

Did Ancient Israelites Form Eastern Religions? (Part 2)

Lost Tribes Institutes' 3rd International Scientific Symposium

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[Part 1](#) is [here](#)

Prelude

I presented the historic basis for this theory, that Buddha was an Israelite, at the Lost Tribes Institute's 2nd Symposium (Chiang Mai, Thailand - May 9, 10, 2024). The primary points I highlighted were

1. Israelite exiles were moved east from Israel toward Assyria's eastern border in the 8th Century BCE and became known as the Saka, Shaka, or Sacae people.
2. As Assyria lost power in the east, the Israelites were free to move further east (8th & 7th centuries BCE).
3. Babylon exiled Jews to the East in the 6th Century BCE, therefore moving the biblical stage east. Many biblical characters "performed" in this eastern arena.
4. Buddha was born when Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Esther, Modecai, and Nehemiah were making history in Babylon and Persian kingdoms east of Israel.
5. Babylonian and Persian kings were making edicts that honored the biblical God in over 100 languages to all their provinces during Buddha's era.
6. Buddha was born to an educated by an aristocratic family of the Shakya nation in modern Northwest India or Nepal, just beyond Persian territory. He would have been aware of all that was happening in his part of the world, even if he was born just outside the Persian Empire. The influence of empires extends beyond their borders.

Introduction

This essay will set the venue for each character and focus on the overlap between Buddha's teachings and teachings found in the Script (Bible). I have highlighted the main biblical and historical figures on the "eastern stage" in chronological order, starting with biblical Isaiah. The prophets who lived in exile are called exilic prophets. Isaiah and others are not exilic, but prophesied about the exile, so I included them in this timeline/essay. Again, this essay highlights values shared between biblical characters and Eastern sages.

Chronology of the Script's Characters with Eastern Values in Persia and NW India

Isaiah (c. 739-685 BCE)

Isaiah, one of the major prophets, lived over a century before the Jews were exiled, but predicted the Jewish exile and return. Amazingly, Isaiah also prophesied about the first Achaemenid king, Cyrus, as a liberator of God's people:

...he (Cyrus) will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." (Isaiah 44:28)

I imagine Isaiah's writings became well-known in Persia's Achaemenid Empire when Cyrus became king and read his name written in the holy text long after Isaiah's prophecy:

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him
and to loose the belts of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:
"I will go before you
and level the exalted places..." (Isaiah 45:1,2)

Prominent scholars and rabbis view Isaiah's book as a microcosm of the Script's (Bible's) overarching themes (Sacks, pp. 112-115). These themes parallel Eastern faiths. Isaiah wrote:

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."
(40:31)

Eastern aspirations seek this type of inner strength and resilience through spiritual practices, particularly in teachings on meditation and cultivating inner peace—practices seen in many of the East's martial arts.

Isaiah also emphasizes that true wisdom and understanding come from God:

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord.
(Isaiah 11:2)

Hinduism's Bhagavad Gita emphasizes gaining spiritual knowledge (Jnana) which is an understanding of self (atman) and its relationship to absolute reality (Brahman). Moksha (Liberation) is transformation through enlightenment that leads to the liberation of the soul from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth - Isaiah's "Spirit of counsel and might..."

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:2)

Buddhism's Awakening (Bodhi) may also mean enlightenment which symbolizes the light that replaces the darkness of ignorance.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

Hindu scriptures, specifically the Rigveda, use the word Jyoti for the "divine light" of knowledge that dispels mental darkness. Diwali, the festival of lights, symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil.

Isaiah's depiction of the Messiah in Isaiah 42:6-7 encapsulates the goal of Eastern buddhas and gurus:

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Nations, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison...

Both Isaiah and Eastern religions highlight the importance of awakening to a higher truth or reality, and an understanding that enlightenment and wisdom free people from darkness through a transformative process. Several other key doctrines in Isaiah's book mirror those of Amida Buddha and other Eastern "streams". Despite cultural and doctrinal differences, the pursuit of enlightenment, wisdom, transformation, salvation, heaven, faith, and others shows a deep and shared spiritual root between Isaiah and Eastern faiths. Did Siddhartha Gautama have access to Isaiah's writings?

Cyrus, the First Achaemenid King (Reigns c. 550-520 BCE)

The Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great in 550 BCE, was known for its religious tolerance and multiculturalism. This environment promoted a conduit for the exchange of religious ideas and biblical texts between the Near East and the Far East. The empire spurred the Silk Road, which facilitated the transmission of goods, knowledge, and beliefs, fostering a cosmopolitan milieu where diverse religious traditions coexisted and interacted. One of the more notable examples of this influence is the relationship between Cyrus the Great and the Jewish people. As mentioned, Cyrus himself must have been influenced by Isaiah's biblical reference roughly 150 years before Cyrus entered the scene (Isaiah 45:13 NIV):

I will raise Cyrus in my righteousness; I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free."

