

# The Two Kingdoms

## *The Kingdom of Heaven part 2*

### Israel – A nation chosen by God

In spite of the many scriptures predicting a coming, earthly kingdom of heaven, many Christians persist in believing that Israel has been passed over - rejected as a people of God because of its continual, persistent disobedience and that, as a result, the nation as such has been permanently replaced by the church. This view is known as *Replacement Theology*.

We know that Israel always had a special place in God's heart. She is described in the O.T. as God's *treasured possession* (Ex.19:5; Deut.7:6) and His *inheritance* ((Isaiah 19:25; 1 Kings 8:51), a *chosen people* (Deut.7:6-8) God's *first-born son* (Ex.4:22) and even as *Yahweh's wife* (Jer.3:14, 31:32).

**The issue is this: given the inauguration of a heavenly body, the Church, does God still have a specific future and purpose in mind for the earthly nation of Israel? Does the fact that Jew and Gentile alike share in this spiritual body without distinction ([Gal.3:28](#)) mean that the Church has effectively replaced Israel entirely - as suggested in [Gal.6:16](#)?**

**To resolve this issue satisfactorily, we need to understand just why God chose Israel to be His special nation in the first place.**

**(i) [Why was Israel chosen by God?](#)**

**The first thing to understand is that Israel was not chosen for its own sake. Yahweh had made clear to Abraham that not only would Israel be blessed but that He intended to use this tiny nation as a conduit of Divine blessing to the whole world.**

## **Genesis 12:2**

**“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.**

**The blessing that would come through Israel as a nation still, I believe, awaits a future realisation because the promise given to Abraham was later couched in the following words:**

**Gen.22:18, "...through your seed (offspring) all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”**

**One nation would therefore prove a blessing to all the other nations because of one man's obedience.**

**Now consider this: the gospel which we preach today is promulgated by born-again individuals (surprisingly, evangelism is nowhere said to be the remit of the Church *as a body*) and is targeted, not at the nations, but at individuals *from among the nations* –**

bringing them into a heavenly body (the Church), which recognises *no* national distinction (**Gal.3:28**).

That's why, addressing Jewish saints who were no longer members of national Israel as such, Peter assures them that they were chosen *according to the foreknowledge of God*. (**1 Pet. 1:2**). We know from **Eph.1:4** that Peter is here making a reference to the election of the Church in eternity - *before time began!*

So what is the apostle driving at? Surely this: that they were chosen to belong to one heavenly nation *before earthly nations even existed!!* That's why the gospel is so individual! That's one reason why the *present conversion of the nations as a whole* - as espoused by *post-millennialism* - is not something entertained in Scripture!

By contrast, the knowledge of God which brings salvation to each nation as a whole, will, by definition, cover the earth! (**Hab.2:14**). And in keeping with its national character, it will be spread to the nations via an entire nation

**(Israel), bringing the nations, as a whole, under the rule of Christ.**

**So God says in [Isaiah 49:6](#)**

**“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”**

**But there was much more to Yahweh's promise to Abraham! So now let's appreciate the true miracle of Gods foreknowledge and wisdom:**

**God had said to Abraham:**

**'...through your seed (offspring) all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'**

**But Israel could not be a blessing to the nations of themselves! And that was never God's intention! Listen to the words of**

**[Galatians 3:16](#),**

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

**So it was Christ, after all, who was the actual subject of the prophetic promise given to Abraham! God's ultimate purpose had always been that salvation and Divine blessing would flow outwards from Israel to the Gentiles; not only from Israel itself (something which has not yet happened nationally because of disobedience) but through one man - an Israelite by the name of Jesus Christ: the Saviour of the world! ([John1:11](#); [Rev.12:5](#)). He was the seed of the woman, Israel - as depicted in John's vision ([Rev.12:5](#)).**

**Notice what God says in [Isaiah 42:6-7](#)**

**“I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, [7] to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison**

**and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.**

**This particular prophetic passage, in contrast to [Isaiah 49:6](#) (above), is primarily in reference to Christ himself rather than the nation as a whole. We know this because our Lord applied these words directly to himself when reading from this self-same passage in the temple:**

