

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries
and **MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**



JANUARY 2026
ROMANS 9:23-29
GOD HAS CALLED PEOPLE
FROM BOTH THE JEWS AND THE NATIONS

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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries
and Messianic Apologetics*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts

All Believers in Israel's Messiah are to be regarded as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are to respect one another in mutual love as brothers and sisters, and are to work together for the salvation of the Jewish people and return of Israel's Messiah.

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be studied and heeded by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the Believers after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

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OLM UPDATE

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J.K. McKee

"And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. As He says also in Hosea, 'I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, "MY PEOPLE," AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, "BELOVED."' 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, "YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE," THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD' [Hosea 2:23; 1:10]. Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, 'THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY' [Isaiah 10:22-23]" (NASU).

There should be little doubting the fact, that even with a salvation historical motif present for Romans chs. 9-11, and the Apostle Paul having surveyed a history of Ancient Israel and his First Century Jewish people—that Romans 9:23-29, vs. 24-26 in particular, stands out as being a little strange. There are surely controversies present in the intertextual references of Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 and the salvation of the nations, followed by Isaiah 10:22-23. What are these things supposed to mean? How do they affect Messianic ecclesiology, and in particular whether or not non-Jewish Believers are part of a separate entity called "the Church," or whether they are a part of an enlarged Kingdom realm of Israel?

When reading Romans 9:23-29, it is not difficult to recognize how Paul had two groups of people in view: those being brought to saving faith in Yeshua from among the nations, and his own Jewish people.

ROMANS 9:23-29

GOD HAS CALLED
PEOPLE FROM BOTH THE
JEWS AND THE NATIONS

HOSEA 2:23; 1:10	ROMANS 9:24-26
<p>"I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, 'You are my God!'" (Hosea 2:23, NASU).</p> <p>"Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it is said to them, 'You are not My people,' it will be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God'" (Hosea 1:10, NASU).</p>	<p>"Even us He called—not only from the Jewish people, but also from the Gentiles—as He says also in Hosea, 'I will call those who were not My people, "My people," and her who was not loved, "Beloved." And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there they shall be called sons of the living God'" (TLV).</p>
ISAIAH 10:22-23	ROMANS 9:27-29

The second set of quotations, where **Isaiah 10:22-23** appears in **Romans 9:27-29**, is much easier for readers to reckon with. As painful as it was for Paul to recognize how many of his fellow Jews had rejected Yeshua, and hence were going to be cut off from Israel (Romans 9:6), it is not as though there was no Biblical precedent for this. The stark word of Isaiah 10:22 is, "For, although your people, Isra'el, are like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return" (CJSB). While in this case, along with the themes of Isaiah ch. 11 following, a return from the exile and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom were foretold for physical people—Paul was looking at things principally from a spiritual vantage point, as presumably only redeemed persons get to really enter into the Messianic Age, hence participating in Israel's restoration and its culmination.

A spiritual dynamic was afforded to him by how the Hebrew *sh'ar yashuv*, was rendered by the Greek LXX, as *to kataleimma autōn sōthēsetai*.

The verb *shuv*, appearing in the Qal stem (simple action, active voice), “turn back, return” (*BDB*),¹ was actually translated with *sōzō*, “to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction” (*BDAG*),² relating to either physical salvation or spiritual salvation. Here, the latter is what was emphasized by Paul—because even with a sizeable enough number of physical Israelites, only a small amount would be saved/rescued and return as is anticipated by the Prophets.

The first set of quotations, where Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 are quoted in Romans 9:24-26, can really catch some readers off guard. Here, the Apostle Paul has claimed, “he called us, not only from Jews, but also from Gentiles” (Brown and Comfort),³ *ekalesen hēmas ou monon ex Ioudaiōn alla kai ex ethnōn*. In asserting that God has called people *ex ethnōn* or “from the nations,” as well, Paul was speaking here in terms of how these people were called to salvation. Yet, rather than quoting a general passage, such as Isaiah 49:6, which emphasized both the restoration of Israel’s tribes and salvation going out to the whole world—a specific prophecy regarding Israel’s restoration was associated with the salvation of the nations. And, not only was a specific prophecy of Israel’s restoration applied to the nations; the declarations of Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 principally concerned those of the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim being restored to God in the eschaton. So, not only is it important for Bible readers to find a fair answer for how Romans 9:24-26 is involved with the question *Are non-Jewish Believers really a part of Israel?*, there are some additional factors also in play, which have not always been approached too well.

