

The True Israel  
Of  
God

*Dan Norcini*

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of  
God

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abrogated never to be resurrected again. Henceforth salvation is to come to those among the Jews that are part of God's elect in the exact same manner as it comes to us who are Gentiles – through repentance and faith in the proclamation of the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Truly, they will not see Him until they say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord".

Until Jesus of Nazareth is owned as the true Messiah, the Jew of today remains as dead in sins and trespasses as anyone else. He does not have some special way of salvation granted him that is different than provided to the Gentiles. As long as he continues to reject Christ Jesus, the words of the Lord Jesus still continue to apply:

*"He who hates Me hates My Father also" (John 15: 23).*

One thing is absolutely certain – All the haters of Christ Jesus lie under the anathema of the great God of heaven and earth and no one who hates this God has any right to think of him or herself as one of His chosen people. This kind of temerity is a recipe for eternal disaster. What a travesty that the misguided system foisted upon gullible Christians by Dispensational theology has only perpetuated their vain hope. One can only pray that God will smite this entire system and dash it to the ground. May He be pleased to use this weak effort on this author's part to do so even if it is only a small part. The entire edifice must be thrown down so that the truth may be clearly seen once again. Amen.

Yours in Christ

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July 2000

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(Free List of Free Booklets)

## The True Israel of God

*"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And to those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."  
(Gal 6: 15-16).*

*"Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart".  
(Psalm 73: 1).*

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God".  
(Matt 5: 8).*

*"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?  
Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her sons."*  
(Isaiah 66: 8).

It is a sad commentary on the state of the church these days that so few professing Christians are knowledgeable of the high and lofty calling that the church occupies in the eternal purpose of God. One cannot read the letters of the apostles and but be struck by the eminency that they attached to it and the esteem in which they held it. The glowing terms they employed to describe it were calculated to instill in the minds of their readers its exalted position as the spouse of Christ and the very temple in which He will display the majesty of His glory throughout all ages.

Yet tragically, there are untold thousands of Christians who are blind to this wondrous truth about themselves and instead are obsessively preoccupied with national Israel and the Jewish race. They speak in ravishing terms of this Israel and incessantly search the headlines coming out of that part of the world feverishly anticipating the fulfillment of Biblical "end-times" prophecies. Indeed to listen to them speak, one gets the distinct impression that many of them would gladly trade their physical birth-parents if they could so that they might be born of the stock of Abraham and become Jews themselves! Such is the obsequious attitude that is fostered among many of this persuasion that they display an almost god-like reverence for those Jews whom they deem as "completed", i.e., Jews who have become converts to Christianity and now own Jesus of Nazareth as their true Messiah. In their minds, these completed Jews can do no wrong, can never err in their understanding of the Scriptures nor be misguided in any way. Somehow, they are more "spiritual" than those poor Gentiles

The simple truth is that if one believes the words of the Scriptures to have any meaning whatsoever, one comes to the inescapable conclusion that the earthly nation of Israel has been rejected and taken as a whole are no more the chosen people of God than are the Arabs.

*"And the Lord said, 'Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God.' Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and it will come about that, in the place where it is said to them, 'You are not My people,' it will be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God.'" (Hosea 1: 9-10).*

This amazing prophecy uttered by Hosea so many years prior to Christ's coming is quoted by both the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter in their various letters to the church. In both cases they refer the latter part of this startling prophecy to the church (Romans 9: 23-26 and 1 Peter 2: 10). Israel as a nation was to be disowned yet a new Israel would arise that would encompass both Jew and Gentile. It is they who would be called the people of God. They and they alone would be the sons of the living God. The cause of this disowning of Israel after the flesh by Jehovah would be the rejection of their promised Shepherd whom they would betray for thirty pieces of silver. That was the last straw so to speak. The national covenant that was between the nation and Jehovah would subsequently be broken irrevocably. The entire scenario was seen in vision form long before it happened by the prophet Zechariah.

*"Then I said, 'I will not pasture you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and let those who are left eat one another's flesh.' And I took my staff, Favor, and cut it into pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. So it was broken on that day, and thus the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized that it was the word of the Lord. And I said to them, 'If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!' So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages." (Zech 11: 9-12).*

Nothing could be clearer. The national covenant between God and earthly Israel is over. It has been broken and totally

35

such as themselves who were not so highly favored as to be born of the "chosen race".

In the words of the apostle Paul, "This ought not to be", and this is putting it mildly, for in reality, it demonstrates a complete lack of understanding on their part of God's redemptive purpose in Christ. Failing to grasp the significance of the New Covenant and its consummation of all the promises made to the patriarchs, they continually confound the types, figures and shadows of the Old Testament with their fulfillment in the New. They insist that there must be a "literal, earthly" fulfillment of all these promises and prophecies if one is to believe the Word of God. To do otherwise in their minds is to handle the Scriptures deceitfully and to fall into the plague of "modernism" which has so infected the present day church scene.

To give them their just due, those of this persuasion tend to have a high regard for the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. Hence, for someone to "explain away" the literal, "obvious" meaning of the Scriptures is a crime of the same nature that those who would try to deny the Virgin Birth of Christ are guilty of. Hence they recoil in horror at the slightest suggestion that one might be attempting to undermine the credibility of the Word of God by suggesting anything other than a literal fulfillment of the promises. Now, this is a fine and commendable attitude when it comes to dealing with the basic doctrines of Christianity such as the deity and humanity of Christ, His virgin birth, his death and resurrection, etc, etc. However, it is completely misguided and unwarranted when dealing with prophetic interpretation. Simply put, prophecy is meant to be interpreted in a completely different manner as even a cursory reading of the apostle Paul clearly reveals.

For instance, take a look at Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In the tenth chapter we find an amazing example of the inspired apostle showing us how to "interpret" the story of the children of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and their subsequent wilderness wanderings.

*"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock*

Notice again, it was not Israel after the flesh that Saul was persecuting; it was the church. What makes this even more striking is the fact that Paul belonged to the nation of Israel after the flesh at the very time he was doing this!

Such is the union between Christ Jesus and His church that to attempt to injure the one is to attempt to injure Christ. What is done to His church is reckoned as if done to Him. And woe be to that man or woman who lifts a hand against the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. They may escape the curse in this life, but they certainly shall not escape it in the next!