That prophecy was fulfilled when Cyrus started the Achaemenid period by ordering the rebuilding of Jerusalem's Temple. Such a start surely caught the attention of those who found themselves in a new kingdom. More importantly, the Temple's rebuilding was a Persian nod to the God of Israel and set the Empire's policy of religious tolerance, which allowed for the development of religious ideas and the writing of many spiritual and philosophical texts through the following centuries.

Parallels between the Bible and the East are deep. Mentally, we see them as separate because Eastern faiths are viewed as polytheistic or philosophical, but even the Vedas point out that Hinduism has a monotheistic underpinning (Zimmer, pp. 124-130).

Conversely, the Hebrew title of the Script's monotheistic God is written in a plural form - Elohim is plural. Eloh is singular. The title for the One God most commonly used is Elohim, which suggests a plurality within its monotheistic belief. Of course, the Script clearly states that we are not to worship other gods, a mandate that many modern Eastern teachers

violate. This is the same violation that originally caused the Script's God to remove Israel from their land to the east.

Japanese author Arimasa Kubo (2022) argues that Shintoism was monotheistic until the 8th century CE and that Japanese culture has many biblical traits that suggest the culture, faith, and traditions were influenced by ancient Israelites. If Kubo is right, a Shinto believer who returns to a biblical worldview would be a reformer since he is restoring his Shinto religion to its roots. Reformers return people back to the origins of their religion.

The Script's God seems most interested in the prophesied return of his lost children. Maybe the call isn't for Easterners to convert to Judaism, Christianity, or another religion but to reform their own indigenous religions to their biblical roots.

Zechariah (520 BCE, during the reign of Darius I)

Zechariah was a reformer who lived when Persian officials plotted against Daniel. One of his prophecies opens with, "In the fourth year of King Darius..." So we know he was a cohort of the Persian King Darius and Daniel, since Daniel served Darius.

Zechariah proclaimed:

"This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the foreigner, or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.'" (7:9-10 NIV)

These values, emphasizing justice, mercy, and compassion, are the basis of any humane society but often struggle to find footing until properly demonstrated and proclaimed. They are embedded with the concept of dharma in Hinduism, which encompasses righteousness, duty, and moral order. In Buddhism, teachings on compassion (*karuṇā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) highlight the importance of alleviating suffering and showing kindness to all beings. Was Zechariah laying the foundation for Eastern teachers and their messages? Zechariah also emphasized:

"These are the things you are to do: speak the truth to each other and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the Lord." (8:16-17 NIV)

Truthfulness and integrity are Hindu values (*Satya*). And "samma-vaca" is a Buddhist emphasis on right speech.

Zechariah also made amazing predictions about the coming Anointed One (Messiah), which the Vedas and Buddha reiterated in their own words. Speaking on God's behalf, Zechariah prophesies of a future king:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming to you:
righteous and having salvation, humble and riding a donkey... (Zechariah 9)

And also speaks the following for God:

"They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him
as one mourns for an only child."

Zechariah promoted the concept of a humble and suffering God, which Eastern spirituality emulates. Buddha mentions the "Lord of Mercies" (Avalokiteshvara) who was "pierced" by the suffering of the people (Dogen, pp. 210-215).

Zechariah 4:6 states:

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."

This verse emphasizes the importance of spiritual strength over physical or worldly power. There are several parallels to this concept in Eastern religious beliefs. For example, the Hindu concept of "Bhakti" or devotion to a personal God is seen as a means to achieve spiritual liberation. Bhakti is considered more powerful than any worldly power or might. The concept developed in the late Vedic Period which coincided with Zechariah's life. Similarly, the Buddhist concept of "Dharma" or righteousness is considered more powerful than any physical weapon. Laozi, the founder of Taoism and 6th Century BCE cohort of Zechariah, teaches that the Tao, or "the Way," is the universe's natural order. By aligning with Tao, one achieves success - not through force or power but by flowing with the natural order. Laozi supposedly traveled west to meet other sages. I wonder if he met Zechariah.

The Sikh religion developed in the region long after the Achaemenid Empire and Zechariah died. Nonetheless, the region was still ripe with concepts from Zechariah. Sikh and Hindu understanding of "Shakti" or divine energy is seen as more powerful than any material or earthly weapons. Sikhs believe that a Guru, or spiritual teacher, possesses this divine power, which is accessed through devotion and meditation. Like Zechariah, Eastern philosophers believed in a power mightier than any army.

