

TRUMPET CALL

WELCOME TO THE UPTOWN CHURCH!

PSALM 98:4-6

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please check your bulletin for more information.

PASSING THE PEACE

Unity & Reconciliation

*Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11-12;
1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14; Matthew 5:23-24*

INVOCATION

A pastoral prayer of invocation, adoration, thanksgiving, and illumination.

Psalm 67:1-2, 105:4

LORD'S PRAYER

Corporate prayer of our covenantal commitment with our Heavenly Father through the Son of God, which encourages the confession of sin together.

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father,

Who is in heaven,

Holy is Your name.

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done,



LORD'S PRAYER

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our sins,

As we forgive those who sin against us.



LORD'S PRAYER

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil:
For Yours is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
Forever and ever — *amen!*



PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Worshipping and praising the Lord in song together.

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:3-12

ELDER

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:



ELDER

Blessed are the poor in spirit,

CONGREGATION

For theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.



ELDER

Blessed are those who mourn,

CONGREGATION

For they shall be comforted.



ELDER

Blessed are the meek,

CONGREGATION

For they shall inherit the earth.



ELDER

Blessed are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,

CONGREGATION

For they shall be satisfied.



ELDER

Blessed are the merciful,

CONGREGATION

For they shall receive mercy.



ELDER

Blessed are the pure in heart,

CONGREGATION

For they shall see God.



ELDER

Blessed are the peacemakers,

CONGREGATION

For they shall be called sons of
God.



ELDER

Blessed are those who are
persecuted for righteousness' sake,

CONGREGATION

For theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.



ELDER

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.



EVERYONE

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



INTERCESSION

Pastoral & Congregational Prayer

1 Timothy 2:1-6

ROMANS 8:15-17

“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”



DISMISSAL

Call children to the altar for prayer and blessing.

Matthew 18:1-14, 19:13-14

PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Worshipping and praising the Lord in song together.

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

DECLARATION OF THE LAW

The Greatest Commandment with a supplementary passage.

*Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:35-40; Luke 10:25-28;
John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-8,21; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8
Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18*

DECLARATION

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.'

This is the first and great commandment.



DECLARATION

And the second is like it:

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.



DECLARATION

For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word:



DECLARATION

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Love does no wrong to a neighbor;
therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

*Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:35-40; Luke 10:25-28; John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-8,21
Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8*





HEAR, O ISRAEL!

Understanding the Greatest Commandment, Part 1



GREATEST COMMANDMENT

“THE LAW OF LOVE”

- **Old Testament**
 - Shema — **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**
 - Priestly Law — **Leviticus 19:18**
- **New Testament**
 - Greatest Commandment — **Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:35-40; Luke 10:25-28**
 - Royal Law — **John 13:34-35; Rom. 13:9-10; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8; 1 John 4:7-8, 21**



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: “SHEMA”

- Shema (“Hear”) was recited every Sabbath in ancient Israel —
Deuteronomy 6:5-9, 11:13–21, Numbers 15:37–41
- **Deuteronomy 6:5-9** — Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: “ROYAL LAW”

- Levitical / Priestly Law
- **Leviticus 19:18** — You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.**
- Why does the apostle James call this second part of the greatest commandment the “royal law”?



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: “ROYAL LAW”

- **Exodus 19:5-6** — Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation.**’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”
- **1 Peter 2:9** — But you are a **chosen race**, a royal **priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: MARK 12:28-34

vv.28-31 — And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.**’ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: MARK 12:28-34

vv.32-34 — And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “**You are not far from the kingdom of God.**”



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: EXPOSITION

- So—let's breakdown the meaning of this command line-by-line, word-by-word:
 1. Hear, O Israel



HEAR

- “Hear” (*shema*) meaning, “Hark! Listen! Lend me your ear!”
- Consider this cry of command in relation to what God says to Israel throughout Scripture:

Ezekiel 12:2 — “Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house...”

Jeremiah 5:21 — “Hear (*shema*) this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not.”



HEAR

Matthew 13:15 — “For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear...”

- See also: **Isaiah 6:10, Acts 28:27, Romans 11:8**
- God regularly cries out to His elect, His chosen Israel, but they refuse to open their hearts and listen.
- Yet the very first word is “listen!”
- **There is no HEART without HEAR.**



HEAR, O ISRAEL

- Interestingly, Christ applies the greatest commandment of the law, “Hear, O Israel” to the Kingdom of God, to us, His Church, the body and bride of Christ.
- Why?
- Why us?
- And why is declaring the national identity Israel a necessary first step before the personal application of the law?



