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Eternal Purpose Transcription
Class #4 130908

Israel My Son

We're talking about the eternal purpose of God. The first week was entirely introductory, and the last two weeks had to do with some general things about the eternal purpose of God. We tried to describe the eternal purpose of God in a very basic summary statement: "What does God desire? We said that the creation of the world was *for* something; it was aiming at something. Saving humans isn't God's purpose. Humans were saved *for a purpose* and we must always keep that in mind.

There was a goal, an objective in the heart of God before creation and before redemption. However, because we are so man centered, we don't really look beyond ourselves. We think that God's purpose is whatever He does to fix *our* condition, to forgive *our sin*, etc. But really there was a purpose before man ever existed, before man ever fell, before man was redeemed.

I remember giving that analogy in the "Not I But Christ" where I was wanting to go to the store with my son when he was two or three years old. I told him to get his shoes on to go get in the car. But before we left he went outside and fell in a big puddle of mud. So, I had to take him inside, give him a bath, and scrub the dirt off, while he just played happily in the bathtub. He was having a great time playing and making a little bubble beard on his face and squirting me with bath toys. And when we finally got out of the bath tub he had had the time of his life and was perfectly satisfied. And as far as he was concerned, that was what he wanted. That was as far as he could see. But I was cleaning him up *in order to get back to what I was originally intended*. I was wanting to go to the store with my son. But from his two or three year old view, that's not what he saw. He saw: I got dirty, and now I had a lot of fun getting clean. That was as far as he understood purpose.

We are a lot like that with Christ. We're so focused on ourself, both the falseness and the dirtiness of sin and also the greatness of forgiveness. Now, I don't want to take away from the greatness of new life, or the forgiveness of sin. All of those things that are realities in Christ, and they are great, but they are *unto* something else. And that something else has to do with this "corporate thing" that God created. You could call it a creation, a land, call it a bride, a harvest, a kingdom, a church. Its this thing that God creates that He gives Himself to. He pours out Himself in life and light and truth.

You could use the word *love* here. God loves this corporate entity. But by love I don't just mean His emotion. When God loves something it has to do with the full giving of Himself to the thing that He

loves. That's what love is. Love is this giving of life, and when the Father loves the Son, He gives all things into His hand, that's what Jesus says: "When the Father loves Me, He gives all things into My hand." "The Father loves Me and shows Me all things He is doing." And so God gives Himself to this body, this corporate people, and by giving Himself to it, by giving His life, and nature and purpose, and everything to that corporate body, He fills it up, He wants to form Himself in it. He fills it up to make this corporate body into a living expression of Himself. That's what glory is.

There is one primary picture that fills up hundreds of pages in the Old Testament. That picture is Israel. Israel is not the *only* picture of this reality, it's not the only type and shadow. There are many others. We looked briefly at creation. What's the natural creation? It is a living habitation for the seed. There are pictures of this in natural seed of plants and animals. But then Adam is that seed that needs to increase and fill up the earth so that the natural creation becomes a living expression of that seed. Then there is the bride imagery that starts right in the beginning too. What is the bride? It is the partner that God creates to give to His Son. The bride is something that is given in order to receive the love, the seed of the husband and to bare his increase, to bare his name, to bare his family. This is an important picture also. Something receives of the Lord, of Christ, and then becomes the increase of it.

The land. The land is another huge picture throughout the Old Testament in various ways. It also starts right there in Genesis 2. A land receives a King. A land is being filled up with this King's laws and ways and judgments and statutes so that the whole land is filled up with the glory of that King. There are many more that we mentioned as well, but I want to get to Israel. **There is one big picture that is bigger than all the other ones. It is more involved than all the other pictures of this corporate body. It just contains so many types and shadows of Christ. So many pictures of God's eternal purpose in Christ and in Christ's body the church. And what is that? It is Israel. "Israel My Son."**

When people think about Israel, they usually think about either the historic people with all of their laws, and sacrifices, and prophets, and rebellion. Or they think about the present situation in the Middle East, and they call that Israel. It is obviously true that there is a nation called "Israel" in the Middle East, but what I'm trying to point is that when you hear the word Israel in scripture, what should come to your mind is **the way that God defined Israel and the way God used Israel throughout Scripture.** How did God define Israel? Well there is no better place than Exodus 4:22.

Exo 4:22 "Go tell Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is My Son, My first born. So I say to you let My Son go that He may serve Me."

