

Nothing New/The Two Houses

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Ecc 1:9 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

Nothing new under the sun, this means that if we look at various issues in the world around us, we must see that they are rehashed versions of something we have previously witnessed. A little like fashion, the same things come round again, they are just renamed and sold as originals. However to those who had worn the style when they were younger can see the similarities and point out it is not actually original but a remodelling of a previously held fashion.

We have the same issues with Satan's lies and deceptions, he renames and repackages lies he has previously told in a different way to deceive further the unlearned believer.

Rom 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (Simple means Unlearned – not unintelligent).

One of his latest repackaging ideas is that the church and true believers are actually the lost tribe of Ephraim. This teaching promotes the doctrine that any Born Again believer must be one of this lost tribe scattered amongst the gentiles, therefore they must actually be Jewish.

Satan is bringing this Doctrine in from two angles; both are a deception and a promotion of elitism.

1. The Church has replaced Israel and the Church is now Ephraim. The Church will rejoin Israel when they call upon the Messiah – The northern and southern kingdoms will be rejoined.
2. That any calling themselves Christians and truly Born Again must be descendents of Ephraim and therefore Jewish. Messiah came for the Jews and only Jews will be saved. When Scripture speaks of gentiles it is actually only speaking of the Ephraimites lost and mixed into the gentile nation.

We will examine the Scriptures relating to these issues shortly, first I would like us to go back in time and see if anything like this has been taught before and if it is in fact a repackaging of an old story.

Judaisers

The Judaisers were around at the time of the early church. They taught that Grace was not sufficient and works of the Law were required to complete and maintain salvation. This created a group of people who were elitist; they believed and promoted this as the only form of relationship with Messiah that was true. You had to belong to this group of enlightened Jews to have salvation. *In other words they are the elect.*

Constantine and Catholicism

Constantine went the opposite direction but ended up with the same result. Constantine was anti-Semitic and passed laws making it illegal to look to Judaism for any kind of understanding for the faith. He initiated the Catholic Church which teaches that unless one belongs to this church and adheres to its teachings, there is no salvation. They have specific Doctrines which must be obeyed

and that make you a special person. In fact if you do everything according to their values you may even be made a saint. This promotes an elitist system that denies free will and Grace. *In other words they are the elect.*

Calvinism

Calvinism teaches that G-d has fore ordained who would be saved and no one has a choice in this. If you were predestined you would be saved otherwise - lost. He stated that anyone can try to be a believer and even say and do the right things but they could not be saved if not predestined. One could never really know whether one was saved or not unless it was declared by Calvin himself. This promotes yet another elitist system that denies free will and Grace. *In other words they are the elect.*

The Two Houses

All believers are actually Jewish or descendants of the tribe of Israel; there are in fact no gentile believers in Scripture, only descendants of Ephraim who are one of the tribes of Israel dispersed among the Gentiles. Only they can call themselves Christians and be true believers. *In other words they are the elect.*

This may all sound a little simplistic as there are in fact many issues involved. There are arguments both for and against all these beliefs. However, when we break them down to their basic components the above descriptions are what remain. Satan's finger prints can clearly be seen in these rehashed and renamed deceptions.

In my discussion with people over these points it is regularly said "but these are not salvation issues so it is only a matter of preference" or "believing these even if they are wrong won't really matter".

Are these statements true?

Let's start with the Judaisers: if this is a doctrine that would not affect salvation and who we claim the Messiah is, would we have warnings against them in Scripture, and would they be called deceivers?

Act 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: (*Talking to Gentiles specifically – saying they must become Jewish, not that they are Jewish*)

Gal 1:6-8 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

These Scripture are being used in their correct context when speaking of Judaisers, it is important to understand Scripture in its context and not use it as a pretext. According to Acts 15 the Judaisers are subverting the soul, they are teaching something that is harmful. Galatians 1 call this teaching "Another Gospel"; it is perverting the Gospel of Yeshua. We are warned not to accept any teaching like this even if an angel from heaven proclaims it, because it leads away from truth to destruction. So is this a minor infraction, or a Doctrine that leads to a major deception?

This kind of teaching is leading away from the truth into a gospel of deception with no salvation. It is leading the adherents to believe that they are the elect and have a special relationship no one else does.

