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MINISTRIES

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The Error of Dispensationalism

Some time ago I used to teach dispensationalist theology. It framed my biblical perspective, and more specifically, my perspective on end time studies. Until one day, no longer able to tolerate some of the Scriptural tensions, I really began to challenge it. I placed so much trust in pastors and theologians on the matter, that it was, in fact, the moment in which I began to really assume I knew nothing and then test everything. I realized that my understanding of dispensationalism was gained from reading books and doctrines and not necessarily studying the Word of God.

It was at this time when I began to realize that it simply does not seem to make any sense, theologically, to separate the Church from Israel or Israel from the Church. It was actually through this study that I began to realize that the whole Word of God is still truth and is for anyone proclaiming faith in the Word of God, and thus by extension, faith in Jesus, or in Hebrew, Yeshua. It is through this study that I realized that we, as his people, are to be practicing the whole Word of God, and not just some of it. Realizing the fullness of the freedom and blessings is what I was missing in traditional, mainstream Christianity. This is the moment that changed my life, my family's life, and began the birth of 119 Ministries.

As with any of our teachings, we are not presenting this as though we have everything figured out. We simply ask that you test what we teach to the Word of God to see if these things that we say are true.

This teaching will conclude the following:

- 1) There is only one Body of the Messiah, not Bodies of the Messiah.***
- 2) The teaching of mainstream dispensationalism is realized to be in error when compared to the Word of God.***
- 3) Israel is not separate from the church, and the church did not replace Israel.***

This is not intended to be a complete analysis on all the errors of dispensationalism. The goal here is to

bring to light the resulting Scriptural inconsistencies generated by this faulty theological framework by removing dispensationalism's supporting pillars.

So, what is dispensationalism?

Dispensationalism: *(Israel and the "Church" are separate entities)*

“Dispensationalism is a theological system that teaches that biblical history is best understood in light of a number of successive administrations of God's dealings with mankind, which it calls ‘dispensations.’ It maintains fundamental distinctions between God's plans for national Israel and for the New Testament Church and emphasizes prophecy of an end-times and a pre-tribulation rapture of the church prior to Christ's Second Coming. Its beginnings are usually associated with the Plymouth Brethren movement in the UK and the teachings of John Nelson Darby.” (www.theopedia.com)

The Dispensations

According to this doctrine, there are 7 dispensations.

1. Innocence (or freedom), (Gen. 2:8-17,25), prior to Adam's fall
2. Conscience (Gen. 3:10-18; Rom. 2:11-15), Adam to Noah
3. Government (Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1), Noah to Abraham
4. Patriarchal rule (or promise), (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:17-18; Gal. 3:15-19), Abraham to Moses
5. Mosaic Law (Ex. 20:1-26; Gal. 3:19), Moses to Christ
6. Grace (Rom. 5:20-21; Eph. 3:1-9), the current church age
7. A literal earthly 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom that has yet to come but soon will (Is. 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Rev. 20:1-6).

Each one of these dispensations is said to represent a different way in which God deals with man, specifically a different testing for man.

From Scofield:

"These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, in respect to two questions: of sin, and man's responsibility,"

"Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment - marking his utter failure in every dispensation." (www.theopedia.com)

Tenets of Dispensationalism:

In addition to these dispensations, the real theological significance can be seen in four basic tenets, which underlie classic dispensational teaching. Dispensationalism maintains:

1. A fundamental distinction between Israel and the church - There are two peoples of God with two different destinies, earthly Israel and the spiritual church.
2. A fundamental distinction between the Law and Grace. They are mutually exclusive ideas **and** incompatible.
3. The view that the New Testament church is a parenthesis in God's plan which was not foreseen by the Old Testament.
4. A distinction between the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ - The rapture of the church at Christ's coming "in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17) precedes the "official" second coming (to the earth) by 7 years of tribulation. (www.theopedia.com)

Let's test this to Scripture. *Are there two bodies, Israel and "the Church?"* Are we all "One Body" in Christ, which includes Israel?

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

For just as **the body** is one and has many members, and all the members of **the body**, though many, are **one body**, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into **one body**—**Jews or Greeks, slaves or free**—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Ephesians 3:6

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, **members of the same body**, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] through the gospel.

