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## Anti-Semitism in the Two-House Movement

Anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism is a significant crime, with devastating prejudices and a poisonous ideology, which has been present in our world since long before the time of Yeshua the Messiah. While manifested in many forms throughout the ages, anti-Semitism undeniably reached its lowest point in the 1930s and 1940s with Hitler's Holocaust and the attempted annihilation of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany. While it can be said that out of the Holocaust and World War II, the State of Israel was birthed *and* Jewish-Christian relations have improved—making sure that non-Jewish followers of Israel's Messiah have a relatively positive and well-informed view of Jewish religion, Jewish tradition, Jewish history, and the Jewish people in general, **is indeed a major undertaking.**

One of the pleasant highlights of my time as an undergraduate at the University of Oklahoma (1999-2003) was being able to attend an evening lecture delivered by Sir Martin Gilbert, the official biographer of Winston Churchill, hosted by the Hillel Foundation. Gilbert is a British Jew, and the 2001 lecture I attended was on the subject of "Winston Churchill and the Jews."<sup>1</sup> Also in attendance were both my modern Hebrew and British history professors, who were both Jewish. We shared a few thoughts afterward about Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Jewish history, and I was able to make a few remarks to both of my classes the following week, when they both noted those whom they saw from class who were there. I did not tell them that I was Messianic, but they could surely tell that I was an inquiring Christian person with an appreciation for the Jewish people, their unique contributions to global civilization, and the establishment of Israel as a sovereign country in the modern Middle East.

My own family's involvement in the Messianic community since 1995 has been predicated upon the basis of two primary things. (1) In embracing our Hebraic Roots in a very real and tangible way, we desire to live in fuller obedience to God's Torah, and we really do want to live as Yeshua and His original disciples lived. (2)

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the material Gilbert spoke about was later incorporated into his book *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007).

## Israel in Future Prophecy

We wish to sincerely and honorably recognize the Biblical facts that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22), that Jesus was Jewish, and that our Messiah did indeed pray, “...that they may be one, just as We are one” (John 17:22). We know that with the emergence of today’s Messianic movement, that much of the centuries-old hatred, bigotry, venom, and mutual distrust and loathing of Jewish and Christian persons toward one another *has been left in the past*. A future of working together, joining in common cause, and using all of our special gifts and talents for the furtherance of God’s Kingdom should instead be witnessed. Understanding where past generations of Jews and Christians had misunderstanding, and rectifying this, **must be present**.

Obviously, there is still much to work through—because people are people. Today’s broad Messianic movement is still trying to figure out what Jewish and non-Jewish Believers composing a “one new humanity” (Ephesians 2:15, NRSV/CJB) really means. While there are many Messianic Jewish congregations and assemblies that are fully welcoming of non-Jewish Believers in their midst, in some other settings such people are not equal members or are at all that welcome. In various sectors of Messianic Judaism, non-Jewish Believers who have entered in and have expected to be welcome with open arms as past injustices have hopefully been repented of, have found themselves turned away. Our own family can attest that in the time we have spent in the Messianic community, that we have visited a few Messianic Jewish congregations which would much rather prefer that people like us not be there. There are a number of groups, for whatever reasons, which treat non-Jews as being second class....

What happens when non-Jewish Believers are told that not only is Messianic Judaism not really for them, **but they are really not wanted in some Messianic Jewish congregations?** Do they just leave happily? Do they leave upset? Does an anti-Semitism that has been confessed and repented of *return* to them in some way? What happens when such people have been convinced from Scripture that they are a part of the Commonwealth of Israel too (Ephesians 2:11-12), and they find themselves somehow ejected from it?

## Why the Two-House Teaching Has Gained Attention

For many non-Jewish Messianics, the Two-House sub-movement has provided an alternative, welcome place, for those who have not really found themselves with a welcome place in Messianic Judaism. Aside from some of its many shortcomings and tall tales about the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, the Two-House sub-movement does rightly tend to be welcoming of all people as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13) or the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), a trait it tends to share with those in the One Law/One Torah sub-movement.<sup>2</sup> Even with various (significant) complementarian

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<sup>2</sup> It is a bit inappropriate though, as has been witnessed in some literature, to basically synthesize the One Law/One Torah sub-movement and Two-House sub-movement, as basically being the same. The former has a far more healthy and appropriate view of mainline Jewish traditions—such as those examined

limitations, it does tend to emphasize some degree of equality among all Believers (cf. Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11) a little better than various parts of today's Messianic Judaism. Much of Messianic Judaism maintains a status-quo of "Jew and Gentile" being unified, but with distinctions to be rigidly maintained. What this means in practice is that Jewish Believers can end up being superior, or at the very least in a higher status, to non-Jewish Believers. It does not often mean that both are on equal footing before the Lord, working together in mutual honor and respect (cf. Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-4). Suspicions and rivalry among those who are supposed to be fellow brothers and sisters in Messiah Yeshua, can certainly be detectable.

Hopefully, among those seeking true equality and fairness for all of God's people in the Messianic community, *all* are allowed to be reckoned as a part of "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16)—and not multiple parts of an enlarged community of Israel (cf. Acts 15:15-18; Amos 9:11-12, LXX) which is rigidly factionalized. There are various fellowships, congregations, and ministries which endorse various forms of a Two-House teaching, and do their best to emphasize a high degree of equality and a place of being welcome among all people in today's Messianic community.<sup>3</sup> There are those who recognize that we all have something to offer the community of faith, but at the same time that we all have been blinded because of our various human limitations. The Jewish people have largely been blind to the Messiah, and Christians have largely been blind to the importance of God's Torah. Both have been right and wrong—all at the same time. Regardless of the finer details, these are the groups whom we obviously have to believe God will primarily use to bring about the complete restoration of His Kingdom.

Many non-Jewish Believers who have become a part of Messianic Judaism have rightfully repented of attitudes and prejudices rooted in anti-Semitism. Even if "unwelcomed" from some Messianic Jewish congregations, they have done their absolute best to guard themselves against such sins. If they find themselves in one of the many independent Messianic assemblies or fellowships out there, they make sure that the Jewish people and their heritage are appropriately honored.

At the same time, many of the same non-Jewish Believers who feel like they have been "booted out" of Messianic Judaism, revisit some old negativity they may have felt toward Judaism. This does not necessarily regard support for the State of

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in this article—even if it can seem, at times, to force a Torah *halachah* on non-Jewish Messianic Believers, which would essentially see them live as though they were ethnically and culturally Jewish, when they are not, as opposed to them being sizably enriched by their Hebraic and Jewish Roots.

This is explored in further detail, in the forthcoming *Messianic Torah Helper* by Messianic Apologetics, as well as the author's forthcoming work *Torah In the Balance, Volume II*.

<sup>3</sup> Consult the author's exegesis paper on Galatians 3:28, "Biblical Equality and Today's Messianic Movement." It should be stressed that even among various independent Messianic groups, many of which are "Two-House" to some degree, that they are often unwilling to let the full egalitarian implications of Galatians 3:28 to take root. This not only includes "There is neither Jew nor Greek," **but also** "there is neither male nor female."

Consult the FAQ, "Women in Ministry," and the various sections of his commentaries *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic* and *The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic*.

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Israel or standing against hate crimes directed toward Jews. The kind of anti-Jewish attitudes which manifest from non-Jewish Believers who felt unwelcome in Messianic Judaism and who left, mostly concern a widescale misunderstanding of Jewish religion, tradition, and Torah *halachah* (הַלְּכָה). Mainline practices, which are found in Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Messianic Jewish synagogues, are widely rejected by a great deal of today's Two-House sub-movement.

There are many assembly groups today who compose the Two-House sub-movement, and whose fellowships are almost exclusively non-Jewish. (Many of these almost-exclusively non-Jewish groups just *assume* they are descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, when most of these people are just of the nations.) Rather than emulating to a wide degree, the orthopraxy of much of contemporary Messianic Judaism—the Jewish people, and virtually anything religiously Jewish, is quantitatively left out of the picture.<sup>4</sup> Even more sadly, in many cases those who put our Jewish brethren in this position, and identify themselves, perhaps rather stridently, as being Two-House advocates, are promoting a noticeable form of anti-Semitism *and do not tend to even realize it*. While there are many Messianic Jews, who continue to look out at their own congregations, and see the numbers of non-Jewish attendees rise—and they are honestly asking the Lord what is happening, perhaps realizing that more is going on than meets the eye—much of the anti-Jewish attitudes present in the Two-House sub-movement and its populism, have made dialoguing about a larger restoration of Israel in future prophecy *most difficult*.

We need to certainly address some of the controversial problems that currently exist with forms of anti-Semitism in the Two-House movement. **You can have no genuine restoration of the Kingdom to Israel without the Jewish people, after all!** Attitudes and misunderstandings allowed to continue for too long have kept many reasonable-thinking Messianic Jews from thinking about more on the horizon. We will analyze some of the issues which stand before us, and how more balanced and fair-minded people can counter this.

## Why Many People Just Dismiss What Happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel

Before we consider some of the specifics of the anti-Semitism present in the Two-House sub-movement—it is important that we address a specific reason why many in Messianic Judaism, and many evangelical Christians for that same matter, tend to reject *any* emphasis upon a future reunion of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. Many Messianic Jews and Christians reject it **because they believe the subject matter is anti-Semitic**. This is largely the result of considering the behavior and attitudes of people who have addressed the Lost Tribes of the Northern Kingdom

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<sup>4</sup> Among such groups is also a great deal of disrespect and dishonor toward Christianity, and its positive contributions to global civilization.

before in religious history. Most recently in the Twentieth Century, the phenomenon of British-Israelism gained considerable popularity through the efforts of Herbert W. Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God.

In his book *Jacob's Dozen*, author William Varner makes an important observation about the problems customarily associated with British-Israelism.<sup>5</sup> He correctly directs our attention to how, "A number of groups, affirming the Satanic character of Zionism and the so-called worldwide Jewish conspiracy, have adopted British-Israelism to prove the superiority of the white race over Jews, Asiatics and Negroes. These groups have often led demonstrations against the supposed Jewish control of money and the media, as well as engaging in violent actions against so-called Jewish 'enemies.'"<sup>6</sup> His conclusion on this heinous occurrence is,

"Satan's attempts to destroy the Jewish people have taken various forms in history, from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes to the murderous plan of Hitler. Now the evil one is promoting the lie that the Jews are not truly the Jews, thus robbing Israel of its promises and covenants and transferring them to the Anglo-Saxon race."<sup>7</sup>

Another Christian author, Dave Hunt, expresses a particular view in his book *How Close Are We?*, concluding,

"[T]he theory of the 'ten lost tribes' is an antisemitic myth. Space does not permit the detailed discussion which this subject perhaps deserves. However, a careful reading of the history of Israel in Scripture denies what must be considered a Satanic doctrine, for it destroys in theory (as others have sought to do in practice) the continuity of Israel. That continuity was repeatedly assured by God and is essential for the major prophecies of Scripture to be fulfilled in the last days."<sup>8</sup>

If we have read Hunt correctly, he has presumably claimed that *any kind* of belief in people descended from the exiled Northern Kingdom, "out there" in the world, and not a part of the established Jewish community, is not only "an antisemitic myth" but even "Satanic." Why would he make such assessments?

Neither Varner nor Hunt have given appropriate attention to the main Tanach prophecies regarding a larger restoration of Israel in their books (i.e., Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 31:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10). They largely dismiss the whole subject matter because of the bad behavior—the anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism—of those who have attempted in the past to address it, and address it *very poorly*.

Many of those who have addressed the subject matter of people from the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, being "out there" in the world, have incorrectly—and we should recognize have *damnably thought*—that today's Jewish people are not true descendants of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At best, such persons have been thought to be usurpers of some kind. At worst, such persons are some kind of literal seed or offspring of the Devil.

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<sup>5</sup> Varner, pp 94-95.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>8</sup> Dave Hunt, *How Close Are We?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), 30.

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These kinds of attitudes are most especially insulting to our Creator God, and they demonstrate absolutely no understanding or empathy toward the terrible tragedies, humiliations, and persecutions that the Jewish people have had to experience throughout history. To deny that the Jewish people—who Two-House advocates largely regard as representing the Southern Kingdom of Judah in restoration of Israel prophecies—are not legitimate Israelites, categorically denies that our Heavenly Father has guarded, protected, and preserved them through many hardships, difficulties, and tribulations. (Much of this has unfortunately been at the hands of institutional Christianity.) **Any attempt to degrade the position of the Jewish people in God’s eternal plan, or deny that He has protected and guided them, is anti-Semitic and must be viewed as suspect.**<sup>9</sup>

In spite of the manifold abuses from those who have addressed the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel in previous history, there are still legitimate questions to be raised from statements like: “So Israel was carried away into exile from their own land to Assyria until this day” (2 Kings 17:23; 1 Chronicles 5:26). It is quite notable, though, that the deportees from the Northern Kingdom were largely dispersed *eastward*, and would have remained within the sphere of influence of the old Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires. One can legitimately acknowledge that there are people groups “out there” in the world in those places, who are descended from the Ten Tribes of the old Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim.

One can hardly claim that a relatively liberal source like *JPS Guide: The Jewish Bible* is anti-Semitic, when it notes that “The 10 tribes of **Israel**...disappeared from biblical accounts after the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722/1 B.C.E. The tribes lost their separate identity during their exile and captivity and are thought by some to have intermarried with the Assyrians.”<sup>10</sup> When Jewish figures like Simcha Jacobovici travel to remote corners of the world, searching for the descendants of the Northern Kingdom, releasing programs like “Quest for the Lost Tribes” for A&E—going to dangerous corners of India and Afghanistan—this is far from being anti-Semitic. Messianic Jews like Jonathan Bernis are hardly anti-Semitic when they think, “exactly what happened to the 10 Northern Tribes is not known,”<sup>11</sup> affirming some level of future return beyond the known Jewish community. His own biographical description in the book

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<sup>9</sup> Concurrent with disparaging today’s Jewish people as not being legitimate Israelites, is the specific denial that today’s Ashkenazic Jews—the children and grand-children of the ones who suffered the most during the Holocaust—are actual Semites. These people make up the majority of the Jewish population in Israel and the Diaspora, and also the Messianic Jewish community.

