

Survey of the Bible part 47 **2 Chronicles 28;1-5**

As we've been moving through the book of 2Chronicles, and for that matter what we saw in 1 and 2 Kings which is parallel to Chronicles, we saw how Israel and particularly the kings of Israel served the God of all creation.

And in many instances we have seen how some of those of Israel were faithful to God and some of Israel were not faithful to God and yet they are all identified as being part of Israel.

The other thing we have discussed is how Israel was chosen of God for a variety of reasons, none of which had anything to do with how much God needed Abraham, Isaac or Jacob because they were indispensable to God.

Rather we are told that God had chosen Israel through a promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which had everything to do, not with the name of Israel, but with the very name of God.

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 ⁷ "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

We see this expressed when the prophet Ezekiel was given a word from the Lord in direct response to those promises and how Israel repeatedly violated the word of the Lord.

Ezekiel 20:5-14 ⁵ and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day when I chose Israel and swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, I am the LORD your God, ⁶ on that day I swore to them, to bring them out from the land of Egypt into a land that I had selected for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. ⁷ "I said to them, 'Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.' ⁸ "But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. ⁹ "***But I acted for the sake of***

My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ "So I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness." ¹¹ "I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live." ¹² "Also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them." ¹³ "But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; and My sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them." ¹⁴ "But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had brought them out.

In that same word given to Ezekiel God then makes another pronouncement on Israel that seems to have turned 180 degrees, from wrath to acceptance.

Ezekiel 20:36-42 ³⁶ "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. ³⁹ "As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD, "Go, serve everyone his idols; *but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols.* ⁴⁰ "For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things." ⁴¹ "As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations." ⁴² "And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers.

What's interesting about this portion of Scripture is again how God uses O.T. Israel as a sign and a picture of the Israel that is to come many years later. That Israel that Ezekiel speaks of in the future is

what we've discussed when Paul properly identifies who that Israel is.

Romans 9:6-8 ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." ⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

Paul makes a distinction between the physical seed of Israel and the spiritual seed of Israel whom Paul identifies here as the children of the promise, whom he also identifies as children of Abraham.

^{NAU} **Romans 4:13** For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

In this verse which group of heirs of Abraham are identified?

The world.

And according to this verse how do these folks become heirs?

Through the righteousness of faith.

But as we've discussed before when Israel is seen in the O.T. where both types of Israelites are exposed we see the faithful and the unfaithful living under the same covenant promises.

In fact, this is precisely the exact same situation we see in Paul's day with the Jews. There were faithful Israelites and unfaithful Israelites and yet Paul says that only the faithful Israelites, those of the faith of Abraham, are considered to be true Israel.

Those of the O.T. who were faithful to the promises of God were always known as the remnant of the larger group Israel.

When God had judged Israel by choosing the Assyrians to destroy and take Israel into captivity He still judged the Assyrians for their actions against His chosen Israel.

Part of that judgment was to bring Israel out of Assyria and reestablish them, but note what part of Israel is allowed back in the Promised land.

Isaiah 10:20-22 ²⁰ Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹ A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. ²² For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, *Only* a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.

Here again Israel is used as a picture of the way God chooses a remnant of Israel to represent Him in this world. Not everyone who is simply a physical descendant of Jacob will be used by God in such a way.

This is why when we study 2Chronicles for example God clearly shows us in the leaders of Judah how one man or one generation seeks the God of creation while the next leader or next generation does not. Jotham, for example, is the one we ended with last week of whom we're told.

2 Chronicles 27:2 ² He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done; however he did not enter the temple of the LORD. But the people continued acting corruptly.

And then he dies and his son becomes king and we read this.

2 Chronicles 28:1-5 ^{NAU} Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father *had done*. ² But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made molten images for the Baals. ³ Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel. ⁴ He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree. ⁵ Wherefore, the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Aram; and they defeated him and carried away from him a great number of captives and brought *them* to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who inflicted him with heavy casualties.

So, why is it that one king will serve the Lord and the very next king will not?

Because God has chosen out of Israel a remnant that can only be defined as the true Israel of God. And by the way this is exactly what we see when the prophet Ezekiel speaks of God bringing Israel back into the land of promise.

Ezekiel 20:36-42 ³⁶ "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me;

How many groups of people is God addressing here in these verses?

Two groups, both made up of one physical people called Israel.

When God says, He will enter into judgment in verse 36 who is being addressed?

The physical descendants of Abraham. And so, you have this large group called Israel of whom God says, I will enter into judgment with you just as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness. So, we have a clear picture of who is being addressed in verse 36. It's Israel.