### **[Luke 4:17-21](#)**

**...and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”**

Unknown to Abraham, the blessings that was to come *through Israel*, both to individuals in the spiritual kingdom (the Church) at the present time and in the future to the nations through the earthly kingdom of Israel, were to be exclusively made real in and by Christ Jesus himself - the prophesied seed of Abraham (and hence of Israel - [Rom.9:5](#); [Rev. 12:5](#)). Salvation, righteousness and peace would be the result, in both the heavenly kingdom (the Church - [Col.1:12](#); [Rom.5:1](#)) and an earthly kingdom of Israel ([Isa.2:4](#); [11:32:1,17-18](#)) and eventuate alike through the spreading of the knowledge of God *in Christ Jesus!* ([Jer.31:34](#); [Hab.2:14](#))

In this dispensation this knowledge of God in Christ would come with a reception of Christ through the gospel of Christ ([1 Cor. 15:3-4](#); [Gal. 1:8-9](#); [John 1:12](#)) and, at the end of the age, through the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom([Matt,24:14](#)) and voluntary submission to the coming King.

**Israel will, in effect, play a role analogous to that of the individual believer today. In our case we spread the knowledge of God to individuals to bring them into a spiritual kingdom under Christ (Col. 1:12-13). In Israel's case, once the heavenly body has been taken home to heaven, the nation as a whole will spread the knowledge of God to the nations to bring them into an earthly kingdom under Christ - one we know as the Millennium (Isa. 43:6-7, 44:23; 49:3, Rev20:4).**

**We see this role come to fruition with the so-called *Great Commission*. Interestingly this commission is found only in **Matthew**, the gospel written specifically to the Jews, presenting Jesus to them as their true Messiah sent from heaven to establish his earthly kingdom!**

**The knowledge of God will, in a future age, be promulgated through Israel, as the gospel is in this dispensation through the Church. When both reach fruition, God's plan for the ages**

**will be fully realised: Christ will be supreme in heaven and on earth:**

**Ephesians 1:9-10 NIV**

**[9] he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, [10] to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment---to bring unity to all things *in heaven and on earth* under Christ.**

**(ii) What was only *one* nation chosen - and Israel in particular?**

**The answer seems to be self-evident! The knowledge God could not be communicated piece-meal. Divine knowledge had to be gradual, progressive and coherent - each new revelation leading on from the one previously communicated. This is in line with all God's communication to us - both back then and now (**Matt.13:12**).**

**The knowledge God delivered also demanded a practical response: He was forging a**

**dynamic relationship with His chosen people and they would have to learn and understand, by experience, the nature of Divine righteousness, justice and love - as well as the implications of both obedience and disobedience etc. This would take generations to come to fruition (and, as we know) has never yet done so in Israel!).**

**Even so - and granting the fact that God's purposes could best be fulfilled by investing Himself in just one nation - why Israel in particular? Why did God set His love on this small nation? It certainly wasn't because she was more impressive, more powerful or more worthy than any of the other nations ([Deut.7:7](#); [Rom.9:11-12](#)).**

**So was it favouritism displayed by a God who, according to His own word, does not play favourites ([Rom.2:11](#); [Deut.10:17](#))?**

**The answer to all three questions appears to be found in an amazing passage in [Deuteronomy 32](#):**

## Deuteronomy 32:8-9

When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples *according to the number of the sons of Israel*. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance (*italics mine*).

This passage tells us a good deal but we need to explore a little of its background if we are to appreciate its profound implications.

The first thing to understand is that after attempts - through Nimrod- to rule over a one-world empire, Satan appears to be now ruling each nation-group through powerful fallen angels who are worshipped as *gods* by their respective nations (1 Cor.8:5). We are most familiar with their activity through verses such as Ephesians 6:12,

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.

The *powers of this dark world* is a translation of the Greek word *kosmokrator*, which literally means '*world-ruler*'.

We come across two of these powerful and malignant rulers in the book of Daniel. There they are described as the *prince of the Persian kingdom* (Daniel 10:13, 20) and the *prince of Greece* (Dan.10:20). And there are many others: Baal (1Kings 18:21); Dagon (1 Sam.5:2); Chemosh (1 Kings 11:7); Moloch (2 Kings 23:10) to name just a few. These fallen angel-princes were *gods* to the nations that worshipped them (Psalm 82:5; 1 Cor.8:5-6) and they have been the force and focus of all idol worship from the very beginning as indicated by Paul in 1Cor.10:20, where the apostle says that:

**The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God.**

Satan, of course, as the instigator of evil, and the most powerful of the fallen angel (**Ezekiel 28; Isaiah 14**), is their *commander -in-chief*. So this fallen world is under his control - *for the moment* - as he administers his kingdom of darkness through these malignant beings.

