

# KINGDOM NOW & FUTURE

Adult Sunday  
School  
9-10 am  
June 2 -23

1. End Times' Genesis: The Church's Birth
2. End Times' Tribulation: This Generation
3. End Times' Jubilation: The Millennium
4. End Times' Culmination: New Heaven and Earth

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## SERIES: KINGDOM NOW AND FUTURE

### MESSAGE 1. END TIMES' GENESIS: THE CHURCH'S BIRTH

Speaker: Jonas G. Croissant

Good morning dear brothers and sisters in Christ. I would like to first thank the elders for the privilege to preach and teach a series on the End Times. It is entitled *Kingdom Now and Future*. The series will be composed of the following four messages, Lord willing:

Message 1. **END TIMES' GENESIS: THE CHURCH' BIRTH**

Message 2. **END TIMES' TRIBULATION: THIS GENERATION**

Message 3. **END TIMES' JUBILATION: THE MILLENIUM**

Message 4. **END TIMES' CULMINATION: NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH**

In the first message, we will see the birth of Church, its relationship with Israel and the Kingdom, as well as our response of worship to these truths.

Let's pray: *"Our Father in Heaven, blessed be your name. You are the righteous One, the Holy One, All-True, All-Powerful, All-Wise, and Gracious God. Oh Lord, You are our King, your reign endures forever. We magnify your Son Jesus Christ our Savior who is seated at*

*your right hand and who reigns having all authority given to Him. We thank you for the atoning work of Your Son Jesus on the cross for the elects and we thank you for the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. May the Spirit mightily help us to meditate on your Kingdom and End Times today and in the following weeks. We do not come boldly before your Word by our own strength, for we know and confess that it is not by our power or strength that we will understand these things, but by your Spirit. May I be granted power, humility, clarity and freedom to preach and teach, and may your Word save and sanctify souls for to except anything else, Oh God, is sin. Hallowed by your Name; Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, for we ask it in Jesus's name, amen".*

**Imagine being asked the following question by children at church, "What is the Bible all about?" What would you respond? Think about it ...** What is the main theme of Scripture? Some would answer, Jesus. After all, Christ said that Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets all talk about Him. Others answer the glory of God or grace. But these answers are too general and do not communicate the entire theme of Scripture. Some have said that the Bible is all about the salvation of sinners. But is Scripture all about men being saved? That would be man-centered, wouldn't it? And that does not explain all the passages talking about judgment. Personally, I used to think that a comprehensive summary of Scripture could be given in these six words: "God saves sinners for His glory". All these answers certainly describe many aspects of Scripture but fail to account for its whole theme, which is none other than *The Kingdom of God*. Our time today will be divided into four parts:

### **1. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE**

### **2. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ISRAEL & THE CHURCH**

### **3. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH**

The first two parts will serve as an introduction for the series and the last one will be the main topic of today based on Acts 2:1-21. In the introduction, some of the things I will teach are somewhat technical and will be particularly relevant to some of you. Hang in there and take notes; I am sure that the take-home messages will be clear and beneficial to all.

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FIRST, LET US CONSIDER PART 1, **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE**

**George Ladd defines the Kingdom of God and its distinction with the Church in this way:** *"The Kingdom is primarily the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God, and, derivatively, the sphere in which the rule is experienced. In biblical idiom, the Kingdom is not identified with its subjects. They are the people of God's rule who enter it, live under it, and are governed by it. The church is the community of the Kingdom but never the Kingdom itself. Jesus' disciples*

*belong to the Kingdom as the Kingdom belongs to them; they are not the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the rule of God; the church is a society of men".* In our era, the Church is the people who have entered into the Kingdom of God, in the OT, it was the OT saints.

**The Kingdom of God is the main theme of the Bible.** 57 of the 66 canonical books of Scripture explicitly mention the theme of the Kingdom with its human and divine aspects. That's 86% of the Bible. The remaining 14% implicitly instruct us about how God rules His Kingdom and how we should live in it. The Hebrew words for "**king**", "**kingdom**", "**reign**", and "**throne**" appear over 3000 times in the OT, and the Greek equivalents occur 160 times in the NT. The first and last OT and NT mentions of these kingdom-related words are respectively found in Genesis 10:10, Malachi 1:14, Matthew 1:6, and Revelation 22:5. From start to finish the Bible is thus all about God the King and His Kingdom. It is about the King killing the Ancient Serpent and saving His Bride to restore His Kingdom.

**Hence, it is wrong to say that we are not in the Kingdom of God or that the Kingdom will only start when Christ comes back to establish His millennial reign.** The Kingdom of God has multiple facets, factors, dimensions, and timings. God is the King of eternity, the King of Creation, the King of Redemption, the King of History, the King of the Earth and the King of Heaven. Ever since creation and the fall, God has always been the King of His created Kingdom. In the OT, one of the names of God is *Adonai* and it means *Lord* or *Master*. Unlike the name *Yahweh* which reflects God's faithfulness and self-existence, *Adonai* refers mainly to His sovereignty. *Adonai* occurs 434 times in the OT, starting in Genesis 15:2 and including 11 occurrences in Daniel 9, and 200 mentions in Ezekiel alone. Ezekiel indeed talks much about the earthly millennial Kingdom of Jesus, including the rebuilt Temple and millennial sacrifices as we shall see in message 3. *Adonai* thus a kingly name of God throughout the OT and there is no King without a Kingdom.