This truth serves to set forth the main danger that this writer sees in the entire Dispensational scheme of things. It removes Christ from the center of attention and robs Him of His preeminence and shifts the entire focus upon the earthly nation of Israel. The standard now becomes not, "What do you think of Jesus Christ", but rather, "What do you think of natural Israel". One searches in vain through the entirety of the New Testament to find any support for this outlandish notion, yet in spite of that, these stalwarts for earthly Israel continue to stubbornly adhere to this discombobulated notion and thereby only foster the spirit of pride and self-righteousness among the Jews that produced their ruin in the first place. They lull the Jews who desperately stand in need of redemption by Christ into a false sense of security by catering to their blind delusion that somehow they are all going to get a second chance somewhere off in the future someday. Whereas the Scriptures state that,

*"Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation". (2 Cor 6: 2).*

The Dispensationalists say:

"Now is not the acceptable time. Now is not the Day of salvation. One is still yet to come for you. Don't fret if you miss it now; God is preparing a special time just for you".

Alas for the apostle Paul. If he had been privy to such wondrous wisdom and insight into God's prophetic plan as the Dispensationalists claim to possess, he could have saved himself a lot of needless trouble and simply informed his brethren after the flesh of this great truth and thereby endeared himself to their hearts and ensured himself of their favor.

*which followed them; and that rock was Christ...Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1Cor 10: 1-4, 11).*

When one considers what Paul has just stated here, it is simply astounding. Spiritual food, spiritual drink, spiritual rock, Christ; where are any of these things mentioned specifically in that story out of Exodus? We see manna from heaven and we see water flowing from a physical rock; we see passing through the Red Sea and a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night; but where is this baptism that Paul describes? The point is that the apostle is showing us is the proper method to interpret the Old Testament. Not only did the story literally and really happen to national Israel, but it also holds a higher, spiritual meaning which the Holy Spirit intended it for it to have.

Take another example from the writings of the same apostle in the letter to the Galatians.

*"Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, 'Rejoice, Barren woman who does not bear, break forth and shout, you who are not in labor, for more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband.' And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.' So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman." (Gal 4: 21-31).*

one's view of Christ Jesus. Listen to the words of the apostle Paul:

**"Grace be with all those that love our lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible". (Eph 6: 24).**

Here we see the wondrous blessing. Observe how it hinges on love for the person of Jesus Christ. Notice the Scripture does not state that:

"Grace or blessing be with all those that love Israel after the flesh".

The next part of the equation is also recorded by Paul:

**"If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed". (1Cor 16: 22).**

There is the terrible curse.

Notice carefully what it does NOT say:

"If anyone does not love Israel after the flesh, let him be accursed".

The simple, New Testament truth is that in Christ Jesus is the only place where blessing is to be found. Outside of him nothing but destruction, ruin and devastation remains. He is the One who is "most blessed forever" (Psalm 21: 6) and those who are "in Him" and them alone, are blessed. To despise Him and by virtue of His vital union with His church which is His body, to despise His church, is to bring the curse of God down upon one's head.

Once again observe the words of the apostle Paul:

**"For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you (His saints – note mine), and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, and these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction..." (2 Thes 1: 6-9).**

Paul, of all men knew firsthand the depth of the union between Christ and His beloved church. Formerly, as Saul of Tarsus he was breathing out threatenings against the church as recorded in the book of Acts, and was met by these words from the risen and exalted Christ,

**"Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?" (Acts 9:4)**

Notice once again how Paul does not hesitate to "spiritualize" the entire incident recorded in the book of Genesis. Where does it say there in Genesis that Hagar is a covenant much less Mount Sinai? For that matter, where does it say that Sarah is the new covenant and is Mt. Zion? The truth is that it does not. However, the apostle Paul tells us plainly that it does. Since the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus being the cornerstone (Eph 2:20), we do not have the "luxury" of so easily dismissing his manner of interpretation.

One can clearly see a pattern developing here in which the actual incidents recorded in the Old Testament have a two-fold meaning. There is the obvious, literal, natural meaning and then there is the hidden, higher, spiritual meaning. The first can be readily gleaned from anyone who takes the time to simply read the accounts and accepts at face value the story and/or ordinances recorded there. The latter can only be discerned through the insight provided by the Holy Spirit who clearly revealed to the apostles the manner in which He intended the Old Testament to be rightly understood. This principle is best summed up by the words of the apostle himself:

**"However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual." (1Cor 15: 46).**

The reader should take notice that the text from which this quotation is taken once again illustrates Paul's method of understanding the Old Testament. Paul speaks of the first Adam (v. 45) and of the second Adam (vs. 45, 47) who clearly is the Lord Christ. In other words, there are very real similarities between the first Adam and the second Adam. Yet there are at the same time, essential differences that must be properly understood. The first Adam is earthy, natural; the second Adam is heavenly and spiritual. Thus Adam, though a very real person whose life is recorded in the book of Genesis is representative of a truth that is greater than himself. There is something deeper, more mysterious if you will, about him. In other words, he is also a type or figure of Christ. This fact is given a second witness in the letter to the Romans in the fifth chapter:

The very language of the Lord Jesus makes it perfectly clear that He is speaking of finality or totality. Once the measure has been filled, it is full: nothing more can be added to it. All that remains is for the curse to be executed.

The apostle Paul echoes these words in his first letter to the Thessalonians:

*"For you brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost."* (1Thes 2: 14-16).

In light of the above, it is an abstruse view of the Scriptures that would somehow exempt Israel from the Divine curse. The curse could come down upon them at any time should they violate the covenant and history itself records that indeed, they were not spared. Why then do Dispensationalists continue to cling to their misguided notion that somehow Israel after the flesh MUST be blessed by God and anathematize anyone who would dare call their view into question?

The answer is quite simple. It is their stubborn insistence in reading the Old Testament forward into the New instead of vice-versa. The New Testament clearly and unequivocally teaches us that only in Christ Jesus is there any blessing to be found. Simply read the first chapter of the letter to the Ephesians to see Paul enumerate the blessings that are to be found in Christ and in Him alone. Outside of Christ lies the curse of God's broken law (Gal 3:10). Anyone found outside of Christ on the day of the great assize will suffer the full brunt of this curse, Jew or non-Jew, as they hear the solemn words from the lips of the Judge of heaven and earth, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matt 25: 41).

The New Covenant standard for blessing is no longer the view that one takes of Israel after the flesh. The New Covenant standard for blessing or for cursing now has become

*"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." (Romans 5: 14).*

Yet one could never have gleaned this from the Scriptures without the Holy Spirit revealing it through the apostle Paul.

