

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL



This map shows the territories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel as they were settled in the Land.

Judea later emerged as the southern kingdom within this territory.

Israel emerged as the northern kingdom.

Both kingdoms existed until the Babylonian Exile.

The people, the land, the history—one enduring connection.



Long before modern borders, colonial empires, or contemporary political movements, this land was home to the Twelve Tribes of Israel. From these tribal territories emerged the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, from which the Jewish people derive their name. While borders changed throughout history, the connection between the Jewish people and this land remained a defining feature of Jewish identity, memory, culture, and religious life for more than three thousand years.

THE SIMPLE TRUTH

Jews are Judeans.

Judaism is the religion of the Judean people.

Judaism was born in Judea.
Its calendar follows the seasons of Judea.

Its prayers face Judea.

Its holidays remember Judea.

Its stories take place in Judea.

Its language originated in Judea.

For thousands of years, Jews carried Judea with them wherever they went.

The modern State of Israel did not create the connection between Jews and the land.

It restored it.

A people.

A land.

A living tradition.

Still connected after thousands of years.

"THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, THE TORAH OF ISRAEL, AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL."



WHY JUDAISM, JEWISH IDENTITY, AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL CANNOT BE SEPARATED.

WHO ARE THE JEWS?

The word "Jew" comes from "Judean."

A Judean is a member of the people that originated in Judea.

Today, that land is known as Israel.

Jews are not simply followers of a religion.

Jews are a people.

Like Armenians come from Armenia and Greeks come from Greece, Jews originate from Judea.

Long before Christianity.

Long before Islam.

Long before the modern State of Israel.

The Jewish people emerged in Judea, developed in Judea, and maintained their identity through thousands of years of exile from Judea.

Jews are Judeans.

JUDAISM IS A LAND-BASED RELIGION

Judaism was not created in a vacuum.

It developed in Judea.

Its holidays follow the agricultural cycles of the Land of Israel.

Passover occurs during the spring barley harvest.

Shavuot is tied to the wheat harvest.

Sukkot celebrates the ingathering of crops.

Many commandments can only be observed in the Land of Israel.

Jewish prayers face Jerusalem.

The Jewish calendar reflects the seasons of the Land of Israel.

To understand Judaism is to understand its connection to Judea.

The religion and the land are inseparable.

EXILE NEVER ENDED THE CONNECTION

For nearly two thousand years, Judeans lived scattered across the world.

Yet they never forgot where they came from.

At weddings, Jews remembered Jerusalem.

At Passover, Jews declared: "Next year in Jerusalem."

Three times a day, Jews prayed facing Jerusalem.

Jewish communities preserved the language, traditions, and memories of their homeland.

Exile changed where Jews lived.

It never changed who they were.