

THE SECRET OF HIS PURPOSE THE PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE KING,
EVERYTHING IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH,
IN JESUS....

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#39

Dualism, Reversionism, Graftage

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Many years ago, I held the view that God is now working along two very distinct and different lines that will also continue in the age to come: 1) the ecclesia of Christians [the church], and 2) the present-day Jewish state of Israel [misnamed], comprised of Jews according to the flesh [bloodline] or religiously joined to Judaism. However, quite a few years ago I became troubled over this; something was amiss in such thinking. After all, the dividing wall has been broken down, and there is now one new man (Ephesians 2:15), and we have our access in one spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:18)—together, the circumcision and the uncircumcision are a new creation and the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). This sure doesn't sound like two distinct lines.

So, I began to inquire of the Lord and search for an answer to what was boiling inside me. As I searched for the answer, the holy spirit began to gradually open my eyes to what I now believe is a much more accurate truth of scripture.

The question that sat before me was this: *Is God working on two distinct lines or one?* The answer I discovered is that God is working only on one line, and this line is based on His Son and the new covenant, and all, regardless of bloodline, are being grafted into this one line. This might seem a bit too obvious, but it really isn't when you begin studying this subject and discover that many seem to believe in a hybrid of the old and the new covenants.

To explain the results of my research, I have divided the various views on the subject into three schools of thought and labeled them: Dualism, Reversionism, and Graftage. The latter two terms may seem strange to some, but they are real words. I also briefly address what is called *replacement theology*.

A quick word about *isms*—whenever I see a word that ends in *ism*, I see that which is associated with the word as something of man and not of God. You want proof. Pay attention to the names attached to world systems, like globalism, capitalism, socialism, fascism, corporatism, etc. Have you ever noticed that even the religions of the world are associated with an *ism* (e.g., Judaism, Islamism, Buddhism), but Christianity is never associated with *ism*, unless theologians come up with terms to define their theologies or doctrines? Word of caution—let us not make anything associated with Jesus an *ism*.

Dualism

Dualism is defined as "the state of being dual (two); duality; two basic entities; two natures." This is a condensed definition, but the point is that it refers to two of something.

As such, dualism sees God working along two distinct lines of people. The first line involves the present-day unbelieving (don't believe in Messiah Jesus) Jews based on the flesh; ones born of a

genealogical bloodline traced to the seed of Jacob (if this is even possible). Although this is the predominant view, I would add the religious component as well. Those who are faithful to Judaism and all its rites may consider themselves Jews even if they are not of a known Jewish family tree. During the days of Moses, foreigners (non-Israelites) could join one of the tribes as long as they integrated into their customs and rites and followed the law. When they did, they became part of the nation as if citizens (Exodus 12:48-49; 22:21; Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 16:10-11).

The second line involves the ecclesia (church) of Christians based on the spirit, that is, ones born of the seed of God, growing into the new creation in Christ. These have the faith of Abraham.

As with most schools of thought, there are variations around a common theme. This school is most associated with *dispensationalism*. The most prevalent form of this *ism* holds to a future pre-tribulation "rapture," followed by a 7-year tribulation, and then a 1000-year kingdom with Christ ruling from ancient Jerusalem with a rebuilt temple and the Jews (Israel) heading up the nations—with the church in heaven, meeting at the pearly gates, eating fruit from the tree of life, walking on streets of pure gold, and living in mansions in a literal, heavenly city called the *heavenly Jerusalem*.

In other words, according to this school, there will be two groups of God's people living in two distinct cities, one earthly and one heavenly, with both being blessed of God for two different reasons, one based on the physical seed of Jacob and the old covenant (that has been made obsolete), and one based on the spiritual seed of God and the new covenant that is of Messiah Jesus. At the same time, there will continue to be billions of unbelievers, created to be in the image of *Elohim*, roasting and toasting in an eternal place of fire and worms that many call *hell*. Ugh! This is straight out of paganism. Or, is it straight out of hell? You choose!

