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The Rebirth of Israel

Among God's most amazing miracles of all time is His preservation of the nation of Israel. Not long after Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, the Roman Empire sent armies to destroy Jerusalem and the temple, and the Jewish people were scattered abroad to the nations. For many centuries, the land was ruled by hostile foreign powers. But beginning in the late nineteenth century, God worked in numerous ways through people and events to restore Israel as a nation. Jewish people began to return to the land, with their numbers increasing up through World War II, especially as Jews fled Europe during the Holocaust. Then on May 14, 1948, the modern State of Israel was born. On a live radio broadcast, the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, read aloud the words of Israel's Declaration of Independence.

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The Rebirth of Israel

Those who were familiar with Bible prophecy recognized the significance of what was happening. Time and again, the prophets had predicted that there would come a day when the Jewish people returned to the Holy Land, and, at last, it was now happening. As God promised in Ezekiel 36:8-10:

You, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.

(Bible Prophecy: The Essentials
by Amir Tsarfati & Barry Stagner p. 15)

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↖	●	The Birth of Israel
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- Israel's origins can be traced back to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), who is considered the father of both Judaism, through his son Isaac (Gen 17:15-27, 21:1-7)) and Islam, through his son Ishmael (Gen 16:1-16).
- The name Israel comes from Abraham's grandson, Jacob, who was renamed "Israel" (Gen 35:9-15)

God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you." Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel. (Gen 35:9–15 ESV).

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Kings and Kingdoms

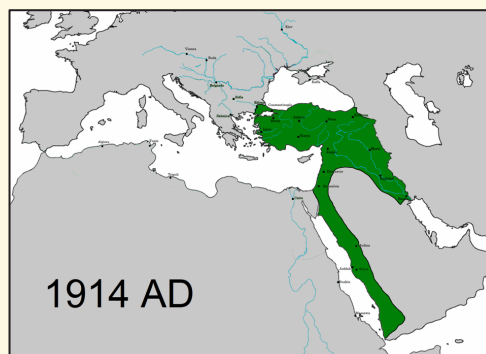
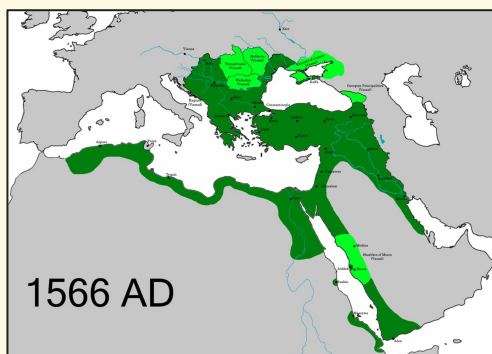
- **King David** ruled the region around 1000 B.C.
- His son, **King Solomon**, built the first temple in ancient Jerusalem.
- In about 931 B.C., the area was divided into **two kingdoms: Israel** in the north and **Judah** in the south.
- Around 722 B.C., the Assyrians invaded and destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. In 586 B.C., the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the first temple, which was replaced by a second temple in about 516 B.C.
- For the next several centuries, the land of modern-day Israel was conquered and ruled by various groups, including the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Fatimids, Seljuk Turks, Crusaders, Egyptians, Mamelukes, Islamists, and others.

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Modern Israel

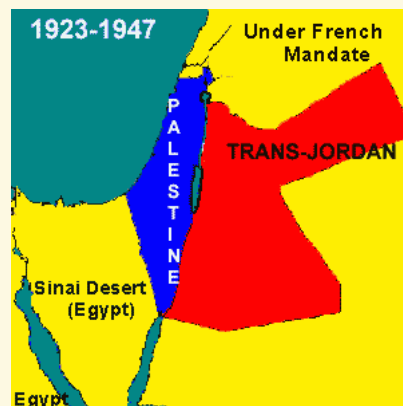
- **The Ottoman Empire** - The Ottoman Empire (Turkish Empire) was an imperial realm that spanned much of Southeast Europe, West Asia, and North Africa from the 14th to early 20th centuries. It also controlled parts of southeastern Central Europe between the early 16th and early 18th centuries



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Modern Israel

- The Balfour Declaration (1922).**
 When World War I ended in 1918 with an Allied victory, the Ottoman Empire rule ended, and Great Britain took control over what became known as Palestine (modern-day Israel, Palestine and Jordan). The Balfour Declaration and the British mandate over Palestine were approved by the League of Nations in 1922. Arabs vehemently opposed the Balfour Declaration, concerned that a Jewish homeland would mean the subjugation of Arab Palestinians. The British controlled Palestine until Israel, in the years following the end of World War II, became an independent state in 1947.