HEAR, O ISRAEL

Why does Christ apply “Hear O Israel” to the Kingdom of God?

Three questions to answer first:

1. Who is Israel?
2. Why is Israel?
3. Who made Israel?



WHO & WHY IS ISRAEL?

- First—let's not use contemporary concepts to answer an ancient question. What does Scripture say?
- New Testament revealed is the Old Testament concealed.
- To define Israel according to Scripture, we need to put on our **eschatological goggles**.



WHO & WHY IS ISRAEL?

- Kingdom of Israel >>> Kingdom of God
- In the OT, Israel was called the “Kingdom of the Lord”
1 Chronicles 28:5; 2 Chronicles 13:8; Exodus 19:5-6; Daniel 2:44, 7:27; Isaiah 52:7; Psalm 10:16; 93:1-5



WHO & WHY IS ISRAEL?

Today, Israel goes by many names:

1. Ethnic Israel, Jews, Judaism, and the modern state of Israel. This may cause confusion b/c to be Jewish is both racial and religious. Paul calls these people “**Israel of the flesh**” (**Romans 9:3-8**)
2. Paul calls the true followers of Christ the “**Israel of God**” (**Galatians 6:14-16**) — spiritual Israel, true Israel, new Israel; the elect or the Church (“called-out assembly”).

Why is this the case? Why is there a distinction at all?



WHO MADE ISRAEL? GENESIS 32:24-30

vv.24-27 — And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.”



WHO MADE ISRAEL? GENESIS 32:24-30

vv.28-30 — Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”



WHO MADE ISRAEL? GENESIS 48:15-16

And he [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said,

“The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, **the angel who has redeemed me from all evil**, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”



WHO MADE ISRAEL?

- The **preincarnate Christ** renamed Jacob, Israel.
- Not only did Christ rename Jacob Israel, but He also claims to be the one mediator between God and man, between the promises of Israel and the people of Israel.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- Jacob's dream in Bethel is one of the most iconic moments in Biblical history.
- It reinforces that God is keeping His promises to Abraham through his grandson Jacob, that his lineage would become a great nation who would possess the land of Canaan and bless all nations of the earth.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? GENESIS 32:12-17

vv.12-14 — And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the **angels of God were ascending and descending on it!** And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? GENESIS 32:12-17

vv.15-17 — Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- This word we translate as “ladder” in English is actually only used once in Hebrew, *sullam*, and means any “stepped ramp” or “flight of steps”, so simply “stairway” or “ladder”.
 - As a stairway, it suggests the angels are ascending and descending the steps of a temple, house, fortress, or throne.
 - As a ladder, it can suggest that the angels are either building or besieging.
 - I think ‘building a house’ is the direct implication of the text, here, because it happens at Bethel, which means, “house of God”



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- It is, here, in Bethel, that God first revealed Himself to his grandfather, Abraham, and said that “To your offspring I will give this land.” (**Genesis 12:7**) and so Abraham built an altar nearby.
- It is also here that God first reveals himself to Jacob. Very fitting. Bethel means “House of God” and Jacob says the stone, which he set as a pillar, is the “gate of heaven” at the “house of God”.
- In other words, Jacob’s house, that is, his descendants/lineage, will be built by God and the land he is destined to occupy, marked by this stone, will be the gateway between heaven and earth.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- But is there something deeper going on, here?
- It turns out, there was—this dream would later have deeply prophetic significance for Israel as a whole.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- In the Gospel of John, the disciples were persuading Nathanael that this Jesus was, in fact, the prophet foretold by Moses and the prophets:

John 1:49-51 — And he [Jesus] said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and **the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.**”

- Jesus is not likening Himself to Jacob’s stairway, He identifies Himself as the stairway. He is the stairway. **The stairway is the bridge between God and the Promised Land**, between heaven and earth. Christ is the one mediator between God and Israel (**1 Timothy 2:1-6**).