Stern recognizes in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary* how Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 are quoted in Romans 9:24-26, and drew the conclusion that Paul had to have been speaking midrashically—obviously via some kind of allegory—when it came to applying a prophecy regarding Israel’s restoration to those from the nations:

“Sha’ul uses these texts from **Hoshea** midrashically. Hosea was not referring to Gentiles but to Israel itself; he meant that one day Israel, in rebellion when he wrote, would be called God’s people. Sha’ul’s meaning, which does not conflict with what Hosea wrote but is not a necessary inference from it, is that ‘God’s people’ now includes some Gentiles.”⁴

¹ *BDB*, 996.

² *BDAG*, 982.

³ Brown and Comfort, 557.

⁴ Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 392.

Stern appears to admit, a bit reluctantly, that those to be regarded “My people,” as stated in Hosea 1:10, may include non-Jewish Believers.

Within today’s Two-House sub-movement, it is extrapolated that the non-Jewish Believers being referred to in Romans 9:24-26, via the appeal to Hosea 1:10 and 2:23, were most probably descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. Whether or not those from the nations, *ex eth-nōn*, in Romans 9:24-26, may be regarded as distant descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom or not, must be viewed as making some assumptions—assumptions which require empirical evidence not often provided by Two-House advocates.

All readers should be able to recognize the fact of how the God of Israel is a loving and gracious Heavenly Father, who desires to show mercy toward all of His human creations. Yet, some questions of logic are necessarily raised when looking at Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 and Romans 9:24-26.

We should not take issue with how there are a series of Tanach (OT) prophecies involving the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, which are unfulfilled at present, and involve their reunion with the Southern Kingdom of Judah (i.e., Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 31:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10). These are prophecies which need to be considered in relation to the Second Coming of Yeshua and the Messianic Age. *But who are these descendants, mainly?* 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).⁵ **The problem is that many Two-House advocates assume that the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom are in every corner of Planet Earth today**, and they really do not take into consideration the steadfast Torah word: “Then you shall be left

⁵ This would be particularly seen in materials such as *Quest for the Lost Tribes* A&E, 1998, DVD 2006, hosted by Simcha Jacobovici, and the concurrent comments witnessed in Jonathan Bernis (2005), *The Scattering of the Tribes of Israel*, March/April 2005. *Jewish Voice Today*. Available via <<http://www.jewishvoice.org>> and Sid Roth, *The Incomplete Church: Bridging the Gap Between God’s Children* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2007), pp 17-18; Kent Dobson, with Jonathan Bernis, *Jewish Voice International Ministries NIV First Century Study Bible*, 2011 NIV (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), pp 1855-1857.

few in number, whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, because you did not obey the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 28:62, NASU).

Any assumption that all, or even most, of the non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua from the First Century were some sort of "Ephraimites," as Two-House proponents widely think, draws a conclusion which not only an Apostle like Paul did not make—it is something which someone like him could not have humanly known, in the event there were a few descendants of the Northern Kingdom "swallowed up" (Hosea 8:8) and assimilated within small parts of his First Century world in the Mediterranean basin. If very few of the non-Jewish Believers in the First Century world of the Apostles were indeed descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim—then not unlike the true identity of the Unknown Soldier, such knowledge would have only been known to an Eternal God.

It is safe to conclude that those in passages like Romans 9:24-26 were genuinely people of the nations at large. At the same time, it can be said that a kind of entirely spiritualized or typological application of restoration of Israel passages to the nations, such as Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 quoted in Romans 9:24-26, does not do enough. A general word like Isaiah 49:6 is clear to explain, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (NASU). The salvation of the nations, generally, is a part of the grand restoration of Israel. Isaiah 49:6 is appealed to, for certain, concerning the nations' redemption, in the Apostolic Writings (Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23). If Paul wanted to emphasize to his mixed Roman audience how God was calling people to salvation from both his own Jewish people and the nations, this is the kind of passage which one would expect to see quoted.