John 10:16

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. **So there will be one flock, one shepherd.**

And that Body is the "Church:"

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the **sake of his body, that is, the church**,

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the **head of the church, his body**, and is himself its Savior.

The Church is the Body. Yeshua is the Head of the Body, and Yeshua is the Savior of the Body. Therefore, anyone who has ever been saved or will be saved is part of the Body, and therefore, part of the "Church." Because Christ is the only way to salvation and eternity, whether it was Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Paul, John, Peter, you, or me, we all claim Christ as our savior, sent by the Father, and therefore, we are all part of the one Body in Christ, the "Church."

Anyone who is saved by Christ is part of the Body.

Colossians 1:18

And he is the **head of the body**, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Ephesians 3:6

This mystery is that through the gospel the **Gentiles are heirs together with Israel**, members together of **one body**, and **sharers together** in the promise in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua].

The “Church” is through all ages.

Ephesians 3:21

to him be glory in **the church** and in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] **throughout all generations**, forever and ever. Amen.

We know that the apostles considered Israel in the Old Testament as “the Church.”

Many dispensationalists have said, "*Israel is not 'the Church' and 'the Church' is not Israel.*" A lot of doctrines and eschatology are built upon this premise. Yet when one examines Scripture itself, one might be surprised to discover that Israel in the Old Testament is repeatedly called the "Church." In Acts 7, even Stephen tips us off to this fact when he was falsely accused of teaching that Yeshua changed the Law of Moses.

Acts 7:38 (KJV)

This is he who was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us,

Stephen clearly refers to Israel in the wilderness as "the Church" and he clearly says the living oracles on Mount Sinai are given to us, as the New Testament church. "The Church" has existed ever since Adam and Eve. The "Church" is clearly not a "new development." It literally means a group of "the called out", or "*ekklesia*" in Greek or "*qahal*" in the Hebrew. All in the faith are called out of the nations (Gentiles) into God's one true nation (Israel).

As Peter said:

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a **holy nation** (singular), a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The Greek word "*ekklesia*" (called out ones) is the Hebraic equivalent of the word "*qahal*," which also means "*called out congregation or assembly*" also related to "*providing witness or testimony*." It was no accident that Stephen, a Jewish believer, called Israel the "church," (*ekklesia*), for his Greek version of the Bible (the Septuagint) regularly uses *ekklesia* to refer to Israel. Many believers in those years relied heavily upon the Septuagint, and the New Testament is filled with quotations from it. Thus, those in the first century were well acquainted with the biblical concept that God's "Church" in the Old Testament

times was the nation of Israel, just as the Church in the writings of the New Testament is also the very same Israel.

It would be hundreds of years later when the theological interpretive framework of dispensationalism would be invented and taught, even though it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

In every instance in which "*congregation*" or "*assembly*" is found in the English versions of the Old Testament, "*ekklesia*" is used in the Septuagint. Israel is the "*ekklesia*" or "*qahal*", the Church.

Is this What Paul Teaches?

In Romans 11, Paul teaches that salvation by faith in grace brings us into the Kingdom:

1) We were once of the "wild olive tree" (Gentiles/nations), and now we are grafted into the "cultivated olive tree" (Israel/God's nation/the holy nation). Paul does not teach that there is a "new tree" called "the Church" that is distinctly separate from Israel. Paul teaches that we are grafted into the already existing tree, which is Israel (see Jeremiah 11:16).

Once we are in the Kingdom we are supported by God's Word:

2) God supports us and gives us nourishment (meaning that we are given God's ways/commandments, and God is the Word). Thus, all of God's Word (not just some it) is to be used in instructions on how to walk righteously (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is what supports and nourishes us. It is our food (Matthew 4:4). It is the foundation, the rock.

Leading to the conclusion, as this "grafting in" continues, all Israel will be saved (House of Israel and House of Judah).

Let's read it in Romans 11.

Romans 11:17-26

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, 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. Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. 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. 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.

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. 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”

For more on this topic, please see our teaching “[Grafted In.](#)”

The whole point is that the Gentiles are to be grafted into Israel as Peter said earlier – the holy nation.

