

## How Is the Church of Israel Different from Mainstream Christianity?

By Reed Benson

Most people are conformists. They are fearful of being earmarked as different and prefer comfortable anonymity rather than running the risk of being maligned for their maverick thoughts or habits. That, however, is not the call of true Christianity. Jesus Christ stated that He was *“not of this world”* (John 8:23). He further taught that it is the *“narrow way”* that leads to life eternal, and *“few there be that find it”* (Matthew 7:14). Of the many examples of great men and ladies of the faith identified in Scripture, invariably they are all individuals who went against the tide and stood for principle when almost everyone else was caving in under the pressure of evil. Thus, we see that being a nonconformist goes to the very heart of the true Christian faith.

Being a nonconformist is not the same as being a rebel. While there are those who may wear with pride the rebel logo (it has many varied shades of meaning in our American culture), a person who is truly rebellious is no friend of God. Scripture could not be clearer in its disapproval when it states this: *“rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft”* (1 Samuel 15:23). No, the nonconformity of Christ is not an unbridled and obnoxious disdain for authority, but rather a soft-spoken but resolute insistence that righteousness and truth will not be abandoned.

As civilizations rise and fall, the true Christian faith almost always carries a conservative flavor, that is, a desire to maintain the values of the past. Why is that? Simply because what we know of the past is mostly its noble qualities, for who cares to go to the effort of preserving that which has little worth? Thus, a conservative is one who resists the tide of fallen human nature to do that what feels good at this moment. Instead, a conservative persuades others to shape their values to match the best aspects of the past. Rarely is this popular, because it is never as easy as the indulgence of the present. Conservatism almost always involves self-sacrifice and either denial or postponement of personal gratification.

The Church of Israel is thus a body of Christian believers who are both conservatives and nonconformists. We are conservative in the sense that we try to foster the best values of the Bible and America’s great Christian past. We are nonconformists in the sense that we strenuously object to the easy road, that broad path of destruction that most churches in our land have chosen to follow. We believe that Abraham, Moses, the great prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles of the New Testament all share the same mantle of being conservative nonconformists. We hope to follow their example.

What follows is a list of the major areas in which the Church of Israel differs with mainstream Christianity of postmodern America and simultaneously embraces those wholesome and noble virtues of our Christian forebears. While not exhaustive, my hope is that the list is comprehensive enough to provide the reader with a general sense of the Church of Israel and our collective worldview.

The Church of Israel asserts that the King James Bible bears the ratification of God as the single Bible best suited for the mind, heart, and ear of English speakers throughout the world and is the absolute touchstone of truth in all things. Mainstream Christianity has largely abandoned the King James Bible, finding it too difficult to understand and politically incorrect. Furthermore, a growing majority of mainstream Christianity refuses to acknowledge any translation of the Bible as authoritative, preferring to embrace the postmodern idea that absolute truth does not exist.

The Church of Israel asserts that the lost sheep of the House of Israel, the so-called “lost ten tribes,” are comprised of the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Teutonic, and Scandinavian people now found in many parts of the earth. Mainstream Christianity believes that God misplaced the “lost ten tribes,” simply allowing them to be absorbed into other races of mankind.

The Church of Israel asserts that the people now commonly referred to as “Jews” and who have taken on the appellation “Israel” are, in fact, impostors. Mainstream Christianity has accepted this misappropriation of identity without any level of scholarly scrutiny, and when challenged, quickly resort to insults rather than considering any meaningful exchange of information.

The Church of Israel asserts that the precious blood atonement wrought by Jesus Christ on Calvary was for the purpose of redeeming His covenant people, genetic Israel, in conformance with the biblical principle of kinsman redemption and the covenantal promises described in both the Old and New Testaments. Mainstream Christianity has discarded the covenants of the Bible and has crafted new theologies that make Christ’s atonement available to all races, even those who do not stand under any penalty of judgment according to covenantal law and therefore have no need of atonement.

