who become children of God through faith.

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### #3 – New Question: Judah or Judea

*The word Judah was given the name Judea; was this new name a Greco-Roman transliteration? Give background history and KJV bible references.*

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### #4 – New Question Follow-up

*Insert the following in the last answer given at the appropriate place when and how the word Jew relates with the two terms, Judah and Judea.*

### #5 – New Question Follow-up

*Please revise again and insert the following additional points. – In [2 Kings 16:6](#) the name “Jew” first appears and give the history. Also, in [Esther 8:17](#) give background of who these people were that became Jews because of fear of the Jews. Were these people Edomites, or of another lineage?*

### #6 – New Question Follow-up

*In the Septuagint (Old Testament in Greek) [Esther 8:17](#) uses the term Gentile, therefore, those who became Jews were not ethnic Israelites, so many of them in Judea and who were called Judeans were not true Jews (Judahites), therefore, the*

*term “Jew” that came to denote all Israelites are not true Israelites and then the term Jew is misleading.*

**– Response #'s 3-4-5-6 –**

Replies to above nested questions/statements are noted below with a corresponding number at end of a Heading Title or at the last sentence of a paragraph, for example, **3, 4, 5, 6**

The name “Judah” (Hebrew: יהודה, *Yehudah*) was originally given to one of the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from Judah, the fourth son of Jacob and Leah ([Genesis 29:35](#)). The region associated with the tribe of Judah became known as the Kingdom of Judah.<sup>3</sup>

**Background History<sup>3</sup>**

The term “Judea” is indeed derived from “Judah” and reflects a Greco-Roman transliteration and adaptation of the name. This transformation occurred during the Hellenistic and Roman periods when Greek and Latin became dominant languages in the Eastern Mediterranean. Here’s a brief overview of the historical background:<sup>3</sup>

**1. Persian Period (539-332 BC):<sup>3</sup>**

- After the Babylonian exile, the region of Judah was known as the Persian province of Yehud. The term “Judah” was still used during this period, but the province’s name began to take on more Hellenistic forms as Greek influence grew.

**2. Hellenistic Period (332-63 BC):<sup>3</sup>**

- Following Alexander the Great’s conquests, Greek culture and language spread throughout the region. The Hebrew name “Yehudah” began to be transliterated into Greek as “Ioudaia.” This

period marks the beginning of the shift from “Judah” to “Judea.”

### 3. Roman Period (63 BC onward):<sup>3</sup>

- When the Romans conquered the region, the Greek term “Ioudaia” was Latinized to “Judea.” The Roman province of Judea included not just the territory of the ancient Kingdom of Judah but also parts of Idumea (Edom) and Samaria.

### The Term “Jew”<sup>4</sup>

The term “Jew” comes from the name “Judah” (Hebrew: יהודה, *Yehudi*), originally referring to members of the tribe of Judah or the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah. Over time, as the identity of the Israelites became closely associated with the southern kingdom and its capital, Jerusalem, the term “Jew” came to denote all Israelites. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, “Jew” (Greek: Ἰουδαῖος, *Ioudaios*) referred to people of Judean origin or those who practiced Judaism. Thus, the term “Jew” is historically linked to both “Judah” and “Judea.”<sup>4</sup>

The name “Jew” first appears in the Bible in [2 Kings 16:6](#):<sup>5</sup>

- “At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.”
- This passage highlights the use of “Jew” to refer to people from the Kingdom of Judah.

### Biblical References<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Old Testament (Judah):<sup>3</sup>

- Genesis 29:35: *Genesis 29:35: "And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing."*
- [Joshua 15:1](#): *"This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast."*

### 2. New Testament (Judea):<sup>3</sup>

- [Matthew 2:1](#): *"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem."*
- [John 3:22](#): *"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized."*
- [Acts 1:8](#): *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

### 3. The Term "Jew" in Esther:<sup>5</sup>

- [Esther 8:17](#): *"And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the **fear** of the Jews fell upon them."*<sup>5</sup>
- ("fear" in the Lexicon: [Strong's Concordance H6342](#) – פָּחַד pachad, pakh'-ad; from [H6342](#); a (sudden) alarm (properly, the object feared, by implication, the feeling):-dread(-ful), fear,

(thing) great (fear, -ly feared), terror.)<sup>Added</sup>

- In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the term used here is “Gentiles” (Greek: ἔθνικοὶ, *ethnikoi*), indicating that those who became Jews were not ethnic Israelites. They were likely a mix of various ethnic groups within the Persian Empire who chose to align themselves with the Jewish community for protection and out of respect for the Jews’ newfound favor in the empire. These converts were not specifically Edomites but came from diverse backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

## Summary

The name “Judea” reflects a Greco-Roman transliteration of the Hebrew name “Judah.” This change occurred as Greek and Latin became prominent languages in the region during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The Bible references “Judah” in the Old Testament and “Judea” in the New Testament, highlighting the linguistic and cultural shifts over time.<sup>3</sup> The term “Jew” originates from “Judah” and historically links to both “Judah” and “Judea,” coming to represent the people of Judean origin and those practicing Judaism throughout history.<sup>4</sup> The name “Jew” first appears in [2 Kings 16:6](#). In [Esther 8:17](#), many people of various ethnic backgrounds became Jews out of fear and respect for the Jewish community.<sup>5</sup> The use of “Gentiles” in the Septuagint indicates that these new Jews were not ethnic Israelites, demonstrating the diverse makeup of the population in Judea. This context shows that the term “Jew” evolved and could be somewhat misleading if assumed to denote only ethnic Israelites.<sup>6</sup>

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## #7 – Analysis Request – Herod & Edomite Jews

*Please provide an analysis within its historical framework and in accordance with biblical teachings on the following excerpt of a sermon on [Judaism and Christianity](#)..*

The Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, was under the authority of the Herods who was under the authority of the Roman emperor. The Herods came to power in 47 BC when Julius Caesar appointed Antipater, the son of the Edomite governor of Edom, to be governor of Judea, and Herod was one of Antipater's two sons. In 40 BC, the Parthians, (Iranians today), but in 40 BC, the Parthians attacked the Roman Empire Eastern fringes and briefly conquered Judea.

