

Good Morning Arising Church,

Today is April 26, 2026 and we are proud to be here with the brotherhood of Zionists here at the Arising Church! We live in exciting times for our community! We just finished Exodus this last week and will be moving on to Daniel in June!



Moreover, last week we had quite the message—some might say the MOST CONSEQUENTIAL MESSAGE OF OUR TIME.



Last week we exposed the delusion spreading across our country in politicians, journalists, *influencers*, and many church leaders. This delusion is clearly seen in the change of heart the nation is having against Israel.

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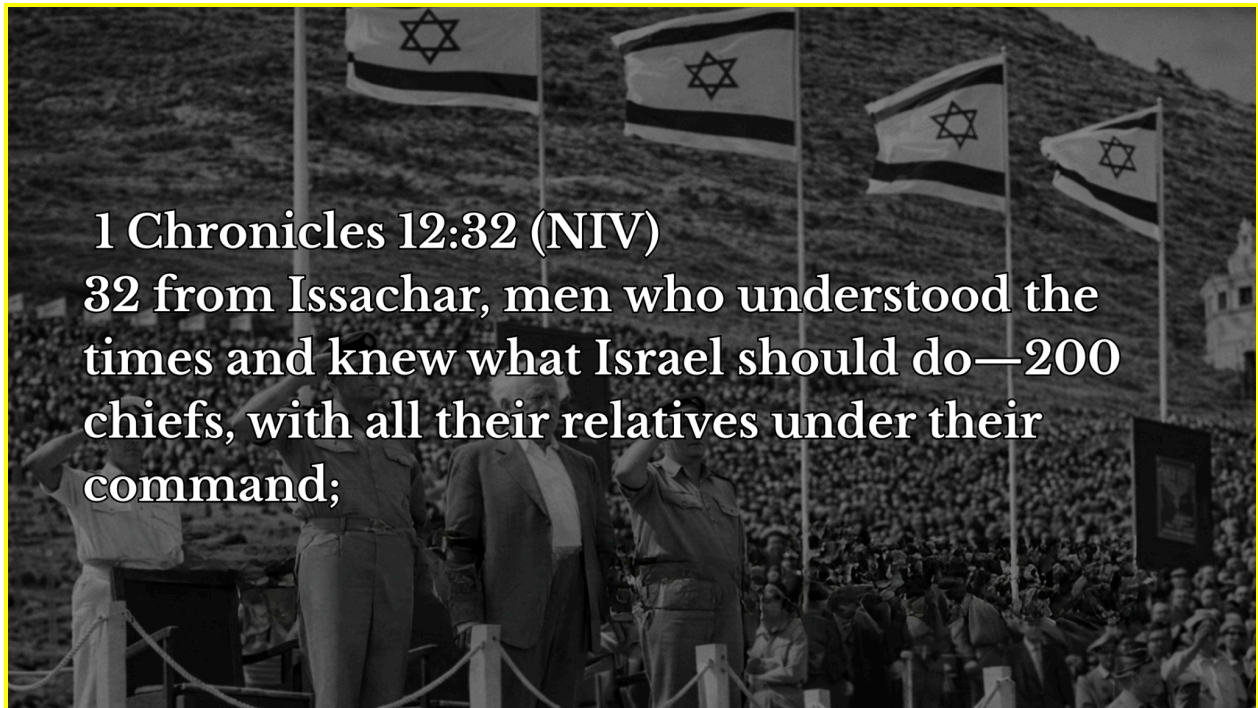
14 Parallel's (Haran and Egypt): In "Captivity"

Event	Haran	Egypt
1. Escaping external threat	Gen 27: 43-45	Gen 45: 11
2. Greatly multiplied	Gen 29: 32	Ex 1:7
3. Time of favor	Gen 30: 27	Gen 47: 5-6
4. Change of heart towards Israel	Gen 31: 1-2	Ex 1: 8
5. Issue with prosperity	Gen 31: 1-2	Ex 1: 9
6. Mistreated	Gen 31: 7,41	Ex 1: 11
7. The Lord sees his suffering	Gen 31:12	Ex 3:7

We went back to the seed book and the life of Jacob to see the change of heart Laban had towards Jacob and how that story is a prophetic pattern that repeats throughout history and can be seen clearly in our world today.

Our charge to you came out of 1 Chronicles 12:32.

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We are not going to fall into the delusion around us, instead we will understand the times and act! Before we get into our sermon today, consider this passage in light of the change of heart against God's people.

- **Hosea 11:8–10 (NIVUK)**

⁸ 'How can I give you up, Ephraim?

How can I hand you over, Israel?

How can I treat you like Admah?

How can I make you like Zeboyim?

**My heart is changed within me;
all my compassion is aroused.**

⁹ I will not carry out my fierce anger,

nor will I devastate Ephraim again.

For I am God, and not a man—

the Holy One among you.

I will not come against their cities.

¹⁰ They will follow the Lord;

he will roar like a lion.

When he roars,

his children will come trembling from the west.

While man's heart towards Israel changes from favor to hostility, Adonai's heart towards Israel changes from hostility to compassion—the complete opposite response of man! Times are changing, the nations are becoming increasingly hostile towards Israel, yet God's heart is becoming increasingly compassionate towards them.

This week will be a continuation from last week's message. Despite YouTube not liking our vigil at the end of last week, despite the barrage of delusion online, and despite being labeled false teachers by some—we are going to double down on what the Word of God says. Consider this verse from the LAW.

- **Leviticus 5:1 (BSB)**

“If someone sins by failing to testify when he hears a public charge about something he has witnessed, whether he has seen it or learned of it, he shall bear the iniquity.

The LAW states that if someone hears something false spoken in their presence and they refuse to speak the truth—then they are in sin. The LAW is not less relevant, it is still true and perfect in every way! We must forge a conviction from the Word to stand for Israel in our actions and our speech. Last week we saw examples of the Ten Boom family and Bonhoeffer. Their lives are exemplary! We must preach these things so our families are prepared to do whatever is necessary to stand up for the Promises of God!

Let's read a verse from the Writings.

- **Daniel 11:32 (LSB)**

32 “And by smooth *words* he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

This verse should inspire us to intensify our study of the Scripture. We are in a time when smooth, comforting words are leading many to act wickedly against God's covenant with Israel. However, we will be the ones who know the God of Israel, His heart, and His Covenant, and we will prevail and act without being seduced by words that are turning others. Our church's mission is *to equip and mature the saints*. There are many believers out there who simply do not know because they have not been taught! Thus, we will commit to know so we can teach the Saints and equip them! Let's do one more before we tell you the title of today's message.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:9–12 (NIV)**

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, 10 and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because **they refused to love the truth and so be saved**. 11 For this reason God sends them a **powerful delusion** so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Satan will do all he can to discredit God and will move in powerful ways to deceive people into condemnation. And even God himself will send a powerful delusion to those who practice lawlessness so that they believe the lie! In our time there are clearly lies and a delusion coming upon the earth in regard to Israel. It is our responsibility to LOVE the truth and speak what is right.

And not just for ourselves, but for the sake of others. The world, and more importantly the church is starved in regard to proper teaching regarding Israel. We are privileged to receive the revelation we have, and have the responsibility to share it with others.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:15 (NIV84)**

15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

To hold fast to Paul's teachings, we must properly understand them so that we are declaring correctly the truth, so that others might not believe the multitude of lies concerning Israel.

In summary, this is what we are aimed at today in the sermon:

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In light of all we are facing in our times, our message is titled:

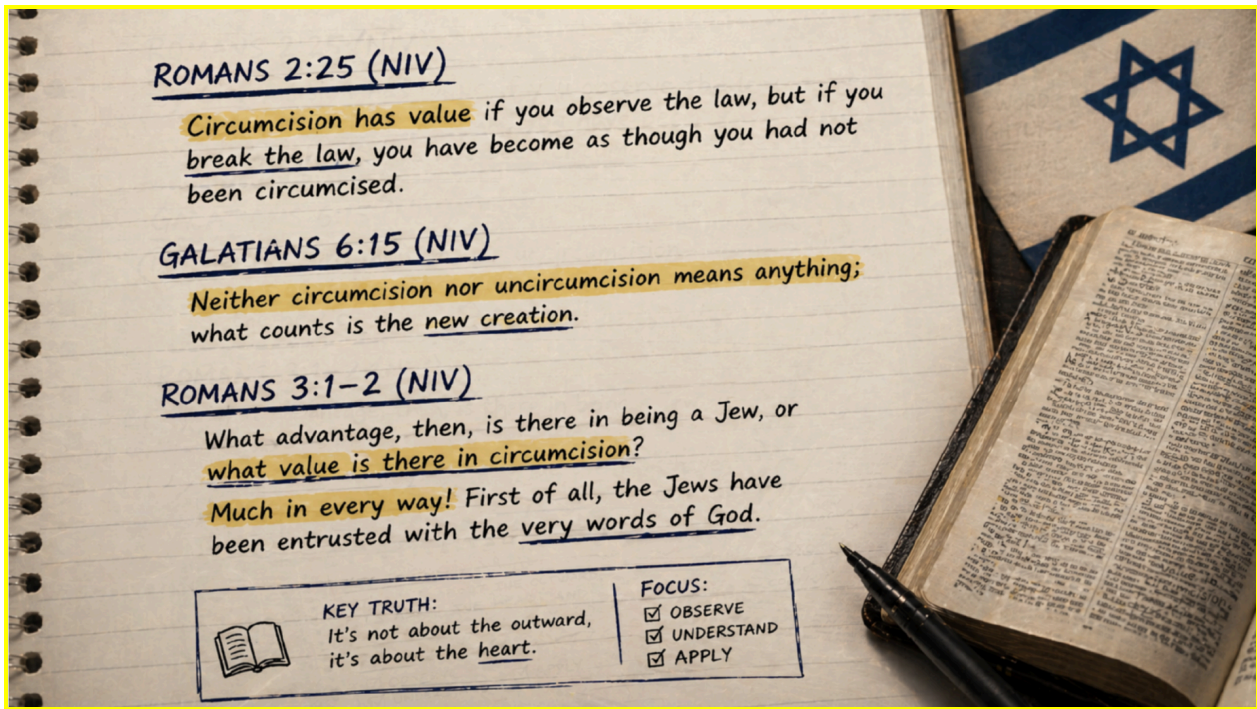
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Now that we've outlined the two applications of our message, we need to address one of the biggest obstacles to understanding Israel's role in Scripture: a widespread misunderstanding of Paul's writings.