Ezekiel (592-570 BCE)

Ezekiel was probably the most eccentric of the Hebrew prophets. His visions and prophecies are wild. Additionally, he was called to take God's message to the "Israelites", so he would have actively been inoculating Israel's lost tribes with biblical content:

He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet, and I will speak to you." As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said, "Son of man, **I am sending you to the Israelites**, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the sovereign Lord says.' And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them. (Ezekiel 2:1-5)

Ezekiel is sent to "rebellious Israelites", not to captive Judah. At this point in history "Israelite" denoted Israel's ten northern tribes taken captive by Assyria (circa 720 BCE). Ezekiel was a Jewish captive from Babylon's 587 BCE deportation, but he was sent to Israelites deported by Assyria 144 years earlier.

Note also that the text above says, "They will know that a prophet has been among them." Ezekiel got the attention of those he was sent to. Were Confucius, Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, the writers of the Vedas, and many other spiritual reformers the Israelites Ezekiel targeted?

In one vision, Ezekiel sees God's presence leave the temple in Jerusalem and move to the east - to the Kebar River in the east, where scholars suggest a remnant of Israel's Lost Tribes remained. Ezekiel prophesied about the House of Judah and the House of Joseph (the Lost Tribes) being reunited (Ezekiel 37). God told Ezekiel:

But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate. But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, even though they are rebellious people." (Chapter 3)

Ezekiel's vision of God also contained wheels like those depicted as Buddhism's Wheel of Life (the Bhavachakra) or Dharma Wheel (the Dharmachakra):

Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. The glory of the Lord went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. (Ezekiel, Chapters 10 and 11)

Ezekiel's affinities with Buddha are so strong that some claim Ezekiel or his father, Buzi, were the original Buddha. (The linguistic change from a "Z" to "D" sound is known as debuccalization or lenition). A book could be written about Ezekiel's impact on the East. In the following verse, like so many other Ezekiel quotes, Ezekiel captures Eastern ideologies:

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 36:26–27 NIV)

Ezekiel's desire for inner transformation and spiritual renewal is found in Hindu concepts of self-transformation (tman) and the Buddhist emphasis on inner purification. Confucius spoke of a "superior man," which may have stemmed from Ezekiel's quote about a spiritual man with a new heart and new spirit.

Daniel (606–530 BCE)

Daniel served in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Darius, and others. Speaking about God, he said:

He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. (2:21 NIV)

This verse acknowledges divine providence and the allotment of wisdom, reflecting the Hindu concept of Ishvara (the divine supreme being) guiding the universe and imparting wisdom to seekers. In Buddhism, the previously mentioned concept of Prajna (wisdom) is central to the path of enlightenment, attained through insight and understanding.

Daniel also prophesied the date of the Anointed One's (Messiah's) coming:

Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. (Daniel 9:25)

Different calendars have been used by a variety of scholars to count the years, but we can do the simple math. If a "seven" is seven years, we can add seven sevens plus 62 sevens

to get a total of 69 sevens. $69 \times 7 = 483$ years. 483 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Anointed One (Messiah).

Later, we will see that only Easterners decoded this prophecy.

Malachai (430 BCE, during the reign of Artaxerxes I)

Malachai, speaking on God's behalf, said

“From sunrise to its setting, My Name will be great among the nations, and in every place, incense will be offered to My Name with a pure grain offering, for My Name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord God (1:11).

The incense and grain offerings in Malachai's prophecy conjure images of eastern offerings at shrines and temples throughout Asia. The offerings were supposed to be made to the Script's God and not to a person, idol, or lesser deity.

Nehemiah (473–403 BCE, during the reign of Artaxerxes I)

Nehemiah was the king's Jewish cupbearer. During a conversation Nehemiah had with the Persian King Artaxerxes, the king gave permission to rebuild Jerusalem. One scholastic camp believes this decree initiated the countdown to Messiah's coming which Daniel prophesied. This conversation is recorded in the script, in a booklet named after Nehemiah:

In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.”

I was very afraid, but I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

The king said to me, “What is it you want?”

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will

your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me, so I set a time.

