

Israel & the Church

2 Different Trains on 2 Different Tracks

In proper Biblical interpretation, one must recognize that the church and Israel represent separate programs of God.

Israel and the church are two trains running on separate tracks.

1. Israel is the **wife of Jehovah** (Isaiah 54) while the church is the **bride of Christ** (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Isaiah 54:5

⁵ For your Maker is your husband— the LORD Almighty is his name— the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.”

Ephesians 5:22-33

“...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

2. **Israel gave birth to Christ** (Rev 12:1-5) whereas **Christ gave birth** to the **church** (Matthew 16:18).

Revelation 12:1-5

“A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ² She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³ Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. ⁴ Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.”

Matthew 16:18

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

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3. Christ will return to **rescue Israel** upon her national conversion at the **end of the Tribulation** period (Matthew 23:37-39). He will return to **rescue the church** at the **rapture** (John 14:1-3).

Matthew 23:37-39

*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, **you will not see me again until** you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*

John 14:1-3

*“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me** that you also may be where I am.”*

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4. King imagery is used to depict God's relationship to Israel (Isaiah 33:22) while head and groom imagery is used to depict Christ's relationship with His church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Isaiah 33:22

*“²² For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, **the LORD is our king**; it is he who will save us.”*

Ephesians 5:22-33

“Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.”

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5. God's program through Israel began in **Genesis 12, (Abraham)** and His program through the church began in **Acts 2** (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 1:5; 11:15-16).

Genesis 12:1-3

*“The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. ² **“I will make you into a great nation,** and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

Acts 2:1-4

*“When **the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.** ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.”*

6. While 4/5th (**80%**) of the Bible pertain to Israel, only 1/5th (**20%**) of it deals with the church.

7. Although **Israel** was a **direct party** to the **biblical covenants** (Jeremiah 31:31-32), the church was not a party to these covenants since the church was not yet in existence when these covenants were made. The church's relationship to these covenants can best be described as a third-party beneficiary rather than a direct party to them. Therefore, the church benefits from the covenants as opposed to being a direct party to them. (God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David)

Jeremiah 31:31-32

*“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when **I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel** and with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.”*

8. **Israel is a nation** (Psalm 147:20). As such, she is always Biblically portrayed as an independent nation **with borders and a capital**. Even today Israel is among the nations of the earth, just like any other country. By contrast, the **church is not a nation** (Romans 10:19) but rather is comprised of people from all nations (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:6, 15).

Rather than taking her seat among the nations of the earth, the church is a mere pilgrim in the world system (1 Peter 2:11).

Psalm 147:20

“He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws”

Romans 10:19

“Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

Ephesians 2:11-22

“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands) ¹² remember that at that time **you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus** you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”**

1 Peter 2:11

“Dear friends, **I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.”**

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9. While **Israel fought physical wars** with various enemies such as the Philistines, the **church is engaged in spiritual warfare** with angelic enemies (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Ephesians 6:10-12

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”**

10. The Scripture assigns to Israel periods of time that have a firm and specific end toward which something is moving, Genesis 7:4 (the flood), Genesis 15:13-16 (bondage in Egypt); Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10; (70 year exile) Ezekiel 4:5-7; Daniel 9:24-27 (Daniel's 70 weeks). These are timing statements with **a specific beginning and ending point** for each period. The New Testament has no comparable timing statements for the church.

Genesis 7:4

*“Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth **for forty days and forty nights**, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”*

Genesis 15:13-16

*“Then the LORD said to him, “Know for certain that **for four hundred years** your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.”*

Jeremiah 25:11

*“This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon **seventy years**.”*

Ezekiel 4:5-7

*“I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So **for 390 days** you will bear the sin of the people of Israel. ⁶ “After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you **40 days**, a day for each year. ⁷ Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her.”*

Daniel 9:24

*“**Seventy ‘sevens’** are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.”*

11. Israel had a priesthood with **all her priests coming from the tribe of Levi and the line of Aaron**. The **church does not have a priesthood** because **it is a priesthood** (Revelation 1:5-6). The New Testament teaches the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Every Church Age believer is a priest with direct access to God the Father through God the Son.

