

Notes: Shabbat – September 13, 2014

Start: 10 am

Order of Service:

Meet and Greet
Introduction (if new people)
Announcements
Open in Prayer for service
Ma Tov
Praise and Worship Songs
Liturgy – Sh'ma
Message
Kaddash - Time of Prayer
Aaronic Blessing
Kiddush
Oneg

Introduction: The Controversy of Galatians 6:16

Gal 6:11 Look at the large letters I use as I close in my own handwriting.

Gal 6:12 It is those who want to look good outwardly who are trying to get you to be circumcised. The only reason they are doing it is to escape persecution for preaching about the Messiah's execution-stake.

Gal 6:13 For even those who are getting circumcised don't observe the Torah. On the contrary, they want you to get circumcised so that they can boast of having gained your adherence.

Gal 6:14 But as for me, Heaven forbid that I should boast about anything except the execution-stake of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah! Through him, as far as I am concerned, the world has been put to death on the stake; and through him, as far as the world is concerned, I have been put to death on the stake.

Gal 6:15 For neither being circumcised nor being uncircumcised matters; what matters is being a new creation.

Gal 6:16 And as many as order their lives by this rule, shalom upon them and mercy, and upon the Isra'el of God!

Gal 6:17 From now on, I don't want anyone to give me any more tsuris, because I have scars on my body to prove that I belong to Yeshua!

Gal 6:18 The grace of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Gal 6:16 And as many as order their lives by this rule, shalom upon them and mercy, and upon the Isra'el of God!

Gal 6:16

This controversial verse, with its expression, unique in the New Testament, "**the Israel of God**," has been misinterpreted as teaching what Replacement theology wrongly claims, namely, that the Church is the New Israel which has replaced the Jews, the so-called "Old Israel," who are therefore now no longer God's people. But neither this verse nor any other part of the New Testament teaches this false and antisemitic doctrine. Nor, in my view, does it teach, as has been proposed (perhaps in reaction), the contrary doctrine that the phrase refers only to Jews and

that "Israel" can never mean Gentiles. To discover what it does teach, we must examine its Jewish background, the use of the word "Israel" in Sha'ul's time, and Sha'ul's purpose at this point in his letter. But we begin at the beginning.

And as many as order their lives by this standard. "As many as" means "all who" (see any lexicon); by context, the "all" Sha'ul has in mind are all those in Galatia, both Messianic Jews and Messianic Gentiles, who order their lives by the standard of being "a new creation" ([Gal 6:15](#)),

[Gal 6:15](#) For neither being circumcised nor being uncircumcised matters; what matters is being a new creation.

These are those whose trusting faithfulness to God and Yeshua. This is found throughout Sha'ul's letter to believers in Galatia.

(Gal. 2:16-Gal. 3:9; [Gal 3:14](#), [Gal 3:22](#), [Gal 3:26-29](#)) expresses itself freely ([Gal 4:21-31](#), [Gal 5:13](#)) in love ([Gal 5:6](#), [Gal 5:13-15](#)) by the Spirit ([Gal 3:2](#), [Gal 3:5](#); [Gal 5:5](#), [Gal 5:16-25](#); [Gal 6:8](#)). These alone constitute God's people in Galatia, God's Messianic Community. Others are self-excluded.

Nothing remarkable so far, but the word sequence is odd. One would have expected, "*Shalom* and mercy upon as many as order their lives by this rule....

However," Sha'ul places the phrase, "as many as order their lives by this rule," at the beginning so that he can maximize the impact of what follows, namely, an allusion to the the main synagogue prayer, the '*Amidah* (Standing Prayer) or *Shmoneh-Esreh* (Eighteen Benedictions); it is the key to this verse.

[Gal 6:16](#) And as many as order their lives by this rule, shalom upon them and mercy, and upon the Isra'el of God!