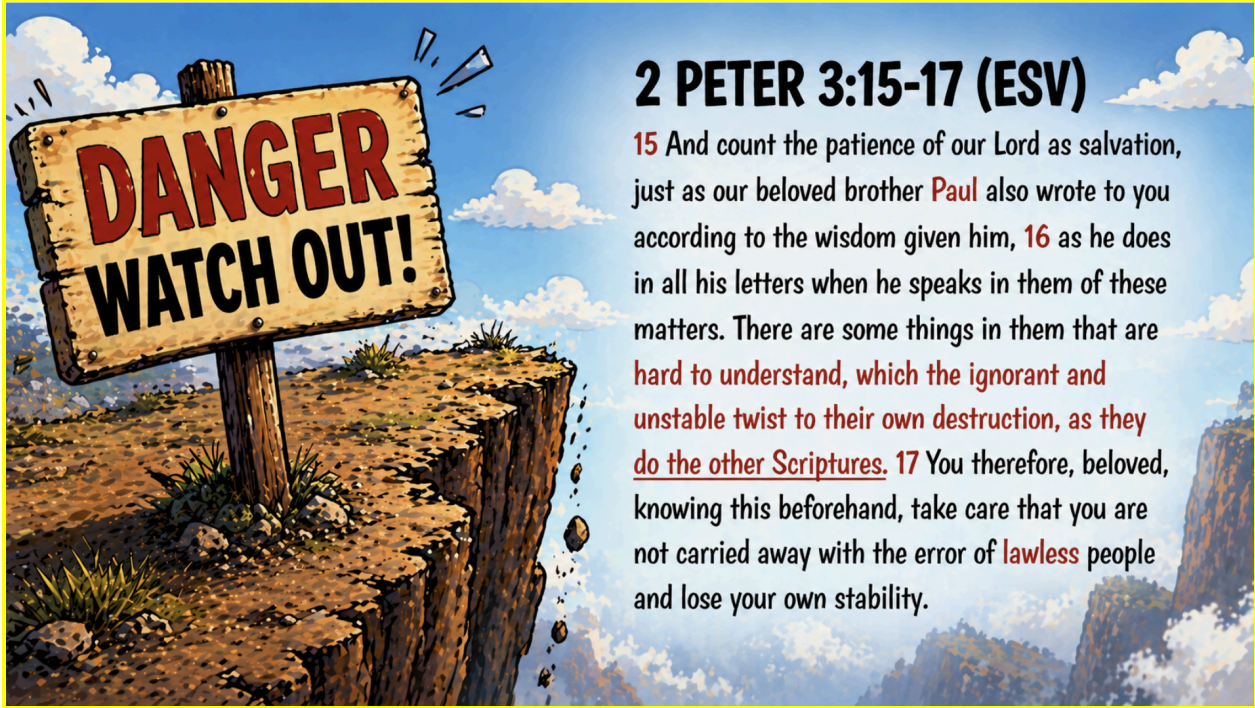
Let's begin by admitting that Paul's writings ARE OBJECTIVELY very confusing for several reasons. Consider the following slide of apparent contradictions in Paul's writings.

(Read highlighted part)



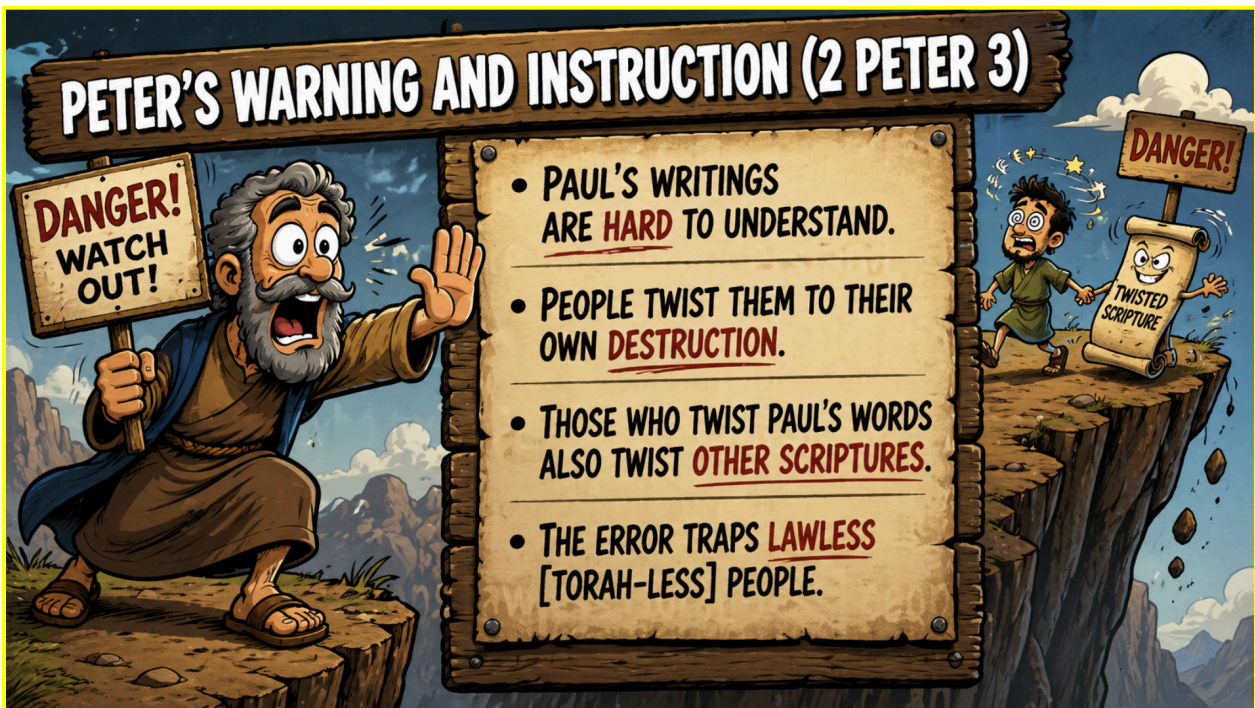
Do you see how it might be difficult to understand Paul's stance on circumcision without ample understanding? With this type of confusing speech, it would be great if the Bible gave us some principles to interpreting Paul's writing. Or maybe if there was some **rock** we could stand on to help us avoid twisting Paul's words.

(Read Slide)



Notice here EXACTLY what Peter is saying:

(DO NOT READ)



1. Paul's writings are hard to understand.

2. People twist them to their own destruction.
3. Those who twist Paul's words ALSO twist other scriptures.
4. The error traps Lawless [Torah-less] people.

Notice that Peter specifically states that those who are twisting Paul's writings are also twisting other scriptures! Also that those who get trapped through error in this matter are Torah-less people, those who don't understand and love the Torah.

WAIT...This does not mean you should doubt the New Testament, stop reading Paul or give up studying! Instead, take this passage as instructional for your studies.

- **Acts 17:10–11 (NIV)**

¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures** every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Keep reading! And test your findings with the Scripture and brothers!

When considering this, it is important also to understand that Paul tells us his method for teaching and living. Consider the following:

(Read Slide)

PAUL'S METHOD



1 CORINTHIANS 4:6 (ESV)

6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may **learn by us not to go beyond what is written**, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.

Paul makes it very clear that he does not go beyond what is written. Remember, at the time he wrote to the Corinthians, the New Testament wasn't the Bible yet. So when Paul says he does not go beyond what is written, he is not referring to the New Testament. Rather, he is speaking about the Older Testament. This means Paul does not go beyond the Older Testament and he instructs the church in Corinth not to go beyond the Older Testament.

Now, this is not stating that the new testament is of no value! It is an essential divine witness to the Older! Rather, ALL future revelations MUST agree with the former revelations. We can draw the following conclusions:

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PAUL'S METHOD (1 COR 4:6)

- All of Paul's revelation comes from Old Testament Scripture
- No new revelation can nullify the old revelation
- A New revelation can only ADD to the Old if it still maintains the original meaning of the Old.

