

The Term Jews – Was Jesus a Jew, “Anti-Semitic or Antisemitic” & To Whom The Promise Was Given

Declaration & Disclaimer of Infallibility

The topics mentioned in title heading are central to historical records and biblical texts, viewed through a steadfast belief in the unerring nature of God’s word, which has endured thorough scrutiny over the ages. This webpage entry was created after extensive research to support the claims presented. While any inaccuracies may hinder our pursuit of perfection, it is important to acknowledge that only the divine Lord, Savior, and God of this universe can rightfully assert a lack of error.

While the information presented is based on sourced material, it is acknowledged that some individuals may perceive inaccuracies in this compilation. Therefore, any feedback identifying specific errors in this presentation is appreciated. It is important to clarify that the purpose of this work is not to assert absolute correctness by the author. Addressing every aspect of this topic would require significantly more time than is available in this format.

Consequently, if someone feels the need to correct any inaccuracies in this essay, as well as in the scriptural and historical narratives, and wishes to provide additional fact-based research to contest these assertions, the author would be open to such academic scrutiny. However, if there is a

significant necessity to revise the information with credible sources to enhance the accuracy of this post, it is recommended to follow a biblical perspective and take into account the guidelines outlined in scripture.

Introduction

It is essential to maintain complete honesty when engaging with topics that present a conflict between our interpretations of biblical teachings and our understanding. Often, our instinctive reaction is to dismiss certain ideas as untrue simply because they contradict our prior education and/or learning. However, we must acknowledge the possibility that the masterful deceiver, Satan, operates like a roaring lion, [misleading the entire world](#).

It is essential to revisit Genesis 3:4 to understand how Eve was misled by the serpent, who is also referred to in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. In these passages, he is clearly identified as “that ancient serpent,” and as well as “the devil and Satan.”

Scripture clearly indicates that even individuals who have accepted Christ and are in a relationship with Him can still fall prey to deception. When we rely solely on others for our understanding and neglect to seek the truth ourselves, we expose ourselves to the misleading influences of Satan, which can affect our thoughts and actions. The Holy Spirit is the only genuine guide who will reveal truth to us through prayer and diligent study of God’s sacred scriptures.

It is crucial to recognize the subtle yet cunning ways in which Satan operates. In 2 Corinthians 11:3 – we are cautioned that Christians can fall prey to his deceit, which can divert them from their genuine and heartfelt commitment to Christ.

Paul underscores the necessity of remaining anchored in the truth of Christ, as Satan often employs subtle tactics to twist or undermine that truth. This serves as a vital reminder to remain alert and to cling to the core teachings of the gospel. We can also reflect on other references to deception by the evil one, such as in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, 2 Timothy 3:13, and Mark 13:22.

With the initial introduction complete with briefly setting aside the main topic, as indicated by the title of this post, we now can delve into the essential aspects that need to be addressed.

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Jesus' Lineage & The Tribe of Judah

The question of whether Jesus Christ was a Jew is one that has stirred debate among Christians for centuries. While mainstream present-day Christian doctrine accepts that Jesus was Jewish, being born into the lineage of Judah, there are alternative views that challenge this assumption. These views

stem from an analysis of biblical texts, the evolution of the term “Jew,” and the historical and ethnic makeup of Judea during the time of Christ. To get an understanding of this issue we need to explore both the biblical and historical perspectives that argue against Jesus being a Jew, as the term is understood today, while also addressing the geographical and cultural elements that contribute to this complex issue.

The Bible makes it clear that Jesus is descended from the tribe of Judah, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 1:1-17 provides a genealogical account tracing Jesus’ ancestry through David, who was a descendant of Judah. Hebrews 7:14 further affirms this connection by stating, “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (KJV). This establishes Jesus’ lineage firmly within the family of Israel, specifically through the line of Judah, which is significant for understanding His messianic role in the New Testament.

However, being from the tribe of Judah does not necessarily mean that Jesus was a “Jew” in the modern sense of the term. Historically, the term “Jew” has undergone a complex evolution, and it did not always exclusively refer to someone from the tribe of Judah. This distinction is crucial in understanding the arguments presented against identifying Jesus as a Jew.

The Evolving Definition of “Jew”

Historically, the term “Jew” was derived from “Judean,” referring to an inhabitant of Judea, the southern kingdom of Israel after the split between Israel and Judah following Solomon’s reign. At the time of Jesus, Judea was a Roman province, and its population was a mixture of different ethnic groups, including Israelites, Edomites, and others. The term “Jew” became synonymous with anyone living in Judea or following the customs and religion associated with Judaism, regardless of their specific tribal affiliation.

