

FOUR REASONS THE JEWS ARE "JUDAH"

INTRODUCTION:

Because this report will be read by individuals with different viewpoints, some introductory comments are needed. After writing a book entitled *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!*, this author has received many letters, tracts, pamphlets, etc. presenting so many different theories about the identity of the Jews that they are too numerous to mention.

These divergent views on Jewish origins/identity have made it apparent to this author that a report on this subject is needed (in fact, some who have discussed this subject with me have urged the printing of a research report on Jewish origins and their modern identity). This report is being presented not as an exhaustive treatise on the subject, but rather as an effort to introduce essential information into this discussion.

Some readers will look at the title of this report and say: "Why write this material, everyone knows the Jews are Judah." It is equally true that others will have the following reaction: "No, the Jews are not Judah, they are actually Khazar-Edomites." The author is under no illusion that the information in this article will satisfy everyone, and the right of all readers to form their own respective opinions on this subject is fully recognized. However, this article is written from the viewpoint that God's Word, the Bible, is the arbiter of truth on all matters, and human opinions and theories must yield to the ultimate truth of the Word of God.

The title of this article indicates that the author believes that modern Jews are the biblical, prophetic "House of Judah." The pages that follow will present: (A) an examination of secular evidence about the Jews, and (B) a faithful presentation of the Bible's information and prophecies on this subject. Presented below are four reasons why I believe that modern Jews are, indeed, the biblical and prophetic "house of Judah."

REASON 1: FULFILLMENT OF ZEPHANIAH'S PROPHECY

Zephaniah chapter two begins with statements clearly indicating it is a "latter day" prophecy. Verse two sets the time-frame of this chapter as being just "before the day of the Lord's anger," and verse three reiterates that this prophecy applies to the time just prior to "**the Day of the Lord.**" Verses 4 - 5 pronounce "**woe**" upon the cities and inhabitants "of the seacoast," and it is clear that the "seacoast" of Palestine is being discussed due to the mention of the cities of Gaza, Ashdod, and Ekron. Verse seven describes the "woe" that will befall these people (also called "Cherethites" and "Philistines" in verse 5) in the following prophecy of God: "**the coast shall be for the remnant of Judah; they shall feed thereupon; in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening; for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.**" (Emphasis added.)

This prophecy clearly states that God will give the historic land of the Philistines (Palestine) to "Judah" just prior to the "Day of the Lord." It furthermore indicates that God was not going to "turn away [Judah's] captivity" until just prior to the Day of the Lord. The phrase "turn away their captivity" is a bit clumsy; it simply means "end their captivity." In 1948, the Jewish nation called Israel was born in the "seacoast" region of old Palestine, fulfilling this prophecy. Indeed, the 1988 Edition of the *Encyclopedia Americana* notes this about Israel's population: "About 70% of it is concentrated in the Mediterranean coastal strip..." This is exactly what Zephaniah 2 prophesied would occur to Judah in the latter days.

Because the Jews had been a stateless people scattered among the nations for centuries (even millennia), the prophecy's language that their captivity would be "turned away" (i.e. "ended") is very descriptive of the fate of the Jews, a people who had not had their own nation for a very long time.

Furthermore, we must accept the fact that God, in his perfect knowledge, has always known where "the house of Judah" was! **The historic fact is that God chose to use modern Jews to fulfill this prophecy about "the house of Judah."** This is powerful evidence that modern Jews are the modern house of Judah. Zephaniah 2:6 also prophesies that agricultural pursuits were to prosper when the "house of Judah" reestablished a nation in Palestine, and much has been written documenting that the Israelis have "made the desert bloom" with their innovative, high-tech agricultural efforts.

A prophecy in Zechariah 14 supports the above analysis of Zephaniah 2. Zechariah 14:1 begins with "Behold the Day of the Lord cometh..." This is the same time frame as Zephaniah 2 (just prior to the Day of the Lord). Zechariah 14:2-3 prophesies that "all nations" will be gathered to battle in the region of Jerusalem, and that the Lord will come to fight against the nations attacking Jerusalem when "his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives." Christians understand this to be a prophecy of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and verse five adds that the Lord will bring "all the saints" with him (an obvious reference to the resurrection of the dead). The rest of the chapter gives more information about this climactic battle and the establishment of the Lord's rule on earth. Verse 14 states: "**Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem.**" None of the other tribes of Israel is specifically mentioned in this prophecy, but "Judah" is there in sufficiently large numbers to warrant God's mentioning them by name. This is consistent with Zephaniah's prophecy that Judah will build a nation in Palestine in the latter days. Zechariah's prophecy indicates that Judah will be fighting to defend Jerusalem in a great war which climaxes with the return of the Conquering Messiah! What people now live in and have sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem? The Jews! Again, Bible prophecies for the latter days indicate that modern Jews are the house (or tribe) of Judah.