When all is considered, the safe—and most provable approach—is that the nations are participants in a larger restoration of Israel.⁶ Whatever main substance is represented by Hosea 1:10 and 2:23, is something which the redeemed from the nations are beneficiaries of as well. Obviously, this would regard those non-Jewish Believers in Paul's day, mainly Greeks and Romans, who had acknowledged Israel's Messiah, and were surely to be reckoned among God's people along with Jewish Believers who had likewise recognized Israel's Messiah. Surely, if the Lord can demonstrate mercy and grace to the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom—whose ancestors

⁶ Most examination of the two-stick oracle of Ezekiel 37:15-28, as witnessed in the Two-House sub-movement, quantitatively fails to mention the fact that it is not just Judah and Israel/Ephraim who are united together, but that a third group of companions—seemingly the righteous from the nations at large—are also involved.

once lived in the Promised Land, saw the Temple of Solomon and God's presence within it, and then fell into gross idolatry—would He not also be compelled to save those of the nations at large, who were just flat turned over to sin and their lusts (cf. Romans 1), welcoming them as participants in Israel's restoration?

It is witnessed in Romans 9:24-26 how prophetic passages regarding Israel's restoration are applied to the nations—with non-Jewish Believers from the nations participating in Israel's restoration. With concepts such as Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 applied to non-Jewish Believers and their salvation—**such people were hardly part of some separate "Church" entity.**

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS SECOND STATEMENT excerpts

The complete Second Statement can be accessed online: <<https://messianicapologetics.net/ma-statement-of-faith/second-statement/>>

WORLDWIDE BODY OF MESSIAH

Today's Messianic community has an important end-time focus (cf. Romans chs. 9-11), which directly involves the salvation of the Jewish people (i.e., Ezekiel 37:1-14) and restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6). Non-Jewish Believers have always been involved in Messianic Judaism. This ranges from how many of the spouses of various Messianic Jewish leaders have been non-Jewish—to how many non-Jewish Believers, both individuals and families, have been Divinely called as direct participants and co-laborers, with Jewish Believers, into the Messianic mission. Their involvement may have started by first having an interest in matters such as Torah study, or understanding Yeshua in the Biblical festivals. Yet, as these persons have more tangibly embraced their faith heritage in Israel's Scriptures, legitimately growing in faith via the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27), it has transitioned into directly serving, side-by-side, with their Messianic Jewish brothers and sisters in matters of Jewish outreach, evangelism, Israel solidarity, and standing against anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Non-Jewish Believers in today's Messianic Judaism, are commonly approached as being like the sojourner Ruth (Ruth 1:16-17).

Yet, what is to be done with the many millions of Christian people, out there in the world, who may never be exposed to the Messianic movement and its unique place in salvation history?

To be certain, there are millions of non-Jewish, Christian people on Earth today, who have legitimately professed Jesus as their Savior, are born again, and who possess salvation. Yet, a great majority of these people know little to nothing about the existence of the Messianic movement, how Jew-

ish Believers in Yeshua can retain their Jewish heritage, and they do not necessarily have a strong Torah foundation in their reading of Holy Scripture. Many contemporary Christians believe in the total abrogation of the Mosaic Law for the post-resurrection era, whereas other theological traditions believe in the ongoing relevance of its moral and ethical statutes. Christian people traditionally observe Sunday Church, and holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and may even hold to a doctrine of pre-tribulation rapture. Some of this may be in defiance to Old Testament institutions such as the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat* and appointed times—but for others this is done as a sincere means to honor the Heavenly Father, and commemorate the birth and resurrection of the Messiah.

Those of the various non-Jewish Torah movements or Hebrew Roots movement, may be especially seen to castigate many evangelical Believers as being “lawless” and in rebellion to God. Quite contrary to this, there are indeed millions of sincerely born again Christian people, who are actively participating in what Yeshua designated as the “weightier matters” (Matthew 23:23) of Moses’ Teaching. These are men and women who possess an ethical compass focused on His decisive interpretation of the Torah seen in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chs. 5-7). Evangelical Christian Believers, quite thankfully, tend to use the principles of God’s Torah to oppose the influence of abortion on demand, the weakening of heterosexual morals, the LGBTQ+ agenda, Wokeism, and radical deconstruction, among other things.

No human being on Earth today, ultimately knows the final, eternal condition of another human being. There are many sincere, born again, evangelical Christians, who will be in the Kingdom—even though they never participated in the Messianic experience, or perhaps even knew about it. *Like each and every one of us, they will be judged by our Eternal God, by the knowledge which they had; only God ultimately knows who enters into God’s Kingdom.* And today, as the contemporary Messianic movement still grows and matures, it is reasonable and fair to say that non-Jewish Believers have to be specially called by the Lord into it. Perhaps in the future, as prophecies such as the nations streaming to Zion in the end-times, to be instructed from God’s Torah, take further shape (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3), many more evangelical Believers will participate in the Messianic Jewish experience on various levels, as allies and close friends. But this must also be joined with being vessels of God’s grace and mercy to the Jewish people, needing salvation (Romans 11:31).