Herod escaped to Rome where the Roman Senate then named Herod king of the Jews and commissioned him to retake Judea, which he did in 37 AD. Hence that family, the Herods, ruled in that southern kingdom for year after year after year.

There were more Herods than one in the Bible, and they were all of the same family. It's not the intention to deal with the Edomites ([Genesis 36:1](#)), but they were and still are what you would call Edomite Jews. In that sense of the word, they were from Edom, the descendants of Esau.

### – Response –

Let's analyze the historical claims for accuracy:

#### **The Sanhedrin and Roman Authority**

##### 1. Sanhedrin's Authority:

- The Sanhedrin was indeed the highest Jewish court and ruling council in Judea during the Second Temple period.
- It operated under varying degrees of autonomy depending on the political climate and the specific rulers in power. During the Roman period,



the Sanhedrin had significant religious authority but was under the ultimate authority of Roman governors and the Herodian kings.

## **The Herodian Dynasty**

### **1. Antipater's Appointment:**

- Antipater the Idumaeen (from Edom) was indeed appointed by Julius Caesar as a procurator of Judea in 47 BC. Antipater had helped Caesar in the Alexandrian War, which earned him this appointment.

### **2. Herod's Background:**

- Herod the Great was one of Antipater's sons. Herod and his brother Phasael were appointed by Antipater as governors, with Herod overseeing Galilee and Phasael governing Jerusalem.

### **3. Parthian Invasion (40 BC):**

- In 40 BC, the Parthians invaded the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, including Judea. They temporarily ousted the Romans and installed Antigonus II Mattathias as king of Judea.

### **4. Herod's Flight and Roman Support:**

- Herod escaped the Parthian invasion and fled to Rome. The Roman Senate, influenced by Mark Antony and Octavian (later Augustus), appointed Herod as "King of the Jews" and supported his efforts to retake Judea.

### **5. Herod's Conquest of Judea:**

- With Roman military support, Herod returned to Judea and, after a three-year campaign, captured Jerusalem in 37 BC, establishing his rule.

## **Herodian Family**

### **1. Herodian Dynasty:**

- The Herodian dynasty included several rulers mentioned in the New Testament. Herod the Great ruled until 4 BC, and his descendants, including Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Agrippa I and II, ruled various parts of his former kingdom.
- The Herods were of Idumaeen (Edomite) descent, as their ancestors had been forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmoneans in the 2nd century BC.

## **Edomites and Identity**

### **1. Edomite Jews:**

- The term “Edomite Jews” can be misleading. While the Herods were of Edomite origin, they practiced Judaism and were accepted as Jewish rulers by the Roman authorities.
- The broader Jewish community, however, often viewed the Herodian dynasty with suspicion and animosity due to their foreign origins and collaboration with Rome.

## **Summary of Accuracy**

- The historical claims about the Herodian dynasty, their rise to power, and their Edomite origins are accurate. Antipater's appointment by Julius Caesar, Herod's flight to Rome, and his subsequent installation as "King of the Jews" by the Roman Senate are well-documented historical events.
- The Sanhedrin's subordination to both the Herodian rulers and the Roman governors is also accurate.
- The reference to multiple Herods in the Bible being of the same family is correct. The Herodian family ruled different regions over several generations.
- The term "Edomite Jews" should be used with caution, as it can imply a distinct ethnic identity within the Jewish population, which was more complex due to the forced conversions and political dynamics of the time.

The analysis supports the overall historical accuracy of the claims, with a note on the nuanced understanding of terms like "Edomite Jews."

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### **#8 – Clarification Query On #7**

The statement in the last response: *"various ethnic groups within the Persian Empire who chose to align themselves with the Jewish community for protection and out of respect for the Jews' newfound favor in the empire. These converts were not specifically Edomites but came from diverse backgrounds."*

Can you clarify this statement because of a follow-up that states: *"The Herods were of Idumaeen (Edomite) descent, as their ancestors had been forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmoneans."*

The main point is, there is a bit of conflict because of these statements: *"various ethnic groups..."* – *"chose to align themselves with the Jewish community for protection and out of respect for the Jews'..."*, and then *"forcibly converted to*

*Judaism*". This mismatches how or why Jews are what they are today.

Also, Herod was titled "*King of the Jews*", however, then why was the banner above Christ's crucifixion that read this same or similar title? Jesus was a Nazarene and from region of Galilee, even though He was born in Bethlehem 90% of His life was in northern region.

### – Response –

The below explanation is refined to resolve any conflicts and provide a clearer picture of the historical context. Here is the revised analysis for clarification:

The name "**Judah**" (Hebrew: יהודה, *Yehudah*) was originally **given to one of the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from Judah**, the fourth son of Jacob and Leah ([Genesis 29:35](#)). The region associated with the tribe of Judah became known as the Kingdom of Judah.

### Background History

The term "Judea" is indeed derived from "Judah" and reflects a Greco-Roman transliteration and adaptation of the name. This transformation occurred during the Hellenistic and Roman periods when Greek and Latin became dominant languages in the Eastern Mediterranean. Here's a brief overview of the historical background:

#### 1. Persian Period (539-332 BC):

- After the Babylonian exile, **the region of Judah was known as the Persian province of Yehud**. The term "Judah" was still used during this period, but the province's name began to take on more Hellenistic forms as Greek influence grew.

#### 2. Hellenistic Period (332-63 BC):

- Following Alexander the Great's conquests, Greek culture and language spread throughout the region. The Hebrew name "Yehudah" began to be transliterated into Greek as "Ioudaia." This period marks the beginning of the shift from "Judah" to "Judea."

### 3. Roman Period (63 BC onward):

- When the Romans conquered the region, the Greek term "Ioudaia" was Latinized to "Judea." The Roman province of Judea included not just the territory of the ancient Kingdom of Judah but also parts of Idumea (Edom) and Samaria.