A critical part of this discussion revolves around the geographic and ethnic identity of people like Laban, who is referred to as a “Syrian” in Genesis 25:20. The term “Syrian” (or “Aramean”) in this context is geographical, not ethnic, indicating that Laban and his family lived in the region of Aram. Despite being labeled as “Syrian,” Laban was part of Abraham’s broader family through Nahor, Abraham’s brother. This geographical designation mirrors the complexity of the term “Jew” during Jesus’ time. Just as Laban was called a Syrian due to his residence, many inhabitants of Judea were called Jews, but they were not necessarily Israelites by descent.

Revelation’s “False Jews” and Ethnic Distinctions

A key point in the argument against Jesus being a Jew in the modern sense comes from the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, Jesus speaks of those *“who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan”* (KJV). These passages suggest that not everyone claiming to be a Jew is a true descendant of Judah or Israel. In these verses, Jesus is condemning a group that identifies as Jewish but is not considered true Israelites in a spiritual or ethnic sense.

This distinction is crucial because it raises the question: if many of the people called Jews during Jesus’ time were not of the tribe of Judah or even Israel, can Jesus Himself be accurately labeled as a Jew in the same way modern Jews are? These passages suggest that being a Jew was not solely about heritage but also about spiritual identity and allegiance.

Paul’s Interpretation: Israel and the Jews

The Apostle Paul’s writings add another layer to this debate. In Romans 9:1-7, Paul discusses the promises made to the

children of Israel and clarifies that not all who are descended from Israel are truly part of Israel: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Romans 9:6-7, KJV). This statement indicates that being a physical descendant of Abraham does not automatically make one a part of the covenant people.

Paul's distinction between the children of the flesh (biological descendants) and the children of the promise (those chosen by God through Isaac and Jacob) supports the argument that many who were identified as Jews during Jesus' time were not true Israelites. This is especially relevant when considering the Edomites, descendants of Esau, who had been integrated into Judean society but were not considered part of the chosen lineage of Jacob (Israel). Paul's teachings suggest that many of the so-called Jews were not spiritually or ethnically aligned with the true Israelite identity.

Esau and Jacob: A Key Distinction

The story of Esau and Jacob is critical to understanding the distinction between true Israelites and those who are only Israelite by geography or name. In Genesis 25:23, God tells Rebekah that two nations—Esau and Jacob—are in her womb, and that the elder, Esau, will serve the younger, Jacob. Esau's descendants, known as Edomites, were often in opposition to Israel, and by the time of Jesus, many Edomites had been integrated into Judean society, adopting the customs and practices of Judaism.

However, the Edomites were not considered true Israelites, as they descended from Esau, not Jacob. This distinction is important because it suggests that the people ruling Judea during Jesus' time, including King Herod (an Edomite), were not true Israelites. Therefore, the argument follows that Jesus, as a descendant of Jacob and from the tribe of Judah, could not be classified as a Jew in the same way that these

Edomite rulers or their followers were.

The Historical Context of Judea: Forced Conversions & Edomites

The historical context of Judea during the Second Temple period provides further support for this argument. According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, during the reign of the Hasmonean dynasty, the Edomites (also known as Idumeans) were forcibly converted to Judaism by John Hyrcanus around 125 B.C. These forced conversions resulted in a population that followed Jewish customs but was not ethnically or spiritually part of the covenant people of Israel.

- **Flavius Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* – Book 13, Chapter 9, Section 1 (13.257–258 in Loeb numbering)**

- *“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 of the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews.”*

Strabo, a Greek geographer and historian, also wrote about the integration of the Edomites into Judean society, noting that they adopted Jewish laws and customs but were distinct in origin. This blending of populations meant that by the time of Jesus, many of those who identified as Jews were not Israelites by blood, but converts from Edom and other surrounding nations.¹ This supports the idea that the term “Jew” during Jesus’ time referred to a broader group of people

than just the descendants of Judah or Israel.

The late first-century Judean historian Flavius Josephus supplies all of the historic details of Strabo's statement. Ezekiel prophesied concerning the Edomites: – Ezekiel 35:10 AMPLIFIED – *“Because you [descendants of Esau] have said, ‘These two nations [Israel and Judah] and these two lands shall be mine, and we will take possession of them,’ although the LORD was there...* This was nearly six hundred years before Christ – we see that the prophecy was about Esau taking for himself the lands of Israel and Judah after the people were deported by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The classical records tell us that this did indeed happen.