This is the same teaching that permeates not only the above mentioned teachings but many others also. The two houses issue is bringing us back to the Judaisers teachings. Messiah only came for the Jews and descendants of Israel: you had to be Jewish or proselytised into Judaism to be saved. There are many Scriptures used to promote this teaching and that on the surface seem to legitimise it. However when we look at these Scriptures in the cold light of day we see that the context used for these is different to the intended usage and Biblical contextual meaning.

Pastors, Ministers, Messianic Rabbi's and Biblical Scholars today will all testify to their understanding of the Judaisers and how this was seen as a deception and how Scripture does not support it. There is a minority of teachers who promote this heresy today but of course they are those that are called deceivers according to Scripture.

What I find interesting is that the most sound teachers and Scholars in one area are so easily deceived in another. The blinds are pulled down so they cannot see. It would appear that the Messianic Movement, of which I am a part, suddenly need to promote gentiles as more than they are. Why is it important for gentile believers to be convinced and persuaded that they are in reality Jewish? Why do gentiles suddenly feel inferior to natural Jews and feel that being "called out" of sin into the faith is not enough?

In 1 Peter we have a distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. In fact the Jews amongst the nations are addressed separately and called the Dispersed or Diaspora. This is done in the same area of Scripture where Jews and Gentiles are referred to as distinct people. Therefore not all saved are Jews only!

Read 1 Peter 1. At first glance it appears it is written only to the Christians. Most Christians have been taught that the Old Testament is Jewish and the New Testament is Christian. Today there is a dividing line between what Christian is and what's Jewish. In the beginning, when the Church was first formed, the dividing line was not as pronounced, as the early Christian church was Jewish, almost purely for the first 10 years.

Not only do most churches fail to recognise the Jewishness of the Gospel and the Jewishness of the New Testament, but that there is a distinction between Jew and Gentile in God's plan of salvation. The theology that has permeated Christianity for the last 2000 years by the mainstream church is that before Christ, the Jews were God's chosen people; after Christ, the Church replaced them. Today this teaching by some is being turned on its head. Both are extremes and are incorrect.

1Pe 2:1-10 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

These verses are often used to support “Replacement Theology”.

However, if we look back at verses 1:1-2, then ahead to verse 2:12, we can see that Peter was writing primarily to messianic Jews. First, let’s compare various translations of 1 Peter 1:1-1.

RSV Translation

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

NAS Translation

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with the his blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

NKJ Translation

1 Peter, an apostle of Christ, to the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

The Jewish New Testament

From: Kefa, an emissary of Yeshua the Messiah. To: God's chosen people, living as aliens in the Diaspora—in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia—chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father and set apart by the Spirit for obeying Yeshua the Messiah and for sprinkling with his blood: Grace and shalom be yours in full measure.

Notice that Peter is writing to members of the Diaspora, or Dispersion, described in Acts 8:1-4 (*before gentiles were grafted in*). This group consisted of the new believers who found themselves persecuted for their belief in Yeshua as the Messiah. Since the Church originally consisted of Jews, this means that Peter’s audience was a Jewish one. A Jewish audience dispersed amongst the Gentiles, not Gentiles that are Jewish.

Peter used the word *eklektos*¹ (meaning “select”, “chosen”, or “elect”, implying favourite) to describe his audience. Since *eklektos* implies “favourite”, we can infer that Peter is referring to Jews. It is true that the gentiles are now “chosen and grafted in” as well, but the Jews are God’s first love (Jer. 31:31-34, Rom. 1:16, 2:9, 2:10—“to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”), hence Peter’s choice of words.

¹ G1588

ἐκλεκτός
eklektos
ek-lek-tos'

From G1586; *select*; by implication *favourite*: - chosen, elect.

Understand that Peter is not excluding the gentiles by using *eklektos*, but he is acknowledging the makeup of his audience as being primarily Jewish. It must be clear that Peter is certainly not excluding the Jews or amalgamating the gentiles as Jewish. Not only is he writing to Jews, but by using *eklektos*, Peter is reaffirming the place of the Jews as God's chosen race.

Now go back to v2:9-10:

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1Pe 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (*Talking to the Dispersed Jews*)

Now look at 2:12:

1Pe 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Given that the church was mostly Jewish, Peter wouldn't have used words to identify them as Jews unless he wanted them to think of themselves as Jews. Instead, he would have thought of them as "the Church", and instead of contrasting his audience with "gentiles" (*the vast majority of the unbelieving world*), he would simply have contrasted them with "unbelievers".