## The Term "Jew"

The term "Jew" comes from the name "Judah" (Hebrew: יהודה, *Yehudi*), originally referring to members of the tribe of Judah or the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah. Over time, as the identity of the Israelites became closely associated with the southern kingdom and its capital, Jerusalem, the term "Jew" came to denote all Israelites. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, "Jew" (Greek: Ἰουδαῖος, *Ioudaios*) referred to people of Judean origin OR those who practiced Judaism. Thus, the term "Jew" is historically linked to both "Judah" and "Judea."

The name "Jew" first appears in the Bible in [2nd Kings 16:6](#):

- "At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day."
- This passage highlights the .

## Biblical References

## 1. Old Testament (Judah):

- [Genesis 29:35](#): *“And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.”*
- Joshua 15:1: *“This then was the lot of the tribe of the **children of Judah**<sup>1</sup> by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast.”*

## 2. New Testament (Judea):

- Matthew 2:1: *“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.”*
- John 3:22: *“After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.”*
- Acts 1:8: *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*

## 3. The Term “Jew” in Esther:

- Esther 8:17: *“And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the **people** of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.”*
- In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the term used is **“Gentiles” for people (Greek: ἔθνικοὶ, ethnikoî)**, indicating that those who became Jews were not ethnic Israelites. They were likely a mix of various ethnic groups

within the Persian Empire<sup>2</sup> who chose to align themselves with the Jewish community for protection and out of respect for the Jews' newfound favor in the empire. These converts were not specifically Edomites but came from diverse backgrounds.

- ethnikos: national, foreign, i.e. spec. **a Gentile**  
**Original Word:** ἔθνικός, ἡ, ὄν
- Part of Speech: Adjective
- Transliteration: ethnikos
- Phonetic Spelling: (eth-nee-kos')
- Definition: national, foreign, a Gentile
- Usage: pagan, heathen, gentile; subst: **a Gentile, non-Jew.**

## Herodian Dynasty and Conversion

### 1. Antipater's Appointment:

- Antipater the Idumaeen (from Edom) was indeed appointed by Julius Caesar as a procurator of Judea in 47 BC. Antipater had helped Caesar in the Alexandrian War, which earned him this appointment.

### 2. Herod's Background:

- Herod the Great was one of Antipater's sons. Herod and his brother Phasael were appointed by Antipater as governors, with Herod overseeing Galilee and Phasael governing Jerusalem.

### 3. Parthian Invasion (40 BC):

- In 40 BC, the Parthians invaded the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, including Judea. They temporarily ousted the Romans and installed

Antigonus II Mattathias as king of Judea.

4. Herod's Flight and Roman Support:

- Herod escaped the Parthian invasion and fled to Rome. The Roman Senate, influenced by Mark Antony and Octavian (later Augustus), appointed Herod as "King of the Jews" and supported his efforts to retake Judea.

5. Herod's Conquest of Judea:

- With Roman military support, Herod returned to Judea and, after a three-year campaign, captured Jerusalem in 37 BC, establishing his rule.

6. Herodian Family:

- The Herodian dynasty included several rulers mentioned in the New Testament. Herod the Great ruled until 4 BC, and his descendants, including Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Agrippa I and II, ruled various parts of his former kingdom.
- The Herods were of Idumaeen (Edomite) descent, as their ancestors had been forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmoneans in the 2nd century BC.

## **Clarification on Converts and Identity**

The historical context shows that conversion to Judaism took place under different circumstances:

- **Voluntary Conversions:** In [Esther 8:17](#), many non-Israelites voluntarily converted to Judaism out of fear and respect for the Jewish community's newfound favor.
- **Forced Conversions:** The Idumaeans, including the



ancestors of the Herods, were forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmoneans. This was part of John Hyrcanus's campaign to consolidate Jewish control and expand the Jewish state.

## **Jesus and the Title "King of the Jews"**

### 1. Herod as King of the Jews:

- Herod the Great was appointed by the Roman Senate and was known as "King of the Jews," a title given to him to solidify his authority over Judea and the Jewish people.

### 2. Jesus's Title at the Crucifixion:

- The title "King of the Jews" was used mockingly by the Roman authorities at Jesus's crucifixion. The inscription above the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" ([John 19:19](#)), was meant to ridicule Jesus's claim to kingship and to serve as a warning against insurrection.
- Jesus, while born in Bethlehem, spent most of his life in Galilee, in the northern part of Israel, aligning him geographically with Nazareth.

## **Summary**

The name "Judea" reflects a Greco-Roman transliteration of the Hebrew name "Judah." This change occurred as Greek and Latin became prominent languages in the region during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The Bible references "Judah" in the Old Testament and "Judea" in the New Testament, highlighting the linguistic and cultural shifts over time. The term "Jew" originates from "Judah" and historically links to both "Judah" and "Judea," coming to represent the people of Judean origin and those practicing Judaism throughout history.

The name “Jew” first appears in [2 Kings 16:6](#). In [Esther 8:17](#), many people of various ethnic backgrounds became Jews out of fear and respect for the Jewish community. The use of “Gentiles” in the Septuagint indicates that these new Jews were not ethnic Israelites, demonstrating the diverse makeup of the population in Judea. The Herods, who were of Idumaeen descent, were forcibly converted to Judaism, which highlights the complexity of Jewish identity in that era. The title “King of the Jews” applied to both Herod and Jesus in different contexts, emphasizing political and religious dynamics of the time.

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## #9 – Question On II Kings Sixteen

(Strong’s Definitions is as follows for “Jew” in 2 Kings 16:6 – יהודי Y<sup>e</sup>hûwdîy, yeh-hoo-dee’; patronymically from **H3063**; a Jehudite (i.e. Judaite or Jew), or descendant of Jehudah (i.e. Judah):–Jew.)