Further, some within this school of thought see the church coming back to earth and residing in the earthly Jerusalem with believing Jews, all united in Christ. Others in this school see the Jews rebuilding a physical temple where God will place His name and glory and reinstitute the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices. In other words, they replace Christianity with Judaism that rises to its former grandeur of Solomon's day with Jesus seated on a throne in Jerusalem and ministering through a rebuilt temple. To add to the confusion, some see King David, literally, on the throne, and some believe that Jews do not have to believe Jesus is the Messiah because the Jews are given special privilege to rule the world based simply on their bloodline that is traced back to Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham. After all, as the thinking goes, they are God's chosen people, and they can do no wrong, and God will protect them no matter what mischief they create in the world. Of course, some rightly insist that the Jews must and will believe in Jesus. Confused yet?

The point is that dualism sees God working along two distinct lines, some see both of these in Christ, and others do not. Unfortunately, dualism seems to confuse or ignore scripture on several levels. In a broad stroke, the achilles heel of dualism is found in Paul's Galatians 4 allegory, the Israel of God as defined by Paul (Galatians 6:16), Romans 11 and the olive tree, and most of all, all of the book of Hebrews that speaks of the better. There's more, but these are the major ones as far as I am concerned. Let us consider some.

First, dualism retains the old covenant or some hybrid of it that, according to scripture, has been made obsolete and has been replaced with the new covenant. When He said, "*A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete* (Hebrews 8:13).

Paul, who I believe could have written Hebrews (or someone very close to him did), wrote something quite similar; something that is easily overlooked.

God has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world—what is viewed as nothing—to bring to nothing what is viewed as something.... (1 Corinthians 1:28 HCSB)

As Saul, Paul considered Judaism as something, so much so, that he persecuted the *Way* until Jesus appeared to him to set him straight. All that Paul held so dear to his heart, as something extremely vital to his life, became as nothing when he was blinded by the Messiah.

But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. (Philippians 3:7-9 HCSB)

All that was gain became loss to Paul, so that he might gain the Messiah, the one he persecuted. Given this, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians about God bringing to nothing what is viewed as something, he clearly had his loss in view. The entire Jewish religious system—based on an old covenant that he had mastered as a zealous Pharisee and that was something in that day—was becoming obsolete, growing old, and ready to disappear (Hebrews 9:13).

Second, Paul defines a true Jew. Based on his definition, an argument could be made that every believing Christian is a Jew; although, I don't see the need to identify us this way, unless we are identifying with the king of Judah, Jesus. It is more probable that Paul was speaking of a physical Jew that believed on Jesus. This is the true Jew as God always intended one to be.

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor 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 NASB)

Third, in His letters to the ecclesias, Jesus exposed the synagogue of the satan, the *adversary*, and the lying Jew. (No need to capitalize satan and place it even close to an equal footing with God or man, for that matter.)

I know of thee the works, and the affliction, and the poverty, (but rich thou art,) and the blasphemy from those declaring Jews to be themselves, and not are, but an assembly of the *adversary*. (Revelation 2:9 Diaglott-NT)

Lo, I give out of the assembly of the *adversary* those saying themselves Jews, to be, and not they are, but speak falsely; lo, I will make them, so that they may have come and may have prostrated before the feet of thee, and they may have known, that I loved thee....
(Revelation 3:9 Diaglott-NT)

Claiming one is a Jew based solely on ancestry and circumcision of the flesh, giving such a one access to God the Father (God of Abraham) while rejecting His Son, Jesus the Messiah, makes one a liar. Jesus said that no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6). If an "outward" Jew rejects Christ and thus has an uncircumcised heart, then his claim to be a true Jew is a lie.

Fourth, in his allegory, Paul made a clear distinction between the present Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above.

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. ... 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."
(Galatians 4:25-26, 30 NASB)

The present or earthly Jerusalem must be cast out.

There is only one Jerusalem on God's heart; it is the city that Abraham sought, which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10). It is called *New Jerusalem*. For this reason, the Hebrew believers were exhorted: *For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come* (Hebrews 13:14).

Ancient Jerusalem was about to be destroyed by the Romans shortly after the letter to the Hebrews was written, but notice that the Hebrews were never encouraged to hold to the earthly city or, for that matter, a new and improved rebuilt one. It had to be destroyed so that they would be released from any and all attachments to the present Jerusalem, the temple, and Judaism. Instead, they were encouraged, as we are today: *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem* (Hebrews 12:22).

