

# *Appendix 1*

## *Is the Church a New Entity That Began at Pentecost?*

The purpose of this appendix is to trace the logic leading to the conclusions reached in this book regarding the identity of the ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) in Matthew 16:18 and in the New Testament in general. It is hoped that the survey given here will highlight the role played by national Israel as the center of biblical theology and God's total plan of redemption.

By way of definition, I offer the following somewhat pedantic, although thorough, definition of the word "Israel" as used here:

**"Israel"**: the ethnic, national entity consisting of the physical descendants of Jacob, the chosen covenant people of God, having an ethnic, national, and territorial destiny as defined by the covenants and the prophets when interpreted by the grammatical-historical ("natural" or "literal") method of hermeneutics

I also submit that the word "Israel" in the New Testament always refers to national Israel in this sense or a segment of national Israel (the "remnant").

The logic underlying the arguments in this book can be set forth as follows.

### **The Second Advent and the Messianic Kingdom**

In the Messianic or millennial kingdom, there will be the

restored nation (kingdom) of Israel and the redeemed Gentile nations. All are distinct national units.<sup>1</sup>

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."<sup>2</sup>

At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.<sup>3</sup>

The LORD will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth; and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him, everyone from his *own* place.<sup>4</sup>

More discussion of Israel and the Gentile nations at the second advent is given as the argument continues.

## **The Interadvent Period: The Key Issue**

In contrast to the Messianic kingdom, however, during the interadvent period things are a bit more complicated, at least from the standpoint of putting together a coherent view of how the various individuals saved during this period should be organized, structured, and named from a biblical/theological standpoint. In this regard, the ἐκκλησία immediately comes to mind. What is it, what is its constituency, and what is its relationship to Israel? The situation is further complicated because Jews during the interadvent period are split into believing and unbelieving segments.

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1 In addition to the three verses cited, see, for example, Isa. 2:2; 11:12; 42:1; 60:3; Jer. 16:19-21; Ezek. 38:23; Zech. 9:10. See also the section, "The Gentiles: Individuals and Nations" in Appendix 3.

2 Isa. 49:6.

3 Jer. 3:17.

4 Zeph. 2:11.

## Hypothesis 1: The ἐκκλησία Begins at Pentecost

If the ἐκκλησία or "church"<sup>5</sup> is an entity that comes into existence at Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2, then ipso facto and necessarily it must be a new entity distinct from the nation of Israel, which of course had long been in existence prior to Pentecost. The logic of this conclusion would seem to be unassailable.

Who, then, are the members of this new entity called the church? It must be those who were the core, original believing constituency at the moment of its birth plus all those individuals who are saved between Pentecost and the second advent.<sup>6</sup> But now a problem surfaces.

Since the beginning of its national status at Sinai, Israel exclusively has been the "people of God."<sup>7</sup>

Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."<sup>8</sup>

Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers...The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should

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5 For simplicity, this appendix uses the common translation "church" for ἐκκλησία rather than the more accurate "congregation" or "assembly."

6 John 7:37-39 and 14:17 could be taken to imply that the church began at Pentecost. For a reply, see footnote 38 in chapter 12 and in general the section, "The Work of the Holy Spirit In the Old Testament and At Pentecost."

7 According to Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Recovering the Unity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 115, Israel in the Old Testament is called the "people of God" about ten times and "my people" about three hundred times.

8 Exod. 6:6-7.

keep all His commandments.<sup>9</sup>

You stand today, all of you, before the LORD your God...that you may enter into the covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath which the LORD your God is making with you today, in order that He may establish you today as His people and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>10</sup>

And what one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Your land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, *from* nations and their gods? For You have established for Yourself Your people Israel as Your own people forever, and You, O LORD, have become their God.<sup>11</sup>

However, if the church is a distinct entity from national Israel, logically there now must necessarily be two peoples of God: the newly created church and his covenant people Israel. Unless Israel at some point lost its status as God's people, the start of a new group of saved individuals at Pentecost would represent a second people of God. Saved Jews might or might not have dual membership,<sup>12</sup> but nevertheless there would now necessarily

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9 Deut. 26:15-18.

