



Spiritual, not fleshly, descendants of Abraham
are the real Israel that counts with God

Who was God talking about when he made the promise to Abraham about his seed? Was the promise only referring to his physical offspring? Or, is there such a thing as “Spiritual Israel?”

“Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God’s people! Being descendants of Abraham doesn’t make them truly Abraham’s children. For the Scriptures say, ‘Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted,’ though Abraham had other children, too. This means that Abraham’s physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham’s children.” (Romans 9:6-8 NLT)

The key point to keep in mind is that “Abraham’s physical descendants are not necessarily children of God”. The “children of the promise” are spiritual – not fleshly – descendants of Abraham.

“This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 3:6 NIV, emphasis added)

The three uses of the word “together” here indicate the unique aspect of the equality and mutuality that Gentiles have in the church with Jews as one body. **“Israel,”** as used here in **Ephesians 3:6**, represents Jewish Christians.

“Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God”—(Galatians 6:16 NIV)

The church is the true Israel, **“the Israel of God,”** the new seed of Abraham. *“The Kingdom of Heaven, still to be completed, but already strongly associated with the community which Jesus founded, is the fulfillment of God’s plan for Israel. So the Church is the true Israel, the recipient of God’s promises, which goes out to all nations in the power of Christ”* (Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew, New Jerusalem Bible [NJB]). *“It is stressed that Christianity is the logical outcome of Judaism and is in conformity with it”* (Introduction to Acts, NJB).

“Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?” (1 Corinthians 10:18 NKJV)

“Israel after the flesh,” ancient Israel or modern Israel, is not true Israel, as opposed to true

Israel, the church.

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.’” (Romans 11:25-26 NIV)

Paul uses **“Israel”** in two different ways in these verses. The first use is of **“Israel after the flesh” (1 Corinthians 10:18)**. The second use is of the Christian **“Israel of God,”** where **“neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything” (Galatians 6:15,16 NIV)**. Thus, the phrase, “All Israel will be saved,” means the total number of Christians that will be **“saved”** – both Jew and Gentile.

For more information related to this subject, please see the following articles on this website:

“Should We Pray for Israel?”

“Does Modern Israel Fulfill Bible Prophecy?”

“Restoration Prophecies — Israel of God”

“Are Restoration Prophecies About Israel Literal — or Symbolic?”