

Parson to Person

ROMANS 15 PART 4

“Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: ‘For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.’ And again he says: ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!’ And again: ‘Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!’ And again, Isaiah says: ‘There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope.’ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:8–13 NKJV).

The Old Testament is a historical, poetic, and prophetic set of books that all describe the purposes and plans of God for man and creation within the context of His Messianic plan of

redemption. Beginning with the creation of man, subsequent fall, and early development of the population, we have a stage setting that broadly shows the condition of man climaxing (pre-Israel) at the Tower of Babel in Babylon.

Following the judgment at Babylon, God called Abraham (Genesis 12) and began the development of the nation and people called Israel (Genesis 12). The Old Testament (Genesis through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus) gives center stage to Israel and her Messiah. The Church Age (Acts 2–Revelation 3) gives focus to the gathering of believers in Jesus—the Messiah—including both Jews and Gentiles. From Revelation 4–19 we gain information about the Tribulation. Fundamentally, the Tribulation is a climactic judgment upon Israel (also including unbelieving Gentiles) which will come to an end when Jesus returns to save her from total annihilation (Revelation 19). Revelation 20 describes (in brief) the literal physical 1000-year reign of Jesus as King of Israel/Monarch of the world ending

with a climactic judgment of all unbelievers from the post -Millennial Age and every other era combined. The final chapters of Revelation (chapters 21–22) describe the New Heaven and New Earth reflected in advance, in Eden, prior to the fall.

These facts become the historical setting in which we see that God has always had a plan for both Israel and the Gentile populations.

A common misconception among Christians is that God chose Israel but made no provision for the other nations. However, this is not the case. God did indeed choose Israel as His own special people—and exclusively made a covenant with them alone. However, in doing so, He chose them, to make Himself known to them, and that through them He might make Himself known to the rest of the world. This is clearly delineated by Paul when he said, *“Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [Israel] for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His*

mercy...” (vss. 8–9). Moreover, the Lord used Ezekiel to prophesy to Israel that the work He would do with them would include the fact that through them *“the nations shall know that I am the Lord”* (Ezekiel 36:23).

God loves all of His creation, and inasmuch as He loves Israel, making them a special people to Himself, He loves the Gentiles and has made provisions for them through Jesus: The Messiah of Israel.

Christianity is the Jewish Faith come to fruition. Therefore, the New Covenant (made with Israel alone) welcomes the nations to the now Jewish faith (see Romans 9–11). We as Gentiles are grafted into the root, fatness, blessings, and promises of Israel. Oh what a blessing we enjoy—by faith alone, in Jesus alone, through grace alone, as declared in the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone.

For further study one may reflect on the “Israelology” section of our statement of faith (excluded by nearly all Systematic Theology books and most church positional papers).

We believe in the election of Israel as God's chosen nation (Deuteronomy 7:6), and in the people of Israel as covenant descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 15:1–6; Jeremiah 31:35–36). God has an irrevocable and eternal plan for the land of Israel and has promised the land as an inheritance to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by covenant (Genesis 15:7–21). God also has a future plan for the people of Israel (Jeremiah 31:31–34). The covenant with the people and land will not be realized in its fullness until the literal, physical, Millennial Reign of Christ.

We believe there is a distinction between Israel and the Church. Seeing this distinction is critical to the correct interpretation of Scripture. The fact that God has an eternal plan with Israel as a people and nation, calls us to reject what is known as “Replacement Theology.” Jews and Gentiles alike who believe the Gospel in the Church Age are all made one—the Church. This by no means suggests that God has replaced or

revoked His covenant with Israel. (Romans 11:1; Ephesians 2:11–22)

We reject the teaching that claims God has or does offer eternal salvation to the Jews without the need for faith in Christ, yet requires all Gentile people to believe on Christ for the same salvation. This doctrine is known as “Dual Covenantism.” We believe neither Jew nor Gentile will be saved apart from faith in the finished work of Christ (Acts 4:12).

All people prior to the cross were saved by faith in God, looking forward with expectation to the fulfillment of prophecy, by God in Christ (Hebrews 11:1–2, 13–16). Jews alive at the time of Christ were saved by faith in Jesus, as are all people from the time of Christ, through the Church Age, the Tribulation, and Millennium (John 3:16–18). All living Jews at the time of the Second Coming of Christ shall miraculously be brought to faith in Christ and shall all be saved (Zechariah 13:1–2, 8–9; Romans 11:25–36).

We believe that God loves the land and people of Israel. Therefore, we too love and

honor God's chosen people and likewise value the land as the Lord's (Joel 3:2). We make every effort to support Israel and to support missions in and to Israel. We believe the Gospel is to be proclaimed to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Romans 1:16–17).

I love you all,
Pastor Paul