In the future as we approach the Messiah’s return, it is to be unfortunately observed how there is going to be a great apostasy against the Creator God (Matthew 24:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:3). While something painful to admit, many in the contemporary Christian system may be seen to abandon their faith in Jesus, and will fail to acknowledge Him as the only way to salvation (John 14:6). The future apostasy will also probably involve casting aside the veracity of the Bible

or Holy Scriptures as myths and fairy tales, and the recognition of how the One God of Israel is the only true Creator.

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY/SUPERSESSIONISM

There is a significant challenge presented today by the Christian world, with the severe rise in replacement theology or supersessionism. Supersessionism quantitatively denies the eternal promises given to the ethnic descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—Israel proper—and transfers them to a new “Church” entity. Tanach (OT) promises of a physical return and restoration of ethnic Israelites to the Holy Land, and a reestablishment of Jewish hegemony, are commonly allegorized as involving the spiritual bounty Believers experience in Christ. Supersessionism is adhered to by those who are both theologically liberal, as well as theologically conservative. Conservative supersessionists, while claiming that Western society needs to return to an ethical and moral foundation in the Holy Scriptures—do not see anything Biblically or prophetically significant about the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, or the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Many are seen to not only promote replacement theology, but even various forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

It has been entirely proper and right for the Messianic Jewish movement to stand against replacement theology or supersessionism, and with that emphasize how the God of Israel is not at all finished with the people of Israel! The significant mission of Jewish outreach and evangelism, is rooted within the Apostle Paul’s salvation-historical trajectory of Romans chs.9-11, and his steadfast word, “God has not rejected His people, has He?” (Romans 11:1, TLV). All of those who are involved within today’s Messianic movement, are seen to stress God’s ongoing, supernatural preservation of the Jewish people over the millennia, and their significant role to play in the Last Days culminating in the Messiah’s return.

Frequently, in various academic, Messianic Jewish sectors, the composition of the people of God has been predicated upon a model of **bilateral ecclesiology**. This posits that both Israel proper and the Christian Church, together, compose the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13). The Christian Church, composing Believers from the nations at large, are to appreciate their Jewish Roots and spiritual heritage in the Synagogue, but are largely to remain separate. Jewish distinction and uniqueness can only be maintained with two noticeable sub-groups composing such a Commonwealth. If non-Jewish Believers, for example, were to partake of various outward matters of Torah (i.e., the seventh-day Sabbath or appointed times), then they may not only be seen to inappropriately blur distinctions, but may even be adhering to some form of replacement theology.

Many Jewish and non-Jewish Believers, within the Messianic community, have not been supportive of a bilateral ecclesiology model. They consider a bilateral ecclesiology model to be entirely contrary to what is actually being witnessed, on the ground and among the people, in Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues in the Diaspora—which are frequently mixed assemblies of Jewish *and* non-Jewish Believers, united as one new man/humanity (Ephesians 2:15). Instead, many are seen to support what may be considered an enlarged Kingdom realm of Israel ecclesiology model, based in James the Just’s expectation of the Tabernacle of David being restored (Acts 15:15-18; Amos 9:11-12, LXX). This would involve a restored Twelve Tribes of Israel at the center, and enlarged borders welcoming in the righteous from the nations. Yeshua the Messiah’s explicit claim to establish His *ekklēsia* (Matthew 16:18-19), is actually rooted within Tanach language detailing the restoration of Israel (Jeremiah 31:4; 33:7), not create a new, second sub-group of elect.

Non-Jewish Believers in Israel’s Messiah are to be regarded as grafted-in to the olive tree as wild branches (Romans 11:16-17), the metaphor of an olive tree itself being taken from descriptions of Israel (Jeremiah 11:16-17; Hosea 14:1-7). Believers from the nations, being grafted-in as wild branches to the olive tree of Israel—should not at all mean a displacement of the natural Israelite or Jewish branches, and with it a disregard for legitimate Messianic Jewish concerns and the original Messianic Jewish mission. Non-Jewish Believers who have been supernaturally called by the Lord to directly participate in the Messianic movement, and have taken on various outward Torah observances as prompted by the Holy Spirit, should not at all be equated to some canceling out of the distinct identity, but most especially, salvation-historical destiny of the Jewish people (cf. Romans 11:26ff).