I feel like Exodus 4:22 is like a lens through which you need to read the entire Old Testament, because it is the understanding behind which God is relating to His people. What does this verse mean? Well,

it means so much, but in a few words and without getting into a lot of detail right now, **it means that God saw Israel as, and related to Israel, as the corporate body of Christ in types and shadows.**

We know that now the church is a body of Christ in spirit and truth. We are literally, as Paul says, “bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.” We have received of His same spirit. We are not Christ. But we are the body of Christ receiving of the life, nature, mind, light of Christ. We are joined to Him and (supposedly) living by Him. Him as that life, that fountain head of life and truth and perspective and purpose, all coming out from the head and, if the body is functioning correctly, flowing through the members. This is the fulfillment of what Israel was in type and shadow.

So God tells Moses to tell Pharaoh “Israel is My Son,” He is giving an identity, He's putting a name on what Israel is. In this same part of Scripture, God goes on to tell Moses that His name is “I Am.” He gives Himself the name “I Am.” And that wouldn't make a whole lot of sense to call yourself “I Am” unless you are the substance of everything that is being shown to them. He is the door with blood on it. He is the exodus through the Red Sea. He is the tabernacle they set up in the wilderness. He is the mountain of inheritance that they go up into. He is the cloud that leads them to the promised land. He is the promised land itself. He is the High Priest, the offerings, the veil, etc. “I Am” is a perfect name to call yourself if you are the living substance and fulfillment of everything that you're showing this people. “I am the unleavened bread.” “I am the passover lamb.” He IS those things. And in Exodus 4, God is about to send Moses in to pull a people out of Egypt and establish them in a covenant that in every way represents the new covenant in Christ.

I can't express how important it is that we understand this. If we can just read the entire Old Testament with this “Israel My Son” lens over our eyes, the entire thing will come alive, because you will understand: What is the Law? It is the nature of that Son. It is the boundaries of that Son. What are the sacrifices? Well they are the death of that Son, and the fragrance of that Son, His death and resurrection being lifted up to the Father. And what are the wars that you read about? They are the victory of that Son over all that is uncircumcised, over all that is flesh. What is the priesthood? What is the priest? It is the relationship that the Son establishes, by which He brings us into His Father. **The whole thing is the Son and a people relating to God in that Son. There is nothing that isn't that.**

When you go outside the boundaries of Israel my Son you find death. That is all Israel ever found outside the boundaries of Israel – they found death, one way or another. Whether it is by famine, sword, captivity, etc.

God establishes it right here. Israel is My Son. Israel will be the corporate body of Christ in types and shadows. Now, you hear first the word Israel back in the story of Jacob. Jacob goes into a hostile land (like Egypt) by himself with nothing but a staff. He comes out bearing a huge company, and a

huge increase and inheritance. And it is only when he comes out after he has wrestled with man and wrestled with God, he comes out as two large camps, and God says, "your name is Israel." It is just like this story of Moses and the Exodus.

Sadly I think, almost tragically, this is a controversial subject in the body of Christ. Maybe not for us here, but it seems to me like ninety percent of the church makes this issue of Israel into huge deal with a whole bunch of controversy and emotional investment surrounding it. And my desire in talking about it is not at all to stir up issues. I usually try to avoid anything thing that are emotionally charged, just because arguing about things on an intellectual level is almost never fruitful. But I feel compelled to speak plainly about Israel because to ignore this reality would be to ignore the entire Old Testament testimony of Jesus Christ and a people living in Him. You can't just skip over this testimony. It's way too big!

I can avoid talking about the millennium but I can't dodge Israel. Israel is this immense, full, and living corporate testimony of "Israel My Son" - the body of Christ. I know that some people hate when I say this. I get emails and comments from people that are so upset.

Have you ever heard the phrase "replacement theology?" Well, if you haven't, replacement theology is a term used to describe how God's covenant and involvement with the church, or with Christians, has now *replaced* His covenant and His involvement with the Jews. The great majority of the church hates this idea for a couple reasons. 1) because many people think that God has a special relationship with the natural Jews. I've heard it said that God has a "special place in His heart for Jews" and that He's doing something different among them, something important, something having to do with His promises to them, something having to do with their future destiny as a nation. So to suggest anything that lessens natural Israel's importance to God is very offensive to some people. Some people actually see it as anti-Semitic. That's amazing to me.

There is so much emotion swirling around this issue, but the fact of the matter is that both the "anti-replacement theology" and much of the "replacement theology" ideas are **focused entirely on the wrong man and the wrong understanding of Israel**. The issue is not that God has switched one group of people to another group of people. No, that's the wrong understanding. That is a very man-centered idea. **The issue is that God has always had another Man in view. He has purposed all things in and for His Son. He has always had a perfect plan and purpose in His Son, that He first showed to the world in types and shadows and then He brought it to a reality in spirit and truth. But its always been Christ. It's never really changed. The only change has been from shadow to substance.** The only thing that God replaced were the shadows of Christ for the substance of Christ. But from God's point of view, Israel has always been "My Son, even My Firstborn".

