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Israel Only Cannot Survive The Whole Counsel Of Scripture: The Gospel, The Kingdom, And The New Covenant Are For All Who Are In Christ



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Israel Only teaches that the redemptive promises of Scripture ultimately belonged only to physical Israel, sometimes redefining the Gentiles of the New Testament as scattered Israelites and limiting salvation to Israel alone.

† That position can't survive the plain statements of Scripture. The Bible distinguishes Israel from the nations, sends the

gospel to every nation, brings Jews and Gentiles into one body through Christ, and declares that God shows no partiality.

† Fulfilled prophecy doesn't mean Israel Only. Biblical fulfillment means that God's promises reached their goal in Christ, and through Christ the blessing promised to Abraham went to the nations (Galatians 3:8, 14).

† Israel had a unique covenantal role in redemptive history, but Israel's calling was never proof that God had no purpose for the nations. Israel was the vessel through which the Messiah and the promised blessing came to the world (Genesis 12:3; Romans 9:4-5).

† The issue isn't whether God's promises to Israel were fulfilled. They were. The issue is what those fulfilled promises accomplished, and Scripture says they opened the blessing of Abraham, reconciliation, citizenship, and access to God through Christ to people from the nations.

Genesis 12:3

And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

† God's promise to Abraham looked beyond Abraham's physical descendants. God explicitly said all the families of the earth would be blessed through him.

† The New Testament explains this promise as the gospel announced beforehand to Abraham (Galatians 3:8). Paul didn't restrict the promise to Israel, he said God would justify the Gentiles by faith.

† The promise therefore begins with Abraham, reaches its fulfillment in Christ, and extends blessing outward to the nations. Israel served God's redemptive purpose, but Israel wasn't the boundary of God's grace.

Isaiah 49:6

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the protected ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My

salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

† Notice the distinction within the verse itself. Jacob and Israel are mentioned, then the Gentiles are mentioned in addition to them. The text doesn't identify the Gentiles as merely another name for Israel.

† God's Servant would restore Israel, but that wasn't the limit of His mission. God's salvation would extend to the Gentiles and reach the end of the earth.

† Paul and Barnabas applied this very prophecy to their mission among the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-48). The apostolic mission wasn't recovering Israelites while pretending they were Gentiles, it was carrying God's salvation beyond Israel.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

† Christ commanded His disciples to make disciples of all the nations. The mission wasn't restricted to people who could trace their ancestry to Israel.

† This expansion fits the entire biblical story. The Messiah came through Israel, fulfilled Israel's promises, and His gospel then went throughout the nations (Romans 16:25-26).

† The first-century fulfillment of the Great Commission doesn't shrink its audience into Israel. Paul could say the gospel had gone throughout the world precisely because the message had moved outward among the nations (Colossians 1:6, 23).

Acts 10:34-35

Opening his mouth, Peter said: I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

† Peter's encounter with Cornelius shattered the idea that covenant blessing had to remain ethnically confined. God showed Peter that He doesn't show partiality.

† Peter didn't say that God accepts only Israelites hidden

among every nation. He said in every nation the person who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

† The Holy Spirit falling upon Cornelius and his household confirmed what Peter had learned. Gentiles weren't required to become ethnic Israelites before receiving God's gift (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18).

Romans 1:16

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.

† Paul couldn't have stated the scope of the gospel much more clearly. Salvation through the gospel is for everyone who believes.

† Paul distinguishes the Jew from the Greek rather than collapsing the Greek into Israel. The gospel went to the Jew first because of Israel's covenantal priority, but it didn't stop there.

† The order was Jew first, then Greek. The requirement wasn't Israelite ancestry, it was faith in Christ.

Romans 10:12-13

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

† There is no distinction between Jew and Greek concerning access to the Lord. The same Lord is Lord of all.

† Paul doesn't say everyone descended from Israel will be saved. He says whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

† The gospel removes ethnic privilege as the basis of standing before God. Christ is the center, faith is the response, and salvation isn't confined to a bloodline.

Galatians 3:26-29

For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 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 belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

† Paul tells us exactly how someone belongs to Abraham's seed under the fulfilled promise, it's through belonging to Christ.

† He doesn't say, If you're Abraham's physical descendant, then you're Christ's. He says the opposite direction, if you belong to Christ, then you're Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise.

† Jew and Greek are brought together in Christ. Their ethnic histories aren't denied, but neither ethnicity determines covenant standing.

† This is devastating to any theology that makes physical Israelite ancestry the boundary of redemption. The defining reality is being in Christ.

Ephesians 2:13-14

But now in Christ Jesus you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

† Paul doesn't describe two permanently separated redeemed peoples. Christ made both groups one.

† The dividing wall wasn't rebuilt after AD 70. Christ destroyed the covenantal hostility and created one new humanity in Himself (Ephesians 2:15-16).

† The people who had been far away were brought near through Christ's blood. Their inclusion wasn't based upon proving Israelite genealogy, it was based upon Christ.

Ephesians 2:18-19

for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

† Both have access to the Father through Christ in one Spirit.

That's inclusion, reconciliation, and shared citizenship.

