

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)

Two-House Teaching

Where does your ministry currently stand in regard to the Two-House teaching?

Outreach Israel and Messianic Apologetics **should not at all** be considered a “Two-House” ministry, given the wide and diverse array of Biblical and theological topics we address, germane to the broad Messianic community. Our ministry affects people in Messianic Judaism, as well as those who identify as being part of the One Law/One Torah and Two-House sub-movements. We consider and analyze a wide series of issues and subjects which are thought to be of importance to people in all of those different groups. If our ministry choice is to at all be honored by others in the Messianic world of ideas, we would consider ourselves **an egalitarian Messianic ministry**. We are a ministry which regards both Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Messiah Yeshua to be a part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13, 19; 3:6), and which advocates a mutual submission ideology (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3-4). We fully affirm that all Messianic Believers, Jewish and non-Jewish, male and female—are equals in the eyes of the Lord (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 2:11)—and should be encouraged to develop all of their gifts, talents, and skills as is proper in Him. We also believe that the Messianic movement’s shared Judeo-Protestant spiritual and theological heritage, must be steadfastly honored.

As it concerns the specific issue of the Two-House teaching, Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics disavow the popular/populist variety of the Two-House teaching which has been promulgated since the 1990s, via a number of pseudo-denominations, sensationalistic groups, and dominant and/or presumed-prophetic personalities—which has not allowed itself to be often subject to constructive criticism, and/or further theological refinement and engagement with conservative Biblical scholarship. Yet, in 2008, at least, one Messianic Jewish ministry actually allowed the following statement to be featured on its website: “The Two-House doctrine, in its most basic terms, simply maintains that the nation of Israel was divided following the reign of Solomon and will be reunited during the end times.”¹ This would be the basic or generic approach taken by our ministry to the issue of what happened to the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, in concert with the sentiments of pre-millennial eschatology.² We would affirm a larger restoration of Israel, involving those from the exiled Northern Kingdom as a participant, yet to occur in Biblical prophecy.

We would acknowledge a greater, end-time restoration of Israel to come which is prophesied, going beyond the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948, as important as this has surely been. Such a larger restoration of Israel definitely involves the Jewish people, as well as descendants from the exiled Northern Kingdom, but also many welcomed and valued scores of companions from the nations themselves. There are pockets of people in remote corners of places like Southeast Asia, Southern Asia, the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean basin, and the environs of Central Africa, who claim to be descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom via some kind of oral tradition, and/or what can appear to be Jewish-style customs—and *most probably are*. (Sometimes this has been enjoined with some credible DNA analysis, confirming distant Semitic descent.) These are the areas which generally fall within the sphere of influence of the old Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires, and where the exiles of the Northern Kingdom could have been legitimately deported, scattered, and/or assimilated (cf. Jeremiah 31:10; Hosea 8:8-9; Amos 9:8-9).³

¹ (2008). *Two-House Doctrine Debate*. *The Messianic Center*. Retrieved 14 August, 2011 from <<http://www.themessianiccenter.com>>.

² Cf. Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching the Last Things: Old Testament Eschatology for the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), pp 37-38, 47-49.

³ This would be particularly seen in a work like [Quest for the Lost Tribes A&E](#), 1998, DVD 2006, hosted by Simcha Jacobovici.

Two-House Teaching

We believe that the Lord will bring together, as one people in Him: the Jewish people, such as the mentioned descendants of exiled Israel/Ephraim, and their many associated companions from all nations—as one broad and inclusive community in Messiah Yeshua, before His return, in fulfillment of end-time prophecy (i.e., Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 31:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10). We **do not at all encourage** non-Jewish Believers (particularly those of Western European ancestry) who are a part of today's Messianic movement, and who recognize themselves as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13; 3:6) or the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), grafted into the olive tree by faith in Israel's Messiah (Romans 11:17-18), to identify themselves as some sort of "Ephraimites." We especially do not encourage such non-Jewish people to make any kind of permanent pilgrimage or "*aliyah*" to the Holy Land, as there is no indication that all Messiah followers will, in total, ever live in the Land of Israel, even in the Messiah's Millennial Kingdom (cf. Isaiah 19:23-24; Zechariah 14:16-19).

