

Israel in the New Testament

Who is Israel in the New Testament? The answer to this question is crucial in understanding the New Testament that we have in Christ Jesus. Are the Jewish people, natural Israel the chosen people and do they still enjoy a covenant with God? OR Is the church of Jesus Christ the chosen people of God? OR Is both Jew and Christian considered the chosen people?

In answering this question I have to go right back to Abraham and the promise He received from Almighty God. So let us pick up the events in Genesis 14. Abraham had just returned from a very successful military campaign. He and his 318 trained servants with his three allies, had just defeated the combined armies of the 4 kings that had captured all the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah with all the supply of provisions. They returned with “...all the goods and also brought back his kinsman Lot and his possessions, the women also and the people.” This was an astonishing victory and could only have been accomplished with the help of Almighty God. On his return he is met by Melchizedek.

Genesis 14:18-20 (King James Version) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. (19) And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: (20) And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Melchizedek met Abraham and served him bread and wine. This is not because a covenant was cut with Abraham, but because Melchizedek preached the Gospel to Abraham. He shared the revelation of Jesus Christ, with Abraham, exactly like Jesus did with His disciples on the night that He was to be betrayed.

Matthew 26:26-28 (King James Version) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. (27) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; (28) For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Melchizedek now explained to Abraham how the promise given to him in Genesis 12:3 “...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”, was to be fulfilled. In Genesis 15:3

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he received more revelation and was shown the stars of heaven, the sons of God that would be born through Jesus Christ.

This is precisely what the Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians.

Galatians 3:8 (King James Version) And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Jesus in addressing the Jews said the following:

John 8:39-40 (King James Version) They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. (40) But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

In verse 40 above, Jesus drew a clear parallel between Him preaching the Gospel to the Jews and Melchizedek having preached it to Abraham. It is clear that Melchizedek preached the Gospel to Abraham and where the promise of Christ is concerned no covenant was cut with Abraham. There is no reference to an Abrahamic covenant and the promises given to him in Genesis 12 is a clear reference to all the world being saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 12:2-3 (King James Version) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: (3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

When covenant is mentioned in Genesis 15 it concerned the promise of the land that his descendants would inherit.

Genesis 15:8-9 (King James Version) And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

Abraham needed some reassurance where this promise was concerned and thus followed the cutting of the covenant between him and God as recorded in verses 9-17. Verses 18-21

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clearly tells us that the covenant thus cut was concerning the land and there is no connection with the meeting with Melchizedek in Genesis 14 , nor the promises in Genesis 12:23 or Genesis 15:5.

Genesis 15:18-21 (King James Version) In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: (19) The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, (20) And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, (21) And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Abraham received the promise of Christ Jesus, and when he believed the gospel as preached to him by Melchizedek, was accounted righteous. This righteousness he received without the law and before circumcision, thereby establishing the truth of righteousness by faith and not by the law. The circumcision was a sign of being righteous and being circumcised does not make you righteous. This is precisely what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome.

Romans 4:1-16 (King James Version) What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (2) For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. (3) For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (4) Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. (5) But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (6) Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, (7) Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. (8) Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (9) Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. (10) How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. (11) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: (12) And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. (13) For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. (14) For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (15) Because the law worketh

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wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. (16) Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Natural Israel, being descendant from Abraham in the flesh, did not receive righteousness by the law nor by circumcision. They had to believe the promise as Abraham did and then receive the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, once He had come to save His people. They received the law 430 years after the promise, which was added because of transgressions and was to point them to Christ and show them that the condition of righteousness, right standing with God could only be by faith in Him and not by the law, because they could not keep the law. This is what Paul wrote in Galatians.

Galatians 3:8-29 (King James Version) And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (9) So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (10) For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (11) But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. (12) And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (15) Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. (16) Now to

Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (17) And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. (18) For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (19) Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (20) Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. (21) Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. (22) But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. (23)

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But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. (24) Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (26) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

To Israel belonged the promise that the Christ would be born as a descendant of Abraham. They were to hear the Gospel first, receive it and then take it to the Gentiles, the rest of the world. God's plan was always that all the world shall be saved (John 3:16). So he needed a people through which Christ could be born after the flesh and he chose Abraham and his descendants, because Abraham believed the Gospel and trusted in the promise.

Romans 9:1-8 (King James Version) I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, (2) That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. (3) For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: (4) Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; (5) Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (6) Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: (7) Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. (8) That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

The Jewish people , natural Israel are not God's chosen people anymore. They were that under the Old Covenant, but the moment Jesus Christ came and instituted the New Testament they lost their place and the Body of Christ, the church became His Chosen people. Consider Romans 10.

Romans 10:1-13 (King James Version) Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the

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righteousness of God. (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (5) For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. (6) But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) (7) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) (8) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; (9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Once Christ had come Israel had to move into the New Testament, the righteousness by faith. They had to come out of the Law into Jesus Christ. As a nation, Israel rejected Jesus as the Christ and instead continued to trust in the law to provide righteousness, which is impossible. They fell from grace and are left outside the New Testament, not in covenant with Almighty God. Consider the following scriptures:

John 14:6 (King James Version) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

1John 2:22-23 (Amplified Bible) Who is [such a] liar as he who denies that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah)? He is the antichrist (the antagonist of Christ), who [habitually] denies and refuses to acknowledge the Father and the Son. (23) No one who [habitually] denies (disowns) the Son even has the Father. Whoever confesses (acknowledges and has) the Son has the Father also.

This is exactly what Jesus told the Pharisees when He told them that the Kingdom would be taken from them and given to another nation (Matthew 21:33-46). This is the nation born through faith in Jesus Christ under the New Testament.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that God has spoken in these last days, through His Son, Jesus Christ and no longer speaks through the prophets and men of the Old Covenant. So he

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who does not hear the Son does not hear the Father. He is the **sole expression** of His glory and image (Hebrews 1:2-3). God is not unjust nor is He a liar or unfaithful to the covenant He had with natural Israel. He promised them righteousness through faith in the coming Christ, who would lay down His life for them. This promise He gave to Abraham before the law and

instructed Him to tell his descendants about the coming Christ, which he did and that is why they waited for the Messiah, the Christ. Then He gave them the law as a shadow of the things to come (* See Hebrews 8,9 and 10) and right through the Old Covenant prophesied to them through various prophets and other writers about the coming Christ who would save them from their sin, wash them from their iniquities and make a new agreement with them. They chose to reject this righteousness and cling to the Old Covenant which is now obsolete. Since they chose to reject Him, He owes them nothing unless they receive Christ and receive the promise given to Abraham.

Hebrews 8:13 (Amplified Bible) When God speaks of a new [covenant or agreement], He makes the first one obsolete (out of use). And what is obsolete (out of use and annulled because of age) is ripe for disappearance and to be dispensed with altogether.

There is no such thing as replacement theology. God never replaced Israel, He merely fulfilled His promise to Abraham, which promise belonged to natural Israel first. They chose to cling to the law and not receive what belonged to them first, but was always meant for the whole world, and thereby disqualified themselves. They have nothing since the law has passed away and the Messiah, the Christ, has already come. This is why we must preach the Gospel to the Jewish people and not perpetuate their blindness and stubbornness by mistakenly still referring to them as God's chosen people.

1Peter 2:7-10 (King James Version) 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, (8) 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. (9) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (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.

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We should tell them the truth and implore them to repent and come in from the cold, by faith in Jesus Christ. They should know that their Messiah has already come and fulfilled all the promises of the Old Covenant and will not come again for this purpose. They must know the truth and if we do not tell them, but agree with their sin, the rejecting of God's righteousness, their blood will be on our hands.