A relative scholastic work like Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 67 actually claims, “[T]he Khazars (a Turkic group from southern Russia)...became ancestors of Ashkenazi Jews...”

This was a book that I had to use for my Exegesis of Romans class at Asbury Theological Seminary (Fall 2008). I did ask my instructor, James C. Miller, about this. He informed me that Esler did go a little far in this assessment and has been reprimanded about it from other academics.

<sup>10</sup> *JPS Guide: The Jewish Bible*, 231.

<sup>11</sup> Bernis, *The Scattering of the Tribes of Israel*.

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*Awakening the One New Man* actually says, “The Lost Tribes of the House of Israel are of particular interest to Jonathan.”<sup>12</sup>

The point that should be understood, which too many who consider the fate of the Northern Kingdom have not taken to serious heart, is how “He who scattered Israel will gather him” (Jeremiah 31:10). Even with some clues given to us in Scripture, **God Himself ultimately knows where the main descendants of the exiles of the Northern Kingdom have gone.**

Are today’s Messianic non-Jewish Believers, who feel a strong connection and feeling of comradeship to the Jewish people (especially Messianic Jews)—*and* who affirm a larger restoration of Israel to occur, involving Judah and Israel/Ephraim as participants—at all promoting anti-Semitism?

Clearly, it would be very difficult to argue that one is anti-Semitic on the basis of saying that a variety of prophecies are unfulfilled (Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 31:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10); such is an issue best left to the realm of eschatology and prophetic accomplishment as we get closer to the return of the Messiah. It would also be hard to say that if there are particular family lines and pockets of people out there in the nations (in places such as Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean basin, and into Central Africa) who are descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom—and they have an oral tradition that traces their origins back to the fallen Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim—that such a thought is anti-Semitic. *This is no more anti-Semitic than recognizing how various people of European ancestry might have a Jewish ancestor or two, who assimilated into Christianity of the Middle Ages!* From an eschatological vantage point, not quite knowing who all of the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom are—or even if one has lost Jewish ancestry—is quantitatively indifferent from not knowing the identity of the antimessiah/antichrist or the false prophet, who the two witnesses of Revelation will be, or what the mark of the beast will ultimately be.

What would not be difficult to argue as being anti-Semitic, is if a wide majority of the Two-House sub-movement—largely non-Jewish, white Caucasian people, who forcibly claim that they are descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom—is ever caught making unfair claims about Jewish religion, tradition, and culture. If the challenges, difficulties, and humiliations the Jewish people have experienced throughout history are totally disregarded and not understood, then the Two-House sub-movement could be considered anti-Semitic. If one continually pokes fun at Judaism and demonstrates no empathy or sympathy for the Jewish struggle witnessed throughout the centuries, then claims of anti-Semitism will be made. **And it is these things that a great deal of the Two-House sub-movement has certainly done, and does not tend to discourage.**

If there is no separate group of elect called “the Church,”<sup>13</sup> and the Commonwealth of Israel or Israel of God<sup>14</sup> may ultimately be considered a multi-

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<sup>12</sup> Robert F. Wolff, ed., *Awakening the One New Man* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011), 228.

<sup>13</sup> Consult the author’s article “When Did ‘the Church’ Begin?” (appearing in *Introduction to Things Messianic*).

<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 2:11-12; Galatians 6:16.

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ethnic faith community, an expanded Kingdom realm of Israel if you will<sup>15</sup>—then an extreme amount of care, honor, and respect needs to be expressed toward the Jewish people by non-Jewish Believers. Adding to the numbers of the community of Israel, be one a descendant of the exiled Northern of Israel/Ephraim, or far more probable a sojourner from the nations at large, should never be **tantamount to replacing or dispersing the Jewish people**, or shoving them into the proverbial corner to be silenced. Caution and discretion should be demonstrated when any non-Jew claims to be a part of an enlarged community of Israel, which has incorporated the righteous from the nations into its polity. When honor and dignity are expressed toward Judaism and the Jewish people, then true progress should be able to be made. When Judaism is disrespected, the plight of the Jewish people throughout history is not understood, and the challenges of today’s Messianic Jews are not recognized—by non-Jewish Messianics—then the proper forum for discussing and evaluating the prophesied restoration of Israel cannot be facilitated.

When the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim was conquered by Assyria, by all rights, the Southern Kingdom of Judah then fully inherited the title of “Israel” as the legitimate, albeit smaller, successor state. There should be absolutely no doubt in anyone’s mind that the Jewish people have been the legitimate torchbearers of “Israel” since that point in the ancient past. If the Jewish people and Judaism are demeaned, and made a less-than-legitimate part of Israel, what is that to say about a larger restoration of Israel prophesied? *Should this not instead bring more unity and appreciation among God’s people?* If Jewish people are given a second-class treatment in the Two-House sub-movement, just as many non-Jews are in Messianic Judaism, then should the Two-House teaching that has been popularized, be considered insulting to God and anti-Semitic?

I very much understand why many of today’s Messianic Jews reject even wanting to discuss prophecies of a larger restoration of Israel, when they witness the behavior of many Two-House advocates who have little or no regard for Judaism. These are not the kind of Messianic Jews who want to see non-Jewish Believers removed from their assemblies, but those who consider *all* to basically be an equal part of the Commonwealth of Israel. They genuinely want all to be welcome in their assemblies. When Judaism is (grossly) disrespected by various Two-House people, especially various individuals reckoned as “leaders” or “spokespersons,” such Messianic Jews do not really want to hear about the possibility of more being on the agenda of salvation history.

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<sup>15</sup> Consult the author’s publication *Are Non-Jewish Believers Really a Part of Israel?*

## The Two-House Sub-Movement and its Approach to “Tradition”

Why is it that a large part of the Two-House sub-movement has definitely gained a reputation for being negative toward Judaism? In a great deal of the popular/populist Two-House literature,<sup>16</sup> more time and energy are actually expelled criticizing Jewish tradition and mainline Jewish practices, than in trying to formulate practical solutions of how all of God’s people can be brought together *and* how various mainline Jewish traditions can benefit and enrich all of us.

Too much negativity is witnessed in the Two-House sub-movement surrounding little sound bytes thrown here and there, laced with “tradition(s) of men”<sup>17</sup> rhetoric. Little care is taken for how, while Yeshua the Messiah did condemn some human traditions adopted by the Rabbis of His day, the majority of these pertained to how various practices subtracted from the Torah’s ethical and moral imperatives. A clear example would be claiming to use family finances as an offering unto God, while failing to use those monies and provide for the well being of one’s aged parents (Mark 7:8-13).

Why is there such a noticeable degree of anti-Judaism present within the Two-House sub-movement? One would think that in a faith community which is actively trying to see a larger restoration of Israel take place, by raising the awareness of unfulfilled prophecies which may otherwise go unnoticed—that more forbearance and understanding of people, and their presumed limitations, would instead be emphasized. But since the mid-to-late 1990s when the Two-House teaching became popularized, *populism* and not reason have been more easily detectable. Some of this may be a direct result of some of the early voices asking questions about prophecies involving the Southern and Northern Kingdoms of Israel being reunited, being rejected by Messianic Judaism. And so, it is quite possible that in being rejected by Messianic Judaism, such people have responded with a quantitative rejection in turn of mainline Jewish tradition, as a kind of personal quest *or* even vendetta. This is now something that has spread as a not-so-subtle infestation, and even a venomous poison, throughout the Two-House sub-movement.

What are some of the things specifically being said or disseminated, to perhaps give the impression that the Two-House sub-movement is anti-Semitic? Surely it

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<sup>16</sup> The writings representing this perspective include, but are not limited to:

Batya Ruth Wootten, *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 1998); *Who Is Israel?*, enlarged edition (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 2000); *Redeemed Israel—Restored and Reunited* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 2006); *Israel’s Feasts and their Fullness*, expanded edition (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David Publishing, 2008); *Who Is Israel? Redeemed Israel—A Primer* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 2011); Angus Wootten, *Restoring Israel’s Kingdom* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 2000); Eddie Chumney, *Restoring the Two Houses of Israel* (Hagerstown, MD, Serenity Books, 1999); Moshe Koniuchowsky, *The Truth About All Israel: A Refutation of the I.M.J.A. Position Paper on the Two Houses of Israel* (Miami Beach: Your Arms to Israel, 2000); Sandy Bloomfield, *The Errors of “The Ephraimite Error”: Disposing of the Lies and Hatred* (Lebanon, TN: Messianic Israel Alliance, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Grk. *tēn paradōsin tōn anthrōpōn* (τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων); the inclusive language “human tradition(s)” (NRSV/CJB/TNIV) should be more preferable.

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should not be an emphasis on overlooked Bible prophecies that include the exiled Northern Kingdom as a participant.

The anti-Semitism, that one finds manifest in sectors of the Two-House sub-movement, surrounds an entire host of issues often pertaining to Jewish interpretations and traditions relating to the Torah. (Much of this often manifests itself during the yearly commemoration of the Spring and Fall high holidays.<sup>18</sup>) The most common statement that is made today goes along the lines of something like,

*You do not want to come out of the Church, only to trade errant  
Christian tradition in for errant Jewish tradition.*

This statement is one that is at least, partially accurate. There is non-Biblical Christian tradition and theology which needs to be jettisoned. A non-Jewish Believer who enters into the Messianic community, should not trade Christian error for Jewish error. Judaism has its problems too, just like Christianity. However, Christianity does have its truths, just as Judaism has its truths. Both Christianity and Judaism have had it right, and they have had it wrong, as those communities which have sought after the One True Creator God of the Holy Scriptures. But rather than having nothing to do with Jewish tradition, as is the preference of some, we must exhibit wisdom, discernment, and Holy Spirit-powered innovation—being able to recognize those things that are spiritually edifying to Messiah followers. (Likewise, we must recognize what is spiritually edifying about Christianity, at least since the Protestant Reformation.)

Obviously, there are going to be some things that are not spiritually edifying from Judaism, like practices which clearly originate from the Jewish mystical tradition or the Kabbalah.<sup>19</sup> Wearing a red bracelet to ward off the so-called “evil eye,” via ancient superstition, would be something appropriately opposed. Encountering someone who is following an ultra-Orthodox Jewish custom of not shaking hands with a woman, for a polite greeting of one to another, should be considered a bit insulting. Yet, a considerable majority of mainline Jewish traditions, seen even in the most progressive and liberal branches of today’s Synagogue, can be quite beneficial to those trying to live a Torah obedient walk of faith. Tradition need not be an enemy to non-Jewish Believers who desire to be “one” with their fellow Jewish Believers.

The statement previously quoted is made with some honorable intentions by those who emphasize it. Some non-Jewish Believers who have been convicted that the Torah is valid instruction for God’s people today, and who realize that much of historic Christianity has an anti-Semitic past, have later denied Yeshua as the Messiah and have converted to Judaism. These people have become enamored with Jewish religion to such an extent where they have become more concerned

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<sup>18</sup> This is explored in more detail in various parts of the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* and *Messianic Fall Holiday Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

<sup>19</sup> Consult the useful summary by Todd Baker, “Kabbalah and the God of the Bible” [Levitt Letter](#) May 2011:21.

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about extra-Biblical tradition, and they have taken their eyes off Scripture, its imperatives to live holy, and the Messiah Himself. This is extremely problematic, and anything that leads to apostasy from the faith **must be prevented**.

However, there are many other factors which can cause people to deny Yeshua the Messiah. The most serious of these is forgetting to place Yeshua at the center of one's life experience (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:2), and ahead of all human achievements (cf. Philippians 3:4-7). Apostasy can take place in Messianic environments where everyone is generally welcome as an equal part of the assembly, but people have an insecure faith in the Lord because something *other than He* is uplifted as more important. Even among various Two-House (as well as One Law/One Torah) fellowships, anti-missionary arguments issued against the Messiahship of Yeshua have been able to wreak havoc, because the spirituality of the people is not focused *first* around the One who came to be sacrificed as a permanent atonement for human sins.<sup>20</sup>

There are valid concerns raised by various voices in the Two-House sub-movement, in that non-Jewish Messianic Believers are not to become "Jewish" at the expense of their own ethnic or cultural heritage—especially if such an ethnic or cultural heritage has made some sort of sizeable contribution to Protestant, Western Christian civilization.<sup>21</sup> Many of us from evangelical Christian backgrounds have perspectives which today's Jewish Believers in Messiah Yeshua need to surely hear—just as much as we need to hear what they have to sincerely offer from their background in the traditional Synagogue. There are non-Biblical elements of Judaism, just as there are non-Biblical elements of Christianity. *But*, there are many godly and most edifying virtues in Judaism, just as there are many godly virtues in Christianity.<sup>22</sup>

Non-Jewish Messianics *need not at all* become hostile to Judaism. Yet, as many have recognized themselves as a part of the Commonwealth, or an enlarged Kingdom realm of Israel, and have rightfully sought to become Torah observant and live as Messiah Yeshua lived—many within the Two-House sub-movement have completely overlooked that the Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians, not only because of disobedience to the Torah and idolatry, but rebellion against the House of David (1 Kings 12:19; 2 Chronicles 10:19). The monarchy of the Northern Kingdom was *never considered* to be something legitimate and blessed by God. The

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<sup>20</sup> Consult the author's article "The Faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah," appearing in *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

<sup>21</sup> This is a place where the author would be personally, and somewhat familiarly, compelled, to appeal to the various sentiments seen in works such as Duncan A. Bruce, *The Mark of the Scots: Their Astonishing Contributions to History, Science, Democracy, Literature and the Arts* (New York: Citadel Press, 1998); and Arthur Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World & Everything in It* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001).

