

2:14 The concept of "both" being made "one" refers to Christ the Shepherd of Israel reconciling the two houses of Israel back together. Christ Jesus became the means to bring "peace" between the once divided Houses of Israel and Judah. This fulfills the prophecy of the two sticks in the hand of one Shepherd (Ez. 37:15-28).

2:15 Through His death, Jesus "abolished" or fulfilled the ordinances of the Mosaic law which were only given to Israel, removing the enmity between the two houses. By the blood of Jesus, He made "in Himself of twain [two] one new man so making peace" [between Israel and Judah].

2:16 Here Paul reinforces the concept that Christ "reconciled [brought back together] both [houses] unto God in one body by the cross having slain the enmity" [the hatred and contention that once existed].

2:17 To those who were "afar off" refers to the Northern House of Israel who were in dispersion. "To them that were nigh" refers to those who were of the House of Judah.

2:18 The word "both" refers to saints of both the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

2:19 The Israelite saints of Ephesus "are no more strangers and foreigners [considered outcasts] but [are now] fellow citizens with the [Judean] saints."

2:20 The faith of the once outcast Israelite saints is built upon the same foundation of the apostles and prophets as the Judean saints. Apostles and prophets were offices only instituted within Israel.

3:1-3, 6-8 Paul reiterates the fact that his calling was to minister to the Gentiles and the children

of Israel (Acts 9:15). Throughout his words in chapter two Paul refers to the Ephesian saints as Israelites and also as Gentiles, which in this case are one and the same. The mystery that he refers to is the reconciling of the two houses back together.

4:8-11 In the bestowing of divine gifts by Jesus Christ to the Church, Paul defines this in fulfillment of Psalm 68:18 in reference to Israel's victorious Messiah in His resurrection and ascension.

6:14 Paul's description of the New Testament believer's armour is based on Isaiah's prophecy of the restoration of Israel under the New Covenant (Isa. 59:16-19).

If the Ephesian saints were not Israelites of the Northern House, Paul's statements would not have applied to them, neither would they have understood what he was saying.

"Thus saith the Lord GOD; 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." Ezekiel 37:19

For a Biblical definition of the word 'Gentile', order tract # 89, A Study into the Meaning of the Word "Gentile" as used in the Bible by Curtis Clair Ewing.

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Tract # 97

ISRAEL IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS



Many Christians have a vague idea that it is only in the Old Testament that we read of a Chosen Race and Nation; that the New Testament speaks only of the Church. Is this true? Has God substituted the Christian Church for His servant people and nation Israel?

"Apparently St. Paul found this idea prevalent in his day among the Christians at Rome, for he writes at some length to warn them against such an assumption.

"Let us note a statement made by our Lord, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel' (Matt. 15:24). In connection with this statement we should also note His directions to His disciples concerning the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom. 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.'"

"If Israel had ceased to be; if God had cast off the people He had chosen; if Jesus came to organize a Church as a substitute for Israel, then WHY did He say that He was sent TO Israel, and WHY did He send His disciples TO Israel with the good news of His Kingdom?

"He could not have been referring to the Judah Jews, for these Jews certainly were not lost, and in addition they were of the House of Judah, NOT Israel.

"These statements are proof that the Israel people were still in existence in our Lord's Day, and that they still had a part to play in God's Plan of restoring His Kingdom on the earth, for He sent the Gospel of the Kingdom TO them and to them ONLY!"

The above quote by W.H. Bennett, Source: Thy Kingdom Come, September 2015

The city of Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, located on the west coast of Asia Minor. The city was most widely known for its temple of the goddess Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Early church historians, Irenaeus and Eusebius indicate that the Apostle John spent his last years in Ephesus, from which he wrote his Gospel and three Epistles.

While preaching in this city, Paul was confronted by an angry mob of idol worshippers (Acts 19:23-41). The Apostle Paul spent nearly three years at Ephesus on his third missionary journey. Under his ministry many people believed and confessed the Lord Jesus. ***"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."*** Acts 19:20

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is classified as one of his prison epistles written in about 60-61 A.D. The profound themes that the Apostle refers to are the mysteries which he received directly by divine revelation from Jesus Christ.

The mystery of:

1. The predestination of the saints 1:3-9
2. The reuniting of the Houses of Israel and Judah 2:11-3:4
3. The Gentiles should be partakers of the Gospel of Christ 3:4-9
4. The Church as the Body of Christ 5:22-33
5. The message of the Gospel of Christ 6:18-20

Remaining consistent as in his other epistles, Paul addressed the saints in Ephesus as "Gentiles". He knew that these Gentiles were a part of the scattered House of Israel that the Lord had dispersed out of their land through the Assyrian captivities of 745 to 721 B.C. They were a part of the *"lost sheep of the House of Israel"* that Jesus referred to in Matthew 10:6 and 15:24. This scattering of the people of Israel became known as the 'diaspora' or 'dispersion.'

Paul referred to the Ephesians as 'Gentiles' four different times and "other Gentiles" one time. Paul's divine mission was to bear the name of Jesus *"before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15). In addressing the Ephesians as Gentiles, he was being consistent with his mission.

The following are Old Testament references Paul used in writing to the Israelite saints in Ephesus in expounding to them the mysteries of the Gospel of Christ under the terms of the New Covenant.

1:4 In describing the believer's position in grace, Paul says *"according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."* This corresponds with the words of Peter; *"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;"*

(1 Peter 2:9) based on God's words to Israel at Sinai in Exodus 19:5-6.

1:5,11 The principle of *"having predestinated us unto the adoption of children"* belonged to the sons of Israel in being restored to God by grace. This is clearly expressed in Galatians 4:4-7; *"To redeem them that were under the Law [Israelites], that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

2:11 The Ephesian saints were Israelites of the Northern House of Joseph, who had been Gentilized and were considered uncircumcised by the House of Judah who were the circumcision. This is clearly a reference to the two Houses of Israel.

2:12 In another proof that the Ephesians were Israelites, Paul says; *"That at that time [before Calvary] ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth [without citizen rights] of Israel, and strangers [cut off] from the covenants of promise."* The Israelites of the Northern House of Israel (commonly known as the **House of Joseph or Ephraim**) were separated, put away in punishment and considered "lost."

2:13 The Ephesian saints were at one time *"far off [having been dispersed] are made nigh [redeemed, restored] by the blood of Christ."*