

Redeemed Israel— The One New Man

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(In this quick study, biblical researcher Ya'acov Natan Lawrence is not offering the reader an exhaustive treatment of this topic, but rather a quick synopsis based on his extensive research in pursuit of truth. In doing so, he has evaluated biblical, linguistic, Christian and Jewish sources.)

WITH WHOM DOES THE BIBLE SAY THAT the Creator of the Universe (YHVH/Yehovah Elohim) want to have an eternal relationship? We know that YHVH Elohim (God) loves everyone and sent his Son to the earth that the whole world might be saved (John 3:16). We also know that he desires that no men should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). But there's a problem. The Bible—the Word of Elohim — also teaches that one can only enter into relationship with the Creator—YHVH Elohim—(resulting in salvation and immortality) by coming through Yeshua (Jesus) the Jewish Messiah via a personal *and covenantal* relationship with him.

This begs the next question. With whom does the Creator make covenants? Anyone and everyone? No.

In the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament), YHVH Elohim declares that in the end times, he will make a new covenant with the two houses of Israel (*not* the Gentiles or non-Israelites)—that is, the house of Judah and the house of Israel (Heb 8:8). We know who Judah is (i.e., the Jews), but who is the house of Israel?

From the time of Abraham forward, Elohim never made a covenant with the Gentiles—in either the Old or the New Testaments. Man's relationship with the God of the Bible is always based on a covenant relationship with him. At the last supper, Yeshua talked with his disciples about making a new covenant with them (and with those of his followers who would come afterwards) when he initiated the communion elements.

For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt 26:28)

And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. (Mark 14:24)

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:20)

What is this new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah to which the writer of Hebrews refers (Heb 8:8)? This idea of a “new covenant” originates in the Old Testament, for Hebrews 8:8 is a direct quote from Jeremiah 31:31.

31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD [YHVH], that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD [YHVH]:

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD [YHVH], I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God [Elohim], and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD [YHVH]: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD [YHVH]: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

And now let's review some biblical history to give us some context as we answer the question, who is the house of Israel? How did the nation of Israel/children of Israel become two houses—the house of Judah and the house of Israel?

At its inception, when the Israelites came out of Egypt, Israel was one nation made up of 12 tribes, but because they broke YHVH's covenants by violating his Torah commandments and going after heathen gods, he broke the 12 tribes apart and they become two separate nations, kingdoms or houses—the northern kingdom (called the house of Israel or Ephraim) and the southern kingdom (called the house of Judah or just plain Judah). We know to this day who the southern kingdom is—the Jews, but again who is the northern kingdom or house? This is important to know, since Elohim will make a covenant with them in the last days, and we can only have salvation and eternal life if we're in covenantal relationship with YHVH Elohim, the Creator of the universe.

What happened to the northern kingdom of Israel after they were split off from the southern kingdom? The biblical prophets and history tell us that they were scattered all across the earth in every direction after the fall of the northern kingdom more than seven hundred years before Yeshua (Jesus), but that in the last days, at the time of the second coming of the Messiah, they would return and be reunited with their Jewish brethren.

Ezekiel prophesied a day when these two nations would become one nation again (Ezek 37:15–28). Below, we read a synopsis of this wonderful prophecy:

19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD [YHVH]; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

20 And the sticks ... shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD [YHVH]; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

So again, who is the house of Israel?

Ezekiel's prophecy is yet for the future, for it has never been fulfilled, and David is not yet ruling as king over the reunited nation of Israel, since the resurrection of the dead hasn't happened yet, and David is still in his grave (Acts 2:29) awaiting the resurrection.

Again, who is the house of Israel? To finally answer this question, let's have one more quick biblical history lesson. Let's go back to the time of the patriarch Jacob [or Israel] for some clues that will definitely tell us who this people group—the house of Israel—is. In Genesis 48:14, 16, 19, the patriarch Jacob just before his death was praying prophetically over his two grandsons (the sons of Joseph) Ephraim and Manasseh.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

While prophesying over Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob crossed his hands over their heads making

the symbol of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav* ✠ (like our letter *t* or *x* in our English alphabet), which resembles a cross and in that ancient Hebraic script pictographically means “sign of the covenant.”¹ His arms also formed the outline of the well-known Christian fish symbol. Jacob then spoke of the Heavenly Messenger (the Hebrew word *malak* mistranslated as “angel” in most Bibles) of YHVH (i.e., the preincarnate Yeshua) who had redeemed him from *all* evil (see Gen 31:11–13), and called on this Redeemer to bless his grandsons’ descendants. Jacob then prophesied that the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh would become like “fish in the midst of the land” (literal translation of Gen 48:14–16; see *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Tanach*).