The best way for non-Jewish Believers in today’s Messianic movement, who consider themselves fellow citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel alongside of Jewish Believers (Ephesians 3:6), to dispel any claims which might be made of replacement theology/supersessionism—is to play an active role as **co-laborers in the Messianic Jewish mission, right alongside of their Messianic Jewish brothers and sisters**. While such a mission will involve Jewish evangelism, it will also involve directly standing against the demonic ideologies of anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, and anti-Zionism.

MESSIANIC JUDAISM

The modern Messianic Jewish movement is a legitimate move of the Holy One of Israel, and has a mission directly rooted within the Apostle Paul’s salvation-historical trajectory of “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26ff). Many in today’s Messianic Judaism are actually seen to associate the modern Messianic Jewish revival with the dry bones of scattered Israel being brought back to life (Ezekiel 37:1-14), especially after the tragedy of the Second World War and Hol-

ocaust, also doubtlessly connected with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 (Isaiah 66:8). Some are seen to further connect the significant Messianic Jewish expansion, of the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the recapture of the Old City of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six Day War, and with that various conclusions about “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) ending may also be seen.

Messianic Judaism was birthed to primarily be a place where Jewish Believers in Israel’s Messiah did not have to profess faith in Yeshua and *then* assimilate into a wider non-Jewish Christianity, as was inappropriately and lamentably required for many centuries of religious history. Jewish people acknowledging Yeshua as Messiah, is one of the most Jewish things a Jewish person could do! By identifying as “Messianic Jews,” Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues were established to be places where Jewish Believers and intermarried couples could observe the traditions and customs of their ancestors, properly observing lifecycle rituals, remaining connected to the Jewish community, and being concerned with matters of both the State of Israel and Zionism. Unfortunately, many Messianic Jewish Believers, in professing faith in Yeshua, have also been ostracized from their families and the Jewish community. So, the Messianic Jewish movement has had to necessarily become the new “family” for a great number of Messianic Jewish Believers.

Messianic Judaism can often be seen, in North America at least, to be divided into two large groups: (1) those wanting Messianic Judaism to be a prophetic, Spirit-filled and end-time move, desiring to see revival come to the Jewish people via the salvation of Messiah Yeshua, and (2) those who are working ecumenically and academically to see Messianic Judaism be recognized as a formal branch of Judaism, alongside of the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform movements (among others). **While the Messianic Jewish mission of Jewish outreach, evangelism, and Israel solidarity will doubtlessly continue until Yeshua returns**, significant questions are being raised in the mid-2020s about the future of formal Messianic Judaism. Will formal Messianic Judaism, mainly in the Diaspora, be able to survive all the way to the point of the Second Coming?

Other major matters regard the many scores of non-Jewish Believers, genuinely called by God into this movement. Many Messianic Jewish Believers are seen to fully welcome non-Jewish Believers into Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues, as fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord, as being part of “one new man/humanity” (Ephesians 2:15). Others are seen to not be so welcome to non-Jewish Believers being a part of a Messianic congregation. *Each Messianic Jewish assembly, in the Diaspora, has to be evaluated on its own merits.* Non-Jewish Believers do make up the majority of people, in many Diaspora Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues. And with that, many are integrated into the leadership structures of local assemblies as elders (*zakanim*) and deacons (*shammashim*). The following is a major definition of Messianic Judaism, reflecting what is commonly seen in the North American Diaspora:

"We are a biblically based community of Jewish and Gentile believers committed to faith in the Jewish Messiah-Yeshua (Jesus), of whom the Torah of Moses and the prophets spoke. We follow a Messianic Jewish lifestyle as taught by the Apostles, celebrate the feasts of Israel, and observe other Jewish traditions. We teach that Jewish people who believe in Yeshua remain Jewish, while Gentile believers may practice Jewish customs and holidays without the requirement to become Jewish."

Rabbi Eric Lakatos, Tikvat Yisrael Messianic Synagogue Cleveland, OH / IAMCS Steering Committee.

