



## **COMPARE AND CONTRAST ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH**

**By Sherry Cumby**

The Apostle Paul was moved upon by the power of the Holy Spirit of the Living God to teach mankind the sovereign plan for Israel and the Church of Jesus Christ in his letter to the Jews and Gentiles at the church in Rome (Romans 9-11). The rejection of the Creator of Israel by His chosen people is addressed in Romans 9:1-3 and 10:1-5.<sup>1</sup> God's outpouring of love with the Law's rules and regulations was scorned by the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yet because of the sovereign promises made through divine covenants, Israel was elected to receive the purpose for the nation through whom the whole world would be blessed.<sup>2</sup> Paul was living proof that God had not abandoned His people; rather, He had preserved a remnant of those who believed His great promises (Romans 11:1, 5).<sup>3</sup> God blinded the Jews for a period of time yet will one day lift the veil when "all Israel will be saved" and they will look upon their Messiah (Romans 11:26). Paul explains that there will come a day when there will be a national turning to Jesus Christ through faith when He returns to earth for His Millennial reign with the saints of glory: His Bride.<sup>4</sup> It is written that Jesus "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1989), pg. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:26). Therefore, believers would do well to recognize the likenesses and differences between Israel and The Church throughout Sacred Scripture.

The Nation of Israel was created by God (Isaiah 43:1 and 15) for the purpose of bringing forth the Redemptive Plan through His only begotten Son: Jesus of Nazareth. The Creator’s decrees will reveal His love, mercy, and grace to a lost world; thereby, His glory will be manifested to all who would believe. Adam sinned against Jehovah God by disobeying His commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; therefore, the first Adam received the first promise God made: “that in the day you eat thereof you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16). As a result of the sin by the first human being, Paul says, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Being the son of Mary, who remained a virgin until after His birth (Matthew 1:25), Jesus of Nazareth was not the offspring of Adam; therefore, He did not inherit the sin nature of the fallen race.<sup>5</sup> Man’s sin can only be justified by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus He offered willingly on the cross of Calvary after giving up His life as the Substitute for every sinner.<sup>6</sup> Those who stood watching witnessed the death of The Lamb of God who bore away the sins of the world (John 1:29; 19:18, 30). Jesus died for the sin of Adam, the inherited sin nature of all off-spring, and the multitude of sins committed by unsaved and saved human beings. Paul gave the assurance that “...by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

The Law of Moses given by God required the blood of goats, bulls, and the sprinkling of the ashes of a flawless red heifer without spot or blemish as a sacrifice for cleansing because of the nation of Israel’s defilement. The Hebrews lived under the rules and regulations of the law

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<sup>5</sup> Class Notes by Dr. Dave Olander

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

for blessings; and under curses, when turning away from God to idolatry (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). The Law was given by Jehovah God to Moses in order to draw the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the Messiah through faith (Galatians 3:24 -25).

God inspired His word and the Holy Spirit moved upon forty chosen men, to write the Sacred Scriptures over a span of 1400 years on three continents. The message of the Bible is faithful and has been counted by church fathers as the authoritative inerrant ‘out-breathing’ of the Sovereign God. Through the continual study of God’s Word, theologians like Lewis Sperry Chafer have found that the Bible’s primary application is made up of 4/5’s to the nation of Israel in contrast of the 1/5 written to the Church of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup>

By grace, Jesus established His Church in Matthew 16:18 by responding to His disciple, Simon Peter’s statement: “...You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus declared, “...and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” After the Lord’s death, the Apostle Peter explained to the Church made up of Jews and Gentiles, “...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light (I Peter 2:9).”

The writer of Hebrews points out that Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest, was faithful to His Father who sent Him to earth just as Moses was faithful to Yahweh (3:1-2). Jesus was counted worthy of more glory than Moses who built the tabernacle in the desert for the presence of God (Hebrews 3:3). Christ provided the one and only way for His Church through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the Father by establishing His tabernacle in the hearts of believers whereby all become the temple of the Holy Spirit. The individual believers within the Church of Jesus Christ have received the Holy Spirit: the Third Person of the one essence Triune

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<sup>7</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1976), Vol. 4, pg. 47.

God. The body of each believer has become the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). In contrast, Israel considers the most sacred place on the face of the earth as the ancient temple site where Solomon's Temple to the Most High God stood.<sup>8</sup> It will soon be rebuilt before Antichrist sets up his throne.<sup>9</sup> After the seven years of tribulation ending in the Battle of Armageddon, Christ Jesus will return and set up His throne in the third temple on the ancient throne of King David where He will rule and reign for a thousand years with an iron scepter (Revelation 2:27).

