

Inclusive Theology & Replacement Prophecy

The Role of Israel in God's Plan

By Christopher J. Patton

God's purpose on earth is to restore His creation, which has suffered evil since Adam and Eve's decision to pick from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their decision corrupted the natural spirit of humanity making us unfit for an eternity spent living like God, with God. Thus, the penalty was death. (Genesis 2:17; Acts 3:20-21)

Only through the mediating sacrifice of the Son, who was fully human and fully God, is it possible for the natural spirit of man (the old man referred to by Paul) to be replaced by the Holy Spirit forming the new man in Christ. In the Kingdom of Heaven, the spiritually corrupt old man is left behind so that only the fullest joy of sinless perfection in love is experienced for eternity. Hallelujah! (I Timothy 2:3-5; Hebrews 2:16-18; Romans 6:5-23)

The events in the garden turned on Eve's and then Adam's sinful rebellion against God in following Satan, the Adversary, our immortal Enemy, and Destroyer of all that is good and beautiful. By man's rebellion, Satan became enthroned over the planet. Consequently, not only does human nature need to be transformed into the image of the Son, who is the express image of the Father, but the rule of this world must be removed from the god of this world and restored to God of Israel by the enthronement of Jesus/Yeshua at His return as the King of Israel and King of Kings. (I Corinthians 15:20-26, 45-49; Hebrews 1:3)

Inclusive Theology

The fact that God is working with humanity one-on-one as well as planning to take over the political governments of this babylonish world can be a source of confusion in understanding the role and concept of Israel as presented in the Bible. Because a large majority of Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as Messiah during His first coming to earth, many believe that the Christian Church has replaced Israel in *all* of God's redeeming work on earth. In this line of thinking, the Church - as Spiritual Israel - has replaced the natural children of Jacob as His *only* chosen instrument to intervene in the affairs of humanity. This replacement theology theory is almost always accompanied by a prophetic exclusion of the biblically promised millennial rule of Israel by the perfect Son of Man on a restored throne of David.

The historical neglect of Bible prophecy in most gospel teaching significantly contributes to the distortions of Biblical truth expressed in replacement theology. Indeed, in the redemption and transformation of believing sinners into holy saints, God does work exclusively through the Holy Spirit, whose presence defines the Body of Christ. Through Jesus, every person - with no exception - may be included in and fully a part of the salvation promises made to Israel. **By choosing Christ, we become chosen in Christ, thus Paul has rightly called the faithful Body of Jesus, the *Israel of God*. This is an inclusive theology.** (Galatians 3:26-29; 6:15-16)

Replacement Prophecy

But God has also promised eventual liberation to all of His creation and desires that all children, women, and men be saved! (Romans 8:19-25) He has prophesied that He will:

- Replace the god of this world with the true Son of God (II Corinthians 4:4)
- Replace the King of Babylon with the King of Israel (Isaiah 14:4-17)
- Replace the materialistically-focused, Babylonian-based global commercial and politically system of evolving international government with the spiritually-focused, Jerusalem-based, international commonwealth of Israel ruled by a King of Kings, Yeshua/Jesus, qualified by His divine right as the King of Israel. (Revelation 17 & 18; Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:1-10)

It is in this proper context of inclusive theology and replacement prophecy that we can best comprehend the concept of chosen-ness represented by the name Israel. The story of Abraham and the original covenant promises made to him are vital keys to understanding the mediating role of Israel in God's plan and the relationship of the modern state of Israel and the Jewish people to the visible church organizations and the spiritual Body of Christ.

Covenants & Promises

Abraham's life testifies that faithful love is the vitally important spiritual tool God uses to accomplish our spiritual transformation into His image. Because of faith, God brings Abraham to a specific geographic territory that has special significance to God. I believe that God's selection of the land of Canaan had more reasons than just its strategic position at the crossroads of western Asia's leading civilizations, but Israel's central global positioning contributes to its prophetic as well as to its historic roles in influencing world events in the fulfillment of God's purposes. (Genesis 12:1-4; 15:17-18)

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So God chose Abraham and moved him to a chosen land to raise up a chosen seed. Elsewhere, I have commented on the fact that the Hebrew *zera* translated "seed" possesses the dual implication of a singular seed and a corporately many seed in the one word. Respectively, God's multifaceted promises apply to both aspects of *zera*. They overlap in that He had to create a nation culturally rooted in righteousness (even though its citizens remained sinners) out of which He could beget and bring to age a sinless Savior. God used contracts or covenants to reveal and administer His concepts of justice and righteousness in creating a nation of this world in which His Son could have a fair chance of growing up sinless from the day of His appearance on this planet as a birthed infant.