The '*Amidah* was then and is now the central element of synagogue worship. "*Sim shalom*" ("Grant peace") was definitely one of the '*Amidah* prayers already in use in Yeshua's day;

Abraham Millgram says it was part of the Temple liturgy, following immediately upon the priestly benediction of [Num 6:24-26](#) (*Jewish Worship*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971, pp. 74, 103).

Sha'ul's Messianic Jewish readers and the Judaizers would have likely spotted the allusion immediately in that they were familiar with these pieces of liturgy.

And likely, many of his Gentile readers would have noticed it too, because as "God-fearers" they had spent much time in synagogues.

Our first experience with a God-fearer in scripture is Cornelius in Acts 10. We later see this dynamic throughout Sha'ul's journey.

(See [Act 13:16](#) [Act 13:46-48](#); [Act 14:1](#), [Act 14:6-7](#) for the evidence that many of the Gentile believers in Galatia had already been "God-fearers"; see [Act 10:2](#) [Act 13:16](#) on the term "God-fearers" itself.)

Moreover, they probably continued using some of these prayers in their Messianic worship; if not, the Judaizers may have refreshed their memories.

In the following literal rendering of the first sentence of "*Sim shalom*," the '*Amidah*'s final blessing, the words quoted by Sha'ul are in boldface:

Put *shalom*, goodness and blessing, grace and kindness **and mercy upon us and upon all Israel**, your people.

By citing just these seven highlighted words, Sha'ul, with utmost economy, guides the reader's attention directly to the intended meaning of the verse. Further, his skill in wordplay is that of a virtuoso.

He starts with the expected greeting, "*Shalom*" and skips to "**upon us**" (substituting "**them**" for "us"), thereby connecting the aforementioned greeting with the prayer, which becomes the new context. Only with the words, "**and mercy**," does the reader realize that Sha'ul has pivoted from greeting to '*Amidah*'; but, with rabbinic brevity (see [Mat 2:6](#)) he does not quote the whole list of six blessings, just the first and last. To the Jewish ear, it would be recognizable and bring to the forefront of one's mind the other blessings. This tactic is displayed throughout the New Covenant writings, both by Sha'ul and by Yeshua. A simple reference, brings forth to mind entire passages of scripture.

Finally, the sequence of the words, "**Shalom upon them and mercy**," differs from that in the '*Amidah* in order to preserve the integrity of the customary greeting, "*Shalom upon them*" ("*shalom 'aleihem*").

In the '*Amidah*, "us" refers to the congregation reciting the prayer; they are part of "all Israel," but by saying, "and upon all Israel," they ask God to extend the requested blessing of peace beyond themselves to the entire people of God.

(The prayers in the synagogue liturgy are typically not merely for oneself or one's friends, but for all God's people.)

The congregation is not "all Israel," but it is included in all Israel. Likewise, in this verse, "**them**" refers to the Messianic Community in Galatia, which is included in (i.e., is a subset of), but not identical with, **the Israel of God**.

By adding, "**and upon the Israel of God**," Sha'ul extends his prayer to other believers outside Galatia.

He does not quote the words "your people" from the '*Amidah*, because it is unnecessary.

The word "Israel" itself already implies "God's people"; since Sha'ul is exercising "utmost economy," he has no need to belabor the obvious. Likewise, he does not have quote the word "all," because he is not focusing on whether the blessing should extend to "all" or only to "some" of God's Israel; without doubt he wished *shalom* and mercy upon *all* the Israel of God, whoever they are.

But *who* is God's Israel? This is the question Sha'ul touches on by quoting from "*Sim shalom*" in such a way as to direct his readers' attention to a new application of the word "Israel," while stopping short of actually redefining it.

Israel. Before we can understand Sha'ul's purpose in changing the '*Amidah*'s "all Israel" to "the Israel of God," we must examine the crucial word "**Israel**." In Sha'ul's time this term was current only among those acquainted with Jewish writings, which means, for most practical purposes, that it was known only to Jews.