Although we could prove out these points in many more places, the above verses form an interpretive key to Paul's writing. Now that we know that the ONLY WAY to understand Paul, is to first understand the Older testament, we will go through the foundations of the Scripture that forms our understanding Paul's writing.

Let's go to Genesis 15:4-6.

- **Genesis 15:4–6 (LSB)**

4 Then behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, "This one will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

5 And He brought him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your seed be."

6 Then he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.

The faith in this promise was to believe that in the face of impossible

circumstances the PHYSICAL line of Abraham would one day become like the Stars of Heaven, both in quantity and quality.

- **Jeremiah 33:24-26 NIV**

24 “Have you not noticed that these people are saying, ‘The Lord has rejected the two kingdoms he chose’? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. 25 This is what the Lord says: ‘If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth,26 then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.’”

In Jeremiah's day, Israel was in captivity, and the nations were saying the Lord has forgotten and despised his people. And the Lord's response is incredible and pointed. He says as long as you see day and night, you will see God's promises to Israel remain. We literally have a 24/7 reminder of God's faithfulness. Did you see the sun come up this morning? God won't forget the nation of Israel. Did you see it go down last night? God won't forget the nation of Israel.

Lets move to Ezekiel.

- **Ezekiel 39:25, 28-29 NIV**

25 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name.

28 Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, **I will gather them to their own land**, not leaving any behind. 29 **I will no longer hide my face from them**, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

The context of Ezekiel's prophecy is concerning the end of the age, a time still yet to come. And he plainly says though he sent Israel into exile, He will regather them to their own land. Even at the end of the age, He will not hide his face from them, but bring all of them to their land and pour out his Spirit on the people of Israel.

Let's look at Psalm 132:13-16.

- **Psalm 132:13-16 (NIV)**

"For **the Lord has chosen Zion,**

he has desired it for his dwelling, saying,

14 **"This is my resting place for ever and ever;
here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.**

15 I will bless her with abundant provisions;
her poor I will satisfy with food.

16 I will clothe her priests with salvation,
and her faithful people will ever sing for joy."

God doesn't choose Zion for His dwelling place simply because He's locked into a covenant that He now has to fulfill. He chooses Zion for His dwelling place because He has desired it! He desires to bless it and make her people, the people of Israel, prosper.

He chose them not because they were numerous and powerful. As Deuteronomy 7:8 says, He chose them because He loved them, which drives His covenant faithfulness to them, and His desire to dwell in Zion and bless His people.

This is just a sampling of a few scriptures concerning Israel. We could really do this all day but we wanted to give you a few that we had to cut for the sake of time on a slide. Our hope is that you would take a picture of this and write them in your Bible so that you can be equipped to talk to others about what the Bible says concerning the nation and people of Israel!

(DO NOT READ)



As you can see from all of these passages, God has a promise for the people of Israel and the land of Israel that cannot be renegotiated or annulled. It is His desire to make these promises and fulfill them. This was the understanding every Jew would have had in the days of Jesus and Paul. We are going to take this foundation for Biblical Interpretation and move into the Newer Testament to see how Paul—an ethnic Law-abiding Jew, was a divine witness to these truths. Let's read again our interpretive steps for reading Paul.

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PAUL'S METHOD (1 COR 4:6)

- All of Paul's revelation comes from Old Testament Scripture
- No new revelation can nullify the old revelation
- A New revelation can only ADD to the Old if it still maintains the original meaning of the Old.

We are going to get into the main thrust of our message today starting in Galatians.

The book of Galatians was written to a gentile church. Paul is addressing a very specific problem in this church — How the gentiles participate in the blessings of the nation of Israel through faith.

(SLIDE)

CONTEXT FOR THE BOOK OF GALATIANS



1. The book of Galatians was written to a gentile church (2:2)



2. Paul is addressing a very specific problem in this church – How the gentiles participate in the blessings of the nation of Israel through faith (3:1-4)

- Galatians 3:5–29 (ESV)

⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so **by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—** ⁶ **just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?** ⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

To begin, you should see that Paul is using the foundation—Genesis 15. Thus, it should be a hint to us that what follows is not adding to, or changing Genesis 15, but clarifying. He then, uses Genesis 15 to make the case that from the time of Abraham, salvation has been through faith. Now, it is important for us to remember the context of Genesis 15—what is Abraham having faith about? Faith that his physical descendants would become like the stars, despite impossible circumstances.

Then comes the statement, "those of faith who are the sons of Abraham." What does this mean? We would like to propose that a few things are happening at the same time in this verse range.

Gentiles who demonstrate the same trusting faithfulness in God as Abraham, are sons of Abraham. Many incorrectly take this to mean that the Church has then replaced Israel.

But notice that is a leap, and not stated in the text. He explicitly says sons of Abraham, not anything along the lines of "sons who replace Israel" or even "sons of Israel." Just because Gentiles by faith can become like sons does not remove an existing son from his place. Two things can be true at once.

Gentiles can become sons of Abraham by walking in the faith of Abraham, AND the nation of Israel still retains promises that were given explicitly to *them* that will be fulfilled. As a Gentile, you can walk in the faith of Abraham AND this does not mean you along with the church are now the sole benefactor of the promises. This is actually clarified in verses eight and nine. It says—

- **Galatians 3:8-9 (ESV)**

⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "**In you shall all the nations be blessed.**" ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are **blessed along** with Abraham, the man of faith.

As you may have heard it said in here: "we are saved *with* them and never *without* them." We as Gentiles are blessed ALONG with Abraham and his descendants not INSTEAD OF.

Take two quick examples from the Tanakh.

- Are Ephraim and Manasseh *actually* sons of Jacob? — No, but were they treated *like* sons and blessed along with the rest? —Yes.

- Is Caleb actually a Hebrew? No, is he treated and blessed along with them? — Yes.

So it is with you. That is why the context of Genesis 12 and 15 is so pertinent—the only way a Gentile can be blessed is IF he himself blesses the family of Abraham and thus is blessed BY the family of Abraham.

Let's keep moving in Galatians.

- **Galatians 3:10-14 (ESV)**

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus **the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles**, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

What we have already discussed makes this much easier to interpret. The blessing of Abraham **comes** to the Gentiles it is not **transferred** to them, they do not take it, Abraham's blessing merely overflows into them. "It says in CHRIST THE BLESSING...might come" This simply means Christ is the vehicle for Abraham and the Gentiles by association receive the blessing. Let's move forward to perhaps the most difficult portion.

- **Galatians 3:15-16 (ESV)**

15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a **man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.** **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.(v14)**

This is a HIGHLY debated portion of scripture. People have been debating it for actually hundreds of years—listen to this commentary that was written BEFORE Abraham Lincoln was president. This is Albert Barnes commentary, he walks through the Hebrew and Greek words for *seed*, showing how in both of them the word is always singular and never plural, making it strange that Paul makes a big deal about it being to a singular person. After explaining the complicated linguistics he says this...

FAMILY HISTORY
Generations of Faith

Abraham

Isaac

Jacob

Judah

Hebron

Hezron

Ram

Ammiadab

Nahshon

Salmon

Boaz

Obed

Jesse

David

...and to seed(s)...

The question then is, whether the argument of the apostle here drawn from the use of the singular word σπέρμα (seed), is one that can be seen to be sound? or is it a mere quibble, as Jerome and Le Clerc suppose? or is it to be left to be presumed to have had a force which we cannot now trace? for this is possible. Socrates and Plato may have used arguments of a subtle nature, based on some nice distinctions of words which were perfectly sound, but which we, from our necessary ignorance of the delicate shades of meaning in the language, cannot now understand. Perhaps the following remarks may show that there is real force and propriety in the position which the apostle takes here. If not, then I confess my inability to explain the passage.

The LORD your God will not cut you off.
1 Kings 8:25

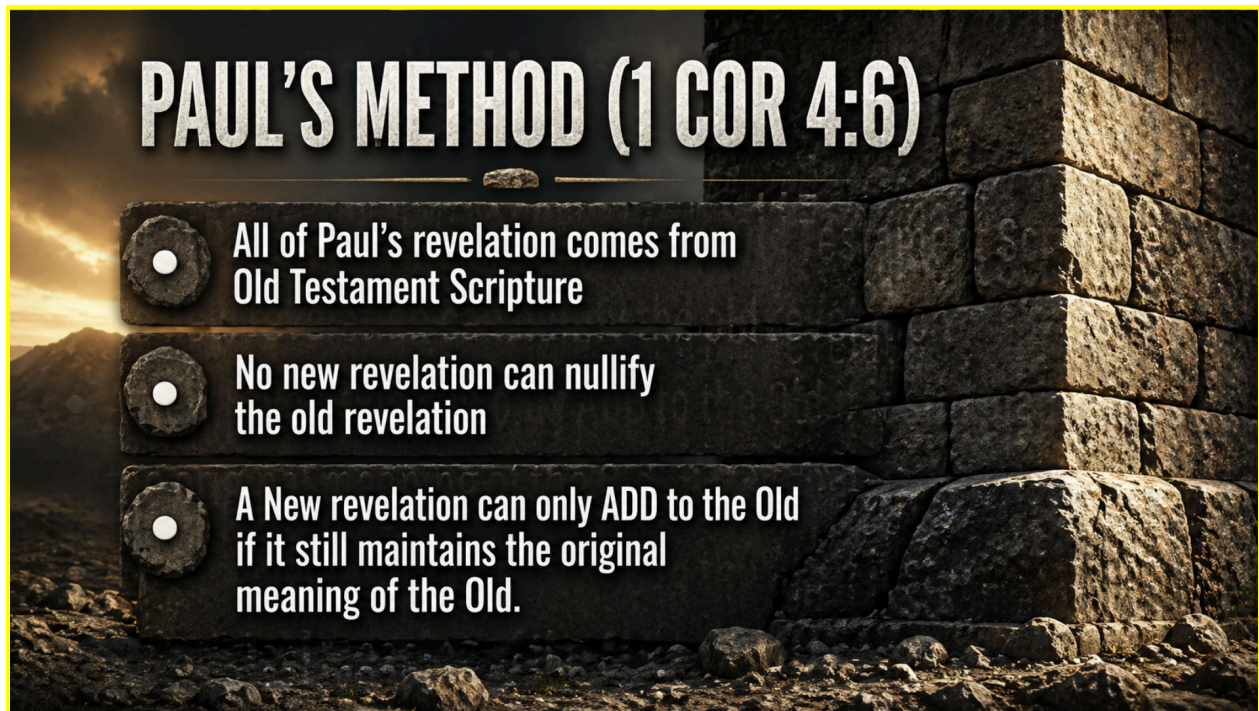
Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 341.