The Prophet Daniel penned the inspired word of God found in Daniel 9:24-27 in which a key to the mystery between Israel and the Church is addressed. The Holy Spirit moved upon God's servant to write:

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. 25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Charles Ryrie points out major events that were to happen after the sixty-nine weeks: the Jewish Messiah would be crucified and the Romans would destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70.<sup>10</sup> These two historical events did take place yet the seventieth week still has not begun; therefore, there has

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<sup>8</sup> Tim LaHaye, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), pg. 150.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Study Bible* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1978), pg. 1327.

been an experiential time lapse between verses 26 and 27 as humanity awaits the next world-changing event.<sup>11</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ was birthed on Pentecost fifty days after the death of Christ. Lewis Sperry Chafer explains that in the specified course of time, God brought forth the Church based solely on the finished work of Christ on the cross, His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.<sup>12</sup> Individuals could only be purified by the spotless innocent blood of Jesus; therefore, the Church could not have existed before His return to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father.<sup>13</sup> Since that day when the Spirit-filled Apostle Peter preached and three thousand were added to the Church, the gospel is still being taken around the world as Christians bear fruit in spite of persecution (John 15: 1-16; I Corinthians 4:12; Hebrews 11:32-38). Since the first century, believers have eagerly awaited the Rapture of the Church which will begin the Nation of Israel's seventieth week while the Church remains in the Lord's heavenly presence.<sup>14</sup>

Premillennialists believe the Rapture will occur when the trump of the archangel shall sound forth and the Church, made up of believing Jews and Gentiles, will rise to meet Jesus Christ in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).<sup>15</sup> Antichrist will be revealed on earth as the one who makes a pack, or treaty, with Israel at the beginning of the seven years of Tribulation.<sup>16</sup> After three and a half years, the abomination that causes desolation will occur when Antichrist breaks his word to the Jewish people and sets himself up to be worshiped by all (Matthew 24:15 and II Thessalonians 2:4).<sup>17</sup> At the end of the seven years, Jesus Christ will return to the earth with His saints to set up His millennial reign.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Chafer, Vol 4, pg. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> LaHaye, pgs. 114-116.

<sup>16</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg. 45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

The Gentiles have only found hope “by grace through faith” in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10). Their heritage has only rested in the first Adam who birthed sin on the earth by eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which God had clearly said that in the day they would eat thereof death would occur (Genesis 2.17).<sup>18</sup> The Gentiles’ inheritance has been the sin nature of Adam being passed from generation to generation upon every individual. Until Jesus Christ preached the message of deliverance, Gentiles “were without Christ, aliens of the commonwealth of Israel, having no part in the covenants of promise, without God, they were without hope” (Ephesians 2:12). With the death of Jesus Christ, His burial, resurrection, ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the invitation of the Good News was extended to include the Gentiles (Acts 10:45; 11:17-18).<sup>19</sup> The Sacred Scriptures recorded in Isaiah 60 predicts that redeemed Israel will receive the Lord’s glory and presence. According to Chafer, the Nation of Israel will be served by other nations; therefore, Gentiles will be a subordinate people as they share in the glory of God on earth.<sup>20</sup> The Lord Himself continues to draw a people group to local churches from among the Gentiles and Jews to bear His name (Acts 15:14 & 17).<sup>21</sup> The Church can be confident that the Holy Spirit of the Living God regenerates, baptizes, and seals the body of believers who will be presented to Christ as a bride dressed in bright linen (John 14:17; Revelation 19:7-8).<sup>22</sup>

The Church is not mentioned specifically in the writings of the Old Testament yet Abraham was promised that through his seed all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pg. 46

The sacrifices made to Jehovah were types foreshadowing the ultimate death of God the Son dying for the sins of all mankind and His blood washing away all unrighteousness.<sup>24</sup> The love stories of the brides of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Boaz were types of the Bride of Christ that He would choose for Himself and build according to His plan.<sup>25</sup> By God's decree, Satan and his angels are destined for the lake of fire. Jesus promised, "...the gates of hell will not prevail..." against the Church who is built, filled, and sealed by His finished work in His own Body.<sup>26</sup>

God made an earthly covenant with Abraham and confirmed it with Isaac and Jacob in Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the Old Testament the prophets continued to predict the favor of God upon His chosen race upon the earth. The Lord has promised them "a national entity" (Jeremiah 31:36), a specific area of land (Genesis 13:15), a throne (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:36), a Man to sit on the throne as King (Jeremiah 33:21), and an earthly kingdom (Daniel 7:14).<sup>28</sup> Because of disobedience, these promises have been interrupted repeatedly by chastisement and by the plan of God providing for the "time of the Gentiles;" however, the covenants are forever and can never be revoked. The word of the Lord from Genesis 12:1 through the conclusion of Malachi relates in some manner to the lineage of Abraham.<sup>29</sup> When the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, comes down from heaven, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband, Abraham and his offspring through the son of Sarah whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be planted forever upon their land and Jesus Christ, King David's Son, will be their eternal King sitting upon King David's throne (Genesis 17:15; Isaiah 66:22; Revelation 20:15; 21:3-4).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg 381.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