To conclude this point, it is acknowledged that placing the name "Israel" on the modern Jewish nation is a misnomer which causes much confusion to many students of the Bible. The Jewish state was named after the **historical land** of Israel, even though the people establishing the nation were from the house of Judah, not the house of Israel (the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel). A prophecy in Ezekiel 37:15-28 confirms that "Judah" and "Israel" will remain separate entities on the earth until they are reunited under a resurrected King David after the return of Christ.

REASON 2: THE JEWS ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

Some material sent to me argues that "the Jews can't be an Israelite tribe because they did not become Christians like the rest of the tribes." In fact, there is a biblical prophecy which foretells that "Judah" will not "become Christian" until Jesus Christ returns as the "Conquering Messiah" (this terminology reflects the Christian viewpoint of Messianic prophecies).

Zechariah 12 is a prophecy devoted to the reaction of the house of Judah (and Levi, a large percentage of whom remained with Judah) when the Messiah returns and saves them from imminent destruction. Many times the phrase "in that day" is repeated in this chapter, a phrase indicating the general time of the latter days and/or the Day of the Lord. Verse two prophesies that God **"will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege against Judah and Jerusalem."** This parallels Zechariah 14 which speaks of a time when **"all nations are gathered against Jerusalem."** Notice that many nations are besieging **"Judah and Jerusalem."** The Bible presents **"Judah and Jerusalem"** as so closely linked with each other in the latter days that they are mentioned together. This has happened as the Israelis have made Jerusalem the capital of the Jewish state, and Jerusalem has become a "cup of trembling" (a major flashpoint) in world politics. Verse six prophesies that God will make: **"...the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood...and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem."**

God prophesies that **"Judah"** would be a militarily victorious nation **in the Middle East** (the geographic setting of this entire chapter is the region around Jerusalem) during the latter days. This prophecy also indicates that Judah will **"devour"** the people who border them ("devour" indicates not just conquering people but an absorbing of their territory as well). This has been dramatically fulfilled by the Israelis in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973; the Israelis conquered ("devoured") territory all around them, taking control of the Egyptian Sinai, Syria's Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and Jordan's West Bank. Some of this territory has been bartered away as part of the "Mideast Peace Process," but the prophecy was fulfilled nonetheless.

This prophecy also indicates a time will come when God will intervene personally to **"save Judah"** and **"defend Jerusalem"** (verses seven and eight). Zechariah 14 prophesies that Judah and Jerusalem will be invaded just prior to the Lord's return, and the phrase **"Mount of Olives"** in Zechariah 14:4 confirm the setting is the geographical city of Jerusalem in the modern Jewish nation. This chapter parallels Acts 1:9-12 which states Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from the **"mount called Olivet"** (the Mount of Olives), and as He ascended to heaven an angel announced that He would return **"in like manner."** Revelation 16:12-16 shows an invading army headed by **"the kings of the east"** will march westward toward Jerusalem across the Euphrates River toward the valley of Megiddo (i.e. "Armageddon") in the Israeli nation.[1]

Zechariah 12:9 prophesies the Messiah will **"destroy"** the nations that come against Jerusalem, and verses 10-14 reveal some surprising information. Judah, the house of David,

"the inhabitants of Jerusalem," and the Levites (all these groups are part of the house of Judah) are astounded and dismayed at the identity of their Messiah!

The God of the Bible who inspired this prophecy declares that "Judah" (the Jews) will "look upon me **whom they have pierced,**" and will "mourn" for him as for an "only son" as God gives them "the spirit of grace and supplication." This prophecy indicates that "Judah" and "Levi" will not accept or recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah **until** he rescues them from an invading army at the culmination of this age. Judah never accepted Jesus Christ when he came as the "suffering Messiah," but they will accept him when he returns as the "conquering Messiah."

This prophecy further answers the question of who is modern Judah. Did the Jewish leadership of Judea (the Sanhedrin) cause Jesus Christ (Yeshua the "Anointed One") to be "pierced" by the Romans when He was crucified? Yes. His hands and his side were "pierced" in the crucifixion process (John 19:34, 20:25). Do modern Jews now live in the area of Jerusalem, and are they non-Christian? Yes. Does Zechariah 12's prophecy support the view that modern, non-Christian Jews living in the Jerusalem region are the descendants of "Judah" and "Levi?" Yes. Therefore, does God's Word indicate that today's Jews are the modern "house of Judah?" Yes!

REASON 3: FULFILLMENT OF GENESIS 49'S PROPHECY

Genesis 49 contains prophecies about the identities and roles of each of the tribes of Israel in the latter days. The prophecies about the tribes of the house of Israel (the northern ten tribes) are extensively discussed in chapter 11 of my book, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!* (Order from www.ChristianReality.com), but little was said about Judah as "Judah" was not the subject of that book. If this was an oversight, it will now be remedied. Genesis 49:8-12 states (emphasis added throughout):

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion; and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine and his teeth white with milk.”

