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## **The Hebrew Root of Hebrew**

Who is a Hebrew?

What does being a Hebrew mean?

We find the first usage of Hebrew in the TANAKH relating to Abraham.

### **Genesis 14:13**

*Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew...*

Genetically speaking, "Hebrew" means any descendant of Eber (Eber). In fact, Strong's acknowledges this linguistic connection back to Eber.

Eber appears to carry the meaning of *“the region on the other side, situated across a stream, or the sea”* Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon.

Eber, as an ancestor of Abraham, was the great-great-grandson of Noah.

However, that would simply be the possible physical understanding of the origin of the word Hebrew.

The nation of Hebrews is less about genetics, and more about spiritual significance.

Any student of the Bible quickly learns that there is often a deeper practical understanding to consider than just the physical. The physical teaches the spiritual.

After Noah landed the ark, he had a son named Shem (Ab-ray). Eber was a descendant of Shem.

According to some Jewish traditions presented in ancient writings (Abu Isa), Eber resisted Nimrod's command to build the Tower of Babel.

Eber “crossed over” from Babylon to the land across the river, outside of Nimrod’s territory.

In the wilderness, Eber and his people appears to have retained the Hebrew language, while because of the tower of Babylon, YHWH confused the languages of everyone else.

As already mentioned, the name 'Hebrew' is first correlated with Abraham, whose name appears to have come from that of his Great-Grandfather (Eber.)

Abraham and his sons Isaac and Jacob distinguished themselves as men who would migrate away from Babylon, by “crossing” a river.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all “crossed over” from their homeland to new territory.

**The Midrash quotes three opinions as to where the Hebrew name comes from:**

- Rabbi Yehuda taught that the word "Eber" means "opposite side." Abraham believed in one God, and the rest of the world worshipped man-made gods. Thus, "Abraham stood on one side, and the entire world stood on the other side."
- Rabbi Nechemiah theorized that the word Hebrew is a reference to Eber.
- The rabbis held that the word Hebrew is a reference to the fact that Abraham came from the other side of the river and was not a native Canaanite.

So basically, it is generally understood that Hebrew means “one who is opposed” and/or one who has “crossed over.”

Some parallels might immediately come to mind.

For example, historically speaking, consider the time the Hebrews “crossed over” the Red Sea and opposed or separated themselves from the Egyptians.

**Exodus 14:21-22**

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Or from a futuristic connection:

**Revelation 18:4**

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues.”

So then, how does the word Hebrew apply to us?

In the faith, we “cross over” from darkness into light:

**John 12:46**

I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

**2 Corinthians 6:14**

For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with

darkness?

### **Ephesians 5:8**

for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

We are to separate ourselves from the wicked ways of the world:

### **Romans 12:2**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

### **John 15:19**

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

In this way, all in the faith are Hebrews. We have crossed over from the ways of the world, to the way of YHWH.

There is more...

If you study the pictograph meaning of paleo Hebrew, which assigns a meaning to each Hebrew letter, the Word Hebrew would look something like this:

*(proper Hebrew illustration would read from right to left, we simply reordered it from left to right for the convenience of our English dominant audience)*

“See (ayin ע), in (beyt ב), man (resh ר), hand (yod י), mark (tav ת)”

...and in an English structured sentence, this would be understood as something like:

*See in man and hand, the mark.*

A Hebrew might be best understood as a person who has a mark on his hand. Of course, not like the mark of the beast like we see in Revelation 13:17, but actually, the exact opposite mark, the mark of YHWH.

So, where else in Scripture do we see this mark on the hand?

We find it in a section of verses often referred to as the *shema*...meaning to listen and obey.

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

“Hear, O Israel: The YHWH our God, YHWH is one. You shall love the YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. **You shall bind them as a sign (mark) on your hand**, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

What does placing the commandments as sign on the forehead mean?

It means that the Word of YHWH is to be in our heart and mind, metaphorically represented by the frontlets between our eyes.

This is where our faith is internalized. Our faith manifests visibly by what we do.

Our faith is visible by action, it is evidenced by action:

### **Hebrews 11:1**

Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.

What does placing the commandments as sign on the hand mean?

While our faith is unseen, because it starts as being internal and it begins in our heart and mind, it follows that our actions are dictated by what rules our mind.

This is represented by the Word of YHWH being a mark on our hand.

If the Word of YHWH is imprinted on our heart and mind, it will be demonstrated by our actions.

In the “*shema*” this is metaphorically represented by the Word of YHWH being a mark on our hand.

Consider 1 John 5, showing how our faith is a faith resulting in action.

### **1 John 5:2-3**

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

So our faith in the Word of God begins in our heart and mind, but it is evidenced by what we do...and a Hebraic metaphor to show this, is a hand.

“See (ayin ע), in (beyt ב), man (resh ר), hand (yod י), mark (tav ת)”

*See in man and hand, the mark.*

So, as a Hebrew, the Word of YHWH is to be in us, as man, and on our hand...meaning the Word manifests first in our heart and mind which leads to direction our action and our way to live our life.

As James appropriately says:

### **James 2:18**

But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

*That...is a Hebrew.*

We pray that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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