

PODCAST 6 — One People, One Story, One Messiah: Israel, the Church, and the Fulfillment of God's Covenants

One Story — Israel, the Church, and the Fulfillment of God's Covenants

In Christ, the promises to Abraham, the law of Moses, and the throne of David reach their climax. The New Covenant creates one unified people of God, composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, fulfilling the prophetic hope of restored Israel. The Church is not a parenthesis; it is the Spirit-filled, New-Covenant people — the true heirs of the promises.

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) “For the last five weeks, we’ve climbed the mountain of Scripture’s story:
 - i) **Podcast 1** taught us how to read that story as Christ-centered.
 - ii) **Podcast 2** introduced us to Abraham’s global promise.
 - iii) **Podcast 3** brought us to Sinai and the law as a tutor leading to Christ.
 - iv) **Podcast 4** revealed Jesus as the enthroned Davidic King.
 - v) **Podcast 5** unveiled the New Covenant as the heart-transforming, Spirit-filled fulfillment of all that came before.
- b) Today, we bring it all together.
 - i) We ask the question that has divided the church in recent centuries:
 - (1) **Who is the true Israel?**
 - (2) **Who are the heirs of the promises?**
 - (3) **How do Israel and the Church relate in God’s one story?**
- c) We will let Scripture, history, and theology answer clearly:
- d) **God has one people — unified in the Messiah — and the New Covenant defines that people as the Church, composed of Jew and Gentile alike.**
- e) Let’s begin with the apostle Paul.”

Ephesians 2:11–22 (ESV) ¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

2) God Has One People of God, Not Two

Ephesians 2:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ 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,

- a) **Paul’s Explosive Claim: “One New Man” (Eph 2:15)**
 - i) Christ broke the dividing wall (v.14), abolished the law as a covenant (v.15), and created:
 - ii) “One new humanity.”

- iii) Not two parallel peoples.
- iv) Not an earthly people + heavenly people.
- v) **One unified people in Christ.**

Ephesians 2:19 (ESV) ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God,**

b) “The Household of God” (Eph 2:19)

- i) Jews and Gentiles are now:
 - (1) “Fellow citizens... members of the household of God.”
 - (2) You cannot have two households of God.

Ephesians 2:21–22 (ESV) ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are **being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**

c) The Church Is the Temple (Eph 2:21–22)

- i) The temple — the symbolic heart of Israel — is now redefined as:
 - (1) “A holy temple in the Lord... a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”
- ii) The presence of God, once limited to Israel, now dwells in the Church.

d) Transition:

- i) This wasn’t a new Christian idea. The early church saw this clearly.

3) HISTORICAL INSIGHT 1 — Patristic Voices on One

a) Justin Martyr (2nd century)

- i) In *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin repeatedly asserts:
 - (1) “We are the true spiritual Israel.”
- ii) He argues that Christ fulfills Israel’s identity and that believers (Jew & Gentile) are the true heirs of the covenant.

b) Irenaeus (2nd century)

- i) *Against Heresies* 4.21.3:
 - (1) “Those who follow the faith of Abraham are the sons of Abraham.”
- ii) For Irenaeus, genealogy is redefined by faith in Christ.

c) Augustine (4th–5th century)

- i) *City of God* 20.29:
 - (1) “The true Israel is the company of all the faithful.”
- ii) Augustine rejects any future revival of Old Covenant ethnicity as the center of God’s plan.

d) Patristic Summary

- i) From the earliest centuries, Christian interpretation held:
- ii) Christ = fulfillment of Israel
- iii) The church = Israel renewed and expanded
- iv) The promises belong to the people of Christ

e) Transition:

- i) “Now we turn to the heart of Paul’s theological masterpiece — the olive tree.”

4) Romans 9–11: The One Olive Tree of God’s People

Romans 11:16–18 (ESV) ¹⁶ If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.

a) The Root Is Abrahamic Promise (Rom 11:16–18)

- i) **The Root Is Not Ethnic Israel**

- (1) Paul explicitly denies this by his argument:
 - (a) “You do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Rom 11:18)
 - (i) Ethnicity does not *support* the people of God; **promise does**.
 - (ii) If the root were ethnic Israel, then Gentiles would be grafted into ethnicity—which is impossible. Instead, Gentiles are grafted into **promise by faith**.
- ii) **The olive tree symbolizes the people of God rooted in the Abrahamic promise.**
 - (1) The root represents **the covenantal promise of God given to Abraham**, now fulfilled and mediated in Christ.
 - (a) This is confirmed by multiple texts:
 - (i) **Romans 11:16** – “If the root is holy, so are the branches”
 - (ii) **Romans 4:11–13** – Abraham is father of all who believe, circumcised or uncircumcised
 - (iii) **Galatians 3:16** – “The promises were made to Abraham and to his Seed... who is Christ”
 - (iv) **Galatians 3:29** – “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring”
 - (2) **Conclusion:** The root = **the Abrahamic promise fulfilled in Christ**, not ethnic descent.
- iii) Key observation:
 - (1) There is **one tree**, not two.
 - (2) Jews and Gentiles share the same root.
 - (3) Faith—not bloodline—is the only connection point.