† Those who had been strangers became fellow citizens. They weren't told that they had secretly been Israelites all along.

† God's household is defined around Christ, not ethnicity. The apostles proclaimed one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Revelation 7:9-10

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all the tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

† Revelation doesn't present redemption as the possession of one ethnicity. John sees a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

† The diversity of the nations isn't erased in the vision. People from those nations participate in the salvation accomplished by God and the Lamb.

† Fulfilled eschatology should make this truth clearer, not smaller. AD 70 completed the judgment of the old covenant age, it didn't place an ethnic fence around God's everlasting kingdom.

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires, take the water of life without cost.

† Revelation closes with invitation, not ethnic exclusion. The thirsty are invited to come and take the water of life freely.

† The gates of the New Jerusalem aren't presented as closed to every person who lacks Israelite ancestry. The nations walk by its light, and its gates aren't shut (Revelation 21:24-26).

† The fulfilled kingdom remains centered in Christ. Whoever belongs to Christ shares in the life, citizenship, and inheritance

found in Him.

Why I Reject The Modern Israel Only Movement

† I want to make something very clear. My rejection of Israel Only isn't based only on disagreements about AD 70, the identity of the Gentiles, or the meaning of Israel. I also reject what I see happening within the modern Israel Only movement and where its theology can lead.

† I've encountered Israel Only advocates today who don't simply argue that prophecy concerned Israel. Some go much further and conclude that salvation itself belonged only to ancient Israel, that the gospel has no saving application to people today, and that people living in the twenty-first century can't enter into the salvation proclaimed in the New Testament.

† Once someone accepts that conclusion, an enormous problem appears. If salvation was only for Israel, if the gospel was only for Israel, and if people today can't come to Christ and receive the life found in Him, what meaningful place is left for faith in Christ today?

† This is one reason I've encountered people associated with Israel Only who have moved toward atheism, agnosticism, unbelief, or a Christianity emptied of a present relationship with Christ. I won't say every Israel Only advocate is an atheist because that wouldn't be accurate or fair. But when a system teaches that Christ's saving work has no application to people alive today, it can remove the very foundation upon which present faith rests.

† That's completely different from fulfilled eschatology as I understand it. I believe prophecy was fulfilled. I believe the old covenant age ended. I believe Christ's coming in judgment occurred in AD 70. But I don't believe salvation ended in AD 70. I don't believe the kingdom ended in AD 70. I don't believe access to God ended in AD 70. I don't believe the water of life dried up in AD 70.

† Revelation describes the completed New Jerusalem with open gates and the invitation to take the water of life freely (Revelation 21:24-26; 22:17). Fulfillment produced the

completed reality, it didn't destroy it.

† Modern Israel Only can make a mistake similar to the one many Christians make concerning modern national Israel, although from the opposite direction. Modern national Israel can't claim covenant standing merely because of physical ancestry while rejecting Christ. In the same way, someone today can't claim spiritual superiority because they believe they've discovered Israelite ancestry while having no faith in Christ.

† Physical ancestry doesn't replace Christ. Genealogy doesn't replace Christ. Knowledge about AD 70 doesn't replace Christ. Understanding covenant history doesn't replace Christ. Christ remains the center of everything.

† Paul said that if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, that person doesn't belong to Him (Romans 8:9). He didn't say Israelite DNA establishes someone's relationship with God.

† Paul also said that if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). The defining expression is in Christ. That's where I stand.

† I refuse to trade futurism for Israel Only. I didn't leave one system that misplaced biblical prophecy only to embrace another system that removes Christ's salvation from people living today.

† Fulfilled prophecy should leave us celebrating what Christ accomplished, not telling the world that what He accomplished isn't available to them.

† My message to the world is still Christ. The kingdom remains. The New Jerusalem remains. The tree of life remains. The water of life remains. The gates remain open. God's people still have access to Him through Christ (Revelation 21:24-27; 22:1-2, 14, 17).

† That's why I reject twenty-first-century Israel Only. I believe fulfillment gives us more reason to proclaim Christ, not less.

Historical References

† Josephus repeatedly distinguished Jews from surrounding peoples and nations in his historical accounts. His language

reflects the ordinary first-century distinction between Israel and non-Israelite peoples, rather than treating every Gentile nation as disguised Israelites.

† Tacitus likewise described Jews as a distinguishable people among the peoples of the Roman world. Whatever his hostility toward Judaism, his historical testimony demonstrates that Jews and the surrounding nations weren't treated as interchangeable ethnic categories.

† Eusebius described the apostolic proclamation spreading beyond Judea into other nations. His historical account reflects the early Christian understanding that the gospel moved outward from Israel rather than remaining restricted to Israelite descendants.

† Historical writers aren't our authority, Scripture is. Their testimony is useful because it confirms that the ordinary historical distinction between Jews and Gentile nations wasn't an invention of later Christianity.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't need Israelite blood to belong to Christ. We need Christ.

† We don't inherit salvation through genealogy. In Christ, believers are children of God through faith (Galatians 3:26).