*Why did translators chose to use name Jew in the 1611 KJV bible?*

### – Response –

The term “Jew” in the 1611 King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is used as a translation for the Hebrew word יהודי (*Yehudi*), which means a descendant of Judah or an inhabitant of the Kingdom of Judah. The choice to use the term “Jew” in the KJV reflects both [linguistic evolution](#) and historical context. Here’s an analysis of why the translators chose this term:

## Historical and Linguistic Context

### 1. Evolution of the Term:

- The term יהודי (*Yehudi*) originates from the name יהודה (*Yehudah*), referring to Judah, the

fourth son of Jacob, and by extension, the tribe and territory named after him. In the Hebrew Bible, יְהוּדִי (*Yehudi*) was used to refer to members of the tribe of Judah and later, to inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah.

- Over centuries, as the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into other languages, the term evolved. In Greek, the word was transliterated as Ἰουδαῖος (*Ioudaios*), and in Latin as *Iudaeus*. These terms were used in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, respectively.

## 2. Medieval and Early Modern English:

- By the time of the 1611 KJV translation, the English language had already adopted the term “Jew” from the Old French “giu” or “juieu,” derived from the Latin “*Iudaeus*.” This was the common term used in English to refer to the descendants of Judah and adherents of Judaism.

## 3. Standardization in the KJV:

- The KJV translators aimed to create a standardized and accessible translation of the Bible. They used terms that were already familiar to English-speaking readers. The term “Jew” was widely understood in the early 17th century to refer to the people of Judah and to the broader Jewish community.
- Translators of the KJV often relied on earlier English translations, such as William Tyndale’s and the Geneva Bible, which also used the term “Jew.”

**Specific Reference:** 2 Kings 16:6

In 2 Kings 16:6, the use of “Jew” reflects the historical and contextual identity of the people:

- *“At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.”*
- The term “Jews” in this verse refers to the people of the Kingdom of Judah, emphasizing their identity as inhabitants of that region.

## **Theological and Cultural Considerations**

### **1. Identity and Continuity:**

- By using “Jew,” the KJV translators maintained a sense of continuity and identity for the Jewish people from the Old Testament through to the New Testament, where the term is frequently used.
- This continuity also aligns with Christian theological perspectives that see the people of Judah as the forebears of the Jewish community in the New Testament period.

### **2. Clarity for the Audience:**

- The primary audience for the KJV was English-speaking Christians who would be familiar with the term “Jew” from both religious and cultural contexts. Using a familiar term ensured clarity and understanding.

## **Conclusion**

The KJV translators chose the term “Jew” in 2 Kings 16:6 and elsewhere to provide consistency, clarity, and continuity in the text. This choice reflects the [linguistic evolution of the](#)

[term](#) from Hebrew to English and aligns with the translators' goal of creating a comprehensible and standard Bible for English readers. The term "Jew" effectively communicated the identity of the descendants of Judah and the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah to the early 17th-century audience.

– Hebrew OT Breakdown On Strong's Ref. #'s –  
H3063 & H3064 – Y<sup>e</sup>hûwdîy, yeh-hoo-dee'

The Strong's numbers H3063 and H3064 refer to related but distinct terms in Hebrew, each with specific meanings. Here's a breakdown of each:

## Strong's H3063: יְהוּדָה (Yehudah)

- **Definition:** Judah
- **Usage:** This term is used as a proper noun to refer to:
  - The fourth son of Jacob and Leah (Genesis 29:35).
  - The tribe descended from Judah.
  - The southern kingdom of Judah, after the division of the United Monarchy.
  - The territory or land of the tribe of Judah.
  
- **Meaning:** The name Judah means "praised" or "He will be praised."

## Strong's H3064: יְהוּדִי (Yehudi)

- **Definition:** Jew, Jehudite, Judaite
- **Usage:** This term is used to refer to:
  - A person belonging to the tribe of Judah.
  - A person living in the territory of Judah.
  - An adherent to the Jewish faith and customs, especially after the Babylonian exile.

- **Meaning:** It is a patronymic or adjectival form derived from H3063, meaning it describes someone who belongs to or is related to Judah. The term “patronymic” means it is derived from the name of a father or ancestor—in this case, from Judah (Yehudah).

## Explanation of the Difference:

- **H3063 (Yehudah):** Refers to the individual Judah (the patriarch), his tribe, or the territory/kingdom associated with his descendants. It is used as a proper noun.
- **H3064 (Yehudi):** Refers to individuals who are descended from Judah, live in the territory of Judah, or identify with the tribe/kingdom of Judah. It is used as an adjective or noun to describe people.

## Example in Context:

### In 2 Kings 16:6:

- **Verse (KJV):** *“At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.”*Term
- **Used:** The term “Jews” in this verse is “יְהוּדִים” (Yehudi), which corresponds to Strong’s H3064.
- **Meaning:** It refers to people belonging to the kingdom of Judah, indicating their regional and, by extension, ethnic and religious identity as part of the Judahite community.

## Patronymically:

- **Meaning:** When Strong's refers to H3064 (Yehudi) as being derived "patronymically" from H3063 (Yehudah), it means that the identity of a "Jew" (Yehudi) is derived from being associated with Judah (Yehudah). This association can be through lineage (descendants of Judah), regional (residents of Judah), or religious-cultural identity (adherents of the Jewish faith stemming from the traditions of the Judahites).

## Summary:

- **H3063 (Yehudah):** Proper noun for the individual Judah, the tribe, or the territory/kingdom.
- **H3064 (Yehudi):** Descriptive term for people associated with Judah—descendants, residents, or adherents of the faith and culture of Judah.

## – Greek NT Breakdown On Strong's Ref. #'s – G2453 (Ioudaios) & G2448 (Ioudas)

The Greek term for "Jew" in the New Testament is Ἰουδαῖος (Ioudaios). Here's a breakdown of the Greek terms and their Strong's numbers:

## Strong's G2453: Ἰουδαῖος (Ioudaios)

- **Definition:** Jew, Judaeen
- **Usage:** This term is used in the New Testament to refer to:
  - A person belonging to the Jewish nation or people.
  - A person living in Judea (the region).
  - An adherent to the Jewish faith and customs.