Romans 11:17–20 (ESV) ¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.

b) Unbelieving Israel Broken Off; Believing Gentiles Grafted In (Rom 11:17–20)

- i) Paul’s logic:
 - (1) Being **physically Jewish** does not guarantee inclusion.
 - (a) **Romans 2:28–29 (ESV)** ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
 - (b) **Romans 9:6–8 (ESV)** ⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.
 - (c) **Romans 11:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.
 - (d) **John 8:39–44 (ESV)** ³⁹ They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, ⁴⁰ but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹ You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” ⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came

from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- (e) **Matthew 3:9 (ESV)** ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.
- (f) **Galatians 3:7 (ESV)** ⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.
- (g) **Philippians 3:3 (ESV)** ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—
- (h) **1 Corinthians 10:1–5 (ESV)** ¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

(2) Being **Gentile** does not exclude inclusion.

(3) Inclusion depends on **faith**.

Romans 11:23–27 (ESV) ²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree. ²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; ²⁷ "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

c) **The Future Inclusion of Jews Is in Christ Alone (Rom 11:23–26)**

i) Their return is:

(1) **grafting back into the same tree**

(a) not building a new tree

(b) not restoring an ethnic kingdom divorced from Christ

Romans 11:28 (ESV) ²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

d) **Romans 11:28–32 — God's Faithfulness, Mercy, and the One Way of Salvation**

i) **Verse 28 — Two Perspectives, Not Two Plans**

(1) "As regards the gospel... as regards election..."

(a) Paul is **not** introducing two salvation tracks.

He is describing **one group** (ethnic Israel) viewed from **two angles**.

(2) **"Enemies as regards the gospel"**

(a) Many Jews reject Christ.

(b) This opposition advances the Gentile mission (Acts 13:46–48).

(c) Their hostility does not nullify God's purposes.

(3) **"Beloved as regards election"**

(a) "Beloved" does **not** mean "saved apart from Christ."

- (b) It means God has **not abandoned His covenant purpose** rooted in Abraham.
- (4) **Key point:** Election here refers to **historical vocation**, not automatic salvation.
 - (a) This mirrors Romans 9:
 - (i) Israel is elect
 - (ii) Yet many are cut off due to unbelief
 - (iii) Election ≠ guaranteed inclusion

Romans 11:29 (ESV) ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

ii) Verse 29 — “The Gifts and Calling of God Are Irrevocable”

- (1) This is one of the most misused verses in the debate.

(a) What are the “gifts and calling”?

- (i) Context defines them:
 - 1. The Abrahamic promises (Rom 9:4–5)
 - 2. The covenant role Israel played in redemptive history
- (ii) Paul is saying:
 - 1. God has not changed His mind about using Israel to bring salvation to the world.
 - 2. That purpose is **fulfilled in Christ**.

(b) What it does NOT mean

- (i) It does **not** mean ethnic Israel is saved apart from faith.
- (ii) It does **not** mean a parallel covenant remains operative.
- (iii) It does **not** override Romans 9:30–10:4.
- (iv) Paul already said:
 - 1. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Rom 10:4)

- (2) Irrevocable calling ≠ irrevocable salvation.

Romans 11:30–31 (ESV) ³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.

iii) Verses 30–31 — One Pattern of Mercy, One Way of Salvation

- (1) Paul draws a **Gentile–Jew parallel**:

(a) Gentiles:

- (i) Once disobedient
- (ii) Now receive mercy

(b) Jews:

- (i) Now disobedient
- (ii) Will receive mercy **the same way**

- (2) This is crucial.

(a) Paul does not say:

- (i) Gentiles by faith
- (ii) Jews by ethnicity

(b) He says:

- (i) Mercy comes the same way for both.
- (ii) That way is **faith in Christ alone**.

Romans 11:32 (ESV) ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

iv) Verse 32 — The Theological Climax

- (1) “God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.”
 - (a) This verse **levels the field completely**.

(2) “All” in disobedience

- (a) Jews are not exempt
- (b) Gentiles are not advantaged
- (c) Everyone stands guilty

(3) “All” in mercy

- (a) Mercy is universal in scope
- (b) But not universalism
- (c) Mercy is received only through Christ (Rom 3:22–24)

(4) Paul’s conclusion:

- (a) God saves everyone the same way — by mercy, through faith, in Christ.

v) V. How This Fits the Flow of Romans 9–11

(1) Here’s the full arc:

- (a) **Romans 9** — Election does not equal salvation
- (b) **Romans 10** — Salvation comes only through faith in Christ
- (c) **Romans 11:1–10** — A remnant exists
- (d) **Romans 11:11–24** — One olive tree, faith determines inclusion
- (e) **Romans 11:25–26** — Jewish inclusion comes through Christ
- (f) **Romans 11:28–32** — God’s mercy operates the same way for all

- (i) Paul ends not with ethnic distinction, but **mercy theology**.

e) “Romans 11:28–32 does not introduce a second plan for Israel. It completes Paul’s argument. Israel remains beloved because God has not abandoned His redemptive purpose—but that purpose is fulfilled in Christ. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, yet mercy comes the same way for Jew and Gentile alike. God has shut all up under disobedience so that salvation might be entirely of mercy. There is one gospel, one Savior, one olive tree, and one way of inclusion—faith in Jesus Christ.”

f) Transition:

- i) “The Reformers saw this with remarkable clarity.”