See *Cast Out the Bondwoman* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art25.html>

Fifth, Paul tells us that Christians are the temple of the living God, and this temple is being built into a dwelling of God *in spirit*, which is corporately New Jerusalem.

And what agreement does a temple of God have with idols? For you are a temple of the living God, even as God said, "I will" dwell in them and "walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Lev. 26:12; Ezek. 37:27 (2 Corinthians 6:16 LITV)

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 on 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. (Ephesians 2:19-22 NASB)

Paul picks up on the theme of strangers who joined themselves to the tribes of Israel under Moses and Joshua (Joshua 8:35), as previously presented. In like fashion, those who were once aliens to the commonwealth of Israel are now citizens within the Israel of God as believers in Messiah Jesus.

Sixth, the thought that a Levitical priesthood will be reinstated to minister in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during the next age is totally in contradiction to scripture. The word of God makes it abundantly clear that there is a new priesthood, not based on a genealogical line traced to Aaron and Levi, whose priests died every generation, but one based on an indestructible life and the very oath of God to His Son. In other words, it is traced to and found in the Son of God.

So also, the Christ has not glorified Himself to become a high priest, but He speaking to Him, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You." Psa. 2:7 As He also says in another place, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," Psa. 110:4 (Hebrews 5:5-6 LITV)

For the One of whom these things are said has partaken of another tribe, from which no one has given devotion at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord has risen out of Judah, as to which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is still more abundantly clear that if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has not become so according to a law of a fleshly command, but according to the power of an indissoluble life. For it is testified, "You are a priest to the age according to the order of Melchizedek." Psa. 110:4 (Hebrews 7:13-17 LITV)

This priesthood traces back to Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and the king of peace, who was a type of God's Son, the true king of righteousness and of peace. The first king-priest according to the order of Melchizedek was probably Shem, who built the first Jerusalem, signifying the kingdom of God on earth. The last and preeminent King-Priest according to the order of Melchizedek is Jesus, who is the very cornerstone, foundation, and builder of the second and last Jerusalem, New Jerusalem, signifying the kingdom of God in heaven and on earth, as manifested in a people called *the body of Christ*.

Consequently, the Levitical priesthood has been made obsolete. It seems untenable that it will be revived as part of God's plan in order to offer daily sacrifices that have all been fulfilled in Christ's one sacrifice for all times (Hebrews 10:9-10).

Just as the old covenant has been made obsolete, so has the old priesthood of men from the loins of Aaron and Levi been made obsolete! God is raising up a new priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, born of the seed of God, indwelt with the spirit of God, and they will reign with King Jesus for the ages (Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6).

Christian Zionism

Dualism is most evident in what is called *Christian Zionism*. This section might appear a bit redundant, but it cannot be avoided in order to make the point.

I realize that there are some who will counter what I have written so far with the argument that the Jews according to the flesh will come into the kingdom of God the same way that Christians do. Their eyes will be opened to Jesus as Messiah, and they will repent for their unbelief and believe on Him. Up to this point, I am in full agreement, for this is the only way for anyone, Jew or gentile [nations], to come into the kingdom of God. Again, the only way to God the Father is through His Son, the Lord Jesus, who is the Savior of the world and the King of the nations.

Where I differ, and I also believe scripture differs, is where those who state the above go on to argue that the believing Jews, whose eyes are opened at the end of the age, generally through and during what is called the *great tribulation*, are a special race of people destined to rule over the nations in the age to come, based not only on their belief in Jesus but also on a bloodline traced back through Jacob, to Isaac, to Abraham. In other words, in the age to come, the believing Jews will be separated out from the ecclesia of believers [church] and given special status as the nation of Israel that will rule over the nations on earth because they are God's chosen.

The problem with such a doctrine is that it is contrary to scripture, especially according to the glorious gospel presented by Paul in his Ephesians epistle.

