

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

Established 1953

August 2008

Vol. 42 / No. 8

ARE THE JEWS GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE?

by Lee Moses

The view is commonly expressed, “The Jews are God’s chosen people.” John Hagee and other similarly premillennial teachers insist Christians are obligated to support the secular nation of Israel. If Israel holds preeminence in God’s sight, such a conclusion would follow, as would other heavier conclusions. There can be no doubt that a nation of Israel plays a central role in the Bible’s unified theme of redemption. “But,” you ask, “Are the Jews God’s chosen people?” The answer would have to be qualified—it depends what you mean when you ask this question.

Do you mean, “Did God at one time specially choose the nation of Israel?” If so, the answer is yes. God had promised Abraham, “*I will make of thee a great nation*” (Genesis 12:2). From the twelve sons of Abraham’s grandson Jacob (or Israel as he was renamed), a special nation came and was chosen by God to be a people unto Himself. When God made His covenant with the twelve tribes of Israel, He separated them from all other nations. As Moses told the Israelites, “*For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*” (Deuteronomy 7:6). Other nations were able to observe clearly the blessing God had placed upon this nation (Exodus 12:33, 35-36; Deuteronomy 4:6; Joshua 2:9-11; 9:24-25; Judges 7:14; 1 Kings 10:9; 2 Kings 5:15; 2 Chronicles 32:23).

By inspiration Paul summed up the blessedness of his fleshly kinsmen, “*Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of*

whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Romans 9:4-5). Israel was to serve a very special purpose in God’s eternal plan of redemption, particularly in bringing Christ into the world. From Sinai to the cross, God held no relationship with any nation comparable to that which He held with Israel. As the psalmist exclaimed, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance*” (Psalm 33:12). This describes the ancient nation of Israel,

Do you mean, “Does God still view people of Jewish descent as His chosen people?” Then the answer is **no**.

Please note that **the duration of the promise to Israel was limited**. No, God did not state a specific number of years that He would continue to bless physical Israel following Sinai. But He did make clear that He would continue to bless them only as long as they remained faithful. They were promised, “*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth*” (Deuteronomy 28:1). This statement contains the biggest two-letter word in the English language: **if**. God’s promises to Israel were largely conditional. And as they were promised, so were they warned, “*And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face,*

so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God” (8:19-20; compare with 28:15-68; Leviticus 26:14-43; Joshua 23:15-16). Suffice it to say that the Israelites miserably failed to meet the conditions necessary to remain in their lofty position.

When John the baptizer came preaching his message of repentance, he warned that the people could no longer find any hope in their physical Abrahamic descent:

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Matthew 3:8-10).

This proverbial axe would take down the nation of Israel; and as it was laid to the very **root**, it would ensure that Israel could not sprout up again. Jesus pointed out that Israel had rejected and killed the prophets God sent to warn them; and thus He lamented, “*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,*” foretelling the utter destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and God’s final rejection of fleshly Israel (Matthew 23:34-24:34).

Also note that **the duration of the precepts of Israel were limited**. The nation of Israel was effectively instituted and sanctified by means of the law God gave them at Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 4:8). Indeed, the authority of the Law of Moses was absolute and perpetual—while the people governed by it were still truly a people, and while the purpose of the Law of Moses remained (Exodus 27:21; Matthew 5:18). The Law of Moses was given for a purpose: “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made*” (Galatians 3:19). That Seed was Christ (verse 16). Once

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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that Seed came and accomplished His task, the Law's purpose was finished. And Christ took away the precepts which set Israel apart from the other nations of the earth:

For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles, LM] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Also note that **the duration of the purpose of Israel was limited**. As the Law of Moses was given to Israel "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19), we see the purpose of Israel itself: To bring the Christ into the world. God had promised Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18; compare with 12:3; Galatians 3:8). Ultimately, Israel's purpose was not merely to bless itself, but to bless all the world by giving it a Savior. Once it had done this, there was no more need for a

fleshly nation to be God's people.

You see, modern Israel is not even Israel in God's eyes: "*they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*" (Romans 9:6). Christ promised Israel, "*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*" (Matthew 21:43).

Some argue, "But Jesus only came to save the Jews!" They particularly cite the incident when a Syro-Phoenician (Gentile) woman besought Jesus to help her daughter, to which He responded, "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matthew 15:24; compare with 10:5-6). It is true that Christ's primary focus in His earthly ministry was to save the Jews, necessarily so because of God's promises to Israel and their patriarchs. But this was only Christ's beginning point: "*Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name*" (Romans 15:8-9, emphasis LM). Consider what Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia: "*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth*" (Acts 13:46-47; compare with Isaiah 49:6-7). Christ's good news of salvation was not only for the Jews, but for all (Romans 1:16).

Some argue, "But Jesus was Jewish!" That Jesus was Jewish provides no argument one way or the other regarding God's present disposition toward the Jews. However, the relationship of the Jews to Jesus provides addition reason why God does **not** view people of Jewish descent as his chosen people. Arguments regarding Jesus' Judaism or ministry to the Jews fall flat once one considers **the Jews rejected Jesus!** "*He came unto his own [the Jews, LM], and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (John 1:11-13, emphasis LM). God

does not bestow this right of privilege because of anyone's earthly parentage. No one can be saved outside of Christ, pure and simple. As Peter proclaimed, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). This was a Jew speaking to Jews.

As they called for the crucifixion of Christ, the Jewish people willingly took upon themselves the guilt: "*Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children*" (Matthew 27:25). The guilt of shedding the blood of the prophets was sufficiently damning (23:31-33), and they called for an infinitely greater curse upon themselves. Instead of observing the blessing God had placed upon Israel, from henceforth other nations would observe the curse God had placed upon it.