- **Meaning:** It is an adjective used substantively as a noun to describe someone who belongs to the Jewish people, whether by ethnicity, religion, or geographic location.

## Strong's G2448: Ἰούδας (Ioudas)

- **Definition:** Judah, Judas
- **Usage:** This term is used as a proper noun in the New Testament to refer to:
  - The patriarch Judah, son of Jacob.
  - Various individuals named Judas in the New Testament, including Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles.
- **Meaning:** The name means “praised” and is directly derived from the Hebrew name יְהוּדָה (Yehudah).

## Explanation of the Difference:

- **G2448 (Ioudas):** Refers to the proper name Judah or Judas. It is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Yehudah and is used as a personal name.
- **G2453 (Ioudaios):** Refers to a Jew or Judaeans, encompassing ethnicity, religion, and regional identity. It is an adjectival form used substantively as a noun.

## Example in Context:

### G2448 (Ioudas) – Proper Name

- **Matthew 1:2 (KJV):** “Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren.”
- **Term Used:** “Judas” here is Ἰούδας (Ioudas), corresponding to Strong's G2448.



- **Meaning:** Refers to Judah, the patriarch, son of Jacob.

## **G2453 (Ioudaios) – Descriptive Term**

- **John 4:9 (KJV):** “Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.”
- **Term Used:** “Jew” here is Ἰουδαῖος (Ioudaios), corresponding to Strong’s G2453.
- **Meaning:** Refers to Jesus as belonging to the Jewish nation, indicating both ethnic and religious identity.

## **Patronymically and Contextually:**

- **G2448 (Ioudas):** As a proper name, it directly links to the historical and genealogical identity of individuals named Judah or Judas, showing their lineage.
- **G2453 (Ioudaios):** As a descriptive term, it identifies individuals as Jews, connecting them to the Jewish people either through ethnic heritage (descendants of Judah), regional residence (inhabitants of Judea), or religious practice (followers of Judaism).

## **Summary:**

- **G2448 (Ioudas):** Proper noun for individuals named Judah or Judas, derived from the Hebrew name Yehudah.
- **G2453 (Ioudaios):** Descriptive term for people identified as Jews, encompassing ethnic, regional, and religious identities.

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## **#10 – Statement: True Judahites**

*The translators choice to provide consistency, clarity, and continuity in the text is commendable, however, the historical accuracy is lost because the truth is that not all Israelites are Judahites, but all true Judahites are Israelites, therefore, “the various ethnic groups within the Persian Empire who chose to align themselves with the Jewish community” and “The Herods... of Idumaeen (Edomite) descent, ...their ancestors had been forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmoneans.” – These facts prove that not all Jews today are the people of the old testament who were called Judahites. Additionally, when the southern kingdom of Judah was exiled to Babylon it played a significant role in the development of Judaism. Furthermore, Judaism was not the practice God approved, but it was a perverted religion of the pharisees with the absence of a temple in Babylon. Please address all these points with references; biblical and other sources.*

## **– Response –**

This request touches on several complex and intertwined historical, theological, and linguistic issues. The following will address each point in turn, providing clarity and references where applicable.

## **The Term “Jew” and Ethnic Identity**

### **1. Not All Israelites Are Judahites:**

1. It's true that not all Israelites are Judahites. The term “Israelite” encompasses all the descendants of Jacob (Israel), which includes twelve tribes. Judahites specifically refer to descendants of the tribe of Judah.
  - The Old Testament distinguishes between these groups. For example, in **2 Samuel 19:43**, the Israelites from the other tribes express

resentment toward the Judahites: *“And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.”*

## **2. Conversion and Identity:**

- The fact that various ethnic groups within the Persian Empire aligned themselves with the Jewish community (Esther 8:17) and that the Idumaeans were forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmoneans (John Hyrcanus) indicates that the Jewish community became ethnically diverse.
- Esther 8:17: *“And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.”*
- This shows that “Jew” in a historical sense came to include not just descendants of Judah but also converts to Judaism.

## **Herodian Dynasty and Idumaeon Descent**

### **1. Herod’s Idumaeon Ancestry:**

- Herod the Great was of Idumaeon (Edomite) descent. His ancestors were forcibly converted to Judaism by John Hyrcanus during the Hasmonean period. This historical fact indicates that the Jewish population included people of non-Israelite origin.
- Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, provides detailed accounts of the Herodian dynasty

and their Idumaeen origins in “Antiquities of the Jews.”

## **Babylonian Exile and Development of Judaism**

### **1. Exile and Religious Transformation:**

- The Babylonian exile (586-538 BC) was a pivotal event in Jewish history. During this period, the Jewish people were removed from their homeland and the First Temple was destroyed, which significantly impacted their religious practices
- In Babylon, the Jewish community developed new forms of worship and religious practices, as they no longer had access to the Temple. This period saw the rise of synagogues and the emphasis on Torah study and prayer as central components of Jewish religious life.
- Psalm 137:1: *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.”*

### **2. Judaism and the Pharisees:**

- After the exile, the Jewish community returned to Judea and rebuilt the Temple (Second Temple period), but different sects, including the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, emerged.
- The Pharisees emphasized oral tradition and interpretations of the Torah, which laid the groundwork for Rabbinic Judaism. Jesus often criticized the Pharisees for their interpretations and practices (see **Matthew 23**).

## **Historical and Theological Points**

## **1. Not All Jews Today Are Ethnic Judahites:**

- The historical facts about conversions and the inclusion of various ethnic groups into the Jewish community support the assertion that not all Jews today are ethnic Judahites. This diversity is reflected in the global Jewish population.

## **2. Judaism vs. Biblical Religion:**

- The claim that Judaism, as practiced by the Pharisees and later Rabbinic tradition, is a perversion of the original Israelite religion is a theological perspective. The New Testament portrays Jesus as challenging the Pharisaic interpretations and practices (see **Matthew 15:3-9** and **Mark 7:6-9**).

