

A Lost Israelite Tribe

Commentary for August 1, 2024 — ... In Afghanistan?

Yes, it might be true. No, this has nothing to do with British-Israelism. Below are excerpts from an "i24" print article that tells an interesting story that has been going around for several hundred years, and if true, then the "ten lost tribes of Israel" have never been lost. In fact, some have always been where Scripture last mentions them to be.

Background

For more on this topic, see the article by Dr. E.W. Bullinger,¹ 1897, "[Two Houses of Israel and Judah](#)." I reprinted it as a March 2013 Commentary. Dr. Bullinger opposed the concept of British Israelism. He believed the ten northern tribes exiled by Assyria to Mesopotamia remained there

Bullinger opposed this teaching that the Ten Lost Tribes migrated for centuries and eventually settled in portions of Western Europe, Scandinavia, and the British Isles that include England, Ireland (north and south), Scotland, and Wales.

Most who believe this concept today teach that God directed and filtered the descendants from one of the sons of Joseph (either Ephraim or Manasseh) to settle in the United States. The other son settled in England.

This teaching was a doctrine of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), founded by Herbert Armstrong in the 1930s. When Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, the organization eventually dissolved, and many offshoots developed. The Associates for Scriptural Knowledge was one of them, although Dr. Martin never taught British Israelism years before nor after he left the WCG in the early 1970s.

The "i24" Article

The article "[Surprising links between Israel and Afghanistan's Pashtuns](#)" was written by Uri Shapira, published on August 22, 2021. It is found at the "i24" website. I am reprinting it in full. (I tried contacting "i24" to request permission to reprint, but I have not received an answer.)

The news service "i24" is an Israeli 24-hour news service whose purpose is to serve the national audience for Israel — similar to CNN once was), to provide coverage of major world-wide events. The "i24" news channel and print articles serve Israeli citizens (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim) about history, cultural events, and news about Israel, the region, and around the world. The full "i24" web address is <https://www.i24news.tv/>. You can watch the

¹ Dr. Bullinger compiled and published the [Companion Bible](#). See the online edition.

channel live on the internet.² Here is the article by Uri Shapira:

["Surprising links between Israel and Afghanistan's Pashtuns"](#)

Since the fall of Kabul to the Taliban last week, life in the capital has become a challenge for many. Among those experiencing the difficulties of the takeover are many Pashtun, a large ethnic group consisting of more than 15 million people.

While the Taliban themselves originated as a Pashtun tribal movement, and still today hold great power in the Pashtun's cultural heartland in Afghanistan's south, not all members of the ethnicity sympathize with the new rulers of the country.

Many served in the Afghan National Army and both of the country's recent former presidents were Pashtun.

Theories exist that suggest that the Pashtuns are decedents of the lost tribes of the Israelites with some feeling connected to the Mediterranean state.

Although most Pashtun are Sunni Muslim, some feel a strong connection to Judaism and to the theories about their Israelite origins.

Israeli anthropologist Prof. Avigdor Shachan suggested that the lost tribes of Israel settled in Afghanistan following the Assyrian conquest of Israel in 856–732 BCE. He even suggested that we can find clues of Hebrew culture in the names of Afghan cities such as Kandahar, which he claims is similar to the Hebrew expression "The Mountain." Other theories note the similarities between Pashtun and Jewish names.

One Pashtun from Afghanistan who feels a strong connection to Israel is H. a former Afghan official who asked to remain anonymous.

"I'm a prime target for the Taliban," he explained. **"If they'll know I'm in Kabul, they'll behead me."**

H. worked with former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani, but ever since the premier fled the country, the two are not in communication.

"The Taliban killed and wounded dozens of people ... they took down our national flag.

In 2019, H. made contact with Israeli right-wing activist Prof Hillel Weiss, who tried to promote a UN-like body, based on the Torah Laws, named "70 Nations." Weiss even met H. in Delhi, India, and exchanged thoughts about future cooperation.

"I wrote to officials such as Israel's Defense Minister Benny Gantz and also to journalists about the situation. We need to help them. This is their land, and they will return to their original place," said Weiss

"They don't even have to convert to Judaism. But they have to accept the [seven laws of](#)

² Where I live near Portland, Oregon, "i24" is one of several international channels on our cable television menu. I did not know "i24" also has print articles.

[Noah](#),” he said, referring to the traditional laws which allow non-Jews to live righteously even without converting. In our previous interview, Weiss said that after his encounter with H. he received a call from an Afghan official who was interested in further business and culture cooperation with Israel.