It's not like God was really invested in one particular people group and now He's invested in another one. From God's perspective the point is not that a new people group has replaced the old people group. God has always been looking at the exact same thing! And the cross of Christ wasn't a change of mind, it was a change of covenant. God never changed His mind!

Do you realize that God is still as interested in circumcision as He was back in Abraham's day, except now it's the circumcision of the entire Adamic man, the entire body of flesh, as Paul says in Colossians 2:11.

Col 2:11 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;

He's just as interested now in the blood of the covenant, the blood of the lamb, as He was then, except now that blood has a new face, a new name. It's not the pictures and shadows of Christ's blood shown in animals; it's the Person! He's just as interested now in the temple of God as He was back in Solomon's day except that temple is a spiritual, eternal reality. **My point is that God didn't change His mind; He changed His covenant from a covenant of natural pictures and shadows to a covenant of spiritual substance and reality. And when we try to make the focus of Israel about which people group God is interested in, we are taking it out of Christ and putting it onto man.** This is just like everything else, every other aspect of man's religion: It's focused on the wrong man. It makes humanity the center of God's purpose.

I used to be involved—sadly—in the Israel movement that is now popular in the church. Because of my desire to see end times events in my lifetime, because of my spiritual lusts and my carnal thinking, I used to be involved in the Israel “stuff” and I read a lot of books and went to conferences. I'm quite familiar with all of the positions and arguments. It all made sense to me when I was looking at the wrong man.

But, when my heart began to turn to see the Lord, I had to admit that the New Testament is so clear about this subject. If you want to believe in a special, unique purpose for natural, national Israel, you literally have to ignore dozens of clear scriptures in the New Testament. The New Testament CLEARLY says that Israel isn't a certain natural people. **Israel is a spiritual Son in whom you can live IF you leave behind whatever people group you are naturally a part of.** The cross doesn't even let Jews into Christ, or Chinese, or Americans, or Canadians. The cross allows NO flesh! Paul says several times, “In Christ there is no Jew or Gentile. There is no slave, or free man. There is no male or female.” If these natural distinctions (like male and female!) don't even exist in Christ, why in the world would Jewish blood be meaningful in a new spiritual man? The whole point of Ephesians chapter 2 is that God put to death the Jew and the Gentile in the body of Christ, raised up one new

man who is not Jew or Gentile but Christ who is all and in all. God put to death everything of the flesh (Jew, Gentile, slave, free, etc.) and leaving it there in the ground and brought up something totally new. "One new man!"

Friends, ethnicity doesn't even enter the picture in Christ because YOU don't enter the picture. The flesh is circumcised at the door. Your blood type, hair color, nationality, ALL OF IT was cut off at the door. It has nothing to do with anything spiritual. All natural distinctions collide with the cross, fall to the ground, and never get back up again. You are not going to be an American in Christ. You're not going to be a Ugandan in Christ. You're not even a man or a woman in Christ! Try to think about that. Those things are part of the world of natural types and shadows, and they are appropriate to understand and respect in the passing world of natural shadows in a natural way, but spiritually speaking they are irrelevant. They don't even exist. I don't know how Paul or Jesus could have said this any clearer than they did in the New Testament.

So someone hears me say all of this and then they say, "So are you saying that Israel isn't special in the Bible?" Well that's a good question. Yes. Israel was very special in the Bible. But... what is Israel and why were they special? People say "God calls them His special people." God says, "only you among all the nations of the earth I have chosen...". Ok, that's true, and I don't want to deny that at all. But again, what is Israel and why were they special? Their "specialness" or uniqueness was not anything natural that they brought to the table, it was nothing that they provided. **Their uniqueness was that God used this particular people in a special way. God used them in natural and super-natural ways to testify of a spiritual and eternal reality that was coming.** That's why they were special.

It's not that they had some natural ability or special characteristic that God favored. No! All flesh is grass! God is no respecter of persons! But God chose a specific people for a very special purpose. And that purpose (as we read throughout the New Testament) was to bear a testimony of a spiritual reality. That was their uniqueness, their specialness. And to prevent any confusion about this, God clarified throughout the old testament that He did not choose them for any natural reason, or because they were more righteous than any other people. In fact, in several instances God tells his own people that they are more unrighteousness, more blind and deaf, than the heathen nations. Notice:

Deu 9:4-6 "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. 5 "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 6 "Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness

that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.