† We shouldn't replace futurism's obsession with modern ethnic Israel with another system that makes ancient ethnic Israel the permanent boundary of salvation.

† Full Preterism doesn't require Israel Only. The fulfillment of Israel's covenant story in AD 70 confirms that the old covenant age reached its appointed end, while the everlasting kingdom established in Christ continues.

† Israel wasn't discarded or cheated. Israel's promises reached their intended destination in Israel's Messiah, and through Him the promised blessing flowed to the nations.

† The Church didn't steal Israel's promises. God's promises reached their fulfillment in Christ, and everyone who belongs to Christ shares in what God accomplished through Him.

† Our message isn't Israel Only. It's Christ for all who believe.

† The gospel is bigger than genealogy, the kingdom is bigger than ethnicity, and the finished work of Christ is more powerful than human bloodlines.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean salvation was only for Israel?

A: No. Fulfillment establishes that God's promises concerning Israel reached their goal in Christ, but Scripture explicitly extends the blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8, 14).

Q: Were the Gentiles in the New Testament simply scattered Israelites?

A: Scripture doesn't allow us to make that universal claim. Paul repeatedly distinguishes Jews from Greeks and Gentiles while declaring that both are brought together through Christ (Romans 1:16; Romans 10:12; Ephesians 2:13-19).

Q: Doesn't the gospel going to Israel first prove that salvation belonged exclusively to Israel?

A: No. Paul said the gospel was to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Priority isn't exclusivity (Romans 1:16).

Q: Who is Abraham's seed under the fulfilled promise?

A: Paul answers directly, those who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

Q: Does ethnicity determine who can belong to God's kingdom today?

A: No. The New Testament grounds our access to the Father in Christ, not genealogy. Through Christ we have access in one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:18-19).

Q: What happened to the distinction between Jew and Gentile in Christ?

A: Christ made both one and broke down the dividing wall. Both

received access to the Father through one Spirit (Ephesians 2:13-19).

Q: Does rejecting Israel Only mean denying Israel's importance?

A: Absolutely not. Israel had an essential covenantal role. The Messiah came through Israel, the promises were given through Israel, and redemption unfolded through Israel's covenant story. But God's purpose through Israel was always moving toward Christ and the blessing of the nations (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 49:6).

Q: What's the strongest answer to Israel Only?

A: Christ Himself is the answer. If you belong to Christ, you're Abraham's seed and an heir according to promise. Scripture places the inheritance in Christ, not in someone's DNA (Galatians 3:29).

Q: Are Israel Only advocates of the twenty-first century Christians?

A: That can't be answered simply by attaching a label to everyone in the movement. If an Israel Only advocate genuinely believes in Christ, trusts Him, confesses Him, and belongs to Him, I won't declare that person isn't a Christian merely because they're wrong about Israel Only. But if someone rejects Christ, denies the gospel, or openly identifies as an atheist, that person can't meaningfully be called a Christian simply because they understand certain events surrounding AD 70. Christianity is centered on Christ (Romans 10:9-13; 1 John 5:11-12).

Q: Do Israel Only advocates today have a relationship with Christ?

A: Some may sincerely profess faith in Christ, so we shouldn't judge every individual's heart. But Israel Only theology can create a serious problem when it teaches that Christ's saving work was exclusively for ancient Israelites and has no saving application today. Scripture says our life is found in Christ, and

whoever has the Son has life (1 John 5:11-12). A theology that removes present access to Christ's life has moved far beyond simply believing prophecy was fulfilled.

Q: Why do Israel Only advocates cause so much trouble in Facebook groups?

A: Not every Israel Only advocate causes trouble, but the conflict often begins because Israel Only isn't merely another interpretation of one prophecy. It can redefine the audience of the gospel, the identity of the Gentiles, salvation, the New Covenant, and who can belong to God's people. Because those claims touch almost every part of the gospel, discussions quickly spread into unrelated posts. When someone repeatedly turns every subject into Israel Only, ignores group rules, or uses posts to recruit people into that system, administrators have to protect the purpose of their group. The problem isn't asking sincere questions. The problem is repeatedly hijacking discussions and promoting a doctrine the group doesn't permit (Titus 3:9-11).

Q: Is Israel Only the same thing as Full Preterism?

A: No. Full Preterism teaches that biblical eschatological prophecy was fulfilled, culminating in AD 70. Israel Only adds claims about ethnicity, salvation, and the exclusive identity of God's redeemed people that Full Preterism doesn't require. I can affirm fulfilled prophecy completely while rejecting Israel Only completely.

Q: If all prophecy was fulfilled by AD 70, why does Christ still matter today?

A: Because fulfillment established His everlasting kingdom, it didn't terminate it. Christ's victory isn't temporary. His kingdom doesn't expire after fulfillment. The completed New Jerusalem has open gates, the tree of life, and the continuing invitation, let the one who is thirsty come and take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:1-2, 17). We aren't waiting for Christ to accomplish redemption again. We're living in the reality of what

He already accomplished.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:12-13; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:13-14; Ephesians 2:18-19; Revelation 7:9-10; Revelation 22:17

† Josephus, Tacitus, Eusebius

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