## **Conclusion**

The term "Jew" in historical context became more inclusive due to conversions and the diverse composition of the Jewish community, especially after the Babylonian exile and during the Hasmonean period. While all Judahites are Israelites, not all who came to be known as Jews were ethnically Judahite. The development of Judaism during the Babylonian exile and the influence of the Pharisees in the post-exilic period contributed to the evolution of Jewish religious practices.

For deeper understanding, consulting works like Josephus's "Antiquities of the Jews" and scholarly studies on the Second Temple period can provide additional historical context. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, offers theological insights into the distinctions and developments within the Israelite and Jewish communities.

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## #11 – Expand On Josephus

Can you expand with quotes by Josephus with the response as follows: – “Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, provides detailed accounts of the Herodian dynasty and their Idumaeen origins.”

### – Response –

Here is the expanded response with quotes from Josephus regarding the Herodian dynasty and their Idumaeen origins:

### Herodian Dynasty and Idumaeen Descent

#### 1. Herod’s Idumaeen Ancestry:

- Herod the Great was of Idumaeen (Edomite) descent. His ancestors were forcibly converted to Judaism by John Hyrcanus during the Hasmonean period. This historical fact indicates that the Jewish population included people of non-Israelite origin.

#### 2. Josephus’s Accounts:

- Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, provides detailed accounts of the Herodian dynasty and their Idumaeen origins in his works “Antiquities of the Jews” and “The Jewish War.”

#### 3. Idumaeen Conversion:

- In “Antiquities of the Jews” (Book 13, Chapter 9, Section 1), Josephus writes about John Hyrcanus’s conquest of Idumaea and the forced conversion of the Idumaeans to Judaism:
  - *“Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if*

*they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews: and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews."*

#### 4. Herod's Background:

- Josephus also provides a detailed account of Herod the Great's background and his rise to power. In "Antiquities of the Jews" (Book 14, Chapter 1, Section 3), he explains Herod's lineage:
  - *"Now, as Antipater was bringing the Jews into a dislike of their present government, he was also bringing Herod, whom he had made procurator of Galilee, into the same views; for having already tasted the sweetness of authority, he persuaded him to aspire to greater things."*
- Herod's father, Antipater, was an Idumaeen who rose to power under the Hasmonean rule. Josephus describes Antipater's and Herod's roles under Roman patronage, leading to Herod's eventual kingship.

#### 5. Herod Appointed King:

- In "The Jewish War" (Book 1, Chapter 14, Section 4), Josephus recounts how Herod was appointed King of Judea by the Roman Senate:
  - *"And thus did this man receive the kingdom, having obtained it on account of no more*

*than a clause in the will of a dead man, because he was named therein, as one that should be governor of the public affairs."*

These passages from Josephus illustrate the Idumaeen origins of the Herodian dynasty and their integration into the Jewish community through forced conversion, as well as Herod's rise to power with Roman support. This historical context helps explain the diverse ethnic makeup of the Jewish population during that era.

## **Historical and Theological Points**

### **1. Not All Jews Today Are Ethnic Judahites:**

- The historical facts about conversions and the inclusion of various ethnic groups into the Jewish community support the assertion that not all Jews today are ethnic Judahites. This diversity is reflected in the global Jewish population.

### **2. Judaism vs. Biblical Religion:**

- The claim that Judaism, as practiced by the Pharisees and later Rabbinic tradition, is a perversion of the original Israelite religion is a theological perspective. The New Testament portrays Jesus as challenging the Pharisaic interpretations and practices (see Matthew 15:3-9 and Mark 7:6-9).

## **Conclusion**

The term "Jew" in historical context became more inclusive due



to conversions and the diverse composition of the Jewish community, especially after the Babylonian exile and during the Hasmonean period. While all Judahites are Israelites, not all who came to be known as Jews were ethnically Judahite. The development of Judaism during the Babylonian exile and the influence of the Pharisees in the post-exilic period contributed to the evolution of Jewish religious practices.

For deeper understanding, consulting works like Josephus's "Antiquities of the Jews" and "The Jewish War" can provide additional historical context. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, offers theological insights into the distinctions and developments within the Israelite and Jewish communities.

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## **#12 – Differences Israelites & Jews**

*There is significant distinctions within the Israelite and Jewish communities, and with these distinct differences would you list them. When we as a society of today claim that the modern nation state of Israel's adaptation of Judaism; this cannot be compared to the original intent God had for Israel. In the last answer it stated Jesus even corrected the Pharisees and the practices which were based on their traditions.*

### **– Response –**

Here is a comprehensive breakdown of the distinctions within the Israelite and Jewish communities, along with an analysis of the evolution of Judaism and how it differs from the original intent as understood from biblical texts. This will also address how these differences relate to the modern nation-state of Israel and its adaptation of Judaism.

## **Distinctions within the Israelite and Jewish Communities**

### **1. Ethnic and Tribal Distinctions:**

- Israelites: Descendants of Jacob (Israel), consisting of twelve tribes (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph [Ephraim and Manasseh], and Benjamin)
- Judahites: Descendants specifically from the tribe of Judah. This tribe was prominent, especially after the division of the United Kingdom of Israel into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.
- Jews: Initially referred to members of the tribe of Judah, but over time, it came to encompass all people who practiced Judaism, including converts from other ethnic backgrounds.

## 2. Historical and Geopolitical Distinctions:

- United Monarchy: Under kings Saul, David, and Solomon, all twelve tribes were united.
- Divided Kingdom: After Solomon's reign, the kingdom split into the northern kingdom of Israel (10 tribes) and the southern kingdom of Judah (2 tribes: Judah and Benjamin, along with some Levites).
- Exile and Return: The northern kingdom fell to Assyria (722 BC) and the southern kingdom to Babylon (586 BC). The return from Babylonian exile primarily involved people from Judah, contributing to the predominance of the term "Jew."