This prophecy reveals much information about modern Judah. To begin with, there is a seeming paradox in this prophecy: Judah is referred to as both a "lion's whelp" and "as an old lion." However, this actually fits the modern Jews/Israelis very well. The term "lion's whelp" (a young cub) predicts Judah will be a young (or recently-born) nation in the latter days: a fitting description of the young Israeli nation which was founded in 1948. This prophecy is very consistent with Zephaniah 2, which prophesied Judah would found a nation in Palestine just prior to "the Day of the Lord." Yet, the Jews are also a people with a continuous history traceable for over three millennia, and they also had a nation in Palestine in ancient times (i.e.

"as an old lion"). The Jews/Israelis fulfill this prophecy as they are a very young nation which was founded by a people with an ancient tradition and heritage.

Genesis 49:8-9 states Judah's "**hand shall be in the neck of thy enemies,**" and refers to Judah "**as a lion going up from the prey.**" This prophecy foretells that Judah will be an aggressive nation and victorious in warfare during the latter days, conquering its enemies like a lion brings down its prey. This has been amply fulfilled by Israeli victories in its wars, and this prophecy meshes perfectly with Zechariah 12:6's prophecy which states Judah would "**devour**" her enemies in the latter days. Not only have the Israelis been successful in warfare, they have leaped out at their enemies even as a lion leaps and stretches out toward its intended prey. The Israelis do not "run and hide" like a prey animal; they attack like a predator. They leaped out to attack their enemies in the 1976 raid on Entebbe, Uganda, and in their destruction of an Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 via a bold air strike.

Surprisingly, after predicting military prowess for Judah, Genesis 49 next prophesies agricultural success for latter-day Judah. Notice the agricultural words printed in bold type in the above prophecy. Verses 11-12 predict Judah's agricultural success in the latter days, and the Israelis have truly "made the desert bloom" by applying advanced Western technology in an inherently dry climate. Confirming this fact, the *Encyclopedia Americana* notes that "of the goods exported [by Israel] in the mid-1980's about one-third were agricultural..."[2] Genesis 49:11-12 parallels Zephaniah 2:6's prophecy, further illustrating the consistency of the Bible's prophecies about Judah in the latter days.

Genesis 49:1 also prophesies: "**Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise.**" This has been fulfilled in the fact that modern Christendom widely regards the Jews as "the chosen people." Ironically, many of the Christians who regard the Jews as "the chosen people" are themselves Israelites (members of the ten tribes of Israel). Indeed, Christians have labeled the Jews as "the chosen people" even though the Jews have clearly inherited none of the birthright blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! It is the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh (the British and Americans) who inherited the birthright promises of population growth, national wealth, empires, and control of strategic geographical "gates." These facts are documented in my book: *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!* (Order from www.ChristianReality.com). Why have the other tribes acknowledged Judah's Israelite heritage even though they have lost sight of their own? Because the Jews have preserved identifiably biblical customs such as the Sabbath, the holydays of Leviticus 23, and a diet avoiding "unclean" meats such as pork and shellfish. If the descendants of the ten tribes had also retained these biblical customs throughout history, their Israelite heritage would never have become obscured.

It is further prophesied in Genesis 49:8 that: "**thy father's children** [the other tribes of Israel] **shall bow down to thee.**" This is explained in verse 10, which states: "**the scepter** [a symbol of kings] **shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering** [hope, expectation] **of the people be.**"

Beginning with the dynasty founded by Kings David and Solomon, there have **always** been Israelites of the various tribes ruled by monarchs descended from David and Solomon.

This is examined more in the next section (and at length in my book), but the fact that the hereditary ruling houses of Europe can be traced to Davidic kings who once ruled over Scythian kingdoms and the widespread Parthian Empire of the ten tribes [in Asia] fulfills the prophecy of Genesis 49:3 and 10. The ancestry of the kings of England can be continuously traced to the ancient kings of Judah via the royal houses of Ireland and Scotland[3], and the seed of David was spread throughout the royal houses of Europe by frequent intermarriages among Europe's royalty.

Genesis 49:10 also prophesies that Judah will have kings ruling over the other tribes of Israel "**until Shiloh come.**" This is a Messianic prophecy which predicts that David's bloodline will be present in the royal houses of the Israelite nations until the coming of the Messiah (Yeshua the Anointed One or Jesus Christ). Even though Europe's remaining royalty now have largely ceremonial roles, the prophecy has still been fulfilled. And, finally, it is the coming of the Messiah toward which the "hope" or "expectation" of both Christians and Jews is directed.

We see that the modern Jews and Israelis have fulfilled Genesis 49's prophecy about Judah in the latter days (in fact, no other people on earth do so). All prophecies about Judah in the latter days point to and are fulfilled by modern Jews/Israelis. Secular evidence supporting this identification follows in the next section.