The presence of non-Israelite Jews in Judea further complicates the claim that Jesus was a Jew. If the majority of people called Jews in Judea were not true descendants of Jacob, but rather Edomites or other converts, then it becomes difficult to classify Jesus, who was a descendant of Jacob, as belonging to the same group.

Jesus and the Pharisees: A Clash of Identity

The Gospels frequently record Jesus in conflict with the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders of His time. In John 8, Jesus tells the Pharisees, “I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you” (John 8:37, KJV). This statement acknowledges their biological descent from Abraham but denies that they are true children of Abraham in a spiritual sense. Jesus goes further, accusing them of being children of the devil: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:44, KJV).

This harsh rebuke suggests that the Pharisees, though descendants of Abraham, were not part of the true covenant people of Israel. Their rejection of Jesus is seen as proof

that they were not spiritually aligned with God's promises to Israel. This further supports the idea that many of the Jews during Jesus' time were not true Israelites, but imposters or spiritual outsiders.

Geographical & Ethnic Complexity Genesis 25:20 & Laban The Syrian

The geographical complexity of terms like "Syrian" and "Jew" highlights the importance of understanding the historical context of these identities. In Genesis 25:20, Laban is called a Syrian (or Aramean), but this designation is based on where he lived rather than his ethnic lineage. Laban was part of Abraham's extended family, descended from Nahor, Abraham's brother. This geographical designation parallels the situation in Judea during Jesus' time, where people were called Jews based on their residence or religious practices rather than their ethnic descent.

Just as Laban being called a Syrian did not mean he was ethnically distinct from Abraham's family, many people called Jews in Jesus' time were not true Israelites by blood, but rather inhabitants of Judea or converts to Judaism. This distinction is critical to understanding the argument that Jesus, though from the tribe of Judah, was not a Jew in the same sense that many of the people called Jews during His time were.

Conclusion

The question of whether Jesus was a Jew is more complex than it might initially appear. While Jesus is clearly identified as a descendant of the tribe of Judah, the term "Jew" during His time was not solely an ethnic or religious label. It encompassed a broad group of people living in Judea, many of whom were not true descendants of Israel. Biblical passages such as Revelation 2:9 and John 8 suggests.

Cont. – Geographical & Ethnic Complexity Genesis 25:20

This leads us to a further angle in our discussion regarding geographical factors and the implications of identity based on one's place of residence.

In the context of Genesis 25:20, the term "Syrian" possibly suggests to a reader of this verse that Laban was indeed a Syrian; however, he was not. The location of Laban's residence does not diminish his shared lineage with Abraham.

In considering Laban's geographical location it is important to take note and compare this with those who were called Jews; "Jew" and "Judean" often used interchangeably. Many individuals living in the region known as Judea during the New Testament period were only referred to Jews because they were residing there. However, the situation with the term "Syrian" and Laban appears similar but differs as he was a Hebrew ethnically speaking. Those in the Roman province of Judea in the New Testament called Jews were not necessarily true descendants of Jacob, but many were of Esau who were called Edomites, as their geographical position does not guarantee their lineage.

A significant number of Edomites, or Idumeans, were compelled to adopt Judaism, which was influenced by the corrupt practices of Babylonian religion. This reality challenges the notion that the Jews in Judea were direct descendants of Abraham, through whom the covenant was established via Isaac and Jacob, especially considering that Esau relinquished his birthright to Jacob. Esau's descendants, the Edomites, were linked to [Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael](#), from whom the promise did not originate.

This insightful distinction regarding the use of the term **“Jew”** in the New Testament and its implications, particularly in relation to the geographical and ancestral differences present at that time. The biblical historical analysis of the Edomites (Idumeans) and their forced conversion to Judaism highlights the complex ethnic and religious landscape of the time. To further outline and address here are key points that are raised here in this analysis:

1. Terminology of **“Jew”** in the New Testament:

- In the New Testament, the term **“Jew”** often refers to people living in **Judea**, the Roman province, but it does not always signify someone of pure lineage from the tribe of Judah (Judahites). Instead, by the time of the Roman occupation, **“Jew”** had become a broader term encompassing not only the tribe of Judah but also other tribes of Israel, as well as converts to Judaism.
- This means that not everyone referred to as a **“Jew”** in the New Testament shared the same ethnic or ancestral heritage as the descendants of Judah (the son of Jacob), despite their religious practices.