Paul also teaches in Ephesians 2 that we (the “Church”) are now Israel

- 1) We were once Gentiles separated from Christ.
- 2) We are now citizens of the commonwealth of Israel in faith in Christ.
- 3) If one is part of the covenants (PLURAL) of promise, then one is part of Israel.

Ephesians 2:11-13

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— 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. But now in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

How can we not be Israel if we are now citizens of Israel? Clearly, dispensationalism has introduced some serious error. Paul understood that all in the faith are Israel because Scripture taught him this: The New Covenant is for the House of Israel and the House of Judah, which are the two kingdoms that make up the whole nation of Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31-33

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD [YHWH], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD [YHWH]. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD [YHWH]: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(Also see Hebrews 8:8-12)

**Note: For more on the Two Houses of Israel, see our teaching “[What is the Gospel?](#)”*

Clearly, if one is a part of the New Covenant established by Yeshua then one is grafted into the House of Judah or the House of Israel and is thus part of Israel. The new covenant is not stated to be made with anyone else. One either becomes part of the one holy nation, as Peter said, Israel, or one is not part of the new covenant. In addition, God said that he would write his law on the hearts and minds of his people (which, by the way, is the exact opposite of abolishing it. He establishes it). It is a little difficult

to subscribe to a theological interpretive framework that separates Israel from the Church when Scripture clearly states that we are grafted into Israel and actually, made citizens of it.

So far, tenet #1 of dispensationalism that was listed in the opening of this teaching does not appear to hold up to the test.

Without the error of dispensationalism, realizing that we are Israel is the same as realizing there are many commandments God decreed that many are not being obedient to. It's commonly taught that most of the commandments were only given to Israel and not "the Church", completely failing to see that Israel and "the Church" are actually the same entity. There is a reason that dispensationalism is popular. Because being obedient to God has never been popular. Just focusing on God's love for us (his grace) is much easier than also loving him back which is actually defined as keeping his commandments - 1 John 5:2-3. That is the very definition of an attempt at a one-sided relationship.

The House of Israel continuously broke and ignored the covenant God established with them, and was consequently divorced (Jeremiah 3:8). God's goal is to restore the House of Israel to the House of Judah so all Israel will be saved. As Hebrews 8:8 states, God found fault with THEM (House of Israel) not with his law, and the New Covenant states that the solution (Jeremiah 30-31) was to write God's "law on our hearts and mind," not abolish it. The obvious goal of God's solution is that we will now keep God's law instead of ignore it and continuously transgress it.

New covenant, same law.

Nowhere in Scripture does it teach that God's solution to bring the House of Israel back together with the House of Judah included abolishing the commandments of God. Consider how seriously strange that actually sounds. Are we to suggest that God's solution to him divorcing the House of Israel because they continuously turned from his ways, followed other gods, thereby disobeying his commandments was to abolish those same commandments?

Suppose we applied such methodology in the instructions of our children. For example: *"Since you refuse to listen and obey my instruction, then never mind."*

That would be absurd, yet we believe that is the same approach the Father has with us? Because of the grace of God's love (Christ's work on the cross), we should now have a sincere interest in loving God back in our faith (1 John 4:19). We love God back by keeping his law that is written on our hearts and minds (John 14:15; 14:21; 1 John 5:2-3; 2 John 1:6).

In our faith, we have also received a deposit of the Holy Spirit that will teach us all things related to God's ways. The Holy Spirit is to guide us so that we will not be seduced away from God's ways, so we can avoid being ashamed at his second coming (John 14:21-25; 1 John 2:24-29).

If tenet #2 is correct, that law and grace are distinctly separate ideas, then why is the New Covenant ALL about writing God's law on our heart? Why is Scripture telling us to keep God's commandments as a means to love God?

Because that is the whole point, the law of God, so that we may do it and want to do it.

How many have considered God's law has always been about loving God and loving others? How many have considered God's law has always been about loving God and loving others? If God's law is so separate from grace in the New Testament, then why is the importance of keeping God's law emphasized so often by nearly every author of the New Testament, including Paul (i.e., Romans 3:31)? Once we are a part of Israel through our faith by grace, we are under the one law or "the Constitution" of Israel.