**Let us now see three dimensions of the Kingdom of God, that is the Rule of God, which will explain all the biblical passages about the Kingdom.** His rule is generally categorized in three ways: (1) He rules over creation: this is called **The Universal Kingdom of God**; (2) He rules over salvation: this is called **The Spiritual or Redemptive Kingdom of God**; (3) He rules over the earth: this is called **the Mediatorial Kingdom of God**. Let's see each dimension one by one in Scripture.

**First, The Universal Kingdom of God.** The sovereign rule of God over creation is always at work throughout eternity, that's the Universal Kingdom. This dimension of the Kingdom is everlasting for God is constantly the King of Creation. This is why 1 Timothy 1:17 says, "**Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen**". And if you want to know what a wicked national leader who is boastful, arrogant, and self-centered would say about God and His Kingdom after being sovereignly regenerated, ask Nebuchadnezzar, because when God saved and humbled him, he then confessed in an

open letter to all the nations: "How great are His signs and how mighty are His wonders! **His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom and His dominion is from generation to generation**" (Daniel 4:3). Nebuchadnezzar became a Calvinist! He embraced the biblical God and His absolute sovereign rule over His universal Kingdom! He understood that the Kingdom of God already existed in his day. Psalm 115:3: "**Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.**" Do you think that God can sovereignly save anyone? Do you think that He can save your president? You better do, because He saved Nebuchadnezzar which introduces for us the second dimension of God's kingdom.

**Secondly, God rules not only over creation but also over salvation which is called The Spiritual or Redemptive Kingdom of God.** This dimension of the Kingdom has also always existed on earth as God saves sinners throughout all the ages by faith alone. However, special eras of redemption exist in Scripture and a unique era of the Kingdom came in the New Testament when Jesus the King came to Israel. In John 1:49 and 12:13, He is called the "**King of Israel**". In John 18:39 and 19:3, He is called the "**King of the Jews**". 1 Timothy 6:15 and the book of Revelation call Him the "**King of kings**". King David referred to Him five times as the "**King of Glory**" in Psalm 24 alone. John extols Him as the "**King of the Nations**" in Revelation 15:3. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords and Revelation 11:15 affirms that His Kingdom endures forever and ever, amen!

This rule is interchangeably called the "**Kingdom of God**" and the "**Kingdom of Heaven**" in Matthew 19:23-24. The expression the "**Kingdom of Heaven**" is only found in Matthew who is known to write for a Jewish audience. And Jews used to avoid mentioning the name of God. They would swear by Heaven and Jesus told them that swearing by Heaven is the same as swearing by Him who is in Heaven (Mat. 23:22). So the "**Kingdom of Heaven**" is identical to the "**Kingdom of God**" and comes from heaven to reach us on the earth. Jesus put it this way when accused to perform miracles by the power of Satan: "**If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you**" (Luke 11:20). The Spiritual Kingdom has come from Heaven in the person of Jesus Christ — our King.

Please open your Bible in Luke 17:20... The text reads, "20 **Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the Kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, 'The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the Kingdom of God is in your midst'**". Jesus says that the Kingdom of God was already present in His day. In fact, the end of verse 21 literally reads "**the Kingdom of God is within you**". This is why many Christians are right in saying that the Kingdom of God exists now as Christ rules in the hearts of Christians. However, as the next parts of Luke 17 and the rest of Scripture indicate, it is also true that there will be a time in the future when Christ comes to establish an earthly Kingdom which will last 1000 years. We will see this in the third message, and before this reign takes place there will be a fierce seven-year tribulation coming on the whole world and the generation of people alive when it begins



will not pass away until Christ comes back on earth. This will be the topic of the second message, next week. Eventually, God will set up a permanent earthly place for His already trans-generational Kingdom, and it will be in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

**This Kingdom of Redemption is already present since Jesus the Messiah came on the earth.** In John 3:5, Jesus said to Nicodemus: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”*. Thus, New Testament believers are not the Kingdom, but they can enter into it by the regenerating work of the Spirit. And many other parables link salvation and the redemptive Kingdom of God. Being born-again is a must to enter this kingdom. And being born-again is visible because of a changed life. Is it you? Have you repented of your sins to love Jesus with all of your heart? 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: *“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”* When we are regenerated by the Spirit, we are washed by the blood of Jesus and we inherit the kingdom because we become God’s children, co-heirs with Christ. Romans 14:17-18 consistently read: *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”*. Christians have entered the spiritual or redemptive Kingdom of God. This is why, as his death, resurrection, and ascension were fast approaching and would be followed by the sending of the Spirit of our salvation, Jesus could say: *“Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Mat 3:2). This Kingdom is now brethren. That’s the Spiritual Kingdom of Salvation.

**Thirdly, God rules not only over creation and salvation but also over the earth with unique human representatives at specific times,** this is **The Mediatorial Kingdom of God**. The Kingdom of God mediated by humans is not always present in history and it always involved the nation of Israel in a unique way. We know that this dimension of the Kingdoms is not always on the earth because Scripture talks about their future inaugurations. For instance, God instituted the theocracy of Israel in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC, and this mediatorial Kingdom was mediated through the prophet Moses. In Exodus 19:5-6, God revealed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai and said to the Israelites, *“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine (the Universal Kingdom), you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (the Mediatorial Kingdom)”*. God said that an earthly Kingdom was being formed with Israel through Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant, on a specific territory on earth.

Then, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC, in the days of Samuel, Israel rejected God as her King and desired a human king, and this was how the monarchy began in Israel. This mediatorial Kingdom was mediated by human representatives such as King David. Again, God spoke a

future Kingdom inauguration when addressing David in 2 Samuel 7. He said: “I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and **I will establish his kingdom.** [...] **Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.**”” This kingdom historically involved David, Solomon, and all their descendants culminating in the greater David — Jesus Christ. This is why Scripture says that Jesus will sit on the throne of David during the millennium. That’s the future Kingdom.