By far, though, the author is most impressed to mention the work of his own late, third cousin, Charles L. Allen, *God's Psychiatry* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1953).

<sup>22</sup> In spite of their many unfortunate, complementarian limitations, Michael & Fronczak, *Twelve Gates*, 71, were gracious enough to recognize, in their estimation, that the material contained in this chapter, included "corrections to some of the worst offenses of the Two-House movement," and were actually "significant, wide-ranging, and refreshing."

## Israel in Future Prophecy

first thing that occurred, after the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim seceded away from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, was that King Jeroboam established false gods, counterfeit holidays, and a counterfeit priesthood against what the Lord established in the Torah:

“If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, *even* to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.’ So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.’ He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. And he made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi. Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense” (1 Kings 12:27-33).

Everything that Jeroboam did was in direct opposition to what the God of Israel had prescribed in the Torah. He first made two golden calves for the people to worship, claiming that these were in actuality Israel’s gods. He built temples on the high places, one in the southern parts of the Northern Kingdom and the other in the northern parts of the Northern Kingdom, for the “convenience” of the people, so they would not go to Jerusalem and seek reunification with the Southern Kingdom. He likewise instituted substitute festivals for the holidays that the Lord prescribed in the Torah, and he created a priesthood that was not of the line of Levi.

Biblical history records what came about as a result of these sins. The Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim later fell to the Assyrian Empire, and was corporately deported into the nations.

## Do not establish proper rulings?

Many non-Jewish Believers in today’s Messianic community, rightly look to the example of the Jewish people for insight into following God’s Torah. This is good, because Judaism indeed has much valuable insight and understanding concerning God’s commandments.<sup>23</sup> However, Biblical history also shows that the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into its own captivity by the Babylonians

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<sup>23</sup> It should be observed, in total fairness, that the two main Protestant strands of Calvinism and Wesleyanism, which have always viewed the so-called “moral law” of the Torah as valid instruction for Christians to follow—surely also have much to teach and guide today’s Messianic Believers.

Consult the relevant sections of the author’s book *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

## Anti-Semitism in the Two-House Movement

for its idolatry and rebellion against God, and likewise Judaism has its own errors. The Jewish people, while not rejecting the validity of the Torah or Moses' Teaching, have placed a fence around many of the commandments (m.*Avot* 1:1),<sup>24</sup> adding customs and traditions that have enhanced the keeping of God's commandments, **but** then various others that have skewed or negated some. The most significant and grievous mistake is that most Jews, unfortunately, have rejected Messiah Yeshua as the Eternal Savior.

When looking to Judaism for spiritual insight, *every Messianic Believer* must use some degree of discernment and caution. The Jewish people have accumulated over two millennia of study, obedience, and communal experience surrounding the Torah. **To reject all Jewish interpretations and insight is wrong.** Jewish perspectives on the Tanach Scriptures are surely considered and consulted in Biblical Studies, along with Christian perspectives, when a viable interpretation is needed. This is even more true of areas of Torah instruction that have been largely kept by Judaism, and largely ignored by Christianity, throughout the centuries. While Jewish perspectives and traditions should not be considered authoritative *as Scripture*, recognizing that they have a consultative authority for the Messianic community is something that will do far more to bring God's people together than keep them apart. *Learning how to do this, though, is an absolute art and science.* Unfortunately, a significant number within today's Two-House sub-movement are not up to this task, and lack the proper abilities, skills, temperament, and mental acumen to do so.

Why do many non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic community, *specifically* in the Two-House sub-movement, think that they can widely reject a majority of Jewish interpretations of the Torah, and associated tradition?

Much of what one encounters, in the teachings of various Two-House advocates, is a great deal of significance given to a passage of the Torah like Deuteronomy 4:2. Within this verse, Moses told the Ancient Israelites, "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." The primary emphasis of this commandment, more than anything else, is that God Himself was the only One who could tell the community of Israel what to do and not to do. This was most serious given the overall message of Deuteronomy opposing idolatry and sexual immorality in the Promised Land, which the people were preparing to enter.<sup>25</sup> Yet, a noticeable number of individuals who are outspoken Two-House proponents, also think that Deuteronomy 4:2 quantitatively rules out *any* Jewish tradition from being recognized as a legitimate expression of Torah observance, to be followed by (any of) God's people.

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<sup>24</sup> "Be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah" (m.*Avot* 1:1b; Leonard, and Kerry M. Olitzky, eds. and trans., *Pirke Avot: A Modern Commentary on Jewish Ethics* [New York: UAHC Press, 1993], 1).

<sup>25</sup> Consult the author's article "The Message of Deuteronomy," appearing in the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper*.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

However, if we were to hold to a strict interpretation of Deuteronomy 4:2, then this likely means that when situations arise which require the faith community to make judgments on various issues or circumstances which are not directly or indirectly addressed in the Torah, or any part of Scripture, that *any decision* could possibly be acceptable. In the independent Messianic community today this has led to many interpretations of the Torah that are foreign to mainline Judaism, and can be quite offensive to Jewish people. It can lead to everyone doing what he or she feels is right (cf. Judges 17:6; 21:25), with confusion about what to do often abounding. (Even various evangelical Christians on the outside wonder about what they witness.)

It can be irresponsible to strongly assert that traditions are not at all commanded by God, when the Torah itself later says that if a matter arises within Israel, that His people are to follow the rulings of the priests and judges who He has recognized as occupying positions of authority:

“If any case is too difficult for you to decide, between one kind of homicide or another, between one kind of lawsuit or another, and between one kind of assault or another, being cases of dispute in your courts, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. So you shall come to the Levitical priest or the judge who is *in office* in those days, and you shall inquire *of them* and they will declare to you the verdict in the case. You shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which the LORD chooses; **and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. According to the terms of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left**” (Deuteronomy 17:8-11).

The clause of interest is *al-pi ha'Torah* (עַל-פִּי הַתּוֹרָה), “According to the tenor of the law” (YLT),<sup>26</sup> which is given to those needing a definite judgment issued regarding a matter.

Some would make the argument that *every Rabbinical ruling* made in Orthodox Judaism today needs to be followed by the Messianic community at large—but this definitely goes too far. At the same time, though, Deuteronomy 17:11 does give a berth of authority to those in Jewish religious leadership which needs to be considered—as at least with what we should consider to be a **consultative authority**. Many within today’s Messianic Judaism believe that its Torah observance should parallel the major *halachic* matters which bind the broad Jewish community together (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform). This would include those areas of when it celebrates the appointed times (including *Chanukah* and *Purim*), how people would generally dress in a congregational environment, how people generally eat kosher, and other traditions which are beneficial to the broad community at large. Of course, there is certainly internal variance witnessed in Messianic Judaism, just as there is variance among various Jewish sects today.

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<sup>26</sup> “according to the mouth of the law” (LITV); “According to the sentence of the law” (KJV).

## Anti-Semitism in the Two-House Movement

If a person in the independent Messianic world has never been exposed to Messianic Judaism, or if someone is naturally predisposed to “do his own thing” (or even worse, “buck the {proverbial} system”) and not respect any established order, then it should not be surprising to see a strong impetus to develop applications of the Torah that are (absolutely) foreign to mainstream Judaism (or at least Reform and Conservative Judaism). For many complicated reasons, both psychological and spiritual, outward un-conformity is something easily discerned within much of the Two-House sub-movement—and *it is a notable, and most significant problem.*

The instruction in Deuteronomy 17:11 is that God’s people are to, “According to the teaching that they will teach you and according to the judgment that they will say to you, shall you do; you shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left” (ATS). We should not all believe that what is implied here is a blind obedience to the ancient rulings left by all of the Sages and Rabbis of Judaism. Messianic Believers have to ultimately evaluate their rulings against the canonical Word of God—and via the impetus of the Holy Spirit—to see if something aligns with the ethos or general tenor of Scripture, as most major rulings relate to ethical value judgments which the written Scriptures may not directly address. With all things, we have to see whether it parallels God’s written Word, and enhances our relationship and walk with Yeshua. There are clearly things that have come down through history that can deter our walk with Him, but then there are many things which can surely enhance it. *Each of us must use proper discernment and consideration—in our appeal to God for His Divine will.*

What is perhaps most important more than anything else is that the rulings anticipated by Deuteronomy 17:8-11 have to often be made by recognized, qualified spiritual leaders of the community of faith at large. The Torah is designed to be lived out in a community, as opposed to an exclusive “one-on-one” basis between oneself and God. A prime example of this witnessed today is that when you see kosher-for-Passover food items, they often say “consult your rabbi” on the packaging. This indicates in some way that there is debate over whether or not an item is kosher for Passover, and that the ultimate determination should go to your local rabbi, who can evaluate what your personal or family circumstances are.

This can be a difficult concept for many who come from evangelical Christian backgrounds to accept, because many are often not used to their pastor making “rulings” on what Believers should do or not do concerning God’s commandments. Many non-Jewish Believers are taught in church that our relationship with God is just between us and Him. While this is *ultimately* true, each of us is also in corporate, covenant association with other members of the faith community. Just like many probably went to a pastor for spiritual guidance, prayer, counseling, or just help regarding an issue, and took his advice and followed it, so can the rulings of the Jewish Rabbis apply. Just as many of us would expect an evangelical Christian pastor to be anointed by the Lord, and for his words to carry authoritative weight, so can the rulings of the Jewish Rabbis.

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Of course, as with all things, we should never follow the opinions of a Christian pastor blindly, nor should we ever follow the rulings of the Jewish Rabbis blindly, either. We have to test everything against God's Word, to make sure that it aligns with the character of our Heavenly Father, and we have to see if it is something that enhances our walk with Him, rather than takes us away from Him. More than anything else, *we have to deal with things on a case-by-case basis*, and recognize the fact that there is a great deal of "grey" when it comes to interpretation and application. In today's emerging Messianic community, hopefully we can find a proper balance between Scripture and tradition, where neither is considered unimportant.<sup>27</sup> We should also pray to have good local Messianic leaders be raised up by the Lord, who can issue sound decisions for their own communities and the issues they face (cf. Matthew 16:19).

## Unbalanced and Unfair Criticisms of Major Jewish Torah Interpretations

Much of what may be considered anti-Semitic rhetoric in the Two-House sub-movement regards a series of Jewish interpretations surrounding various Torah commandments and mainline *halachic* practices. In respectable society, when there may be misunderstandings present between diverse groups of people, then those seeking fair-minded solutions will hopefully take the necessary time to investigate those areas not understood and seek some answers. As it regards some of the things we need to discuss here: **Why do today's Jews live the way they do?**

The criticism directed by a wide variety of non-Jewish Believers, in the Two-House sub-movement, is issued toward some specific mainline Jewish interpretations of the Torah. Some of this is simply the result of being under-informed, but some of this is also the sad, and most sorry consequence, of thinking that the Jewish people have nothing legitimate to offer to the Body of Messiah at large. I know that in my own dialogue with various open-minded Messianic Jews over the years about the Northern Kingdom of Israel in Biblical history and prophecies of its reunion with the Southern Kingdom of Judah, they largely approach the issue with disdain *not* necessarily because of the idea of various groups of people from the Northern Kingdom "out there" in the world offends them—but because they find the attitudes of many self-claiming "Ephraimites" in the Two-House sub-movement toward mainline Jewish tradition to be quite offensive.

Whether you agree with some of the Torah interpretations or *halachic* positions present in Judaism, which we are preparing to discuss, is not as important as *the attitudes* in which these things are criticized. Has there been any criticism issued, with little or no understanding—or even an effort to understand? Some of these things regard the "finer issues" of the Torah, and they are to a certain degree open

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<sup>27</sup> For a further discussion of related topics, consult the author's exegetical paper on Matthew 23:2-3, "Who Sits in the Seat of Moses?" in the *Messianic Torah Helper* (forthcoming).

to interpretation. **You will actually see some variance within Judaism itself.** The key to having constructive dialogue, though, is being informed and not being ignorant about an issue, acting as though we were some kind of “flaming-fundie.” All of us must be very careful when critiquing the varied Jewish positions on the issues detailed below, as obedience to these commandments is quite foundational to many Jews and their identity. We need not *unnecessarily offend* anyone, but exhibit an appropriate level of respect and forbearance.

(One highly useful resource for you to possess as a home reference about a great deal of Jewish custom and practice found today in the Twenty-First Century is Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004]).

### The Proper Name of God, and Titles Issued Toward the Creator

For some reason or another, since the mid-to-late 1990s, the circulation of questions about the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel, being reunited in future prophecy, have been closely associated with questions about the proper name of God. Much of the Two-House sub-movement, or at least its popular literature, is closely connected to some degree with the perspectives of **the Sacred Name movement**. The Sacred Name movement, which has been around in various seventh-day and Sabbatarian groups for over a century, since the early 1900s, largely advocates that people must know the proper name of the Creator in the Hebrew Scriptures, YHWH/YHVH (יהוה), in order to possess eternal salvation. It is quite difficult to find Two-House publications and literature which directly refers to the Supreme Deity as either “God” or “Lord.”

Much like how the false doctrines of psychopannychy and annihilation<sup>28</sup> have been closely tied to denominations like the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (neither of which has anything to do with keeping the Sabbath), so have the abuses of Sacred Name Onlyism been closely tied to various populist voices present within the Two-House sub-movement.