First and foremost its worth noting how this passage has been hard to understand since the Civil War, and we surveyed dozens of commentaries and books with a wide range of views. We are going to attempt to show you what we believe is a responsible interpretation.

The reason this verse is so important is that MANY Christian Scholars use this as the fulcrum for Gentiles and the Church replacing Israel—because it seems to remove the physical descendants of Abraham from the promises and put them exclusively on Christ.

But, isn't it interesting that right before Paul says the confusing part about seeds, he talks about a covenant being impossible to annul...?...things that make you go hmmm. Remember our slide?

(READ SLIDE)



He is not changing revelation, he is further clarifying and he is about to show that the point is the means of fulfillment as he said in verse 14, not the ones who receive it.

Listen to these two commentaries that are going to show that the SEED is culminated in Christ not exclusive to Christ as the only one who it was about.

(READ SLIDE)

...and to seed(s)...?

part 2.

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graph TD; ABRAHAM --> ISAAC; ABRAHAM --> KETURAH; ISAAC --> JACOB; JACOB --> JUDAH; JUDAH --> HEZRON; HEZRON --> AMMINADAB; AMMINADAB --> NAHSHON; AMMINADAB --> SALMON; AMMINADAB --> BOAZ; AMMINADAB --> OBED; AMMINADAB --> JESSE; BOAZ --> DAVID;
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Apostle pauses to point out, that, though the promise was given to Abraham's seed, yet it was restricted to **one line**. The descendants of Hagar and Keturah and the posterity of Esau were not included in the covenant. Similarly in Rom. 9:7, 8, we read, "Neither because they are a seed (i.e. one of the lines of descendants) of Abraham, **are they all children, but (so ran the promise), In Isaac shall thy seed be called**", i.e. the title of 'seed' par excellence to thee shall be in the line of Isaac. **but as of one] One line of descent, the spiritual seed**, who are gathered up into and blessed in their **One Head and Representative.**

E. H. Perowne, *The Epistle to the Galatians, Edited with Introduction and Notes*,
The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), 37–38.

Let's read one more:

(READ SLIDE)

...and to seed(s)...?

part 3.

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graph TD; ABRAHAM --> ISAAC; ABRAHAM --> KETURAH; ISAAC --> JACOB; JACOB --> JUDAH; JUDAH --> HEZRON; HEZRON --> RAM; HEZRON --> AMMINADAB; AMMINADAB --> NAHSHON; AMMINADAB --> SALMON; AMMINADAB --> BOAZ; AMMINADAB --> OBED; AMMINADAB --> JESSE; BOAZ --> DAVID; KETURAH --> HAGAR; HAGAR --> ESAU;
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It might be said, then, that the promise "to thy seed" did not refer to the two races, as if he had said σπέρματα, "seeds," but to one (σπέρμα), "the seed" of Abraham, by way of eminence. (5.) **This promise was subsequently narrowed down still more, so as to include only one portion of the descendants of Isaac.** Thus it was limited to the posterity of Jacob, Esau being excluded; **subsequently the peculiar blessing was promised to the family of Judah**, one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Gen. 49:10); in subsequent times it was still further narrowed down or limited to the family of Jesse; then to that of David; then to that of Solomon, until it terminated in the Messiah.

Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians*, ed. Robert Frew
(London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 339–342.

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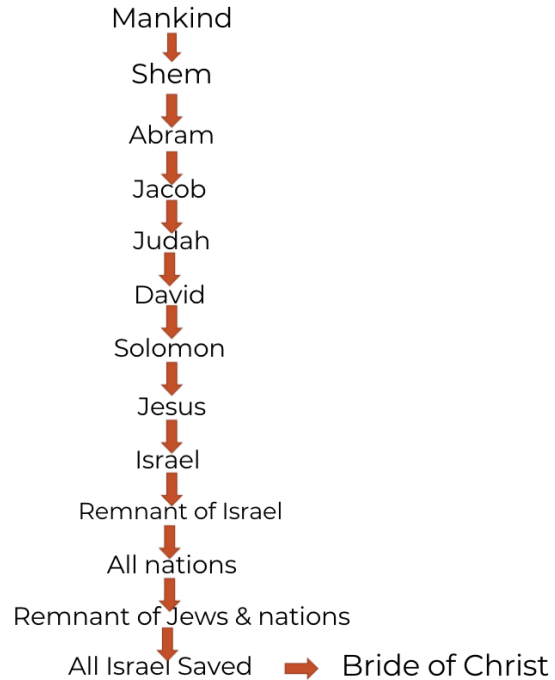
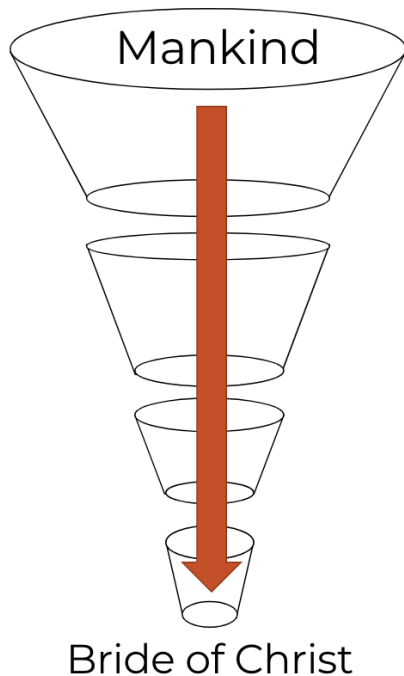
...and to seed(s)...?

part 4.

The original intention of the promise was that there should be a limitation, and that limitation was made from age to age, until it terminated in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. By being thus **narrowed down from age to age, and limited by successive revelations**, it was shown that the Messiah was eminently intended,—which is what Paul says here. The promise was indeed at first general, and the term used was of the most general nature; but it was shown from time to time that God intended that it should be **applied only to one branch or portion of the family of Abraham**; and that limitation was **finally so made as to terminate in the Messiah**. This I take to be the meaning of this very difficult passage of scripture.

Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians*, ed. Robert Frew
(London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 339–342.

Barnes is saying that the promise CULMINATED to Messiah through the one line of Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-etc. Not that it was ONLY for Christ but ONLY for the line that would produce CHRIST. This should remind you of this slide from Genesis Foundations:



Remember the context of the promise that is culminating in Christ, is — the Descendants of Abraham would be like the stars, the entire promised land would be their possession & the plan of God to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham. These are events that have yet to fully take place but have been inaugurated by Christ and will only take place through Christ at His second coming. Let's keep reading in Galatians 3 and see something that helps with this even more.