**In sum, the Kingdom of God exists now in its universal and spiritual dimensions over creation and salvation, respectively, but it also has future facets on earth in the Mediatorial Kingdom: the 1000 year-reign of Jesus on earth (Revelation 20) and the eternal reign of Jesus in the New Heaven and the New Earth (Revelation 21).** When Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream referring to the end earthly kingdoms including his, Daniel explained the dream and said: “the God of heaven **will set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that Kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these Kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever**” (Daniel 2:44). God is going to establish His earthly Kingdom with the Messiah for a 1000-year and forevermore. This mediatorial Kingdom will be mediated on earth by the God-Man Jesus, the greater David. We also learn of the future millennial Kingdom on earth in the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31 and 34: “**31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne** [He will then say to the sheep] **34 Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”** And the goats undergo what is called the Judgment of the Nations before the millennium. This Kingdom is prepared by God but was not yet here when Jesus spoke these words. This is a future kingdom for Israel and all of the people of God as also shown in Acts 1:6: when the disciples “gathered around [Jesus] and asked him, “**Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?**””. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus “**appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God,**” and after 40 days of personal training with Jesus, it would be insulting to think that the disciples had not understood the basics of the Kingdom. No, they actually understood that God was going to “**restore the kingdom to Israel**” and Jesus did not rebuke them this time as he often did. Rather, He simply said that they could not know the “times or dates the Father has set by his own authority” (Acts 1:7).

**Bringing it all together,** the Kingdom of God is the main theme of Scripture. It is the rule of God and has three dimensions: God’s rule over creation (called the Universal Kingdom), God’s rule over salvation (called the Spiritual or Redemptive Kingdom), and God’s rule over the earth through human mediators (called the Mediatorial Kingdom). The Kingdom of God is both present now in the dimensions of the universal and redemptive Kingdoms and is yet future in its mediatorial dimension when Christ will rule the earth from Jerusalem (Revelation 20) and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21). The Kingdom exists now spiritually through

salvation and is yet future physically in the millennium. This latter Kingdom will have a King from the human race, human subjects, and a territory on earth as predicted in the OT.

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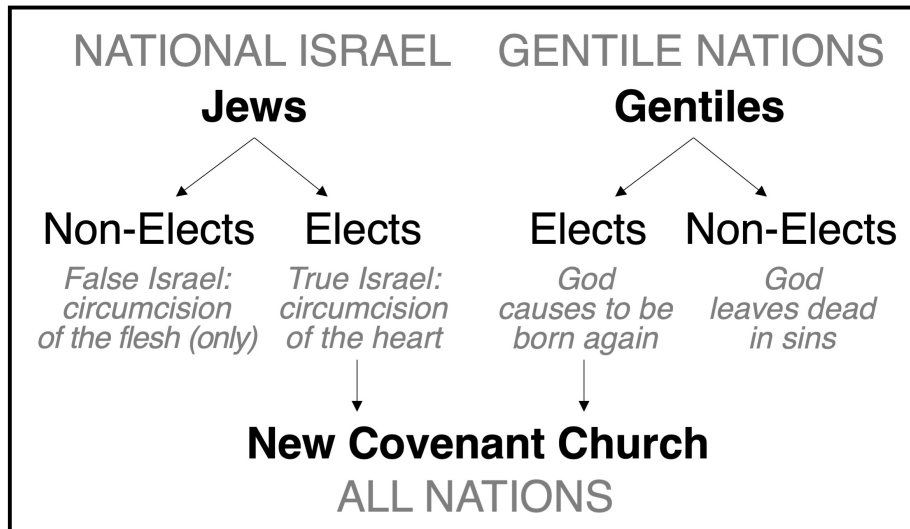
## PART 2, **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL & THE CHURCH**

**Regarding the mediatorial Kingdom of God on earth through Christ in the End Times, Christians have three main views. The names of these views illustrate differences of understanding on how to interpret the 1000-year reign (or millennium) of Christ in Revelation 20.** The names of the three views are: (1) Premillennialism (Christ comes pre-millennium, that is before the millennium); (2) Postmillennialism (Christ comes post-millennium, that is after the millennium, or at its culmination), and (3) Amillennialism (which means that there is no future mediatorial kingdom, the earthly millennium, but only a spiritual kingdom with the Church today). We will talk about these three views throughout the series and interact with certain key points of divergence in the four messages.

**In this message, we will test the teaching of Postmillennialism and Amillennialism which says that the Church is the New Israel.** This is usually accompanied by beliefs that the Nation of Israel has no unique future promises but that the Church is spiritually inheriting its promises and blessings. So, is Israel used as a synonym for the Church in the Bible? Has Israel always existed, as some believe? Is Israel or the Church a synonym for the people of God in all ages? Can we say that the Church already existed in the Old Testament? And what is at stake in all of this? First of all, we are the church and we should know who we are and who we are not. Secondly, those who reject the biblical distinction between Israel and the Church often end up teaching that the nation of Israel has no future blessings awaiting them in the earthly millennium of Christ, which is exactly what the Bible affirms. They teach that Israel got all the curses predicted in the OT and the Church gets all the blessings. Furthermore, Romans 11 tells that God does not want us to be ignorant about the fact that a partial hardening has come upon National Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

So, let's see what the Bible actually teaches on the relationship between Israel and the Church. Importantly, to faithfully understand these relationships and differences, we must only follow biblical passages and not go beyond what is written to follow a theological system.