One of the major criticisms that quite a few Two-House advocates have of Judaism in general, is Judaism’s avoidance of using the proper name of God. This same widescale non-usage is present in Messianic Judaism as well (and is also followed by the majority in the One Law/One Torah sub-movement). Many in the Two-House sub-movement, contrary to this, freely use and widely speak God’s proper name of YHWH, often pronounced either Yahweh or Yahveh, and believe that Judaism is in significant error for failing to use it. Some have even accused the Jewish people of “hiding the name of God” from them, and believe that failure to speak the proper name of God is a “gross error” of Judaism.<sup>29</sup>

While it is absolutely true that our Heavenly Father has a name, we should agree as Believers that whatever Yeshua and the Apostles did concerning its usage

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<sup>28</sup> Consult the author’s publications *To Be Absent From the Body* and *Why Hell Must Be Eternal*.

<sup>29</sup> Academic Jewish resources do not hide the Divine Name from common knowledge.

Cf. *Jewish Study Bible*, 2141; *JPS Guide: The Jewish Bible*, 242.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

should be what we do. In contrast to what those who advocate its usage may say, **there is not a single instance in the Apostolic Scriptures of Yeshua or the Apostles ever speaking the Divine Name.** By the period of Second Temple Judaism, the name of God was only spoken on *Yom Kippur* or the Day of Atonement in the Temple. The Mishnah reflects these traditions that existed in the Judaism of Yeshua's day:

“And the priests and people standing in the courtyard, when they would hear the Expressed Name [of the Lord] come out of the mouth of the high priest, would kneel and bow down and fall on their faces and say, ‘Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom forever and ever’” (m.*Yoma* 6:2).<sup>30</sup>

Within the Judaism of Yeshua's day, the people used terms such as “the Temple,” “the Place,” “the Kingdom,” “Heaven,” or even “the Name” to refer to God, a custom we see employed throughout the Gospel of Matthew. This extended into early Christianity as well with Christians using “God” and “Lord” to refer to the Supreme Deity. Neither Yeshua nor the Apostles made using the Divine Name an issue, and they fully adhered to the Jewish custom which was prevalent in the First Century. If they had ever spoken the Divine Name, then claims of blasphemy would have been issued against them by the Jewish religious leaders, something which does not appear in the Gospels or the Book of Acts.

We would do well to follow Yeshua's non-usage of the Father's name. Using the proper name of God, as is too commonplace throughout the Two-House sub-movement, significantly offends our Jewish *and* Messianic Jewish brethren, and is not something that Yeshua did during His ministry. The Jewish people of the First Century and the Jewish people today hold the name of God in such high regard and holiness that they consider it to be blasphemous to pronounce it with human lips. While pronouncing God's name might not be “blasphemy,” per se, we must treat it with holiness and respect *by not speaking it casually*. At most, we might be able to get away with speaking the name YHWH a few times in an academic sense.

But why does it seem that the issue of God's proper name has become such a problem? Many people who use the Divine Name in sectors of the Messianic community tend to forget that our Father has many titles that are used complimentary *and independently* of the name YHWH. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the most notable titles that are used are *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) and *Adonai* (אֲדֹנָי). In the Greek Scriptures, their counterparts are *Theos* (θεός) and *Kurios* (κύριος). These titles in English correspond to “God” and “Lord.”

Sacred Name Only advocates often have a field day in attacking people who use the titles God and Lord. It is often said that these words are of pagan origin and should have no place whatsoever in the vocabulary of a Believer. This claim is made on the basis that God and Lord have also been titles of pagan deities. This claim is made even more so for the Greek titles *Kurios* and *Theos*, which were used in Ancient Greek as titles for the deities of Mount Olympus. However, arguments

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<sup>30</sup> Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 275.

against *Kurios* and *Theos* significantly lose weight when we see that the Jewish Rabbis who translated the Hebrew Tanach into Greek had no problem using them in reference to the Holy One of Israel. In fact, when the Apostles went into Greek-speaking lands, this is *exactly* what they called the God of Israel—just as Greek-speaking Diaspora Judaism had done for several centuries before them.

It is not uncommon at all for many in today's Messianic movement to perceive of the Hebrew language as being the "holy tongue." This is based on a misunderstanding of Zephaniah 3:9, where the Prophet says "I will give to the peoples purified lips" or *safar beruah* (שָׂפָה בְּרוּרָה). To assume that this means that the peoples will be given an ability to speak the Hebrew language is not an honest assessment of the Book of Zephaniah, as the previous verses tell us exactly what the problem of Ancient Israel has been:

"Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the tyrannical city! She heeded no voice, she accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD, she did not draw near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are wolves at evening; they leave nothing for the morning. Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law. The LORD is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame. I have cut off nations; their corner towers are in ruins. I have made their streets desolate, with no one passing by; their cities are laid waste, without a man, without an inhabitant. I said, 'Surely you will revere Me, accept instruction.' So her dwelling will not be cut off *according to* all that I have appointed concerning her. But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds" (Zephaniah 3:1-7).

Being given "purified lips" is undoubtedly connected with moving from a state of sinfulness to a state of holiness—from a state of profanity to a state of purity. Zephaniah's prophecy of "I will make the peoples pure of speech" (NJPS) is akin to the Apostle Paul's later instruction, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear" (Ephesians 4:29). The "purified lips" pertains to a *manner of speech* by which the Father's people will be able to serve Him.<sup>31</sup>

While the Hebrew language certainly has great beauty—it is still a *human language* (and in many cases a primitive language, with limited vocabulary, at that). And perhaps most significantly, Hebrew is an Ancient Near Eastern language with relatives such as Aramaic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic. Yet this is not understood by many within the broad Messianic community, who assume that Hebrew is a holy language and that every other language is to some degree unholy. Such a misunderstanding can lead to ridiculous conclusions such as,

"The Set-apart Spirit, inspiring all Scripture, would most certainly not have transgressed the Law of Yahuweh by 'inspiring' the Messianic Scriptures in a

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<sup>31</sup> For further consideration, consult the entry for the Book of Zephaniah in *A Survey of the Tanach for the Practical Messianic*.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

language riddled with the names of Greek deities and freely using the names of these deities in the text, no way!” (C.J. Koster, from the book *Come Out of Her, My People*).<sup>32</sup>

Here, because common nouns in Greek are also attested to be used as names of Greek deities, the Greek Scriptures are assumed to obviously not be inspired of the Almighty. This has led to a number of people doubting the message of the gospel, and leaving faith in Yeshua the Messiah.

But what happens if we were to apply this logic equally to the Hebrew Scriptures? Terms common to Hebrew, used as the proper names of pagan gods in languages such as Ugaritic—including the terms *El* (אֵל) and *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים)—are applied to YHWH in the Tanach. If such a standard as proposed were applied to the whole of Scripture, **neither the Hebrew Tanach nor Greek Messianic Writings could really be considered as inspired**, as both languages include common vocabulary words used to refer to pagan deities. Are today’s Messianics ready to start reading the Tanach against its Ancient Near Eastern context? This has certainly been a significantly deficient area of our collective Biblical Studies.

If we are to reject titles such as God and Lord because they might be used to refer to pagan deities, then we must hold the Hebrew titles of *Elohim* and *Adonai* to the exact same standard. Not surprisingly, both of these titles have been used to refer to *pagan deities* every bit as much as the deity YHWH. *TWOT* explains that *El* (אֵל), the singular form of *Elohim*, “is a very ancient Semitic term. It is also the most widely distributed name among Semitic-speaking peoples for the deity, occurring in some form in every Semitic language, except Ethiopic.”<sup>33</sup> So, if we are to reject God and Lord as titles, we must do the same for *Elohim* because *Elohim* is used to refer to pagan deities, and *El* is used in almost every Semitic language to refer to deities other than YHWH.

But it even goes beyond this. A shortened poetic form of “Yahweh,” *Yah* (יָה), which appears in the Hebrew Tanach, was possibly used by pagan societies that pre-dated the Israelites. The *IVPBBC* tells us, “There are a number of possible occurrences of Yahweh or Yah as a deity’s name outside of Israel, though all are debatable.”<sup>34</sup> Yet even if true, we certainly should not conclude that YHWH is a pagan name because the pagans may have used derivations of it. Furthermore, in 2 Samuel 5:20, David describes the God of Israel as *Ba’al* (בַּעַל), which was the name of a Canaanite deity! But note that, “In the early years the title Baal seems to have been used for the Lord (Yahweh)” (*NIDB*).<sup>35</sup> Is this an error on David’s part? We should not believe so.

**There is no substantial evidence that makes “God” and “Lord” pagan titles.** Otherwise, titles such as the Hebrew *Elohim*, and possibly even the name YHWH itself, would be pagan. A failure to use standard terms for the Supreme Deity, by a

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<sup>32</sup> C.J. Koster, *Come Out of Her, My People* (Northriding, South Africa: Institute for Scripture Research, 1998), vi.

<sup>33</sup> Jack B. Scott, “‘ēl,” in *TWOT*, 1:42.

<sup>34</sup> Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, 80.

<sup>35</sup> Steven Barabas, “Baal,” in *NIDB*, 113.

wide variety of people within the Two-House sub-movement, has severely limited the audience of those who have been able to listen to proposals about a larger restoration of Israel prophesied in Scripture. Because of the widespread Sacred Name Only agenda seen within the Two-House sub-movement, many Messianic Jews do not want to fairly consider the subject matter of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel to be reunited according to Bible prophecy—and Messianic Jewish leaders are certainly not going to allow Sacred Name Onlyism into their congregations. And, claiming that people who do not speak the name YHWH are not saved, is actually one of an entire host of highly problematic beliefs that one finds often adhered to by Sacred Name Onlyists.<sup>36</sup>

### Tzitzits and Tallits

Within the Torah, one of the most interesting instructions that is given to the Ancient Israelites is, “Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue” (Numbers 15:38; cf. Deuteronomy 22:12). When many non-Jewish Believers have their first exposure to the Messianic movement, it is usually by attending a *Shabbat* service on Saturday morning at a Messianic Jewish congregation. Like the traditional Synagogue, one will witness that many men, and even a few women, will be wearing some kind of a four-cornered garment, called a *tallit* (טלית), with tassels or fringes on it.<sup>37</sup>

When one sees a *tallit* (טלית), or prayer shawl, onto which four *tzitzits* are attached, one at each of the corners, a person is undeniably connected to the ancient past. *Tallits* vary in size from a small shawl to a large garment that can be used as a kind of cloak, and they usually have colored stripes, often blue or black. These prayer shawls are customarily worn during prayer times, and often in congregational services. In traditional Judaism, the *tallit* is only worn during the daytime, except for the evening of the high holidays of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

Wearing tassels, fringes, or *tzitziyot* (צִיצִיּוֹת) is easily observed on the clothing of many Orthodox Jews today. A garment that is usually worn is the *tallit katan* (קַטָּן טלית), a four-cornered undergarment worn by men onto which *tzitzits* are attached and then can be pulled out to be seen at the waist. Conservative and Reform Jews will often only wear a *tallit* with *tzitziyot* during the *Shabbat* service, the Fall high holidays, and personal, private prayer times.

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<sup>36</sup> Concurrent with the Sacred Name Only agenda regarding the Father’s name, are claims made about the name of the Son. It is frequently claimed that the name Jesus is pagan and derived from the name Zeus, but this is without viable linguistic support. *Iēsous* (Ἰησοῦς) and *Zeus* (Ζεὺς) have two totally different Greek spellings and different pronunciations. Likewise, if the Greek name *Iēsous* were of pagan origin, and not a Jewish transliteration of the Hebrew name *Yeshua* (יֵשׁוּעַ) to be employed among Greek speakers, then it would not have been used for the title of the Book of Joshua (appearing as Ἰησοῦς) in the Septuagint.

<sup>37</sup> Consult Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), pp 377-382 for a summary of how the *tallit* is employed in the mainline Jewish Synagogue.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

Largely in Judaism, the *tzitzits* that are witnessed on the *tallit* or *tallit katan* are all white. Why is this the case? The blue dye or *techelet* (תְּכֵלֶת) that was used for the single fringe on the *tzitzit* was traditionally taken from a small sea snail (b.*Menachot* 42b), and following the destruction of the Second Temple the process was largely lost to history. There are organizations in Israel today which have claimed to rediscover the original blue dye, or a close substitute, and there are various observant Jews who will now wear *tzitziyot* with a thread of blue. There are also those who do not do this, and continue to simply wear all white fringes.

Generally speaking, today's Messianic Jews will fall somewhere within how Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews observe the commandments to wear *tzitziyot*. Some of today's Messianic Jews wear the tassels or fringes with the cord of blue, but others do not.

Many non-Jewish Messianic Believers today who have entered into the Messianic movement have gone along with their Messianic Jewish counterparts, in observing the instruction to wear *tzitziyot*. This more often includes having the cord of blue. This may involve using *tzitzits* imported from Israel using the apparently-rediscovered *techelet* blue dye. It is also quite frequent, however, to encounter many homemade *tzitzits* with a synthetic blue dye. In a great deal of the independent Messianic world, especially in the Two-House sub-movement, while *tzitzits* can be witnessed on a traditional *tallit*, more frequently homemade *tzitzits* with a synthetic blue cord are attached to belt loops. (It is also true that there are some Messianic Jews who have taken to wearing their own *tzitzits* with a synthetic blue dye, on their belt loops.<sup>38</sup>)

Beyond this, there is a large cottage industry that has developed, with various multi-colored *tzitzits* with a synthetic blue cord present. Some of these *tzitzits* are white, with a synthetic blue cord, and a synthetic red cord to presumably represent the blood of Yeshua. Other types of *tzitzits* are even more creative, appearing in multiple colors of the rainbow. Yet, unless *tzitzits* are either white with the *techelet* cord of blue, or all white, they stand outside of the window of what would be recognized as legitimate Torah *halachah* by most of today's observant Jews.