What we learn from this is a principle here that is of the utmost importance. The stories, ordinances, statutes, as well as the covenants and the items associated with them, all have a deeper, spiritual meaning that is to be grasped if they are to be rightly understood and interpreted by those of us living under the New Covenant. We have looked at the feast of Passover in a previous article and already observed how the lamb, the leaven, and the other elements surrounding this Old Covenant feast are to be rightly understood by the Christian (1Cor 5: 7-8). The same can be said of the altar, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the laver, the incense, and all of the elements of the Mosaic economy. All were very real implements or institutions ordained by the Lord of the covenant that figured prominently in the history of the ancient people of God. Yet they all have a higher, spiritual significance as they are all types or figures of New Testament spiritual realities. Observe if you will the following comparisons:

The altar (Exodus 27: 1) is a type of the spiritual altar of the New Covenant (Heb 13: 10) which is none other than Christ Himself whose pure and holy nature sanctifies the offering of His own body (Matt 23:19). The laver of washing (Exod 30: 18-21) made for ceremonial ablutions prefigures the washing of regeneration (Titus 3: 5) as well as the continual washing of the saints by the water of the Word (Eph 5: 26). The incense which was offered up before the golden altar (Exod 30: 6-9, 34-36) clearly is a type of the prayers of the saints (Rev 8: 3-4) which ascend before the throne of God as a pleasing fragrance being perfumed by the merits of Christ. The sacrifices outlined in Leviticus all point to the one great sacrifice (Hebrews 10: 4-10) offered by the Lord Jesus. The high priest (Exod 28) prefigures the Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 7:26-28; Heb 8: 1-2).

As a matter of truth, the entire tabernacle structure and all the trappings that surrounded it served only as a type of the great, spiritual reality in the heavenlies.

"Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve the **copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, 'See,' He says, 'That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.'" (Heb 8: 4-5).

Even the geographical locations of ancient Israel are representative of spiritual realities. Mt. Zion, the hill which became synonymous with the temple and the place of Jehovah's presence and the seat of the king's throne was itself a type of the true palace of the King of Kings and the place of His presence. Notice carefully the following Scripture texts and observe how many of the familiar terms and images employed by the Old Testament are transferred into the New Covenant where they find their true fulfillment.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the **city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King.**" (Psalm 48: 1-2).

"**God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. And His tabernacle is in Salem** (ancient name of Jerusalem - note mine); **His dwelling place also is in Zion.**" (Psalm 76: 1-2).

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth...He summons the heavens above, and the earth, to judge His people...And the heavens declare His righteousness, for **God Himself is Judge.**" (Psalm 50: 2,4,6).

"For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, 'If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.' And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, 'I am full of fear and trembling.' **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,** and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and **church of the first-born** who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men

propitiation to the wrath of God and the Fulfiller of the law. That was vicarious and was befitting of the Lamb of God who, though completely innocent in His own Person, freely chose to bear the curse for His own people. No, if we are to believe the Dispensationalists, then the Lord Jesus actually deserved or merited this curse since He had violated the Divine injunction concerning the nation of Israel!

One can easily see the folly in this scheme when viewed from this perspective. For if it were true, then we have the blasphemous suggestion that the Lord Jesus is pitted against His own Father and is going around cursing that which His Father has blessed. If God would not allow Balaam to curse that which He had blessed (Numbers 23:8), then why would He allow His Son to do so? The Scriptures emphatically state that "the curse causeless shall not come". If there is not cause, then the curse returns empty. The fact is Israel was indeed guilty and deserved the Divine curse. Deuteronomy, chapter 28, wherein lie the blessings and curses of the covenant, makes it readily apparent that if they rebelled against God and cast off His authority they would indeed become subjected to His curse. Their rejection of the many prophetic voices sent by God to warn them of their apostasy and their continued idolatry was due directly to the erroneous and fatal error of foolishly believing that God would not make good on His threatenings and smite them with the curse. The last recorded voice in the Old Covenant period warns them once again to beware of this terrible delusion.

"Behold, I am going to send you Eijjah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the lord. And he will come and restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, **lest I come and smite the land with a curse**". (Malachi 4: 5-6).

Indeed, Jesus Himself states that John the Baptist was Elijah as he came in the spirit and power of that great prophet of fire. He did come and prepared the way for the Messiah who was then rejected by those to whom He was sent with the result that they were to:

"Fill up them the measure of the guilt of your fathers". (Matt 23: 32).

rain on it." For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress." (Isaiah 5: 3-7)

This prophecy had a partial fulfillment in the destruction of Israel under the Babylonian armies of Nebuchadnezzar. It's complete fulfillment was yet to occur in 70 AD under the Roman general Titus and his legions. As a matter of fact, this exact passage is quoted by Christ to the Pharisees in both Matthew's and Luke's gospel. Luke, chapter 20, records that the Pharisees understand that Jesus had spoken this parable against the generation that was alive at the time of Christ's earthly ministry (verse 19). Matthew, chapter 21, goes on to further elucidate the parable by recording that the Pharisees actually pronounced the sentence of doom upon their own heads (verse 41). Upon this follows one of the clearest sayings in the Word of God as concerns the nation of Israel.

**"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it." (Matt 21: 43).**

The axe had been laid at the root of the tree. The fertilizer had been applied. Time had been granted to see if the tree would yield its looked-for fruit. It had not. Nothing remained but for its rotting carcass (Matt 24:28) to be the gathering place of the Roman legions under Titus who in 70 AD swept it from the scene with the broom of destruction.

From that point on, the only nation that God would deal with in a salvific manner would be His "holy nation", the church comprised of men and women from every nation, every tribe, every tongue under heaven. (1 Peter 2: 9).

The point in all this is quite simple yet very succinct. The Lord Jesus cursed the nation of Israel. There simply is no arguing this point. It is indisputable. The reason – they were barren. Yet, according to the Dispensationalist's view of the Genesis promise made to Abraham, He had committed an unpardonable sin. He had the audacity to curse the chosen people of God! If you believe the Dispensationalists then the Lord Jesus had now become cursed. Mind you, this has nothing to do with Him become a curse for us as Galatians relates when He became the recipient of the divine curse as a

made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel." (Heb 12: 18-24)

As can be easily observed from the Old Testament references cited, the Israelites regarded Mt. Zion as the place in which Jehovah manifested His presence. He was said to dwell there as a great King in His temple or tabernacle, an emblem of the royal pavilion stationed among His subjects. From there He proceeded to sit in judgment of not only His people, but of all the nations of the earth. Only there in Jerusalem could He truly be known for only there had He chosen to reveal Himself through His statutes, ordinances and Word. Yet notice how easily and beautifully the writer of Hebrews transfers all of these images and ideas to the spiritual reality that they were intended to represent – the church. Looking at the underlined sections of the Scripture text from Hebrews, one can instantly see that Zion, the city of the living God and of the great King and the heavenly Jerusalem are identical with the Church! The reason that they are is because the ideas and truths they intended to portray all find their ultimate expression in the church of the first-born.