Revelation 1:5-6

*“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and **has made us to be a kingdom and priests** to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”*

1 Peter 2:5, 9

*“you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a **holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, God’s special possession,”*

12. While Israel will be resurrected at the **beginning of the millennial** kingdom (Daniel 12:2; John 11:23-24; Revelation 20:4-5), Church-Age believers receive their resurrected bodies at the point of **the rapture** (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

Daniel 12:2

*“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth **will awake**: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”*

John 11:23-24

*“Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”²⁴ Martha answered, “I know **he will rise again in the resurrection** at the last day.”*

Revelation 20:4-5

*“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.⁵ (**The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.**) This is the first resurrection.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:14-16

*“For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.¹⁵ According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.¹⁶ For **the Lord***

himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

13. **Israel's judgment will take place on earth, at the end of the Tribulation** period, (Ezekiel 20:33-44). By contrast, the only judgment the New Testament reveals for the church is the **Bema Seat** judgment of rewards **in heaven** following the rapture (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Ezekiel 20:33-36

"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will reign over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath.³⁴ I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered— with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath.³⁵ I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you.³⁶ As I judged your ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Romans 14:10

"You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

"If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames."

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

14. Although the **gates of the New Jerusalem** are named after the **twelve tribes** (Revelation 21:12), who were the foundations of Israel, **the foundations of the eternal city** are named after the **twelve apostles** (Revelation 21:14) who are the foundations of the church (Ephesians 2:20).

Revelation 21:12

*“It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written **the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.**”*

Revelation 21:14

*“The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the **names of the twelve apostles** of the Lamb.”*

Ephesians 2:20

“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

15. People become **members** of the commonwealth of Israel **through physical birth**. By contrast, membership in the **church** is only attained by **spiritual birth** (John 3:1-9; Titus 3:5).

John 3:3-6

“Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”⁴ “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

Titus 3:5

“he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,”

16. Israel was directly governed by the Mosaic Law (Psalm 147:19-20). By contrast, the controlling authority for the church is New Testament. While all Scripture is *for* the church (2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 15:4), **only the New Testament's** is directly **about the church.**

Psalm 147:19-20

“He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. ²⁰ He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws.”

2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”

Romans 15:4

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”

17. The Holy Spirit indwelt and filled Old Testament Jews **selectively** (Joel 2:28), **temporarily** (1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11), and subsequent to salvation to enable for a special purpose (Exodus 31:3). By **contrast, the Holy Spirit indwells all Church-Age believers** (1 Corinthians 12:13) **permanently** (John 14:16) and at the point of salvation (Romans 8:9). Thus, the Spirit's work in and through Israel cannot be used as a pattern to depict the believer's normal experience with the Holy Spirit in the present age (John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; Acts 1:5).

Joel 2:28

*““And afterward, **I will pour out my Spirit on all people...**”*

1 Samuel 16:14

*“Now the **Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul**, and an evil^[a] spirit from the LORD tormented him.”*

Psalm 51:11

*“Do not cast me from your presence **or take your Holy Spirit from me**”*

Exodus 31:3

“and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

John 14:16

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever”

Romans 8:9

“You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

John 7:37-39

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Acts 1:5

“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

18. While Christ's farewell address to Israel (Matthew 24) is recorded in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25), His farewell address to the church (John 16:12-13) is found in the Upper Room Discourse (John 13–17).

19. Although Israel is referred to as God's first-born son (Exodus 4:22), the church is never given this same designation or title.

Exodus 4:22

“Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son,”

20. While Israel's program is revealed in the Old Testament, the church's program was unknown in Old Testament times. Because the **church is a New Testament mystery** (Ephesians 3:3-6), or something previously hidden and now unveiled (Romans 16:25-26), Church Age doctrine comes exclusively from the New Testament (Matthew; John 13-17) rather than the Old Testament. Noting such differences should caution us against **taking prophecies and promises that are specifically aimed at Israel** and misapplying them to the present dispensation of the Church Age.

Ephesians 3:3-6

*“that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery of Christ**, ⁵ **which was not made known** to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This **mystery is that** through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 16:25-26

*“Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with **the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past**, ²⁶ **but now revealed** and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith”*

Matthew 16:18

*“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build my church**, and the gates of Hades^[c] will not overcome it.”*