Problems abound when we see various non-Jewish Believers in the Two-House sub-movement, forcibly identifying themselves as "returning Ephraim," who have said that the Jewish *tallit* is something that is unimportant and is an invalid tradition. Too many, in seeing how the *tallit* has been employed throughout the centuries in the Synagogue, have claimed that it is an invalid application of the Torah instruction. More frequently, though, what is witnessed is not an invalidation of the Jewish *tallit*, but rather *tallits* being employed in a disrespectful manner, and in ways for which the *tallit* was never originally intended. It is apparently not enough for various people in the Two-House sub-movement to be aware of the diversity of views present in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism—which for the latter two includes the acceptance of females wearing a

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<sup>38</sup> They are advertised on p 23 of the 2010-2011 *Messianic Jewish Resources Catalog* published by Lederer.

*tallit* (or at least a feminine pastel *tallit*)—picking an already established manner and using it.

While everyone has a free will, the Jewish reaction—especially in the Land of Israel—to independent interpretations of wearing *tzitzits* speaks for itself, and tends to be anything but positive. *Tzitzits* with a synthetic cord of blue look very odd when associating with non-believing Jews (although they do not incur anger, as much as they do mocking). Picking up a *tallit* for anything other than personal morning prayers or congregational worship on Saturday morning, can be a bit out of place.

### Tefillin (Phylacteries)

A steadfastly important admonition in the Torah is to remember not only how the Lord led Ancient Israel out of Egypt with His powerful hand and arm, but also how His people are to have His Word placed upon their own hands and foreheads:

- “So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:16).
- “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead” (Deuteronomy 6:8).

How these instructions have been interpreted by much of historical Judaism is viewed with a great deal of suspicion *and* mistrust by many non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic community—but most significantly in the Two-House sub-movement. Observant Jews who observe this direction, bind leather boxes known as *tefillin* (תְּפִלִּין) or phylacteries (derived from the Greek *phylaktērion*, φυλακτήριον) onto their arms and heads, remembering that the Lord led His people out of Egypt with an outstretched arm, and that they are to have His Word in their minds. *Tefillin* are used as an important part of a Jewish person’s daily prayers.<sup>39</sup>

In Orthodox Judaism, wrapping *tefillin* is considered to not only be one of the most important commandments of the Torah, but one of the most key rituals that identifies oneself as a Jew. Within the broad Jewish tradition, the instruction to bind God’s Word on the hand and forehead has been taken literally, as the phylacteries include small parchments inside that have transcribed these Torah instructions (Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21). Conservative and Reform Jews will also frequently wrap *tefillin*, but probably not as frequently as the Orthodox. These latter two Jewish sects will also allow women to use *tefillin*, whereas in Orthodox Judaism only men use them.

The custom of wrapping *tefillin* is not that commonplace within the daily prayer activities of today’s Messianic Jews, although there are some trends which indicate that this is changing, with more open to the tradition. Many non-Jewish Messianics take this instruction as meaning that God’s people are to *only* have His Word present in what they do with their hands and with their minds.

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<sup>39</sup> Consult Eisenberg, pp 382-386 for a summary of how *tefillin* is employed in the mainline Jewish Synagogue.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

While remembering what God's Word says about what we do with our hands and minds is surely important, this does not make the practice of wrapping *tefillin* wrong or invalid. That the custom of employing phylacteries in Jewish prayer was present several centuries before the ministry of Yeshua is non-disputable.<sup>40</sup> The common rejection of using *tefillin* or phylacteries, for any kind of personal prayer, is often disputed from the basis that Yeshua the Messiah spoke against them in His criticism of the Pharisaical leaders:

"All their works they do to be noticed by men. They make their *tefillin* wide and their *tzitziyot* long" (Matthew 23:5, TLV).

Did Yeshua speak against wrapping *tefillin*/phylacteries in this verse? In His criticism of the Pharisaical leaders, Yeshua also criticized these individuals for their wearing of tassels or *tzitziyot*. Yet, elsewhere we see that Yeshua Himself wore fringes attached to the corners of His garments:

"Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured...And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped" (Mark 6:56; Luke 8:43-44).

Yeshua's word of Matthew 23:5 is clear: "They do everything to be observed by others" (HCSB). Yeshua actually criticizes these Pharisees for the manner in which they wore *tzitzits* and wrapped *tefillin*, in order to draw attention to themselves. The Messiah did not say that the custom of wrapping *tefillin* or phylacteries is wrong and ungodly. It is quite feasible that Yeshua Himself had employed *tefillin* within His own personal prayer times. The very purpose of taking the time in the morning, and binding a physical, ritual object like the *tefillin* or phylacteries—is so that one can be disciplined and focused in one's prayers and entreaties to the Heavenly Father.

There are Messianic Jews today who recognize the practice of wrapping *tefillin* as one of several interpretive options of how to have God's Word placed upon the hand and forehead. It is certainly an exercise that can direct one's attention upon God's Word.

Now if you do not wish to wrap *tefillin* and consider it an invalid interpretation of the Torah, you are entitled to your opinion. Some of you may not wrap *tefillin* because they can very expensive, or you are unprepared to make the commitment to use them on some kind of regular basis. None of us needs to find ourselves criticizing Judaism, though, for adhering to a custom that long pre-dates the Messiah's ministry. Wrapping *tefillin* in prayer times—not to be seen by others—is something which is to enhance the intimacy and communication between a person who uses them, and his (or her) Creator.

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. R.L. Omanson, "Phylactery," in *ISBE*, 3:864-865; Ruth Santinover Fagen, "Phylacteries," in *ABD*, 5:368-370.

### Kippahs (Yarmulkes) and Headcovering Garments

One of the most obvious elements of modern Jewish identity witnessed in the world today, is men wearing the *kippah* (or *yarmulke*, יארמולקע) or skullcap. The idea behind wearing this small skullcap is that it shows submission to God. The term *kippah* (כִּפָּה) is derived from the Hebrew verb *kafar* (כָּפַר), meaning “to cover, to forgive, to expiate, to reconcile” (AMG).<sup>41</sup> The *kippah* is believed to be a “covering” which represents a man’s submission to God.

It is notable that the headcovering garment of a *kippah* is not an explicit commandment of Scripture. This is a Jewish tradition which has developed over time. Alfred J. Kolatch explains this in *The Jewish Book of Why*:

“A *yarmulke*, called a *kipa* in Hebrew, is a skullcap worn by Jews. Some wear one at all times, others only during prayer and at mealtime.

“...The custom of covering the head received wide acceptance, but not by all. Historian Israel Abrahams points out that in the thirteenth century ‘boys in Germany and adults in France were called to the Tora in the synagogue bareheaded.’

“In the Middle Ages, French and Spanish rabbinical authorities regarded the practice of covering the head during prayer and when studying the Tora to be no more than mere custom. Some rabbis were known to pray bareheaded.

“Today, Orthodox Jews and many Conservative Jews believe that covering the head is an expression of *yirat Shama’yim* (‘fear of God’ or ‘reverence for God’)....”<sup>42</sup>

Wearing a *kippah* is quite commonplace throughout the diverse social strata of modern Israel. Jews of all types throughout the Diaspora commonly wear them as well, sometimes as a part of their everyday dress. While wearing a *kippah* is more frequently associated with Synagogue worship or personal prayers, wearing a *kippah* at the home dinner table of a Jewish family is also witnessed. It is quite commonplace to see a majority of men in today’s Messianic Jewish congregations wear *kippahs* in *Shabbat* worship. Various Messianic Jews also wear a *kippah* as a part of their normal, everyday dress.

It is not uncommon in many Messianic congregations to see non-Jewish men wear *kippahs*. This is largely so that they can respect the protocol of the assembly, as generally all men are expected to wear a *kippah* if they were to attend a service at any non-Messianic synagogue.

It is not difficult, though, to find a substantial amount of criticism, in some parts of the Messianic community—most especially the Two-House sub-movement—on whether or not the *kippah* is something appropriate to wear. It is usually based on the Apostle Paul’s instructions witnessed in 1 Corinthians 11:4-16.

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<sup>41</sup> Baker and Carpenter, 521.

<sup>42</sup> Alfred J. Kolatch, *The Jewish Book of Why* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1981), pp 121-122.

Consult Eisenberg, pp 374-377 for a summary of how the *kippah* and related headcovering garments, are employed in the mainline Jewish Synagogue.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

As we will proceed to describe, there are some translation issues present in these verses in various English Bible versions, as well as some ancient background issues germane to First Century Corinth, which need to be seriously considered.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:4, *pas anēr proseuchomenos ē prophēteuōn kata kephalēs* (πάς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς), “Every man praying or prophesying, having *something* down from the head...” (my translation). Many versions add something like “with his head covered” (NIV) or “who has *something* on his head” (NASU), but does this really do justice to the clause *kata kephalēs* (κατὰ κεφαλῆς)? Would it have really been disgraceful for a First Century Jewish man, or even a Greek or Roman man, to wear a garment upon his head during a time of prayer or prophecy? *No*. Paul specifies later in 1 Corinthians 11:14 that there is something which could be down from a man’s head that would disgrace him: “if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him.” Long hair on a man hanging down, could have communicated something in Corinth that might not have been very good for the Believers. At the very least, some males with long hair hanging down, from certain angles, could possibly be confused as being female. Philip B. Payne further describes,

“Something ‘down from’ (κατά [kata] with the genitive, ‘lit. hanging down fr. the head,’ BDAG 511 A.1.a) or ‘over’ the head of men leading in worship was disgraceful. Paul does not in this verse identify what was down from the head, so any explanation, to be convincing, needs to cite evidence from this passage and its cultural context. What hanging down from a man’s head would be disgraceful for men leading worship in Corinth, a Greek city and a Roman colony? Many assume it is a toga (*himation*). It was not, however, disgraceful in the cultural context of Corinth or in Jewish culture for a man to drape a garment over his head. The *capite velato* custom of pulling a toga over one’s head in Roman religious contexts symbolized devotion and piety, not disgrace. Jewish custom and the Hebrew Scriptures also approved head-covering garments for men leading in worship<sup>43</sup>...Thankfully, Paul identifies in verse 15 what ‘hanging down from the dead’ causes disgrace: ‘If a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him [1 Corinthians 11:14, NIV].’”<sup>44</sup>

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 11:5a, Paul issues instruction regarding *pasa de gunē proseuchomenē ē prophēteuōusa akatakalyptō tē kephalē* (πάσα δὲ γυνή προσευχόμενη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ), “every woman praying or prophesying, with the head uncovered...” (my translation) is to be regarded as having dishonored her head, being as though her head were shaved (1 Corinthians 11:5b). Having a shaved (Grk. verb *xureō*, ξυρέω) head in ancient times, whether in Ancient Israel, Second Temple Judaism, or even Greco-Roman culture, was frequently a sign of mourning and/or humiliation. The challenge for interpreting a “head uncovered,” is that it is frequently read from the perspective of it meaning that a

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<sup>43</sup> E.g., Exodus 28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Leviticus 8:9; 16:4; Ezekiel 24:17; 44:18; Zechariah 3:5.

<sup>44</sup> Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), pp 141-142.

woman praying or prophesying must have some kind of a garment present. Is wearing a headcovering garment really the issue?

A significant usage of the adjective *akatakaluptos* (ἀκατακάλυπτος), in the Septuagint, is Leviticus 13:45, speaking of “the leper who has the plague in him, his garments shall be torn, and his head shall be **uncovered** [*akatakaluptos*]” (LXE).<sup>45</sup> *Akatakaluptos* actually renders the Hebrew verb *para* (פָּרַע), meaning “to let the hair on the head hang loosely” (*HALOT*),<sup>46</sup> as “The leper who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head **hang loose** [*para*]...” (Leviticus 13:45, RSV).<sup>47</sup> If this background is kept in view, then a Corinthian woman who had her head “uncovered,” is one who actually had her long hair hanging loose for all in the assembly to see. It is true that when modern readers encounter a term like “uncovered,” it is more natural for us to think that the Corinthian woman was to probably be wearing some sort of head garment. But wearing or not wearing a head garment would not have been as problematic as a female having loosed hair flowing freely. In a largely progressive and so-called “sexually liberated” city like First Century Corinth, a woman with free-flowing loose hair **was anything but respectable**. In fact, such a hairstyle would be like a prostitute advertising her wares! Payne details,

“Loosed hair was disgraceful (11:5) and symbolized sexual looseness in Roman, Greek, and Jewish culture....Loosed hair fits the cultural influence and specific practice of the Dionysiac cult, which was popular in Corinth and explains why women in Corinth might have let their hair down.”<sup>48</sup>

Contrary to women with “uncovered” heads—heads with hair freely flowing down—respectable women would have “covered heads” with their hair arranged in a kind of bun, something attested in the artwork of the broad First Century.<sup>49</sup> A Corinthian woman with an “uncovered” head meaning free-flowing long hair, hair that has not been arranged in a proper manner, makes sense of Paul’s prescription that such an “uncovered” woman’s hair be cut or shaved off—which was definitely a sign of dishonor (1 Corinthians 11:6). A proper recognition of the genders is in view here (1 Corinthians 11:7-8), including being aware of how at a previous time

<sup>45</sup> NETS similarly has: “let his clothes be loosened and his head be uncovered [*akatakaluptos*].”

<sup>46</sup> *HALOT*, 2:970.

<sup>47</sup> Payne, 167 further states,

“The only occurrence in the text Paul cited the most, the LXX [Septuagint], of ‘uncovered’ (11:5; ἀκατακάλυπτος [*akatakaluptos*] in Lev 13:45) translates פָּרַע [*paru’a*], from פָּרַע, which Hebrew scholars agree means ‘to let the hair on the head hang loosely.’ It is the earliest instance of the word ‘cover’ (κατακάλυπτος [*katakaluptos*]) occurring with ‘head’ in the *TLG* database...‘Uncovered’ is explained twice in verses 5-6, using ‘for’ (γάρ [*gar*]). Both reasons explain the uncovering as equivalent to hair being clipped or shaved. This associates the covering as hair and fits most naturally if ‘uncovered’ refers to a woman with her hair let down.”