2. The Edomites (Idumeans) and Forced Conversions:

- Looking at the historical accuracy of **Edomites**, and being that they were factually descendants of **Esau** and indeed a different lineage from the Israelites, as Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob (from whom the 12 tribes of Israel, including Judah, descended). The Edomites were incorporated into the Jewish population through forced conversion during the rule of **John Hyrcanus**, a Hasmonean ruler in the 2nd century BC.

- This forced conversion to Judaism blurred the ethnic distinction between the Edomites (Idumeans) and the Jews of Judea. The **Idumeans**, while practicing Judaism, were not of the same direct Abrahamic lineage through Isaac and Jacob. As you pointed out, Esau's descendants did not share in the covenantal promises given through Isaac and Jacob, although they became religiously assimilated into Judean society.

3. Geographical vs. Ancestral Identity:

- As you correctly noted, in the case of the term "**Syrian**" in the Old Testament, it is a **geographical designation** that does not negate the shared ancestry with Abraham. However, in the New Testament, the use of "**Jew**" often took on a **religious and geographical significance**, rather than strictly denoting ethnic descent from the tribe of Judah.
- This means that the people in **Judea** could include not only true descendants of Judah (Judahites) but also converts, such as the **Edomites/Idumeans**, and even other groups who had adopted Jewish customs and religion. The distinction between ethnic descent and religious affiliation became increasingly complex.

4. Edomites and the Lineage of Ishmael:

- Esau's marriage to **Mahalath**, the daughter of **Ishmael**, further distances the Edomites from the covenantal promise made to Abraham through **Isaac** and **Jacob**. While both Esau and Ishmael were descendants of Abraham, the promise specifically went through Isaac and Jacob, excluding both **Esau** and **Ishmael** from that covenant line.
- Ishmael, being Abraham's son through Hagar, was blessed by God (Genesis 17:20), but the covenant was established

through **Isaac** (Genesis 17:21), and further narrowed through **Jacob**. The Edomites, being descendants of Esau, and Esau's connection to Ishmael's line through marriage, positioned them outside the lineage through which the **promise of the Messiah** and the **covenant** were to be fulfilled.

Conclusion:

The distinction regarding the difference between geographical and ancestral identity is crucial when interpreting the terms used in the Bible. In the New Testament, the term "Jew" can include individuals who were religiously part of Judaism but not necessarily from the ethnic lineage of **Judah** or even **Jacob**. This is especially significant given the presence of **Edomites (Idumeans)**, who, despite adopting Jewish customs, did not share the same ancestral promises through Isaac and Jacob.

Thus, while there were in **Judea** true descendants of **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, others were not (such as the Edomites), and this complicated the meaning of "Jew" during the Roman period. The divergence between geographical and ancestral identity in Judea aligns with historical realities of the time.

For Fear of The Jews

In the below video, titled "For Fear Of The Jews," the message articulates a perspective on the Jewish community during the days of Christ. It is essential for Bible readers to comprehend the term "Jew" within its specific context, a point that Pastor Weaver elaborates on. The video runs for just under an hour and addresses a topic that is likely to engage those seeking a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

When examining Romans 2:29, the verse serves as a starting

point for discussing how Jews are identified in relation to this matter, which may challenge some viewers' preconceptions about Semites and those who might be unexpectedly antisemitic, as explained in the video.

Historically, this topic has not been fully illuminated, leading me to believe that it represents a means by which certain Jewish groups (Zionists or elite religious leaders of Phariseeism) exert control over those they exploit. In this context, Voltaire remarked, "If you want to find out who controls you, simply find out who you can't criticize."

Terms, such as "[anti-semitic or un-hyphenated as antisemitic, here as well](#)"; today serve important functions for the power elite. The terms are used to deflect criticism away from the guilty and heap ridicule upon anyone who dares tell the truth. "Anti-semitic" tends to evoke fear and loathing against the individuals who are so labeled (libeled?). Thus, the fear of being labelled in this manner tends to effectively stop thought, discourse, criticism, and further investigation. It's the black letter printed pages of history (not revisionist history) that reveals the truth, and if one is diligent to do the research to know the truth then they'll find it. Just as one who is diligent in seeking God then He will reveal himself.

The Catholic doctrine is not inline with the post's author, but [this link](#) does say some of the same points given in the video.