

The Jews Are Israel

One of the most egregious and oft-repeated myths, and one which has serious repercussions and leads to dislocations at many levels of comprehension, is the confusion between Jews and Israelites. I see this repeated so often, and yet it is an inexplicable garbling of the Word that can only really be explained by a failure to have read the Old Testament, made all the worse by the modern day conflation of the re-invented Kingdom of Judea with the State of Israel. The Jews indeed are Israelites, but the Israelites are not the Jews. An analogy would be: Cornish people are English, but English people are not Cornish. In the same way some English people are Cornish, some Israelites are Jews.

This matter is very simple. The Israelites, also known as the Hebrews, were originally a conglomeration of 12 separate Tribes, of which the tribe of Judah was but 1 of those tribes. A 13th tribe was created when the Tribe of Joseph became two tribes, Ephraim and Manassah. So in all Israel consisted of 13 Tribes. After the reign of King Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel fragmented in two, and became two states. The southern state was the Kingdom of Judea, and was comprised of 2 tribes, Judah & Benjamin, + some of the Levites. The Northern Kingdom retained the Name of Israel, and was inhabited by the 10 other tribes + the rest of the Levites. Eventually the Northern Kingdom was exiled, (between 745 and 721BC), largely scattered abroad, leaving predominantly the Southern Kingdom of Judea.

If you talk about things like 'The Jewish Bible', 'God's promises to the Jews', 'the Jewish homeland of Israel', (which I hear all the time), you are simply parroting received nonsense.

God's promises were to Israel – all 13 tribes.

The Jewish ancestral homeland is Judea – the land allotment God gave them which was originally one of the 12 portions of the land of Israel.

The Torah, the books of the Law, is the Hebrew bible.

If we don't really understand the difference between the House of Israel and The House of Judah, we end up in a morass of confusion. The prophets will make little sense, it will be impossible to make any sense of certain passages in Paul's writing, and it also lends itself inevitably to a somewhat skewed understanding of Jesus' ministry.

I suppose to complete the analogy, if one went around talking about the Cornish car manufacturer, Aston Martin, the Cornish parliament at Westminster, and the Cornish language used by air traffic control worldwide, people would think you were crackers.