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>49</sup> “What about having one’s head ‘uncovered’ would cause shame to a woman leading in worship in the cultural setting of Corinth? The extensive evidence from portraiture, frescoes, sculptures, and vase paintings in Greek and Roman cities of Paul’s day almost universally depicts respectable women with their hair done up. Women in everyday public settings are not depicted with their hair hanging loose over their shoulders” (*Ibid.*, 151).

## Israel in Future Prophecy

in Biblical history (e.g., Genesis 6:4) women may have been able to tempt the angels (1 Corinthians 11:10).

Both man and woman—especially if they are married—are to understand that they are not independent of one another, with all originating from God (1 Corinthians 11:11-12). With the realization that “covered” and “uncovered” probably relates to hairstyles of hair pulled up versus free-flowing long hair, how does this change our reading of Paul’s further direction? When people would attend home gatherings of the Corinthians, *including* any visiting pagans, what impression would it give of the Messiah followers and the Lord Yeshua? As 1 Corinthians 11:13-16 details,

“Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God *with her head* uncovered {**meaning:** with free-flowing long hair}? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering [mantle; Grk. *peribolaion*, περιβόλαιον]. But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the [assemblies] of God.”

It is difficult at first for us to consider covered/uncovered to relate to hairstyles, which either communicated lewdness or promiscuity or just general disrespectfulness to wider society—but it is a much better way for us to understand the issues of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. The actual issue in Ancient Corinth regarding male and female heads that are “covered” and “uncovered” **actually pertained to specific hairstyles**. Men should not have long hair hanging down. Women should have their long hair put up, being “covered,” as being “uncovered” would mean letting the hair go. The association that such hairstyles would have, could not only communicate a degree of prostitution-promotion (female *and* male) to outsiders, but perhaps also associate the Corinthians as participating with local pagan religious activities. The Apostle Paul clearly did not want something like this communicated to outsiders in the gatherings and worship activities of the Messiah followers!

I have never seen the perspective of “covered” and “uncovered” relating to Ancient Corinthian hairstyles ever really considered in any sector of today’s Messianic movement. Many believe that “covered” and “uncovered” relates to head garments like the *kippah/yarmulke*, various uses of the *tallit*, or some kind of female head garment. While not all of these items as we know them were in use in the Biblical period, ultimately the issue of headcovering garments for men and women is one that is **entirely traditional and cultural**. It is something that all Messianic Believers need to be sensitive about in their *halachah* to be certain (like men wearing a *yarmulke* at the Western Wall in Jerusalem), **but headcovering garments are not the real issue** of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. The main thrust of this part of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians pertains to how various grooming styles can damage the credibility of the faith community. In First Century Corinth, women who let their hair go “uncovered”—long and loose—were communicating something bad. Today, long hair on a woman (perhaps in a pony tail or other style)

in some places might instead communicate conservativeness.<sup>50</sup> As far as shorter or longer degrees of hair length on a woman *or* man are concerned: they regard the general evaluation of their (Twenty-First Century [Western]) cultural context, and what may be considered respectable.

I have personally been in widescale favor of all Messianic men wearing a *kippah/yarmulke* during weekly *Shabbat* services **and most especially** during the high holy days of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Likewise, all of those who also don a *tallit* for prayer and worship should not do so without a *kippah/yarmulke*. While it is a tradition, the wearing of the skullcap is nonetheless considered to be a sign of a man's reverence for God in mainline Judaism. The protocol observed in a Messianic congregation should be similar to that in the Jewish Synagogue.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, the wearing of the *kippah* cannot be construed as any kind of Biblically-prescribed commandment, nor something that should be forced upon anyone. I urge sensitivity concerning the Jewish custom of wearing the *kippah*, especially considering how widespread it is. No non-Jewish Believer should ever be caught trying to degrade the role that the *kippah/yarmulke* has played in many centuries of Jewish culture. Yet, unbalanced interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, slurs such as calling the *kippah/yarmulke* some kind of "beanie," and disrespect for the custom in general—has definitely been witnessed by those in the Two-House sub-movement. How can such people ever hope to see a larger restoration of Israel's Kingdom come to pass, if they cannot respect one of the most basic and widespread traditions of the Jewish people?

### The Mixing of Meat and Dairy

Generally speaking, across the broad Messianic movement, some level of kosher eating is followed, and it is not believed that the dietary laws of the Torah were abolished by either Yeshua or the Apostles. There is considerable variance, though, of how such kosher eating is to be observed. This minimally involves an abstention from unclean meats like pork and shellfish. In many cases, clean meats such as beef, lamb, chicken, turkey, and various fish are only purchased (or at least preferred to be purchased) from authorized Jewish sources. Beyond this, a wide array of Jewish traditions regarding food storage and preparation, are encountered. While a bulk of the Messianic movement may only be found to keep what it considers to be "Biblically kosher" or "kosher style," there are a considerable number of those who observe the many Rabbinical rulings on *kashrut* law (כַּשְׂרוּת), which are principally observed in today's Orthodox Judaism.

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<sup>50</sup> Indeed, in our family's experience in the Messianic movement since 1995, most of the average men and women in our faith community have little problems as it concerns our proposed reading of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. They tend to have hairstyles and a mode of dress which communicate a rather conservative demeanor to society at large, consistent with much of respectable Judaism and Christianity, not at all being associated with much popular culture.

<sup>51</sup> This section has adapted quotations from the author's commentary *1 Corinthians for the Practical Messianic*.

## Israel in Future Prophecy

One of the recognizable features, of much Jewish kosher observance throughout history, has been the separation of meat and dairy products.<sup>52</sup> This has been largely based on the Torah's instruction, "You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother" (Exodus 23:19; cf. 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21). Orthodox Jews today, especially, do not eat meat and dairy products together. This not only involves not drinking milk or eating cheese along with meat, but also how various baked goods that might be served with meat, will not include dairy ingredients. Among different communities, meat or dairy will only be eaten after a sufficient time of digestion, which varies from group to group. Some of the main theological reasons for not mixing meat and dairy products, as based from the Torah, are summarized in the *ArtScroll Chumash*:

"Meat represents the animal portion of life, the muscle and sinew. Milk represents the reproductive capacity of animal life, for milk is the nourishment that supports new life. In animals, these two aspects of life are inseparable; animals instinctively eat and reproduce. Man has a higher calling. He must not mingle these aspects of his nature. To the contrary, he must learn to differentiate between his activities and—primarily—to subjugate them all to his duty to grow in the service of God and to put Godliness into all his activities. The higher duty is symbolized in the prohibition against mixing milk and meat. Its proximity to the law of the festivals and the first of first fruits conveys the teaching that one who succumbs to his animal instincts destroys the holy nature of the seasons and God's blessings of prosperity."<sup>53</sup>

The Hebrew verb translated as "boil" is *bashal* (בָּשַׁל), which appearing in the Piel stem (intensive action, active voice) means "**cook, boil, roast**" (*CHALOT*).<sup>54</sup> But what is the reasoning behind, "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk" (Exodus 23:19, NIV)? It might be explained on humanitarian grounds, and how it could be perceived as cruel to actually cook the meat of a calf or kid in the very milk that once fed it. Likewise, it has been suggested that cooking such meat in milk is a prohibition against an Ancient Canaanite religious ritual, possibly related to fertility.<sup>55</sup> It is true that the practice of separating meat and dairy was a debate present within the Second Temple Judaism in which Yeshua's ministry functioned (m.*Chullin* 8:3-4; b.*Chullin* 104a; cf. b.*Shabbat* 130a), which makes it possible that the family of Joseph and Mary did not really eat meat and dairy products together.

There are a wide number of people within the Messianic community, including much of Messianic Judaism, who do not agree with the separation of meat and dairy as is principally witnessed in much of Orthodox Judaism's practice of keeping kosher. Separating meat and dairy is, of course, an interpretation of the

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<sup>52</sup> Consult Eisenberg, pp 662-664 for a summary of how prohibition on mixing milk and meat is practiced in the mainline Jewish Synagogue.

<sup>53</sup> Scherman, *Chumash*, 437.

<sup>54</sup> *CHALOT*, 51.

<sup>55</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), pp 485-486; John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus*, Vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 334; Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, 103.

Torah's instructions about not boiling or cooking a kid in its mother's milk. The challenge is not when we recognize how the historical Jewish practice of separating meat and dairy is a noticeable part of the traditional Synagogue's observance of keeping kosher; problems are seen when people choose to totally disregard the right of a Jewish person to separate meat and dairy as a part of his or her *legitimate* Torah application and heritage.

The Two-House sub-movement has quite a few people who are rather disrespectful of the common Jewish separation of meat and dairy products. These are largely non-Jewish Believers who have expended no effort, to at least understand in an historical sense, how the kosher dietary laws have been followed by the Synagogue. These are people who are largely insensitive to Jewish views and interpretations of *kashrut*, and in a few cases actually includes people who will just flat make fun of Jews who do not eat cheeseburgers or lasagna. Yet, even if it can be observed that various Jews are a bit overly-ambitious about their kosher eating, they have at least been trying to keep the dietary laws. Ironically, many of the non-Jews within the Two-House sub-movement, (improperly) believing themselves to be of "returning Ephraim," have perhaps ironically overlooked the prophetic sentiment of Hosea 9:3:

"Ephraim shall return to Egypt, **and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria**" (LITV).

The Hebrew text specifically says *u'v'Ashur tamei yokeilu* (וּבְאַשּׁוּר טָמֵא יֹאכְלוּ), "in Asshur an unclean thing they eat" (YLT). Those within the Two-House sub-movement, who choose to criticize mainline Jewish interpretations and applications for observing *kashrut*, often do not consider the fact that those of the exiled Northern Kingdom were actually prophesied to eat unclean things, not considered food, in their exile.

While it is unlikely that we are going to see a huge number of today's Messianic people, non-Jewish *or* Jewish, keep a level of kosher the same as Orthodox Judaism—more understanding and appreciation, of the different aspects and levels of kosher observance by the Synagogue, is surely needed. None of us needs to ever find ourselves in a restaurant in Israel, or a place like New York City or Los Angeles with its large Jewish populations, making snide remarks about separating meat and dairy, and instead arrogantly insist the rightness of being "Biblically kosher."<sup>56</sup>

## Beards and Facial Hair

It is not difficult for people to acknowledge how wearing beards (Heb. sing. *zaqan*, זָקַן), or facial hair in general, is quite commonplace among many male Jews. Many Jewish cultural features have been rooted within the instruction of Leviticus 19:27, "You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard." There has been internal debate within Judaism what "the side-

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<sup>56</sup> For more information on this subject matter and related issues, consult the *Messianic Kosher Helper* by Messianic Apologetics (forthcoming).

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growth of your beard” (NJPS) actually means, though, with varied applications of this present among modern Jews.<sup>57</sup>

Some interpret this command as relating to a man’s full beard, others only his sideburns, and others the extremities of the beard. Some believe that a man’s facial hair has actual “boundaries,” more or less defined, and others believe that the hair on a man’s face should just grow without any type of grooming. Some believe that a man can trim and groom his beard. Others believe that a man can shave his beard, provided it is with an electric razor. And, others even think that a man can shave his beard with a conventional depilatory razor, provided that it has at least two blades, and not a single cutting edge. Consequently, the same variance of interpretations has made its way into the Messianic movement, and one will see a wide array of applications.

In approaching the word of Leviticus 19:27, we should acknowledge the diversity of opinions within Judaism. Whatever interpretation you hold to about beards, you should respect others. It is notable that there is a distinct Messianic subculture that insists that all men wear beards, and there are those who will often be judgmental and quite harsh of men who do not have them. Having or not having a full beard is not an issue of a man’s spirituality, as one’s relationship with the Lord is contingent on having a heart and mind which have been transformed by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating God’s love to others in the world. As God had to remind the Prophet Samuel, “for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7, NRSV).

Some men are incapable of growing beards, or even a moustache or goatee, and that is the way God made them. Are they less spiritual because they cannot have a beard? Others have beards as a matter of personal preference, and not necessarily because they think the Bible requires them. In some Messianic congregations, you will find that facial hair on men is not an issue, where in others it is an issue. Speaking for myself, I do not choose to make the facial hair I see or do not see on any man into an issue, although men who wear beards can obviously be easily distinguished from women.

Concurrent with the variance of views, concerning beards and facial hair within Judaism, is how much of Orthodox Judaism practices the custom of wearing *payot* (פאות). This interpretation stems from the meaning of the Hebrew word for “corner” in Leviticus 19:27, *peah* (פֶּה), “side, edge, border” (BDB).<sup>58</sup> *Payot* are often curls that extend down from the area of the sideburns, and they vary in length from a few inches, to even eighteen inches. Kolatch explains that “many Jews, particularly members of *chassidic* sects, will not trim the sidelocks even of children. Long, curled sidelocks (*payot*) on the children of *chassidim* is a common sight.”<sup>59</sup>

Not very many in the Messianic community practice the custom of having *payot*. No one, though, should ever be found harassing Jews who do wear them.

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<sup>57</sup> Consult Eisenberg, pp 590-592 for a summary of how the issue of beards, grooming beards, and shaving is approached in the mainline Jewish Synagogue.

<sup>58</sup> BDB, 802.

<sup>59</sup> Kolatch, 122.

Simply consider the many Orthodox Jews during World War II, who had Nazi troops shame them by cutting off their *payot*. Even with the wearing of *payot* something that is not too common in the worldwide Jewish community, it is certainly an interpretation of Leviticus 19:27 that has a longstanding practice throughout Jewish history, and is a part of the heritage of unique sectors of the Orthodox Synagogue.