Was there a temple upon the ancient hill called Zion? So too there is a temple upon this Mt. Zion that the Christian has come to. It is a spiritual temple made up of living and not dead stones (1 Peter 2:5). Did God dwell in the temple that stood upon the earthy Zion? So does He dwell in this spiritual temple built upon this spiritual Zion (Eph 2: 21-22). He is in their midst whenever they gather in His Name which is held in reverence among them (Matt 18:20). Did God sit as a Judge on a throne above the cherubim in the natural temple? So too does He sit as Judge upon this spiritual hill (Hebrews 12: 23). Could God only be known in Judah? So too can He only be known through "the church of the living God which is the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). Outside of the church there is no true knowledge of God for it is the church that is the city which is set upon a hill (Matt 5:14) shining forth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4: 6). It should be abundantly manifest by now that all of these "weak and beggarly elements" as the apostle Paul refers to them (Gal 4: 9) are to be regarded by the Christian as



prefiguring the higher and spiritual realities of Christ's kingdom. Their only value consisted in the spiritual reality which they were designed to represent. Once that was brought in by the inauguration of the New Covenant by the blood of Christ they are now "becoming obsolete and ready to disappear" (Heb 8: 13). Now that the reality has come, there is no further need for the type that prefigured it. This is in perfect harmony with the principle previously set forth, "first the natural and then the spiritual". It is in this manner that one rightly understands the place and purpose of natural, earthly Israel. It should be regarded as merely a type that served to prefigure a greater and higher spiritual reality. One that reality has come there is no further need of it; the purpose for which it existed is has been accomplished.

The simple fact is that Israel was merely the nation that was chosen to bring forth the promised Messiah (Romans 9: 5) who would be the "Desire of all nations" (Hag 2: 7). It was this "Seed of Abraham" in whom all the nations of the earth (not just the Jews) would be blessed. God could have chosen any single nation on the face of the earth to accomplish His sovereign purpose of being the progenitor of the Messiah. He was not obligated to choose Israel. As a matter of fact, Abraham, was not a Jew when God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, but was an idolatrous Gentile! So the beginnings of the nation of Israel can be traced directly to the Gentiles!

The reason that God maintained the nation intact and dealt so patiently with them even after they imported the pagan idolatry of the ancient world into their midst and continually spurned and mocked His prophets was not due to any inherent goodness or redeeming qualities within them. Rather it was for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. Once that was done and Messiah had come forth there was no further need for the type to exist. The reality had come and the type became obsolete in exactly the same fashion as all the vestiges of the Old Covenant. The entire nation, while quite real with a rich and varied history, had served its purpose and must make way for the greater and higher reality that it represented, the church, the true Zion of God (Hebrews 12: 22).

This is easily demonstrated from the Scriptures. Paul refers to an Israel "after the flesh" (1 Cor 10:18 KJV). By logical

This parable bears such a striking resemblance to the actual event that took place in Mark's gospel that it could not be merely coincidental. The same truth is being set forth in both incidents that are recorded – one by example, the other by parable. That the nation of Israel after the flesh is being referred to is easily discerned if one simply considers that the entire length of the Lord Jesus' earthly ministry up to this point was three years. For three years He had gone about "doing good, and healing those who were sick and oppressed by the devil." He had preached the gospel and brought light to the nation. In spite of this, by far and large, he was "despised and rejected of men" and "esteemed not". Israel as a whole refused his yoke and went about seeking a righteousness of their own by the law. In the words of John the Baptist, the axe had been laid at their root of their tree and the tree that did not bear fruit would be cut down and cast into the fire. Yet, the longsuffering of God was still not through with them – there would be six more months, another half year while the Lord Jesus would continue His gracious presence among them. They would still be given time to avail themselves of the life-giving words that would fall from His mouth and refresh the parched soil of their barren wilderness. Alas, the Scriptures record all too well that the "fertilizer" and the period of respite had no effect. The nation gave over their benefactor to the Romans and crucified Him. The time of reckoning would now have to come as the chief vineyard owner came to survey his vineyard.

This concept of Israel being barren was no novelty. Their entire history bore witness to the truth of their fruitlessness. Isaiah the prophet long ago had predicated their ruin for the same reason.

*"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. And I will lay it waste; it will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up> I will also charge the clouds to rain no*

But a simple look at the Scriptures should quickly dispel this fallacious opinion. In the gospel of Mark we have an incident recorded in which the Lord Jesus and his disciples are journeying on the way to Jerusalem.

*"And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry. And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And Jesus answered and said to it, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again!' And His disciples were listening... And whenever evening came, they would go out of the city. And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, 'Rabbi, behold the fig tree which You cursed has withered.'" (Mark 11: 12-14, 19-21).*

Notice carefully what happened here. The Lord Christ cursed the barren fig tree. Even the Dispensationalists are forced to admit that the fig tree is oftentimes, although not always, an emblem of the nation of Israel. Indeed their entire system of eschatology hinges on what they refer to as a "putting forth of the leaves of the fig tree" which they erroneously relate to Israel being regathered into their ancient land in 1948 AD. Suffice it to say that unless they are going to be deliberately disingenuous, they must admit the consistent use of the symbol as referring to the nation of Israel. What happened here is obvious to all but the most prejudiced or biased reader; Christ Jesus cursed the nation for its barrenness!

One simply cannot escape the force of this. If this is not enough to convince the doubter then a look at another passage should serve to enforce this assertion.

Luke's gospel this time records the incident.  
*"And He began telling this parable: 'A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'" (Luke 13: 6-9).*

inference then there must be an Israel after the spirit. This is the Israel spoken of by the apostle Paul in Galatians where he states:

*"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And to those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (Gal 6: 15-16).*

To the apostle, the Israel of God is synonymous with the new creation. Unlike the "old" Israel under the Old Covenant which had an old and vanishing way of approaching God, the "new" Israel is under the New Covenant and has access to God through a new and living way (Heb 10:20). It is comprised of both Jew and Gentile who have been made into one "new" man in Christ (Eph 2: 15) with a "new" commandment to love one another (John 13:34). Entrance into this "new" creation comes through the "new" birth which is brought about by grace, through faith in Christ and is not based on fleshly descent, social standing, or gender (Gal 3:28).

