

# The Church In God's Eternal Plan

## When Did the Church Begin?

- The Historical Debate
  - With Adam
  - With Abraham
  - With Christ
    - The call of the first disciples
    - The Confession of Peter in Matt. 16
    - The Last Supper, which established a New Covenant
    - The united belief of the Apostles in the Resurrection
  - With Pentecost
  - With Paul

## When Did the Church Begin?

- The Biblical Data
  - Matt. 16:18
  - Rock on which the church is built:
    - 1) Peter (17 early church fathers); all the apostles (8 early church fathers)
    - 2) Christ (16 early church fathers)
    - 3) Peter's confession (44 early church fathers)
  - Three conclusions:
    - The church was still future when Christ spoke these words: "I will build"
    - The church is distinct from but related to the Kingdom of God (16:19).
    - The church is distinct from the nation of Israel.

## When Did the Church Begin?

- The Biblical Data
  - Matt. 16:18
  - Eph. 1:20-23
  - Eph. 2:14-16
  - Eph. 3:5-6
  - Eph. 4:7-12
  - 1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

## What Is the Relationship Between Israel & the Church?

- Three primary positions:
  - Covenantalism
    - Their views
      - a) The entire nation of Israel = the OT church
      - b) The true believers in Israel = the OT church
    - Their defense
      - The name assembly or congregation is given to Israel in the OT; the LXX uses *ekklesia* (Josh. 8:35; Ezra 2:65; Joel 2:16).
      - The NT church is called the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22).
      - Not only does Jesus promise to build the church in the future (Matt. 16:18), but he recognized it as already existing (Matt. 18:17).
      - Stephen refers to Israel as "the *ekklesia* in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38).
      - Paul equates the OT and the church (Rom. 11:17-21; Eph. 2:11-16).

## What Is the Relationship Between Israel & the Church?

- Three primary positions:
  - Covenantalism
  - Traditional or Classic Dispensationalism
    - John Nelson Darby (Plymouth Brethren), C. I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie
    - Traditional Dispensationalism taught that God has two completely distinct purposes in human history: one for the earth through Israel and a second for heaven through the church.
      - Chafer: "the dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity."

## What Is the Relationship Between Israel & the Church?

- Three primary positions:
  - Covenantalism
  - Traditional or Classic Dispensationalism
    - Two distinct ways of salvation:
      - *Scotfield Reference Bible*, in its note on 1 John 3:7: "The righteous man under law became righteous by doing righteously; under grace he does righteously because he has been made righteous (Rom. 3:22; Rom. 10:3, *note*)."
      - Commenting on the petition in the Lord's Prayer to "forgive us our debts" *Scotfield* states, "This is legal ground. Cf. Eph. 4:32, which is grace. Under law forgiveness is conditioned upon a like spirit in us; under grace we are forgiven for Christ's sake, and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven. See Mt. 18:32; 26:28, *note*."
    - Two compartments in eternity
      - For some, in eternity Israel will occupy the new earth and the church will occupy the heavenly Jerusalem.
      - For others, like Ryrie, both Israel and the church will share the heavenly Jerusalem in eternity.

## What Is the Relationship Between Israel & the Church?

- Three primary positions:
  - Covenantalism
  - Traditional or Classic Dispensationalism
  - Progressive Dispensationalism
    - Robert Saucy: *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*

## Great Similarities

- Both contain the true people of God.
- Both OT Israel and the NT church are saved by the work of Christ.
  - **Rom 1:1-2** Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures.
- Both appropriate the salvation accomplished by Christ in the same way—by faith alone.
  - **Rom 3:21** But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

## Great Similarities

- Both benefited from the work of the Spirit.
  - Regeneration
  - Sanctification
  - Abiding Presence

## Great Similarities

- Both were assigned the same responsibility—to be a witness nation.
  - Israel:
    - **Ex. 19:5-6** "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine, and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.
  - The Church:
    - **1 Peter 2:5** you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
    - **Rev. 1:6** and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
    - **Rev. 5:10** "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

## Great Similarities

- Both are beneficiaries of the New Covenant.
  - Israel
    - Jer. 31:31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.
  - The church
    - **1 Cor. 11:25** In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood."
    - **2 Cor. 3:6** who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant.
    - **Heb. 8:6-8** Jesus is the mediator of a "better covenant...new covenant."