But now, in Christ Jesus you who then were afar off, came to be near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, He making us both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, in His flesh causing to cease the enmity, the Law of the commandments in decrees, that He might in Himself create the two into one new man, making peace, and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, slaying the enmity in Himself. And coming, He proclaimed "peace to you, the ones afar off, and to the ones near." Isa. 57:19 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2:13-18 LITV)

There are no longer two distinct lines but one line that God is working along that Paul calls the *one new man in Christ*. The wall that separated the nation of Israel from the rest of the nations has been broken down by the second man—Christ—and all who believe on God's Son are one and equal in the sight of God. All have the same access by one spirit to one Father. Paul makes it very clear in his letters that, in respect to God and His Son, there is only one distinct line, not two.

There is one body and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, the One above all and through all and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 LITV)

But to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we by Him. (1 Corinthians 8:6 LITV)

For those who teach from Paul's epistles, don't you think that if there are two distinct lines, he would have stated so along the way or, at the least, intimated so? But he did not give one scintilla

of evidence. In fact, he goes out of the way to make the point that there is only one, and it is based on one foundation. There is no other foundation but Christ.

Unfortunately, it seems that many evangelical Christians have chosen to ignore the truth of these verses, and more, as they support the current Jewish state of Israel solely on the basis, as they see it, of them being God's chosen nation to rule the world in the age to come, no matter what they do or think. In some measure, this is based on the misguided gospel that the ecclesia has nothing to do with this earth; after all, it will be raptured out of this earth to heaven.

It would be one thing, and a good thing at that, if they sought to simply convert the Jews and the modern nation of Israel to Christ so that they would come out of Judaism into Christianity, but this is not at the heart of Christian Zionism. Dangerously, some see Christianity being absorbed into Judaism, not the other way around. Yes, we have Jewish roots (I prefer Hebrew roots), but that does not mean those roots replace the true root of God which is Christ Himself.

Like Esau who sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of red stew, so are many Christians selling their birthright to a people and a nation that have rejected Christ for the last 2,000 years and that Jesus Himself said would not inherit the kingdom of God (Matthew 21:43); at least based on their genealogy. The church of the conquerors is the true Israel of God because they have come under the rule of God through His Son, are obedient to His will, and are in covenant union with Christ.

Now, what is modern Zionism? There are many definitions of it, some even sinister, but, at its core, it holds that the Jews have the right to self-determination and to develop their national culture in their own natural homeland, implemented through the creation and defense of the Jewish state of Israel. Initially, Zionism was a national movement to return the Jewish people to Palestine and to reestablish their sovereignty in "the land of Israel" through their own nation. Of course, this took place in 1948.

One Jewish website included this in the definition of Zionism: "It is applied to Evangelical Christians who want people of the Jewish religion to return to Israel in order to hasten the second coming. 'Christian Zionism' is also used to describe any Christian support for Israel."

It is safe to say that Christian Zionists believe that modern Israel, along with its "eternal" capital, Jerusalem, is the apple of God's eye and will never cease to exist, and any nation that opposes Israel or attempts to give away its land will ultimately fail. Think about this—the whole earth is the Lord's!

Again, some believe that the ones calling themselves Jews, who presently reject Christ Jesus and remain enemies of His cross, must and will believe on Jesus as Messiah at the end of the age in order to have this most-favored status in the world. However, others believe they will come into this favor with God based simply on their ancestry. In addition, again, as the misguided doctrine goes, the ecclesia of Christ will be "raptured" off the earth and, "poof," the Jewish state will take over.

Christian Zionists fail to see that, prophetically, the earthly Jerusalem fell just as Shiloh fell, never to be repaired again (Jeremiah 7:12-15; 19:11). God removed His name from physical Jerusalem

just as He did from Shiloh. Ezekiel saw the glory of God leaving the temple and the city as a foreshadow of God's name and glory never again being placed upon or in a physical structure built by man. Jesus is God's temple and His name and glory reside with Him and in Him. We who believe on the Lord Jesus are His temple on earth today.

But how are we to interpret Jeremiah's prophesy that Jerusalem and the temple would never be repaired again? After all, Jerusalem has been rebuilt many times (by some accounts nine times). As I have considered this question, a new view has come to me (one that is different from one held for some years). Just because there is a modern-day city called *Jerusalem* does not prove that it has been rebuilt again from Jeremiah's view, and especially according to God's standard.