Thus in Paul's mind there are two Israel's that exist simultaneously in time and have always existed in this manner. That is why he can state categorically that

*"For they are not all Israel who are who are of Israel!" (Romans 9: 6 MKJV).*

Try using this type of phraseology with any other nation or nationality and see how foolish it would be. Imagine saying that, "they are not all Arabs who are Arabs"! Or how about, "They are not all Eskimos who are Eskimos". It would make absolutely no sense whatsoever. But it makes perfect sense to use Paul's language because there are two different Israel's – one "after the flesh", the other "after the spirit". Look again at how Paul further differentiates between the two in that same letter to the Romans:

*"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2: 28-29).*

We see the exact same truth referred to by none less than our Lord Jesus who in His revelation to the churches of Asia

Minor addresses the churches at both Smyrna and Philadelphia in the following manner:

*"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." (Rev 2: 9).*

*"Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie – behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you". (Rev 3: 9).*

There simply is no other way to explain this than to realize that not everyone who can trace his or her fleshly descent back to Abraham can be considered to be a Jew and thus a part of Israel. Otherwise we are left with the insane possibility of someone claiming to be of one race or nationality all the while belonging to another! Further proof of this truth is attested by our Lord's remarks concerning Nathaniel in the gospel of John.

*"And Nathaniel said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' Nathaniel said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathaniel answered Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'" (John 1: 46-51).*

The Lord Jesus calls Nathaniel an Israelite indeed or in truth. In contrast to the vast majority of the nation, Nathaniel was a true son of Jacob whom had seen the heavens opened centuries before with the angels of God ascending and descending upon a ladder. In the same manner in which God had changed this man of guile and duplicity into a true child of God and renamed him Israel, so too would Nathaniel be counted among those who had been recipients of the same work of divine grace in their heart? Clearly then it is no stretching of the Scriptures to categorically state that among

What a glorious mystery! What a marvelous plan! Who cannot but stand in awe and wonder and fall down before the infinite wisdom of the Most High as He works out His purpose in the earth. A company of redeemed sinners saved by grace, given a new nature whose hearts have been made pure through faith (Acts 15: 9). This is the Israel of God. These are the ones who will see God (Matt 5: 8). These are the nation that whom God is surely good (Psalm 73:1). This is the nation that was brought forth all at once (Isaiah 66: 8). As the Psalmist prophesied:

*"The Lord hath said unto me, 'Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee.'" (Psalm 2: 7).*

This prophecy was made good at the resurrection of Christ from the dead as Paul states in Acts:

*"And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.'" (Acts 13: 32-33).*

On that day, Christ Jesus, the Servant of Jehovah, the true Israel of God was brought forth and in the process, all of His people with Him. The true Israel of God was brought forth in one day – the day of His triumphant resurrection and victory over sin, death, and Satan! Hallelujah!

Remarkably, in spite of all the clear evidence to the contrary, there are some who continue to hold to the fallacious notion that Israel "after the flesh" somehow has a date with destiny. It is only a matter of time until it resumes its rightful place among the nations. They brazenly utter veiled warnings that those who propagate what they contemptuously refer to as "replacement theology" are perilously close to becoming the recipients of the divine curse for speaking against Israel in such a manner as the Scripture clearly has warned (Gen 12:3).

*"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

With this one passage they attempt to silence or intimidate all who would oppose their misguided notions concerning Israel after the flesh.

"Hear this, O house of Jacob, **who are named Israel** and who came forth from the loins of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord and invoke the God of Israel, **but not in truth nor in righteousness. For they call themselves after the holy city, and lean on the God of Israel; the Lord of hosts is His name...** You have heard; look at all this. And you, will you not declare it? I proclaim to you **new things** from this time, even **hidden things** which you have not known. They are **created** now and not long ago; and before today you have not heard them, lest you should say, 'Behold, I knew them.' You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; and you have been called a rebel from birth." (Isaiah 48: 1-2, 6-8).

Fleshly, carnal Israel was just that – it was Israel in name only, not in truth or reality. It lacked any of the essential qualities that were required in the Servant of Jehovah. Instead it was a rebel from its birth. Its very inception beneath the mountain called Sinai had proven its degeneracy. There it had prostituted itself and fallen down before a golden calf and cast off the yoke of servitude to indulge in its own desires.

Thus God would do a new thing – something which would remain hidden until the time of its accomplishment. He would make a "new" Israel, a "new" Servant, One that would not fail Him or rebel against Him. This is the mystery, the hidden thing that Jehovah would do – the same hidden mystery that Paul has set forth in his letter to the Ephesians. This Chosen One of Jehovah, the epitome of the true Servant in His own right, would not be alone. He would draw a multitude of redeemed sinners to Himself and they would constitute a mystical body, the body of Christ, which would partake of the same essential qualities as their glorious Head. Collectively, they would become the "Servant of Jehovah", the new Israel of God, the new creation.

"For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus...**" (Eph 2: 10).

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation. And to those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.** (Gal 6: 15-16).

26

the vast numbers of those who make up national Israel and call themselves Jews, there are those who belong to God and those who do not but are rather children of the devil. What else does the term, "synagogue" of Satan refer to?

This is precisely what Jesus told the Jews in the eighth chapter of John's gospel.

"I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.' They answered Him and said, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father.' They said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He send Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. **You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.**" (John 8: 38-44).

These Jews that our Lord was addressing were making a deadly and fatal mistake – they were relying on their fleshly descent from Abraham to secure the favor of God. They foolishly believed that the Father of spirits was so impressed with their physical lineage that He would somehow overlook the corruption that lurked in their hearts. The Lord Christ quickly dispelled them of that notion by informing them that they were the offspring of Satan! All He received for His efforts to correct them was their hatred and undying animosity as they attempted to stone Him to death!

One more voice to further buttress our point comes from the lips of that most eminent of prophets, John the Baptist. In the gospel of Luke, the account is recorded of John's dealings with the Jews, in particular, the Pharisees and Sadducees, as they came to look in on what this upstart is doing. John's stinging words forcefully bring home their folly in trusting in their fleshly descent from Abraham.

"He therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned

you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance, **and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father', for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.** And also the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Luke 3: 7-9).

With this in mind, it is not too difficult to grasp the power in Paul's logic as he attempts to deal with the Israel situation in his letter to the Romans. In the ninth chapter he takes up the apparent failure of the word of God as it relates to Israel.

