

The New Israel is the Church

By Jesse Romero M.A.

The Holy Bible in the New Testament makes no distinction between the Kingdom of Israel and the Church. In fact, the New Testament specifically says that Israel is the Church and vice versa. We will explore that further below. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) likewise teaches that the Catholic Church is quite literally the “New Israel.”

*Likewise, it belongs to the sacramental nature of ecclesial ministry that it have a collegial character. In fact, from the beginning of his ministry, **the Lord Jesus instituted the Twelve as “the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy.” Chosen together, they were also sent out together, and their fraternal unity would be at the service of the fraternal communion of all the faithful: they would reflect and witness to the communion of the divine persons. For this reason every bishop exercises his ministry from within the episcopal college, in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and head of the college. So also priests exercise their ministry from within the presbyterium of the diocese, under the direction of their bishop.***

Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 877

Now with that said, let’s look at what the Scriptures actually say about the relationship between Israel and the Church. Jesus said the Kingdom of God is NOW, not some distant future thing. To those who would listen, Jesus said:

“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17

To the priests, scribes and elders of Israel, Jesus said: *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you (Jews) and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” Matthew 21:43*

To his disciples, Jesus said: *“Do not fear, little flock, for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Luke 12:32*

Galatians 6:13-16 (DR) ‘For neither they themselves who are circumcised, keep the law; but they will have you to be circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.’

*In Galatians 6:13-16, St. Paul confronts Judaizers who hypocritically impose circumcision on Gentiles while failing to keep the Law themselves, seeking only to boast in others' conformity. He contrasts this with his sole boast in **the Cross of Christ**, which crucifies the world to believers and them to it. Neither circumcision (being a Jew) nor uncircumcision (being a Gentile) matters; only **a new creature** in Christ avails (this happens at baptism). Those following this **rule** (of the New Covenant) receive peace, mercy, and are identified as the true **Israel of God (the Catholic Church)**. Early Church Fathers like Origen and John Chrysostom emphasize the transformative power of the Cross, which renders worldly distinctions irrelevant and inaugurates a new creation through faith and baptism, elevating believers above the Old Covenant to the New Israel.*

The following are Scripture references that back this point. They are certainly not all the Scripture passages that can be found, but rather a good cross section of them. The Bible plainly teaches that the Church is Israel....

WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT?

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- **The OT in Jeremiah 31:31-33 says the New Covenant is with Israel.**
 - **Scripture says New Covenant in Luke 22:20, 1 Cor 11:25, 2 Cor 3:6, Heb 8:6-10 is with the Christians who are now the New Israel (cf. Gal 6:16).**

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD?

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- **Israelites are the Children of God in the OT:** Exodus 4:22, Deut 14:1, Isaiah 1:2,4, Isaiah 63:8, Hosea 11:1
 - **Scripture says disobedient Israelites are not the Children of God:** Deuteronomy 32:5, John 8:39-44
 - **NT Scripture says Christians are now the Children of God:** John 1:12, John 11:52, Romans 8:14-16, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 3:26, Galatians 4:5-7, Philippians 2:15, 1 John 3:1

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

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- **In the OT Israel is the Kingdom of God:** Exodus 19:6, 1 Chronicles 17:14, 1 Chronicles 28:5
 - **In the NT, disobedient Israel is No longer the Kingdom of God:** Matthew 8:11-12, Matthew 21:43
 - **In the NT Christians are now the Kingdom of God:** Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 4:20, Colossians 1:13, Colossians 4:11, Revelation 1:6

WHO ARE THE PRIESTS OF GOD?

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- **In the OT the Israelites are the Priests of God:** Exodus 19:6
 - **In the OT disobedient Israelites are no longer the Priests of God:** 1 Samuel 2:28-30, Lamentations 4:13-16, Ezekiel 44:10-13, Hosea 4:6, Malachi 2:2-9
 - **The Christians are now the Priests of God:** 1 Peter 2:5-9, Revelation 1:6, Revelation 5:10

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD?

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- **In the OT the Israelites are the People of God:** Exodus 6:7, Deuteronomy 27:9, 2 Samuel 7:23, Jeremiah 11:4
 - **In the OT disobedient Israelites are no longer the People of God:** Hosea 1:9, Jeremiah 5:10

- **In the NT the Christians are now the People of God:** Romans 9:25, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 4:12, Ephesians 5:3, 2 Thessalonians 1:10, Titus 2:14

WHAT IS THE VINEYARD OF GOD?

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- **In the OT Israelites are the Vineyard of God:** Isaiah 5:3-7, Jeremiah 12:10
 - **In the NT Christians are now the Vineyard of God:** Luke 20:16

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM?

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- **In the OT the Israelites are the Children of Abraham:** 2 Chronicles 20:7, Psalms 105:6, Isaiah 41:8
 - **In the NT disobedient Israelites are no longer the Children of Abraham:** John 8:39, Romans 9:6-7, Galatians 4:25-30
 - **In the NT the Christians are the Children of Abraham:** Romans 4:11-16, Galatians 3:7, Galatians 3:29, Galatians 4:23-31

WHO IS THE WIFE (OR BRIDE) OF GOD?

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- **In the OT Israel is the Wife (or Bride) of God:** Isaiah 54:5-6, Jeremiah 2:2, Ezekiel 16:32, Hosea 1:2
 - **In the OT disobedient Israelites are Not the Wife (or Bride) of God:** Jeremiah 3:8, Hosea 2:2
 - **In the NT Christians are the Wife (or Bride) of God:** 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:31,32

WHAT IS JERUSALEM?