**Let me first summarize what I am about to explain from Scripture to help you see it better later on. We will see that the Bible uses the word Israel in two ways:** (1) National Israel (i.e. elect + non-elect Jews), and (2) True Israel (i.e. elect Jews only). And the Church is composed of elect Jews and Gentiles, which is thus different from National Israel. On your handout:



You can see that all of humanity is divided into two groups, the Nation of Israel and the Nations of the Gentiles. Within National Israel, two sub-groups coexist: the elects and the non-elects. Similarly, within the Gentile Nations' category, two sub-groups coexist: the elects and the non-elects. So far so good. Now the elects within National Israel form what Scripture calls "True Israel" or "the Israel of God". And here is the surprising statement: **The Church is composed of True Israel and the Gentile elects**. So, is there a relationship between Israel and the Church? Yes, *if* you talk about elect Jews, but *Not if* you talk about the whole Nation of Israel. Elect Jews (i.e. True Israel) are part of the Church. Hence the Church contains True Israel, **but it is not limited or equivalent to the True Israel**. True Israel is a subset of the Church, not the whole Church because Israel always refers to Jews in Scripture. That was the summary, now let's walk through biblical texts to see it.

**First of all, Israel is not a word that can be used for the people of God throughout history, because Israel began with the patriarch Jacob.** Consistently, the first occurrence of the word Israel in the Bible is in Genesis 32:28 when God said to Jacob in 1906 BC, "*Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed*". 97-year-old Jacob, whose name meant "Deceiver", became "Israel" meaning "God's Fighter". **And Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel.** You say, what about Abraham, Isaac and the people that preceded them? Well, Scripture never calls them Israel. They were certainly among the elects who belonged to the spiritual or redemptive Kingdom of God ever since Adam was, but they are not called Israel. Israel is a physical Nation. Abraham was also promised to be a spiritual nation and we are all part of this Nation by faith, but we are not called Israel any more than he was. God also changed the name of Abram who became Abraham, meaning "father of multitudes". Jacob is the father of the Nation of Israel. The book of Romans tells us that Abraham is the father of all the elects from all Nations who have faith as he did.



**Secondly, let's see the difference between National Israel and true Israel which is also called the Remnant.** You say, can you prove that Israel is divided into two groups, one being called true Israel? Fair enough, let's see it in Scripture. In Romans 9:6, Paul says that **"they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel"**. This verse teaches that there is a sub-group within those who are physical descendants of National Israel. Verse 27 is even more explicit and tells us that this group is called the remnant and will be saved: **"Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea** (that's National Israel), **it is the remnant that will be saved** (that's True Israel)". This passage contrasts Israel and the Gentiles and affirms that there is a group of saved Jews within National Israel, a group called the Remnant. In Romans 2:28-29, we then read, **"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit"**. Being a true Jew is being regenerated or circumcised in the heart, as opposed to being only physically circumcised as all Jews within National Israel. Again, bear in mind that this passage also discusses Israel and the Gentiles, so Paul is talking about ethnic Jews here, and he says that some of true Jews have are inwardly pure before God. This sub-group of Jews within National Israel is called the remnant and true Israel. This is further confirmed by two statements of Jesus. In John 1:47, we read, **"When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit"**. Jesus literally said that Nathanael was a **"True Israelite"**, which implies that some were false Israelite. How so? They were full of deceit, loving their sins, unregenerated, uncircumcised of heart, that is, among the non-elect. Then, in John 15:1, Jesus says, **"I am the true Vine"**. Given the fact that the Vine was a frequent Old Testament symbol for Israel, it can be understood that Jesus said, **"I am the true Israel"**. Now amils would probably say amen to all of this, but there is the catch. The reason why Nathanael, Jesus, and many others were called "True Israelites" or "True Israel" is because they were physical descendants of Jacob. They were Jews. Jesus was a Jew. He was elected by God for the redemption of His people. Gentiles, however, are by definition *not Jews* and are thus never called Israel in Scripture. All the passages about True Israel refer to ethnic Jews belonging to National Israel *and* who were circumcised of heart. True Israel is the elect sub-set of National Israel. *Israel always refers to Jews in the Bible.*

**Thirdly, is the New Covenant Church ever called Israel in the Bible? The answer is no.** Here is the biblical definition of the Church. Listen carefully. The Church is the New Covenant community of believers from all nations from Pentecost to the Rapture. It should be noted that the word Israel occurs hundreds of times in Scripture and the overwhelming majority of them refers to Jews. Amils, Postmils, and Premils all agree on this. Only two texts are typically used to defend the idea that the Church is the New Israel of God.

**The first text is Romans 9:6** which we read earlier. Please turn to Romans 9... It says that **"they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel"**. First saying the Church is in view in

this verse demands us to arbitrarily say that God is using Israel in two different meanings here. That is: “they are not all of the CHURCH who are DESCENDED FROM ISRAEL”. This redefinition of the word Israel is completely arbitrary and unacceptable. In fact, the context unmistakably refers to Jewish people. In verse 3 and following, Paul, a Hebrew of Hebrews, says that those who “descended from Israel” are, “**my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service**”. Then, the chapter contrasts Israel with Gentiles. Verse 24, reads, “**even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles**”. Verses 30-31, “**What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law**”. Clearly, in Romans 9 (as in chapter 11 and all of Scripture) the word Israel refers to Jews as opposed to Gentiles. In fact, this is the whole thrust of Romans which explains that the Gospel is of grace through faith, not of works, even for the Jews. The point is, Jews are not saved just because of their lineage. They are saved if they are true Jews inside; if they are true to God and to His Word.

