

Abraham's Descendants

The People of God

Introduction

As we said in our introductory lesson, God's purpose is to sum all things up in Christ—both things in Heaven and things in the earth. This would include the people of God. It would seem by the way that some teachers speak of God's people that He has two distinct groups of people—Israel and the Church. However, this is not the case. God only has one people—His people, His sons and daughters.

Many teachers have confused God's people by teaching about different plans of God or different dispensations for His dealings with Israel as compared with His dealings with the Church. Dispensationalism made popular by Scofield and the Scofield bible attempts to separate promises and provisions about the end times into two categories—those associated with Israel and those associated with the Church. We are convinced that you can never get a complete picture of the end times if you do this. Too much of the plain teaching of the Scriptures is ignored and mental gymnastics are used to explain things.

The one people of God constitute the Nation of God or the Kingdom of God. The New Testament makes it clear that the one people are composed of both Jew and Gentile [**Gal. 3:28**]. God, in His manifold wisdom, is doing some things that relate to that which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world. He is summing all things up in Christ. He is also dealing with the rebellion and 'fractured kingdom' issue [for more on this see "[Fractured Kingdom](#)"]. In doing this, God has given the Devil some latitude and not simply 'slapped him out of existence' as He could have easily done. God has allowed the kingdom of darkness to continue to operate in order to provide a testing and training ground for His sons to mature and come into the fullness of their sonship so that they could learn to reign as joint-heirs with Christ. We are being trained for the throne and this process involves the Lord giving the enemy permission to tempt and test us.

Our institutional church teaching has applied the Kingdom of God Scriptures to the 'church' ignoring the concepts of the Kingdom completely. The 'church' and the 'kingdom' are not the same thing. The 'church' is a sub-set of the Kingdom, which means the Kingdom is 'bigger' than the Church. Not every being that is in the Kingdom is in the Church; however, everyone who is in the true Church is in the Kingdom. I say true Church because the requirement is to do the will of the Father, not religious work. The institutional system is not the true Church and there are many workers within the institutional system that are not citizens of the Kingdom of God. That is not a very popular statement. As a matter of fact, it makes many 'church members' angry.

Dispensationalists have made the 'kingdom' to be a part of the dealings of God with Israel and say that it doesn't apply to anyone but the Jews. They say we are in the 'church age' and when the 'church age' is finished then God completes His 'kingdom' work with Israel, which is basically relegated to the Tribulation period. This form of dispensational thought makes it easy to categorize the Scriptures in a manner that is conducive to natural thinking and reasoning and results in 'doctrines' that are at best erroneous and at worst pure deception.

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Because of our lack of understanding about the Kingdom of God, a huge portion of the people of God have bought into the dispensational concepts that were made popular by Scofield in his reference bible notes. This has caused God's people to separate Israel and the Church into different categories that God deals with differently.

God is unfolding His purpose in our space-time continuum. The purpose of God is not fragmented into different 'dispensations' that have little or no relationship with each other. Instead, the purpose of God is a unified whole that finds expression within time to bring to completion the intent of God and complete His work to restore His Kingdom and replace within His Kingdom the functions vacated by Lucifer and the fallen angels. These functions are our future job placement assignments.

The end times are the culmination of the purposes of God which brings all aspects of God's plan together. We see the kingdom of darkness grow to its full potential and we see the people of God mature as the harvest grows nearer. This is pictured clearly by Jesus in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

The People of God

Forget for the moment any designation of 'church' and let's just consider the idea of the 'people of God'. God has always had His people in the earth. We know from the Scriptures that Enoch was one of the people of God. We know that Noah was one also. We also know that between the fall of Adam and the promise to Abraham, there were few that could be called the people of God. However, we know that one part of the purpose of God is to bring many sons to glory.[**Heb. 2:10**]. This would require more than a few righteous who would walk with God.

Within the purpose of God, the eternal counsels of His manifold wisdom, God called Abraham and made a promise to Him.

Genesis 12:1-2 NASB

- (1) Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;
- (2) And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

In this God promises, 1) a lineage of children, and 2) an inheritance for that lineage, which results in a great nation and through him a blessing to all of the families of the earth. There is a physical lineage and there is also a spiritual lineage. However, in the New Covenant we find that the lineage was very specific. The promise was only to the promised seed. We see that in the physical this was Isaac. However, Isaac was only a fore-shadowing of the True Seed, which is spiritual.

Galatians 3:16 NASB

- (16) Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

THE SEED of Abraham is Christ Jesus [**Gal. 3:16**] and He is the blessing to all the families of the earth. Since the lineage promised in the natural is fulfilled in the spiritual, [**Rom, 9:6-8; Gal, 3:7, 29**] we can expect the natural inheritance to have a spiritual fulfillment and the natural nation to also have a

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spiritual fulfillment.