God only has one law or instruction for His people just as any leader would have, whether they be natural or grafted in (i.e.: Numbers 15:29). God does not have a law for one group of people just because they happen to be a descendant of the tribe of Judah (Jews) and perhaps the tribe of Dan, and then one for the alien and foreigner.

Leviticus 24:22

"You are to have the same law for the foreigner and for the native born; I am the LORD (YHWH) your God."

The Head does not give out two contradicting instructions for the same body. As we are now part of the one Body in faith, we are now part of those same instructions that are intended by God to bless us in our obedience. Therefore, even without such Pauline passages as Romans 2:28-29, 9:8, and Galatians 3:29, dispensationalism's ultra-sharp distinction between "Israel" and "the Church" appears to be both unwarranted and unbiblical, and therefore, leaves an aftermath of suspect conclusions with any theological framework built on this invented concept.

So why does dispensationalism even exist? To be honest, dispensationalism offers a rather convincing way to offer some doctrines that some find attractive.

- 1) The Church/Israel dichotomy
- 2) The Law is not for today
- 3) The pre-tribulational rapture

2 Timothy 4:3

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

God's people have a history of dismissing the commandments of God and wanting to avoid God's judgment. This is nothing new in Scripture. The House of Israel was divorced for such things.

The three ear-tickling pillars of dispensationalism is beautiful music to such ears; to such a degree that the conflicting Scripture we've just reviewed is often eagerly ignored. This doctrine is achieved by verse plucking out of Paul's letters and the rest of Scripture and at the same time ignoring the surrounding context and the totality of Scripture. Peter clearly warned us.

2 Peter 3:16

as he [Paul] does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand,

take care that you are not carried away with the **error of lawless people and lose your own stability.**

In other words, distorting Paul's writings generates lawlessness! So **what support is used to promote that the Church is supposedly a new institution?** In the absence of applying any other guiding Scripture, the foundational cause of the error is found in a poor interpretation of Matthew 16:18.

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We have already established in the above that YHWH's "Church" has existed since the beginning and that "the Church" is referred by God as Israel. **We must then ask this question.** *How can Yeshua build a "new Church" and not conflict with everything he and the Old Testament already taught?*

The Scriptures teach everywhere that Israel would be "rebuilt" or "restored." It is clearly stated over and over again that the division in the Kingdom relating to the House of Israel and House of Judah would become one again. For instance, read the Messianic prophecy of Ezekiel 37. In fact, Yeshua states that he only came for the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 15:24).

The whole goal of the New Covenant is to bring the House of Israel back to God's law (Hebrews 8:8-12; Jeremiah 31:30-32) by writing it on their heart. The whole point and purpose of all Scripture certainly teaches the central theme of the rebuilding and restoration of all of Israel (House of Judah and the House of Israel) so that they can be a light to the nations, as the one nation of Israel. So, did Yeshua come to do what he, and Scripture said, which is to restore or rebuild Israel, or did Jesus contradict himself and Scripture in Matthew 16:18 by stating he was building a new Church, and he will just deal with Israel some other day during the Great Tribulation?

Are we grafted into Israel, or are we grafted into a new tree called Christianity which is supposedly separate from Israel? If you answer this question, then you'll be able to answer the previous question as well. Romans 11 and Ephesians 2 would serve well for anyone struggling. Yeshua never spoke outside of the Law and the Prophets that were already declared. We all must agree that **all of his teaching** is in perfect harmony with what was already revealed in the Law and Prophets. If God intended to create a new body of his people and give them a different, new set of laws, he would have told us somewhere in His Word that it was coming.

Amos 3:7

"For the Lord [YHWH] God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

Thus, everything must be declared by the Prophets first before YHWH does anything. So if we interpret God doing something, we better hope to find it in the Prophets first, otherwise something is seriously wrong. Here we see that YHWH says he only does what he already revealed that he was going to do, and nowhere does YHWH say he is going to change the Law of God or create a new group of people. You won't find that anywhere in the Prophets. So, we have a problem. Could it be because men are inventing doctrine that is contrary to Scripture, thus leading sheep away from the Truth? It is much more consistent and congruent with scriptural principle to at least attempt to understand Christ's statement in

light of the Law and Prophets.