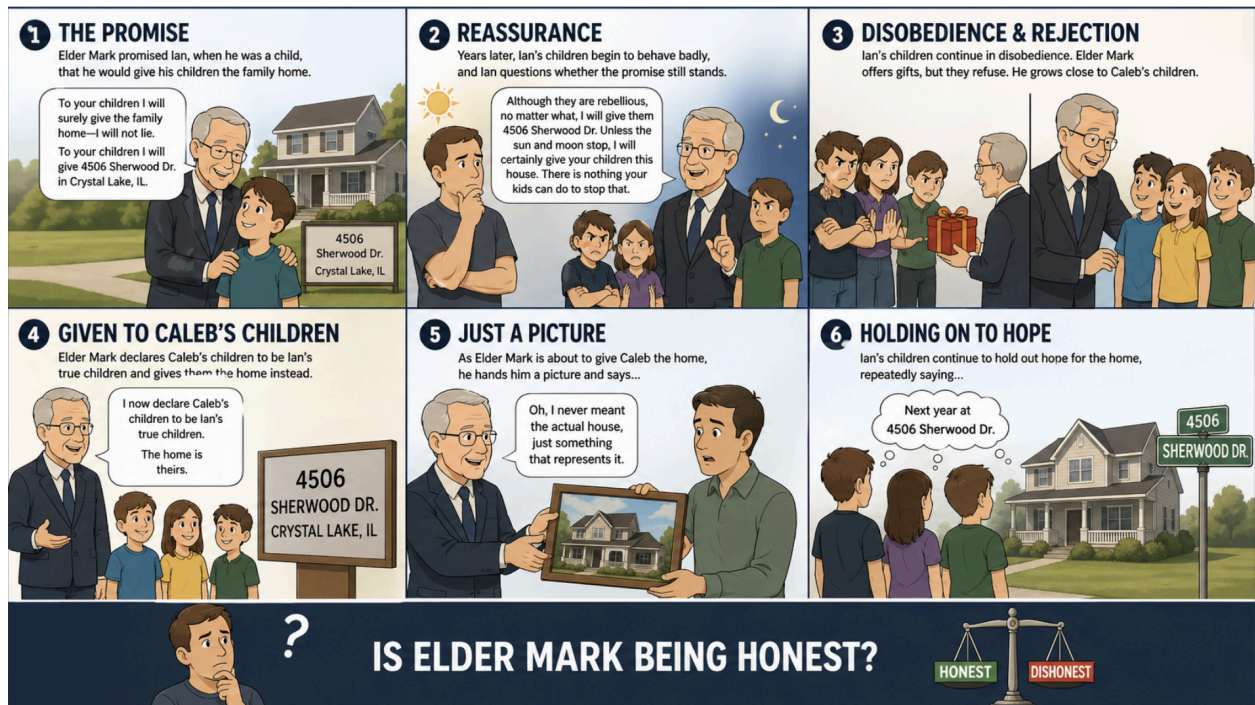
- **Galatians 3:17-18 (ESV)**

¹⁷ **This is what I mean:** the law, which came 430 years afterward, **does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.** ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Do you find it fascinating that Paul starts with: "*what I mean is this*"...In other words—he admits what he said was confusing and needs to clarify.

He once again doubles down that he is not saying anything that changes previous covenants ratified by God. Remember Abraham was put to sleep when this covenant was made. It is completely dependent on God himself to keep. Even if Israel breaks the law, the promise still stands.

The idea that the church has replaced Israel is literally saying God is unfaithful to his promise and is a liar. Take this analogy as an example.



Imagine that Elder Mark promised Ian, when he was a child, that he would give his children the family home. Then Elder Mark reinforced that promise, saying, “To your children I will surely give the family home—I will not lie.” He even specified, “To your children I will give 4506 Sherwood Dr. in Crystal Lake, IL.”

Years later, Ian’s children begin to behave badly, and Ian starts to question whether the promise still stands. In response, Elder Mark reassures him: “Although they are rebellious, no matter what, I will give them 4506 Sherwood Dr. Unless the sun and moon stop, I will

certainly give your children this house. There is nothing your kids can do to stop that.”

Now imagine that Ian’s children continue in disobedience. Over time, Elder Mark offers them gifts, but they refuse to receive them. Because of this, Elder Mark develops a close relationship with Caleb’s children (who also misbehave)

Then Elder Mark declares Caleb’s children to be Ian’s true children and gives them the home instead. Furthermore, as Elder Mark is about to give Caleb the home, he actually just hands him a picture of the house and states: "Oh, I never meant the actual house, just something that represents it."

During this entire time, Ian’s children continue to hold out hope for the home, repeatedly saying, “Next year at 4506 Sherwood Dr.”

In this scenario, is Elder Mark being honest?

Do you realize how absurd that story is? Many Christians are not malicious, but uninformed. Nevertheless, the implication of removing Israel from the promises and land—leads to making God out to be a liar and reneging on his promises.

Let's move through Galatians 3:19-27

- **Galatians 3:19-27 (ESV)**

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, **until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made**, and it was put in place through angels by an

intermediary. **20** Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned

everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then,

the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no

longer under a guardian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into

Christ have put on Christ.

Paul is putting on a capstone to his argument for JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH not by works. He is also clarifying the intention of the law was never to replace Abraham or the promises. From its giving on Sinai, to the time of the Galatians, the laws intention was never a means of salvation. Though some were trying to influence the Galatian church in this way.

- **Galatians 3:28-29 (ESV)**

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

He is not speaking of removing distinctions between Jew and Greek or Male and Female. The point is that all people must come to personal salvation the same way regardless of any extenuating circumstances. Nor is he saying that Gentiles have taken anything away from the descendants

of Abraham because they now are heirs. The promise that was given to Abraham would come through Christ and all nations could be blessed alongside Abraham if they approach it in faith.

That was a lot—but understanding these passages is very important to equipping and maturing believers outside these walls to come to the truth of the Word of God.

While we are in Galatians we want to discuss quickly two verses in chapter six that come up repeatedly in this conversation.

- **Galatians 6:15–18 (ESV)**

¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, **and** upon the Israel of God.

Here we come to yet another section of Paul's writings that has led to much confusion and differing conclusions within Christendom. We admit, this verse alone took us much time and debate to come to a conclusion on.

First off, its important to note this is the only mention of the word "Israel" in the entire book of Galatians. So we can confidently state Paul is not writing the book of Galatians to establish a radically new definition of who or what Israel is. In proper exposition of the word, if we ever come to one difficult verse that we don't immediately understand the meaning of, it is simply an invitation into deeper study. We cannot take it out of context and then redefine all scripture written before it. (remember the interpretive key to understanding Paul's writings).

PAUL'S METHOD (1 COR 4:6)

- All of Paul's revelation comes from Old Testament Scripture
- No new revelation can nullify the old revelation
- A New revelation can only ADD to the Old if it still maintains the original meaning of the Old.

Lets start by defining what Paul means by "this rule":

(DO NOT READ)

Galatians 6:15–18 (ESV)

15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And as for **all who walk by this rule**, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

All who follow this rule:

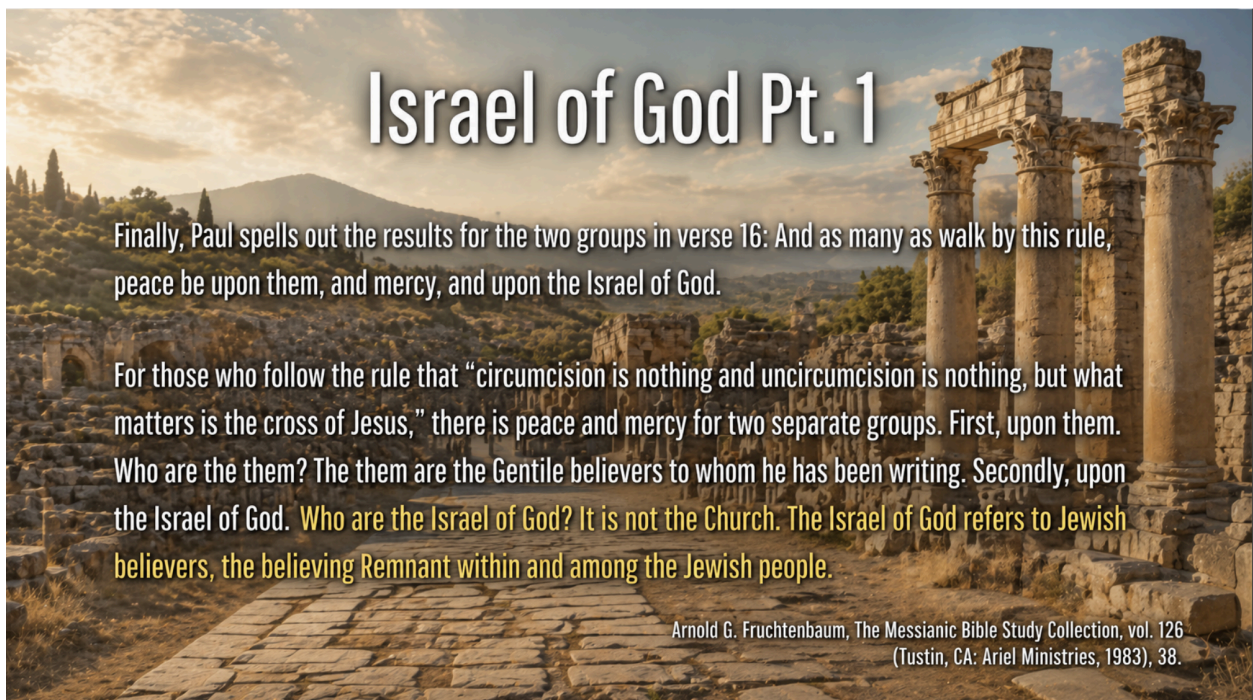
This refers to those who do not put value in circumcision or uncircumcision, but instead a new creation.

- new creation
- peace
- mercy
- walk by this rule
- Israel of God

This refers to those who do not put value in circumcision or uncircumcision, but instead a new creation. Concerning those who believe that—Paul says peace be upon THEM. He then uses a conjunction and distinguishes the 'them' from another group—the 'Israel of God'.

So we see two distinct parties in this text: *them* and *the Israel of God*. This begs the question: *who is the Israel of God?*

Let's look at some commentaries concerning this difficult question:



Israel of God Pt. 1

Finally, Paul spells out the results for the two groups in verse 16: And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

For those who follow the rule that “circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the cross of Jesus,” there is peace and mercy for two separate groups. First, upon them. Who are the them? The them are the Gentile believers to whom he has been writing. Secondly, upon the Israel of God. **Who are the Israel of God? It is not the Church. The Israel of God refers to Jewish believers, the believing Remnant within and among the Jewish people.**

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Bible Study Collection*, vol. 126
(Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1983), 38.



