

The Millennium, Part 3. Who Are the Chosen People of God? Continued

1. Introduction

1.1. "Therefore, it is the distinction between Israel and the Church and the purposes God has for each that sets dispensationalism apart from other eschatological systems." (Storms: Kingdom Come, 50-51)

1.2. "What, then, is the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism? The answer is...A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the church distinct....Chafer summarized it as follows:

The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity...

This is probably the most basic theological test of whether or not a person is a dispensationalist, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. The one who fails to distinguish Israel and the church consistently will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and one who does will." (C. Ryrie: *Dispensationalism*, 44-45)

1.3. *Dispensational Doctrine of Israel and the Church* from Gerstner: *Wrongly Dividing*, 181-182

Israel	The Church
An ethnic group, descended from Abraham	Composed of all nationalities
<u>Abrahamic covenant made his descendants God's chosen people was unconditional</u>	<u>Covenant of grace which brings the church into being is conditional in that it requires faith.</u>
One becomes an Israelite by being born, not reborn.	Regeneration/new birth is required
Israelites never received a baptism by, or indwelling of, the Holy Spirit.	Holy Spirit is essential for a member of the church.
Israel is national and visible.	The church is individual and invisible.
Israel is an earthly people, with earthly promises and an earthly destiny eternally.	The church is a spiritual people with eternal life in heaven for its destiny.

1.4. It is this distinction between Israel and the Church that makes Dispensationalism incompatible with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

1.5. Ephesians 2:11-12. I want to deal with the squiggly underlined issues above in 1.2 and in the 2nd row of the table in 1.3. Chafer is admitting that God will continue to work through Judaism to bring salvation to the Jews. Dispensationalism says that the Abrahamic covenant was solely for the Jewish people.

2. What does Scripture say about Judaism? Galatians 1-2

2.1. Context: Trouble in the Galatian churches over a false gospel coming in.

2.2. Content:

2.2.1. There is only one gospel (1:6-7, 9).

2.2.2. The false gospel is Judaism with its focus on the works of the law.

2.2.2.1. Paul's experience with Judaism was turned on end by the true gospel (1:11-16).

2.2.2.2. Paul confronts Peter (and whole slew of other Christians) because he capitulates to Judaizers (2:14-16).

2.3. Consequence: Doxology! Galatians 2:20-21: Judaism does nothing for anybody, there is only one gospel that proclaims salvation in Christ alone by faith alone!

3. What does Scripture say about the Abrahamic Covenant? Galatians 3

3.1. Content:

3.1.1. The Abrahamic covenant was all about grace through faith! (3:1-9)

3.1.1.1. Note: it is possible that the Jews were saying they were descended from Abraham and knew what was required to be righteous before God. (Compare John 8:34-59)

3.1.1.2. In (3:6) Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 to prove that faith had always been the instrument to bring life by the Spirit of God.

3.1.1.3. In (3:8-9) Paul quotes Genesis 12:3 to prove that the gospel has never changed.

3.1.2. In (3:10-14) Paul piles up a series of Old Testament texts to prove that:

3.1.2.1. Relying on the law for salvation only brings the curse of the law,
Deuteronomy 27:26.

3.1.2.2. That righteousness before God only comes by faith, Habakkuk 2:4.

3.1.2.3. That the law is not of faith, Leviticus 18:5.

3.1.2.4. Christ Jesus became a curse for us by hanging on the cross,
Deuteronomy 21:23.

3.1.3. In (3:16) Paul upends the Jewish understanding of the Abrahamic covenant by "an astounding statement" (Storms, 189).

3.1.3.1. He gives commentary/interpretation/explanation of who the offspring is that all of the promises are for.

3.1.3.2. Galatians 3:16: "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ."

3.1.3.3. "Amazing! Here Paul unequivocally says that the "seed" or "offspring" of Abraham with whom God established his covenant and to whom the land and all its blessings were promised was ultimately only ONE of Abraham's physical progeny, Jesus the Messiah! Jesus is "THE SEED" of Abraham whom God had in mind when he made his covenant promise" (Storms, 189).

3.1.3.4. This in no way bars the elect from being heirs of the covenant, rather it is the guarantee that we are heirs.

3.1.3.5. "...just when you think that Paul has narrowed it down to one person and one person only, he throws wide open the gate into God's

kingdom blessings by saying at the close of Galatians 3, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring [i.e., seed], heirs according to promise*" (vv. 28–29; emphasis mine)" (Storms, 190).

3.2. Consequence: "The only relevant criterion is whether or not you are related by faith to the one seed of Abraham for whom the covenant promises were intended. Are you "in Christ"? If so, you (regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social status), no less than he, are Abraham's seed and thus the ones for whom the covenant was intended and in whom the covenant blessings will be fulfilled" (Storms, 190).

4. Who Are the Chosen People of God?

4.1. "Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God." (Gal. 6:16 NIV 1984)