Consider this: the glory of Solomon's temple has never been reinstated, even with the rebuilding of a second temple that occurred when a remnant returned to Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity. To our knowledge, the glory of God did not reside in this temple and never did, even up to Jesus' time. It never achieved its prior glory. Why? Again, because this glory is only found in the true temple of God, God's Son, and now in His people *who have this treasure in earthen vessels* (2 Corinthians 4:7). Everything has now moved to a much higher level with greater promises. Thus, Jeremiah's prophesy has held to the present—that is, Jerusalem has not been repaired to the standard of God's glory, regardless of what resides in Jerusalem today or even in the future. Even if a temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem (I tend to think not), it will fall short of God's standard, for His glory and His name now reside with a people who have been given the faith to believe on the one who is the final and ultimate sacrifice.

There is only one Jerusalem, just as there is only one God and one Lord.

There is one more question to resolve? Why did God call for a remnant to return to rebuild the temple and reinstate animal sacrifices, even though His name and glory were not in it? Simple, it was necessary for the arrival of the Messiah of Israel and king of Judah, as prophesied by the prophets. Yeshua had to come to Jerusalem and be sacrificed for the sins of Israel (and the world) as the lamb of God. Only one class of people could sacrifice the lambs for the sins of the nation and that was the Levitical priesthood. Given this, the priesthood (and a temple) had to be present to offer up God's sacrificial lamb, and they did this very thing in rejecting Jesus and demanding His crucifixion.

People of God, we must make a clear distinction between the unbelieving Jew, who is one according to the flesh, and the true Jew, who is one inwardly with a circumcision of the heart by the spirit (Romans 2:29). We must see that modern Zionism is antichrist and not of God but of man. The true Zion of God is not of this earth nor of man, but of heaven. The Zion of God is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). We must not confuse the revived, present-day Israel on the land with the Israel of God, whose mother above is New Jerusalem.

What are we to do? Love the modern Jews that are in Israel and in the world who are still in unbelief and enemies of the cross—manifest the life and love of Jesus to them and, as they see Him in us, encourage them to believe on Jesus.

Now, let us continue to reversionism, which could be likened to the outcome of Zionism if carried to its full manifestation.

Reversionism

Reversionism is defined as a belief that one must "return to a former state, custom, or belief." The Galatians and Hebrews epistles were both written to confront believers that were in danger of reverting back to Judaism and the old covenant, in part or in whole.

This view is similar to dualism, and the same scriptural argument against dualism applies to reversionism; however, it goes much further in its view of the Jew and Israel and what it sees as the economy of God for the ages. We could say that reversionism is more insidious than dualism, for it seeks to bring the new covenant into the old covenant rather than spiritually interpreting the new in light of the types and shadows of the old. The result is that, in the extreme case, the new covenant is abandoned in whole or in part, or perverted through some hybrid theology to the point of either rejecting Christ or making Him prominent but not preeminent. *That in all things he might have the preeminence!* (Colossians 1:18)

Reversionism seeks to return to a former state that, in this case, is no longer in the economy of God. Again, and as a reminder, the book of Hebrews was written for this very reason; it was a warning to believing Hebrews (and now to all believers) of the danger of returning to Judaism and the old covenant, exhorting them to press on in the new covenant that is based on better promises and a better resurrection.

Reversionists hold that believers must become like practicing Jews and hold to a form of Judaism. They are judaizers. As they say, Christ is coming for a Jewish bride, so Christians must be like a physical, practicing Jew. Jesus came to set us free from things like this, not to lead us back into bondage to do this, don't do that. At best, it becomes a hybrid of Christianity and Judaism with the Son of God in the midst of it in some measure; however, in the extreme it tramples underfoot the Son of God (Hebrews 10:29).

We need to be abundantly clear that, because of Calvary, Christ has done away with Judaism, but this camp seeks to bring Messiah Jesus into Judaism. Another way of stating this is that it seeks to bring Christ Jesus into Judaism, something that He made obsolete with His very own blood (Hebrews 9:12, 25; 13:12) and condemned and brought into death in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and Herod's temple (Luke 19:14, 27; 22:7). Consider what scripture says.

