

The Church, The Bride of Christ

From 'Flesh Israel' to 'Faith Israel'

- Dispersed yet Citizens (Jam. 1:1, Eph. 2:19)

Gal. 6:16 (KJV) *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

You do not join Israel by passport. You join by Passover. Christ is our Passover Lamb, slain for us.

1 Cor. 5:7 *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

Israel had thirteen tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh from Joseph (Gen. 48:5)).

Twelve – all except Levi - received landed portions (Josh. 13:33).

However doctrine is not built on literal counting. It is built on Christ. Christ chose twelve Apostles (Luke 6:13) to show that He is the true Head of Israel (Matt. 19:28), not to imitate Jacob's count.

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The Christian Church does not replace Israel. She is the true Israel (Rom. 9:6-8, Gal. 3:29).

Jesus did not start a new religion. He fulfils the old.

***Matt. 5:17** Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

The phrase, 'Israel of God' used above in Gal. 6:16 by Apostle Paul is an assertion that the promises of God before the first coming of Christ have been inherited by the Christians who are the faithful remnants (Rom. 9:6). Jesus deliberately selected twelve Apostles as substantial leaders of God's true Israel to fulfil what was foreshadowed in the twelve sons of Jacob or tribes of physical Israel (Matt. 19:28).

This is also the reason that the Christian Church is addressed as the twelve tribes of the dispersion in Jam. 1:1.

The interesting thing about the Church designated as the 'Israel of God' is the fact that it comprises both biological Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 3:26-28).

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The Israel of old were themselves convinced that they were a people specially blessed of God, and we are expected not to think any less of ourselves under Christ. As they were promised a land built by men, we have been promised one made and built by God (Heb. 11:9-10). What also made 'Israel of the flesh' to be special was the Law (Torah) given at Sinai. But that Law came with a terminal glory in comparison to the eternal glory annexing the New Law (Covenant) given presently through Jesus Christ (see 2 Cor. 3:12). Through the Torah, the old Israel was expected to be a blessing to the other nations of the earth, a vocation which has been reassigned to us, the 'Israel of God', through the Gospel of Christ (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 10:18).

The 'shadow' Israel also had a trait we must expect in the form of sectarian tendencies between the north (Samaria) and south (Jerusalem), typified by 'Yahwism' and 'Baalism' fronted by Elijah and Jezebel respectively (see also Luke 9:51-55). The Church is similarly threatened by worldliness which has been defeated by our Head, Christ Jesus (John 16:33).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. How many children had Israel or Jacob? Do not say twelve!
 - * Thirteen minimum – twelve sons plus Dinah. Fifteen including Ephraim and Manasseh.
 - * Note that ‘twelve’ is symbolic of government (Rev. 21:12-14), not biology. Physical Israel had 13 tribes, Joseph being Ephraim and Manasseh. Levi had no land (Josh. 13:33). Do not build doctrine on counting. Build on Christ. Jesus chose 12 apostles (Luke 6:13) to show that He is true Israel’s Head.

2. If one embarks on a pilgrimage to Israel now, or even becomes an Israeli national, does that make one part of the ‘Israel of God’?

No. “They are not all Israel who are of Israel... children of flesh... not children of God.” (Rom. 9:6-8) “Born... not of blood... but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

 - * Nationalizing is of the flesh, involving man’s law and a passport.
 - * The Israel of God is of faith, Spirit, promise (Gal. 3:26-29). Ruth was Moabite but became of Israel by faith. Pharisees were Jews by blood but Jesus said they were “of their father the devil” (John 8:44).

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- * Pilgrimage to Tel Aviv does not circumcise the heart as in Col. 2:11. You can live in Jerusalem and belong to Baal. You can live in Ukanafun and belong to God. “Our citizenship is in heaven.” (Phil. 3:20)
3. Between ‘tourism’ and ‘spirituality’, which one can we say pilgrimage to physical Israel identifies with, as Christians?
- * Tourism. “Neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem... God is Spirit.” (John 4:21-24)
“Here we have no continuing city.” (Heb. 13:14)
 - * Spirituality is “worship in Spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Going to see where Jesus walked does not equate to walking with Jesus. Two on the Emmaus road walked with Him, but they did not know Him.
 - * Danger: Tourism replaces Christ with geography. “You observe days... I am afraid for you.” Paul never sold “Holy Land tours”. He focused on “Holy Spirit tours” (Acts 19:2).
 - * Pilgrimage today is tourism plus Judaism. It is not spirituality, it is sentimentality. “You have come to Mount Zion... heavenly Jerusalem.” (Heb. 12:22)
We are already there by faith.

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4. What was the 'Talmud' and how can our traditions of administering the Christian Gospel be equated with the Faith today without our knowing it?

- * Talmud: Jewish commentary on Torah plus oral traditions of elders. Note that teaching the traditions of men as doctrine make the word of God of no effect (Mark 7:3-13).
Talmud = Torah + commentary + fences + fences. Example: Torah: "Keep Sabbath".
Talmud: "Do not walk 2000 cubits. Do not carry a needle. Do not spit on the ground, it might be ploughed."
- * How the Gospel becomes Talmudic today:
 - Dress codes: "Women no trousers" – not Scripture, tradition. 1 Tim. 2:9 "modest", not "forbidden".
 - Title hierarchies: Talmud of clergy (Matt. 23:9).
 - Holy days: "First fruit, Easter, end of year sacrifice" – Gal. 4:10 "you observe days and months and seasons and years."
 - Water / Oil / Mantle laws: "Use only from altar" – Mark 7:13 "tradition".
 - Covering doctrine: "Cannot pray without man's headship" – 1 Cor. 11 twisted.

Test: If Jesus did not command it, the apostles did not practise it, but your "papa"

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enforced it, it is Talmud. “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:9)

- * The methods of administering the Gospel are transitional “ready to vanish” (Heb. 8:13). The old covenant system – temple, priesthood, sacrifices – was a ‘shadow’ pointing to Christ. Heb. 8:13 says that it was “growing old and ready to vanish away”. When Christ came and the temple fell, that administration passed away. The Israel of God walks by Spirit, not Talmud. “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Gal. 5:18)

Confession

Lord, I confess that You separated Israel and made her special through the Torah to reveal Yourself; that You have made the Christian Church and Gospel more special, uniting all to reveal Yourself today. Thank you Lord that You have delivered us from the Torah, our schoolmaster, to graduation through this Gospel (Gal. 3:24; 4:1-7).