In conjunction with that idea of the rebuilding and restoration of the House of Israel spoken of by the Law and the Prophets and Yeshua, the Hebrew language uses a word, sometimes translated "*to build*" but which can also be rendered "*to rebuild*," restoration. Thus, Christ's declaration to Peter, likely speaking Hebrew when it was first uttered, could be translated, "*I will rebuild my assembly...*" "*I will rebuild my church...*" without stretching the underlying thought of text at all. In fact, this translation of the text has much to commend itself, particularly when we consider the numerous times the Prophets spoke concerning the re-establishment of the House of Israel.

Now let's go into some of the detail about that. The prophet Amos speaks of the rebuilding of David's fallen tent.

Amos 9:9-11

“For behold, I will command,
and shake the house of Israel among all the nations
as one shakes with a sieve,
but no pebble shall fall to the earth.
All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword,
who say, ‘Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.’

“In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins
and **rebuild it** as in the days of old,

Here, the house of Israel is spoken of as disciplined and scattered among the nations on account of their sin, and, in this same context, God informs us through the prophet that he will one day restore David's fallen tent (which is a reference to the house of Israel) and REBUILD it as in days of old.

The nation of Israel is the only institution the prophets mention that God would restore and build back up. There is no mention of any other structure that God would "build" in the "last days" except for the house of Israel.

Specifically referencing the Amos prophecy we just read, James describes the "building" of the New Testament assembly (the church) and the inclusion of the Gentiles in the assembly:

Acts 15:14-18, citing Amos 9:

Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.
And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

““After this I will return,
and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen;
I will rebuild its ruins,
and I will restore it,
that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord,
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,

says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.'

The Gentiles are seen as being grafted into the house of Israel when David's fallen tent is being rebuilt from its ruins. Christ's resurrection and ascension and the subsequent sending of the Holy (Set-apart) Spirit is emphatically explained to be a fulfillment of the prophecies which describe the restoration of the house of Israel. The fulfillment of Amos 9 is NOT the building of some new thing, it is NOT the new church. Peter speaks of the activities on Shavuot (or Pentecost) as being a fulfillment of what the prophets said would happen to the house of Israel in the last days:

Acts 2:16-18

But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it will be,' God says, 'that I will pour out my Spirit on all people, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'

This citation by Peter of Joel 2 stops short. The prophet goes on to say:

Joel 2:32-3:1

It will so happen that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD [YHWH] will be delivered. For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who survive, just as the LORD [YHWH] has promised; the remnant will be those whom the LORD [YHWH] will call. For look! **In those days and at that time I will return the exiles to Judah and Jerusalem.**

Meaning, the house of Israel will return to Judah. Here the pouring out upon all flesh is connected with what follows - the returning of the exiles of the house of Israel back to Judah and Jerusalem. Again, this is evidence that the so called "*building of the church*" was really talking about the re-establishment and restoration of the exiled house of Israel, not a new church, not a new thing.

Acts 3 recorded the events immediately following Shavuot or Pentecost. Here Peter speaks of those events as fulfilling what the prophets wrote about long ago:

Acts 3:18-26

But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time **for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.** Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. **You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers,** saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by **turning every one of you from your wickedness."**

First, Peter describes the events of Shavuot (Pentecost) as the beginning of the fulfillment of the restoration of the house of Israel as spoken of by the prophets. These events were precursors of the

restoration of all things (meaning the restoration of David's fallen tent - the house of Israel). So far, it is clearly not sounding like a "new Church," but simply the beginning of the restoration of the House of Israel to the House of Judah (the Jews); to be one kingdom again, no longer divided, the two becoming one. (see our teachings [“What is the Gospel?”](#) and [“The Lost Sheep”](#))

The prophets stated that the Messiah would rebuild Israel, not create something new. So if Yeshua said he was going to build a new church, should the understanding of that not agree with the Prophets and what the Messiah was said to do? Everything must be revealed in the Prophets first, before the Father does anything (Amos 3:7).

Next, Peter describes the people in his listening audience as "sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made" with the fathers. Certainly those who insist that a "new thing" was created (i.e., "the Church") would never describe themselves as "sons of the prophets and the covenant of the fathers."