For it is impossible for those once having been enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and becoming sharers of the Holy Spirit, and tasting the good Word of God, and the works of power of a coming age, and having fallen away, it is impossible for them again to renew to repentance, crucifying again for themselves the Son of God, and putting Him to open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6 LITV)

How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was

sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." (Hebrews 10:29-30 ESV)

Those who seek to bring Christianity (Christ) into Judaism, along with all its outward appearances and forms and works of righteousness under the law by which no man is justified (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20, 28; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; Philippians 3:9), are severing themselves from Christ and disqualifying themselves from being an heir with the son of the free woman. They are in bondage with the bondwoman, the present Jerusalem that needs to be cast out (Galatians 4:25-30).

Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man being circumcised, that he is a debtor to do all the Law, you whoever are justified by Law, you were severed from Christ; you fell from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness out of faith. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any strength, but faith working through love. You were running well; who held you back that you do not obey the truth? (Galatians 5:2-7 LITV)

As the Hebrews letter asks: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation* (Hebrews 2:3)? Paul did not mince words when it came to any gospel that tried to revert Christians to Judaism.

But even if we, or an angel out of Heaven, should preach a gospel to you beside the gospel we preached to you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8 LITV)

Although not mentioned in the title to this article, there is another view out there that is completely opposite dualism and reversionism.

Replacement Theology

It is called *replacement theology* (also known as *supersessionism*). One source describes it this way—a predominantly *gentile* church totally supplanted or replaced physical Israel in the plan of God, making the Jews no longer God's chosen people and removing the nation of Israel from God's future plans. The new covenant has superseded the old covenant, making the old obsolete. I find this rather strange since Hebrews clearly makes this point. Another source states it this way—*it doesn't matter where the lost tribes of Israel went because God is finished with them*. As this theology goes, spiritual Israel, the church, has supplanted physical Israel; God is only working with the "new Israel" because the church has permanently replaced Israel in God's plan and purposes in the earth.

As with any school of thought there can be a measure of truth in it, and there is some in replacement theology. However, their conclusion is off. The false premise of this theology denies that Abraham's physical descendants have any role in God's plan to achieve His purpose.

As I have presented in other articles—based on evidence from history, migration, archeology, etymology, and anthropology, the sons of Israel have played and continue to play a major role in God's plan—all in fulfillment of the great promises to Abraham. What fascinates me is that many Christians that call themselves *gentiles* are probably physical descendants of Abraham.

See *Abraham's Multitude of Nations* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art63.pdf>

This leads to the last and most important school of thought on this matter; one that I see more clearly lining up with scripture.

Graftage

The noun *graftage* is defined as "the state of being grafted." The noun *graft* is defined as "a shoot or bud of one plant or tree inserted or to be inserted into the stem or trunk of another, where it continues to grow, becoming a permanent part; the act or process of inserting such a bud or shoot." The same process can occur with skin, bone, or living tissue transplanted from one body to another body or from one part of a body to another part of the same body, where it grows and becomes a permanent part. Another way of stating this is that "being grafted" refers to the process of inserting, let's say, object B into object A so that object B becomes a permanent part of object A. Once grafted, object B takes on the life of object A.

Graftage is a two-way process involving cutting or removing a part from one object and inserting or grafting it into another object. Obviously, if something can be grafted in, it only follows that it can also be cut out or pruned if it fails to root properly or bear fruit. The fact of the matter is that, in order to bring forth the fruit of His kingdom, God both prunes (cuts out dead material and trims living material) out of and grafts (inserts living material) into His tree. This is the job of a vinedresser.

As an aside, the key to graftage is to be so joined with the root or source of life that the two become one to the point that they are indistinguishable and there is no way they could or would ever be cut off entirely—perhaps pruned a bit but never totally cut off and discarded. This is what is called *oneness* or *union with Christ*. Of course, this is only a metaphor and, as such, it can only be carried so far.

Now, scripture uses many agricultural or horticultural metaphors, most notably, those involving trees and vines that, in the natural world, are grafted. The most recognizable one is Jesus as the true vine and the Father as the vinedresser (John 15:1-6). Another one that is recognized (but also often misunderstood) is the olive tree, as Paul explains in Romans 11. This is addressed in more detail in another article that I encourage you to read.

