

SummerSalon14 - Israelology

A separate study of Israel is generally not part of systematic theology. One does not find this distinct section in the Table of Contents of books covering the Bible's systematized subjects. Indeed, this omission reflects the largely *supersessionist* position held by many believers, fellowships, seminaries and denominations —so much so that the world forms its disregard —even to the point of hate of Israel — based on ignorance of *who* Israel is —God's chosen vessel in His historical outworking of His covenants and dispensations.

I believe the study of Israel has received the greatest boost in the past twenty-five years by the works of Drs. Arnold Fruchtenbaum and David Stern. Both these scholars are intimately aware of the vast work in messianic scholarship that has been done in the past two hundred years. But it took Dr. Fruchtenbaum's book ***Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*** and Dr. Stern's ***Complete Jewish Bible*** to finally put biblical and national Israel on the map as a legitimate, individual subject in the systematic study of God's Word.

As with other topics in this Forum, the entire two hours could be taken to cover all the important bases on this one individual topic. **Corrie's Theological Library** houses about 350 resources that specifically relate to thousands of doctrinal points covered by Israelology. Four of those points are addressed.

First, and this will come as a shock to many reading —Scriptures in the OT do not refer to the church. The OT is *studied* by the church for multiple important reasons. But the OT is written *about* Israel. The church was not present in the times written about in the OT, and doctrine about the church is not presented in

the OT. Therefore, the exact cross over that many pastors and Bible teachers make in their use of the OT by applying it to the identity and life of the church —is in error. This does not mean many of those who do this are guilty of false teaching. They simply have not been taught the errors of Covenant and parts of Reform theologies. The bridge that allows making this error is that of *replacement theology*, or the theological term, *supersessionism* —meaning the church supersedes Israel as God’s chosen people. But Christ’s *spiritual* body is not Israel; Christ’s body and bride is not *spiritual* Israel; and Israel has not been replaced by the church.

Second, it is grievously sad to admit —the most consistent treatment of and mischaracterization of Israel —by both the lost and the saved — has been to hate the Jews —claiming that hatred is valid because “the Jews killed Christ.” This lie is the core evil of anti-Semitism. (It is worth noting that the word “Semitic” technically means all middle eastern ethnicities —all progeny of Abraham’s sons —both Ishmael and Isaac.) But for the vast majority of history anti-Semitism has never meant anything other than hatred of the Jew. But as we see played out on our television, computer and phone screens, it is Israel that the world collectively hates. Paraclete Press Research Service, Inc. takes no *political* stands and advocates to political activism. Those *carnal, temporal* activities are poor ammunition in the war against spiritual deception. The fact remains, God says in His Word that He will bless those who bless Israel and He will curse those who curse Israel. I am baffled by those who know this verse, but out of resignation, merely state, “we *can’t* be against the Jew or else God will *punish* us.” That is a pathetic attitude when the Lord wants us to instead learn the wonderful plan He

has that excludes *no one*. All, Jews and Gentiles alike, have their vested place and protection in God's plan when they are rightly aligned with His purpose for them.

God took a people out of Ur of Chaldea to consecrate as a holy, separate people. These are those who left Ur with Abraham. The Chaldeans were people who lived in southern Babylonia which is part of southern Iraq today. Israel left Ur with Abraham.

But I can hear some astute readers now. "There is *neither Jew nor Greek...*" (Gal 3:28). This is precisely true. The text does not mean however that at conversion a Jew is no longer a Jew; or a Greek (Gentile) is no longer a Gentile, any more than it means a man is no longer a man or a woman is no longer a woman when they receive Christ as their Savior. But Paul's words do address ***point three*** about Israelology, the study of the Jews. It is "one new man" that characterizes both Jews and Gentiles who comprise Christ's spiritual body. It was *Gentiles* who were added in the mix —not Jews *added* to Gentiles. Gentiles had been excluded from the commonwealth of Israel. Jews were in covenant with God as He made the New Covenant with them. But Gentile believers are grafted in to that rich olive tree of Israel. See Romans 11. Very significant is the context of this statement in Gal 3:28. Paul is speaking of the church age under the dispensation of the grace gospel. From the moment of Christ's death on the cross 2,000 years ago, no Jew has been in right standing with their God on the basis of their prior covenant of Law. There is always room at the cross. One new man is the perfect identity of any and all during the last two millennia. No matter where on earth, no matter what the ethnic birth of an individual, the offer of reconciliation with God is provided in the one new man.

Fourth, and this will be of surprise to many, the Holocaust was not characterized by just the suffering of Jews who had no interest in their Messiah. *Entering* the Holocaust as well as *coming out* of the Holocaust —either spiritually as in the case of those who died —or physically as in the case of those who were rescued — *there were believers in Messiah among Holocaust Jews*. God’s Word declares there has always been a *remnant* of His chosen people who have endured persecution simply because they are His own. Much is owed to the preservation of scholarship by Jews who have recognized the Messiah in Isaiah (52 and 53). These have often suffered greatly. See www.ariel.org for a thorough study, *The Theology of the Holocaust*.

Returning to the political nature that characterizes most people’s view of the Jew, the Bible believer best obeys the Lord when he follows Paul’s lead in Rom 1:15-16:

So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Living out Romans 1:15-16 is the most important lesson one can take away from the study of Israel. There are many mission organizations that specialize in bringing saving knowledge of Yeshua HaMashiach to the Jewish people. ***Jews for Jesus*** is one mission organization. Their motto is, “We exist to make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people world-wide.” As much as Israel needs friends and political allies, God’s word declares one new man is to be about *His* business of making more friends for *Him* (James 2:23).