The Bible describes this web of covenantal agreements over the history of their formation and the prophecy of their implementation. The over-arching purpose of restoring the creation ties the many individual covenants together. In simplest terms, there is really only one covenant – just as there is only one God, but within this one, broad purpose appear a number of specific agreements which expand and protect the key elements that God is using to accomplish His goal of redeeming creation. This is why a description of the terms and calling of the Sinai Covenant are repeated in the New Covenant. The chosen ones from the peoples of the earth are His nation of kings and priests because in Christ we execute and mediate His righteousness and love. (Exodus 19:5-6; I Peter 1:20-23; 2:9-10; Revelation 5:9-10)

The concept of covenant reveals that we must have a dynamic, interactive, but also submissive *relationship* with God in order to be saved. **The only covenants written in the Bible and unconditionally promised are the covenants made with Abraham and his seed, the children of Israel.** (Ephesians 2:11-14) Through one of Abraham's descendents, Jesus, non-Israelites may be grafted by faith into a blood-guaranteed and sealed relationship with God. This grafting only comes through the repentant rejection of our naturally rebellious selves, full of our own concepts of right and wrong or good and evil, in order to accept His grace and rule in our lives unconditionally. As individuals, people can now enter into an intimate, spiritual kingdom-level relationship with the Father through the Son receiving the Holy Spirit now as the earnest beginnings of what is to come. As reborn individuals, believers become spiritual Jews. (Romans 2:28-29)

However, other covenant promises are still at work in other areas of God's plan to bring the entire globe under His rule. Satan is not yet bound. If you believe otherwise, how can you honestly explain the extremely gross and twisted evil that has been and is being inflicted on millions? Mankind's inhumanity to man is just that – not human! It's demonic in nature. Our "inhumanity" is beyond human: it reflects the Destroyer at his despicable worst in wasting the lives of populous nations created for God's love and glory. (I Peter 5:8-9; II Peter 2:12-19; Jude 6, 10-13)

King of Israel & King of Kings

But God is not going to replace the Babylonian kingdoms of this world with any of the Christian organizations now in existence. He has not made any territorial promises to the church, nor has He explicitly codified a covenant or legal structure for the church to rule territory like He did for ancient Israel. Remember, the Sinai Covenant established Israel as the original "nation under God": Israel's political ruler was the divine God of Israel and not any man. Israel in Sinai is an example, particular to its time and culture, of the kind of government that God will institute for the entire world when Jesus returns.

But God made covenant promises to the children of Jacob giving them eternal rights of possession to specific territory and of the future political overlordship of the entire planet. It is through Israel that national liberation will come to every nation. God has promised to replace the King of Babylon, god of this world, with the King of Israel, the King of Kings. The legal vehicles for this change are the Israelite covenant promises made to Abraham and David. In the future, each nation will live freely under God. Through the throne of Israel's Messiah, all nations will be connected politically and spiritually. All who obey God's teaching that comes out of Jerusalem will experience universal prosperity, peace, and long lives generally filled with good times.

For these ultimate covenant promises of world rule to be activated, the Jewish people needed to be returned to their homeland in advance of the global restoration of God's reign. Prior to their spiritual restoration, God unconditionally promised to restore Israel as a people free to dwell as Jews in their ancient homeland. Their return to the Promised Land is an act of grace not dependant or conditioned on their spiritual repentance. (Ezekiel 37; 38:8; Zechariah 8:7)

From now to Yeshua's return, the number of Jewish people believing in Him as their personal Savior will increase. Even though about half of the Israelis will support globalism and Antichrist, at least 144,000 will go forth as evangelists in the early part of the seven-year period following the peace treaty that they sign with him. These 144,000 will probably be

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supported by hundreds of thousands of believers. As a whole nation, the returned Israelites will suffer some months of severe tribulation prior to being the first of many nations to experience a national deliverance in a final, unified acceptance of Israel's returned Messiah, Yeshua, by "all Israel." (Romans 11:25-36; Revelation 7:4-17; Zechariah 12:7-10)

The Witness of Israel

Thus, the secular, totally human state of Israel is living, material evidence of the promised era of God's Kingdom to come. The foundation and continued existence of modern state of Israel is a testimony of God's faithfulness and continued intervention in the affairs of nation states. To borrow an analogy from Paul, the modern state of Israel is like a healthy seed that must be well-developed, naturally rich in nutrients, and planted in its mortality so that the divine Kingdom of Israel, transformed into the Kingdom of God, can rise to rule the world, bringing liberation and restoration to all of God's creation. (I Corinthians 15:35-38)

Therefore, it's not surprising to read in Zechariah chapters 12 & 14 that Israel still exists as a nation to the very end. She is in fact the last "rogue state" outside of the global kingdom of Antichrist. Judah is the only army described as defending Jerusalem against Antichrist and Satan's hordes, fighting on the side of the God of Israel. In that day, the Messiah, Yeshua, will appear to destroy all of the remaining forces of evil that have come against His people and His city. (Zechariah 14:14) Only then, will Satan be removed to the bottomless abyss for a thousand years. (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

Peace shall reign over an earth filled with the knowledge of the LORD. Though not complete, much of God's creation will be restored and His covenant promises fully realized without any possibility of debate about it. This is the hope of an inclusive theology taught in conjunction with the Bible's replacement prophecy.