H. doesn't dismiss the option of immigrating to Israel **“If I had a visa, I would have moved to Israel”** he maintained. **“But not as an asylum seeker.”** He also said he would not convert to Judaism, although he does feel a strong connection to Israel and to the Jewish people.

“We both have the same blood. We are Bnei Israel,” he said, using a Hebrew term meaning “Sons of Israel” or “Israelites.”

Another Pashtun-Afghan who asked to remain anonymous is S. who now lives in Peshawar, Pakistan. Originally from Afghanistan, S. has lived in different cities around the world and worked in the shipping industry. We can see Jewish symbols on his Facebook page.

“Israel is my country” he said. **“I am persecuted here because of my Jewish faith. I would like to make contact with the Israeli authorities and start an immigration process,”** he said.

Recently the issue landed in the headlines when Israeli lawmaker Gabi Lasky from the left-wing Meretz party said that Afghan migrants should be let into Israel.

However, she didn't specifically refer to the Pashtuns. Lasky told us in response that she didn't know about the theories which tie the Pashtuns to the lost tribes. **“I referred to only a few hundred asylum seekers,”** she said. **“The Jewish people have suffered from persecutions and being refugees more than anyone else. So we can't be blind to the suffering of the other.”**

Nevertheless, at the moment it seems unlikely that these requests will be answered, considering strict Israeli immigration laws.

The future is unclear for the Pashtun people, especially for those who supported the previous regime.

“There is no way I'm staying in Afghanistan,” said H. He also mentioned that he is considering moving to Australia or Canada. But this crisis may also be a turning point in the relationship between Israel and Afghanistan, two countries that do not share borders but may have more in common than many think.

Former Afghan Official: **“If I had a visa I would move to Israel.”**

Jon Eric Lambert in his book *The Temple and the Lost Tribes of Israel: A Biblical View*, author (Bloomington, Indiana: Westbow Press, 2022) presents evidence that people in the area in and around Afghanistan have long known that they are descended from Israelites. Like Uri Shapira's article Lambert discovered from his research that British researchers knew about the Pashtun and other tribes with possible connections to the Ten Tribes.

Lambert learned about this information as a 21-year military chaplain who served in Somalia

and Iraq. While in Iraq he was able to investigate and discovered that British researchers in the 1800s also learned about the Afghan tribes and their ties to Israel, particularly the Pash-tun "tribe" in Afghanistan, which is the largest tribe in the country. Some acknowledge they are Israelites, and others do not. Lambert presents the evidence in the first four chapters.

Jewish historian Josephus wrote in *Antiquities of the Jews* 11:133 (Loeb edition, volume 6, 1966):

"... the Israelite nation as a whole remained in the country [of exile]. In this way has it come about that there are two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while until now there have been tribes beyond the Euphrates — countless myriads whose number cannot be ascertained."

The powerful Parthian Empire was east of the Euphrates River during the time of Josephus.

Chapter 3 in Lambert's book is titled "John 10 and the Other Sheep — the Lost Tribes of Israel, Part I." The "other sheep" are those from the "other" tribes other than Judah, Benjamin, and Levi who were the tribes of Judah. Lambert demonstrates that many Afghans call themselves "sons of Israel." While they consider themselves at present to be loyal Muslims, they trace their lineage to Israel. And the same Afghan tribes have traditions that are not from the Koran, but are similar to Mosaic traditions. These traditions vary from tribe to tribe. Some Afghan groups trace their lineage to sons of Jacob. Some state that they are awaiting the return of the Messiah who will tell them to return to Palestine where they came from. Then they will acknowledge YHWH.

Chapter 4 is titled "The Lost Tribes of Israel, Part II." In both chapters Lambert examines the literary and historical evidence developed by earlier (primarily British) researchers in the Afghan region, going back to the early 1800s. Even then the various tribes claimed to have Israelite connection, while being dedicated Muslims. Also, the British writers said nothing about British Israelism).

See Dr. Martin's two articles from the 1990s, "[Who Are the Northern Ten Tribes of Israel Today?](#)" and "[Just Who Is an Israelite Today?](#)"

Lambert's Temple Research

In the second and larger portion of his book, Lambert gives a solid presentation about the walls of Nehemiah that help pinpoint the Temple to have been at the Gihon location. It is another avenue of investigation supporting the Gihon location for the Jerusalem Temples of God. He presents the evidence in the chapters titled "God's Future Temple in the Right Location," Parts I, II and III.

Lambert agrees with Dr. Martin's Temple research while presenting his own new line of evidence. He strongly supports the concept that (1) the traditional temple site (the Al Aqsa Mosque platform) is the remains of Fort Antonia, (2) the Temple was above and west of the Gihon Spring, and (3) Christ was crucified on the Mount of Olives.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com