As we get closer to the Second Coming, the center of the Messianic Jewish movement should necessarily shift away from the Diaspora and back toward the Land of Israel. Many are of the opinion that the modern Messianic Jewish movement has been placed, to see the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:1-14) and 144,000 sealed servants (Revelation 7:4-8; 14:1-5) emerge onto the scene. With the formal Messianic Jewish movement having gone through various phases of development, since the late 1960s and early 1970s, the question of whether or not there will be a post-formal Messianic Jewish phase (sometime in the mid-to-late Twenty-First Century)—is directly tied to it being an end-time move of God, and both the effects and fulfillment of future prophecies. Such a phase, though, would see the Messianic movement likely become much more de-centralized and informal, concurrent with Yeshua's end-time prophetic warning (cf. Mark 13:12; Matthew 24:10), and much more along the lines of the home fellowships witnessed in the Book of Acts and Apostolic epistles.

Our ministry and family are a part of the Diaspora Messianic Jewish movement. Yet at the same time, we are also fully aware that if this is to indeed be regarded as a prophetic, end-time move of the Holy Spirit, that we need to be prepared for new, possibly unforeseen factors and challenges to unfold, as we anticipate the return of the Messiah.

ONE LAW/ONE TORAH THEOLOGY

One Law/One Torah theology is considered to be a false teaching by the Messianic Jewish community. For certain, when it is exegetically evaluated, One Law/One Torah theology is a product of a fundamentalist hermeneutic. It is correct that there are statements, appearing within the jurisprudence of the Pentateuch, which detail "one law" or "one statute" applying to the native born and sojourner in some way (i.e., Exodus 12:48-49; Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 9:14; 15:15-16). Those of the One Law/One Torah sub-movement incorrectly conclude that statements, involving "one law" or "one statute," concern a universal Torah observance. When reviewed in their proper and wider context, Pentateuchal statements involving "one law" or "one statute" concerned specific areas where a sojourner who had entered into Ancient Israel, could have been treated unfairly or taken advantage of, unlike a native. They did not speak of universal Torah, but instead concerned specific, targeted matters.

One Law/One Torah theology is frequently criticized, because it tends to conclude that there were virtually no differences of any kind, between the native and sojourner in Ancient Israel. When pointed out, various differences which did exist between native and sojourner in the Torah, are not handled too well, by most supporters of a One Law/One Torah theology. An obvious issue would involve how only the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have an ancestral claim to tribal territories in the Land of Israel. Sojourners who entered in, from the outside to the community of Israel, could not make such claims.

Over the years, our family and ministry have had very poor, and often very strained relations, with many persons stridently identifying as One Law/One Torah. In our experience, the One Law/One Torah sub-movement is marked by a great deal of legalism, inflexibility, and judgmentalism. It is widely devoid of the work of the Holy Spirit, and absent of a great deal of the required love and grace of true Messiah followers. Some proponents are known to hold to unsustainable ideas, such as the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; cf. Hebrews 8:7-13) actually having been operative in the pre-resurrection era, prior to Yeshua's completed work on the tree of sacrifice (Luke 22:20). One Law/One Torah theology is widely seen to conclude that there have been no major changes, of any kind, naturally resultant from the Messiah event. This can most especially involve its sway toward theonomy, quite contrary to how the capital penalties of the Torah were absorbed in the death of Yeshua (Colossians 2:14), with capital punishment largely being a thing of the past.

Pronomian Christianity is a widely associated venue, or extension, of One Law/One Torah theology. There are some sincere people involved with Pronomian Christianity, who certainly desire to return to a theological foundation in Moses' Teaching. But the emerging Pronomian movement, also has some voices who bear distinct tinges of replacement theology (i.e., "the Church is Israel").

Today in the Body of Messiah, do Jewish and non-Jewish people have the exact same relationship to the Torah? **No.** The Torah of Moses composes the ethnic and cultural heritage of today's Jewish people; it may only be considered part of the spiritual heritage of non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah, who themselves will have another ethnic background and history as part of their identity. The Jewish people have a unique, direct connection to the Torah; non-Jewish Believers only have an indirect, spiritual connection.

It needs to be recognized how being disfavorable to One Law/One Torah theology, its fundamentalism, and its legalism—does not automatically mean that a person or ministry is seen to actively discourage non-Jewish Believers from partaking of God's blessings in outward Torah practices such as the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, festivals/*moedim*, or a kosher-style diet. The Torah itself emphasized a universal education of all, within the community of Ancient Israel (Deuteronomy 31:12). While there were various differences between native and sojourner in Ancient Israel, native and sojourner also had far more in common than not. Many thousands of non-Jewish Believers—by

the prompting of the Holy Spirit and the power of the New Covenant uniquely writing commandments onto their heart and mind—have been called by the Lord into the Messianic movement, in this hour. They have partaken of their faith heritage in Israel’s Scriptures in tangible ways—but unlike many in the One Law/One Torah sub-movement, are also actively involved in the Messianic Jewish mission, especially Jewish outreach and evangelism.