The Church of Israel asserts that Jesus Christ did not abolish Old Testament Law, but confirmed it with His earthly ministry, fulfilled in His sacrificial death, and promulgated in the teachings of the Apostles. Mainstream Christianity purports that the New Testament ushered in a new dispensation, rendering the Laws of the Old Testament antiquated and valueless for modern believers.

The Church of Israel asserts that the Ten Commandments represent a divine summation of biblical law and moral virtue and are therefore invaluable regarding practical daily life for both the believer and the unconverted. Mainstream Christianity has but tepid enthusiasm for the Ten Commandments and has mounted only a sporadic defense of these cornerstone biblical precepts.

The Church of Israel asserts that the biblical Sabbath of the seventh day remains fully valid, was kept by Christ and His Apostles, is designed for the blessing of God’s people today, and is identified as the day commonly called Saturday. Mainstream Christianity insists that the Sabbath commandment is unnecessary and prefers to follow the early Roman Catholic Church’s position of worship on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday.

The Church of Israel asserts that Christ or the Apostles never abolished the biblical festivals of the Old Testament. They represent the foundation of a spirit-filled annual calendar by which believers can structure their lives. Mainstream Christianity has abandoned the festivals of the Bible and has developed religious celebrations and conferences with virtually no regard to biblical precedent.

The Church of Israel asserts that all races bear the mark of God's original design and ought to remain separate and distinct from one another in worship, marriage, and social relations so that God's original biblical order can be preserved for the betterment of all. Mainstream Christianity has embraced the ungodly humanist proposition that all racial distinctions are to be ignored and suggests that race mixing is a mark of worldly sophistication.

The Church of Israel asserts that intimate relations between individuals of the same gender are a perversion of the highest order plainly condemned in Scripture. Mainstream Christianity rarely condemns homosexual behavior and is at best divided in their opinion, with many churches openly embracing practicing homosexuals.

The Church of Israel asserts that spiritual leadership in both the church and the home is the burden and responsibility of males; if practiced as the Bible commands, this order of headship results in the greatest opportunity for blessings for both men and ladies. Mainstream Christianity has endorsed the precepts of radical feminism that seek to empower females with the false promise of greater fulfillment if male leadership is discarded in the church and the home.

The Church of Israel asserts that responsible moral behavior, specifically the avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, and all forms of promiscuity, is essential to the spiritual and physical well-being of individuals, families, and the church body. Mainstream Christianity is largely indifferent to many of these moral issues that are so destructive to our social order.

The Church of Israel asserts that God's Kingdom on earth is the goal and culmination of history and will be consummated when Jesus Christ returns to rule over all nations in eternal majesty. Mainstream Christianity has either passively forgotten that dominion of the earth is Scripture's ultimate concern or has actively fostered the rapture doctrine, which limits Christ's reign to non-tangible realms.

The Church of Israel asserts that the eternal life of a believer finds its complete fulfillment when the conscious soul is reunited with the physical resurrected body as taught in the historic Christian creeds. Mainstream Christianity focuses exclusively on the immortality of the soul and is apparently uninterested in a resurrected physical body on earth.

The Church of Israel asserts that the regathering is a yet future event associated with the return of Christ in which the faithful saints of true, genetic Israel will be either

resurrected or translated and brought to the historic land of Israel. Mainstream Christianity either dismisses the concept of a literal regathering altogether or mistakenly suggests that the regathering has already occurred and is embodied by the Israeli state formalized in 1948.

This list of distinctions between the Church of Israel and the denominations of mainstream Christianity is not exhaustive. But it does provide clear indicators that the Church of Israel offers a structure of biblical belief that is somewhat off the broad path. As conservative nonconformists, we at the Church of Israel believe that our doctrine and practice are an accurate reflection of the faith of both Old and New Testament believers. It is our sincere desire to please Christ through the study and application of Scripture to the best of our ability. For those who have interest in more detailed information regarding the teachings of the Church of Israel, please call 417-432-3119 or write Church of Israel, Route 1 Box 218E, Schell City, Missouri, 64783.