## 3. Religious and Cultural Distinctions:

- Pre-Exilic Religion: Worship centered around the Temple in Jerusalem, with a focus on sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood.
- Post-Exilic Religion: Development of synagogue worship, emphasis on Torah study and oral traditions. The rise of various sects, such as the

Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.

- Pharisaic Judaism: Emphasized oral law and traditions. Criticized by Jesus for legalism and hypocrisy (Matthew 23).

#### 4. Conversion and Inclusion:

- **Forced Conversions**: As seen in the case of the Idumaeans (Edomites) under John Hyrcanus.
- **Voluntary Conversions**: As mentioned in Esther 8:17, where many people in the Persian Empire became Jews out of fear or respect.

## **Modern Judaism vs. Biblical Intent**

### 1. Judaism's Evolution:

- The religion of the ancient Israelites involved Temple worship, sacrifices, and adherence to Mosaic Law. This was the original intent as prescribed in the Torah.
- After the destruction of the Second Temple (70 AD), Rabbinic Judaism emerged, focusing on the oral Torah, synagogue worship, and rabbinic teachings. This form of Judaism has carried on through the centuries into modern times.

### 2. Jesus' Critique of the Pharisees:

- Jesus criticized the Pharisees for their emphasis on human traditions over God's commandments (Matthew 15:3-9, Mark 7:6-9). He accused them of legalism and missing the weightier matters of the law, such as justice, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23).
- Jesus sought to restore a purer form of worship and adherence to God's original intent.

### 3. Modern Nation-State of Israel:

- The modern state of Israel, established in 1948, is a secular nation with a diverse population, including secular Jews, religious Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others.
- The religious aspect of modern Israel is primarily influenced by Rabbinic Judaism, which evolved significantly from the ancient practices described in the Torah.

## Conclusion

The distinctions within the Israelite and Jewish communities are significant and rooted in historical, ethnic, and religious developments. Modern Judaism, particularly Rabbinic Judaism, differs from the original practices outlined in the Hebrew Bible. These changes were influenced by historical events such as the Babylonian exile and the destruction of the Second Temple.

Jesus' teachings and critiques highlighted the need for a return to the core principles of God's commandments, contrasting with the evolving traditions of the Pharisees. The modern nation-state of Israel, while culturally and historically linked to ancient Israel, represents a complex and diverse society with varying interpretations and practices of Judaism.

For a more detailed understanding, examining the works of Josephus and other historical sources, alongside biblical texts, provides deeper insights into these distinctions and their implications for both ancient and modern contexts.

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## #13 – Post Exile Return

*The popular belief that's shared is there were only two tribes*

*in the southern kingdom, but this is not what the scripture says, as there were those of the tribe of Simeon as well in the southern kingdom; see Joshua 19:9. Is it true that there were some Levites also in the southern kingdom, and can it be documented from scripture that primarily of those returning after exile were from Judah?*

## **– Response –**

The idea that the majority of those returning from the Babylonian exile were from the tribe of Judah, along with some from the tribe of Benjamin and the Levites, is well-documented in Scripture. While the southern kingdom included remnants from other tribes such as Simeon, the primary focus is indeed on Judah. Let's explore the biblical evidence for this.

### **Tribes in the Southern Kingdom**

#### **1. Joshua 19:9 – Tribe of Simeon:**

- *“Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.”*
- This verse indicates that the tribe of Simeon had their inheritance within the territory of Judah, meaning they were geographically situated in the southern kingdom.

#### **2. Levites in the Southern Kingdom:**

- The Levites were spread throughout Israel, but many served in the Temple in Jerusalem, located in the southern kingdom (Judah). After the split of the kingdom, many Levites and priests remained or migrated to Judah to serve in the Temple.

## Returning from Exile

### 1. Ezra 1:5:

- *“Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.”*
- This verse emphasizes that the primary groups returning were from Judah and Benjamin, along with priests and Levites.

### 2. Ezra 2:1-2:

- <sup>1</sup>*“Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city; <sup>2</sup>which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel.”*
- The list that follows includes mainly people from Judah and Benjamin.

### 3. Nehemiah 7:6-7:

- <sup>6</sup>*“These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city; <sup>7</sup>who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, I*

- say, of the men of the people of Israel was this."*
- Similar to Ezra, this passage outlines the return of the exiles, primarily focusing on Judah and Benjamin.

## **Emphasis on Judah**

### 1. Ezra 4:1:

- *"Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel."*
- Again, the returning exiles are identified mainly as those from Judah and Benjamin.

### 2. Zechariah 8:13:

- *"And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong."*
- This prophetic vision speaks of the restoration and blessing upon the house of Judah and the house of Israel, indicating the central role of Judah in the post-exilic community.

## **Conclusion**

While the southern kingdom included members from Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and Levites, the biblical record shows that the primary groups identified in the return from exile were from Judah and Benjamin, along with priests and Levites. This focus on Judah reflects the central role of Jerusalem and the Temple in the post-exilic community. The returning exiles are

frequently referred to as “Judah” or “Judah and Benjamin,” underscoring Judah’s predominant identity among those who came back to rebuild Jerusalem and reestablish their society.

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### **– Concluding Observation of Who God’s Chosen Are –**

The Jewish community is often recognized as God’s chosen people. The AI search revealed that the term “Jew” holds great historical significance, regardless of whether the portrayal of Jews in modern times is accurate or not. It is essential for any dedicated student of history to delve into this historical assertion, especially when examining biblical texts.

It has been noted, and it needs said again, that discussing the concept of “God’s Chosen” can be a delicate matter, especially when differing beliefs challenge the current understanding. To be candid, let us carefully examine the modern perspective on this issue. Accordingly, we will now assess whether the scriptural and historical evidence aligns with the contemporary prevailing viewpoint. Finally, we will explore the revealed facts to determine the identity of God’s chosen people.

If you overlooked any of the previous explanations about the identity of the Jews, this will serve as a recap highlighting key points mentioned earlier regarding who the Jews are. But to give some additional clarification maybe it will be better to take a closer look and expand further to find what was uncovered when we delved into the history and laid this out for the reader.