Consequently, in **John 12:31** and **John 16:11** the Devil is described as '*the prince of this world*'. In **Ephesians 2:2** he's called '*the ruler of the kingdom of the air*' and in **1 John 5:19** we are told that '*the whole world is under the control of the evil one*'.

However, what is now crucial to a proper understanding of **Deuteronomy 32**, is the realization that these fallen angel-princes are described in the Old Testament as '*sons of God*' (*Bene ha Elohim*). This is a term applied to *any direct creation of God*: Adam (**Luke 3:38**); David (**Psalms 89:27**) and even Israel itself (**Ex.4:22**) but importantly, for our purposes here, it is a term similarly applied to

angels - fallen and unfallen ([Gen.6:2,4](#); [Job 1:6, 38:7](#); [Psalm 82:6](#)).

We meet these so-called "sons of God" in [Job 1:6](#) where the KJV translates the verse in this way:

**One day the *Sons of God* (*bene ha-'elohim*; NIV & ESV - *angels*) came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.**

We also encounter these *sons of God* in [Job 38](#) when our world was created. There it says: that:

**'...the morning stars sang together, And all the *sons of God* (the *bene ha-Elohim*) shouted for joy'.**

Genesis 6 records how - before the flood - a particular group of these fallen angels mated with human females:

**Genesis 6:2** the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.

This particular group of angels (unlike those at present inhabiting the Heavenly realms - **Eph.6:12**) has, as we know, been punished for that particular crime with confinement in Hades (**1 Pet.2:4; 1 Pet.3:19-20; Jude 5-6;**).

So now we can consider the real implications of **Deut. 32:8**,

**When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.**

So what makes this passage such a interesting and informative one? Simply this: that where it says '*sons of Israel*', we need to understand that this is a later Masoretic reading. The Septuagint has, by contrast: '*Sons of God*'! The passage would then read:

**When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples *according to the number of the sons of God.* (*italics mine*).**

**If this is so, - and reading this verse carefully in this light, it appears to be telling us that when the nations were first divided and allocated their Divinely-ordained boundaries (**Acts 17:26**), spiritual dominion over them was *divided among the fallen angels (sons of God)*!**

**This may appear to be a stretch but it *is* consistent with what we have discussed concerning the spiritual rulers of this present age (**Eph. 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19**). It also gives a natural meaning (and tremendous significance) to the verse which follows:**

**Deut.32:9,**

**For the *Lord's portion* is his people, Jacob *his allotted inheritance* (*italics mine*).**

**What is a *portion*? I have never come across a word so misused and misunderstood in Christian vocabulary! We actually construe it to mean simply something enjoyed. Eg we might say: 'in our worship service the Lord has his *portion*'.**

**But what is a *portion*? It's a *part of the whole*? You are given *your* portion and, by implication, the remainder is allocated to another - or others!**

**So now we can see what this particular passage appears to be telling us. The fallen angels had been allocated (inherited) the nations of the world - all except Israel. *That little nation was God's share: His slice of the pie, if you like.***

**So how did this come about? And why did I state a little while ago that God's choice of Israel as His own possession was *necessary* and *inevitable*?**

**Well let's go back a little and set the scene!**

**Satan had made his (first) play via a one-world empire under the first dictator Nimrod (as he will at the end via the Antichrist) but God had foiled this Satanic enterprise by confusing the languages at Babel. He then permitted the fallen angels to usurp dominion over all the nations which developed after the flood. This would be entirely in consonance with Him sovereignly fulfilling His own purposes in His way (see my message entitled 'Israel under attack') - as well as allowing mankind to preserve the integrity of his Divinely-granted self-determining free-will!**

**Another important point to keep in mind is that a righteous God, by nature, and in consonance with perfect justice, will always demand perfect transparency: will have any matter seen in its true light/nature ([Rom.3:26](#); [1 Cor.3:13](#); [1 John 1:9](#); [Rev.20:13](#);) . The fact that He has allowed Satan to 'do his worst' in this way, seems to be an example of God doing just this - thereby allowing evil to be seen in its true light!**

This is particularly evident in **Psalm 82**, where, in a great assembly in Heaven, God accuses these false 'gods' (addressing them as 'sons of the most High') of 'botching' the job with their evil and unfair practices - leading to wars; cruel injustice; sin run rampant and so on.

