

## One House

This is an article on the ‘one house’ concept as opposed to the ‘two house’ ideas. There are some people who teach that those who embrace God’s Torah and are not specifically Jewish are members of the house of Ephraim, while the modern Jew is of the house of Judah. This is called the ‘two house’ teaching. The association of ‘Gentile who loves Torah’ with ‘Ephraim’ is seen through a rather convoluted and spiritualized reasoning process to be part of the promise from God that He would reunite the ‘two houses’ of Israel that separated shortly after Solomon’s reign. According to the two-housers this is because Ephraim (the northern 10 tribes sent into exile a little more than a hundred years before the southern two tribes of Judah and Benjamin) is said to have dispersed into the world population and lost their identity. Judah is said to have retained their identity through the centuries and are today’s Jews. The modern day non-Jewish person who loves God’s Torah must be related somehow to Ephraim according to these teachers, either through genetics or influence. So the ‘two house’ teachings consist of recognizing these so-called ‘facts’ and working to bring the two houses together.

However, I think that the two house teachings are a distraction away from building the One House of God’s family, which I believe is also called the Remnant. The House of God has existed since the beginning, and consists of all those who love and obey Him. Instead of worrying about whether the house a person belongs to is part of physical Israel, the person who follows God ought to see themselves as part of One house already, regardless of whether they are Jew or Gentile. I think God has already united the two houses, because no one can tell which tribe they are from now. Except for possibly the Levitical genetic marker, all of the Jews are one nation. Two houses have already become One house by God’s power. God is the one who said He would do it, and it is almost completed.

One House is spoken of in Hebrews.

*Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. (Hebrews 3:5-6 NASB95)*

“Whose house we are” refers to all believers and followers of the Messiah, also known as the Christ, and is singular.

Paul writes of the household of believers which includes both Gentiles and Jews in Romans 9. First he tells us that Israel is not just those who are physical descendants of Abraham, but it is the children of the promise who are the children of God.

*But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s*

*descendants, but: “through Isaac your descendants will be named.” That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is the word of promise: “At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.” (Romans 9:6-9 NASB95)*

Then, in the same chapter, he specifically mentions that this ‘house’ is made up of people from both the Jews and the Gentiles.

*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. (Romans 9:23-24 NASB95)*

Later, in Romans 11, Paul also relates the Remnant to this house, and says it is the same as at the time of Elijah when Elijah thought he was the only child of God left. (1 Kings 19:10-18)

*God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.” But what is the divine response to him? “I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. (Romans 11:2-5 NASB95)*

This Remnant has always been around, always witnessing to the grace and mercy of God our Father. The Remnant is spoken of throughout the Scriptures. Joseph recognizes this:

*“God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.” (Genesis 45:7 NASB95)*

The writer of the next reference of 2 Kings may be referring to a purely physical remnant, or The Remnant, or both. This section is also quoted in Isaiah 37:31,32.

*‘The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ‘For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord will perform this. (2 Kings 19:30-31 NASB95)*

In another place, Isaiah speaks of the remnant, and again it can be applied to physical or spiritual Israel. (By spiritual Israel I am speaking of the ‘children of the promise’ that Paul mentions previously). The interesting thing to note about this Scripture is how it debunks one of the main arguments of the Two House teachings, which is that Israel never reached the ‘sands of the sea’ population promised to Abraham (so somehow the multiplication of Ephraim while dispersed is a fulfillment of this population promise). Here Isaiah says that Israel did in fact achieve that population level.

*A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. (Isaiah 10:21-22 NASB95)*

Isaiah again speaks of the remnant, this time for sure (in my opinion) referring to both physical and spiritual descendants (it doesn't matter how they got there, just that they are there).

*In that day the Lord of hosts will become a beautiful crown and a glorious diadem to the remnant of His people; a spirit of justice for him who sits in judgment, a strength to those who repel the onslaught at the gate. (Isaiah 28:5-6 NASB95)*

I introduce this next Scripture in order to show that 'all' the Remnant of the house of Israel, also called Jacob, are one house, and that God is the one who does it. See also that He is speaking to the remnant as a present (at that time) reality.

*"Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, you who have been borne by Me from birth and have been carried from the womb; even to your old age I will be the same, and even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; and I will bear you and I will deliver you." (Isaiah 46:3-4 NASB95)*

Jeremiah has a few words to say about the makeup and destiny of this Remnant also.

*"Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply." (Jeremiah 23:3 NASB95)*

*'In those days and at that time,' declares the Lord, 'search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.' (Jeremiah 50:20 NASB95)*

See also Jeremiah 31, where Ephraim is synonymous with Israel and Jacob, and part of the remnant.

Zechariah tells us why this remnant will be few and the purpose for it.

*"It will come about in all the land," Declares the Lord, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The Lord is my God.' " (Zechariah 13:8-9 NASB95)*

But the remnant still stands, because God is able to make them stand.

It appears to me that even the Philistines are said by God to be part of this remnant.

*And I will remove their blood from their mouth and their detestable things from between their teeth. Then they also will be a remnant for our God, and be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite. (Zechariah 9:7 NASB95, read the context)*

So we see that Scripture seems to equate the remnant, which includes Jews and Gentiles, with God's house or children, which are also equated to the tabernacle of David. All of these are one group of people, those who love God and are called according to His purpose. James, in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, ties this all together in response to the demand by some that all converts must be circumcised (become Jewish). He quotes Amos 9:11 and 12 and adds some clarification.

*After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 'After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,' Says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago." (Acts 15:13-18 NASB95)*

So this is what I mean by 'one house.' Yes, it is true that physical Israel split up, and maybe some of them were diffused into the population of the gentiles. It is also true that God said He would reunite the 'two houses' of Israel, which I believe He has already accomplished. It is just as true that Gentiles are separately mentioned and included, and that there is only One House of God, filled with (or made up of) the children of God, and it is also called the house or tabernacle of David, the remnant, the Bride of Christ, and Israel. We don't have to get lost in the self-identification of who is Ephraim and who is Judah. It just confuses the issues at best. All of us who follow God with all of our heart, mind, and strength are members of the One House, and this is what we should teach instead of Two Houses.

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 NASB95)*

Shalom  
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