REASON 4: THE "ASHKEN-AZI" AND "ASHKAN-IAN" JEW LINKAGE

The linchpin of arguments opposing a Judaic identity for modern Jews is the contention that modern Ashkenazi Jews are "religious" but not "racial" Jews. This argument asserts that the Ashkenazi Jews (i.e. central and eastern European Jews) descended from Khazar-Edomite (non-Israelite) bloodlines, and therefore cannot truly constitute "Judah" in the modern world. This author is aware that some who espouse the "Khazar-Edomite origin of the Jews" theory do acknowledge that some Sephardic Jews (i.e. Spanish/Mediterranean Jews) are members of the house of Judah.

This section will document the following points: (A) While some base their judgment on the identity of the house of Judah by differentiating between the terms "religious Jews" and "racial Jews," two biblical passages indicate that God regards these terms as a "distinction without a difference," and (B) There is a major misunderstanding about the origin of the term "Ashkenazi" Jew, and that secular evidence indicates they are, in fact, the Israelite house of Judah.

Those who say that modern Jews include Edomite and Khazar bloodlines are correct. Now, let's examine the historical extent of these facts and determine from the Bible if this really matters in the eyes of God.

To assert that any of the tribes of Israel was ever a pristinely, non-Gentile entity is a myth. The Israelites have always included gentile bloodlines in their midst, and God's Word allowed them to do so. In the time of the Exodus, God allowed the Israelites to be accompanied by a "mixed multitude" of people who had been slaves in Egypt. Numbers 12 records that God

swiftly punished Miriam (Moses' sister), because she dared to criticize Moses for having a Gentile(Cushite) wife. In the days of Kings David and Solomon, the Israelites virtually merged with the Gentile residents of the city-states of Tyre and Sidon (I Chronicles 14:1, II Chronicles 2, 8:18). II Chronicles 2:17 records 153,600 "strangers" (Gentiles) lived in Israel during Solomon's rule. King David had a Gentile leader in his army called "Uriah the Hittite" (II Samuel 11), and David's royal bodyguard was composed of "Cherethites and Pelethites" (II Samuel 8:18), who were likely Philistines and Cretans.[4] Ruth, a Moabitess, was an ancestor of both King David and Jesus Christ (Ruth 1:4).

God knew that many Gentiles would intermarry with the Israelites, and gave directions on how "strangers" (or "sojourners") could be lawfully blended into the Israelite tribes. In Leviticus 19:33 - 34, God commanded:

"...if a stranger sojourn with you in your land, you shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

About 800 years later, God again cited this command in Ezekiel 47:21-23:

"So you shall divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel...you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel...In what tribe the stranger sojourns, there shall you give him his inheritance, saith the Lord."

Interesting! God commanded the Israelites to give equal inheritances to Gentile "sojourners" who intermarried with the Israelites, and THEY ARE TO BE REGARDED AS FULL MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE in which they "sojourned." Indeed, despite the various wars between the Israelites and the Edomites, God also commanded the Israelites in Deuteronomy 23:7-8:

"You shall not abhor an Edomite; for he is your brother ...the children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation."

Strangely, some who deny the "Jewishness" of the Jews use the term "Edomite" as a pejorative epithet. In the above scripture, God ordered Israelites not to despise Edomites! It is easy to see why God regarded the Edomites as "brothers" to the Israelites.

Edomites descend from Esau (Genesis 36:43), and Esau was Jacob's twin brother (Genesis 25:19-26). Jacob was renamed Israel (Genesis 32:28), and Judah was one of his twelve sons. This means Esau (Edom) was an uncle to Judah, the first Jew. Edomites are descended from Abraham and Isaac, so they are also descended from Eber (from whom we derive the term "Hebrew").[5] Since Edomites are both Semite and Hebrew, Edomites are as closely-related to the Israelites as any Gentile can be!

God decreed that when strangers (Gentiles) "sojourned" among the Israelites, they could intermarry with Israelites and be regarded as Israelites as surely as if they were "born in the land." The term "sojourn" encompasses more than just "dwell" in the land, however. A Gentile had to adopt the religion and culture of the Israelites to be considered an Israelite. Now we will apply this biblical principle to the history of the Jewish people.