**The second text to support the idea that the Church is the New Israel of God is found in Galatians 6:16.** Starting in verse 15, the passage reads, “**For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**” Amills and Postmills say that Paul called the Church “**the Israel of God**” in v. 16. However, the grammar of this verse and the context of the epistle of Galatians clearly show that this is an error. Considering the grammar, we see that Paul has two groups in mind in v. 16, “**those who will walk by this rule**” and (Greek *kai*) “**the Israel of God**”. The Greek word *kai* in this verse is commonly used to mean “and” and fleeing to unsupported usage (such as the word “**even**” used in the Christian Standard Bible) would have to be contextually necessary. Amillennialists typically say that the text should read “**And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God**”, which would imply that Paul here called the Church the Israel of God. However, we will see that the first group of Galatians 6:16 (**those who will walk by this rule**) are believing Gentiles while the second group (“**the Israel of God**”) involves believing Jews, that is True Israel or “**the Israel of God**”. Now keep in mind that v. 15 talks about the uselessness of circumcision. Let’s zoom out and see the big picture of Galatians for a moment. What was the context of Galatians? Was Paul writing in a good mood to these Christians? Not at all. He wrote very brief greetings, unlike other letters, and then directly and sharply rebuked them for accepted another Gospel which involved salvation through faith in Christ plus circumcision plus the deeds of the Law of Moses. However, the Bible shows that repentant faith in Christ plus nothing equals salvation. And faith plus anything equals damnation. We are saved only by grace, only through faith, only in Christ. So, who propagated this false teaching of salvation by faith plus deeds plus circumcision? Paul calls them the “**the party of the circumcision**”, and even “**false**

**brethren**" in 2:4. They were false Christians claiming that salvation was by obeying the law of Moses including the sign of circumcision. They are remembered as the "**Judaizers**", as they attempted to conform Christians to Judaism. In Philippians 3:2, Paul called them "**evil workers**" and "**false circumcision**". If you will, these were "False Jews", a "False Israel", which was only concerned with the external aspects of the Law and was not with the true circumcision of the heart. And the whole book of the Galatians contrasts Jews and Gentiles for that very reason. The word "Gentiles" is used 9 times by Paul in Galatians and 23 times in Romans, which is more than any other NT epistles. This central comparison must guide our interpretation of the word Israel in these letters. Now to see what the two groups of Galatians 6:16 are, i.e. "**those who will walk by this rule**" and "**the Israel of God**", let me ask a simple question. Who was forced to be circumcised in the churches of Galatia? The Gentiles obviously since Jews were already circumcised. So, what is the natural reading our passage? Let me read it to you again, from v. 12:

"12 **Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised** (i.e. False Israel compels believing Gentiles in Galatian churches to be circumcised), **simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.** 13 **For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves** (again False Israel), **but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.** 14 **But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.** 15 **For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.** 16 **And those who will walk by this rule** (i.e. Gentiles who refused to be circumcised because they understood that the law and circumcision were over in Christ), **peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God** (i.e. believing Jews)". Peace and mercy are "**upon**" believing Jews, not unbelieving ones. By affirming the peace and forgiveness enjoyed by believing Gentiles as well as Israelites, Paul ensures that his rebuke against the *false* Jews will not lead the Galatian churches to reject the *true* Jews as well. In summary, both Romans 9:6 and Galatians 6:16 are clearly refereeing to Jewish people and not to the whole Church.

Now some OT passages are applied to the Church (e.g. Hosea 11:1 with Matthew 2:15; Hosea 1:10, 2:23 with Romans 9:24-26) but that does not mean that the Church is Israel; rather, it simply means that many OT *principles* also apply to the Church age or they simply serve as *illustrations*. These facts, however, do not prove that the Church is Israel.

-In summary, **NATIONAL ISRAEL = Jews** (1 Co. 10:32) = **All Israel** (Rom. 11:26) = **Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh** (Rom. 9:3).

**-NATIONAL ISRAEL = False + True Israel** (Rom. 2:28-19, 9:6,27)

**-ELECT JEWS = Remnant** (Rom. 9:27, Greek *hypoleimma*; Rom 11:5, Greek *leimma*) = **Israel of God** (Gal. 6:16) = **True Israel** (Rom. 2:28-29, 9:6) = **True Vine** (John 15:1)

**-ELECT GENTILES = Rest** (Acts 15:17, Greek *kataloipos*) = **Churches of the Gentiles** (Rom. 16:4)  
The Greek word for Gentiles is *ethnos* and from it we get the English ethnicities.

**-ELECT GENTILES ≠ Israel of God ≠ True Israel**

**-CHURCH = Believing** (elect) **Gentiles + Believing** (elect) **Jews** ("Israel of God", Gal 6:16)

**-CHURCH ≠ National Israel ≠ True Israel** (1 Co 10:32).

**-CHURCH = Elect Gentiles + True Israel** (Gal 6:16). In fact, going further, since Eph. 2:20 tells that the foundation of the Church is Christ and His Apostles, and since all of them were Jews, **we can biblically say that the foundation of the Church is True Israel and onto it Gentile living stones have been added by the multitudes in the past 2000 years!** John 4:22: **"Salvation is from the Jews"**!