But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house? And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them (2 Chronicles 7:19-22).

The LORD had promised regarding Jerusalem, "*And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof*" (Jeremiah 19:8).

God does **not** view people of Jewish descent today as His chosen people, and this cannot be stated too emphatically. This is not to advocate anti-Semitic thinking or action, nor is it to say that a person of Jewish birth cannot **become** one of God's chosen people. They simply are not physically **born** into His special favor.

There are serious ramifications to the view that God continues to view physical Israel as His chosen people. First of all, it renders the Gospel, at best, as only one alternative means of salvation. Second, it obligates Christians not only to **support** Judaism, but to **convert** to Judaism. Third, it makes God a respecter of persons, refuting everything for which Peter commended God in Acts 10:34-35.

Do you mean, “Does God view *spiritual* Jews as His chosen people?” Then the answer is yes.

While God does not view modern Israel as Israel, placing no value on circumcision or observation of the Law of Moses, He still has a chosen people: “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God*” (Galatians 6:15-16). So it is the rule of “a new creature,” being born again from the waters of Christian baptism and putting on the “new man” of Christianity (John 3:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22ff), by which one must walk to avail anything. It is those

who walk by this rule whom Paul calls “the Israel of God,” and thus upon whom the peace and mercy of God lie. “*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God*” (Romans 2:28-29).

Peter observed that the elect, or chosen, of God become so “*through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*” (1 Peter 1:2). It is to these Peter wrote, saying, “*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people [a people for God’s own possession, American Standard Version]; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*” (2:9-10).

Many of God’s ancient promises to Israel were ultimately to be realized in **spiritual** Israel, the church. And the realization of the promises under the new covenant with spiritual Israel is far greater than could have

been expected upon fleshly Israel’s reception of those promises. The old covenant had only “*a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*” (Hebrews 10:1). “*But now hath [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises*” (8:6).

No, even though their ancient forebears were God’s people, those who are born of Jewish descent today are not God’s people. However, they have just as much opportunity as anyone else to be added to spiritual Israel and enjoy the incomparable blessings of God’s favor.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

THE NUMBER ONE

by Marlin Kilpatrick

Most people understand that one does not mean two or more. However, in the field of religion many often become confused. When we consider the many ways man has devised to try to worship and serve his Creator, it is apparent that very little consideration has been given to the significant role the number one plays in God’s scheme of redemption.

In Genesis 3, we have the introduction of sin into this world. In Genesis 4, we have the introduction of worship in the form of animal sacrifice. There was only one way to please God in this earliest form of worship. Abel pleased God, but Cain did not, but what made the difference? Abel obeyed by faith, while Cain worshiped as he pleased (Hebrews 11:4). In essence, Cain thought his sacrifice would be just as pleasing to God as Abel’s, but he was terribly mistaken.

As wickedness among the people increased, God chose one man whose name was Noah (Genesis 6:8). According to the apostle Peter, Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). While preaching to the people, Noah obeyed God by building an ark. There was only one ark—one place of safety. All outside of the ark perished in the universal flood (Genesis 7:21 -23).

In Exodus 20, we read of the 10 Commandments. God said, “*Thou shalt have no other gods before me*” (Exodus 20:3). There is only one true and living God, and he will be second to none other. In the Old Testament we see how God used the concept of one—one God, one Deliverer, one way of worshiping Him, one ark for safety from destruction, one law which was His, and only one way for His people to express their love for Him, by obeying His law.

The concept of one and its significance is also seen in the New Testament. In the New Testament we read of the greatest expression of God’s love. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sin of the whole

world (John 3:16; 1 John 2:1-2). There is only one Savior. He promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18-19). Christ built only one church (Acts 2), and this church is His body. The apostle Paul wrote, “*And he is the head of the body, the church...*” (Colossians 1:18). Christ is also the Savior of His body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Some will say, “Well, the church doesn’t save us.” This is true, but the real question is, “Where are the saved?” There are only three possibilities: 1) they are in the church, 2) they are not in the church, or 3) some are in and some are not in the church. The Bible says they are in the one body which is His church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Christ has promised to save only His church (5:23).

Since the Lord adds the saved to His church (Acts 2:47), one might ask, “How, then, do I get into the church of Christ?” There is only one way, and that is through obedience to the gospel (Romans 1:16). On Pentecost (Acts 2), the people heard but one message. Those who gladly received the word, as preached by the apostles, were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts

2:38, 41). Friend, it is still the same today. You must hear the gospel, believe in Christ as God's Son, repent of your sins, and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of your sins. This is the one way that is right, and cannot be wrong.

Dear reader, there is only one way we can worship God and please Him. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The New Testament furnishes us a pattern for today's worship. The Lord's church worshiped on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The worship consisted of singing without the use of mechanical instruments of music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); praying (Acts 2:42); observing the Lord's death by eating the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-29); giving of one's means (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7); and hearing the preaching of God's word (Acts 20:7). When we follow this pattern for our worship, we are pleasing to God. This is the one and only way the Lord has authorized us to worship Him. Friend, when and how do you worship God? Do you worship on Sunday, the first day of the week? Do you follow the divinely given pattern for worship, revealed in the New Testament?

Precious people, there is only one way we can be saved and that is by our obedience to the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). There is only one church to which Christ adds the saved, and that church is His. In the New Testament, congregations of His church were known as churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). Are you a member of the Lord's church?

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Friend, we enter into Christ by being baptized into Him (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). Why not enter into this one way and be saved today? If we can assist you in your obedience to the gospel, please contact us or the nearest true church of Christ and make your desire known. You'll be glad you did! Think about it.

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP

- COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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