Yet, that is precisely whom Peter is speaking to. He is speaking to "Israel", not to some alleged "New Testament Church"! The prophets were obeying the Law of Moses! And most teach that they are not in the “covenant of the fathers.”

Therefore, Christ's response to Peter's confession must be understood as describing Yeshua's work to rebuild and restore the house of Israel as foretold so many times by the Prophets of old.

Binding and Loosing

Yeshua's next statement, then, must be understood in the context in which it was declared:

Matthew 16:19

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”.

There is little debate about the crux of this statement. Messiah is speaking about giving some authority to Peter. “Binding and loosing” is a Hebrew language idiom for exercising authority (to prohibit and to permit). But the debate over its interpretation is about the nature of this authority and the exercising of this authority. The Catholic Church, for example, sees this authority as their right to change God’s Law, to overturn Law, and to create new Law. And so, we must ask ourselves, *"Is it possible to alter our Creator’s Law or to overturn it?"* There are myriads of places in the Law and the Prophets which expressly prohibit the changing or abrogation of God's Law. The Lord himself instructed through Moses:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2

*“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD [YHWH], the God of your fathers, is giving you. **You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD [YHWH] your God that I command you.***

And,

Deuteronomy 12:32

“Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. **You shall not add to it or take from it.**

How careful have we really been? Has anything been added to, or taken away from what Moses originally wrote?

In the Psalms, David says repeatedly that the Law of God is eternal, everlasting, and never ending:

Psalms 119:89

Forever, O LORD [YHWH], your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

Psalms 119:152

Long have I known from your testimonies
that you have founded them forever.

Psalms 119:142

Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true.

And Yeshua himself said:

Matthew 5:17-19

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Yeshua stated that not one of God’s commandments was to be “abolished,” or to be “put an end to,” or changed in any capacity until ***all*** of the Law and Prophets are fulfilled, ***and*** Heaven and Earth passes away. Heaven and Earth passing away and being made new, is the last prophetic event foretold in Scripture.

Isaiah 65:17

“For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.

Revelation 21:1

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Please note that this event has clearly not happened yet. Heaven and Earth passing away is the same event that Peter mentions in 2 Peter 3:10-13. **Yeshua states that all of God’s law will exist at LEAST UNTIL that same day. We can read about that day in Revelation 21.**

Revelation 21:5-6

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

The Messiah’s work on the cross for our salvation is finished as declared in John 19:30, but the Lord is not yet finished with what **all** has been said in His Law and Prophets, until he finally says “it is done.” This is signaled by the arrival of the new Heaven and the New Earth. Nothing can be added to nor taken away from what Moses wrote as the Law of God until Heaven and Earth pass away. That happens at least 1,000 years after Yeshua returns in his second coming.

Now you may have heard some teach that in Matthew 5:17 the word ‘fulfill’ means “to put an end to,” or to “finish.”

This is done for two reasons:

- 1) To avoid the clear teaching of Yeshua that not one of God’s commandments are to pass away from the law, and
- 2) To preserve their misinterpretations of Paul’s letters.

...the same letters that Peter said were difficult to understand and can result in the error of lawlessness.

If this interpretation is true, we should be able to apply such teaching to Scripture, as God is not the author of confusion. We are commanded to test all things and only hold on to what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:20). Let’s test the teaching, or understanding, that the word “*fulfill*” means “*to put an end to*,” or “*to finish*.”

Can “*fulfill*” in Matthew 5:17 mean “*to put an end to*?”

Matthew 5:17

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill [put an end to] them.

To “abolish” and “put an end to” produce the same net result, the same effect; and clearly, this doesn’t make any sense.

Let’s try it again in verse 18.

Matthew 5:18

For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all (the law and prophets) is accomplished.

But some say that parts of the law did pass away before all of the law and prophets have been fulfilled.

Let’s try it again in verse 19.

Matthew 5:19

Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments (that Yeshua supposedly just put an end to?) and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them (even though Yeshua put an end to them?), will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

See, that doesn't really make any sense either.

There are only two possible interpretations of "fulfill" in the Greek, in Matthew 5:17:

1) Yeshua came to "*fulfill the real meaning of God's law,*" or to "*fully preach the law,*" to fix the problematic and incorrect Pharisaical interpretations of God's law (and you can see Matthew 23 and Mark 7 for more context there).