See *Fullness of the Nations* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art64.html>

Graftage of the Fig Tree

Since the bad/good fig tree is less recognized, let us consider it, starting with some history I have stressed in other writings.

At the end of Jacob-Israel's life, he blessed his son Judah with the scepter [the king] (Genesis 49:10), Joseph with fruitfulness [the kingdom] (Genesis 49:22-26), and the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, with the birthright (Genesis 48; 1 Chronicles 5:1), who were also blessed with his name *Israel*: "*And may my name live on in them*" (Genesis 48:16). Following Solomon's

death, the united kingdom of Israel was divided into two nations (1 Kings 11:9-11; 2 Chronicles 10:15-11:4), the house of Judah, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and most of the Levites, and the house of Israel, consisting of the remaining ten tribes. The name *Judah* and the scepter remained in Jerusalem and formed the southern nation. The name *Israel* and the birthright took root in Samaria and formed the northern nation. Later, the nation of Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity and dispersed northward. They ceased being a nation and lost their national identity. They became the lost [i.e., no national identity] sheep of the house of Israel and remain so to this very day, at least as far as the world and most of Christendom is concerned. The spiritually discerning know that they have been found and called the *ecclesia of Christ*, the *true Israel of God*. Modern Israel is not this house; it has unlawfully usurped the name. The nation of Judah was also taken into captivity, but by the Babylonians. Later, a remnant returned to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem, and with it, the hope of the scepter.

This is a very condensed history (with a little commentary), but the point is: When Jesus came the first time, the house or nation of Judah, not Israel, resided in Jerusalem. Jesus came the first time as the antitype of Judah to take the scepter as the king of Judah.

As a side note, it is my view that in Jesus' first inaugural arrival (coming), He came as both Judah and Joseph, who could also be identified as *Shiloh-Israel*. At this time, all that had to be done was initiated, including the reunification of Judah and Israel. However, all of this has not been consummated; this takes place in His second arrival. God's plan is to firmly and manifestly bring the kingdom of the heavens to earth and reunite Judah and Israel on all levels. Again, this has been inaugurated, but it has not been consummated.

See *Until Shiloh Comes* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art66.html>

Now, the nation of Judah was symbolized by the fig tree, but in the days of Jesus, metaphorically, there were two fig trees present in Judea, a good fig tree and a bad fig tree. Jeremiah, a prophet of Judah, was given revelation of two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord.

One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten due to rottenness. Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad figs, very bad, which cannot be eaten due to rottenness." (Jeremiah 24:2-3 NASB)

Then, the Lord went on to explain what would happen to the good figs and the bad figs.

"For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart." (Jeremiah 24:6-7 NASB)

'But like the bad figs which cannot be eaten due to rottenness ... so I will abandon ... the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land 'I will send the sword, the famine and the pestilence upon them until they are destroyed from the land which I gave to them and their forefathers.'" (Jeremiah 24:8, 10 NASB)

Drawing upon the word He gave to Jeremiah about 600 years earlier, Jesus clearly made the point that the good figs could only come from a good fig tree and the bad figs from a bad fig tree.

"So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:17-20 NASB)

In other words, metaphorically, the nation of Judah was made up of two trees, a good one and a bad one, one that had a heart for the Lord and one that did not. The good fig tree believed that Jesus is the Messiah and the king of Judah and followed Him, even after His death on the cross and His resurrection. They recognized Him and loved Him. The bad fig tree refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah and king of Judah and rejected Him to the point of demanding His death on a cross. They too recognized Him, for the parables tell us so, but they hated Him to the point of becoming murderers (Matthew 21:38-39).

Because of this, Jesus declared to them: The kingdom of God will be taken from you [bad fig tree], and it will be given to a nation [good fig tree] producing the fruits of it (Matthew 21:43 LITV).

The bad fig tree would not inherit the kingdom of God, but instead be cast out because of its rotten fruit. Just as Jeremiah had prophesied, so did Jesus: *But the king* [God the Father] *was enraged, and he sent his* [God's Roman] *armies and destroyed those murderers* [bad figs] *and set their city* [Jerusalem] *on fire* (Matthew 22:7). In 70 AD, God sent His Roman army to destroy the great city Jerusalem and the temple, bringing a final blow to Mosaic Judaism and the old covenant.