So as we can see gentiles and Jews are separate in Scripture and yet the believing gentiles are "grafted in" to the olive tree. To say that grafted means they are actually Ephraim returning is an incorrect interpretation of Scripture. Let us now look at the Scriptures involved.

Ezekiel 37¹

The prophecy of Ezekiel 37 (*concerning two trees which become one in the hand of the Most High*), mixed with Romans 11:17-18 where Romans talks about branches coming from another tree and being grafted in to an established tree, we get a Theological Doctrine that is not a Scriptural one.

- Ezekiel is talking about two separate but equal trees becoming one tree. Ezekiel sees the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel coming under the authority of Messiah
- Paul on the other hand is speaking of people coming and joining other people: Gentiles joining Jews in the Torah and salvation of the Messiah.

Paul is speaking about a spiritual union of faith, while Ezekiel is distinctly speaking about a union of physical kingdoms. Paul is saying that the wild branches have to leave their tree and join the tree with the natural branches. The natural ones are the righteous Jews. Some of them who are cut off from the natural are also able to be grafted in from off the ground where they have been cut off (*Non-Believing Jews can be saved*).

In Romans 11 Paul is emphasizing the importance of the spiritual flow of bearing good fruit by being grafted into the spiritual tree which G-d intended, and that this comes from trust in Messiah Yeshua and obedience to His Commandments. That is his meaning to this symbolism.

In Ezekiel 37 the two trees are suggestive of fully realised physical Israel, Ephraim and Judah and their associated tribes. In Romans 11, the wild branches come away from the wild and enter the natural. It is the Gentiles (*wild in sin*) becoming aware of the natural (*Torah obedient Israel*) through the knowledge of Messiah, thereby joining with the life available to Israel. That part of Israel (*the Jews*) which does not take to the Torah through Messiah is cast off, with the possibility of returning to the Olive Tree. They are not cut off by their own choices in this life but through the sins of the fathers, they must repent as any gentile to be re-grafted instead of remaining as those that were cut off.

To think that Ezekiel 37 and Romans 11 are speaking of the same metaphor is misunderstanding the relationship G-d has with His people and how others are grafted in. If the *wild* Branches are Ephraim and the Jews the natural branches, then Romans 11 is saying that righteous Ephraim must leave Ephraim and join Judah. Ephraim then ceases to exist as an independent people. Under these circumstances Ephraim is bad and Judah is good, and that just is not the case.

What the Most High is saying in Romans 11 is that anyone, Jewish or not, who will be saved, must believe in His Messiah and obey His Torah. This is what it means to be in the Olive Tree. This understanding causes us to seek out the unbelieving Jewish people and the unbelieving Gentiles, and to see them both become one in Messiah. There is no preference given here to anyone's genealogy. They become one body, one people, together in faith and practice if they come into Messiah. Not, as presumed by the advocates of the Two Houses Doctrine, start as one people who have been separated.

Our Messiah Yeshua chose to use the term "Called Out" to signify His people in Matt.16:19. The Apostles promoted this concept and used it most often concerning the followers of Messiah. "Called Out", in Hebrew *mikra* and in Greek *ekklesia*, has been miss-translated into English as "church." Yet, it is the concept of being His "Called Out" which Messiah offered to Israel (*the Jewish people*) first. Those who would follow this Jewish Messiah (*the Lion of Judah*) would be the "Called Out".

In Yeshua's view, it is more important to be "called out" than to be "grafted in," since He never used the term "grafted in" or spoke of "two trees" or "two houses." To be "Called Out" is to be brought forth from sinfulness to the life of G-d. Messiah said that those in Israel needed to be "Called Out". The apostle Peter reiterated this when he commanded the Jewish people to "save yourselves from this sinful generation."

Conclusion

When looking at and listening to this type, or in fact any doctrinal teaching, we have to break down what is being promoted and see if it ties up with Scripture or if someone is using Scripture to promote an unbiblical idea.

The two houses issue when examined is a promotion of an elitist Judaized form of Christianity which the Bible does not support. It is however another rehashed deception promoted by the father of lies to lead the Christian into yet another divisive and destructive doctrine bringing further disharmony and pride based spirituality. *We are the elect?*

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ⁱ Referenced from article by David Hargis: *Grafted in or called out? Challenging the "two-house" theory*