An eschatology-based approach toward addressing this subject, with various details obviously needing to be left to an Eternal and Sovereign God, is frequently not the approach which one encounters in much of the well-known literature surrounding the subject matter. It can be said that there is a distinct difference between a populist Two-House teaching, which essentially advocates that the majority of non-Jewish Believers are distant descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom (with various connections to be likely made with Nineteenth Century British-Israelism)—versus a more Biblical approach to the issue which focuses on the specific prophecies of a larger restoration of Israel. While we would affirm a wide number of Tanach prophecies involving the exiled Northern Kingdom as a participant, as being unfulfilled at the present time, our ministry would not at all be considered a part of a Two-House sub-movement which practices a great deal of theological eisegesis, where many Biblical references to "two" are applied to Judah and Ephraim, and whose Hebrew and Greek examination is often limited to *Strong's Concordance* (among other things).

When this subject matter has been raised, we have definitely strived as a ministry—as best as we humanly can—to focus the attention of today's Messianic people on a larger scope of expectations regarding the restoration of Israel, with the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim as a noticeable participant. *How does this affect our view of the end-times, and what is to transpire regarding the restoration of Israel before the Messiah's return?* Unlike the populist Two-House teaching which has garnered the most attention since the late 1990s, our ministry has made it clear that non-Jewish Messianic Believers thinking that they are mostly descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom, is not at all a useful or profitable endeavor. Jeremiah 31:10 certainly directs Bible readers, "He who scattered Israel will gather him" (NASU). **Many of the finer details of such a larger restoration of Israel to be anticipated, are only known by our Eternal and Omnipresent Creator.** And, not at all to be ignored, is the steadfast Torah word of Deuteronomy 28:62, "Then you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, because you did not obey the LORD your God" (NASU). Much of the popular/populist Two-House literature has actually posited that the physical numbers of descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are in the hundreds of millions, if not billions, whereas the tenor of the Pentateuch itself does not at all convey this. Not only does this seem like a significant over-exaggeration, it makes the known Jewish population seem absolutely miniscule—especially in light of the 6 million Jews who were slaughtered in the Holocaust!

Perhaps most overlooked (and dismissed) in the whole discussion (and debate), is that there will be many associated companions/associates from the nations themselves involved in the restoration process (Ezekiel 37:16-19; Isaiah 49:6; cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47), most definitely being the significant majority of those who participate, in what is mainly **not** the reunion of the Two Houses of Israel as has been popularly communicated—but in actuality, instead, what is **a larger restoration/expansion of Israel's Kingdom**. Such a restoration would involve a resolution to the issue of the exiled Northern Kingdom for sure, but would also incorporate the righteous from the nations, into an expanded realm of Israel's Kingdom (cf. Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:15-18). Most of the non-

Also Jonathan Bernis (2005), *The Scattering of the Tribes of Israel*, March/April 2005. *Jewish Voice Today*. Available via <<http://www.jewishvoice.org>>; Sid Roth, *The Incomplete Church: Bridging the Gap Between God's Children* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2007), pp 17-18; "The 'Lost Tribes of Israel,'" in Kent Dobson with Jonathan Bernis, *Jewish Voice International Ministries NIV First Century Study Bible*, 2011 NIV (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), pp 1855-1856.

Jewish Believers one is likely to encounter, forcibly identifying themselves as some sort of “Ephraimites,” are not, and they have no Semitic genealogy of any kind. Yet, these people have been Divinely led by the Lord into the Messianic movement, certainly in fulfillment of prophecies like Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-3, and should be considered welcome and valued. They are most certainly the equals of Jewish Believers in Messiah Yeshua (cf. Galatians 3:28).⁴ They are, without question, human beings made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), who are loved by Him as the Eternal Creator!

Our ministry has a consistent track record of speaking out against many of the anti-Christian and anti-Jewish sentiments, which are often witnessed in the Two-House sub-movement and much of its popular literature. If there is genuinely a larger restoration of Israel to occur, which effectively involves all who acknowledge the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—*via the emergence of the modern Messianic movement*—then today’s Messianic people must certainly show proper respect and honor to their Jewish and Christian forbearers, employing their great virtues to accomplish His mission and purpose for the final hour.⁵

⁴ Consult the author’s exegesis paper on Galatians 3:28, “Biblical Equality and Today’s Messianic Movement” (appearing in *Confronting Critical Issues*).

⁵ Some preliminary resolution to the complicated issue of the popular/populist Two-House teaching in the broad Messianic movement, and the issue of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim in Biblical history and eschatology, is provided in the author’s book *Israel in Future Prophecy: Is There a Larger Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel?*