It is to be fairly recognized, that while there were specific contexts in the Pentateuch, involving “one law” or “one statute”—that contrary to the conclusion of a number of persons in Messianic Judaism—such a “one law” or “one statute” adhered to, in specific areas, highlighted commonality and fairness, and not differences or distinctions, as being the most important focus of the Torah’s jurisprudence.

TWO-HOUSE THEOLOGY

Two-House theology is considered to be a false teaching by the Messianic Jewish community. It first arose from various non-Jewish people in Messianic Judaism, unfortunately feeling unwelcome or rejected by Messianic Jews. They then falsely thought that they needed to find a physical connection to Israel, in order to be fully accepted within the people of God. Without being able to find any distant Jewish relative or ancestry, they instead looked to the descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. It was then quickly concluded that the reason the Lord must be leading so many non-Jewish people into the Messianic movement and toward things of Torah, was because they were actual, physical descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, “Ephraimites.” Sadly, what developed into the Two-House teaching—while based in some legitimate Biblical issues to be resolved—was influenced by a great deal of Ten Lost Tribes myths, fundamentalism and sensationalism, poor Biblical exegesis, and unbridled emotionalism.

All Bible readers have to intelligibly sort through the complications of the Divided Kingdom era of Ancient Israel, following the reign of King Solomon. Ancient Israel did legitimately separate into the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. While both participated in their own levels of idolatry and rebellion against the Lord, the Northern Kingdom was illegitimate from the very beginning, with the Southern Kingdom remaining true to the House of David. A sizeable enough group from the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, was taken into exile by the Assyrian Empire, who later assimilated into where they were dispersed. Yet, there were Northern Kingdom Israelites loyal to the God of Israel, who migrated to the Southern Kingdom, and whose descendants were integrated into the Jewish population through its dispersion to Babylon, and return. It is Scripturally accurate to say that corporately the Ten Tribes of the Northern Kingdom were dispersed, while at the same time recognizing how there were persons from all Twelve Tribes of Israel who were a

part of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and hence the Jewish community up until today.

There are various Tanach prophecies, which do concern a seemingly yet-to-be accomplished reunion of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel (i.e., Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 31:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10). There are various pre-millennial interpreters who recognize that these prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, with resolution to the Divided Kingdom matter to occur in conjunction with, or subsequent to, the Second Coming of the Messiah. But, they do not subscribe to some of the exaggerations regarding who the actual descendants of the exiled Northern Kingdom are, as propagated by the Two-House teaching. Such persons to be reunited with those of the Southern Kingdom, are much more limited to small groups in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Africa, and the Eastern Mediterranean, which possess oral customs and traditions stemming from Ancient Israel. A great number of the actual descendants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim, actually live in the Middle East and its immediate environs, and are most probably Muslim today.

What makes the Two-House teaching false, is not a focus on various, unfulfilled future prophecies involving the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel as participants; what makes the Two-House teaching false, is the assumption of there being hundreds of millions, if not several billion, lost Israelites from the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim in the world today. This is not the impression one gets from a Torah word such as, "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" (Deuteronomy 28:26, NASU). The idea that there are hundreds of millions of lost Israelites from the Northern Kingdom on Planet Earth, but only 17-18 million Jews, is rightfully offensive to today's Messianic Jewish Believers—especially in light of the 6 million who perished in the Holocaust.

Those of the Two-House sub-movement have been prone to promote a great number of Lost Tribes myths and fantasies, especially repackaging some of the claims of the Nineteenth Century British-Israel movement. This runs contrary to how conservative examiners are prone to look for descendants of the Northern Kingdom exiles, among people groups within the sphere of influence of the old Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires: mainly Eastward. The Talmud expresses the view that the Lost Tribes went to Persia (b.Yevamot 16b), with an ancient Christian leader expressing a similar view that they went to Persia and India (Sulpitus Severus *Sacred History* 11). There are Messianic Jewish ministries which have performed regular outreaches and medical missions in Africa and India, among small groups which have oral traditions and customs going back to Ancient Israel and the Northern Kingdom. They have been recognized as legitimate descendants of the Lost Tribes by Jewish authorities in Israel, and often have a desire to make *aliyah*.