5) HISTORICAL INSIGHT 2 — Reformation Consensus (5–6 min)

a) Martin Luther

- i) On Galatians 3:
 - (1) “Those who believe in Christ are the true Israel.”
- ii) Luther saw the church as the continuation of God’s people, not a replacement.

b) John Calvin

- i) *Institutes* 4.1.2:
 - (1) “The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours that the two are actually one and the same.”
- ii) Calvin explicitly denies two peoples of God.

c) The Puritan John Owen

- i) In his *Hebrews Commentary*.
 - (1) “The church under the New Covenant is the Israel of God.”
- ii) Owen places the church as the eschatological form of Israel.

d) Historical Summary

- i) The earliest church → one Israel in Christ
- ii) The Reformers → one covenant people through Christ
- iii) Only modern dispensationalism introduces a sharp two-peoples divide

e) Transition:

- i) “Next we see this unity in the mission of the gospel — the fulfillment of Israel’s calling.”

6) The Church Fulfills Israel's Mission to the Nations

a) Abrahamic Fulfillment (Gal 3:8–9, 14, 29)

- i) Paul calls the Abrahamic promise:
 - (1) “The gospel beforehand.”
- ii) And he declares:
 - (1) “If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's offspring.”

b) Isaiah's Servant Mission Fulfilled in the Church (Acts 13:47)

- i) Paul and Barnabas quote Isaiah 49:6:
 - (1) “I have made you a light for the Gentiles.”
- ii) Originally Israel's mission → now fulfilled in Christ → extended to the church.

c) The Church Is the Royal Priesthood (1 Pet 2:4–10)

- i) Peter uses Israel's identity language:
 - (1) “Chosen race”
 - (2) “Royal priesthood”
 - (3) “Holy nation”
 - (4) “People for His own possession”
- ii) These titles come from **Exodus 19:5–6**, applied to the church.

d) Transition:

- i) “Now let's address objections — especially the claim that Israel and the church must be forever distinct.”

7) Objections Answered: Why the Church Is Not a Parenthesis

a) Objection 1 — “But the OT speaks of Israel's restoration!”

i) Response:

It does — and the NT repeatedly applies those promises to:

- (1) the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2)
- (2) the pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:17–21)
- (3) the church's inclusion of the Gentiles (Acts 15:14–17)
- (4) the new creation (Rev 21–22)
- (5) Restoration language = fulfilled **in Christ**, not geography.

b) Objection 2 — “God made national promises!”

i) Response: True — but the NT universalizes them:

- (1) **Land** → **whole earth** (Matt 5:5)
- (2) **Zion** → **heavenly Jerusalem** (Heb 12:22)
- (3) **Temple** → **Christ and His body** (John 2:19–21; Eph 2:21)
- (4) **People** → **all nations who believe** (Gal 3:7–9)

c) Objection 3 — “Romans 11 says all Israel will be saved!”

i) Response: Yes — and Paul already defined Israel in Romans 9:6:

- (1) “Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.”
- (2) “All Israel” in 11:26 refers to the **eschatological people of God**—Jew and Gentile united in Christ, as the fullness comes in.

8) CONCLUSION

As we bring this series to a close, step back for a moment and take in the whole picture. What we've traced across Scripture is not a collection of disconnected covenants, not a series of divine course-corrections, and not two parallel plans running side by side. What we've seen is **one story**—coherent, intentional, and Christ-centered from beginning to end.

From Abraham's promise of blessing to the nations,
to Sinai's law exposing the need for a new heart,
to David's throne pointing forward to a greater King,
to the prophets crying out for forgiveness that would last,
to Pentecost where the Spirit was poured out—
the story has been moving in one direction all along.

The covenants were not competing chapters; they were converging ones.
The shadows were not failures; they were signposts.
And Israel's story was never abandoned—it was fulfilled.
That fulfillment is found in **one Messiah**.

Jesus is the Seed of Abraham,
the true Israel,
the Son of David,
the mediator of the New Covenant,
the King who reigns now and will consummate His kingdom in the new creation.

And because there is one Messiah, there is **one people**—not defined by ethnicity, land, or law, but by faith, forgiveness, and the indwelling Spirit. Jew and Gentile, reconciled in Christ, standing together in the promises of God.

If this series has done anything, I hope it has unsettled shallow readings of Scripture and invited you into deeper ones. The Bible rewards careful reading. It invites wrestling. It calls us not just to inherit conclusions, but to test them, trace them, and verify them in the text.

So don't stop here.

Go back to the prophets.

Re-read Romans and Hebrews.

Follow the threads.

Ask the hard questions.

And above all, keep your eyes fixed on Christ—the center of the story and the key to all of Scripture.

There is **one story**. And we are still learning to read it well.