Israel of God Pt. 2

Given that Paul refers to “Israel according to the flesh” (1 Cor 10:18, my translation), the expression Israel of God could be understood as a way of **contrasting believing Israelites from ethnic Jews who do not believe**. As such it would connect with Paul’s train of thought in Romans 9–11, where Paul argues that “not all who are descended from Israel are Israel” (Rom 9:6). Furthermore, if Paul’s statement that “there is no ... male and female” does not eliminate gender distinctions, then the claim that “there is no Jew or Greek” does not automatically mean all distinctions between the two are eliminated. A final line of evidence is a possible parallel with the Jewish Benediction Shemoneh ‘Esreh, which, like Galatians 6:16, has the unusual order of peace and mercy. In such Jewish benedictions, there are always two distinct groups in view—one that receives peace and another that receives mercy.

Matthew S. Harmon, Galatians, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger,
Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), A64.



Israel of God Pt. 3

Furthermore, if Paul wanted to equate the two entities, there were more obvious ways to do it. Indeed, the word order may suggest that Paul issues two distinct blessings on two distinct groups.¹²⁵ A further indication that two groups may be in view is the repetition of the preposition ἐπί, which when repeated “normally distinguishes a second group from those serving as the object of the first instance of the preposition.” Thus while not decisive, on the whole the grammar seems to favor the view that **Paul refers to two distinct groups**.

Matthew S. Harmon, Galatians, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger,
Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 464.



Israel of God Pt. 4

So, there is peace and mercy upon two different groups of people who follow the rule that circumcision means nothing and uncircumcision means nothing, only a new creation is what counts. Peace and mercy upon the Gentile believers who follow this rule and upon the Jewish believers who follow this rule. **Never make the mistake of identifying the Israel of God with the Church or with Gentile believers as being some kind of new "spiritual Jews." This is nowhere taught in Scriptures.** There are two different groups in this verse separated by the word and: first, them, who are the Gentile believers and secondly, the Israel of God, who are the Jewish believers.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Bible Study Collection*,
vol. 126 (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1983), 38-39.

After surveying a multitude of commentaries, and much personal study over the last week, we can confidently say we do not believe "the Israel of God" here is referring to the Church at all

GALATIANS 6:16 – CLARITY OF THE RULE

Gal. 6:16	"Those Who Follow This Rule"	"Israel Of God"
 What	 Peace	 Mercy
 Who? (At Maximum)	 All Believers	 National Israel (The Entire Nation)
 Who? (At Minimum)	 All Believers	 Remnant

We believe that at a minimum it is referring to the believing remnant of Israel or even it could be referring to all of Israel as a whole. The second position is certainly intriguing when you consider Paul is extending MERCY in particular to the Israel of God.

Remember back to the foundation we laid for you and consider Ezekiel 39:25 again

- **Ezekiel 39:25 ESV**

25 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have **mercy** on the **whole house of Israel**, and I will be jealous for my holy name.

Ezekiel prophesies that mercy will be shown to the WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. Hosea also says God will be moved from anger to compassion, or mercy. Therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that Paul is saying *peace* to gentiles who believe, and *mercy* to the whole house of Israel.

For another example of this, look at Acts 15...

- **Acts 15:3 (LSB)**

3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, recounting in **detail the conversion of the Gentiles**, and were bringing great joy to all the brothers.

The gentiles are converted to the faith. Contrast this with the way that Paul speaks about the Jews...

- **Romans 11:14 (LSB)**

14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and **save some of them**.

The gentiles need to be converted, the Jews who are already under Adonai, need to be saved!

What is most important to walk away with is that we cannot flippantly toss around the name Israel and ascribe it to Gentiles. This may be surprising to many of you and *seemingly* problematic. But, we recommend instead that your position be the same as Paul himself when considering your place:

- **Ephesians 2:11–13 (NIV)**

¹¹ 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.

You are not a natural son, but somehow you are being treated like one. You are not a citizen of Israel, but yet you are being treated like you are. Boldly declaring as a Gentile that you are Israel is the quickest path to ensuring your life exasperates the Jewish people instead of making them jealous.

The quickest way to cause the Jewish people to become jealous will be to speak boldly of their destiny, while patiently teaching your gentile brothers in their ignorance, to carry the same faith of Abraham that in the face of impossible circumstance, the nation of Israel will become like the stars of heaven!

Moreover, taking the stance that the Church and Israel or Gentile Believers and Israel are synonymous creates massive problems when you read passages like Romans 11—consider this:

The Church ≠ Israel

Romans 11:25–31 (LSB)

25 For I do not want you, brothers, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to (THE CHURCH) until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

26 and so all (THE CHURCH) will be saved; just as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from (THE CHURCH).”

27 “And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

28 From the standpoint of the gospel (THE CHURCH) are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice (THE CHURCH) are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of (THE CHURCH'S) disobedience,

31 so (THE CHURCH) also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

There are many passages in Romans that you may be thinking of as we are speaking. We studied Romans about us much as we did Galatians this last week and we wanted to discuss it. Instead we assure you that when you lay the proper foundation you will find the message of Romans is completely in line with our conclusions today and the whole of Scripture.

There is no way to discuss every possible problematic passage in the Newer Testament with you today, and we hope you will implement this frame work we have talked about to arrive at responsible interpretations!

Closing:

In closing, we want to encourage you all with the movement we began with.

(READ SLIDE)



We went through A LOT of content, and we are confident that even if everything that was said today was not immediately digested—you will continue to be blessed by this teaching in the days to come. We hope that your conversations over lunch are spurred onto further discussion surrounding this topic! And that your convictions on this matter are becoming solidified and your confidence is growing!

Daniel 3:12–28 (NIV)

¹² But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

¹³ **Furious with rage**, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, ¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?”

- Standing with Israel will bring out the demons and the RAGE in people—expect it and make the conviction TODAY to stand with them.

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, **Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.**”

- We refuse to worship the graven image of a lying God who annuls his promises. We will only worship Adonai.

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, **and his attitude toward them changed.** He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?”

They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.”

25 He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

- "attitude changed"...huh
- Standing for the God of Israel will put you in the fire—but that's exactly where you want to be because its where the Lord is too.
- As things get more intense in regards to Israel, you can expect that the Lord will move in miraculous ways!

They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

- Just maybe standing with the most hated people in the world and standing in the fire with them will be the very thing that turns the most vile Gentiles into the boldest Evangelists.

Additional Reading for your Study:

The question then is, whether the argument of the apostle here drawn from the use of the singular word σπέρμα (*seed*), is one that can be seen to be sound? or is it a mere quibble, as Jerome and Le Clerc suppose? or is it to be left to be *presumed* to have had a force which we cannot now trace? for *this* is possible. Socrates and Plato may have used arguments of a subtle nature, based on some nice distinctions of words which were perfectly sound, but which we, from our necessary ignorance of the delicate shades of meaning in the language, cannot now understand. Perhaps the following remarks may show that there is *real* force and propriety in the position

which the apostle takes here. If not, then I confess my inability to explain the passage.

Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 341.

16. *Now to Abraham and his seed.* To him and his posterity.

Were the promises made. The promise here referred to was that which is recorded in Gen. 22:17, 18. “In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, &c. He does not use the plural term, as if the promise extended to many persons, but he speaks in the singular number, as if but one was intended; and that one must be the Messiah. Such is Paul’s interpretation; such is evidently the sentiment which he intends to convey, and the argument which he intends to urge. He designs evidently to be understood as affirming that in the use of the *singular* number σπέρμα (seed), instead of the plural σπέρματα (seeds), there is a fair ground of argument to demonstrate that the promise related to Christ or the Messiah, and to him primarily if not exclusively. Now no one ever probably read this passage without feeling a difficulty, and without asking himself whether this argument is sound, and is worthy a man of candour, and especially of an inspired man. Some of the difficulties in the passage are these. (1.) The promise referred to in Genesis seems to have related to the posterity of Abraham at large, without *any* particular reference to an individual. It is to his seed; his descendants; to all his seed or posterity. Such would be the fair and natural interpretation should it be read by hundreds or thousands of persons who had never heard of the interpretation here put upon it by Paul. (2.) The argument of the apostle seems to proceed on the supposition that the word “seed” (σπέρμα), *i.e.* posterity, here cannot refer to more than one person. If it had, says he, it would be in the plural number. But the fact is, that the word *is* often used to denote posterity at large; to refer to descendants without limitation, just as