I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me with safe conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple, for the city wall, and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. So I went to the governors of the Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me. (2:1-9)

Most historians believe Artaxerxes reigned from about 465–424 BCE, but historian Thucydides claims his reign started in 475 BCE (Gérard, 2015). This decree was issued in Artaxerxes' 20th year, circa 445 BCE or 455 BCE. Remembering Daniel's prophecy, that 483 years would span between the "rebuild Jerusalem" decree and the Anointed One, calculates to the adult ministry of Yeshua (Jesus or Isa) who was born within 6 years of the year 0, at the intersection of BCE and CE eras. Christian legends claim Yeshua was killed at the age of 33, but there is no clear scriptural or historical evidence to validate that, so we aren't bound by that age. We also aren't bound by Pontius Pilate's reign (from circa 26-37 CE) even though he sentenced Yeshua to death, the prophecy isn't dated to his death but to the Anointed One's "coming" which could have been when he started teaching publically. Add a degree of error for dating methods and various calendar options, and Yeshua fits the prophecy's timeframe.

Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE)

After the temple and Jerusalem had been rebuilt, Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenid Empire (330 BCE). His victory and the Greek Hellenistic culture he introduced ended the brilliant era of the Prophets. Alexander's short-lived empire ended and was parceled in four pieces to four generals who often fought with each other. These warring kingdoms created a gulf between East and West and stopped the exchange of ideas and goods.

Biblical content had already inoculated the East, but those texts, decrees, and prophecies weren't canonized in the East. Within the Greek Hellenized world, Jews who had returned to Jerusalem, started canonizing their prophets' writings and other sacred texts like the Torah. Those canonized writings became a pillar of the Western world. In the East,

writings of other sages were added to the prophets. As Eastern libraries expanded, the voice of the Script's prophets was diluted or buried by other voices. Now historians no longer acknowledge the Hebrew prophets' role in the formation of Eastern religions, but evidence suggests their influence was huge.

Yeshua (The Beginning of the Common Era, CE)

Yeshua (Jesus) was born a Jew under Rome's jurisdiction. Even though he was born under Western rule, his teachings fit an Eastern paradigm so perfectly that if you simply present him as he is presented in the Script, his life message applies to Eastern teaching. Of course, Yeshua's message challenges some oppressive concepts in every faith. Additionally, each faith has guardians who feel threatened by Yeshua, but the East's masses feel an affinity to him since the parallels between Eastern values and Yeshua's life message are unending. Reading Yeshua's life and teachings in an Eastern context, one concludes that Jesus reunites the East and West. Unfortunately, Yeshua's life message has been packaged in Western Christianity so long that now many have difficulty separating Jesus' teachings from the packaging.

Many authors have written on the countless similarities and overlaps between Yeshua's teachings and Eastern philosophies. Book titles like "Living Buddha, Living Christ", "Yeshua Buddha", "Seeing Jesus from the East", and "The Lost Sutras of Jesus" are plentiful. In a historical context, the parallels between Jesus and Eastern thought aren't surprising. After all, both share a similar history from the Achaemenid period, and both built on the sacred texts written by the prophets we've discussed. Jesus even said,

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I haven't come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5).

Some of the prophets Jesus "fulfilled" were Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and Ezekiel - the same prophets who inspired the Vedas, Buddha, Confucius, and others.

Jesus is loved by multitudes in Asia, but Christianity is often detested. Mahatma Gandhi adored Jesus' teachings while simultaneously speaking against the Western Church's hypocrisy. More and more Westerners seem to be following Gandhi in that same direction, deploring the church while maintaining some sense of faith. Christianity has enormous problems, but Jesus' teachings remain as relevant to Asians as ever.

Asia also has ancient legends of the Jewish Messiah going to Kashmir, Tibet, Japan, and other places. Hindu and Buddhist-styled pictures of Jesus adorn Eastern literature,

temples, and bookstores. In the East, Jesus is given titles such as guru, avatar, yogi, buddha, Muktinath, Zen master, incarnation, Tathagata, Prajapati, sadhguru, Mesikh, and many others. There are also many Eastern variations of his name: Isa, Ishu, Uza, Isau, Yesu, Jizu, Ye Su, etc. This endless list of Eastern titles and names for Yeshua is indicative of countless Asians who, like Gandhi, acknowledge Ye Su as an indigenous spiritual master, but reject the West's Christian packaging. In other words, they aren't converting to Christianity, Judaism, or any other "foreign" religion. They don't want Christian missionaries in their lands. They simply want Ye Su within their Eastern cultural context.

Here are a few verses about Jesus that ChatGPT pulled up when prompted to "find the alignment between biblical prophets and Eastern faiths." Note that the prompt was to find biblical prophets. I didn't single out Jesus, but all the verses ChatGPT gave me were about him (April 20, 2024):

Confucius said, "What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others."
(Confucius, Analects 15.24). Yesu says, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."
(Matthew 7:12)

Buddha taught the concept of non-attachment and encouraged individuals to let go of material possessions and desires to attain spiritual liberation. Jizu taught, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)

Buddhism teaches the importance of being fully present at the moment and not being eaten by worries. In Matthew 6:34, Ishu says, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Eastern principles teach nonviolence and the importance of responding to aggression with compassion and understanding. Mahatma Gandhi incorporated these tactics into his resistance against Britain. Of course, Gandhi cited Ishu as one of his main inspirations. In Matthew 5:38–39, Ishu teaches, "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'

But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, offer them the other cheek as well." Gandhi's use of the Script in his reformation may picture what is needed in the East, a re-adoption of the Script within an Eastern context.