10 Deut. 29:10-13.

11 2 Sam. 7:23-24. Also Lev. 26:12: "I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people"; Deut. 27:9: "Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the LORD your God"; 1 Sam. 12:22: "The LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself"; Isa. 1:3: "An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, *but* Israel does not know, My people do not understand"; Jer. 7:23: "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people.'"

12 The notion of two distinct peoples of God causes more problems than at first appear. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, p. 757, definitely sees a dual membership: "It is true that Jewish believers are part of the Church. But the Jewish believers are also the Remnant of Isrsel, which is always part of the nation of Israel and not separated from it. Jewish believers are part of the Church *and* part of Israel" (emphasis original). Stern, *The Jewish New Testament Commentary*, p. 575, offers what is perhaps a humorous comment about membership options: "In the case of a Jew who has accepted Yeshua as Messiah, Dispensationalism has the curious effect of demanding that he decide whether he belongs to his

exist two peoples of God.

Dispensationalism, of course, takes exactly this view; it is perhaps the central thesis of the whole of dispensational theology: two peoples/two programs.<sup>13</sup> However, there are two arguments against the dispensational concept of two peoples of God.

*First*, Paul's remarks in Romans 11:1-2 imply that not only is the nation of Israel still **the** people of God, but also that he is aware of only one "people of God," namely, that

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own Jewish people, Israel, or to the Church." Actually, Stern is not quite correct. According to dispensationalism, the choice is not his. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, p. 226, writes, "Saved Israelites under the old economy were placed into the body of Christ at Pentecost (cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-15). Thereafter the church is distinguished from both Jew and Gentile (1 Cor. 10:32; Heb. 12:22-24). The church as the body of Christ is therefore a new entity, and the term *ecclesia* when used in this sense is used only of saints of the present dispensation." It must be pointed out, however, that since dispensationalism sees two distinct futures for these two groups, this is not a good solution. It means the believing Jews in the church have been removed from participating in the future of national Israel as predicted in her covenants and prophets. Now they have a "heavenly" destiny as members of the church rather than sharing the "earthly destiny" as members of Israel, their "kinsmen according to the flesh." Seeing the church as a new entity born on Pentecost and distinct from Israel also creates a few curious notes in Peter's sermons in Acts 2 and 3. In 2:22, he addresses his audience as "men of Israel" and in both sermons preaches to them as God's covenant people (2:36; 3:22-23, 25-26). But when they respond in belief they become members of the church, a new and distinct group from God's covenant people. This footnote merely points out some odd problems that arise with the concept of two peoples of God. However, the two arguments that follow in the text show the concept is almost certainly unscriptural.

- 13 According to Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, pp. 44-45, the first of the threefold *sine qua non* is this: "A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct." He then quotes Daniel Fuller positively: "The basic premise of Dispensationalism is two purposes of God expressed in the formation of two peoples who maintain their distinction throughout eternity." Robert L. Saucy, "Israel and the Church: A Case for Discontinuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Westchester, IL: Crossways Books, 1988), p. 258: "On the basis of the biblical description of 'Israel' as 'people of God' involving a national identity and the church as similarly 'people of God,' but formed from all nations, we have sought to show that these entities are not totally continuous. Rather, the Scriptures indicate that both have a place in God's program of salvation." Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, p.224: "Dispensational ecclesiology defines the church as a distinct body of saints in the present age, having its own divine purpose and destiny and differing from the saints of the past or future ages."

people whom he foreknew:<sup>14</sup>

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.

Verses 28-29 also imply that the entirety of national Israel constitutes the people of God during the interadvent period. See the discussion in the section, "Israel's Restoration" in chapter 5.

*Second*, as discussed at more length in Appendix 3, several Old Testament passages show that with the full restoration of the nation of Israel at the second advent, Gentiles as nations will be saved and actually become part of "God's people."

"Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

"Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation."<sup>15</sup>

These prophecies imply two conclusions:

- It is only when they are fulfilled at the return of King Messiah and the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom on earth that "my people" is expanded beyond Israel.
- Until that point in time, the prophetic picture portrays "my people" as simply and exclusively national Israel.