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? GALATIANS 3:16,22,29

v.16 — The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.

v.22 — But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

v.29 — If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- Christ is the gateway and ladder to the Promised Land, Bethel is the “house of God” which is a reference to both Israel and the Church — Christ is required for both!
- **Christ is saying:** I am the “gateway to heaven”
I am “the house of God”
I am “the house of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”
I am the one mediator between God and Israel
I am Israel, I am the Church, I am the Kingdom



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- **The promises of Abraham belong to those in Christ, not those outside of Christ.**
- **Recap:** After Jacob's dream, God changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means, "One who strives, struggles, or wrestles with God" ([Gen.32:28](#)). Jacob wrestled a man ([vv.24-25](#)), whom he identified as God, calling the place where he wrestled Him *Peniel*, meaning, "the face of God" ([Gen.32:30](#)) Jacob wrestled the preincarnate Christ who redeemed him from all evil, so that God's promises to Abraham may be fulfilled through him ([Gen.48:16](#)).



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- **Without Christ, Israel ceases to be wrestling with God.**
- They cease to be Israel. But in which sense: racial or religious?
- They remain Israel of the flesh (**Romans 9:4-5, 11:1,11,25-26**).
- **The Church is the Israel of the promises — the Israel of God.** That is an Israel who is saved and will be glorified by God in the Promised Land to come when Christ returns.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 9:6-8

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? GALATIANS 3:7-9

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

Without the Son, you do not have the Father.

1 John 2:23 — “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

Yet Jesus Christ, king of the Jews, died for them!

Matthew 27:25 — And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”

Luke 23:34 — “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:1-6

vv.1-3 — I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.”



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:1-6

vv.4-6 — But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:11-12

vv.11-12 — So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:15-32

vv.15-18 — For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the [natural] branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the [natural] branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:15-32

vv.19-22 — Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:15-32

vv.23-24 — And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:15-32

vv.25-27 — Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;
“and this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 11:15-32

vv.28-32 — As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.



WHY MAKE ISRAEL? ROMANS 9:1-5

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. **To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.**



WHY MAKE ISRAEL?

- Christ is the fulfilment of the promises of Abraham.
- The Church is the fulfilment of the kingdom Israel through Christ!
- The Church is the eternal kingdom come. His will be done!

- Why make Israel? **To save us all from slavery—sin and death.**





BY FAITH, NOT FLESH.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”

Ephesians 2:4-5

WHO IS ISRAEL? GALATIANS 6:14-16

vv.14-16 — “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

- Paul is referring to the true church of saved believers. He does not mean anyone and everyone who claims to be Christian...

Matthew 13:24-30 — *Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds*



WHO IS ISRAEL?

- Old Covenantal Israel was a shadow kingdom. It was Phase 1, so to speak, of God's gospel plan to draw all people to Himself.

Mark 1:15 — “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Luke 17:20-21 — “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you [it is within you, it is within your grasp]”.



WHO IS ISRAEL?

- Kingdom Israel was ramping up to Christ's eternal kingdom which would fulfill the **whole purpose of the old kingdom**.
- The advent of Christ was the revealing of the true eternal kingdom—Abel till now—the Gospel Kingdom.

Matthew 24:14 — “The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (see also: **Matthew 4:23, 9:35**)



WHO IS ISRAEL?

- The purpose of Israel and why it was created by God was to bring about the Messiah's, Jesus Christ, the truth, way, and life, and His eternal kingdom (**Galatians 3:23-29**).
There is no salvation, no glorification, no Promised land, no New Jerusalem, no kingdom of God, without Christ our Lord.
- It's not about earthly territories or tribes!
- **Focus on the true eternal kingdom, not the shadow kingdom that's fading away. His kingdom come, His will be done.**



WHO IS ISRAEL? WE ARE.

- **“Hear, O Israel”** means, **“Hark! O Kingdom of God!”**
- Therefore, when Christ says, “Hear, O Israel”
— He is speaking to you! More specifically, to us!
- Kingdom of Israel > Kingdom of God > Body of Christ > Son(s) of God
- **Kingdom of God = Divine Family**



WHO IS ISRAEL? WE ARE.

- We have been grafted into Christ with faithful Israel (of the flesh) as adopted sons of God, which was only possible through the incarnation (His flesh), which is for our glorification (in the flesh).
- **Christ is the fulfillment of Israel.**
He died a Jew. He rose a Christian. He remained Israel.
- We are children of the resurrection! Not children of the flesh, but children of the Promise. We are not bound by the law of death, but by the law of liberty, as Paul and James say.



WHO IS ISRAEL? GALATIANS 3:23-29

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, **for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.



WHO IS ISRAEL? WE ARE.

