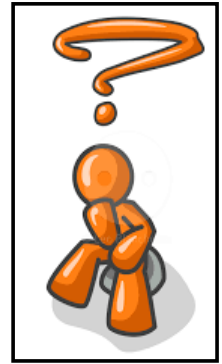
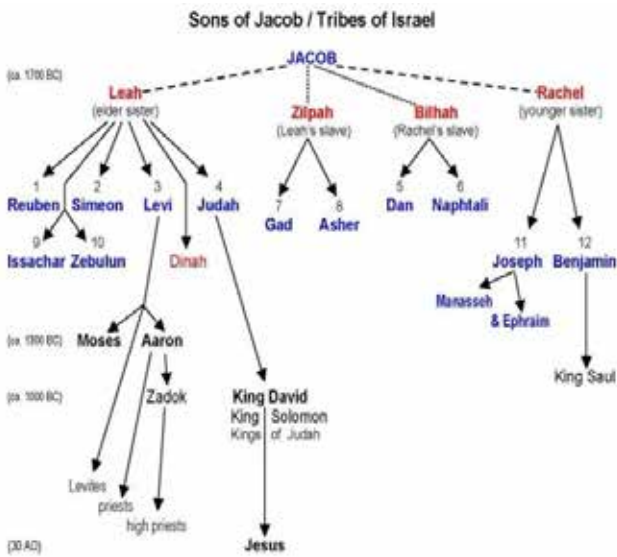


# What About ...

## The Lost Tribes of Israel By Jerry Collins



The 12 tribes of Israel were the family groups descended from the biblical patriarch Jacob. The tribes are important because God worked through the tribes to fulfill His promises—especially the promise of the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (Revelation 5:5). The 12 sons of Jacob were offspring of two of Jacob’s wives, Leah and Rachel, and two concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah. The promises to Abraham of a land, people, and blessing would be passed on to these family groups. The future nation of Israel would be identified by these 12 sons of Jacob (Genesis 49). In Genesis 49:1, *Jacob summoned his sons and said, “Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come.”* After he had given prophetic insights into the lives of his 12 sons and their posterity, Genesis 49:28 notes *all these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him.* God’s intention was to bless the nation which consisted of the 12 sons of Jacob, who would become the 12 tribes of Israel.



of the United Kingdom in 930 B.C. many Israelites from all the northern tribes joined their brethren in the south and continued their specific tribal identity as part of the Kingdom of Judah.

- Numerous individuals out of *all the tribes of Israel* rejected Jeroboam’s idolatry and became refugees in the Southern Kingdom. *For the Levites left their suburban lands and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest’s office unto the LORD; ....And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, who set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord his God of their fathers* (2 Chronicles 11:14, 16).
- During the reign of King Asa in Judah (910 BC), many more from the northern tribes moved south from Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon. *He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to him from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him* (2 Chronicles 15:9). Thus, it is evident that

### What Happened to the Twelve Tribes of Israel?

The United Kingdom of 12 tribes eventually split into the southern kingdom of Judah and northern kingdom of Israel. The ten northern tribes were carried into Assyrian Exile in 722 B.C. Some believe that since then there have only been two tribes. The 10 northern tribes either fell off the face of the earth or were assimilated into other people groups. For instance, British-Israelism teaches that the supposed “lost ten tribes” migrated to Europe and then to England and became the primary ancestors of the British people and, thereby, the United States. The primary goal behind British Israelism is to claim that England and the United States have inherited the covenant promises God made to Israel. Is it true that the ten northern tribes were lost? Is it possible that these tribes migrated to England and the United States?

### The Old Testament

Following Solomon’s death, Solomon’s son Rehoboam became king and foolishly threatened to make life more difficult for the people of the nation of Israel (1 Kings 12:14). This led to a rebellion against Rehoboam, and the ten northern tribes crowned Jeroboam as their king. *It came about when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, that they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. None but the tribe of Judah followed the house of David* (1 Kings 12:20). At the time of the disruption



the kingdom of Judah absorbed many from the northern kingdom throughout the years following the nations division.

- Some 200 years later, Hezekiah (715 B.C.) invited the north and south to Jerusalem for Passover. *Now Hezekiah sent to **all Israel and Judah** and wrote letters also to **Ephraim and Manasseh**, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the Lord God of Israel (2 Chronicles 30:1). So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout **all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan**, that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated it in great numbers as it was prescribed... Some laughed them to scorn and mocked them. Nevertheless, some **men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun** humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem (vv. 5, 9-10).*
- One hundred years after the Assyrian invasion and destruction, in 622 B.C., devout Israelites from the north gave and assisted to help repair the Temple. *They came to Hilkiah the high priest and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the doorkeepers, had collected from **Manasseh and Ephraim**, and from **all the remnant of Israel**, and from **all Judah and Benjamin** and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 34:9).*

**The northern ten tribes, therefore, were never lost.** Many assimilated within the Southern Kingdom of Judah after the kingdom was divided. For the next 200 years, others joined them. After their kingdom was destroyed, many Israelites remained in the north, but many more continued to migrate south. They became refugees due to Jeroboam's threats, Assyria's invasion, and idolatry in the north.

## The New Testament

In the New Testament, all the tribes in the Kingdom of Israel continued to exist. The New Testament indicates that in the first century "Jews" still maintained their tribal identities, even from some of the supposed lost tribes.

- The aged prophetess Anna, who beheld the baby Jesus in the Temple, was of the tribe of Asher, one of the northern tribes. *And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the **tribe of Asher** (Luke 2:36).*
- When Paul spoke of his Jewish brethren, he spoke of a common promise and a common hope they had as a tribal people. *Unto which promise **our twelve tribes**, earnestly serving God day and night, hope to come (Acts 26:7).*
- Paul described himself as a Benjamite. ... *For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the **tribe of Benjamin** (Romans 11:1). ... If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the **tribe of***

***Benjamin**, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee (Philippians 3:4-5).*

- James addressed his epistle to the **twelve tribes which are scattered abroad** (James 1:1). James made no distinction between Judah and the ten northern tribes.

All Jews were part of a common body, the only difference being that some were in the land of Israel and some in the Diaspora. Evidently, members of all the tribes existed both inside and outside the Promised Land.

## Conclusion

Ideas such as British-Israelism do not stand up to biblical scrutiny. The 12 tribes of Israel will inherit the land. Thus, God's promises to Israel have not been transferred to England and the United States.

- **God's covenants with Israel have always involved the 12 tribes living within the literal land of Israel.** *On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "**To your descendants I have given this land**, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite" (Genesis 15:18-21).*
- **God determined that Abraham's descendants, Isaac, Jacob, and the 12 tribes of Israel would inherit the land.** *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, "Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, '**To your descendants I will give it**'" (Deuteronomy 33:1).*
- **The current dispersion of the tribes of Israel will eventually lead to the 12 tribe's future regathering in the land of Israel.** *And He will lift up a standard for the nations and **assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12).*** The 144,000 from the 12 tribes will be sealed by God in the Tribulation. *And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed **from every tribe of the sons of Israel** (Revelation 7:4). The apostles will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the **twelve tribes of Israel** during Christ's 1000-year reign on earth (Matthew 19:28). The New Jerusalem will have a *great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the **twelve tribes of the sons of Israel** (Revelation 21:12).**

The tribes were not lost. They existed throughout the Old and New Testaments. They exist today. God also has a literal future for the nation of Israel—one that **includes all 12 tribes**. That future extends on into eternity.