The New Covenant, promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-33, is what actually governs the Church during the present Age of Grace.<sup>31</sup> God has put His law in the minds of His children by the reading, preaching, and teaching of His available word; His laws have been written on hearts. On His Resurrection Day Jesus Christ announced to Mary Magdelene to tell His brothers “I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God” (John 20:17b). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the Triune God is the God of believers. There is coming a day when the Nation of Israel upon the earth will be sheltered by the fulfillment of this covenant made available by the blood of Jesus.<sup>32</sup> The New Covenant for Jews and Gentiles provides *a guarantee of every divine grace* through Christ.<sup>33</sup>

The Lord has built His Church for heavenly citizenship and to rule and reign with Him during His millennial reign upon the earth.<sup>34</sup> After the Rapture of the Church, individual believers will stand before Christ and give an account of works done upon the earth. Each work will be tried as by fire and rewards will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Corinthians 3:12-15; 9:16-27; II Corinthians 5:9-11; Revelation 3:11; 22:12).<sup>35</sup> The marriage supper of the Lamb will be celebrated with His Bride in heaven (Matthew 25:10; Revelation 19:7-9).<sup>36</sup> When the new heavens and the new earth are created, the Church will occupy heaven in His presence eternally; the Nation of Israel will occupy the new earth and every detail of every covenant will be fulfilled.

God chose a Gentile named Abraham who became a friend to his Creator, to birth a nation upon the earth through whom He would bring forth His only begotten Son to redeem all

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Vol. 4, pg. 49.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Vol. 4, pg. 396

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



mankind from the penalty of sin. Long after Abraham was virile, the Lord gave him the son of promise through Sarah. Isaac begat Jacob who begat Judah to whom the promise was made of the royal scepter to come forth and never depart; thus, the Jews were born (Genesis 49:10). The Lord Himself has continued to draw people by His Spirit to walk by faith and not by sight as He builds His Church. The Jews and the Church have faith in common; however, the distinctions made between the Nation of Israel and the called out believers from among Jew and Gentile people groups are forever distinguished. Replacement theology is often based on the scripture passages of “the Israel of God” found in Galatians 6:16 and “they are not all Israel which are of Israel” from Romans 9:6.<sup>37</sup> Christians must learn by the study of the Word that God in His grace will keep His covenants with Israel forever; at the same time, His grace will build His church for the purpose of eternal life with Him in heaven and the occupation of the new earth.

The natural process of birth has perpetuated the Israelite nation. The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of individuals whether Jew or Gentile, has built the Christian community upon the earth for eternal heavenly rewards. Believers become children of God at their point of believing upon the Son of God who took away all sin at His death on the cross when His blood was shed. The Holy Spirit then begins the lifelong work of the regeneration process working concurrently with the individual to conform the new born Christian into the image of Christ.

Amazingly, Israel and the Church share something in common concerning nationality. The Nation of Israel is counted as one nation along with the other 192 countries of the world system.<sup>38</sup> Out of their hatred for all Jews, Arab nations refuse to recognize her as a nation;

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<sup>37</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg. 48.

<sup>38</sup> <http://geography.about.com/cs/countries/a/numbercountries.htm>

however, since May 14, 1948, Israel has been a resurrected nation.<sup>39</sup> The offspring of Jacob/Israel continue to return to the Promised Land from nations all over the world. In comparison, the Church is made up of those seen by John the Revelator: "...there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb...(Revelation 7:9)."

The dispensations upon the earth are for periods of time revealed by the plan of God. Chafer explains that the people of the earth since Adam will continue to propagate upon the earth throughout eternity although their estate may be altered.<sup>40</sup> The Church was built and established by Christ for this present dispensation as an influence upon the earth while the Holy Spirit moves upon willing hearts thereby bringing glory to God. The Church is the mystery unrelated to prior dispensations or to that which will follow after the millennium.<sup>41</sup>

The contrast of the ministry between Israel and the Church is easily distinguishable. The Temple worship was for the Jews alone; the Gentiles remained in the Outer Court. They had no vision to launch missionary progress to reach those outside the Jewish community; therefore, they kept their love from God, and for God, among themselves.<sup>42</sup> The writer of Psalm 67 reveals the worldwide missionary thrust that 144,000 Israelites will carry to the ends of the earth in the next dispensation (Revelation 7:4-9).<sup>43</sup> The Church, on the other hand, became foreign missionary minded from birth. Jesus Christ gave His disciples a charge to carry the gospel to all nations assuring them that He would be with them (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark 16:20 says after

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<sup>39</sup> The World Book Encyclopedia (Chicago, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1975), Vol. 10, pg. 392.

