The True Israel of God: A People Defined by Faith, Not Lineage

Introduction

The question of who truly constitutes the people of God has been a subject of great debate in both theological and political spheres. Many today assume that the modern political state of Israel represents the continuation of biblical Israel and that its citizens are automatically the people of God. However, the New Testament offers a clear and consistent message: under the New Covenant, the true Israel of God is defined not by ethnic lineage or national borders, but by faith in Jesus Christ. This was God's plan from the beginning, that through Abraham's seed—alluding ultimately to Christ—all nations would be blessed (*Genesis 12:3*). Thus, the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled not through a physical nation, but through a spiritual people united in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile.

Believers in Christ Are the True Israel (Spiritual Israel)

The Apostle Paul makes this point clear in **Romans 2:28-29**
"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Here, Paul reveals that true identity before God is a matter of the heart, not the flesh. Those who have been spiritually renewed through faith in Christ are counted as the true people of God.

Galatians 3:7 affirms this:
"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

And again in **Galatians 3:28-29**
"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

This directly connects faith in Christ with being Abraham's seed—heirs of the covenant promises, regardless of ethnicity or lineage.

Paul concludes this thought in **Galatians 6:15-16**
"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Believing Gentiles and Jews alike are called *"the Israel of God."*

Modern Political Israel Is Not the Covenant People of God Without Christ

Paul addresses this misunderstanding directly in **Romans 9:6-8**
"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because

they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Physical descent from Abraham does not guarantee covenant status. Only those who receive the promise through faith in Christ are counted as the true Israel.

Jesus Himself confronted this false confidence in **John 8:39-44** when speaking to unbelieving Jews:
"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham… Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

Despite their physical lineage, their rejection of Christ excluded them from the true family of God.

Those Who Believe in Christ Are Grafted Into the True Israel

In **Romans 11:17-23**, Paul uses the olive tree analogy to explain how Gentiles are grafted into the covenant people of God through faith, while unbelieving Israelites are broken off:
"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree…"

Faith in Christ brings both Jew and Gentile into one body—the true, spiritual Israel.

The Church Is the Fulfillment of God’s Covenant People

Ephesians 2:11-19 beautifully summarizes this truth:
“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh… were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise… But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ… Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

Gentile believers are now full citizens of the commonwealth of Israel, not through political affiliation, but through their unity with Christ in the household of God.

Conclusion

In light of these scriptures, it becomes clear that the true Israel of God is not determined by genealogical records or political affiliation, but by a transformed heart and faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul declared, *“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”* (*Galatians 3:29*).

This does not exclude those of Jewish descent; rather, it invites them—as well as all nations—to receive the promised blessings through faith in the Messiah. While the world continues to elevate a political entity as the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises, Scripture calls believers to recognize that the true fulfillment is found in Christ and His body, the Church.

The blessing of Abraham, foretold in *Genesis 12:3*, is realized

in the gospel going forth to all nations, drawing together a people redeemed by the blood of Christ. This is the true Israel of God—those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, united by faith in the One who fulfills every promise.