Both Jewish and Gentile Greek-speakers said "*Ioudaioi*" when referring to the Jews (or "Judeans"; see [Joh 1:19](#)) as a geographic, ethnic, national, political or socio-religious entity.

But Jews reserved the word "**Israel**" to refer to themselves as God's people, the people of promise, whereas Gentiles did not use the term "Israel" at all.

Thus "**Israel**" was Jewish jargon. The Judaizers likely exploited this fact in a crude appeal to the Gentiles' pride, so that their Gentile followers would think that by getting themselves circumcised they were joining God's fashionable elite, God's "in crowd."

Therefore, Sha'ul is teaching nothing at all here about what "the Israel of God" is. He is not defining it to be the Church, or the Jews, or some Jews and not others. Rather, he is using the word "Israel" as a synonym for "God's people," with "the Israel of God" being best defined as "those who are genuinely God's people,"

"God's 'Israel,' so to speak," in contrast with the Judaizers who may in *some* sense be "Israel" but are not "of God," and therefore not *God's* Israel.

We know that Sha'ul is not redefining a term because verse 16 is the only place where "the Israel of God" is mentioned.

The entire momentum of Sha'ul's thought in the book of Galatians, reaches its climax here when we get to 6:11.

[Gal 6:11](#) Look at the large letters I use as I close in my own handwriting.

The large letters are used to emphasize...Sha'ul is concluding his letter with a final thought that is important. Everything else in this letter was foundational in refuting the claims of those who told non-Jewish believers in Galatia that they had to become circumcised.

Even without a more precise definition for "the Israel of God," we may be certain that the central point of the verse is this: "The Judaizers want Gentiles to think they must get circumcised in order to become part of God's people ([Gal 5:3](#)).

But I say that Gentiles have only to trust in and remain faithful to God and his Messiah; if you are doing this, then, without circumcision, you are already part of God's people; you are *already*, so to speak, included in God's 'Israel.' " Using the "most Jewish" language possible, the phraseology of the '*Amidah*, he demolishes the Judaizers' last point of persuasion!

The tone of [Gal 6:17](#) shows that Sha'ul is fully aware of his accomplishment; and since nothing more of substance needs to be said, [Gal 6:18](#) ends the letter.

Sha'ul's letter to the Galatians may have ended, but what I have to convey hasn't ended. If it were only that simple.

Regarding v 16, interpreters have not been satisfied to let the matter rest. They have looked for a "deeper meaning," some deep truth concerning the nature of "the Israel of God." And that is their error. There isn't any deeper meaning! However, others believe there is a deeper meaning than what Sha'ul was stating.

The consequence of this wrong interpretation has been immeasurable pain for the Jews. The conclusion was reached that the Church is now the "New Israel" and the Jews, the so-called "Old Israel," no longer God's people. If the Jews are no longer God's people, isn't it appropriate to persecute them? There are four reasons why this antisemitic conclusion is false and is not taught by this verse or any other: (1) the Greek grammar, (2) the Jewish background, (3) Sha'ul's purpose here, and (4) Sha'ul's teaching elsewhere.

- (1) *Sha'ul's purpose here.* Sha'ul's purpose in the book of Galatians is to destroy the arguments of the Judaizers, not teaching about the nature of Israel. This is clear from the fact that the word "Israel" appears only here in the whole book of Galatians. Thus whatever we learn in this verse about Israel is a byproduct, gleaned in passing and to be set alongside his reasoned discussion of the subject, which is found not in Galatians but in the book of Romans.
- (2) *Sha'ul's teaching elsewhere.* In Romans, Sha'ul devotes three chapters to the subject of Israel (chapters 9-11). There all eleven instances of the word "Israel" refer to the Jewish people, never to the Church. The climax of his teaching is that "all Israel"-the Jewish people as a whole-"will be saved" ([Rom 11:26](#); the note there shows that "Israel" in that verse does not mean the Church). And his purpose in those chapters is to prove that God can be counted on to keep his promises, both to the Jewish people and to all believers in Yeshua-which is precisely the opposite of the theology that says the Jews are no longer God's people, no longer the people of promise.