*"I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish myself accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons in the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all God blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither are they all children because they are Abraham's seed, but through Isaac your seed will be named. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as seed. For this is a word of promise: 'At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.'" (Romans 9: 1-9).*

He begins by stating that he is extremely sorrowful and deeply grieved over the rejection of the gospel message by the vast majority of the Jews, his kinsmen according to the flesh. He goes on to list the great privileges that they had possessed and mentions the promises that God had made to them. Yet seemingly, something that is not possible has taken place – the word of God has failed and God has not made good on His promises to them. The very thought of something like this occurring is intolerable as the divine purpose cannot fail. But how then do we explain the rejection of the gospel by the vast majority of the Jews? If Paul's claim that the gospel was the way provided by God to enter His favor and receive the

*"And He said to Me, 'You are My Servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory.'" (Isaiah 49:3).*

If there was ever any doubt exactly who is this Israel that God is referring to in this text, a closer examination of the passage should make it abundantly clear.

*"Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me, and He has also made Me a select arrow; He has hidden Me in His quiver. And He said to Me, 'You are My Servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory.'" (Isaiah 49: 1-3).*

This remarkable passage is clearly speaking of the Messiah who was to come. As such it was referring to none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. That this is evident can be seen by reading the entirety of the chapter. But a passage from the book of Revelation makes it abundantly clear who this illustrious person that is spoken of is:

*"And in His hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword;" (Rev 1: 16).*

That this is the Messiah, the Lord Christ is, beyond dispute as the 18<sup>th</sup> verse of that same chapter in Revelation clearly reveals.

What Isaiah's passage therefore is telling us is nothing short of astounding. It is the illustrious person here spoken of who would epitomize in His own person all that God intended that Israel should ever be. He would truly be "Jehovah's Servant". Whereas Israel after the flesh had miserably failed and turned to the Baals and other false gods of their day and served them, this One would faithfully serve Him and in so doing would "raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved ones of Israel" (verse 6). He would also be "a light to the Gentiles" (verse 6). This One was truly:

*"My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen One in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles." (Isaiah 42: 1).*

He would be the very incarnation of Israel; the substance, the essence of what Israel should be in the Divine purpose.

All this is in sharp contrast to the carnal, degenerate seed mentioned in the previous chapter.

commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might **make the two into one new man**, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them **both in one body** to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity, And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near, for through Him we **both have our 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 are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being **built together** into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." (Eph 2: 11-22).

Everything about this Scripture thoroughly dispels any notion of any sort of two-fold purpose of God. That idea simply cannot be reconciled with that which Paul has written. As a matter of fact, Paul is clearly stating that the Gentiles in the Ephesian church **had been** strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. He then goes on to tell them, "No more" – they are "no longer strangers and aliens" to this "commonwealth of Israel". As a matter of fact, they were fellow citizens of it! How then had they entered this Israel? Had these Gentiles suddenly discovered that they had been born Jewish? Was some sort of genealogical search performed on their behalf? Of course not! They had entered it through faith in Christ! They had been brought near by the blood of Christ who had made them members of His one body comprised of both Jew and Gentile. They now belonged to the household of the living God in which:

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." (Gal 3: 28-29).* It is through this company of people that the Lord will show forth His glory throughout all eternity. They are the spiritual temple, the house which God is building; the house that He will fill with the glory of His presence. As He has clearly said in the prophet Isaiah:

promised kingdom with all its blessings, then the rejection of that gospel must necessarily entail that the vast majority of Jews had been left out of the long-awaited kingdom. Thus God had failed to accomplish His purpose and His Word had returned to Him void which would be a contradiction of that which He had clearly said could never happen (Isaiah 55:11).

Paul's solution to this apparent Gordian knot is straightforward and simple. God certainly had made promises to Israel but He only made them to His true Israel! Not one of those promises had failed to come to pass because "they are not all Israel who are of Israel". Those Jews who had responded in faith to the gospel were members of His true Israel; it was only to them that He had made the promises. The rest were blinded (Romans 11:7). In other words, fleshly descent from Abraham did not constitute one as being included in the Israel to whom the promises were made. One had to be born into this Israel by the power of the promise.

This is why Paul refers to Isaac.

Don't forget that before Isaac came along Ishmael was born to Abraham. Ishmael could trace his fleshly descent directly to Abraham. Yet the seed of Ishmael were not counted among the Israel of God. Why was that? Because Ishmael was born of the flesh and not of the promise. Isaac on the other hand, was conceived and brought forth by the direct activity of God. His mother Sarah was hopelessly barren and Abraham, his father, was past the years of natural procreation ability. Yet God had made them a promise of an heir. It was the power of that promise that brought forth Isaac in the womb of Sarah. In much the same manner, it is the direct and sovereign intervention of God that gives rise to the children of the promise. They are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1: 13). Isaac thus becomes a figure for all the true seed of Abraham.

Yet, some of Paul's hearers would not be satisfied with that explanation but would quickly assert that all of the Jews who had rejected the gospel were direct descendants of Isaac. Therefore, Paul's argument was moot. Paul anticipates their response and goes on to speak of Jacob and Esau, who were both born of Isaac.

*"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to election might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger'. Just as it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' (Romans 9: 10-13).*

What Paul is doing is systematically destroying the myth that fleshly descent somehow determines whether or not one is included in the Israel of God. Paul can basically say that Ishmael and Esau both can trace their lineage back to Abraham, they are children of the flesh, yet both of them were rejected from the eternal purpose of God and were not included among the Israel to whom He had made the promises.

As the godly Puritan John Flavel was wont to say, *"If Abraham's faith be not in your hearts, it will be no advantage that Abraham's blood runs in your veins"*. This is the crux of Paul's entire argument. **Only by faith in the promise as it is revealed in the gospel can one become a member of the true Israel of God.** One has to follow in the footsteps of Abraham if one is to join the commonwealth of Israel.

*"Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham"*. (Gal 3: 7).

Without this faith, all of Abraham's physical descendants simply are a carnal, degenerate seed with no distinction between them and the offspring of Ishmael or for that matter, the sons of Keturah, Abraham's second wife. As such, they have no right to claim the promises of God nor do they have a right to be regarded as Israel.