This makes more sense because this was the complete point and purpose of every teaching of Yeshua when he was in close proximity to the Pharisees. He was always correcting their understanding of God's law. Yeshua desired to instruct us in the way God wants us to walk in his law and not the way men want us to walk in God's law. Yeshua came to fully preach the correct interpretation of what Moses wrote, not to abolish it; to fix what the Pharisees messed up in their doctrine.

And here is the other possible explanation to what "fulfill" could mean, or "*pleroo*" in Matthew 5:17

2) It can mean to "complete, finish, or put an end to." All one has to do is insert that definition into the context of the Scripture, that we just read, to witness how such an interpretation is illogical and absurd. It simply does not work; it didn't work, we just tested it.

The only interpretation of "fulfill" in Matthew 5 that fits the context and avoids the mentioned absurdities of our test is to understand that Yeshua is teaching that He will *make full* or *fully preach* God's law. Yeshua came to fully preach God's law, and not destroy it. Because we are to practice and teach even the least of the commandments. Yeshua came to fully preach the law in His teaching and the example He walked. He taught us the full meaning of God's law. Does that not fit the ministry of Yeshua perfectly? Yeshua taught, walked, practiced, obeyed and lived the Law of Moses. Are we not commanded to walk as Yeshua walked?

1 John 2:6

He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, **even as he walked.**

Therefore, in light of the explicit revelation of Scripture and the confirmation from the lips of our Messiah, the Law of God cannot be altered, nullified or replaced by an institution of man. God's law is unchangeable. And, whether we want to admit it or not, nearly every Christian denomination has its roots in Catholic doctrine and the corruption of Rome. The real difference is how many steps away from Rome and back into the Truth of God's Word has each denomination taken, if at all? The closer to what Yeshua taught and practiced, the closer one is to the truth, to the Word of God, conforming to the same example.

If we want to "*contend for the faith once delivered to all of the saints,*" then we should believe and practice what Yeshua, Paul, and the disciples practiced and taught. That should just make sense; do what Yeshua believed and taught, not what the Catholic Church changed. The Catholic Church changed such

things as the Lord's Sabbath and the Feast days by their very own admission, and under the penalty of death, not because Scripture said so, but because they misused Matthew 16 to grant themselves authority to change God's Word. They readily admit to this and can be validated by simply reading their published literature.

Matthew 16:18-19

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

What then, is this authority which has been given to Peter? What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven Peter was to receive? The prophet Isaiah speaks about the key, which is connected to the authority to bind and loose:

Isaiah 22:20-22

In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Here, the "key" that Eliakim was to receive was the authority over the house of David to open and close (or to bind and loose). The promise to the church of Philadelphia in the book of Revelation also associates this key of David with the authority to bind and loose:

Revelation 3:7

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

This "key" appears to be the right to rule and reign over the house of Israel. What is the standard by which the house of Israel was to be managed?

The Law of Moses was that standard.

Deuteronomy 4:1

“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land [YHWH] that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

Deuteronomy 6:1-2

“Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD [YHWH] your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD [YHWH] your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

The nation of Israel was to be operated according to the laws and right-rulings of God's law. All disputes were to be settled by the application of the laws and right-rulings. In fact, the Law or in

Hebrew, Torah, was Israel's inheritance:

Deuteronomy 33:4

the law that Moses gave us, the possession of the assembly of Jacob.

The instruction, which is what Torah literally means, was made up of two parts:

Deuteronomy 6:1

Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD [YHWH] your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it