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Modern Israel

- Israeli Independence (1948).**
 The United Nations approved a plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state in 1947, but the Arabs rejected it. In May 1948, Israel was officially declared an independent state with David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, as the prime minister. While this historic event seemed to be a victory for Jews, it also marked the beginning of more violence with the Arabs.



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Modern Israel

• Arab-Israeli Conflict

- **Suez Crisis:** Relations between Israel and Egypt were rocky in the years following the 1948 war. In 1956, Egypt overtook and nationalised the Suez Canal. With the help of British and French forces, Israel attacked the Sinai Peninsula and retook the Suez Canal.
- **Six-Day War:** Israel in 1967 defeated Egypt, Jordan and Syria in six days. After this brief war, Israel took control of the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, and Golan Heights.
- **Yom Kippur War:** In 1973 Egypt and Syria launched air strikes against Israel on the Holy Day of Yom Kippur. The fighting went on for two weeks, until the UN adopted a resolution to stop the war. Syria hoped to recapture the Golan Heights during this battle but was unsuccessful.
- **Lebanon War:** In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and ejected the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This group, which started in 1964 and declared all Arab citizens living in Palestine up to 1947 to be called “Palestinians,” focused on creating a Palestinian state within Israel.

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Modern Israel

• Arab-Israeli Conflict


- **First Palestinian Intifada:** Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank led to a 1987 Palestinian uprising and hundreds of deaths. A peace process, known as the Oslo Peace Accords, ended the Intifada (Arabic word meaning “shaking off”).
- **Second Palestinian Intifada:** Palestinians launched suicide bombs and other attacks on Israelis in 2000. The resulting violence lasted for years, until a cease-fire was reached. Israel announced a plan to remove all troops and Jewish settlements from the Gaza strip by the end of 2005.
- **Second Lebanon War:** Israel went to war with Hezbollah—a Shiite Islamic militant group in Lebanon—in 2006. A UN-negotiated ceasefire ended the conflict a couple of months after it started.
- **Hamas Wars:** Israel has been involved in repeated violence with Hamas, a Sunni Islamist militant group that assumed Palestinian power in 2006. Some of the more significant conflicts took place beginning in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

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Modern Israel

- Palestine** (officially the State of Palestine) is a state in West Asia. Founded on 15 November 1988 and officially governed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), it claims the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip as its territory.
- Israel** (officially the State of Israel) is a country in West Asia. It is bordered by Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the east, the Red Sea to the south, Egypt to the southwest, the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and the Palestinian territories – the West Bank along the east and the Gaza Strip along the southwest. Tel Aviv is the financial, economic, and technological centre of the country, while its seat of government is in its proclaimed capital of Jerusalem.




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Modern Israel

- Two State Solution**
 - The two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict centres around the establishment of an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, in the region west of the Jordan River.
 - The major points of contention include the specific boundaries of the two states (though most proposals are based on the 1967 lines), the status of Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements and the right of return of Palestinian refugees.



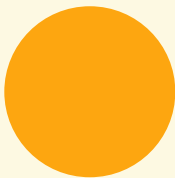
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Questions to Consider!!

- Has the church replaced Israel?
- Does Israel have a divine claim upon land in the Middle East?
- Is the establishing of the State of Israel the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and a sign of an imminent battle of Armageddon?
- Do sincere Jews have to believe in Jesus in order to be 'saved'?
- Should the church be working towards and anticipating a widespread revival among the Jews?

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The Role of Israel

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The Role of Israel

The nation of Israel holds immense importance in Christian theology due to its role in God's covenant promises. These beliefs are deeply rooted in biblical passages that affirm God's ongoing relationship with Israel and His faithfulness to them. These include:-

- Biblical Covenant with Abraham
- God's Promised Land
- God's Chosen People
- Fulfillment of Prophecy
- Israel in End Times Prophecy
- Salvation through Christ

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The Role of Israel

- **Biblical Covenant with Abraham**

The significance of Israel begins with God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. God promises to bless Abraham and make him a great nation:

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen 12:1-3 ESV).