### The Biblical Calendar

The new month, as originally specified by the Torah, was to be determined by the changing of the moon or *chodesh* (חֹדֶשׁ). Genesis 1:14 states how God originally made the lights of the sky, as the means by which His people were to keep time: “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.” Numbers 29:6<sup>60</sup> records how there were to be a variety of special offerings presented to the Lord, during the time of the New Moon.

Since the Biblical period of ancient times up until modern times, there has been a diversity of opinion present within Judaism as to how time is to be reckoned. For practical purposes, this most often concerns the days on which the appointed times are to be observed. While residing within the Land of Israel in either the First or Second Temple periods, it would be quite easy for an enclosed group of Ancient Israelites or Ancient Jews to maintain a calendrical system via a visible sighting of the New Moon, things definitely changed in history with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and widespread expulsion from the Holy Land. How was the Jewish community, the vast majority of which was spread abroad in Diaspora, to keep the appointed times and maintain some level of cohesion and unity? George Robinson offers the following fair summation in his book *Essential Judaism*, of how the Hillel II calendar was developed in the Fourth Century C.E.:

“In the time of the Temple in Jerusalem (the First Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.E., the Second Temple, built in 538 B.C.E. was razed in 70 C.E.), communication over long distances was problematic. It was imperative, if all Jewish communities were to celebrate at the same time, that everyone know when the new moon occurred, since the date of a festival would be based on when the first of the month fell...Until 358 C.E., when Rabbi Hillel II introduced a permanent fixed calendar, it was up to the Sanhedrin, the governing body of rabbis in Jerusalem, to decide when the new moon fell, based on eyewitness testimony. They in turn would send a signal to a man on a neighboring hilltop who would light a signal fire; another fire would be lit on a nearby hilltop and so on, until a chain of signal fires was flickering through the known Jewish world, telling the Jews that the new month had begun.

“This was, needless to say, an inexact system. The rabbis of the Sanhedrin worried that communities outside the Holy Land would not know the exact date

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<sup>60</sup> “[T]he burnt offering of the new moon and its grain offering, and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD” (Numbers 29:6).

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on which to celebrate a festival. In response to this problem, they instituted a second day for each festival in the Diaspora so that there could be no mistake. The second day is preserved in the practice of Orthodox and Conservative Jews in the Diaspora of celebrating a second day of major holidays. In Israel and the Reform movement, only one day of each festival is observed.”<sup>61</sup>

With a few modifications since, the Hillel II calendar—which is all *pre-calculated* for the beginning of the month and days for the appointed times—is followed by the worldwide Jewish community today, as well as the considerable majority of Messianic Judaism. One of the biggest areas of divergence, that is easily detectable between much of the Two-House sub-movement and Messianic Judaism, is that the former largely rejects the validity of the mainline Jewish calendar. When various “Two-House” assemblies and fellowships gather to remember the appointed times, such as Passover, it is usually not at the same time that mainline Messianic Jewish congregations will gather.

The issue of the calendar in general, is often regarded as one of authority. Do the Rabbis of Judaism have *any* significant place in the *halachah* of today’s Messianic community and Messianic Believers? It is not difficult for a Messianic Jewish person, in respecting his or her heritage, to conclude that the Hillel II calendar should be followed, since it provides common dates for all Jews the world over to observe the appointed times. Believing in Messiah Yeshua does not all of a sudden make such a person un-Jewish or significantly disconnected from the wider Jewish world, especially in matters like the calendar followed. Even if the Rabbis have been wrong in many theological areas, this does not mean that they are completely ignorant and totally devoid of basic wisdom.

Within much of the Two-House sub-movement, rather than the pre-calculated Hillel II calendar being followed, many instead prefer to follow the calendrical determinations by the Karaite movement. The Karaites were an ancient sect of Judaism that arose in the Middle Ages, that quantitatively rejected Rabbinical authority and the value of works like the Mishnah or Talmud. The Karaite movement in Israel, while extremely small, has its own calendar based on their visible sighting of the New Moon.

(It does have to be noted that a small number of people within the Two-House sub-movement do still follow the mainline Jewish calendar. But even in doing so, there are disagreements often present with the date for keeping *Shavuot*, or referring to the Feast of Trumpets as *Rosh HaShanah*.<sup>62</sup>)

Within the Two-House sub-movement and at many its popular conference events, it is not uncommon to find various outspoken teachers who advocate things along the lines of, “The Father is restoring the Biblical calendar to us...” Within such teachings, one does not often find that much regard expressed for the

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<sup>61</sup> George Robinson, *Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs, and Rituals* (New York: Pocket Books, 2000), pp 79-80.

<sup>62</sup> Consult the relevant sections of the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* and *Messianic Fall Holiday Helper* by Messianic Apologetics for a further discussion of these issues.

complexities of ancient Jewish history, and the need for the Rabbinic authorities to develop a calendar that *the worldwide Jewish community* could use to keep them unified together as a people. Unfair accusations and disgust toward the Synagogue, and Jewish religion in general, are instead more easily detected.

Too much of the independent Messianic world has many “restored Biblical calendars” littering its ranks. While various persons have taken it upon themselves to produce their own “restored Biblical calendar,” this has tended to only cause *more confusion* and division, as one does not know which calendar is to be followed from congregation to assembly to fellowship. Not all agree with the determination of the Karaite movement in Israel, or when the New Moon begins and ends. The default calendar choice, for any Messianic, is understandably the mainline Rabbinical calendar used by Judaism today.

What really needs to be recognized, about why there is so much diversity circulating in the independent Messianic world about the Biblical calendar, is that a group’s so-called “restored Biblical calendar” is really not a means by which to determine the “real date” for remembering Passover or *Yom Kippur*. Many have produced their own calendars as a means to promote their own predictions and calculations regarding the end-times and Second Coming. With this, the most amount of attention focused is not upon the determination of the New Moon, but rather **the year**. Many assumptions are made from mathematics, astronomy, chronology, and science. It is not too infrequent that someone’s “restored Biblical calendar” gets proven wrong, and suggested dates and times have to be adjusted and recalculated when predictions come and go when nothing happens.

There is likely a season coming when some of the presuppositions that have gone into the different “restored Biblical calendars,” will need to be radically reevaluated. Recalculating and recalculating the presumed year of Yeshua’s return (2000, 2007, 2012, 2017, etc.) cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. The severe challenge to people reconsidering the various presuppositions that are associated with highly-packaged teachings like the so-called 6,000-year doctrine,<sup>63</sup> is that it will open up areas of theological discussion which have largely remained closed to all sectors of the Messianic movement, particularly as it concerns the material of Genesis chs. 1-11.<sup>64</sup> Anthropologically speaking, we see human cave paintings, such as those in Lascaux, France from an estimated 16,000 years ago<sup>65</sup> (with some of the other cave paintings in France and Spain dating to as many as 32,000 years ago). One need not be an evolutionist to legitimately recognize that the popular 6,000-year doctrine has made some assumptions, about both eschatology and Biblical genealogies (i.e., Genesis 5, 11),<sup>66</sup> that do not bear out in human history.

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<sup>63</sup> Consult the FAQ, “6,000 Year Teaching.”

<sup>64</sup> For a worthwhile review, I recommend that you consider the views of Creationist Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question: Scientific Advances and the Accuracy of Genesis*, second expanded edition (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001) and *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004).

<sup>65</sup> Information on visiting the cave of Lascaux can be accessed on the French Ministry of Culture website: <<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arnat/lascaux/en/>>.

<sup>66</sup> Consult the FAQ, “Genesis 5, 11 Genealogies.”

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Yeshua will only return **when His people are ready**. The Apostle Peter says we “ought...to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (2 Peter 3:11-12). He employs the present active participle *speudontas* (σπεύδοντες)—“hastening”—to describe this action. The righteous behavior of Believers affects “the coming of the day of God,”<sup>67</sup> not any human being’s mistaken calculation of it.

Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics see absolutely no reason why today’s Messianic movement should not be observing the appointed times *on all of the same dates* as the rest of the worldwide Jewish community. The areas where the Rabbinical authorities should be rejected concern matters like Yeshua’s Messiahship, or Jewish and non-Jewish equality in the people of God. Matters, like making sure that the assembly follows the same calendar, are in a quantitatively different category. Significant, unnecessary divisions have been caused by all of the “restored Biblical calendars” out there—and various, presumed “leaders” of note in the Two-House sub-movement have been caught going after Jewish customs, which have not at all helped reasonable dialogue about Biblical prophecies concerning a larger restoration of the Kingdom to Israel (Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 31:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10).

## Torah Halachah for Messianic Believers

Having been involved in the Messianic movement since 1995, my family and I have seen and witnessed a great deal firsthand that many of you have not experienced. We have been involved with several Messianic Jewish congregations, and have been exposed to many “independent” forms of Messianic expression as well. We have seen individuals who largely embrace an Orthodox or even ultra-Orthodox style of Torah application for their lives, and then others who completely shun any form of mainline Jewish tradition. *How do we weather the extremes?*

In the previous sections describing various aspects of Jewish custom and tradition, derived from Torah instructions, there has not been a huge amount of understanding—or even a desire for understanding—among far too many people in the Two-House sub-movement. Why have the Jewish people separated meat and dairy, worn *tallits*, or prayed with *tefillin* throughout history? When people criticize things they do not express any interest in understanding, not only do they show themselves to be ignorant, but too many times they show themselves to be arrogant. Some of the aspects of Jewish Torah practice, such as employing a *tallit* and/or *tefillin* in regular times of prayer, can definitely be used—if I may call it something from my Wesleyan heritage—as a **means of grace**. Using these elements of faith, undeniably derived from interpretations of Holy Writ, can be a physical way for individuals to partake of God’s goodness, learning tangible lessons. (Quantitatively speaking, using *tefillin* for regular prayer times is no different than remembering the Lord’s Supper or being baptized, as is practiced in much of evangelical Christianity.)

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<sup>67</sup> Consult the author’s blog editorial, “The Hastening of Righteousness.”

## Anti-Semitism in the Two-House Movement

I understand why some non-Jewish Messianics shy away from a great deal Jewish custom and tradition, because they see the pitfalls of various people in the Messianic movement who embrace it all with little discernment, and whose relationship is far more with Jewish tradition than it is with the God of Israel. There are Messianic Jews who are over-zealous for Judaism, and there are non-Jews in the Messianic movement who sometimes want to be “more Jewish” than most Jewish Believers themselves. These are the ones, sadly, who can be easily persuaded against the Messiahship of Yeshua, because embracing tradition is more important to them than knowing and having a supernatural experience with the Creator God via His Son. In various cases, a few of these people want most non-Jewish Believers removed from the Messianic movement. Unfortunately, the presence of a number of people with bad attitudes, has gone a long way at influencing a wide number of non-Jews in the Two-House sub-movement, in their being strongly opposed to mainline Jewish ways of following the Torah.

Can tradition *and* history be totally discarded as one attempts to keep God’s Torah? *It would be naïve of anyone to think so.* The Messianic movement would not be here, unless someone had started examining the Gospels and the letters of the New Testament with more Jewish resources at their disposal than generations past. We recognize that Yeshua and His Disciples lived like the average Jews of the First Century. They adhered to many of the customs and traditions of their time, and instructed their followers to likewise keep them. If they were living today, they would do their best to be living, (at least somewhat) as active members of the worldwide Jewish community.

*What Jewish community the Disciples might, or would, be a part of today is a vigorous debate.* Many believe that they would be Orthodox. Many believe that they would be Conservative or Reform. I believe that they would be part of the Jewish community that interacts the most with the world at large, being concerned with social justice and fairness for all. To me, I do not believe Yeshua or the Apostles would be a part of an Orthodox Jewish community largely off to itself, but instead that they would be part of the more Centrist branches of Judaism.

No religious practice, be it of Judaism or Christianity, is beyond criticism. No one’s own personal faith is beyond criticism, as we must reevaluate where we stand before God every day. Constructive criticism is a good thing, as it helps us grow and learn. In mainline Judaism, the majority of the traditions and customs that have developed are supposed to help one’s relationship with God, and they are based in the Scriptures. At the same time, no one Jew is going to apply it all the same, and non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement are likewise not going to apply these things the same way.

But should the Torah be applied in a manner that is not consistent with any branch of Judaism? Some say yes, **but I would say no.** Even though the vast majority of Judaism today is not Orthodox, those who are observant still wear a *yarmulke* to a religious service, they know what *tefillin* and what a *tallit* are, and they will nominally separate meat and dairy for much of what they eat. I believe that a moderate approach to these issues is best, where we can recognize the value

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in them, while at the same time respect one's personal choice. Arrogantly coming against them is wrong, but equally so, no one should be forced or coerced to follow them.<sup>68</sup>

### The Jewish Leadership of Israel, and Mutual Honor and Respect

Why does it seem, to many observers, that a large number of people within the Two-House sub-movement have a problem with mainline Jewish traditions and customs, which are often based in the Torah and were observed in the Biblical period? Why do people who commonly claim to be doing their best to see a larger restoration of Israel come to pass, **actually seem to be doing more to see it deterred?**

The word of Isaiah 11:13 should be well taken: "...the jealousy of Ephraim will depart...Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, and Judah will not harass Ephraim." This did involve the political rivalry that existed between the ancient Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel. By extension, there tends to be strong hostility, tension, and even some hatred, which can flame up among Jewish and non-Jewish people in today's Messianic movement, when the prophecies of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms yet to be reunited are discussed.

Most of the non-Jews, who forcibly claim to be "returning Ephraim," are not all descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom—and they do not have a distant Jewish ancestor or two, either. Yet, it is absolutely true that purposefully fomenting more bitterness, resentment, and misunderstanding among people in the broad Messianic community **has to stop**. Someone, when approaching the subject matter, has to make sure that the bickering depicted by Isaiah 11:13 can be **steadfastly avoided**. Even with the significant number of self-claiming "Ephraimites" being only of the nations, many of these people have definitely opened themselves up to the same, negative spiritual influences which operated via the different monarchs and leaders of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (discussed further in **Chapter 5**).