History of the Asian Jews

After the fall of Judah and Jerusalem, the house of Judah was removed into an Asian captivity. In the 6th century B.C., Cyrus, the Persian Emperor, allowed a small contingent of Jews to return to Judea. Ezra 1:5 and Nehemiah 11:3-4 confirm that remnants of only three tribes (Judah, Levi and Benjamin) returned to Judea at that time, and Nehemiah 7:66 records there were only 42,360 returnees to Judea. Josephus records that the Persian Jews held a great festival to celebrate this event. He writes that four million people attended this Jewish celebration, and that when it was over, a "certain part" of this multitude emigrated to Jerusalem, but **"the rest of the multitude returned every one to their own countries** [i.e. the nations within Persia's Empire]."[5] (NOTE: Your volume of Josephus may have a footnote discrediting Josephus' four million figure because the writer of the footnote didn't carefully read the text. Josephus did not claim four million emigrated to Jerusalem; he simply recorded the number of people who attended the festival in Persia celebrating the return of a small contingent of Jews to Jerusalem. Josephus tells us the vast majority of Jewish captives chose to remain in Persia's Asian provinces rather than join the pioneers who returned to rebuild Judea.) What is critically important to realize is that the vast majority of the tribe of Judah **stayed in Asia** even when a few went from their midst to rebuild a portion of Jerusalem.

The small contingent under Ezra and Nehemiah formed the population base of the Jews who later inhabited Judea at the time of Christ. However, during the time of the Maccabees, John Hyrcanus (circa 135 - 105 B.C.) and the Jews conquered a body of Edomites who adopted the Jews' religion and customs and merged with the Jews.[7] Josephus gives this account of the Jewish-Edomite merger:

"Hyrcanus...subdued all the Idumeans [Edomites]; 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...that they were hereafter no other than Jews.**"[8] (Emphasis added.)

Josephus was on solid biblical ground in his judgment of the merged Edomites as "no other than Jews." Based on God's laws governing the admittance of Gentiles into the tribes of Israel (Leviticus 19:33-34, Ezekiel 47:22-23), the Edomites "became Jews" because they embraced circumcision (the key sign of the Old Covenant with God) and "the rest of the Jewish way of living." God's assimilation laws considered them as much a part of the tribe of Judah as those "born in the land." Even allowing for the added restriction of Deuteronomy 23:7-8 (that children of Edomite-Israelite unions will be fully "Israelite" in the third generation), the progeny of the Edomite-Israelite union around 110 B.C. would have been past the "third generation" by the time of Christ's ministry (circa 30 A.D.). By the time the first century A.D.

ended, God's law recognized the Edomite-Jewish merger as complete and all progeny of this merger would have been regarded as fully Jewish (members of the house of Judah). Many Sephardic Jews have descended from the Judean Jews who were scattered throughout the Roman and Mediterranean region after the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and also in 135 A.D. when Jews were expelled from Jerusalem after the Bar Kochba revolt.[9] In this account, there is no reason for doubting the "Jewishness" of Sephardic Jews. The Edomites (and any other Gentiles) who adopted circumcision and Jewish customs over the centuries had become full members of the tribe of Judah under God's laws governing such mergers by the time they scattered to Spain and other Mediterranean regions.

Next we will consider the Ashkenazi Jews, who settled in central and eastern Europe. To understand their history, we must examine the history of the great empire of Parthia (which is almost entirely ignored in history books). The Parthian Empire replaced the Persian and Seleucid Greek Empires, and it flourished from approximately 250 B.C. - 226 A.D. At its greatest extent, it dominated the region from the Caucasus Mountains and Russian steppes in the north to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean in the south, and from the Euphrates River in the west to the Indus River in the east. Rome tried many times to conquer Parthia, but was never able to do so. The great 19th century English historian, George Rawlinson, decried the fact that Rome was being presented as "a Universal Monarchy, a power unchecked" when the Greco-Roman historians themselves recorded that Parthia was "a rival state dividing with Rome the attention of mankind and the sovereignty of the known earth." [10]

The Parthian empire was formed by a group of related tribes who were called "exiles" in their Asian lands.[11] Classical writers record that the Parthians were under the domination of the Assyrians and Medes prior to their becoming independent.[12] Their tribal names reflected the names of the clans of the ten tribes of Israel, and their cities bore Semitic names and their Semitic kings often bore the name of the root-word "Phares," which identified the royal line of King David, who descended from Phares (I Chronicles 2:3-15). The Parthians were the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, and their kings were David's descendants, fulfilling God's promise that David's progeny would rule over the ten tribes of Israel (Jeremiah 33:17). Many are familiar with the account of the Magi worshipping the baby Jesus soon after his birth, but few are aware that the Magi were a delegation of Parthian nobles and the hereditary priests of Parthia. The Parthians wrested control of Palestine from the Romans a few decades prior to Jesus Christ's birth, and ruled it for several years.