In Matthew 23:12, Yesu says, "For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." This aligns with the Taoist concept of humility and the importance of recognizing one's place in the natural order of things. Additionally, Confucius' disciples often respond to his teaching, saying, "Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practice this lesson." (The Analects, 12)

Not bad for AI.

The New Testament also states that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:28). This faith-based concept mirrors the Nembutsu belief that "anyone who calls on the name of Amida Buddha (the teacher of life and light) will be saved" (Nagami, 2023). That prompted discussion about whether Amida Buddha is another Eastern title for Jesus, the Teacher of Life and Light. ChatGTP seems to think so.

I have read and talked with many Eastern followers of Yeshua Buddhs (teacher) who don't believe the West takes Yeshua's teaching serious enough: He taught his followers to deny themselves, to leave their homes, to sell their possessions, to love their enemies, and lay down their lives. None of these teachings typify Western Christianity.

Magi from the East (at the onset of the new era)

Both history and the Script acknowledge Easterners as the first to decode messages from the biblical prophets:

Magi from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1,2)

The East was seeded with Israelites who had a history with God. These "lost" Israelites were spiritually revived by a later wave of Jewish prophets and powerful Babylonian and Persian kings who venerated the Script's God. We shouldn't be surprised that Eastern sages, not Greek philosophers, Roman thinkers, Jewish rabbis, or Hellenistic Westerners,

were the first to decode Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah's prophecies about the Messiah and the timing of his birth. I was more surprised that Jesus was the primary candidate picked by ChatGPT when prompted to find the alignment between biblical prophets and Eastern faiths.

The Emissaries (First-century CE)

Yeshua's students (emissaries or disciples) obeyed his instructions to go to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 10:6). One apostle, Thomas, was very influential in Asia. Another, Matthew, is purportedly buried in Kyrgyzstan's Lake Issyk Kol region. Later generations also sought to share Yeshua's message among Israel's lost tribes and found different degrees of success in Asia.

Oddly, Eastern followers of Yeshua were quickly labeled heretics by Christianity's Western branch. The pronouncement opened up the previous divide between East and West. Over a thousand five-hundred years later, Protestant missionaries started recording the presence of tribes with Israelite customs and "legends of a lost book" in Asia during the 1700s and 1800s. The topic flourished for a while and then died down. Now the "Lost Tribes of Israel" topic is resurfacing again in the East.

Conclusion

Today, several ethnic groups from Iran, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Kyrgyzstan, Altai, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, China, Korea, and Japan have links to Israel's Lost Tribes. Historically, we have learned how the Script's promise to sow Israelites to all nations was fulfilled (Part 1). Israelite descendants spread across the East via the Saka and Scythian nations. Likewise, the founders of Eastern religions were probably Israelites sown eastward through Saka and Scythian migrations. The possibility that Siddhartha and others were Israelites cannot be denied. Additionally, Ezekiel, a Jewish exile, was sent by God to the East to specifically revive Israelite faith in their ancestral God. Ezekiel's work manifested in the revival of Eastern sages and religions. Unfortunately, since the original texts were not canonized and preserved, teachings and concepts may have morphed from generation to generation.

A milieu of biblical concepts such as monotheism, justice, honesty, humility, inner peace, forgiveness, generosity, renunciation, asceticism, suffering, sacrifice, and prophetic wisdom mixed with the prophets' eccentric lifestyles resonated with influential Israelite tribes who had assimilated in the East centuries earlier. This combination gave rise to the

hypothesis that Eastern sages were Israelites who were returning to their ancient God. We know Easterners sought to address the human condition, offering guidance on ethical living, spiritual fulfillment, detachment from worldly pleasures, and the pursuit of divine truths. And we know that the prophetic tradition of speaking truth to power, advocating for justice, and calling for spiritual renewal was a core value of the East. Thousands of years have passed since that time. What we see today may differ from the script's narrative, but at this point, reviving ancient Eastern faiths and restoring them to their sacred roots might be more biblical than viewing the East as pagan or trying to convert them to Christianity or Judaism. Maybe they just need to return to their original God and appropriate the prophetic texts that inspired them so many centuries ago.

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