Similar wording of Galatians 6:15 – 16 is found in Ephesians 2:11 – 15, but notice how Sha'ul conveys a similar message to a different audience...

[Eph 2:11](#) Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth — called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised —

[Eph 2:12](#) at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God.

[Eph 2:13](#) But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood.

[Eph 2:14](#) For he himself is our shalom — he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah which divided us

[Eph 2:15](#) by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity and thus make shalom,

[Eph 2:16](#) and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in himself killing that enmity.

Does Sha'ul ever refer to Ephesian believers as Israel?

Traditional Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism and Covenant theology (Presby-terianism) are among the branches of Christendom that have perpetuated the idea that the Christians have replaced the Jews as "the New Israel," "the True Israel," "the Israel of God."

But in reaction, the branch of fundamentalist Protestantism known as Dispensationalism has erred in the opposite direction. Taking the "**and**" before "**upon the Israel of God**" to mean that "**those who order their lives by this standard**" are entirely distinct from "**the Israel of God**," they propose a schema in which "the Israel of God" refers to Jews, but the Church and the Jewish people are forever separate in their histories and destinies.

The Jews are seen as having a physical, non-spiritual, earthly destiny, while the Church is seen as having a heavenly, spiritual, non-earthly destiny. Intended to restore the Jewish people to a place in God's plan, the "separate but equal" status accorded them tends here, as in interracial contexts, toward "separate and inferior."

Further, in the case of a Jew who has accepted Yeshua as the Messiah, Dispensationalism has the curious effect of demanding that he decide whether he belongs to his own Jewish people, Israel, or to the Church. The psychological conflict is exacerbated by Dispensationalism's teaching that there will be a "Pre-Tribulation Rapture" of the Church,

in which Christians will one day be removed to heaven from the scene of world history, while the Jews, Israel, will be left behind to suffer through "the time of Jacob's trouble." Is a Jewish believer, then, going to flee with the Christians or stay behind to suffer with the Jews?

Is his fate to be "Jewish" suffering or "Christian" escape? For more on this, see [1Th 4:13-18](#).

If, as the Dispensationalists teach, the Church is not "the Israel of God," then precisely which Jews could Dispensationalists consistently understand to be "the Israel of God"?

Messianic Jews?

This would be consistent with Sha'ul's teaching that "not everyone from Israel is truly part of Israel," so that "only a remnant" will be saved ([Rom 9:6](#), [Rom 9:27](#); [Rom 11:5](#)). But Messianic Jews are already among "as many as order their lives by this standard," so that there is no need to mention them a second time. Non-Messianic Jews? Possibly, since Sha'ul's heart so ached for his unsaved brothers that he would have put himself under God's curse if it could have helped them ([Rom 9:3-4](#), [Rom 10:1](#)). But nothing in the letter to the Galatians prepares us for such a sentiment here; it simply doesn't fit into place. All Jews? Then there would have been no need for Sha'ul to invent the phrase, "the Israel of God"; he could have quoted "all Israel" from the *Amidah* without modification.

The Dispensationalists are wrong; neither the Jewish people as a whole nor any subgroup of them constitute what Sha'ul means by "**the Israel of God**." This is clear from [Rom 11:16-24](#), where Gentile believers are portrayed as wild olive branches grafted into the rich root of the cultivated olive tree which is Israel, the Jewish people.

Since Gentile believers "have shared with the Jews in spiritual matters" ([Rom 15:27](#)), they are in some sense no longer "excluded from citizenship in Israel" ([Eph 2:12](#)); while unbelieving Jews, who are now broken-off branches, constitute some sort of "Israel in suspended animation," since they are capable, through trust, of being grafted back into their own olive tree.