The entire fascinating story of the ten tribes' relocation into Asia and their eventual restoration to independence and power in the Parthian Empire are thoroughly documented in this author's book, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!* (Order from www.ChristianReality.com). Whereas the Roman Empire oppressed the Jews, the Parthian Empire granted them great freedoms, allowing Jews to have their own self-governing cities! [13] George Rawlinson noted that the Jews (descendants of the "multitude" mentioned by Josephus in the Persian Empire) were very numerous throughout Parthia's provinces. In fact, Parthian Jews were so numerous and rich that they sent their Holy Day offerings to the Jerusalem Temple with armed escorts of "many ten thousands of men." [14]

The Bible itself records that only a small delegation of Jewish captives returned to Judea under Nehemiah and Ezra while the majority of the tribe of Judah stayed in Asia and Mesopotamia. Even prior to the Parthian empire, the Bible confirms that the Jews had large numbers and influence in Persia's empire. Esther became Queen of Persia (Esther 2:16-22), and Mordechai was the King's "Prime Minister" (Esther 8). Esther 3:12 records that the evil Haman tried to instigate a "holocaust" against the Jews, and tricked the king into issuing a decree of destruction against the Jews which was sent to the rulers of all the Persian provinces. When God arranged for Mordechai to replace Haman, the Jews were rescued by a decree of deliverance which was sent to all 127 provinces stretching "from India unto Ethiopia" (Esther 8:9).

What is noteworthy about Esther's account is that it confirms that the Jews were so numerous and dispersed throughout Asia and Mesopotamia that any decree concerning them had to be sent to all 127 Persian provinces! If the Jews had only a scant number of local populations, a few local decrees would have sufficed. Esther 8:17 records that for a time in Persia's empire, it became quite popular to be Jewish, and that **"many of the people of the land became Jews."** When discussing the Judean Jews, it was noted that many Edomites merged with them to become fully-accepted members of the tribe of Judah, according to God's assimilation decrees in Leviticus 19:33-34 and Ezekiel 47:22-23. The book of Esther records that the Asian Jews also had "many" non-Jews merging with them! God's assimilation decrees would have applied to this merger as well. While the Judean Jews merged with a very closely-related group (the Semitic/Hebrew Edomites), many of the Gentiles who merged with the Asian Jews would have been much less closely related racially. However, since "the people of the land" under Persian rule included many people who were relocated members of the ten tribes of Israel, some of those who "became Jews" may have been Israelites of other tribes who readopted religious practices which were practiced by or known to their forefathers in the old kingdom of Israel. Such actions would have merged various Israelite tribal bloodlines with those of the Jews.

In the above accounts, we see that the racial make-up of the Judean Jews began to differ over time with that of the Asian Jews, but it is critical to realize that under God's assimilation laws, both groups of Jews were regarded as true members of the tribe of Judah! Esther 8:17 doesn't say that the people who merged with the Jews "became impostor Jews;" it declares that they **"became Jews"** (i.e. members of the tribe of Judah). **In this passage, the Bible itself recognizes that the merger of non-Jewish Asians into the tribe of Judah was regarded as completely valid in God's eyes.** This precedent will be important when we discuss the Khazars' adoption of Jewish customs.

The numerous Asian Jews prospered for centuries under Parthian rule. When the Parthian Empire was overthrown by the Sassanian Persians in 227 A.D., there was a dramatic change of events which affected the Asian Jews. At this point a digression about Parthian history is essential.

The Semitic Parthian Empire:

The Parthian Empire had, for a considerable period of time prior to its fall, become openly Semitic in nature. Judaism was already well-established in Parthia, and Christianity became widespread in the Apostolic times. There are records that many of the apostles (Thomas, Andrew, Bartholomew, Philip, and Matthew) evangelized in the various provinces of Parthia.[15] Even the Bible records that the Apostle Peter wrote one of his epistles from Babylon (I Peter 5:13), which was then a major city in Parthia's empire.

Consider again the visit of the Magi (or "Wise Men") to the young Jesus Christ. Few are aware that the Magi were Parthian nobles and priests who elected Parthian emperors, and that "Wise Men" was their formal title as Parthian "Senators." [16] The Bible does not say only three Magi visited Jesus, and this author believes they numbered at least twelve (one for each of the tribes of Israel who then lived in the Parthian Empire). Matthew 2:3 records that King Herod and "all Jerusalem" were "troubled" (The *Phillips New Testament* renders it "deeply perturbed") when the Magi's caravan arrived at the city. Three weary riders on dusty camels would not have alarmed an entire city or caused an urgent warning about their arrival to come to King Herod. However, twelve Parthian priests and nobles from Parthia's king-making Senate would have been urgent news, indeed! Accompanying the Parthian nobility would have been a huge number of armed escorts, bakers, attendants, servants and camp-followers.

Parthia and Rome had fought over Palestine a few decades previous to this time (Parthia had evicted the Romans from Palestine for a several years!), and the arrival of a large body of Parthian soldiers in Jerusalem was technically a violation of the Roman-Parthian treaty that neither side would send an army across the Euphrates River (the border between the empires). The full story of this visit is detailed in chapter 9 of my book, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!* (Order from www.ChristianReality.com)

Moving forward to Apostolic times, there is a record that, during his stay in Parthia, the Apostle Thomas met and baptized some of the Wise Men in Parthia's ruling nobility.[17] Perhaps some of the very Wise Men who visited Jesus Christ were among those baptized later by Thomas. Since Jesus was actually worshipped by a number of Parthian rulers, Parthia offered the Apostles a very friendly environment in which to evangelize. During the time of the early Christian Church, Parthian kings placed Semitic slogans on Parthian coinage, and some Parthian vassal kings openly adopted Christianity for themselves and their subjects.[18] The portraits of the Parthian kings on their coinage have long confirmed the Semitic nature of Parthian rulers. However, this proliferation of Semitic culture and religion deeply alienated one of the Parthians' subject nations.