In light of this prophetic symbolism, which religious group on earth today would qualify as having fulfilled Jacob’s prophecy as to who the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh are? Which religion on earth today uses the fish as their symbol, speaks of a Messenger from YHVH as their Redeemer (or Savior), and has the sign of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav*, which looks like a cross? The Buddhists? The Moslems? The Hindus? Even the Jews? Hardly! Only Christianity fits this enigmatic criteria. Many Christians are without a doubt the literal descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, although they have intermarried with the nations (or Gentiles) of the world. Those who are not literal descendants of Abraham through the sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh), according to the Apostle Paul, once they come to saving faith in Yeshua in some unique sense become the descendants of Abraham (e.g., Gal 3:7, 29).

So now that we know who the house of Israel is, how does this relate to you?

What did Yeshua say about the house of Israel? He declares that he came to gather them in, and he commissioned his disciples to do the same.

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt 15:24)

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt 10:6)

Who did Paul view the Gentiles as? In Ephesians 2:11–19, he states that the Gentiles of Ephesus are no longer Gentiles, but are now Israelites who had been grafted into the nation of Israel by the blood of Yeshua (see also Rom 11:13–24). Paul calls them the *one new man* in Messiah (Christ) united with believing Jews! These “Gentiles,” in Paul’s mind, were obviously a part of this group that Yeshua referred to as “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Furthermore, in Galatians 3:29, Paul clearly declares that if a Gentile belongs to Messiah (Christ), then he is the seed (literally, the sperm or offspring) of Abraham and heirs to all the covenant promises YHVH made to him and his descendants.

According to the apostolic writers and the rest of the Bible, within the spiritual body of Messiah (called “the church”) there are no longer any Jews nor Gentiles (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). There is only “the one new man” in Yeshua. YHVH doesn’t refer to his people as “the Gentile saints” and “the Jewish saints.” There is only one body of Yeshua, which the New Testament calls the saints (the set-apart ones), the one new man, the *ecclesia* (i.e., the church or “called out ones”), a royal priesthood and the elect, which is made up of 12 tribes of Israel who metaphorically in the New Testament are likened to an olive tree, a building, or a temple.

Furthermore, Yeshua is coming back to marry *one* bride, NOT two brides—a Jewish and a Gentile-Christian bride. Yeshua is not a polygamist! That bride will be an Israelite bride—not a Gentile bride. She will have both Jewish and Christian aspects.

YHVH is preparing a bride for his son **RIGHT NOW!** Malachi 4:3–6 talks about this. In the last days, before the second coming, YHVH is turning the children (that’s you and me) back to the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith. This phenomena is currently happening all over the world among Christians.

Remember ye the Torah-law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

But not every born-again believer will be the bride of Yeshua. Remember in Yeshua’s Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1–13) how the five wise virgins were allowed into the wedding supper, but the five foolish ones were not. This parable represents two classes of end-time born-again believers. This parable teaches us that there are two levels of spiritual rewards in YHVH’s eternal kingdom: those who are in the wedding of Yeshua and those who are not.

¹ Hebrew Word Pictures by Dr. Frank Seekins; Living Word Pictures Inc., Phoenix, AZ, 2003, p. 11.

In Matthew 5:19, Yeshua also refers to these two levels of rewards. There will be some believers who will be the least and some who will be the greatest in his kingdom.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least [Torah] commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

What will determine one's level of rewards or position in Yeshua's kingdom? Simply this. How obedient were we to the (Torah) commandments of Yeshua? Elsewhere, Yeshua stated that those who love him will be keeping his (Torah) commandments.

If ye love me, keep my [Torah] commandments. (John 14:15)

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his [Torah] commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his [Torah] commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. (1 John 2:6–7)

The NT clearly teaches that our spiritual rewards (*not* our salvation!) will be based on our works of righteousness (i.e., obedience to the Word, commandments, or Torah of Elohim, see Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Eph 6:8; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 2:23; 19:8; 22:12; compare with Ps 62:12; Jer 17:10; 32:19; Ezek 7:27).

The Bible defines who the end-time saints, or the bride of Yeshua will be in Revelation 12:17 and 14:12. The people who will be the bride of Yeshua will be keeping YHVH's Torah commandments and will also have the testimony or faith of Yeshua.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev 12:17)

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Rev 14:12)

So if you have come to the Elohim (God) of Israel through the way of the cross of Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah of Israel, then you are that one new man and are part of the nation of redeemed Israelites who was purchased with the blood of Yeshua. As such, you have the added opportunity of being part of that bride.

Right now, Yeshua the Messiah is handing us all an invitation to his wedding.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Rev 3:20–21)

Whether you want to be his bride or not, if you want to spend eternity with Yeshua in the New Jerusalem, which is heaven on earth, then you will have to enter that heaven-sent city through one of 12 gates, which are named after the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 21:12). ***There is no Gentile gate.*** So which gate will you enter?