<sup>40</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg. 49.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg. 50.

<sup>43</sup> LaHaye, pg. 112.

the ascension of Jesus Christ, "... the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it."

Concerning the death of Christ, the Jewish leaders and the people of Israel called for the crucifixion death of the One who claimed that He was the Son of God; the King of the Jews. Willingly, the people cried out, "Let His blood be upon us and upon our children!" (Matthew 27:25). By God's infinite grace and preordained plan, the nation guilty of His suffering will be forgiven and saved in order to bring glory to God for the world to see that His covenants are non-revocable.<sup>44</sup> However, until the death of Jesus Christ, the Church could not have existed for there was no innocent blood to cleanse her of sin. With the completed work of Christ, there remains a perfect salvation offered to all. The message of the Church is that the Lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world by His shed blood; only believe.<sup>45</sup>

Foreign to the Israelite is the right to call Jehovah/Yahweh their Father. John writes of the distinction to this when he says that all who receive Jesus Christ, who Himself came from the Father, have been given the right to become children of God (John 1:12 &14). To be born again, is to be born of the Spirit who is One with the Father and the Son. The Christian is actually begotten of the Father.<sup>46</sup> Jesus taught His disciples to pray by petitioning, "Our Father in heaven..." (Matthew 6:9). Isaiah recorded that the Messiah would be called the "everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:6).

The term for Christ to an Israelite is synonymous with Messiah, Immanuel, and King; associating the office with the blessings.<sup>47</sup> Christ to the Church is thought of as Redeemer,

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<sup>44</sup> Chafer, Vol. 4, pg. 50.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Savior, Lord, Prince of Peace, and the Bridegroom. Paul presents Christ as the Head of the Church, which is His body (Ephesians 5:23).

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is in sharp contrast to His work with the members of the Church. In the Old Testament the staying power of the Holy Spirit was not experienced by individuals upon whom the Holy Spirit would choose to move upon only for periods of time. An example would be Israel's first king Saul who was indwelt by the Holy Spirit for a period of time only to experience great loss when the Holy Spirit departed (I Samuel 16:14). King David prayed in his confession of sin with Bathsheba, "...take not thy Holy Spirit from me..." (Psalm 51:11). However, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost birthed the power of the indwelling presence of the Counselor, Helper, Teacher, Comforter, and Friend to all who believe (Acts 1:4-5). The Reward of Jesus Christ given to Him by His Father was the gift of the Holy Spirit when He was exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33). Jesus in turn poured out His gift upon all who were gathered with the Apostles. Peter's simple message to all unsaved humanity was, "...Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). The thief on the cross simply believed and was accepted by Jesus; therefore, all believers have been saved by the grace of a loving merciful God (Luke 23:42-43; Ephesians 1:7; 2:5).

There are other contrasts between Israel and the Church which could be noted as to *position, the reign of Christ on the earth, priesthood, marriage, judgments, and position in eternity.*<sup>48</sup> However, it is also important to note that this discussion could be endless. In conclusion, a study of the scriptures reveals that Israel and the Church share much in common.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pgs. 52-53.

Each share the same Scriptures based on the ancient Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts. Both recognize a divine call upon individual lives through whom God builds relationships; both recognize unrighteousness as sin; both are drawn to believe in a need for redemption and salvation; and, both recognize they have a destiny with God.

Dramatically, the contrasts between Israel and the Church remain fixed by God. Israel was created; the Church was birthed. God made eternal covenants with Israel that will be fulfilled for His name sake. No covenant has been made by God with His established Church; the only promise given: eternal life in Christ.<sup>49</sup> Judaism caused Israel to turn inward and focus on oneness with God for Jews only; the Church was given a mandate by Christ to reach the world. Unbelieving Israel awaits their Messiah for the first time to earth; Christians await the Rapture of the Church to be with the Savior of all mankind forever. The Nation of Israel will go through the Seven Year Tribulation upon the earth; the Church will be kept in Christ. The Lord will return for His second coming to earth with His purified Bride to rule and reign upon the earth for a thousand years. When time shall be no more, the new heaven and the new earth will be revealed. The Church: the Bride of Christ, the wife of the Lamb will live eternally with Christ in heaven; Israel will occupy the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9). *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into It* (Revelation 21:24).

*...Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Revelation 22:20

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<sup>49</sup> Class notes by Dr. Chris Cone and Dr. Dave Olander.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Book Encyclopedia, 1975, Vol. 10, pg. 392.

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