The Medes and Persians had ruled the same region under the Achaemenid kings (Cyrus, Darius, etc.) prior to the Parthian empire. The culture and religion of the Persians was based on Zoroastrianism, and the Persians resented the dominance of Semitic culture and religion under the later Parthian kings. Around 217 - 218 A.D., the Parthian empire defeated the Roman empire in one of the greatest battles in the long history of the Parthian-Roman rivalry. The battle of Nisibis, provoked by Roman treachery, lasted three days and caused so many casualties that the Greco-Roman historians record that the piles of bodies hindered the

movement of the armies.[19] Even though the Parthians had defeated the Roman armies in a climactic war and exacted a huge payment of tribute money from Rome, Parthia had won a "Pyrrhic victory." The war so weakened Parthia that within a decade the Persians successfully revolted and expelled the Semitic people out of the region.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to examine these events in detail, the Parthians, Jews, mingled Semites, and the Parthian royalty fled in great numbers toward Europe and the Black Sea region through the Caucasus Mountains of Armenia.[20] These masses of refugees became known as "Caucasians," and later became the Anglo-Saxons, Goths, Germans, etc. who poured into Europe from the east and destroyed the Roman empire. It is worth noting, however, that while Greco-Roman historians recognized the battle of Nisibis as one of the major engagements in the history of the Roman empire, modern historical accounts ignore this pivotal event. History texts are full of information about Gentile empires, but omit or downplay the history of the Israelite empires (Phoenicia, Carthage, Parthia, and Scythia), even though the Israelite empires frequently defeated the Gentile empires of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome in wars.

Impact of Parthia's Fall on Parthian Jews:

When Parthia fell and its Semitic people fled toward Eastern Europe, many Jews would have migrated with them. Remember that the population of Asian Jews was very large, and far greater than the population of Judean Jews (who had descended from the contingent of Asian Jews who had returned to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah). While the Jews of Judea were oppressed under Rome, the Parthian Jews enjoyed great freedom and autonomy.[21] When the Sassanian Persians overthrew the Parthians and began a "jihad" against all things Semitic, the Jews would have every motivation to flee along with the Parthian (i.e. Israelite) tribes who had been their protectors. Where did these numerous Asian Jews go? Those who maintain that modern Jews are not the Tribe of Judah ignore the fact that there was a major Jewish population present with the Parthian-Israelite tribes who migrated toward Eastern Europe via the area of the Black Sea. The Asian (i.e. "Parthian") Jews did not migrate to the moon, nor did they disappear into a black hole. Since these Parthian Jews were members of the tribe of Judah, we should expect them to reappear in considerable numbers in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region along with the rest of the migrating Semites. **That is exactly what happened.**

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* records that in Persian tradition the Arsacids (Parthia's rulers) were called the **Ashkanians**. [22] The *Britannica* further notes that this name was based on the term "**Ashak**." [23] The word "Ashak" is based on the Hebrew name "Isaac" as was a city in the Parthian homeland named "**Asaak**." [24] Genesis 21:12 prophesied that the Israelites would be known by the name of Isaac, and this came true as the Parthians and Scythians were identified by such names as Sacae, Asaak, Ashak, and Sacan (or Saxon). When the Israelites and Jews were expelled from Parthia by the Sassanian Persians, it is noteworthy that the Persian name for the Parthians remained on the Parthian Jews who migrated toward Europe. The Parthian name "**Ashkan-ian**" is easily seen in the term **Ashken-azi** Jew! The very term "Ashkenazi" proclaims a Parthian (or Israelite) origin, and the term "Ashkenazi Jew" could just as easily be rendered as "Parthian Jew."

A Brief History of the Khazars:

Some who deny that Ashkenazi Jews are descended from the tribe of Judah assert that the term "Ashkenazi Jew" is based on a branch of the Japhethic race mentioned in Genesis 10:3. However, some who make that connection also assert the Ashkenazi Jews are "Edomite/Khazars." You can't have it both ways! We have already seen that the Edomites have no racial connection to Japheth; they are Semites and fellow-Hebrews with the Israelites. Therefore, the only historical origin for the term "Ashkenazi" that makes any sense is that it indicates a "Parthian" origin for the Ashkenazi Jews.

