

Non-Jews, Inheritance in Holy Land

In various sectors of the independent Messianic community, and/or Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, I have heard that non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah will (all) be granted permanent residence in the Holy Land when Yeshua returns. Is this or is this not, true?

Ezekiel 47:13-20 details various tribal boundaries for the Land of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom, which are altered from those seen previously in Tanach Scriptures.¹ It is first summarized, “So you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel” (Ezekiel 47:21, NASU). This is then followed by the statement, “You shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the aliens who stay in your midst, who bring forth sons in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And in the tribe with which the alien stays, there you shall give *him* his inheritance” (Ezekiel 47:22-23, NASU). It is, of course, fair to recognize that there will be various *gerim* or sojourners who have decisively entered into the community of Israel, and are granted permanent residence and territory in this Land of Israel. While in the Torah, outsiders were always welcome to join the community of Israel and worship Israel's God (Leviticus 19:34), they had no allotment of tribal lands. What is witnessed in Ezekiel 47:22 is different.

Is it appropriate to conclude that *all* non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah classify as being among those granted tribal territories in the Land of Israel, and that when Yeshua returns *all* non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah will be granted permanent residence in the Promised Land? **No.** While non-Jewish Believers are to be active participants in the restoration of Israel via the return of Israel's sovereign King Messiah—and must be active in seeing Jewish people come to faith in the Messiah (Romans 11:11)—the promised return of the descendants of Israel to the Promised Land will not directly involve most of today's non-Jewish Messianic Believers. This is because the tribal territories in the Holy Land (Joshua chs. 15-21; Ezekiel 47:13-48:35) are very specific to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

It would be fair to deduce that the sojourners mentioned in Ezekiel 47:22-23, who are given an allotment of territory formally promised to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, are limited to a specific and limited number of non-Jewish people who have been very closely aligned with Israel's restoration. Non-Jewish Believers may be regarded as a part of a Kingdom of Israel with a restored Twelve Tribes at its center (cf. James 1:1), whose borders have widened themselves (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:15-18), but they are nonetheless not ethnic Israelites and are not entitled to permanent habitation in a rather small Land of Israel. Furthermore, there is no Biblical evidence, at all, that all people living on Planet Earth during the Millennial Kingdom will live in the Land of Israel.

While Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah have far more in common than not as fellow members of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13)—tribal inheritance in the Land of Israel is something almost exclusively reserved for ethnic Israelites and not those of the nations.

¹ Kenneth L. Barker, ed., et. al., *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1315; Wayne Grudem, ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 1578; Kent Dobson, *NIV First-Century Study Bible: Explore Scripture in Its Jewish and Early Christian Context*, 2011 NIV (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 1050; Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1276; Craig S. Keener and John H. Walton, eds., *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 1410 all offer a map of these boundaries.