the word posterity is with us; and it is a fact, moreover, that the word is not used in the plural at all to denote a posterity, the singular form being constantly employed for that purpose. Any one who will open Tromm's Concordance to the Septuagint, or Schmid's on the New Testament, will see the most ample confirmation of this remark. Indeed the *plural* form of the word is never used except in this place in Galatians. The difficulty, therefore, is, that the remark here of Paul appears to be a *trick* of argument, or a *quibble* more worthy of a trifling Jewish Rabbi, than of a grave reasoner or an inspired man. I have stated this difficulty freely, just as I suppose it has struck hundreds of minds, because I do not wish to shrink from any real difficulty in examining the Bible, but to see whether it can be fairly met. In meeting it, expositors have resorted to various explanations, most of them, as it seems to me, unsatisfactory, and it is not necessary to detail them. Bishop Burnet, Doddridge, and some others suppose that the apostle means to say that the promises made to Abraham were *not only* appropriated to one class of his descendants, that is, to those by Isaac, but that they centred in *one illustrious* person, through whom all the rest are made partakers of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. This Doddridge admits the apostle says in "*bad Greek*," but still he supposes that this is the true exposition. Noessett and Rosenmüller suppose that by the word σπέρμα (*seed*) here, is not meant the Messiah, but Christians in general; the body of believers. But this is evidently in contradiction of the apostle, who expressly affirms that Christ was intended. It is also liable to another objection that is fatal to the opinion. The very point of the argument of the apostle is, that the singular and not the plural form of the word is used, and that therefore an *individual*, and not a *collective body* or a number of individuals, is intended. But according to this interpretation the reference *is*, in fact, to a numerous body of individuals, to the whole body of Christians. Jerome affirms that the apostle made use of a false argument, which, although it might appear well enough to the stupid Galatians, would not be approved by wise or learned men.—*Chandler*. Borger endeavours to show that this was in accordance with the mode of speaking and writing among the Hebrews, and especially that the Jewish Rabbis were accustomed to draw an argument like this from *the singular number*, and that the Hebrew word (זרע) *seed* is often used by them in this manner; see

his remarks as quoted by Bloomfield *in loc.* But the objection to this is, that though this might be common, yet it is not the less a quibble on the word, for certainly the very puerile reasoning of the Jewish Rabbis is no good authority on which to vindicate the authority of an apostle. Locke and Clarke suppose that this refers to Christ as the spiritual head of the mystical body, and to all believers in him. Le Clerc supposes that it is an allegorical kind of argument, that was fitted to convince the Jews only, who were accustomed to this kind of reasoning. I do not know but this solution may be satisfactory to many minds, and that it is capable of vindication, since it is not easy to say how far it is proper to make use of methods of argument used by an adversary in order to convince them. The *argumentum ad hominem* is certainly allowable to a certain extent, when designed to show the legitimate tendency of the principles advanced by an opponent. But here there is no evidence that Paul was reasoning with an adversary. He was showing the Galatians, not the Jews, what was the truth, and justice to the character of the apostle requires us to suppose that he would make use of only such arguments as are in accordance with the eternal principles of truth, and such as may be seen to be true in all countries and at all times. The question then is, whether the argument of the apostle here drawn from the use of the singular word σπέρμα (*seed*), is one that can be seen to be sound? or is it a mere quibble, as Jerome and Le Clerc suppose? or is it to be left to be *presumed* to have had a force which we cannot now trace? for *this* is possible. Socrates and Plato may have used arguments of a subtile nature, based on some nice distinctions of words which were perfectly sound, but which we, from our necessary ignorance of the delicate shades of meaning in the language, cannot now understand. Perhaps the following remarks may show that there is *real* force and propriety in the position which the apostle takes here. If not, then I confess my inability to explain the passage. (1.) There can be no reasonable objection to the opinion that the promise originally made to Abraham *included* the Messiah, and the promised blessings were to descend through him. This is so often affirmed in the New Testament, that to deny it would be to deny the repeated declarations of the sacred writers, and to make war on the whole structure of the Bible; see particularly Rom. 4; comp. John 8:56. If this general principle be admitted, it will remove

much perplexity from the controversy. (2.) The promise made to Abraham (Gen. 22:18), “and in thy seed (בזרעך, Sept. ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου, where the words both in Heb. and in Gr. are in the singular number) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” cannot refer to *all* the seed or the posterity of Abraham taken collectively. He had two sons, Isaac by Rebecca, and Ishmael by Hagar, besides numerous descendants by Keturah; Gen. 25:1, seq. Through a large part of these no particular blessings descended on the human family, and there is no sense in which all the families of the earth are particularly blessed in them. On any supposition, therefore, there must have been *some* limitation of the promise; or the word “seed” was intended to include only *some* portion of his descendants, whether a particular branch, or an individual, does not yet appear. It must have referred to *a part* only of the posterity of Abraham, but to what part is to be learned only by subsequent revelations. (3.) It was the *intention* of God to confine the blessing to one branch of the family, to *Isaac* and his descendants. The *peculiar* promised blessing was to be through him, and not through the family of Ishmael. This intention is often expressed, Gen. 17:19–21; 21:12; 25:11; comp. Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18. Thus the original promise of a blessing through the posterity of Abraham became somewhat *narrowed down*, so as to show that there was to be a limitation of the promise to a particular portion of his posterity. (4.) If the promise had referred to the two branches of the family, if it had been intended to include Ishmael as well as Isaac, then some term would have been used that would have expressed this. So unlike were Isaac and Ishmael; so different in the circumstances of their birth and their future life; so dissimilar were the prophecies respecting them, that it might be said that their descendants were two races of men; and in scripture the race of Ishmael ceased to be spoken of as the descendants or the posterity of Abraham. There was a sense in which the posterity of Isaac was regarded as the seed or posterity of Abraham in which the descendants of Ishmael were not; and the term σπέρμα or “seed” therefore properly designated the posterity of Isaac. It might be said, then, that the promise “to thy seed” did not refer to the *two* races, as if he had said σπέρματα, “seeds,” but to *one*(σπέρμα), “the seed” of Abraham, by way of eminence. (5.) This promise was subsequently *narrowed down* still more, so as to include only one portion of the

descendants of Isaac. Thus it was limited to the posterity of *Jacob*, Esau being excluded; subsequently the peculiar blessing was promised to the family of *Judah*, one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Gen. 49:10); in subsequent times it was still further narrowed down or limited to the family of Jesse; then to that of David; then to that of Solomon, until it terminated in the Messiah. The original intention of the promise was that there *should be* a limitation, and that limitation was made from age to age, until it terminated in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. By being thus narrowed down from age to age, and limited by successive revelations, it was shown that the Messiah was eminently intended,—which is what Paul says here. The promise was indeed at first general, and the term used was of the most general nature; but it was shown from time to time that God *intended* that it should be applied only to one branch or portion of the family of Abraham; and that limitation was finally so made as to terminate in the Messiah. This I take to be the meaning of this very difficult passage of scripture; and though it may not be thought that *all* the perplexities are removed by these remarks, yet I trust they will be seen to be so far removed as that it will appear that there is real force in the argument of the apostle, and that it is not a mere trick of argument, or a quibble unworthy of him as an apostle and a man.

Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 339–342.

16. ‘Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed’.
and his seed] These words are emphatic. Had the promise been made to Abraham only, it would have determined with his own life. But it was the precious heritage of his descendants, not disannulled or superseded by the law given on Mount Sinai.
the promises] Used, as in Rom. 9:4, of that group of promises made to the patriarchs, which were regarded by their descendants as their title deeds to

the land of Israel and all the privileges of the chosen race. But *here* with special reference to Gen. 13:15, 17:7, 8. At first sight these two promises seem to refer only to the land. But they include far more. The chief blessing promised is contained in the words, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee ... and I will be their God." Comp. Heb. 11:16. It is interesting to notice how *this* promise was appropriated by the seed. On the Cross He cried, 'My God, My God.' After His resurrection He said, 'I ascend ... to My God, and your God'. *made*] Lit. '**spoken**', as in R.V. They were made orally, not, like the law, written on tables of stone.

He saith not] Rather, 'it (the promise) saith not'. It does not run, 'And to thy seeds', &c. This clause is parenthetical, illustrative of, but not necessary to the argument.

Exception has been taken to the emphasis which St Paul attaches to the use of the singular 'seed', on the ground that in the Hebrew the plural 'seeds' would not bear the sense which he seems to attribute to it, viz. several lines of descent. The same may be said of our own language, in which 'seeds' can only mean grains, or kinds of grain—not lines of human descent. But, without insisting on the fact that in Hellenistic Greek (which St Paul was writing), the plural, no less than the singular, is employed in the sense here required, we may observe that the import of the passage is not dependent on rigid conformity to linguistic usage. The Apostle pauses to point out, that, though the promise was given to Abraham's seed, yet it was restricted to one line. The descendants of Hagar and Keturah and the posterity of Esau were not included in the covenant. Similarly in Rom. 9:7, 8, we read, "Neither because they are a seed (i.e. one of the lines of descendants) of Abraham, are they all children, but (so ran the promise), In Isaac shall thy seed be called", i.e. the title of 'seed' *par excellence* to thee shall be in the line of Isaac.

but as of one] One line of descent, the spiritual seed, who are gathered up into and blessed in their One Head and Representative.

which is Christ] Which is Messiah. The seed to Whom the promise was made is the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), the second Adam, Who is at once the Saviour and the Head of the body. It is only as we are in Him,

united to Him by living faith, that we are in the bond of the covenant, the true seed of Abraham, heirs according to the promise, partakers of the blessing—justification, life, glory.

E. H. Perowne, [*The Epistle to the Galatians, Edited with Introduction and Notes*](#), The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), 37–38.

In verse 16, Paul then pronounces a blessing on members of the two groups who would follow this rule of salvation through faith alone. The first group is the *them*, the *uncircumcision*, the Gentile Christians to and of whom he had devoted most of the epistle. The second group is the *Israel of God*. These are the *circumcision*, the Jewish believers who, in contrast with the Judaizers, followed the rule of salvation by grace through faith alone. Covenant Theologians must ignore the primary meaning of *kai*, which separates the two groups in the verse, in order to make them both the same group.

