

## **Is Israel really the People of Adonai Elohim?**

I am having difficulty believing that in 2014 we are still debating the idea Israel is God's Chosen People and that Israel is God's elect. Just the other day, I had a discussion on this very topic and the specter of Replacement Theology raised its ugly head once more.

**Abba Father, why is there such arrogance and pride with the Body of Messiah, arrogance and pride drawing many of your children away from the truth of your relationship with Israel? I understand much of this belief in replacement theology is through ignorance and false teaching; however, it points out a striking understanding, many believers do not think for themselves but rely on their teachers, their pastors, their leaders to do their thinking for them. Help us, please, to hear Your Word clearly and to understand how much you love Israel, both natural and grafted-in branches. In Your Beloved Name, I pray.**

To draw towards an understanding of the issue, we need to have a grasp of first principles, namely, Adonai Elohim called Israel to be His early in the narrative. We go first to Genesis 12, where Adonai Tzivaot informs Avram, *Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed.* (Genesis 12:1-3) There are three important promises made by Adonai Elohim in this covenant with Avram; first, Avram is told he will be the progenitor of a great nation. Second, HaShem tells Avram He will bless this man who will be the father of Israel and that in doing so, Avraham

himself will be a blessing. Then Adonai Elohim exclaims those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse His people will be cursed. Then, in verse 3 we discover the hidden blessing of His covenant with Avram - *by you all the families of the earth will be blessed*. As I have shared with you before, and it seems there is a need for reiteration, the word usually used for blessing is בִּרְכָה, bracha. In this verse, however, the word used is נִוְרַח, nivrachu, meaning, at its root, intermingled and grafted in. Here, in this treasure of blessing, is the future of Israel up to this day: first, God's children would be intermingled with the nations of the earth, their purpose being to share Torah with the nations. Second, those of the nations who turned to Adonai Elohim Tzivaot and accepted His Word as Truth, would be grafted into Israel. I'll deal with this concept shortly. This declaration by Our Almighty God clearly sets the stage for understanding His choosing Israel as His own.

In Exodus 19, we find Adonai directing Moshe to tell the Israelites, *You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine.* (Exodus 19:4,5) In these verses we read quite clearly of HaShem's choosing Israel out of all the nations of the earth to be His prized possession. We see this claim of ownership repeated in Deuteronomy 7: *For you are a people set apart as holy for ADONAI your God.* (Deuteronomy 7:6) Not only do we read of the fact Israel has been made kadosh, holy or set-apart, we are given the understanding of HaShem's high expectations of Israel. This comes to us in the phrase *a people set apart as holy for ADONAI your God*. Given holy

means set-apart, the repetition of holy, kadosh, in this phrase accentuates the nature of the set-apart nature of our relationship with Adonai Elohim. This now becomes more than a physical separation from the world, it is a spiritual separation. One of the more important aspects of the covenant relationship between Adonai Tzivaot and Israel is that Israel's permanence as His chosen people is was not, is not and will not be dependent on Israel's behaviour. If it was, as we have seen through the ages, Israel would no longer exist. No, Adonai's action alone establishes Israel's permanence. Israel is Adonai's people irrespective of their obedience and disobedience. We find this in Deuteronomy 32, *Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Abba who has bought you? He has made you and established you.* (Deuteronomy 32:6) The language used here is quite explicit. First, He has bought Israel, purchased His chosen people through the Lamb, who was slain before the beginning of the universe, as we read in Revelation 13:8. Second, Abba, the Ruler of the universe, established Israel as His. The root of the word used in the Hebrew for established, in Deuteronomy 32:6, כּוּן, kun, carries with it the same sense of immutability as Adonai Himself has, as one of His defining characteristics. Thus, as a loving father never abandons his children, no matter how they may rebel against him, יְהוָה דִּרְשׁ, Adonai Diresh, The God who cares, made an everlasting promise He would never abandon His Chosen People. Let's be very clear at this point; there is a distinction between being Adonai's Chosen People and being saved. Being God's Chosen People is not automatic salvation for the Jewish People. Unfortunately this misunderstanding has led many in the Body to conclude there is no need to share the Gospel to Jewish People, because they are saved, by being His Chosen People. I'll deal a bit more with that shortly.

We travel in time several hundred years to the time of King David, who, in one of his immortal pieces of divinely-inspired poetry, asserts, *For Yah chose Ya'akov for himself, Isra'el as his own unique treasure.* (Psalm 135: 4) Here, then, qualifies Adonai Tzivaot's perception of Israel as a *unique treasure*, something quite precious, one of a kind and never duplicated. A few years later, Solomon, David's son, in the wisdom given to him by HaShem, makes the declaration, *For you made a distinction between them and all the peoples of the earth by making them your inheritance, as you said through Moshe your servant when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt, Adonai ELOHIM.* (1 Kings 8:53) Here we see another important piece of information being introduced, the concept of Israel being HaShem's inheritance, His endowment to the world. Take this idea into your hearts, for an endowment is a promise, usually of great value, given to another as a sign of love or respect. For this knowledge to remain intact for some many years, and by two strong and powerful kings of Israel, bears witness to its truth.