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- **In the OT Jerusalem is the City and Mother of Israel:** Psalms 149:2, Isaiah 12:6, Isaiah 49:18-22, Isaiah 51:18, Lamentations 4:2
 - **In the NT Jerusalem is the City and Mother of Christians:** Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22

WHO ARE THE CHOSEN PEOPLE?

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- **In the OT the Israelites are the chosen People of God:** Deuteronomy 7:7, Deuteronomy 10:15, Deuteronomy 14:2, Isaiah 43:20,21
 - **In the OT disobedient Israelites are No longer the Chosen People:** Deuteronomy 31:17, 2 Kings 17:20, 2 Chronicles 25:7, Psalms 78:59, Jeremiah 6:30, Jeremiah 7:29, Jeremiah 14:10
 - **In the NT the Christians are the Chosen People:** Colossians 3:12, 1 Peter 2:9
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WHO ARE THE CIRCUMCISED?

- **In the OT the Israelites are the Circumcised:** Genesis 17:10, Judges 15:18
- **In the OT & NT disobedient Israelites are No longer the Circumcised:** Jer 9:25,26, Rom 2:25,28, Philippians 3:2
- **In the NT Christians are the Circumcised:** Romans 2:29, Philippians 3:3, Colossians 2:11

WHO ARE THE JEWS?

- **In the OT the Israelites are Jews:** Ezra 5:1, Jeremiah 34:8,9, Zechariah 8:22-23
- **In the NT disobedient Israelites are No longer Jews:** Romans 2:28, Revelation 2:9, Revelation 3:9
- **In the NT the Christians Are now the Jews:** Romans 2:29

WHAT IS THE OLIVE TREE?

- **In the OT Israel is the Olive Tree:** Jeremiah 11:16, Hosea 14:6
- **In the NT Christians are now the Olive Tree:** Romans 11:24

WHO IS ISRAEL?

- **In the OT Israel is descended from Jacob:** Genesis 32:38, Genesis 35:10, Exodus 3:14, Judges 20:11
- **In the OT & NT disobedient Israelites are No longer Israel:** Num 15:30-31, Deuteronomy 18:19, Acts 3:23, Romans 9:6
- **In the NT the Christians are now Israel:** John 11:50-52, 1 Corinthians 10:1, Galatians 6:15-16, Ephesians 2:12-19

Q) Is the Catholic Church the 'new Israel of God?'

A) CCC 759 "The eternal Father, in accordance with the utterly gratuitous and mysterious design of his wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe and chose to raise up men to share in his own divine life," to which he calls all men in his Son. "The Father . . . determined to call together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ." This "family of God" is gradually formed and takes shape during the stages of human history, in keeping with the Father's plan. In fact, "already present in figure at the beginning of the world, this Church was prepared in marvelous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and the old Alliance. Established in this last age of the world and made manifest in the outpouring of the Spirit, it will be brought to glorious completion at the end of time."

Israel is fulfilled, perfects and transformed by Christ and His Church, not replaced.

Dr Taylor Marshall – “You really have one entity, the New Jerusalem, the New Israel of God which is the Catholic Church, It has true continuity with the faithful of the old Jerusalem and the old Testament, it’s a linear projection through time because God is one...”

Catholicism is the new Israel of God, it fulfills all the previous OT covenants, transforms them and perfects them.

In heaven the Church will be comprised of the children of God who were ethnic Jews and Gentiles and they will all be new creations in Christ and citizens of Heaven.

Dr Scott Hahn: “Judaism is pre-messianic Catholicism & Catholicism is post messianic Judaism.”

The overwhelming testimony of Scripture is clear and unmistakable: the Church is Israel, and Israel is the Church. In its fullest and most perfect expression, this reality is embodied in the Catholic Church, particularly in her apostolic office and universal authority.

The separation between Jews and Gentiles has been torn down by Christ, and a New Covenant has been made to fulfill, transform and perfect the Old Covenant which is now ‘obsolete’ (2 Cor 3:7-14; Hebrew 8:6-10, 13; 9:15; 10:4-10; 12:24; Jer 31:31-34). The overwhelming testimony of Scripture is clear and unmistakable: the Church is Israel, and Israel is the Church. In its fullest and most perfect expression, this reality is embodied in the Catholic Church, particularly in her apostolic office and universal authority.

Israel is no longer defined by ethnicity or geography. Under the reign of her true King, Jesus Christ, Israel has been gloriously expanded to embrace people of every race, tongue, and nation. What was once a small people in a corner of the Middle East has become the worldwide Kingdom of God—the true Israel of God—reigning not by force of arms, but by the sovereign grace that rules in the hearts of men. No earthly empire has ever come close to the spiritual dominion exercised by this Kingdom.

For anyone who reads the Scriptures with an open heart and honest mind, this truth stands out plainly. The Kingdom of Israel is the Catholic Church. The very word used for “Church” in the New Testament—**ecclesia**—is the identical Greek term the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) uses repeatedly for the assembled congregation and kingdom of Israel. When the Greek Old Testament and the Greek New Testament are read side by side, the continuity is seamless and undeniable: the ecclesia of the Old Testament and the ecclesia of the New Testament are not two different peoples, but one and the same reality in different stages of God’s redemptive plan.

The only essential change brought by the cross is this: through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Gentiles are now welcomed into the Israel of God without first having to become Jews through the ritual requirements of the Mosaic Law. Full membership in the New Israel—the Catholic Church—is granted immediately in the sacrament of Baptism. This sacred washing has its roots in the Jewish tradition of the mikvah (ceremonial immersion), yet it has been infinitely elevated and empowered by the sanctifying grace of God, making the baptized a new creation in Christ and a true citizen of the eternal Kingdom.
