

Was Israel Replaced by the Church?

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In this series regarding returning to God's righteousness, I am dealing with the question now of whether or not "the church" has replaced Israel. I stated last time that while there has been division, I do not believe "Israel" has been replaced. The message is there in the Word but missed, ignored, or we have been blinded to it for a season. I believe our Father YHVH allowed the division for His own purposes; among them, for there to be two witnesses to come together in unity as we near Messiah's return.

Looking Back

If we didn't have the prophecies of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings, what we call the Old Testament, we wouldn't even know there was a Messiah to come, much less how to ascertain that He is genuinely from The Father. Beware! Even the elect may be deceived.

We believe in the God of the Bible, Who is also called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Those very people of the Old Testament were believers in the same God we honor yet we now consider them outside the camp of belief? Yes, it is true that they will have to be grafted back into their own tree by faith in Messiah Yeshua/Jesus, but it is NOT true that they are Un-believers. More like "incomplete" and still waiting for the same Salvation that we have already recognized. The Word further tells us that **the (temporary) blinding of Israel was for the sake of the Gentiles to come in!** For us! (Romans 11:25)

"All Israel" includes Jews, of the House of *Yehudah*, but *Jews/Yehudah* does not refer to all Israel, only one of twelve tribes/Houses. We have Scriptural reference to those who were grafted in to the House of *Yehudah*/Jews by faith as well as those who were grafted into all Israel by faith—for example, the mixed multitudes that came out of Egypt with Israel, Rahab from Jericho/Canaan, Ruth from Moab. (Matthew 1:5) Over time, the name of "Jews" has usurped the identity of "Israel," rather than acknowledging that it is but one of the twelve tribes, bringing further confusion.

Looking Forward

The idea that the church has replaced Israel is called **Replacement Theology**, though it is not always acknowledged by name. When Gentiles were grafted into the House of God by faith, which is Israel, how could they replace what they were brought into?

Yeshua Himself noted that His work was to make a way back to relationship with the Father, and that He only did what He knew the Father did.

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know^[a] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." ...How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

John 14:6-7, 9-11 KJV

The Gentile believers that came to Messiah Yeshua, primarily through Paul's work, were grateful to recognize that their sin could be forgiven and they could become part of the family of God, which was Israel. This was extremely difficult for Jewish people to comprehend and some fell prey to a supremacist view of Judaism and Jewish people that still exists today. Others tried to make it as difficult as possible for Gentiles to come in to the family. But ultimately, as we know now, the flood of Gentile Believers was huge. Israel, called by our God to be His special witness to the world succeeded in some ways and failed miserably in others. Still, Paul and the disciples conveyed the message that these Gentiles WERE accepted by YHVH our God and thus, should be accepted by those in Judaism, through Messiah Yeshua, to become part of the assembly of "called out ones."

¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands— ¹² remember **that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without YHVH in the world.** ¹³ **But now in Y'Shua the Messiah you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.**

Ephesians 2:11–13 KJV

A frequently used word for the group of Believers in the OT was *Kahal*, H6951.—*congregation, assembly, multitude*. These people were called to follow YHVH, the God of Israel. The *Septuagint* provides a bridge between the Hebrew words and the Greek words chosen for translation. *Ekklesia* was the Greek word chosen for *Kahal*. -- *ek*—"out of" or "away from" and *kaleo*—"to be called." *Ekklesia* then literally means "to be called out of or away from."

As I understand it, there was great enmity between those assemblies that accepted Yeshua as Messiah and those that did not. Eventually, those opposed to Him added malediction prayers to curse those who followed Yeshua. His followers could not continue there and had to come together with those in agreement. It seems that *ekklesia* was then used to refer to those assemblies that DID accept Yeshua as Messiah, while *synagogue* was used to refer to those assemblies that did NOT accept Him. Two names for what is really just one body of people in disagreement.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the **foundation of the apostles and prophets,**

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Ephesians 2:19-20 KJV

²⁴ even us whom he has called, **not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?** ²⁵

As indeed he says in Hosea,

"Those who were not my people I will call my people,
and her who was not beloved I will call beloved."

Romans 9: 24-27

Paul confirmed this picture of Jew and Gentile coming together in his letter to the Corinthians, who HAD been steeped in deep paganism. Our God does NOT have two wives, but ONE!

*² For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband,
to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.*

2 Cor. 11:2

Now, having been called out of the world and into the family of YHVH, our God, we need to learn what it means to be a Child in the Family of God, not a child of the flesh or the world, before anything else. Back to my earlier focus in this series:

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Revelation 22:11 KJV

Next time Child first and then later Bride! He is not coming for a child Bride, but one who is mature, without spot or blemish! Comments/Questions: info@set-apart-ministries.org