No doubt this will cause a visceral reaction from those who stubbornly continue to insist that Israel after the flesh is still the highly favored nation of God. In spite of the completely unambiguous writings of the divinely inspired apostle, they protest most vehemently that earthly Israel must yet be restored to its former greatness among the nations if the promises of God are to mean anything at all. Yet all this does is to clearly demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of Paul's argument in Romans 9 as well as their forgetting to take

would knowingly cast such aspersions on the Divine character would do well to quickly retract their rash and foolish sayings. What could ever frustrate or annul it? Might it not be the gates of Hades? Could not Satan marshal his forces and overthrow the work of God? Perish the thought! To even suggest it momentarily is to make the Lord Jesus a false witness and in effect brand Him a liar! It is none less the Son of God who asserted that the *"gates of Hades would not overpower it"*. He is its Guardian, its Defender, its Protector and *"all authority both in heaven and in earth have been given unto Him"*. He is the *"first-born of all creation"*, and all things are beneath His feet and subject to His mighty, omnipotent will. Then, I ask, in all candor, how can the church fail? If it fails, then God fails and that is impossible. Period!

Lastly, the New Testament Scriptures simply do not know of any such two-fold purpose of God, one involving a heavenly people and the other involving an earthly people. Throughout its contents, one repeatedly finds references to "one flock", not two separate, different flocks with two separate, different purposes. This flock has "one shepherd" (John 10:16). There is One "olive tree" (Romans 11: 17), not two separate trees. There is also One "bride" of Christ, not two wives for God, one for Christ (the church) and one for Jehovah (Israel) (Eph 5: 23-32) - by the way, this would make God guilty of polygamy. There is also One "body" (Eph 2: 15-16), not two separate bodies. One "holy nation" (1Peter 2: 9), not two separate holy nations.

If there are any doubts remaining in the reader's mind, the following Scripture quotation should settle that forever.  
*"Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision", which is performed in the flesh by human hands - remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants or promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of*

The second has to do with the notion that somehow the purpose of God for the church has failed and it will be up to Israel to clean up after it and sort all these things out. It is no small wonder that the main proponents of this system tend to be of the Arminian persuasion. Arminians are quite fond of blithely asserting that God is often frustrated in His intentions and desires to perform many things which His own creatures continually thwart Him in regard to. So to them it makes perfect sense to proclaim that God's purpose for the church has largely failed and in essence, He must resort to "Plan B", which to give Him credit, they insist, will be a glorious success. But what sayeth the Scriptures in regards to God's purposes? "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, 'I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted'" (Job 42: 1-2).

"The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, 'Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.'" (Isaiah 14: 24).

"For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isaiah 14: 27).

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isaiah 46: 9-11).

"And upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it." (Matt 16: 18).

"I know that everything that God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him." (Eccl 3: 14).

The idea that the purpose of God could ever fail is repugnant, if not outright blasphemous. He who has not only decreed all things but works all things after the counsel of His sovereign will (Eph 1: 11) cannot fail in that which He sets out to accomplish. The notion that God's eternal purpose to show forth His glory in His church as was clearly set forth by the apostle Paul in the third chapter of Ephesians has somehow been thwarted or frustrated is preposterous. Anyone who

into account the principle that he so clearly laid down that was recited earlier in this discourse:

*"The spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual." (1Cor 15: 46).*

Notice Paul did not say, "first the natural, then the spiritual, then back to the natural again". Yet there are those that continue to insist that this is the way it must be. God must return to dealing with natural Israel by restoring them to the land in which the natural, earthy temple will be rebuilt and the natural, earthy system of carnal Mosaic ordinances will be reinstated. The animal sacrifices, the altar of incense, the sacrificial altar, the laver, the seven-branched candlestick, the red heifer, the priesthood, etc., must all be reinstated again only this time they will be far more glorious than they were before. They vociferously and confidently assert that only in this way will the promises concerning the kingdom be made good to Israel or God fails in His purpose and the prophecies concerning the glory of the Messianic kingdom go unfulfilled. Yet this is exactly the same error that the Jews of Jesus' day made.

We have already shown to whom the promises of God were actually made when. They were only made with the spiritual seed, the children of the promise, those who are of the faith of Abraham. They were not made to the carnal, unregenerate seed. Yet, it behooves us to understand that it was this same fleshly, unregenerate seed among the Jews that carnalized the Old Testament prophecies and thus got them into trouble in the first place.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus thoroughly exposed their ignorance in understanding the Scriptures by putting a question to them that they could not answer.

*"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?' They said to Him, 'The son of David.' He said to them, 'Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord', saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet'? If David then calls Him 'Lord' how is He his son?' And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question." (Matt 22: 41-46).*



Like their forefathers before them,  
"The Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see,  
nor ears to hear." (Deut 29: 4).

In that same chapter Jesus told them plainly that:  
"You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures..." (Matt  
22: 29).

Their failure to apprehend the true nature of the kingdom that had been promised resulted in them anticipating the Messiah as One who would crush their enemies (namely the Romans at that time) and restore them to a place of preeminence and prosperity that eclipsed even that which their forefathers had enjoyed under Solomon. The glories they looked for involved the pomp, ceremony, and wealth that this world system boasts of. Consequently, when this carpenter's son from Nazareth came preaching a kingdom in which one was required to love his enemies, be poor in spirit, a mourner and even face the possibility of being persecuted, this was simply too much! That this "son of fornication" could be the promised Son of David and yet be his Lord at the same time was preposterous to them. When He further informed them that the kingdom that they had been anticipating was right there "in their midst" He had to be gotten rid of at all costs! In their minds He was a dangerously deluded imposter who threatened the stability of the entire commonwealth of Israel. By falsely accusing Him and delivering Him up to the Romans to be put to death they congratulated themselves as being the protectors of all that was honorable and noble among the people of Jehovah. Now surely they would be rewarded by Jehovah who would soon send the long-awaited Messiah with the magnificent kingdom that He would usher in and no doubt but that they would occupy some important place in it as a reward for their dedication to His service. "Blind guides of the blind"! All they managed to accomplish was to put to death the very King who had been promised to them and thus filled up the measure of their sins (Matt 23:32). The "reward" they obtained for their blind zeal was that "the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to a nation producing the fruit of it (Matt 21: 43).

Yet incredibly they are still those today who continue to insist that all that the Pharisees and the blinded masses of Israel were looking forward to is yet to come. It simply awaits a future

spiritual or heavenly purpose because the church is a spiritual or heavenly kingdom. Yet, that will all come to an end with the imminent rapture of the church and then God will resume His dealings with His ancient people. Then His purpose will be once more centered in the earthly nation of Israel. You see, God has a heavenly purpose and an earthly purpose."

