

ESTABLISH

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD – SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Review & Introduction

Last week's definition of the Church:

“The church is the new covenant assembly of the people of God”

Key Words:

- People of God
- New Covenant
- Assembly

Ecclesiology

Questions for this week:

- What is the relationship between the church and Israel?
- What does it mean that the church is the Bride of Christ?
- How does the Holy Spirit fit into our understanding of the church?
- Who are the leaders of the church?

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

1. The Promises of the New Covenant were given to Israel

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah**, ³² 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. ³³ **For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days**, declares the LORD: 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.” (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

1. The Promises of the New Covenant were given to Israel

²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “**This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.**” (Luke 22:20)

- Jesus’ death was a New Covenant sacrifice
- The Lord’s Supper is a New Covenant ordinance
- But the New Covenant was promised to Israel and Judah!

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

2. All Christians are heirs of the New Covenant promises to Israel

- 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” (Ephesians 2:11-14)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

2. All Christians are heirs of the New Covenant promises to Israel

- For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶ **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.** (Ephesians 3:1-6)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

3. The relationship between Israel and the Church

- Ethnic Israel was specially chosen as the means that God used to create and redeem a people for himself through the promised seed through whom all the nations are blessed.
- The church is the culmination and fulfillment of God's plan and purpose to create and redeem one people for himself, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles who are saved through faith Abraham's promised seed: Jesus Christ who died for the sins of his people.

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

- ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. 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.** (Romans 9:3-7)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

- Question: Have God's promises to Israel failed?
- Answer:
 - No, they have not failed.
 - We are tempted to think they have failed only if we don't recognize that not all who are descended from Israel is Israel.
 - The children of God are the children of promise not merely the children of the flesh.

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

- I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? ³ “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” ⁴ But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵ So too **at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.** (Romans 11:1-5)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

- Question: Has God rejected national Israel?
- Answer:
 - No, God has not rejected national Israel.
- Evidence:
 - Paul has believed the Gospel and been saved according to the promises to Israel.
 - God has always saved a remnant of Israel, children of promise, chosen by grace.

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

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 Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

“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.**”

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, **they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.** ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

(Romans 11:23-28)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today

- Question: Are God's special purposes for ethnic Jews finished?
- Answer:
 - No, they remain "beloved for the sake of their forefathers"

Further:

- All the Jews who remain to be saved will be saved through the [New] Covenant (by faith in Jesus Christ alongside us Gentiles)
 - There is one vine.
 - We have been grafted into it contrary to our nature.
 - Jews are grafted into it according to their nature.
- The New Covenant assembly of the people of God includes all Jewish and Gentile believers.

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

4. Ethnic Jews Today – Summary

- Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. It's children of promise who are counted as children of God.
- There remains a remnant of national Israel who are children of God, children of promise, by grace.
- The identifying mark of the ethnic Jews who are children of God is their faith (in contrast to unbelief).
- The Jews who continue to be saved through the history of the world are saved in and through the same New Covenant work of Christ as Gentiles.

The Church as the Bride of Christ

I've said we can define the as the new covenant assembly of the people of God.

- If that's a biblical definition, how does it relate to the NT teaching that the Church is the Bride of Christ?

Recall Categories:

- People of God
- Covenant
- Assembly

The Church as the Bride of Christ

“Bride” is a marriage term.

Is there anything that links marriage to these biblical categories we’ve used to define the church?

Recall categories:

- People of God
- Covenant
- Assembly

The Church as the Bride of Christ

Is there any pattern in the Bible of referring to the relationship between God and his people in marriage terms?

The Church as the Bride of Christ

⁸ “When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine.

⁹ Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil...

¹⁵ “But you trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his. (Ezekiel 16:8-9,15)

The Church as the Bride of Christ

“If a man divorces his wife
and she goes from him
and becomes another man's wife,
will he return to her?
Would not that land be greatly polluted?
You have played the whore with many lovers;
and would you return to me?
declares the LORD...

²⁰ Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband,
so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel,
declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 3:1, 20)

The Church as the Bride of Christ

“Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;
be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced;
for you will forget the shame of your youth,
and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

⁵ For your Maker is your husband,
the LORD of hosts is his name;
and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,
the God of the whole earth he is called.

⁶ For the LORD has called you
like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit,
like a wife of youth when she is cast off,
says your God.

⁷ For a brief moment I deserted you,
but with great compassion I will gather you.

⁸ In overflowing anger for a moment
I hid my face from you,
but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,”
says the LORD, your Redeemer. (Isaiah 54:4-8)

The Church as the Bride of Christ

¹⁶ “And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ ¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. ¹⁸ And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD. (Hosea 2:16-20)

The Church as the Bride of Christ

Our understanding of the church as the Bride of Christ is enriched when we see that this is a reflection of the New Covenant relationship in which God's people (his bride) will no longer be unfaithful to him.

The Holy Spirit and the Church

Why will the New Covenant people of God (the Bride of Christ) remain faithful to him?

What has changed between the Old Covenant and the New?

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² 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. ³³ **For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: 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.” (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

The Relationship Between Israel and the Church

²⁴ I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

(Ezekiel 36:24-27)

The Holy Spirit and the Church

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is one of the most important points of contrast between the Old Covenant and the New. It's the work of the Holy Spirit in us which gives us hearts which are inclined to follow Jesus, which writes God's laws on our hearts, and which causes us to walk in (increasing and eventually total) obedience.

The Leaders of the Church

Elders – Three words to describe this office:

- *Episkopos* (overseer/bishop)
- *Presbuteros* (elder/presbyter)
- *Poimen* (Pastor) = “Shepherd”

The Leaders of the Church

These words are used interchangeably:

Acts 20:17,28

¹⁷ Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and **called the elders** of the church to come to him. ¹⁸ And when they came to him, he said to them:
... ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**

The Leaders of the Church

These words are used interchangeably:

Titus 1:5-7

⁵ This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and **appoint elders** in every town as I directed you— ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ **For an overseer**, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain

The Leaders of the Church

These words are used interchangeably:

1 Tim 3:1-2, 5:17

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the **office of overseer**, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach...

^{5:17} Let the **elders who rule** well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

The Leaders of the Church

These words are used interchangeably:

1 Peter 5:1-2

So **I exhort the elders** among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² **shepherd the flock of God** that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

The Leaders of the Church

Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

The Leaders of the Church

Elders (pastors, overseers) are responsible for shepherding and overseeing the church, especially through the preaching and teaching of the word.

Deacons are responsible for specific practical needs which they manage on behalf of the congregation.

The Local Church and the Universal Church

Elders (pastors, overseers) are responsible for shepherding and overseeing the church, especially through the preaching and teaching of the word.

Deacons are responsible for specific practical needs which they manage on behalf of the congregation.

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