Our next piece of the uniqueness of Israel in Adonai Elohim's heart and plans may be found in both Torah and the Prophets – Israel's redemption from Egypt. In Exodus 6, Adonai Tzivaot tells Moshe, *Therefore, say to the people of Isra'el: 'I am ADONAI. I will free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians, rescue you from their oppression, and redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am ADONAI your God, who freed you from the forced labor of the Egyptians.* (Exodus 6:6,7) This is the effort Adonai Elohim put into the preservation of His people or they might have perished. Indeed, it is illogical, statistically that we have survived as a unique people, even one with our own

genetic marker, given the relatively small number of Jewish people around the world today compared with other nations,. And we read in 2nd Samuel 7, *Therefore, you are great, ADONAI, God; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you — everything we have heard confirms that. Who can be compared with your people, with Isra'el? What other nation on earth did God set out to redeem and make into a people for himself? . . . . You set up your people for yourself as your people forever; and you, ADONAI, became their God.* (2 Samuel 7:22-24) Thus we know, from the Hebrew Scriptures, Israel was chosen to be God's people, not for their being the greatest, mightiest nation on earth. On the contrary, Israel was chosen by Adonai Elohim Tzivaot specifically because *you were the fewest of all peoples. Rather, it was because ADONAI loved you, and because he wanted to keep the oath which he had sworn to your ancestors, that ADONAI brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from a life of slavery under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.* (Deuteronomy 7:7,8) Adonai chooses whom He chooses and showers His grace and blessings upon whom He chooses. Legend of the Talmud informs us Adonai offered the Torah, His Life Instructions, to other nations but they refused. However, an equally enticing legend states Adonai offered the Torah to Israel precisely because of their lowly stature, so their success as a nation would be attributed to Him, rather than to anything Israel itself did. Frankly, I find this a more appealing rationale, since God's Shekinah will be seen through everything He does.

Then, we read of Adonai creating a covenantal relationship with Israel, an eternal promise, one that would and could never be broken, or God is not whom He claims to Be. We read of this relationship in Exodus 24, *Moshe came and told*

*the people everything ADONAI had said, including all the rulings. The people answered with one voice: "We will obey every word ADONAI has spoken." . . . Moshe took the blood (of the sacrifice), sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which ADONAI has made with you in accordance with all these words."* (Exodus 24:3, 8) How do we know the covenant made between Adonai and Israel at Mt. Sinai is eternal? Does Rabbi Sha'ul count as a reliable observer of Adonai's covenants? I believe he does and, as an apostle, I conclude he has the credentials to make a qualifying assessment of the Mosaic Covenant, when he states, in Galatians 3: *Here is what I am saying: the legal part of the Torah, which came into being 430 years later, does not nullify an oath sworn by God, so as to abolish the promise. For if the inheritance comes from the legal part of the Torah, it no longer comes from a promise. But God gave it to Avraham through a promise.* (Galatians 3:17,18) Agreeing with Rav Sha'ul, Dr. William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament, the Master's Seminary, states, *no covenant superseded or nullified any previous covenant. Each covenant advanced the previous without abrogating it. This is part and parcel of the process of progressive revelation. Thus, when the Mosaic Covenant was established at Mt. Sinai, it did not nullify the Abrahamic Covenant.*

Well, having developed the idea Israel is Adonai's Chosen People from the Hebrew Scriptures, is this theme consistent in the Apostolic Scriptures? I've already shared Rav Sha'ul's comments about the Mosaic Covenant, found in Galatians 3; he continues to make this connection very clearly, in Romans 11, when he emphatically claims, *In that case, I say, isn't it that God has repudiated his people? Heaven forbid! For I myself am a son of Isra'el, from the seed of*

*Avraham, of the tribe of Binyamin. God has not repudiated his people, whom he chose in advance. (Romans 11:1,2)*

Are there other Apostles who support God's choice of Israel as His people? The Apostle Peter, in 1 Peter 2, declares Israel to be Adonai's chosen people, as he writes, *But you are a chosen people, the King's cohanim, a holy nation, a people for God to possess! Why? In order for you to declare the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)* From both Sha'ul and Peter's writings emerges a most intriguing question, who now is Israel? Is there a difference between the "Church" and the Jewish people?

Dispensationalists would say there clearly is and they would assert Jews will be saved by virtue of their being in a covenant relationship with Adonai, through the Avrahamic Covenant. The Church, then, is composed of only Gentile believers and Jewish believers who have renounced their Judaism. This dual covenant theology is not only false and heretical, it is also anti-Semitic, since it denies the Jewish people an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

This false doctrine is also shared by those who claim the Church has replaced the Jewish people as the New Israel and the Gentile Body of Messiah as God's chosen people. How egocentric and arrogant is that belief? Well, if there is a new Spiritual Israel, who comprises it?