But where, pray tell, is there any mention of such an arbitrary distinction made by the apostle in the above-mentioned text between a heavenly and earthly purpose? The text speaks of only one eternal purpose, not two separate ones. When pressed why God must have this two-fold purpose, they are compelled into devising a rather ingenious explanation.

The reason for this, so they tell us, is that the history of the church over the last two thousand years has been one of abysmal failure. The church has been charged with evangelizing the world and making disciples of Christ throughout the entire world. Yet, it has not done so, witness its repeated failings, divisions, denominational schisms, compromise, lukewarmness, heresies, etc., etc. Why it is an absolutely terrible witness to the gospel with which it was entrusted. Yes, it has had its finer moments when periods of revival have come, but for the most part, it has produced very little lasting effect on the world around it. It will be up to the Jewish nation to finish the task that the church was charged with and spread throughout the world the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Israel, after the flesh, so they tell us, will succeed where the church has failed. Thus, God must restore His people of old to their ancient glory so that they may truly be a light to the world and the people in whom He will show forth His glory. There are several problems with this fallacious theory however.

The first should be readily observable by those who have thoughtfully pondered the Scripture text quoted from Ephesians. Note carefully that Paul did not say that God would show forth His glory in earthly Israel, but rather through the church, and that not for a period of some two thousand or so years prior to His resuming His dealings with Israel after the flesh, but "throughout all generations, forever and ever" (Eph 3: 21).

notion that natural Israel, Israel "after the flesh" is the center of God's purpose in the earth, is a pipe-dream, a figment of their own imagination that has absolutely no support whatsoever from the New Testament. As a matter of fact, Paul the apostle makes it quite clear in his letter to the Ephesians what the purpose of God consists of. Notice carefully as you read the text, that not a single word is said about natural, earthly Israel.

*"And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel... To me the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord... Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Eph 3: 4-6, 8-11, 20-21).*

No amount of exegetical gymnastics with this text can make it say anything other than it so clearly does – God's eternal purpose is centered in His church, not in the ancient fleshly nation of Israel. When confronted with these lucid words from the apostle, the force of which they cannot escape, those who continue to insist that Israel after the flesh is the focal point of God's purpose are forced to begin backpedaling and then qualify their position with an argument that goes something like this:

"Yes, we will grant that God has an eternal purpose in His church and that indeed that is exactly what He has been doing these long two thousand or more years. So we agree that God has a purpose that is centered in the church; however, it is a

millennium period of 1000 years somewhere in the not-to-distant future. The Pharisees were right after all – it was simply a matter of timing! Ancient Zionism has thus found a new friend in the Christian church who will champion its cause! What is such a travesty is that the same interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures that was held by these Jews who were devoid of the Spirit of God has now found itself a home within the confines of the church! So zealous are these new converts to Zionism that they are now ready to take up their own stones of invectives and epithets and hurl them at anyone who would dare to question the soundness of their cause. "Anti-Semitic" is the favorite word-weapon of choice that they employ in this diatribe of words as if somehow that is enough to intimidate those who oppose them into remaining silent.

One simply has to take a look at how the apostle Paul handled this very same perversion of truth that dominated the Jewish minds of his day. In Acts 26, Paul is giving his defense before King Agrippa of the Jews. Mind you that it was the Jews egged on by their leaders who caused Paul so much grief during the course of his ministry. Paul's insistence that the kingdom of God had been opened to the Gentiles had infuriated them. They could not conceive of any "dog of a Gentile" being given a position of equal footing with themselves in the kingdom that God had promised them. The Gentiles were to be subservient to Israel, not co-equal. It is fascinating to see the exact manner taken by the apostle to defend himself and to explain the message with which he has been entrusted.

*"And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?"*

Notice carefully that Paul is about to explain the hope of the promise made by God to Israel. This is the key to understanding everything that will follow. Did God make a promise to the fathers and thus to Israel? He certainly did. Yet observe that he says not a single word of some future earthly, millennial kingdom in which God would resume His dealings

with His ancient people and exalt them to the chief place of supremacy and honor among the nations and thus fulfill all the ancient promises made to them in the prophets. Not a single word! Assume for a moment that he had and that his defense had gone something like this:

*"King Agrippa and brethren. I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain. Many years have we yearned to see this promise made good to our nation. The promise that God would send the long-awaited Messiah who would bring in the wondrous kingdom that He has promised to us in the sacred writings of the prophets. I am here to tell you that Jesus of Nazareth is this promised Messiah. Yes, I tell you it is He who is the One who will bring in the kingdom of God. I know full well that you rejected Him at the first and delivered Him over to death. That was a grievous sin indeed but fear not. He has promised that He will once again take up His dealings with our people when He is finished dealing with the Gentiles. He will indeed make good on every promise concerning the kingdom whereof the prophets spoke. Israel will be chief of all the nations once again. Its former glory will return and eclipse even that of Solomon's day! The wealth of the Gentiles will be brought in and thus gold and silver will abound once more. The temple will be rebuilt and will be far superior and more glorious than that of Solomon's time as well. All of our enemies will do homage to us and the yoke of slavery will never again rest upon us".*

Now this author submits to you, that if this was indeed the message that Paul was declaring, not one Jew of the day would have lifted a finger against Paul. As a matter of fact, they would have raced to embrace him and call him one of their own. For this is exactly what they believed God had promised them! If this is what Paul believed was in their future, why then did he refrain from telling them such? Why did he not take the opportunity that he was presented with to clarify his doctrine so that they might better understand that they were both looking forward to a kingdom of the same nature but it was only a matter of timing? Instead he did nothing of the sort! His silence is absolutely deafening.

Instead Paul speaks of the resurrection of the dead! The resurrection of the dead - what does that have to do with the promise that was hoped for by the twelve tribes? The answer is given a bit further down in that same chapter. He goes onto say how the Lord Jesus commanded had called him to:

*"...delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26: 17-23).*

There you have it! The resurrection of the Messiah from the dead was the manner in which the kingdom that God had promised in the prophets would be brought in and thus in "Abraham's Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed". Not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles would be delivered from the kingdom and power of Satan, and become fellow heirs of the inheritance that God had promised the fathers. All those who received these glad tidings through a faith which brought forth repentance could thus be brought nigh to God since atonement for sin had been made through the death of the Messiah. This is the wondrous promise that God had made through Moses and the Prophets!

Still, there are those today who having deliberately shut their eyes to the New Testament writings concerning this matter contemptuously refer to that which has been written above as "replacement theology", i.e., that the Church has replaced Israel as being the center of God's purpose. Their misguided