**The difference between National Israel & the Church is explicit in 1 Corinthians 10:32**, let's read it together: **"Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God"**. All of humanity is found in this verse in three categories: unbelieving Israel (the Jews), unbelieving Gentiles (the Greeks), and believing Jews and Gentiles (the Church). Since Greek was spoken by all of the people throughout the Roman Empire, being a Greek was synonymous with being a Gentile. The same expression is used by Paul in Galatians 3:28 where he says that in Christ there is neither **"male or female"** (we can only be one or the other), **"slave or free"** (we can only be one or the other), **"Jew or Greek"** (we can only be one or the other, Jew or non-Jew, that is Jew or Gentile). In 1 Corinthians 10:32, we thus have incontrovertible evidence which shows that Israel and the Church are two different entities.

<b>Israel</b>	<b>New Cov. Church</b>
<b>Always means Jews</b> (entire Nation or some persons)	Those <b>called out</b> from <b>all Ethnicities/Nations</b>

**In fact, what is the main difference between Israel and the Church? Israel is one nation whereas the church is composed of all the nations.** And we should guard against two errors at this point. One error is saying that National Israel was *irreversibly* cast away by God and replaced by the Church (which is called Replacement theology and is incompatible with Romans 11). The other error is the error of traditional dispensationalism which completely separates Israel and the Church and sees God having **two Brides**: Israel and the Church.

Progressive dispensationalism and many historic premillennialists, however, recognize that the book of Ephesians teaches that God has abolished the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles who now form what Paul called the **"One New Man"** (Ephesians 2:15). Similarly, Romans 11 illustrates the covenant of faith with Abraham as **One Olive Tree** with

branches of True Israel have remained and God has then grafted branches elect Gentiles. There is only **one people of God, one church** containing elect Jews (the True Israel of God) and elect Gentiles. 1 Corinthians 12:13: **"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit"**.

Grudem summarizes the progressive dispensationalists view as follows: *"They would not see the church as a parenthesis in God's plan, but as the first step toward the establishment of the Kingdom of God. On a progressive dispensational view, God does not have two separate purposes for Israel and the Church, but a single purpose —the establishment of the Kingdom of God—in which Israel and the Church will both share. [...] Moreover, they would hold that the Church will reign with Christ in glorified bodied on earth during the millennium"*.

**Now, are we to be surprised by the fact that the Church contains True Israel and forms one Bride?** Not at all since Jeremiah 31 prophesied that God would make a **"new covenant with the house of Israel"** and yet they rejected this covenant in Jesus, but not all since many elect Jews believed in their Messiah. And God said time and time again in the OT that those who were not His people would be called His people.

**In summary, the Bible uses the word Israel in two ways: (1) National Israel (i.e. elect + non-elect Jews), and (2) True Israel (i.e. elect Jews only). And the Church is composed of elect Jews and Gentiles, which is thus different from National Israel.** In theological terms, there is both continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Church. The continuity is seen in the acceptance of True Jews in the Church and the application of moral laws from the Old Testament today. National Israel still has a future in God's prophetic calendar and will be restored when they believe in Jesus their Messiah (Romans 11). More on this next week. Now let's see what the Bible says about the timeframe of the existence of the Church.

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## PART 3, LET US REJOICE IN **THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH**

**Let's first see how the Bible defines the Church etymologically and theologically.**

Regarding the etymology or root meaning of the word Church, the Greek word translated Church is *Ekklesia* and it literally means *"those who are called out"*. *Ekklesia* refers to a group of people or a congregation and the context indicates which group is in view. In other words, the word *Ekklesia* does not always refer to Christians or to elect believers. For instance, in Acts 19 there was a riot in Ephesus involving the unbelievers. Verse 25 says that a group of Ephesians was called out and verse 32 states that their **"Ekklesia was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another."** Was that the Church? Of course not, this was simply a congregation of people in Ephesus. Another example of *Ekklesia* which does not refer to the Church as we know it is found in Acts 7:38 where the **"Ekklesia in the**



wilderness", that is Israel in the wilderness. Israel was called out of Egypt to serve God. The King James Version has created a lot of unnecessary confusion by translating Acts 7:38 as the "church in the wilderness. The NKJV has corrected this mistake and renders it the "congregation in the wilderness". In all these examples, the common denominator is this: *Ekklesia* refers to a group called out for a purpose. What about us, the actual Church? Well, 1 Peter 2:9 says that we have been "**called you out of darkness into [God's] wonderful light.**" Colossians 1:12-13, we are to give "**thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son**". Etymologically, the Church is thus the congregation of Christians called out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light of God's dear Son. Whoa, isn't that glorious?! Aren't you thrilled that God qualified you by sovereign grace to serve Him in His Kingdom? **If so, If you love Him why not serve Him? That's why you have been called out. You are a servant of the King and His Kingdom!**

Let us now see the theological definition of the Church. We will see that the Church is the New Covenant community of believers from all nations from Pentecost to the Rapture. Mark these keywords, **New Covenant community**, because they demand that the Church did not exist in the OT. Here are a few reasons for this fact:

## 1. The Church was a mystery in the Old Testament

Please open your Bible to Ephesians chapter 3. Let us read the first ten verse and you will see that the union of Jews and Gentiles (v. 1) into the Church was a mystery in the Old Testament: v.3 "3 that by revelation there was made known to me **the mystery**, as I wrote before in brief. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into **the mystery of Christ**, 5 which **in other generations was not made known to the sons of men**, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, **that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body** (Jews and Gentiles being one body refers to the Church), and **fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel** [... v. 9] **the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things**; 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through **the church**." The Church is a revealed mystery which makes the wisdom of God shine in the world.

Remember that in the epistles, a mystery is most often a new covenant truth which has been revealed by the apostles in the New Testament era. Speaking about marriage which is an earthly picture of the heavenly intimacy between Christ and the Church, Ephesians 5:32 says that "**this mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church**". This mystery supports the fact that the Church did not exist in the OT since it was a mystery not

yet revealed to humanity. In fact, the Church is inseparable from the Gospel and 1 Peter 1:10-12 tells us that the Gospel was also a mystery to the OT prophets and the angels.