Once again we go to Rav Sha'ul who, in Romans 11, clearly outlines the constituents of Israel: *Now if the hallah offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole loaf. And if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you — a wild olive — were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree. (Romans 11:16,17)* In Romans 11, Rav Sha'ul develops his Olive Tree Theology, bringing Jews and

Gentiles together, as One-New Man (Ephesians 2:15). Does this mean Gentiles, who are drawn to Adonai and accept His salvation, become Jewish, as many gentiles believe? This is an extremely important question. I contend, with scriptural support, there is a separate role for Gentile Believers than for Jewish Believers. Where is this shown? In Exodus 19, Adonai shares with Moshe the plans He has for His people, Israel - *Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.* (Exodus 19:5,6) The Jewish people, then, are to be priests to the nations, bringing Torah throughout the world, which they have done through the many exiles my people have endured, exiles which carry on to this day. Unfortunately, more than 75% of Jewish people today do not believe in God and of the 25% who do, fully 24.9% believe the way to salvation is to keep Torah and do good works. That leaves a remnant of 0.1% to carry His word of salvation to the nations and we do this throughout the world.

Sha'ul writes about the role of Gentile believers, in Romans 11: *it is by means of their stumbling that the deliverance has come to the Gentiles, in order to **provoke them to jealousy.*** (Romans 11:11) This sentiment was first raised in Deuteronomy 32, where Moshe writes of Adonai making the claim, *They (Jewish People) aroused my jealousy with a non-god and provoked me with their vanities; I will arouse their jealousy with a non-people (Gentiles) and provoke them with a vile nation* (Assyria, Babylon and Romans). In the Tanakh, the term 'nations', in Hebrew גוֹיִם, goyim, means Gentiles, not Jews. We read of the nations coming to Jerusalem to worship Adonai, during the Millennial Reign, in Zechariah 14, *Finally, everyone*



*remaining from all the nations that came to attack Yerushalayim will go up every year to worship the king, ADONAI-Tzva'ot, and to keep the festival of Sukkot.*

(Zechariah 14:16) With only Jews around the world, where would the Gentiles be to come up to Jerusalem each year?

Rav Sha'ul draws an interesting assertion from his discussion of the Olive Tree metaphor. In Romans 11, Sha'ul warns Gentile believers, *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you — a wild olive — were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree, then don't boast as if you were better than the branches.* (Romans 11:17,18) How often I have seen Gentile believers criticising Jewish believers for doing or not doing something, which they believe is not biblical, without really understanding what Scripture is saying. The thorns of arrogance are, unfortunately, firmly rooted in the heart. Sha'ul continues, *However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you.* (Romans 11:18) With this teaching, Rav Sha'ul is warning Gentile believers, who are tempted to replace Jewish believers as the true people of Adonai Elohim, both Jewish and Gentile believers are fed by the same root and, as such, are subject to the same scrutiny from Ruach HaKadosh, the Holy Spirit. Failure to remember this important teaching may result in being pruned from the Tree of Life, as Sha'ul writes in verses 20 and 21: *So don't be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified! For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won't spare you!* (Romans 11:20, 21) I wonder how many of His children truly understand the import of these words. Do they truly comprehend the awesome consequences of holding the position that the Jewish people, His chosen people, are irrelevant to the plans of Adonai Tzivaot? Do they

really suppose the Apostle Paul was making this up? We can only ask for Adonai Yeshua's mercies on those who cling to the myth, the arrogance of replacement theology.

However, Rav Sha'ul makes it abundantly clear, in Romans 9, *But the present condition of Isra'el does not mean that the Word of God has failed.* (Romans 9:6) Indeed, further into Romans 9, Sha'ul begins to clarify his position, developed for him by the Holy Spirit, *indeed, not all the descendants are seed of Avraham; rather, "What is to be called your 'seed' will be in Yitz'chak."* (Romans 9:7) In verse 8, we begin to see more clearly, whom Rav Sha'ul considers Israel, *In other words, it is not the physical children who are children of God, but the children the promise refers to who are considered seed.* And just who constitute the Seed of the Promise? In the first instance, of course, the Seed of the Promise is Adonai Yeshua, who being the very nature of Adonai Elohim, brings as many as would turn from their wickedness and embrace Adonai's Life Instructions, as taught both in Torah and by our Living Torah, to Abba B'Shamayim. And then, the seed of the promise is both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. Listen to how Peter explains this in Acts 15, *God chose me from among you to be the one by whose mouth the Goyim should hear the message of the Good News and come to trust. And God, who knows the heart, bore them witness by giving the Ruach HaKadosh to them, just as he did to us; that is, he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their heart by trust.* (Acts 15:7-9) Do you hear how this statement is congruent with Rav Sha'ul's comment about the One New Man: *by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to*

*Adonai Elohim in one body through the execution stake, thereby killing the hostility.* (Ephesians 2:15)

O.K. time to bring this message home. What personal message from Adonai Elohim Tzivaot will you be taking away with you today? Are you certain within your own heart Spiritual Israel is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles? Beloved, do you understand the importance of the concept of a circumcised heart? Where do you stand this very moment in the Heart of our beloved Abba?

Abba, Father, we are so grateful you have brought us together, Jew and Gentile, held tightly in grace and love which flows freely from Your heart; I pray each one of us understands the imperative to have a circumcised heart. May our behaviours truly reflect the transformation you have caused within us. In Your precious Name we pray.