Let's briefly examine the Khazar Empire to learn more about its connection to the Ashkenazi Jews. The Khazars are first recognizable as a distinct people entering the area of Armenia at the end of the second century A.D. and the beginning of the third century A.D.[25] This is the precise time in history when the Parthian Empire weakened and fell, and the Parthians fled toward Armenia and the Caucasus mountains. The fact that the Khazars entered Armenia in the same historical period as the Parthian refugees argues that they had a Parthian connection themselves.

During the 7th and 8th centuries A.D., the Khazars held back the Moslems who were attempting to advance into Europe through the Caucasus region. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states: "the Khazars had protected the plains of Europe from the Mohammedans..."[26] In the 9th century A.D., the attacks of the Pechenegs (a Turkic people) so disrupted the trade routes that the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus dispatched a huge work party to build an impregnable stone city for the Khazars so they could hold off the Pechenegs. This fortified stone city became known as "Sarkel," or "the White Abode." [27] The Parthians had a well-known tradition of racial and religious tolerance,[28] and so did the Khazars. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* notes that:

"Merchants from every nation found protection and good faith in the Khazar cities. **The Jews, expelled from Constantinople, sought a home amongst them,** developed the Khazar trade, and contended with Mohammedans and Christians for the theological allegiance of the pagan people. **The dynasty [of the Khazars] accepted Judaism (circa 740 A.D.) but there was equal tolerance for all.**"[29]

Notice that before the Khazar dynasty accepted Judaism as the dominant religion of Khazaria, there were already substantial numbers of racial Jews living there! Many of these Jews would have been descended from displaced Parthian Jews (members of the tribe of Judah) who had migrated there when Parthia fell. The above quote also reveals that a second wave of racial Jews arrived in Khazaria after they were expelled from the Byzantine capital of Constantinople.

Furthermore, the fact that the Khazar rulers chose Judaism for their kingdom confirms that the Jews already constituted a large and influential portion of their subjects! When Khazarian kings adopted Judaism, a "Jewish kingdom" was established along a major trade route where Jewish practices were welcomed and approved! When this news spread to other scattered Jews from the tribe of Judah, there was, no doubt, a substantial third migration of Jews from

the tribe of Judah from other nations to the friendly territory of Khazaria! How could it be otherwise? Jews were often purged, persecuted, or expelled from various nations, so a kingdom favoring Judaism would have been a magnet drawing Jews from many nations! The influx of Jews into Khazaria would have given it the largest concentration of Jews anywhere on earth. Even those Khazars who had not been Jews by birth would have become genuine members of the tribe of Judah in God's eyes from then on if they fulfilled the conditions of God's assimilation laws of Leviticus 23 and Ezekiel 47 (and it seems apparent that they did so).

Did all the Khazars adopt Judaism? No. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* noted that there was "equal tolerance for all," so there was no official pressure on anyone to become Jewish. It is highly likely that Christians and Mohammedans continued to practice their religion as before while Judaism was practiced by the Jews and the Khazar royalty. Judaism was not a universal religion in Khazaria.

Some might object to the assertion in the above paragraph that scattered Jews would flock to Khazaria when it became known that Khazaria offered a refuge to the Jews. However, all people want a homeland where they can practice their culture, religion, and way of life openly. The Jews are no different. Just as dispossessed Jews flocked to a Jewish enclave under the Babylonians (Jeremiah 40:11), they would have flocked to a "Jewish state" in Khazaria from nations wherein they were persecuted or barely tolerated.

As further evidence that many non-Jewish Khazars did not convert to Judaism, a major Khazar city, Itil, featured 30 mosques in the early 900's A.D.[30] When Khazaria fell around 1000 A.D., much of its population was non-Jewish. Where did the Jews of Khazaria go? History makes that answer an obvious one. They migrated to the north and west and their descendants eventually numbered in the millions as they lived in eastern and central Europe, the Ukraine, etc. In other words, their descendants became the Ashkenazi Jews, still bearing the root word "Ashkan-ian" which bore record to their Parthian (i.e. Semitic) origin.

In conclusion, we can see that there is abundant evidence to indicate that both the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews can lay claim to being the true modern descendants of the tribe of Judah. In both of their histories, non-Israelites who merged with the Jews and adopted Jewish customs and religion became members of the tribe of Judah under God's assimilation laws in Leviticus 19 and Ezekiel 47. **The fact that God himself used both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews to fulfill prophecies about latter-day "Judah" in Zephaniah 2 and Genesis 49 gives powerful support to this conclusion.**

In spite of the above, this author is sure that some will still doubt the "Jewishness" of modern Jews. For this reason, several additional proofs will be offered, based on evidence that modern and historic Jews manifest the personality traits of their namesake ancestor, Judah, the son of Jacob. These remarkable similarities will offer further evidence of a genetic (i.e. bloodline) bond between ancient Judah and modern Jews.

Those desiring to order copies of the author's book, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!*, which offers extensive details about the entire history of the ten tribes from ancient through modern times, can purchase them at www.ChristianReality.com.

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