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The Role of Israel

- **God's Promised Land**

Throughout the Old Testament, God repeatedly promises the land of Canaan (modern-day Israel) to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Genesis 15:18-21, God makes a covenant with Abraham, promising him the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River as an everlasting possession.

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Gen 15:18-21 ESV).

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The Role of Israel

- **God's Chosen People:**

The Israelites are God's chosen people, selected to be a light to the nations and to fulfill His purposes on the earth. In Deuteronomy 7:6-8, God declares that He has chosen Israel to be His treasured possession, above all other peoples on the face of the earth.

"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut 7:6-8 ESV).

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The Role of Israel

- **Fulfillment of Prophecy**

Many prophecies concerning the restoration and blessing of Israel find fulfillment in the New Testament. In Ezekiel 36:24-28, God promises to gather the people of Israel from exile, cleanse them, and give them a new heart. Romans 11 discusses the future restoration of Israel, affirming that God has not rejected His people.

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God (Eze 36:24-28 ESV)

22



The Role of Israel

- **Israel in End Times Prophecy**

The nation of Israel plays a central role in the end times. In passages such as Zechariah 12-14 and Revelation 7, Israel is depicted as a focal point of God's redemptive plan, with events surrounding Jerusalem and the Jewish people marking the culmination of human history.

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. (Zech 14:1-4 ESV).

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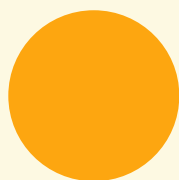
The Role of Israel

- **Salvation through Christ**

It's important to note that salvation is ultimately found in Jesus Christ, and membership in the covenant community is through faith in Him rather than ethnic lineage (Galatians 3:28-29). However, God's faithfulness to His promises to Israel appear to remain intact, and the restoration of Israel is seen as part of God's overall plan of redemption for all humanity.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:28-29).

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God's Plan for Israel and the Church

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The Church's Response to Israel

- Throughout history, Christians have advocated hostility towards the Jews.
 - **John Chrysostom (347-407)**- “The Jews are the odious assassins of Christ and for killing God there is no expiation possible, no indulgence or pardon. Christians may never cease vengeance, and the Jews must live in servitude forever. It is incumbent upon all Christians to hate the Jews.”
 - **Augustine (354-430)** – “The true image of the Hebrew is Judas Iscariot, who sells the Lord for silver. The Jew can never spiritually understand the Scriptures and forever will bear the guilt for the death of Jesus because their fathers killed the Saviour.”
 - **Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)** – “It would be perfectly licit to hold the Jews, because of their crucifying the Lord, in perpetual servitude.
 - **Martin Luther (1483-1546)** - “Set their synagogues on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no-one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it... in order that God may see that we are Christians”

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Israel and the Church

Among evangelical Protestants there has been a difference of viewpoint on the question of the relationship between Israel and the church. This question was brought into prominence by those who hold to a “dispensational” system of theology ... Lewis Sperry Chafer’s Systematic Theology ... argues that God has two distinct plans for the two different groups of people that he has redeemed: God’s purposes and promises for Israel are for earthly blessings and they will yet be fulfilled on this earth at some time in the future. On the other hand, God’s purposes and promises for the church are for heavenly blessings and those promises will be fulfilled in heaven. This distinction between the two different groups that God saves will especially be seen in the millennium, for at that time Israel will reign on earth as God’s people and enjoy the fulfillment of Old Testament promises, but the church will already have been taken up into heaven at the time of Christ’s secret return for his saints (“the rapture”). On this view, the church did not begin until Pentecost (Acts 2). And it is not right to think of Old Testament believers together with New Testament believers as constituting one church.

(Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology, 859–860).

27



Israel and the Church

On a progressive dispensational view, God does not have two separate purposes for Israel and the church but a single purpose—the establishment of the kingdom of God—in which Israel and the church will both share. Progressive dispensationalists would see no distinction between Israel and the church in the future eternal state for all will be part of the one people of God. Moreover, they would hold that the church will reign with Christ in glorified bodies on earth during the millennium

However, there is still a difference between progressive dispensationalists and the rest of evangelicalism on one point: they would say that the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel will still be fulfilled in the millennium by ethnic Jewish people who will believe in Christ and live in the land of Israel as a “model nation” for all nations to see and learn from. Therefore they would not say that the church is the “new Israel” or that all the Old Testament prophecies about Israel will be fulfilled in the church, for these prophecies will yet be fulfilled in ethnic Israel.

(Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology, 860).

28



Israel and the Church

With regard to this question, we should notice the many New Testament verses that understand the church as the “new Israel” or new “people of God.” The fact that “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25) would suggest this. Moreover, this present church age, which has brought the salvation of many millions of Christians in the church, is not an interruption or a parenthesis in God’s plan, but a continuation of his plan expressed throughout the Old Testament to call a people to himself. Paul says, “For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal” (Rom. 2:28–29). Paul recognizes that though there is a literal or natural sense in which people who physically descended from Abraham are to be called Jews, there is also a deeper or spiritual sense in which a “true Jew” is one who is inwardly a believer and whose heart has been cleansed by God.

(Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology, 861)

29



Replacement Theology

Replacement theology or supersessionism “is the view that the church is the new or true Israel that has permanently replaced or superseded Israel as the people of God.”
(Michael J. Vlach)

We believe that in the unfolding of the plan of God in history, the Christian Church is the very fruition of the redemptive purpose of God. As such, the multi-racial, international Church of Jesus Christ supersedes racial, national Israel as the focus of the kingdom of God. Indeed, we believe that the Church becomes “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16), the “seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:29), “the circumcision” (Phil. 3:3), the “temple of God” (Eph. 2:19-22), and so forth. We believe that Jew and Gentile are eternally merged into a “new man” in the Church of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:12–18). What God hath joined together let no man put asunder! “We believe that the international Church has superseded for all times national Israel as the institution for the administration of divine blessing to the world.”
(Kenneth Gentry, Preterist and Covenant Theologian)

30



Replacement Theology

“... the Church, Abraham’s spiritual seed, had replaced national Israel in that it had transcended and fulfilled the terms of the covenant given to Israel, which covenant Israel had lost because of disobedience.” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.)

On the one hand, we know that Christianity owes its birth to Judaism, and we want to affirm that God has not abandoned his commitment to Israel as his people. On the other hand, it is fundamental to Christian faith that Jesus the Jewish Messiah is the decisive revelation of God for all human beings, so that we cannot say that it makes no difference whether a Jew believes in Jesus or not. For this reason, the idea often advocated today, that God has two covenants—one for Jews, based on Moses, and the other for Gentiles, based on Jesus—is unsatisfactory. It ‘does not allow Jesus to be the decisive revelation for the people to whom the revelation was given in the first place’. If Jesus is not the Messiah for Jewish people, he cannot be the Saviour of the world.
(Exploring the New Testament, vol. 2, 259).

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Key Verses

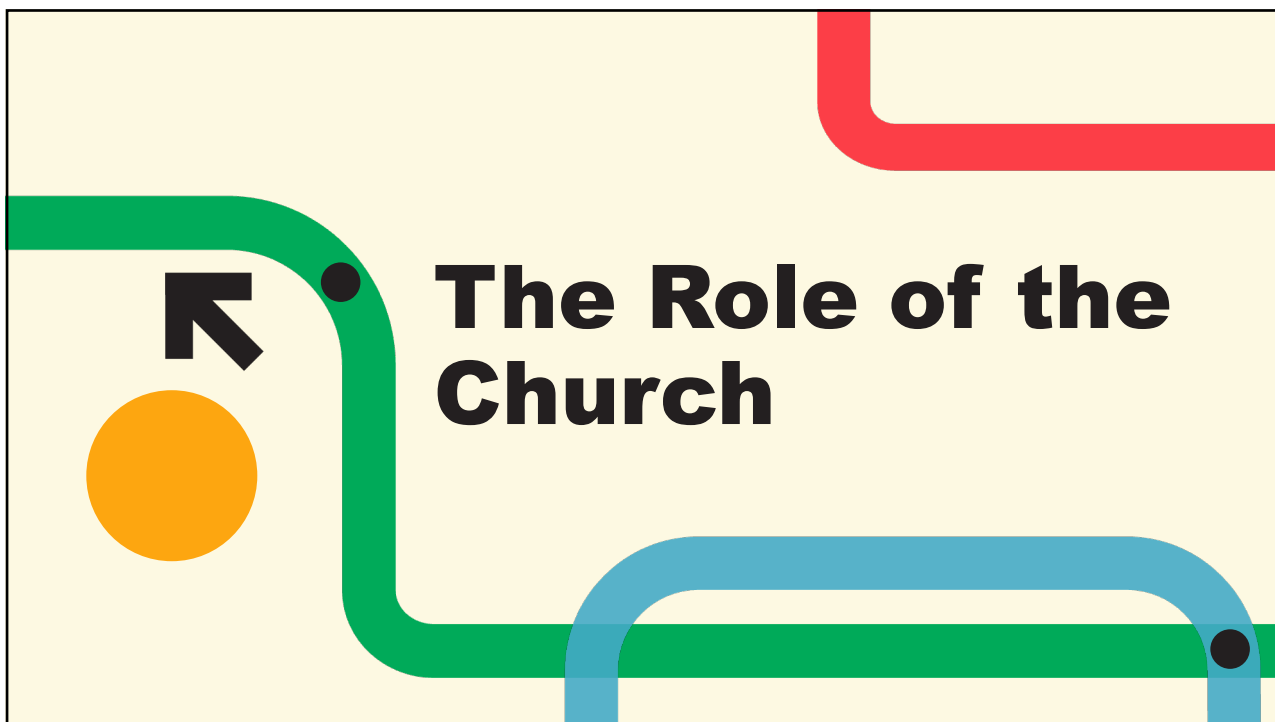
But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:25–29 ESV).