But now, as **Deut.32:9** indicates, after 2000 years of allowing Satan every opportunity to prove himself, God finally stepped in! He would have His own nation! He would show just how it should be done! He would demonstrate the nature and effect of a righteous and loving rule - and be therein glorified (**Ezek.28:25**).

But the nations were all spoken for! They were all under the dominion of the fallen angel-princes - from the time of Babel onwards! All sunken and steeped in sin and idolatry! Given the state of the human heart (**Rom.3:16-18:8:5-8**), and the fact that the nations, sunken in sin and idolatry, were under the sway of demonic rulers (**Eph. 2:2**), mankind as a whole

would have been incapable of receiving or acknowledging God's truth ([Rom.1:21-23, 28](#); [John 8:45](#)).

So then, if God were to have *His own nation*, He would have to start *from scratch*! As He had begun again with Noah (and as He was to begin a new spiritual nation with Christ), He would have to begin with one righteous man - and this man was Abraham: a man through whom Yahweh would create and develop His own nation - through which He would then reach out to the entire world!

Accordingly we read in [Deuteronomy 32:6](#), **Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?**

Yahweh's *portion* - His slice of the pie (if you will) was to be the nation of Israel. The false Gods were allocated the pagan nations: Israel was *God's share* - His *inheritance*, as we read in [v9](#) above (See also [Isa.19:25](#); [1Kings 8:51](#) etc)

**For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance.**

So God didn't *choose* Israel from among the nations - Israel didn't even exist until God called Abraham from Ur, the Sumerian city dedicated to Nanna, the moon god, and perhaps the most sinful city in Sumer. And so concerned was He to make a fresh start with His own nation, that He ordered Abraham to leave his family behind.

And this is the way it transpired. Abraham's family could play no part in the formation of this nation - only Abraham himself! Even Sarah, his wife, Sarah, was infertile and beyond child-bearing age until God supernaturally intervened ([Gen.18:10](#)). Interestingly, the wives of all three of the patriarchs were similarly unable to conceive naturally without Divine assistance ([Gen.25:21; 30:22](#)).

And so, like all direct creations, Israel the nation was a "son of God"

## **Exodus 4:22**

**‘This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son,**

**Incidentally, this explains the dreadful nature of the tenth plague of Egypt. Pharaoh had taken *His* firstborn and wouldn't let him go from Egypt. So God would take their first-born sons (**Ex.4:23**)!**

**So Israel is precious to Jehovah. He produced her for Himself. The following passage is a striking description of just what that little nation meant to Him.**

**Deuteronomy 32:10-11 He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, [11] like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft. The Lord alone led him; no foreign god was with him. (see also **Zech.2:8**)**

**And it doesn't end there. One would think that Israel's rebellion and disobedience (even to the point of having the Son of God crucified) would have eventually disqualified her from any future blessing - except for one important factor: God made a promise and He always keeps His promises!**

**Remember that God had begun the nation of Israel from scratch with Abraham, that great patriarch. Abraham was, in effect, Israel's father and they were his earthly children! ([John 8:39](#)). God's guarantee of blessing was made to Abraham! Because of that man's obedience, his family would be blessed and used of God to bring blessing to all other nations ([Gen.12:2](#), [22:18](#); [Deut.7:6-8](#); [Rom.11:28](#)).**

**Now it's true that Israel as a nation has not yet entered into God's blessings - despite Yahweh's assurance given to Abraham. This is because the nations immediate blessings were conditional upon their obedience ([Gen.19:5](#)) and they failed to deliver on the Sinaitic**

covenant. Nevertheless, restoration and blessing are inevitable because Abraham *was* faithful and God's promise to him has ultimate primacy - as he is the head of the nation! So notice what Paul says of Israel in **Romans 11:26-29**,

.....all Israel will be saved. As it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; *but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable (italics mine)!*

And one day, after the Church has been called home, God's purposes for this world will be fulfilled when Jesus returns to establish his kingdom in his beloved land of Israel!

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