So God chose Abraham. He could have chosen some guy in Japan. He chose Abraham, and from this man, according to his seed, He painted a picture of another Seed to come. Now Paul insists that the natural seed shown to us in Abraham's descendents was always a picture of a spiritual Seed, Christ.

Gal 3:16 *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.*

And Paul tells us that the way to become members of this seed is NOT to be born of the natural Jew, but be a spiritual Jew, which is circumcision of the heart, not circumcision of the flesh. We do not need to be sons of Abraham according to the flesh, but sons of Abraham according to the faith. Paul explains all of this, insisting that the natural was only ever a picture of the spiritual.

God chose a person to reveal Himself to, in a huge collection of types and shadows and pictures and promises. He dealt with that person as a living testimony of a spiritual, coming reality. Yes, God CHOSE the Jews. He set His love upon them. He gave them a very unique role and purpose. But that purpose was to testify of the spiritual substance to come. And as far as the natural goes, the Jews demonstrated over and over again that their nature was no different than the rest of the nations. Their nature was not different, but their purpose *was* different. Their purpose was to be a living testimony of a spiritual reality.

Paul is asked in Romans "what advantage did the Jews have then? What advantage is their to being a Jew?" And Paul first tells them there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile spiritually speaking. He begins the book of Romans by explaining that *possessing* the Law and the promises doesn't make the Jews more righteous than the gentiles. He repeats over and over that both Jew and Gentile are in the same spiritual condition – dead in sin and trespass. They both need faith in Christ unto new life.

And yet he does say that the Jews were used in a special way, and that carrying the law and words of God should have worked towards their advantage in receiving the Messiah. All of these things pointed to Christ! They carried a testimony, they carried the prophecies, the oracles of God. They carried the promises, the types and shadows of spiritual things. They had a measure of glory revealed in them and to them, the glory of shadows. They had the miracles and tabernacles and pillars of fire and victories over, supernatural victories over enemies—all of which were natural pictures of spiritual things. And yet, Paul says, to be a true Jew, or a true Israelite, they had to be circumcised of heart, they had to become sons of Abraham by faith.

Let's just look at a few very clear Scriptures:

Rom 2:28-29 *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 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.*

Rom 3:1-2 *Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.*

He continues the list of advantages in Romans chapter 9, saying:

Rom 9:4-8 *...who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. 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.*

So God's promises to Israel have not failed. That is what he Paul saying. And what is his argument? Why haven't God's many promises to Israel failed? **Because Israel isn't a nationality! It never was in the mind of God. It's not now, wasn't then. What was it? "Israel is my Son." Israel is a collective body of Christ.** And the true worship and service that exists in Israel now (according to Christ in John 4) has nothing to do with natural places, natural sacrifices, natural services. Why? What does Jesus say? God is spirit and He is looking for people to worship Him in the fulfillment of all those natural pictures, not in natural places and things and actions.

John 4:21 *"Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. For an hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."*

God is spirit. We don't usually understand that phrase. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. Paul says:

Php 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,*

No confidence in the flesh. No confidence in whether you have Jewish blood, or a quarter Jewish blood. God says He is no respecter of persons. I know this is such an emotionally charged subject and my desire is not to stir up people and cause fights, but its just so important that we understand Israel is My Son, Jesus Christ, glorified in a corporate body, in which there is no Jew or Gentile.

***Gal 6:12-16** Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. 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.*

For neither is circumcision nor uncircumcision anything; they are both nothing. But what is? A new creation. And those who walk by this rule, or by this reality, peace and mercy be upon them, upon the Israel of God.” What is the Israel of God? It doesn’t have anything to do with circumcision or uncircumcision! It doesn't have anything to do with Jew or Gentile. What is it? It's a NEW CREATION. Totally new. It's the same Son, but now living in the newness of Spirit in a people who have been joined to Him.

What is the Israel of God? In the old covenant it was a natural picture of Christ as the life of a people. It was Christ as the sacrifices, offerings, feasts, victories, harvests and blessings. It was Christ living in a people and people living in Christ. It was Christ! And what is the Israel of God now? **Its still Christ!** It’s Christ as the living offering and sacrifice, feast, victory and harvest, all the same exact things that were in the old covenant, but now in spirit and truth. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. It’s not an old creation anymore, its a new creation. It’s not circumcision of the flesh, it’s circumcision of the heart by the spirit of God.

God has only ever had one thing in His heart, not two. Its not like there was once one thing, then God stopped that thing, and He replaced it with another thing. There has only every been ONE thing, one purpose in His heart. That “thing” is His corporate, glorified Son. This first existed in shadow and then it was fulfilled in spirit and truth.