## 2. Jesus spoke of the Church as a future congregation to be assembled

The first biblical occurrence of the Greek word *ekklēsia*, or “church”, appears in Matthew 16:18, when Jesus says, “**I will build my church, and [...] the gates of hell will not prevail against it**”. Jesus did not say: “since I arrived on earth, I built my Church”, He spoke using the future tense, “**I will build my church**”, which strongly implies that the Church did not exist when He said this in 28 AD, let alone in the Old Testament. The word *Ekklesia* occurs only two more times in the Gospels, that’s in Mat 18 where Jesus explained how to discipline sin among believers. Then, we never hear about the Church to be built... until the book of Acts when the Church was born and thrived and the word *Ekklesia* is then naturally present throughout the Epistles since these are letters to local churches. Hence the very occurrence of the term Church signals its restricted existence in New Testament Times.

## 3. The Church was born in the New Covenant

The prophet Jeremiah had gloriously prophesied about the new covenant in Jeremiah 31: 31-34. This new heart of the new covenant, knowing the Lord, is none other than the heart regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36: 25-27, 1 John 2: 20,27). Now here is a key verse on the New Covenant. Please turn to Luke 22:20: “**And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”**” So there is a link between the New Covenant and the blood of Jesus.

Now in Acts 20:28, Paul told the Ephesians elders to pastor the “**church of God which [Jesus] purchased with His own blood.**” So there is a link between the Church, the blood of Jesus, and the New Covenant. In fact, Pastors are “**ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life**” (2 Corinthians 3:6). The coming of the Spirit of life is here linked to the New Covenant.

Bringing it all together, we learn that the Church belongs to the New Covenant era. The New Covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus and inaugurated by the coming of the Spirit. And when did the Spirit come? At Pentecost. This is why the Church is the New Covenant community of believers between Pentecost and the Rapture when the Church will be removed from the earth. Since the Church is a New Covenant *Ekklesia* of people, it thus cannot exist in the Old Testament which was under the Old Covenant. This again distinguishes the Church from OT Israel.

So far, we saw that the Church is unique to the NT because (1) it was a mystery in the OT, (2) because Jesus spoke of the future inauguration of the Church in Matthew 16:18 (I will build

my Church), and (3) because it is linked to the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus. Now, let us meditate together on the passage the birth of the Church at Pentecost.

#### **4. The Church was born by the baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Please open your Bible to the second chapter of the book of Acts, and verse 1... Here is the Word of the Lord: “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

**This festival was one of the three Jewish feasts that called for a pilgrimage to the Holy City** of the Jews and it attracted hundreds of thousands of people from across the known world. The name Pentecost literally means fiftieth, and it originated from the fact that Pentecost took place on the fiftieth day after the feast of Passover. In Judaism, Pentecost was called the feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16), the feast of Weeks or the Day of First Fruits (Num. 28:26). In 30 AD, God poetically used the harvest context of Pentecost to give the firstfruits of His elects to Christ (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 15:20-23) by saving three thousand people (Acts 2:41) and manifesting the multi-ethnic nature of His Church through the sign of speaking in various human languages as we are about to read.

**The 120 disciples of Acts were all together waiting for the promised Spirit “in one place”** which was a large “house” (Acts 2:1-2). Then the men and women present (Acts 1:14) were anointed by the Holy Spirit and began to miraculously utter human languages through the Spirit’s power (Acts 2:4). But how could anyone know that they just had received the Spirit? Is not the Spirit immaterial and invisible? He surely is and this is why God gave a visual sign of the giving of the Spirit adapted for the times: “tongues as of fire” (v. 3). It was not a real fire but “tongues as of fire”, a visual manifestation of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The Spirit also descended on Jesus “as a dove” (Matt. 3:16), not a real dove, again to show the outpouring of the Spirit. The scene was truly dramatic since a “violent rushing wind” occurred, much like some kind of a hurricane. God made sure that everyone was going to pay attention to the revelation of a mystery hidden for centuries. The Church of Jesus Christ was born at that very moment when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples. Hence 1 Corinthians 12:13 states: “**For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.**” The Spirit baptized the disciples into the Christ and they became His body—the Church. The Church could not be born before the ascension and coronation of Jesus. Jesus ascended in heaven to reign at the right hand of the Father and then sent the Spirit to give birth to the Church.

**Under the inspiration of the Spirit, Luke, the writer of Acts, then makes a most interesting comment** which shows that the Jews were the recipients of the sign of tongues: "And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). The Holy Spirit wanted us to know that the Jews dispersed in all nations of the Roman Empire were present at Pentecost. Scholars estimate that one to two hundred thousand people were present that year. When the sound of the wind was heard (v. 2), the Jews "came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:6). At this point, the disciples had left the house and joined the crowd near the temple since they knew that the Spirit would lead them to witness (Acts 1:8), and this is how the massive crowd got to hear the apostles speaking in human languages before the Jews.

**Acts 2:7-13:** "They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God. And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine"".

**The proselyte Jews were "all amazed and marveled"** (v. 7) and being "perplexed" they said to one another, "What does this mean?" (v. 12). These devout Jews dispersed in all the Roman Empire had come from various countries to worship Yahweh and were now hearing Galilean Christians miraculously speaking in sixteen of their own dialects. What a surprise!

