

Understanding the Roles of Israel and the Church: Part 1

It is of the utmost importance and significance to the kingdom of G-d that at this time the church fully comprehends the unique roles that both Israel and the church are still to play out before Messiah returns. This would also be inclusive of Jewish believers from within the church who are called to be a light back to their own people.

As the apostle Paul has instructed, we are not to be ignorant to this mystery (Rom. 11:25). Yet there seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding in this regard—not simply toward Jewish believers, in how they should reflect their faith in Yeshua, but also in our reconnection as a spiritual family, as up to this point we are so very separate.

In fact, a good amount of what we hear and read from within the church continues to fuel this separation, either through the doctrine of replacement theology that teaches the church has replaced Israel, or through teachings that promote a continued separation right until the end with G-d dealing with Israel on His own apart from the church. However, with all of my heart as a Jewish believer who has come to love his Gentile family as his very own, I believe both of these teachings and positions to be incorrect.

For one moment, let's look at G-d's family between Jew and Gentile as a circle. The Jews were brought in first into their half and then removed through their unbelief, while the Gentiles came into their half after Christ through a remnant of Israel that started the church. So, from G-d's perspective, His spiritual family between Jew and Gentile has never really co-existed. And yet we hear the cry of Jesus from deep within His heart in John 17 that His family would be one. And it does not take much to read between these lines that Jesus was not

just referring to all believers being united here in these Scriptures, but also that His Jewish and Gentile family would be one.

Read it carefully and you will see that first He prays for His Jewish apostles and then, in verse 20, He switches to pray for those who will believe in their message, who up to this point are mainly believers from the nations (Gentiles), that we would be one. But the devil has ravaged the relationship between the two groups (Jew and Gentile), because he knows what is at stake when we truly reconnect as a spiritual family, which I will explain in more depth in part 2 of this message.

In light of the end times in which we are living, we must stop looking at Israel and the Jewish people as they are currently and start to see them by faith through the word of G-d, which tells us that the veil over their souls is only temporary and that it will be lifted (Rom 11:25-27). Indeed, Israel is a covenant people who must be spiritually restored before the L-rd returns in accordance to His promises to them through His word. We must begin to see them as part of the family of G-d who is yet to be restored to the circle and love them with the Father's heart, a Father who longs for His firstborn children to come home. Nothing less will do. We (the rest of G-d's children in His family) must also begin to see Israel's spiritual awakening as tantamount to G-d's end-time glory plan and begin to take it on as our very own. For isn't that what family is supposed to do for each other? Have we been missing something here?

In fact, I believe that G-d has designed His end-time plan so that neither group can come into its fullness without the other and that we are intricately linked together in His final end time mercy plan to take full dominion over heaven and earth—for Israel to receive salvation and for the church to be G-d's salvific agent to help bring it to pass. If this is truly the case, then we will need to take a good, hard look at

what we currently believe, especially if it is keeping us apart from our divine destiny to help the L-rd return to the earth. Church, this is serious stuff!



I know these are challenging words to many of us, but they are written and bathed in the love of Christ so that, at this time, the body of Messiah through Jew and Gentile would truly unite and understand the depths of their callings to help usher in the final chapter of the book and see Jesus reign upon the earth. For when the church accepts the reality of these circumstances, we will also begin to discover the significance of our own end-time role, which is to help release life back to our firstborn brethren, Israel, and see the family of G-d finally restored. Oh, my G-d, what an honor He is actually bestowing on His end-time church, which is why our generation and the ones that tarry in the church to the L-rd's coming need to make adjustments toward Israel. Now is the time of their restoration and salvation. As Jesus told us, the first would be last and the last first!

One, With Distinct Roles

To still believe the church has replaced Israel when all of the Scriptures regarding Israel's restoration to the land have already been fulfilled is silly. Both Moses and the prophets clearly pointed out that Israel would be brought back first and then spiritually cleansed. You must read these Scriptures, for the Word of G-d does not lie (Deut. 30:4-6; ; Ez. 36:22-28)!

If you honestly believe this or are teaching it to the church, you truly need to repent and allow the L-rd to correct your heart as well as your theology and support of His spiritual family, for there is no condemnation in Christ. I would also really encourage you to read my new book, *The Ezekiel Generation*, which launches in October and addresses this

subject in detail where you can find healing and restoration in this regard.

