

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

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MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

Frequently Asked Questions

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: *Greek New Testament*
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: *King James Version*
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: *Septuagint*
m. Mishnah
MT: *Masoretic Text*
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
NJSB: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
NT: *New Testament*
OT: *Old Testament*
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*
v(s). *verse(s)*
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

Fullness of the Nations

Proponents of the Two-House teaching commonly claim that the “fullness of the Gentiles/nations” in Romans 11:25, is the same as that prophesied by Jacob in Genesis 48:19. Is there any merit to the “fullness of the Gentiles/nations” being those of the Lost Tribes of Ephraim?

Within the Patriarch Jacob’s blessing of his grandson Ephraim in Genesis 48:19, it is stated that “his descendants shall become a multitude of nations” (NASU). It is fair to say that this would suggest some level of abundance. Proponents of the Two-House teaching, in seeing *melo-ha’goyim* or “fullness of the nations” in Genesis 48:19, frequently draw the conclusion that this is what is referred to in Romans 11:25, when the Apostle Paul detailed how “a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (NASU). Two-House proponents conclude that “the fullness of the Gentiles/nations,” is in actuality the masses of the Lost Tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. Once these people come to a recognition of their apparently lost Israelite heritage, then what is anticipated regarding “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26) will take place.¹

It is fair to say that Two-House proponents have not done a very good job with considering alternative interpretations or approaches to Genesis 48:18 and Romans 11:25. When Jacob foresaw that his grandson Ephraim would become *melo-ha’goyim*, did this automatically mean that the physical descendants of Ephraim would become multiple, non-Semitic ethnic groups in the future, something caused by the exile of the Northern Kingdom? While the Hebrew *goyim* can certainly be applied to different ethnic groups, it is also unavoidable from the Tanach how the Hebrew *goyim* as “nations” can refer to the tribes of Israel themselves. Ezekiel 2:3 states, “I send you to the Children of Israel, to the rebellious nations [*el-goyim*] that have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have defiantly sinned against Me; they and their fathers have defiantly sinned against Me to this very day” (ATS). Ephraim becoming *melo-ha’goyim* is commonly interpreted by examiners to speak to how the Northern Kingdom of Israel, would also be known as Ephraim. So, the “fullness of the nations” in Genesis 48:19 really concerned how “Ephraim” would become a designate name for the Northern Kingdom. As Jewish scholar Richard Elliot Friedman indicates in his *Commentary on the Torah*,

“The unusual phrase *mēlō-haggōyim* is usually taken to mean a multitude of nations, but that makes no particular sense in terms of the fate of the single tribe of Ephraim. Elsewhere *mēlō* can mean a full unit among a group (as in 2 Sam 8:2). It may mean here that Ephraim will be thought of as a nation, for Ephraim later comes to dominate the kingdom of Israel, and the name Ephraim is sometimes used to refer to the entire Israelite kingdom (Isa 7:2-17; Hos 5:3; 6:10; 7:1).”²

Linguistically speaking, Two-House proponents making a connection between “fullness of the nations” in Genesis 48:19 and Romans 11:25, are not on as firm a footing as they would like it to be. The Septuagint renders

¹ If necessary, do consult the book *Israel in Future Prophecy* by J.K. McKee. While this writer has little issue with addressing the subject matter of the Divided Kingdom period in Ancient Israel and what happened to the Northern Kingdom exiles, it cannot go overlooked how he is also a strong critic of the Two-House sub-movement and its sensationalism.

² Richard Elliot Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 158.

Also John E. Hartley, *New International Bible Commentary: Genesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 354; Kenneth A. Matthews, *New American Commentary: Genesis 11:27-50:26*, Vol 1b (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 881.

Fullness of the Nations

melo-ha'goyim in Genesis 48:19 as *plēthos ethnōn* or “a multitude of nations” (NETS), whereas the source text of Romans 11:25 has to *plērōma tōn ethnōn* or “the fullness of the Gentiles/nations.” The term *plērōma* or “fullness” in Romans 11:25, is affected by its immediate usage in Romans 11:12, with Paul detailing the anticipated salvation of his fellow Jews in the future: “If their trespass means riches for the world, and their impoverishment means riches for the nations, how much more will their fullness [*plērōma*] mean!” (Kingdom New Testament). **A proper interpretation and application of “the fullness of the nations” in Romans 11:25, will take into consideration the previous usage of “fullness” in Romans 11:12.**

This writer has argued that “fullness of the nations” in Romans 11:25 involves a qualitative fullness, where a group of non-Jewish Believers of stellar spiritual and moral aptitude, will emerge on the scene of history—and be used by God mightily as beacons of His love, grace, and mercy to a Jewish people which has widely dismissed Yeshua the Messiah (cf. Romans 11:31).³

³ For a further review, consult the author’s commentary *Romans for the Practical Messianic*.