While it is true that there are Messianic Jewish leaders and teachers who have contributed to the problem, and they have little interest in discussing the relevant prophecies, it is most unfortunate to observe how *the majority of the problems* are most often found among those of the Two-House sub-movement itself. When many people within today's Two-House sub-movement are told that they need to respect Judaism and the Jewish people, they frequently scoff, mock, and reject it. (And, they typically do the same to evangelical Christianity as well.) The Holy Scriptures themselves, however, bid all Messiah followers to respect the Jewish people, who gave humanity at large the Messiah Yeshua. Yeshua Himself said, "for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

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<sup>68</sup> The various aspects of Torah *halachah* mentioned in this article, and related issues, are examined in further detail in the author's book *Torah In the Balance, Volume II*.

What does the Torah communicate to us about the position of the Jewish people within the community of Israel? Prior to blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, the Patriarch Jacob/Israel blessed his fourth son, Judah:

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down to you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples” (Genesis 49:8-10).

The prophetic word, *ki-yavo Shiloh v'lo yiqhat amnim* (יָבֹא שִׁילֹה וְלוֹ יִקְחֶת עַמִּים), is often thought to be some kind of reference not only to the Davidic monarchy, but to the eventual arrival of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) on the scene of world history. It is He, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5), who will be granted the ultimate scepter or *shevet* (שֵׁבֶט),<sup>69</sup> and to whom all the peoples of Planet Earth must acknowledge as supreme (i.e., Psalm 2:8; 72:8, 11; Isaiah 11:10, 12; Micah 5:4; Zechariah 9:10).<sup>70</sup> The association with the tribe of Judah, which would become the dominant force in the Southern Kingdom of Israel, with the Messiah Himself—requires any person who recognizes Yeshua as Savior to highly respect His fellow Jews. The Rabbinical commentary on this, as offered by the *ArtScroll Chumash*, should be well taken:

“The word *until* does not mean that Judah's ascendancy will end with the coming of Messiah. To the contrary, the sense of the verse is that once Messiah begins to reign, Judah's blessing of kingship will become fully realized and go to an even higher plateau (*Sh'lah*). At that time, all the nations will assemble to acknowledge his greatness and pay homage to him.”<sup>71</sup>

The teaching of Yeshua and the Apostles does not imply that once the Messiah arrives on the scene of world history, that the scepter of leadership will somehow be completely removed from the Jewish people. It will undoubtedly be transformed, and altered to a degree, by the arrival of the Messiah and the salvation historical work He will perform—but it is not to be cast aside, dishonored, and revoked. In Yeshua's word of Matthew 25:45-46, it is rightly concluded that those who did not offer care for those in need, *most especially Yeshua's Jewish brethren*,<sup>72</sup> will suffer the same penalties as Satan and the demonic host:

“Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ These **will go away into eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”

When you see something like this, while it undeniably concerns care for strangers or prisoners in general, it must also concern Yeshua's own Jewish brothers and sisters. These are people who throughout history have suffered great

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<sup>69</sup> “rod, staff, club, scepter” (BDB, 986).

<sup>70</sup> Mathews, pp 894-896.

<sup>71</sup> Scherman, *Chumash*, 279.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 77.

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humiliation, and even near genocide (on more than one occasion, no less). Anyone in the Messianic community—especially purporting a larger restoration of Israel yet to occur in prophecy—cannot afford to fall into the trap of treating the historic Jewish people with any degree of unfairness or lack of understanding. Yet, in dismissing a great deal of mainline Jewish Torah practice and *halachah*, and even acting as though “Judah needs correction” for a variety of mainline traditions and customs, a wide number of people in the Two-House sub-movement have really thought that the Jewish leadership of the Kingdom of Israel has been nullified.

The Apostle Paul asks, “what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with **the oracles of God**” (Romans 3:1-2). What are *ta logia tou Theou* (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ)? Many readers think that these are the Tanach Scriptures. But, the singular term *logos* (λόγος) has a wide variety of applications, including things that are “chiefly oral” (BDAG).<sup>73</sup> What if Paul has actually included in his statements of Romans 3:1-2, that the Jewish people were entrusted with the *oral explanations* of how much of God’s Instruction is to be properly followed? Many of these traditional explanations could have made their way into Jewish literature like the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud, Midrashim, and even Dead Sea Scrolls—which Bible scholars today generally all consult as containing important background material, as at least historical witnesses to ancient opinions.

We see later in on Romans 9:3-4, how Paul speaks of “my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and **the temple service** and the promises.” The term *latreia* (λατρεία) largely relates to cultic worship.<sup>74</sup> Historically speaking, the Synagogue has certainly preserved many traditional liturgies, hymns, and psalms (not necessarily present in the Book of Psalms) originally used in Temple worship that have made their way into the *siddur* (סידור) or prayer book.<sup>75</sup>

Taken together, the Jewish people have historically been given the responsibility of preserving the protocol of proper worship and mainline Torah *halachah*. Yeshua Himself actually bid His disciples to follow the lead of the Pharisees (Matthew 23:1-2), even though He did warn them about some of the leaders’ hypocrisy (Matthew 23:3). Because of Judah’s leadership affirmed in the Torah (Genesis 49:10), the Jewish people do get to determine a wide degree of the proper way of how the commandments of the Torah are to be interpreted. Today’s Messianics should follow—and certainly expel efforts to be knowledgeable—of many of the Jewish interpretations of Moses’ Teaching.

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<sup>73</sup> BDAG, 599.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Ibid., 587.

<sup>75</sup> The valid statements of Daniel C. Juster, *Growing to Maturity* (Denver: The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations Press, 1987), 228 on the *siddur* need to be recognized here:

“Eighty percent is either direct Scriptural quotation or creative intertwining of Scripture passages....Fifteen percent is prayer material inspired by Scripture....Only a small portion contains anything contrary to Biblical faith.”

## Anti-Semitism in the Two-House Movement

Does this mean that the Rabbinical authorities are to be *blindly followed* in all matters? **Of course not.** No astute and intelligent Bible reader thinks that Paul instructing Believers to follow the government in Romans ch. 13, means that man-made laws that are in flat defiance of God's will are to be followed. Similarly, any applications of God's Torah seen in the Jewish theological tradition need to be spiritually edifying—as Philippians 4:8 would say, “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things”—and be compatible with His mandate of Israel making a difference in the world (Genesis 12:2-3; Deuteronomy 4:5-8). There are Jewish views of the Tanach Scriptures which clearly do subtract from the gospel, and which disregard the Messiahship of Yeshua, that are to surely be disregarded.<sup>76</sup> Yet, one can clearly recognize that the Apostles affirmed that the Jewish religious leadership of their day had an authority—what today we should best call a **consultative authority**, alongside that of leaders in the Body of Messiah (cf. Matthew 16:19)—not to be so casually dismissed. Many of the traditions Judaism has preserved can be considered “Spirit-inspired,” and doubtlessly aid non-Jews in the Messianic movement, being enriched by their Hebraic and Jewish Roots.

As with all issues, though, discernment and wisdom from the Holy Spirit should be able to identify those things which subtract from Yeshua and His atoning work.<sup>77</sup> Much of today's Messianic Judaism has rightfully recognized various areas of Jewish Torah practice, where Yeshua's ministry and teachings and the thrust of the gospel clearly stand in contrast. The majority of Messianic Judaism does not follow an Orthodox level of Torah observance, but one closer to contemporary Conservative or Reform Judaism.

We all have a great debt to Judaism and the Jewish people, and while *it will take time* for many of today's Messianic Jews to see that there is a larger restoration of Israel to occur via prophecy, incorporating the righteous from the nations into an expanded Kingdom realm of Israel—**non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement should not be causing problems.**

But why are there problems? This can happen when one witnesses non-Jewish Believers *inappropriately assuming* some sort of identity as “returning Ephraim” (as opposed to just affirming prophecies that speak of the reunification of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel, yet to occur). Too many place the Jewish people in a distant junior role in widely speaking of “Ephraim and Judah,” so that the distinct contributions that Judaism and the Synagogue have to make to the people of God get effectively nullified. While today's Two-House teachers will widely claim they do not promote replacement theology, in dismissing a great deal of the value of mainline Jewish tradition—even that which is widely seen in much of today's (Left of Center) Messianic Judaism—they definitely tend to practice a form

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<sup>76</sup> For a notable example of this, consult the FAQ, “Ephesians 2:14-15.”

<sup>77</sup> For a further discussion on this and related issues, consult the author's article “The Role of History in Messianic Biblical Interpretation” (appearing in *Introduction to Things Messianic*).

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of social supersessionism, when it comes to the Jewish Synagogue. (And, they practice just outright dismissal and dishonor when it comes to the sizeable, legitimate spiritual contributions of evangelical Protestant Christianity.)

The instruction of Romans 12:10 points us in a direction much different than that commonly witnessed in today's broad Messianic community: "love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (NRSV). The instruction of Philippians 2:3-4 can be added to this: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." When approaching the subject matter of a prophesied larger restoration of Israel, the unity among God's people that should be present can only be manifested when we all learn to respect and honor one another. *Far too few have asked the Lord to give them these abilities.* It is required, though, of all Believers to "be subject to one another in the fear of Messiah" (Ephesians 5:21).

This does not mean that non-Jewish Messianic Believers have to become culturally or ethnically Jewish in all of their Torah observance, and have Jewish tradition and custom permeate *every single area* of their lives. (It is my personal opinion that there is a difference between traditional observances like lighting *Shabbat* candles or employing the *haggadah* for Passover, which normally take place within a local faith community, and more cultural practices like having a *chuppah* during a wedding ceremony, which is more of a family affair.)<sup>78</sup> In fact, non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement, often have many edifying perspectives and views from their evangelical Christian backgrounds that our faith community should benefit from. A position of mutual respect, as encouraged by the Apostolic Scriptures, allows for multiple parties to come together and for their best virtues, talents, and abilities to be used to accomplish the mission of God (cf. Ephesians 4:11-13).

## Anti-Semitism in the Two-House Movement

How do any of us learn to put another's needs before our own (cf. Philippians 2:3-4)? Many of today's Messianic Jews have undergone a great deal of rejection from their families and communities for expressing faith in Yeshua (Jesus). They are essentially ostracized from the Synagogue, and many are prohibited from becoming citizens of the State of Israel. All these Messianic Jews tend to have, is the fellowship of their fellow Jewish Believers, and the (distant) hope that one day their extended families and many more in the worldwide Jewish community *may* recognize the Savior. Non-Jewish Believers who make up a great deal of the Two-House sub-movement, *do not often realize this.* They are actually (and most inappropriately, and sometimes even delusionally) expecting to be recognized as "Ephraim," when they seldom realize that they have interjected themselves into a

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<sup>78</sup> This is discussed in further detail in the author's article, "Considering Messianic Jewish Fears of Replacement and Irrelevance," appearing in the *Messianic Torah Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

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Messianic community where many Messianic Jews are still trying to handle the basic religious and social issues of being Jewish and believing in Yeshua.

There is a distinct sector of today's Messianic Jews which is definitely of the position that the Messianic movement is not something for non-Jewish Believers to be that involved in. *They want to see most of them go back to church.* When they see non-Jewish Believers keeping *Shabbat*, the appointed times, or eating kosher, they feel that their heritage is possibly being robbed from them. A wide number of forceful accusations are likely to be made in the (not so distant) future, by such a group, in regard to replacement theology or supersessionism. These are people who do not consider non-Jewish Believers to be a real part of the Commonwealth of Israel (cf. Ephesians 2:11-13), much less are that interested in entertaining a larger restoration of Israel beyond the rebirth of the Jewish State and the salvation of a generation of Jews. A Two-House populism which advocates that most non-Jews in the Messianic movement are some sort of lost "Ephraimites," coupled with a high level of opposition to mainline Jewish tradition, is **an easy target** for such Messianic Jewish teachers and leaders to go after.

It cannot be avoided that many movements in past history, which to some degree or another have approached the "lost tribes of Israel" subject matter, have often had (extreme) levels of anti-Semitism (eventually) associated with them. Making some observations on British-Israelism of the Nineteenth Century, author Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, of the book *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History*, indicates how "There were several advantages to focusing on the ten tribes: as part of Israel, they were chosen, blessed by God, and—most important—they were not Jews. Exiled seven centuries before Jesus, they could not be guilty for the Crucifixion." Noting this one example, he further explains, "This idea [of British-Israelism], despite its philo-Jewish beginnings, would later pave the way for some radical forms of anti-Semitism within the various Anglo-Israelist offshoots."<sup>79</sup> While possibly starting out as being pro-Jewish on various levels, Nineteenth Century British-Israelism helped give rise to other groups like that of Christian Identity and their white supremacism. (They may have fallen prey to the errant idea that the Jewish people were "Christ killers," when **all of sinful, fallen humanity** is actually responsible for Yeshua's execution.)

As things stand today, the various Two-House pseudo-denominations should not be regarded as being blatantly anti-Semitic, although they have not exactly taken any quantitative positions of being philo-Jewish, either. These are groups which tend to spur mainline Jewish positions as they regard usage of the Divine Name of God, customs like men wearing *yarmulkes* in worship services and places of reverence, and most notably they disregard the Hillel II Rabbinical calendar. There is a wide degree of theological fundamentalism and rigidity also present, which if not reigned in, could very well lead to problems much worse than simply disregarding mainline Jewish traditions. Unfortunately, some of the main leaders

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<sup>79</sup> Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 193.

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and teachers of the Two-House sub-movement, due to their own personal fundamentalism and over-simplicity, are widely unwilling to implement the necessary changes to see some of the claims against them thwarted.