On the other hand, the **Jews from Jerusalem did not speak these languages** and were thus unable to comprehend what happened. They were the "others [of v. 12 who] were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine"". Indeed, many foreign languages look like meaningless babbling to those who do not know them. The Jews from the regions of Israel thus concluded that the disciples were drunk.

**Acts 2:14-21:** "14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; 20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the

*moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”.*

**God had just answered the prayer of Moses:** “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” (Num. 11:30). Praise be to Him!

**What was this speaking in tongues all about?** The purpose of speaking in tongues was infallibly interpreted by Peter who quoted the prophecy of Joel to show that tongues signified that the multi-ethnic outpouring of the Spirit (“all flesh,” v. 17b), regardless of gender (“you sons and your daughters,” v. 17c), age (“young men [...] old men,” v. 17d-e) and social status (“even on My bondslaves, both men and women,” v.18). The phrase “all flesh” (Acts 2:17b) was a technical expression used by Jewish writers to divide humanity into only two racial groupings — Jews and Gentiles. **Tongues were thus no less than a sign of the birth of the multi-ethnic New Covenant Church** in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Whether is its Jews and Gentiles, ethnicities are not removed in Christ, they are unified in Him. In Revelation 5:9 the song of heaven is “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed **people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation**”. Nations are there. In Revelation 7:9: “After this I looked”, said John, “and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, **from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb**”. Nations will still be present in the Future Kingdom, to praise God. The unity of God’s people does not preclude the diversity of ethnicities that God has created for His glory. Every skin color, every hair texture, every eye color, every color in the rainbow of humanity will praise God.

Now in Acts 10:44-47, Gentiles spoke in tongues as well and in chapter 11, Peter went up to Jerusalem, as Jews criticized him, saying, (v.3) “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” And Peter answered that he preached the Gospel to them, and, watch v. 16, “As I began to speak, the **Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning**”. Peter said that Spirit fell on Gentiles just as on them (i.e. Jews) at the beginning. But what kind of a beginning was he referring to? Answer: the beginning of the Church at Pentecost. Acts 11:16 thus tells us the Church began at Pentecost.

**I grew up influenced by Pentecostals and let me tell you they evangelize, they are zealous for the Lord and we can learn from them in that regard in our circles.** And Pentecostals often say: “Oh, I am sure that we are in last days, the End Times, because of the increase of sin in our generation, Christ is surely coming back soon!”. I also happen to believe that we are in the last days and that Christ can come back at any time, but we have been in the last days for 2000 years! You say, what do you mean? Well, in Acts 2:17, Peter says that Pentecost occurred in the “*last days*”. The whole Church era is biblically in the last days. Or consider Hebrews 1:1-2: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke



to our fathers by the prophets (that's the OT era), but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son (that's the NT era)". The Last Days or End Times started with the first coming of Jesus and will continue until His second coming.

**Note that all the details of the prophecy of Joel did not happen at Pentecost (Acts 2:19-20; Matthew 24:29ff) which began the "Last Days" era of the Church.** There were no "*wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke*" (v. 19) and the "*sun*" and the "*moon*" did not change because this will happen in the future tribulation "*before the day of the Lord comes*" (v. 20). Peter did not say that what happened at Pentecost fulfilled the prophecy of Joel, unlike other quotations of the OT prophecy, because this was a preview of the coming kingdom and not yet its fulfillment. The complete fulfillment of Joel 2 awaits Christ's second coming as we shall see next week. This is the already/not yet motif of biblical prophecy.

## IN CONCLUSION

First, we saw that the Kingdom of God means His rule. He rules over creation which is called the Universal Kingdom. He rules over salvation which is called the Spiritual or Redemptive kingdom. Both of these Kingdom dimensions are always present on earth as God sovereignly rules all things and continually and graciously saves more elect sinners. The spiritual Kingdom exists now, and people enter into it by being born of the Spirit. Thirdly, God rules over the earth through human representatives or mediators in a specific geographical location. This is called the Mediatorial Kingdom. This kingdom does not always exist on the earth and is spoken in future terms. Christ will establish His millennial kingdom at His second coming.

Second, we saw that Israel always refers to Jews in the Bible. Israel can mean National Israel (i.e. all Jews, elects and non-elects combined) or True Israel (only the elects). True Israel is also called the Remnant and the Israel of God. We saw that the Church is comprised of elects Jews and Gentiles. Hence True Israel is a subset of both National Israel and the Church.

Third, we saw that the Church is not the New Israel and did not exist in the OT because: (1) the Church is composed of all the nations whereas Israel is only one nation, (2) the Church was a mystery in the OT, (3) Jesus said "I will build my Church" hence it was still future in 28 AD, (4) The Church belongs to the New Covenant in Christ's blood, and (5) The Church was born at Pentecost when the disciples were baptized into the church by the Spirit.

**We also saw that we are in the last days and the Kingdom is now in a very real sense. Now, what should be our response to these things?** Peter told us in Acts 2:21 "*it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*". The Kingdom is now and how is it advancing? By the Gospel through the regenerating power of the Spirit! If

you are not sure to be saved, call today on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. Christ died for the sins of all those who repent and trust in Him. Believe and repent today.

**If you are saved, evangelize and hasten Christ's return!** Your King has appointed you as an ambassador saying in 2 Co 5:19-20 that He has entrusted "to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ." How faithful to the King are you in the crucial area of evangelism? People are dying without Christ in this city by the hundreds of thousands. Don't be like National Israel. Be faithful and enter into the joy of your King! I will simply end by reading John 9:4-5 and Matthew 5: 14-16 where Jesus respectively said: **"4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world". "14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven".** Amen.