- Many today believe that “Israel of the flesh” (Jews, Judaism) is the defining feature of Israel, and that this Israel of the flesh is saved by virtue of their flesh and blood.
- **My friends, this is not right.**
- Flesh and blood does not inherit the kingdom of God (**1 Cor. 15:50**)
- Flesh and blood does not make Israel *Israel* — “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel...” (**Romans 9:6; 1 Corinthians 15:50**)



WHO IS ISRAEL? WE ARE.

- Christ created Israel.
- You are Israel if you are in a **right covenantal relationship with God**—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—on His terms, not our terms.
- The Israel of God (Kingdom of God) is not defined by flesh or blood, by race or place.



WHO IS ISRAEL? WE ARE.

Keep it simple:

- Is Israel of the flesh saved without Christ? No.
- Is Israel of the flesh saved with Christ? Yes.
- Is Israel of God saved without Christ? No.
- Is Israel of God saved with Christ? Yes.
- Who is the true Israel, then?
Those who belong to the Son of God, Jesus Christ.



WHY IS ALL THIS IMPORTANT?

Why is declaring the national identity Israel a necessary first step before the personal application of the law?

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO THE LAW?

Critical Application

ISRAEL OBEYS THE LAW OF LOVE & LIBERTY

- When we make these kinds of distinctions or segregations, as if some people are more special or “more equal” by virtue of their flesh and blood, their status or position, we show partiality.
 - Favouritism, tribalism, nepotism, racism, ethnocentrism (Arianism), Antisemitism, segregationalism, et cetera
- But, are we, as Christians, to show partiality at all? No!
Partiality violates the greatest commandment!



ISRAEL OBEYS THE LAW: GALATIANS 2:11-14

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. **But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel**, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"



ISRAEL OBEYS THE LAW: JAMES 2:1-12

vv.1-4 — My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?



ISRAEL OBEYS THE LAW: JAMES 2:1-12

vv.5-8 — Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?



ISRAEL OBEYS THE LAW: JAMES 2:1-12

vv.9-12 — If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. **But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.** For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.





LOVE IS JUST.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23

ISRAEL OBEYS THE LAW OF LOVE & LIBERTY

- Partiality, favouritism, tribalism, nepotism, racism, ethnocentrism (Arianism), Antisemitism, segregationalism — **it is all sin.**
- You are guilty of the whole law if you believe or behave this way.
- Segregation divides the body of Christ by our flesh and blood, not His! His blood was shed for all!
It violates the **Royal Law of Love and Liberty.**





WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 6:12

HEAR, O ISRAEL!

- **Hear, O Israel** means, “**Listen! Wrestle with the Word of God!**”
- Continue in belief. Obey His voice. Persevere!
- Open your hearts to hear Him!

“For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.” (**Romans 11:21**)



HEAR, O ISRAEL!

- **Hear, O Israel** is a national call to the whole kingdom of God.
We are declaring our citizenship is from heaven!
We are children of God!
- The law of our land: **Love God, love neighbour.**

You cannot be Israel without following the greatest commandment.



HEAR, O ISRAEL!

- We, as a kingdom, as a nation, as citizens from above, are called to encourage and exhort one another to love one another as God loves us. Are you doing that?
How do we do that?
 1. Look at people as they ought to be, not as they are.
 2. Focus on things above: your glorification and your neighbours' glorification (“love your neighbour as yourself”)



SUPPLICATION

Pastoral Prayer of Application.

CALL THE ELDERS

Prayer in the Isles — altar call, confession of sin, anointing of the sick,
pastoral intercession and prayer, praise and worship

James 5:13-16; Psalm 103:2-5

JAMES 5:13-16

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”



BENEDICTION

Priestly Blessing

BENEDICTION

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God the Father,
And the communion of the Holy Spirit,
Be with you all this week.
Go in the peace that surpasses all understanding.
Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:14







TAKEAWAY #1

Personal Exhortation and Admonition

TAKEAWAY #2

Corporate Admonition and Exhortation

TAKEAWAY #3

Corporate/Personal Exhortation

WHAT IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?

- **Matthew 22:35-40** — And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”



WHAT IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?

- **Luke 10:25-28** — *Parable of the Good Samaritan* — And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and **your neighbor as yourself.**” And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; **do this, and you will live.**”



HEAR, O ISRAEL!

- The Israel of God is conquering the whole world!
(Matt.13:31-32)
- It's not about this place! Or this mountain! It's about the whole earth coming under the authority of Christ as it is in heaven.

John 4:19-26, Hebrews 2:8-9, Revelation 12



SUMMATIVE POINT

Critical Application.