But none of this rather complex and subtle teaching about Israel is brought up in Galatians, and it is unreasonable to pack all this meaning into a single use of the word "Israel" (for more see [Rom 11:23-24](#)). In fact, since Sha'ul wrote Galatians before he wrote Romans, we cannot even be sure that he had yet thought all of this through.

It is the Church's fault that the question of who is God's people became a point of contention and separation between Judaism and Christianity. For the Church began claiming, over against the Jews, to be the "New Israel," the "true Israel," the "Israel of God," and regarded the Jewish people as merely the "Old Israel," no longer eligible to receive God's promises because of having rejected Yeshua.

How ironic that the Church claimed to supplant the Jewish people as Israel when it behaved instead like Israel's old name, Ya'akov, which means "supplanter"! This perverted understanding of election, ignoring everything Sha'ul writes in chapters 9-11, raised between Jews and Christians an unnecessary barrier.

[Zec 8:23](#) Adonai-Tzva'ot says, 'When that time comes, ten men will take hold — speaking all the languages of the nations — will grab hold of the cloak of a Jew and say, "We want to go with you, because we have heard that God is with you." ' ' "

This week I received some new insight regarding this passage.

God is not with the Judaizer,

But with the Messianic Jew.

As Jeri had talked about in her drash, I too believe in the manner where it will be the Messianic movement that leads people back to God.

In light of what transpired this week with Congressional Representative Ted Cruz, and his appearance at a In Defense of Christians gathering

This was sent through the Rabbi's Forum by Rabbi Aaron Bortz of Adat HaTikvah, Louisville, KY:

BRITAIN ON WAY TO BECOMING JUDENFREI.

I actually never thought I would have to write an article like this, from the green and pleasant land of England . However it is becoming truly frightening to be a Jew in UK . What is so remarkable is how quickly it all appears to have happened. One can now start to experience what it must have been like in parts of Europe under Nazi threat, when friends and neighbors suddenly and without warning, turn on you because you are Jewish.

In the last week or so alone, we have seen the Tricycle Theatre banning the annual JEWISH film festival, which is one of the most important Jewish events of the calendar. The famous Edinburgh Fringe arts festival has also banned Israeli connected theatre groups. We have the Parliamentary Member from Bradford, a large town in Yorkshire, announcing his town to be "Israeli" free,as well as reading that a leading

Scottish Nationalist has apparently declared that an independent Scotland will be "Israeli free". None of us are surely naïve enough to not understand that in practice it means Judenfrei, unless individual Jews renounce their loyalty to Israel . Leading Supermarkets have been invaded and ransacked by anti Israel terrorists, threatening staff and customers. The supermarkets have succumbed to this terrorism, with rumours swirling around that they are soon to stop selling all Israeli products. Only a day or two ago, a major supermarket in Central London , actually took all kosher products off the shelf. Think about that- all Jewish products banned, many not even from Israel at all.

Over 100,000 people marched through London recently in an anti Israel and anti Jewish orgy of sheer hatred. I know people whose life long friends are putting the most hideous anti Semitic rantings on their "Facebook" pages.

Our Jewish so called leaders have let us down.

I personally haven't seen nor read any leading member of our Jewish representative bodies, or Rabbis, standing up in public for our community.

This is not a good time to be a Jew in Britain . Apparently in France it is far worse.. We are being cowed and terrorized by home grown anti semites, and by imported oriental ones. Only in the last few days have some of the leading Newspaper columnists begun to wake up to the hatred they have themselves stirred up by their coverage of Gaza, replete with its ancient Jewish blood libel of deliberate child sacrifice.

Natan Sharansky said recently that Europe is death to Jews, and he is so correct. History shows that anything can generate the hatred. If it wasn't Gaza it would be something else.

>>

>> Lloyd Levy

>>

London

>> 18 August2014.

From Ron Cantor:

There are Orthodox religious *anti-Messianics* at the door of our congregation almost every week, trying to persuade people away from their faith and even from entering the congregation. Please pray for protection for the young believers and pray for these men to have a revelation of Yeshua.