



רַתְּתַאמְ תַּךְ סִדְוֹר וּדְיָן אֶסְךָ וְהוּ

# Who is a Jew: Does it Matter?

You will be for me a kingdom of  
priests and a holy nation!

Exodus 19:6

## A. Who is a Jew?

According to modern Judaism, a Jew is any person whose mother was a Jew or any person who has gone through the formal process of conversion to Judaism. Also, being a Jew has nothing to do with what you believe or what you do.

### 1. Orthodox—Conservative—Reform—Reconstructionist

Orthodoxy does not accept the authority of Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis to perform conversions, and the Conservative movement has debated whether to accept the authority of Reform rabbis.

### 2. Matrilineal or Patrilineal Descent?

Why does traditional Judaism uses matrilineal descent to determine Jewish status, when in all other things (tribal affiliation, priestly status, royalty, etc.) patrilineal descent is used? The Torah does not specifically state anywhere that matrilineal descent should be used!

### 3. Who is a Messianic Jew?

A "Messianic Jew" is not somebody who has chosen to worship in a certain way or uses certain Jewish elements, but is a Jew who believes in the Messiah. It is the belief 'by a Jew' in Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah that determines a Messianic Jewish identity.

(*International Messianic Jewish Alliance imja.com*)

#### **a. Messianic Jews: The Faithful Remnant**

"Throughout history He (G-d) has preserved for Himself a faithful Jewish remnant. Since New Covenant times He has kept alive a remnant of those who trust and follow Yeshua as their Messiah. This Messianic Jewish remnant mediates redemption on behalf of the whole nation."

*Teplinsky "Why Care About Israel" p31*

## B. Does it Matter?

4000 years after Abraham's runaway grandson Jacob was renamed Israel and inherited the covenant blessing—the world has changed, but NOT the Word of God. The Jewish nation in 2007 is on center stage, an international battle zone—and a stumbling stone. Why? It's all about Yeshua—and it does matter to God 'who is a Jew.'

**Continued on back...**

## Origins of the Words "Jew" and "Judaism"

The original name for the people we now call Jews was **Hebrews**. The word "Hebrew" (in Hebrew, "Ivri") is first used in the Torah to describe Abraham (*Gen. 14:13*). The word is apparently derived from the name Eber, one of Abraham's ancestors.

Another name used for the people is **Children of Israel** or **Israelites**, which refers to the fact that the people are descendants of **Jacob**, who was also called **Israel**. (*Gen. 32:28*)

The word "**Jew**" (in Hebrew, "**Yehudi**") is derived from the name **Judah**, which was the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons. Judah was the ancestor of one of the tribes of Israel, which was named after him. Likewise, the word **Judaism** literally means "**Judah-ism**," that is, the religion of the Yehudim.

Today, the word "**Jew**" is used to refer to all of the physical and spiritual descendants of **Jacob/Israel**, as well as to the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and their wives, and the word "**Judaism**" is used to refer to their beliefs.

**Judaism 101** [JewFAQ.Org](http://JewFAQ.Org)



MessianicClub.com  
Messianic Jewish Club  
Laguna Woods Village

## Who is a Jew: Does it Matter? *Continued*

### B. Does it Matter? (Continued)

Let's look at the question of 'Does it Matter?' from the perspective of the past, present and future!

#### 1. Past

- **Covenant:** God established a 'covenant' relationship with Abraham and the Jewish nation. *Gen 12:1-3*
- **First Born:** God says the Jewish people retain an irrevocable birthright as His adopted firstborn son! *Ex 4:22-23*

#### 2. Present

- **The Church:** All who trust Messiah for their salvation are God's adopted children in "a community of the firstborn" but only Israel as a nation is God's adopted firstborn! *Heb 12:23*
  - **Olive Tree:** Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree (Israel). *Rom 11:17-24*
  - **Abraham's Seed:** Jew and Gentile are both sons and heirs according to the promise. However, this does not mean that the Church (the community of believers) replaces Israel in God's prophetic plan. *Gal 3:26-29*
- **Judaism:** Waiting for the Messiah
- **Messianic Judaism—Christianity:** The Messiah has come—the good news is salvation to all who believe! *John 3:1-21*
- **Times of the Gentiles:** A period of time that only God knows—this present age (time). *Luke 21:24*
- **Aliya:** The Law of Return July 5, 1950 (Zionism) *Ezek 39:21-29*
- **Loving the Jewish People:** Now is the time "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" *Rom 1:16*. God promised Abram, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" *Gen 12:3*.

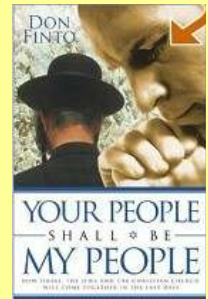
#### 3. Future

- **'Times of Gentiles' Fulfilled:** There is coming a time when God will again restore Israel—He will fulfill all of His promises to Israel. During a time of great tribulation national Israel will be God's people on the earth and they will be restored to Jerusalem, protected by divine seal, worship in a rebuilt temple and suffer at the hand of the Antichrist. However, in the end—all opposition to the LORD will be cut off and both Jew and Gentile believers will enjoy a new heaven and a new earth—for ever! *Rev 21-22*

## Resources



Sandra Teplinsky  
Chosen Books  
LightOfZion.org



Don Finto—Regal Books



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