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph 2:17–22 ESV).


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Questions & Discussion

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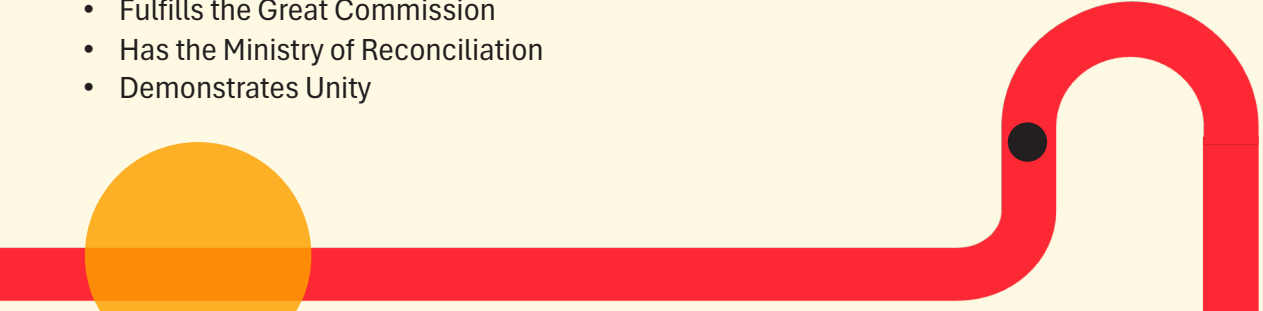
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		<h2>The Role of the Church</h2>
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The church as the people of God is central to our understanding of the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Through its proclamation of the Good News, its nurturing of community and fellowship, and its ministry of reconciliation, the church serves as a catalyst for spiritual transformation and the advancement of God's kingdom on earth.

The church:

- Is the Body of Christ
- Fulfills the Great Commission
- Has the Ministry of Reconciliation
- Demonstrates Unity



35



The Role of the Church

- **The Church as the Body of Christ**

The Apostle Paul frequently employs the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ in his epistles (1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18). Just as a human body has many parts that function together as one organism, so too does the church comprise diverse individuals unified by their common faith in Christ. This imagery underscores the interconnectedness and interdependence of believers in fulfilling God's purposes on earth.

36



The Role of the Church

- **The Church Fulfils the Great Commission**

In the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus instructs his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations." This command emphasises the mission of the church to proclaim the Gospel message to all people and to invite them into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The church serves as the primary vehicle through which the Good News is shared and salvation is offered.

37



The Role of the Church

- **The Church has the Ministry of Reconciliation**

Paul describes the church as ambassadors for Christ, entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). This means that believers are called to proclaim the message of reconciliation between God and humanity, which has been made possible through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church serves to reconcile people to God and experience the forgiveness of sins.

38



The Role of the Church

- **The Church Demonstrates Unity**

Ephesians 2:11-22 highlights the reconciling work of Christ, which brings together Jews and Gentiles into one body—the church. This passage underscores the inclusivity of God's redemptive plan and the unity that believers share in Christ, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds. The church, therefore, serves as a visible demonstration of God's grace and a testimony to the transformative power of the Gospel.

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