But notice what God says to this larger group of Israelites in verses 37-38.

Ezekiel 20:37-38 ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me;

What does it mean when God says to this larger group Israel, I will make you pass under the rod?

This is an expression of a shepherd using his staff to count and mark off his sheep. It was not uncommon for more than one shepherd with more than one flock of sheep grazing in the same pasture. Primarily for safety sake as each shepherd would engage in protecting the entire flock.

But when it was time for each shepherd to bring his sheep together at the end of the day they would have the sheep pass under their rod and for each sheep that was theirs they would touch that sheep who was then herded in a separate place as belonging to that shepherd.

Leviticus 27:32 ³² For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.

And so, in this verse we have a picture of the entire flock but only a portion of that flock shall be counted as being holy to the Lord.

And so, when Ezekiel says that God will make the entire nation of Israel pass under the rod and through that action will purge of that entire nation called Israel, “those who transgress against Me”, what is He saying as to those who are not purged?

And so, in a very real sense we have two Israel's being spoken of in Ezekiel, one that is only the physical descendants of Abraham, and the other chosen by God as He desires to choose, who are then identified as His sheep.

It is these chosen sheep who have passed under the rod and counted to be a part of God's chosen flock who we are told enter into the bond of the covenant.

Well, how is that possible when all of these Jews, these Israelites, are already under the bond of the covenant?, and by that we mean the old covenant given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Only if we're talking about a new covenant that will fulfill and make the old covenant obsolete.

Ezekiel is giving us a clear picture of the flock of God who are going to enjoy the blessings of the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ. And by the way, this new covenant was a present reality in Ezekiel's day even though Jesus Christ wouldn't come onto the scene until many years later.

Why would that be?

Because it would be accepted by faith by the O.T. saints in the same way you and I accept by faith the ultimate culmination of that promise found in the New heavens and new earth, which by the

way Abraham did as well. And so, even for Abraham it was the New covenant promise that he longed for.

By faith, he saw himself and all those who had his faith, as belonging to an Israel that would long for the city with the foundations whose architect and builder is God. And yet, in his faith he never entered into the physical Promised land as he wandered in the land as an alien.

In the exact same way, though we don't physically reign on the new earth, we are seated with Christ as co-heirs in the heavenly places by promise today.

Ephesians 2:4-9 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

When we study the nation of Israel under the Old covenant it is always a picture of the future Israel under the promise of the New Covenant, otherwise there is always the tendency to go back to the Old Covenant people and its Old covenant practices.

This was the danger the writer of Hebrews spoke of time and again in that book when he pointed out that the first covenant was always to point to as a sign post for the second covenant.

Hebrews 8:7-13 ⁷ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. ⁸ For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; ⁹ NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. ¹⁰ "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ¹¹ "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. ¹² "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." ¹³ When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

When God says that He is making a new covenant with the house of Israel where that covenant will accomplish some amazing things like putting His law into their minds and writing them on their hearts and to where everyone in this house of Israel will have their sins remembered no more, what Israel is God talking about?

The Israel that Ezekiel points to as the flock that passes under the rod of whom God chooses and sets aside as holy.

Ezekiel 20:40-42 ⁴⁰ "For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. ⁴¹ "As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. ⁴² "And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers.

Abraham was "the" forefather and it was never his intention to only possess real estate in the present Middle east. The land of Israel, like the nation of Israel, was always to point to the real Israel of God and the real Promised land.

The Israel of God under the Old Covenant was always known as the circumcision people of God. But we know that there is a true circumcision that takes place not of the flesh but of the Spirit and it is this true circumcision who are regarded as the true Israel.

^{NAU} **Romans 2:29** 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.

Galatians 6:14-16 ¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

^{NAU} **Philippians 3:3** for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

You and I in Christ are the Israel of God, the new creation, the people who have passed under the rod and are now the flock of Christ, both Jew and Gentile.

I know I've spent some time on this over the last couple of weeks, but I'm setting the scene for what is about to be taking place in parts of the Old Testament Scriptures that again are meant to point to Christ and His people and His kingdom.

When I started this study with you I made it clear that the Scriptures were written for one purpose and one purpose only and that was to reveal the Savior to come, from Adam onward and the people who would be a part of the last Adam and His kingdom.

If we miss this then we miss the fulfillment of all of these O.T. Scriptures and prophecies that relate to Israel and the Promised land. If we miss it we'll get bogged down with trying to resurrect the Old Covenant and its practices and an Israel that is no longer the true Israel of God.