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14 Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, p. 740, writes, "The fact that Paul refers to Israel as *his people* [in vv. 1 and 2] **in the present age** shows that they are still the chosen people" (italics original; bold added). However, he fails to draw the implication that I do from Paul's statement, namely, that there is one and only one "his people" during this age.

15 Zech. 2:10-13.

Therefore, the people of God consists solely of Israel through the interadvent period with no loss of continuity from Old Testament times.<sup>16</sup>

Thus I consider the notion of two peoples of God unacceptable, creating more problems than its solves. But two peoples of God necessarily result if a new entity, distinct from national Israel, is formed at Pentecost. The solution to the "Israel/church" debate, then, must lie along the lines of assuming that there is no new, distinct, and unique group, separate from Israel, that comes into existence at Pentecost. The immediate corollary to this assumption is that there is only one people of God. Does this continue to be national Israel during the interadvent period as implied by the prophets?

## **Hypothesis 2: No New Entity Begins at Pentecost**

Once one starts down this path, at the risk of oversimplifying, there are two possibilities corresponding to two possible concepts of "Israel." The first is replacement theology/amillennialism with its definition(s) of "Israel," and the second is the solution proposed in this book, which retains the definition of "Israel" given at the beginning of this appendix.

### Replacement Theology/Amillennialism

In replacement theology/amillennialism we have only one people of God in both testaments. National Israel of the Old Testament is either replaced by the church as the "new Israel" and new people of God or in some way metamorphoses into this new Israel, expanding to include all the saved Gentiles with no substantive theological distinction between "Jew" and "Gentile."<sup>17</sup>

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16 Dispensationalists might argue that the NT church as a people of God distinct from Israel was a "mystery": a revelation not given the OT prophets but remaining "hidden" until revealed in NT times (Eph. 3:2-6; Col. 1:25-26). There are indeed aspects of God's program not revealed in Old Testament times (see the section, "The ἐκκλησία and the Mystery" in Appendix 3). However, if an OT prophecy viewed Israel as the sole people of God at the time of the second advent of the Messiah, a NT revelation cannot contradict that.

17 Adherents to the view being defined here generally cite Gal. 3:28 in

The question whether it is more proper to speak of a replacement of the Jews by the Christian church or of an extension (continuation) of the OT people of God into that of the NT church is variously answered. Some prefer to think in terms of a growth of the church out of OT Israel. There is biblical warrant for this. But it is also true that Jesus says that the owner of the vineyard (read "OT Israel") will let out the vineyard to other tenants (Matt. 21:41). This shows that along with continuity there is discontinuity between OT Israel and the church today....

What should be stated clearly, however, is that the idea of the church replacing Israel is not to be understood as a form of advanced anti-Semitism...

When Jesus the Messiah came, he founded the church (ἐκκλησία) upon the rock of Peter's confession....At Pentecost the nuclear church founded by the Savior receives its own life-principle in the outpouring of the Spirit. Jews and Gentiles are included within this new "Israel of God" [Gal. 6:16].<sup>18</sup>

However, on either scenario of the "proper" way to speak, national Israel of the Old Testament loses not only its status as the people of God but also in the process any and all ethnic, national, and territorial distinctives and covenantal prerogatives and destiny. For many reasons, I also find this view unacceptable, in fact a far more serious and grave error than dispensationalism.<sup>19</sup> Is the Lord finished with national Israel? Has he forgotten his covenants with them? Will the word of his prophets about the glorious restoration of Israel to the land given them as an everlasting possession come to naught? To understand how serious an error it is to make such claims, consider these Scriptures, which show the heart of God toward his

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support of this conclusion. For a response, see footnote 20 in chapter 5.

18 Marten H. Woudstra, "Israel and the Church: A Case for Continuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Westchester, IL: Crossways Books, 1988), pp. 237-38.

19 For a review of the anti-Semitism resulting from "replacement theology" (or "supercessionism") since it first entered the church and then became its official position with Augustine, see Horner, *Future Israel*, pp. 1-36.

people Israel.<sup>20</sup>

Isaiah 49:13-16:

Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth!  
Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains!  
For the LORD has comforted His people  
And will have compassion on His afflicted.

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,  
And the Lord has forgotten me."

"Can a woman forget her nursing child  
And have no compassion on the son of her womb?  
Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.  
Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My  
*hands*;  
Your walls are continually before Me."

