

Who Are the Israelites According to Torah

In the Torah and Tanakh, **Israel is a covenant identity established by YAHUAH**, not a later cultural or political term.

Israel refers to:

A people formed through lineage, covenant, and obedience appointed for a purpose.

Israel Begins with Ya‘aqob’s Renaming

The name **Israel (Yisra’el)** originates when YAHUAH renames Ya‘aqob after a transformative encounter.

Genesis 32:28

“...Your name shall no longer be called Ya‘aqob, but Yisra’el...”

This renaming signal:

- covenant calling
- identity transformation
- responsibility under YAHUAH

Israel is not originally a nation it is a **covenant name given to a man**, whose descendants inherit that calling.

Israel Becomes a Twelve-Tribe Nation

Ya‘aqob’s twelve sons become the **twelve tribes of Israel**, forming a covenant people.

These tribes carry:

- lineage identity
- territorial inheritance
- covenant obligations

The Torah consistently refers to Israel as a **family-nation**, not a loose spiritual label.

Important beginner understanding:

Israel is structured it is genealogical and covenantal.

Israel's Identity Is Covenant-Based, Not Merely Ethnic

While lineage establishes tribal belonging, the Torah emphasizes that **covenant obedience defines Israel's standing**.

Belonging without obedience leads to discipline.

Deuteronomy 28

This chapter outlines:

- blessings for obedience
- consequences for rebellion

Israel's identity is relational obedience sustains covenant blessing.

Ancestry alone does not protect from consequences.

Disobedience Leads to Scattering Among the Nations

The Torah warns that covenant violation results in dispersion.

Deuteronomy 28:64

“...YAHUAH will scatter you among all peoples...”

The prophets later confirm this outcome.

Hosea 8:8

“Israel is swallowed up; now they are among the nations...”

Scattering is presented as **discipline**, not abandonment.

It explains why Israel appears dispersed and hidden in history.

Israel Is Defined Biblically Not by Modern Categories

The Torah and Tanakh never define Israel by:

- modern nationality
- race categories
- political borders

Israel is defined by:

- descent from Ya‘aqob
- covenant relationship
- obedience responsibility

This distinction helps beginners avoid projecting modern ideas onto ancient text.

Israelites are:

Descendants of Ya‘aqob (renamed Israel)
Organized into twelve covenant tribes
Bound by Torah responsibility
Disciplined through scattering for disobedience

Israel is a **covenant identity**, not merely a cultural label.

Key Scriptures

- Genesis 32:28 Name Israel established
- Genesis 35 Tribal lineage formation
- Deuteronomy 28 Covenant consequences
- Deuteronomy 28:64 Scattering warning
- Hosea 8:8 Prophetic confirmation