

**The Israel of God**  
**Titles of The Church (5)**  
**Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan**

**The Church is The Spiritual Israel of God**

<sup>NAU</sup> **Galatians 6:16** <sup>16</sup> And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

Apostle Paul is talking to the brethren of the Galatian church, he says, “peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.” He calls the Galatian church the Israel of God!

The first question that comes to our mind is: Why is the church called the Israel of God? We are not Jews. Some people may argue that Paul doesn’t say specifically the church is the Israel of God, he only says peace and mercy upon the Israel of God. Let’s look at more passages.

**Circumcision is The Sign of Covenant between God and Abraham**

<sup>NAU</sup> **Genesis 17:10 – 14** <sup>10</sup> “This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup> “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a *servant* who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. <sup>13</sup> “A *servant* who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall my covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup> “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

Every male in Abraham’s household, including the servant who is born in his household or who is bought has to be circumcised. Verse 14 says any male who is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people, that means he is not considered as one of Abraham’s descendants.

If a person is not circumcised, even though he is born of a Jewish family, he is not considered as a Jew. Circumcision is the mark of a Jew.

**We Are The Circumcision**

<sup>NAU</sup> **Philippians 3:3** <sup>3</sup> for we are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

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Paul says to the Christians of the Philippian church: “we are the circumcision.” Why are we the circumcision? Most Christians are not circumcised!

<sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 2:28** <sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. <sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

This verse brings out 3 points:

- Circumcision in the flesh is not true circumcision.
- A person is not a Jew if he is only circumcised in the flesh but not circumcised in the heart.
- A Jew is one who is circumcised of the heart by the Holy Spirit.

This leads to the question: When are Christians circumcised by the Holy Spirit?

<sup>NAU</sup> **Colossians 2:11 – 12** <sup>11</sup>and in him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

- True circumcision is made without hands, that means not by the human hands, but by God Himself.
- True circumcision is the removal of the flesh, that means true circumcision is putting the flesh to death.
- True circumcision is done at the baptism, that means at the baptism our flesh is put to death. Our baptism is our true circumcision.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 6:3 – 4** <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

At the baptism we were baptized into Christ’s death (that means we died with Christ), we were buried with Christ, then we were raised up with Christ and we walk in the new life with Christ.

Since our baptism is our true circumcision, therefore we are spiritual Jews, the church is the spiritual Israel of God!

### **Our Blessing and Our Responsibility**

Since we are the spiritual Jews, the blessings for the Jews are transferred to us. We are the chosen people of God, we are the heirs to the Kingdom of God. With our blessing comes our responsibility.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 49:6** <sup>6</sup> 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 preserved 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.”

Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet, he was living around 700 years before the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yahweh God wants all men to be saved. He starts His salvation plan with a group of people, namely Abraham’s descendants, Christ the Messiah comes from Abraham. God leads Abraham’s descendants and teaches them through the statutes that He gives them.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Deuteronomy 4:6** <sup>6</sup> “So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” “

God’s plan was that when Israelites live by His statutes, they would be very different from the other nations on earth, they would become a light in the world. The other nations living in darkness would see this light and be drawn to it, then they would also learn God’s statutes and follow Him. In this way Israel would bring the salvation of God to the ends of the earth.

Because of rebellion against God, Israel couldn’t fulfill her responsibility. At the end Israel was wiped out as a nation. By the time of the Lord Jesus, Israel was reduced to be just a colony of the Roman Empire.

Now in the New Testament, Christians are the spiritual Israel of God, the responsibility for Israel has been passed to us. That’s why the Lord Jesus says, “You are the light of the world.” We are to be a light for the Gentiles. Here Gentiles are those who don’t believe in Yahweh God

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and the Lord Jesus Christ. The church takes up the responsibility of bringing the salvation to all nations.

### **Conclusion**

We can see God's heart in His salvation plan. We are saved so that we can save others. We are given this big task, that is a privilege. Throughout history God has been actively working to save the world through the Israel of God.