However, there are also many willing believers in the church thinking that the "one new man" in Christ has eliminated any differences between Jews and Gentiles. This also is incorrect. The apostle Paul never meant to eliminate the distinctions between Jewish and Gentile believers, but rather emphasized that in the Spirit of G-d, we now have complete equality and are co-heirs of the promises of Israel's covenants, both Jew and Gentile alike. This was actually challenging for first-century Gentile believers to process in light of Israel's rich heritage, which is why the apostle Paul worked so hard to communicate this essential principle to them.

If Paul meant to eliminate the distinctions between Jew and Gentile, then why did he adapt himself when he went back to Jerusalem, so he could effectively reach his own Jewish brethren with the gospel (Acts 21:17-26)? If he truly taught that the distinctions between Jew and Gentile were eliminated in Christ, why did he act in this fashion? No, he was a Jew to the Jews and a Gentile to the Gentiles, because he fully understood those he was ministering to in the hope that he could reach them for G-d (1 Cor. 9:20-23).

The apostle Paul's emphasis in the Galatian epistle does not eliminate Jew or Gentile but rather focuses us on our position in the Spirit through Christ: "You are all Sons of G-d through faith in Jesus Christ, for all of you were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).

This is why these different references were good for this analogy, as we know that while as men and women, for example, we are now equal in the Spirit through Christ, it does not eliminate the differences between us as men or women or even

husband and wives. But in Christ, we are one!

Nor did it necessarily change a slave's rights at that time. But it did in the Spirit, and so it is with Jew and Gentile. There is no longer any difference between us as His children, for we are one and are now co-heirs.

We can also see this unity and distinction within the Trinity itself. While the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all one, they each play out unique and different roles from within the unity of G-d. And this is also true of G-d's family in the Spirit between Jew and Gentile, which we must now learn to accept and bless to encourage Israel's spiritual awakening, which has to come to pass so that the end may come.

As a result, our roles remain—and thank G-d that they do—which up to this point we have not understood too well. Instead, when a Jewish person has come to faith in the church, we have expected them to conform to Gentile customs. But may this never be, because they have been called and chosen to become lights back to their own people, and so instead we should be supporting and blessing them into this calling to help win the Jewish people to faith.

I am not suggesting that Jews go back to the law for any dependency for salvation, but rather are free to live as Jews in their own heritage in however the Spirit leads them to reach their own. Nor am I criticizing Gentile customs, many of which I now enjoy myself.

But as a believer and follower of Jesus, have I not been set free from the law that I may have liberty in the Spirit? Is it not liberty to move with my Gentile-believing family and liberty to move as a Jew along with my customs and heritage? It is not liberty to celebrate the feasts of the L-rd, most of which focus on Yeshua Himself and the Holy Spirit? In fact, as a Gentile believer, do you not have liberty to celebrate the feasts also? There are appointed feasts and times in the

Spirit that I honestly feel we have been robbed of through the church's disconnection from its Jewish apostolic roots and heritage.

In order for this to happen in G-d's body at this time, there must be a spiritual reconnection between us as His children, which is vital for Israel and the church. It is vital for Jews to come into the salvation of the L-rd and for Gentiles to fulfill their destiny in arousing Israel to envy and releasing the mercy of G-d back to them. Just as G-d used Israel to give birth to the church, now in turn to fulfill His family circle, we would give birth back to them. It makes so much sense when you think of it in this light.

In part 2, we will address the incredible significance of the church's end-time role to bring glory to G-d. We will also address some of the barriers the enemy has placed in our way from the church's past to prevent us from coming into this destiny, some of which are of a sensitive and delicate matter that we will need to face in order to come into this time.

Hold on. It's going to get really good.

Grant Berry is a Jewish believer in Yeshua/Jesus and author of *The New Covenant Prophecy and The Ezekiel Generation*. He has founded *Reconnecting Ministries* with the specific focus to help the church reconnect spiritually to Israel and considers it vital to the kingdom of G-d in the last days. His message focuses on the unity, love and healing that the Father wants to bring between Jew and Gentile yet clearly points out the differences and misunderstandings between the two groups. Now is the time to look more carefully into this mystery to make way for healing and reconnection in the Spirit. For more information, please visit .