## **The Complex Identity of “Jews” in Historical and Theological Context**



## **Introduction**

The term "Jew" carries a complex and multifaceted history, intertwining lineage, religion, and geography. The common misconception is that all Jews are direct descendants of Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. However, historical and scriptural records reveal a more nuanced reality. The use of the term "Jew" has evolved over centuries, encompassing people beyond the tribe of Judah. This essay explores the origins and development of Jewish identity, the distinction between Judahites and Jews, and the implications of forced conversions and geographical labels on the definition of Jewish identity.

## **Historical Context and Lineage of Judah**

Jacob, also known as Israel, had twelve sons who became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. Judah, Jacob's fourth son with Leah, fathered the tribe of Judah, which settled in the region that later became known as Judea. The term "Judahite" specifically refers to a member of this tribe. The name "Jew" is derived from "Judah" and originally referred to the members of the tribe of Judah. Over time, however, the designation expanded.

## **The Expansion of Jewish Identity**

The expansion of Jewish identity beyond the tribe of Judah can be attributed to several historical events and social dynamics. The Babylonian Exile (586 BCE) played a significant role in transforming the identity of the people of Judah. When the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple and exiled the Judahites, they retained a strong sense of cultural and religious identity. Upon their return, the term "Jew" began to signify those who adhered to the religion of Judaism, not just those of Judahite descent.

## **Scriptural Reference:**

- [2 Kings 25:21](#): *“And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.”*

## **Edomite Jews: A Case of Forced Conversion**

One pivotal moment in the history of Jewish identity is the forced conversion of the Edomites. The Edomites, descendants of Esau (Jacob’s brother), were historically distinct from the Israelites. However, in the 2nd century BC, the Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus conquered Edom and forced its inhabitants to convert to Judaism. These Edomites, now practicing Jews, were absorbed into the Jewish community despite their different lineage. This significant event blurred the lines between ethnic and religious identity among Jews.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [Obadiah 1:18](#): *“And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.”*

## **Judeans and the Geographic Label**

The term “Jew” also expanded due to geographic considerations. The inhabitants of Judea, regardless of their tribal affiliation, were collectively known as Judeans. Over time, this regional designation also contributed to the broader application of the term “Jew.” Thus, individuals living in Judea, practicing Judaism, and identifying with Jewish culture were labeled as Jews, even if they were not of the tribe of Judah.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [Ezra 2:1](#): *“Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city.”*

## **Authentic Israelites and the Tribe of Judah**

An authentic Israelite refers to a descendant of any of the twelve tribes of Israel, not just Judah. Therefore, it is not entirely accurate to use the term “Jew” exclusively to describe all Israelites. The historical context shows that “Jew” came to denote anyone who practiced Judaism or lived in Judea, expanding far beyond the tribe of Judah. The complexity arises when considering the various groups absorbed into the Jewish identity through conversion or geographical association.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [Numbers 34:13](#): *“And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe.”*

## **Theological Implications**

### **God’s Chosen People under the Old and New Covenants**

The theological implications of this complex identity are profound. Under the old covenant, being God’s chosen people required lineage from the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, however, those who became Jews who were not of this lineage are not original Israelites and God’s chosen. Under the new covenant, introduced by Jesus Christ, shifts this requirement and lineage as an Israelite does not grandfather

them in. According to the New Testament, acceptance of Christ is necessary to be considered part of God's chosen people.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [Romans 9:6-8](#)<sup>1</sup>*“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: <sup>7</sup>Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. <sup>8</sup>That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”*
- [John 14:6](#): *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

## **The End of Sacrifices and the Role of Christ**

With the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD by the Romans, the practice of sacrifices, which was central to the old covenant, ended. The New Testament, particularly the Book of Hebrews, teaches that Jesus Christ was the final sacrifice, rendering the old sacrificial system obsolete.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [Hebrews 10:10-12](#): <sup>10</sup>*“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup>And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: <sup>12</sup>But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.”*

## Judaism under the New Covenant

The new covenant established through Christ signifies a transition from the old practices, making the religion of Judaism, as practiced under the old covenant, not entirely aligned with New Testament teachings. The absence of a temple and sacrifices highlights this shift.

### Scriptural Reference:

- [Hebrews 8:13](#): *“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”*

## Key Takeaways

### Historical Record and Jewish Identity

The key takeaway from this study shows that historical records indicate that today’s Jews are not necessarily God’s chosen people under the new covenant. The term “Jew” encompasses a diverse group of people, including those who were forcibly converted and those geographically associated with Judea.

1. **Requirement of Pure Lineage:** To be considered God’s chosen people under the old covenant, one would have to be of the stock of Jacob, a pure-blooded Israelite.
  - [Romans 9:4](#): *“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.”*
2. **Acceptance of Christ:** Under the new covenant, God’s chosen people are those who accept Christ and His sacrificial atonement for sin.
  - [John 1:12](#): *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to*

*them that believe on his name."*

## **Theological Implications**

According to historical and scriptural evidence, the New Testament emphasizes that faith in Christ is essential for being part of God's chosen people.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [Galatians 3:28-29](#): *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

## **Conclusion**

The term "Jew" has evolved significantly from its origins, encompassing a wide range of people connected by religion, culture, and geography. The distinction between Judahites and Jews highlights the complexities of Jewish identity, shaped by historical events such as forced conversions and regional labels. Understanding this evolution is crucial for appreciating the diverse and rich history of the Jewish people. The complexity of Jewish identity serves as a reminder of the dynamic interplay between lineage, religion, and culture in shaping human societies. Furthermore, the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant under Christ emphasizes a new understanding of God's chosen people, based on faith in Christ rather than lineage alone.

### **Scriptural Reference:**

- [1 Peter 2:9](#): *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal*

*priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

This essay highlighted the historical, theological, and modern perspectives on Jewish identity, illustrating the complexity and evolution of what it means to be a Jew, and affirming that under the new covenant, being God's chosen requires acceptance of Christ's sacrifice.