Jeremiah 31:31-36:

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Thus says the LORD,

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<sup>20</sup> There are any number of thorough refutations of replacement theology/amillennialism. The papers assembled in the book, *Israel: The Land and the People*, gen. ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998), deal with several aspects of this issue. See also Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "An Assessment of 'Replacement Theology: The Relationship Between the Israel of the Abrahamic-Davidic Covenant and the Christian Church," *Mishkan* 21 (February 1994): 9-20, and Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, pp. 140-233.

Who gives the sun for light by day  
And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for  
light by night,  
Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar;  
The LORD of hosts is His name:  
"If this fixed order departs  
From before Me," declares the LORD,  
"Then the offspring of Israel also will cease  
From being a nation before Me forever."

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) wrote much about the eschatological future of national Israel in *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*. He rejoiced in that future for the chosen people, the covenant nation of God, and penned the following hymn (1882) based on Isaiah 44:21, "O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me":

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
all other names may pass away,  
but thine, my Israel, shall remain  
in everlasting memory.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
inscribed upon my palms thou art;  
the name I gave in days of old  
is graven still upon my heart.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
beloved of thy God art thou,  
his crown forever on thy head,  
his name forever on thy brow.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
he who upon thee named his name  
assures thee of eternal love,  
a love for evermore the same.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
the oath of him that cannot lie  
is on thy city and thy land,  
an oath to all eternity.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
the grace of ages deep and broad  
is grace without decay, the grace,  
O Israel, of the Lord thy God.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:

sun, moon, and stars may cease to shine,  
but thou shalt be remembered still,  
for thou art his, and he is thine.

### The Alternative Offered

As argued above, until that point in time when the Gentile nations are added to "my people" at the second advent, the people of God consists solely of national Israel, implying that there is only one people of God in both testaments and that no new people of God, distinct from Israel, began at Pentecost or at any other time. But what, then, is the "church," and what is its relationship to Israel?

*First*, during the interadvent period **only a remnant** of national Israel is experiencing its spiritual covenantal blessings of salvation, and **none** of national Israel are experiencing its physical and territorial covenantal blessings.

*Second*, based on the evidence marshaled in chapters 3 and 4, chapter 7 developed the final arguments for identifying the קָהָל (*qāhāl*) or ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) to which Jesus referred in Matthew 16:18:

The *qāhāl* is the Messianic assembly or community within national Israel.

*Third*, this *qāhāl* began with the first Jewish believers that accepted Jesus as Messiah during his public ministry. It was not a new people of God but the believing remnant within national Israel. Though experiencing much growth during Jesus' ministry and the early chapters of Acts, the Messianic community remained, until Acts 10,<sup>21</sup> exclusively Jewish in constituency and thus coextensive with the "remnant" of Romans 11:5.

*Fourth*, Gentile salvation, whether during the interadvent period as individuals or at the second advent as nations,

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21 Concerning the Samaritans in Acts 8, see footnote 46 in chapter 10.

comes through Israel and only through Israel; it is based on Israel's Abrahamic covenant:<sup>22</sup> "In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed."

*Fifth*, individual Gentiles are saved for the first time in Acts 10 under the preaching of Peter. This is the beginning point at which Gentiles as individuals are added to the Messianic community. Since the *qāhāl* is the Messianic community within national Israel, this implies that these individual Gentiles in some sense simultaneously become part of national Israel and thus part of the current and only "my people"--the "people of God."

Are there any passages in the New Testament that suggest Gentiles as individuals become in some sense, however limited, "part" of national Israel? I suggest there are two: Romans 11:16-24 and Ephesians 2:11-22, both systematic and didactic passages. These texts are discussed in Appendix 2.

What is this sense in which individual Gentiles become part of national Israel? This question is addressed in Appendix 3.

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22 It is legitimate to call the Abrahamic covenant "Israel's covenant" even though it was made with Abraham before there was a nation of Israel. The covenant was reiterated to Isaac (Gen. 26:24) and again to Jacob when he was renamed "Israel" (35:9-12), and Paul states the covenants belonged to Israel (Rom. 9:4). Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, p. 744, calls the Abrahamic covenant "a Jewish covenant."