The "rules" (in Hebrew, *chukot*) were the basic laws or precepts. These precepts are the basic guidelines for behavior. The breaking of these commandments usually resulted in a severe penalty. The "right-rulings" (in Hebrew, *mishpatim*) were the "judgments" or correct disciplinary measures in the event of a minor misdeed. Included among these, for example, is the commandment to require the restitution of property plus a fifth of its value to the one wronged. The *mishpatim* were the "judgments" which Israel was to administer when someone was found guilty of wronging another. Now let's consider the instruction in Matthew 16:19, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The grammatical construction in the Greek manuscripts is very important to the understanding of the meaning of this instruction. "*Shall be having been bound*" and "*shall be having been loosed*". This is very awkward English, but it accurately renders the periphrastic future perfect tense. It is constructed by attaching the future tense of the "to be" verb to the perfect participle of the action verbs. It essentially means, "when this judgment is 'bound,' it shall already have been bound in heaven," and "when the judgment is 'to loose' (release), it shall already have been released in heaven." The action, when declared by the disciples, will at that point in time already have been done in the heavens. What Messiah was actually saying is this, "The judgment which you render shall have already been rendered." Why? How does that even make sense? Because the Law of Messiah's reign is the Law of Moses. Any decisions that have to be made in the assembly of the Messiah must be done in accordance to the judgments (*mishpatim*).

When all disputes and disagreements among Messiah's people are handled and settled according to the judgments of the Law, then it is easy to see how that the decision was already made in heaven; it was already written down. Any loosing or binding must be done in accordance with what has already been decided by God and written in the Law. Thus, when the elders decide to "bind" in accordance to the dictates of the judgments of the Torah, then heaven has already decided the case and has been "bound." When the elders decide to "loose" according to the dictates of the judgments of the Law, then heaven has already "loosed" because the decision has already been made by God, and it has been written into the Law as a judgment. There is no new authority that Peter has been given; there is no new authority that anyone else has been given. Neither is there any new authority that the assembly (the "Church") has been given. The authority that the Messiah has given his disciples and their descendants is that authority which has been encapsulated into the Torah.

These are the righteous judgments which the Almighty has issued for the building up and the administration of the Messiah's assembly. The keys of the reign of Messiah are rightfully placed in the hands of Messiah's disciples because theirs is the Law, and their inheritance is the Law, the Torah.

Yeshua's declaration to Peter is merely an affirmation of what has already been established. The prophets declare that Messiah will teach the Law to the nations:

Isaiah 2:2-4

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD [YHWH]
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
and many peoples shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [YHWH],
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD [YHWH] from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

The judging disputes and settling of cases during the Messianic age will be done in conjunction with the instructions of the Law, the Torah. The judgments (*mishpatim*) are those laws which are judgments between disputers. The prophet Micah says the exact same thing.

Micah 4:2-3

and many nations shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [YHWH],
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;

It is well known that Messiah will rule and reign on earth during the Messianic age and enforce the Law, the Torah. His disciples will reign with him. So then, why should it be any surprise that the disciples of the Messiah should be using those same laws and judgments of the Torah to administer the assembly of Messiah in the present time, today?

The Conclusion

The Christian Church has misinterpreted many Scriptures because it has ignored the Torah of Scripture. The Law has not been done away with to any more degree than heaven and earth have disappeared.

There is as much of a difference between Israel and the Church as there is there is a difference between one body (meaning none).

The Messiah taught his disciples that the Torah is still valid and that walking in accordance to the commandments of the Torah is the correct way to express faith in him and to love him. Yeshua claimed through his teachings and lifestyle and through implicit and explicit dialogue that he is the Prophet who was to come - the very Messiah of prophecy. And for those of his disciples who recognize and confess this fact of his identity, we are given the Torah as the correct way to administer his assembly, to settle disputes, and to issue decisions which affect the body of Messiah. It would be expected that this study surfaced many of the Scriptural contradictions that dispensationalist theology brings to the table. There is no shortage of problems that are generated with dispensationalism. We should be careful to not add or subtract from God's commandments, and certainly be careful to not to accuse Paul, and especially God, of doing so either.

In short, dispensationalism is best summed up as theological license to make the same profound errors as the "dispensation" before you while claiming God has changed and that this "more attractive" dispensation's doctrine is something "new" for a "new group" with "new rules" and a "new plan" by the same (not new) God with his same (not new) Word taught by his same (not new) people (Israel).

Dispensationalism is a failed attempt to separate God's people from the whole Word of God. When in reality, we are to believe, commit, trust and practice the whole Word of God because we are to do what we believe and believe what we do.

We hope that this study has blessed you; and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverthing.net

TWITTER: [www.twitter.com/119Ministries#](https://twitter.com/119Ministries#)