We need to realize that the good fig tree that followed Jesus lived on, and this tree was made up of believing Judahites or Jews. To those who argue that the ecclesia of Christ is a Jewish ecclesia; there is some truth to this. The early ecclesia was mostly of physical Judahites who followed the king of Judah; some estimate that they predominated the ecclesia for the first eight years. After all, Paul declared: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek* (Romans 1:16). Then he asked: *What advantage has the Jew?; to which he answered: Great in every respect* (Romans 3:1, 2). However, the advantage is of no value if a Jew remains one outwardly, manifested through the flesh, and is not one inwardly, manifested through faith and a circumcised heart.

As the king and lion from the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5), Jesus is the trunk or, if you will, the entire good fig tree, made up of many branches, called to bear the fruit of the kingdom. The genealogical Judahites that were good figs met Paul's definition of a true Jew, for they were ones inwardly with a circumcision of the heart, by the spirit (Romans 2:29).

Here is where graftage enters in. All who have believed on Jesus regardless of their genealogical roots have been grafted into the good fig tree of Judah and united themselves with the king of Judah. The believing physical Jews were already part of the good fig tree and didn't need to be grafted in like those from among the nations (non-Jews).

Again, let it be emphasized that the early church was most assuredly made up of genealogical Jews or good figs. Over time, as the gospel went forth to the nations, other shoots were grafted into this good fig tree to bear the fruit of the kingdom. We could even say that those from the nations produced other types of fruit, such as apples, oranges, pears, etc., metaphorically speaking. God loves diversity!

As an aside, the Lord revealed to me recently that His people are the fruit of the kingdom. I see a two-fold fruitiness. His people are the fruit, and they produce fruit as well.

The kingdom of God produces all kinds of fruit; after all, consider what the tree(s) of life produces in New Jerusalem. To be clear, the fruit bearers are people, for the city of God speaks of the corporate temple of the Lord, the body of Christ.

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2 NASB)

Graftage is not replacement, for it acknowledges that the good fig tree that started in the old testament under the old covenant continued on as the good fig tree of the new testament under the new covenant—even a new creation. Its roots are in the ancient days of Judah, but its growth increased materially after Calvary and the resurrection of Christ, as not only believing ethnic Jews continued on as the tree, but others not of the ancient tree were grafted into it. In like fashion, in Jesus' day, many physical Jews were pruned out of the tree to become wild or bad figs and cannot be grafted back in unless they have faith to believe in Jesus, the Savior and Messiah.

Paul presents the olive tree in the same way, only he uses it in reference to Israel, not Judah or the Jews. Since Israel encompasses a much larger population, I find the olive tree more significant than the fig tree. Israelites were pruned out of the olive tree in Paul's day as well. Thankfully, Paul was not one of them. As I have written elsewhere, since that time, over the many centuries to follow to the present, a great multitude of believing descendants of ethnic or physical Israelites have been grafted in as well. Unfortunately, this glorious story is unknown to many. If it were known and accepted, all the other theories would be swept into the dustbin of history, for it brings the most glory to God the Father and His Son.

Do not think for a minute that graftage, involving the good fig tree (or the olive tree), means that there is a reversion to the old covenant and its outward forms—except to reveal the reality of Jesus the Messiah through the many types—for it does not!

God is pressing on toward the all new. As Jesus said: *No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God* (Luke 9:62). Let us not look back to the old; let us press on toward the new!

The first has been taken away to establish the second (Hebrews 10:9). The genealogical Jew had an advantage, for the gospel was presented to the Jew first; however, salvation is based on faith (Romans 1:16-17), not a gene pool. Their advantage was mostly then, not now! Today, there is

no advantage to the genealogical Jew, for God only acknowledges the true Jew who is one with a circumcised heart.

Conclusion

There is only one line upon which God is working today, and the good fig tree of Judah is one type of this line that has remained unbroken since its inception. Another type is the olive tree that speaks of all believing Israel as a multitude of nations that feed off the rich root of Messiah Jesus and live by the truth that *God rules*.

These two metaphors unite Judah and Israel as one in Christ!

Good news; we who believe have been grafted! Let's stay that way!