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, former professor of Greek and New Testament Exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary, has done a detailed study of Galatians 6:16. In his introduction, Johnson makes the following observation:

In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, persistent support remains for the contention that the term *Israel* may refer properly to Gentile believers in the present age ... the primary support is found in Galatians 6:16 ...

I cannot help but think that dogmatic considerations loom large in the interpretation of Galatians 6:16. The tenacity with which this application of “the Israel of God” to the church is held in spite of a mass of evidence to the contrary leads one to think that the supporters of the view believe their eschatological system, usually an amillennial scheme, hangs on the reference of the term to the people of God, composed of both believing Jews and Gentiles. Amillennialism does

not hang on this interpretation, but the view does appear to have a treasured place in amillennial exegesis.

In speaking of the view that the term refers to ethnic *Israel*, a sense that the term Israel has in every other of its more than sixty-five uses in the NT and in its fifteen uses in Paul, in tones almost emotional William Hendriksen, the respected Reformed commentator, writes, "I refuse to accept that explanation." ...

What I am leading up to is expressed neatly by D. W. B. Robinson in an article written about twenty years ago: "The glib citing of Gal. 5:16 to support the view that 'the church is the new Israel' should be vigorously challenged. There is weighty support for a limited interpretation." We can say more than this, in my opinion. There is more than weighty support for a more limited interpretation. There is overwhelming support for such. In fact, the least likely view among several alternatives is the view that "the Israel of God" is the church.

Johnson presents three views concerning this verse. Only the first insists that the *Israel of God* is the Church as a whole while the other two limit it to Jewish believers. The first view is described as follows:

The first is the claim that "the Israel of God" is simply a term descriptive of the believing church of the present age ... The Israel of God is the body who shall walk by the rule of the new creation, and they include believing people from the two ethnic bodies of Jews and Gentiles.

The basis for the first view is:

The list of names supporting this view is impressive, although the bases of the interpretation are few and feeble, namely, the claim that the *kai* ... before the term "the Israel of God" is an explicative or appositional *kai*; ... and the claim that if one sees the term "the Israel of God" as a believing ethnic Israel, they would be included in the preceding clause, "And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them."

Johnson rejects this view on three grounds. The first is for grammatical and syntactical reasons for which there are two. The first is that this view must resort to a secondary or lesser meaning of *kai*:

It is necessary to begin this part of the discussion with a reminder of a basic, but often neglected, hermeneutical principle. It is this: in the absence of compelling exegetical and theological considerations, we should avoid the rarer grammatical usages when the common ones make good sense.

Because the latter usage serves well the view that the term “the Israel of God” is the church, the dogmatic concern overcame grammatical usage. An extremely rare usage has been made to replace the common usage, even in spite of the fact that the common and frequent usage of *and* makes perfectly good sense in Galatians 6:16.

Second, Johnson points out that if Paul’s intention was to identify the *them* as being the *Israel of God*, then the best way of showing this was to eliminate the *kai* altogether. [...] The very presence of the *kai* argues against the *them* being the *Israel of God*. As Johnson notes, “Paul, however, did not eliminate the *kai*.”

The second ground for rejecting this view is for exegetical considerations, which deals with context and usage. Concerning usage, Johnson states:

From the standpoint of biblical usage this view stands condemned. There is no instance in biblical literature of the term *Israel* being used in the sense of the church, or the people of God as composed of both believing ethnic Jews and Gentiles. Nor, on the other hand, as one might expect if there were such usage, does the phrase *ta ethné* (KJV, “the Gentiles”) ever mean the non-Christian world specifically, but only the non-Jewish peoples, although such are generally non-Christians. Thus, the usage of the term *Israel* stands overwhelmingly opposed to the first view.

The usage of the terms *Israel* and *the church* in the early chapters of the book of Acts is in complete harmony, for Israel exists there alongside the newly formed church, and the two entities are kept separate in terminology.

For those who would cite Romans 9:6 as evidence, Johnson shows that this verse is no support for such a view, for the distinction is between Jews who believe and Jews who do not:

Paul is here speaking only of a division within ethnic Israel. Some of them are believers and thus truly Israel, whereas others, though ethnically Israelites, are not truly Israel, since they are not elect and believing ... No Gentiles are found in the statement at all.

Even many Covenant Theologians have agreed with this view of Romans 9:6 and do not use it to support their view of Galatians 6:16. As for context, Johnson observes:

On the contrary, the apostle is concerned with correcting the gospel preached to the Galatians by the Judaizers, particularly their false contention that it was necessary to be circumcised to be saved and to observe as Christians certain requirements of the Law of Moses in order to remain in divine favor ... The apostle makes no attempt whatsoever to deny that there is a legitimate distinction of race between Gentile and Jewish believers in the church.... There is a remnant of Jewish believers in the church according to the election of grace.... This approach fails to see that Paul does not say there is neither Jew nor Greek within the church. He speaks of those who are "in Christ." ... But Paul also says there is neither male nor female, nor slave nor free man in Christ. Would he then deny sexual differences within the church? Or the social differences in Paul's day? Is it not plain that Paul is not speaking of national or ethnic difference in Christ, but of spiritual status? In that sense there is no difference in Christ.

The third ground for rejecting this view is theological:

... no historical evidence points to that the term *Israel* being identified with the church before A. D. 160. Further, at that date there was no characterization of the church as "the Israel of God." In other words, for more than a century after Paul there was no evidence of the identification.

Johnson's summary concerning the rejection of the first view is:

To conclude the discussion of the first interpretation, it seems clear that there is little evidence—grammatical, exegetical, or theological—that supports it. On the other hand, there is sound historical evidence against the identification of *Israel* with believing or unbelieving

Gentiles. The grammatical usage of *kai* is not favorable to the view, nor is the Pauline or NT usage of *Israel*. Finally, ... the Pauline teaching in Galatians contains a recognition of national distinctions in the one people of God.

The second view is that the *Israel of God* is the believing Jewish remnant within the Church. This is Johnson's own view and is the common dispensational view. Johnson describes this view as follows:

The second of the important interpretations of Galatians 6:16 and "the Israel of God" is the view that the words refer simply to believing ethnic Israelites in the Christian church. Does not Paul speak of himself as an Israelite (cf. Rom. 11:1)? And does not the apostle also speak of "a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (cf. 11:5), words that plainly in the context refer to believing Israelites? What more fitting thing could Paul write, it is said, in a work so strongly attacking Jewish professing believers, the Judaizers, than to make it most plain that he was not attacking the true believing Jews? Judaizers are anathematized, but the remnant according to the election of grace are "the Israel of God." ...

Perhaps this expression, "the Israel of God," contrasts with his expression in 1 Corinthians 10:18, "Israel after the flesh" (KJV), as the true, believing Israel versus the unbelieving element, just as in Romans 9:6, the apostle distinguishes two Israels, one elect and believing, the other unbelieving, but both ethnic Israelites (cf. [Romans 9] vv. 7–13).

Johnson supports this view on the same three grounds that he rejected the first view. On grammatical and syntactical grounds, Johnson states that "there are no grammatical, or syntactical considerations that would be contrary" to this view and, furthermore, the "common sense of *kai* as continuative, or copulative is followed." In other words, it uses the primary meaning of *kai*.

On exegetical grounds Johnson states:

Exegetically the view is sound, since "Israel" has its uniform Pauline ethnic sense. And further, the apostle achieves a very striking climactic conclusion. Drawing near the end of his "battle-epistle" with its harsh

and forceful attack on the Judaists and its omission of the customary words of thanksgiving, Paul tempers his language with a special blessing for those faithful believing Israelites who, understanding the grace of God and its exclusion of any human works as the ground of redemption, had not succumbed to the subtle blandishments of the deceptive Judaizers. They, not the false men from Jerusalem, are “the Israel of God,” or, as he calls them elsewhere, “the remnant according to the election of grace” (cf. Rom. 11:5).

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [Faith Alone: The Condition of Our Salvation: An Exposition of the Book of Galatians and Other Relevant Topics](#), ed. Christiane Jurik, Second Edition (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2016), 61–68.

Finally, Paul spells out the results for the two groups in verse 16: *And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

For those who follow the rule that “circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the cross of Jesus,” there is *peace* and *mercy* for two separate groups. First, upon *them*. Who are the *them*? The *them* are the Gentile believers to whom he has been writing. Secondly, upon the *Israel of God*. Who are *the Israel of God*? It is not the Church. The *Israel of God* refers to Jewish believers, the believing Remnant within and among the Jewish people.

So, there is *peace* and *mercy* upon two different groups of people who follow the rule that circumcision means nothing and uncircumcision means nothing, only a new creation is what counts. *Peace* and *mercy* upon the Gentile believers who follow this rule and upon the Jewish believers who follow this rule. Never make the mistake of identifying *the Israel of God* with the Church or with Gentile believers as being some kind of new “spiritual

Jews.” This is nowhere taught in Scriptures. There are two different groups in this verse separated by the word and: first, them, who are the Gentile believers and secondly, *the Israel of God*, who are the Jewish believers.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Messianic Bible Study Collection](#), vol. 126 (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1983), 38–39.