It is our understanding from the Scriptures that the spiritual fulfillment of this promise of inheritance and a great nation is the Kingdom of God. While Jesus was speaking in the Temple, He told the Chief Priests and Elders of Jerusalem that He was taking things to a new level, the natural was over with.

Matthew 21:43 NASB

- (43) "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.

That 'nation' is the spiritual version of the 'nation' promised to Abraham. It is the nation of God, the Kingdom of God where Jesus rules as the unchanging King.

We can see from this that God's program for Israel and God's program for the Church are not two different programs, but, are actually one flowing process that unfolds in time to fulfill God's ultimate intention. The things of the Old Testament are given to us as examples, types and shadows of spiritual truth. We cannot fully understand the New Testament without seeing God's purpose and the way that He began to implement that purpose in the Old Testament. This can only be done through the revelation brought to us by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:14-17 NASB

- (14) But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.
- (15) But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;
- (16) but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- (17) Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.

There is a veil over the mind when the Old Testament is read that is only taken away in Christ. It is the Spirit that removes the veil so that our understanding may be enlightened.[Eph. 1:17-19] Notice that the veil is on the mind and the heart. Scripturally, the heart is where we understand spiritual truth. The heart is how we think, the very structure of our thinking process. The mind implements what we think.

Paul told us in Ephesians that, at one time, we “*were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*”[Eph. 2:12 NKJV] However, God, in His mercy and grace has done something for us. We “*who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*”[Eph. 2:13 NKJV]

Ephesians 2:14-16 NASB

- (14) For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups* into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,
- (15) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,
- (16) and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

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What are “both groups” mentioned here? They are Israel and non-Israel, that is, Jews and Gentiles. All descendants of Abraham who are sons of Abraham by faith [**Gal. 3:7**] are brought together in Christ.

Galatians 3:28-29 NASB

- (28) 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.
- (29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

All who are “in Christ” are Abraham's descendants and his heirs according to the promise made to Abraham.

Romans 2:28-29 NASB

- (28) For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.
- (29) 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.

The sign that makes us descendants of Abraham is circumcision of the heart. This has nothing to do with the natural or physical aspects of the lineage of Abraham but is spiritual.

The Olive Tree

The root of God's plan is the promise to Abraham. From that root grows both the physical and the spiritual people who are sons of Abraham. Paul describes this as a cultivated olive tree and the Jews as natural branches that were cut off and the Gentiles as wild olive tree branches that were grafted in.

Romans 11:17-21 NASB

- (17) But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,
- (18) do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.
- (19) You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."
- (20) Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;
- (21) for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

I have heard a number of “teachers” say that the Church has Jewish roots or that it is rooted in Judaism. This is simply not true. Our root is the promise to Abraham. It is the root of the Jews and it is the root of the Church. The promise is about the Seed, Christ Jesus. It is that seed that has produced the Olive Tree of which both Jews and Gentiles are branches.

Before the coming of Christ, the Olive Tree was cultivated in faith looking forward to the Messiah. Those who did not believe Messiah when He came were cut off as branches because of their unbelief. Their cutting off made room or opportunity for the Gentiles who stand by faith. Now, Gentiles who are wild olive branches have been grafted in to the root of the cultivated olive tree. If the Gentile branches

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become filled with unbelief like the Jewish branches that were cut off, then God may cut off the Gentile branches, too. He is not a respecter of persons. Unbelief can cause our branch to be removed from the olive tree.

Romans 11:22-24 NASB

- (22) Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.
- (23) And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.
- (24) For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

This makes it clear that our participation in the olive tree is by faith and our removal is unbelief. If the Jews do not continue in unbelief, they will be re-grafted into the olive tree. The olive tree is the nation of God. It is True Israel. It is the Body of believers who are in Christ. The ONLY way to be a part of the olive tree is to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ.

End Times Application

What has been said in this lesson is not *replacement theology* but rather *completion theology*. The Church has not replaced Israel in God's plan nor does God have a separate agenda for the Church and Israel. Rather, God is bringing to completion all aspects of His purpose which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world. There is only one olive tree, one body, one Lord, one God with the end result that all things will be summed up in One New Man with Christ Jesus as the Head.

Until we can come to a proper understanding and perspective on physical Israel we cannot understand the things concerning the End Times and the return of our Lord. Physical Israel in its unbelief has no provision in God. Jesus made this clear.

Matthew 21:43 NASB

- (43) "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.

Matthew 23:38-39 NASB

- (38) "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!
- (39) "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

The privileges of the Kingdom have been taken away from physical Israel. The house of physical Israel is left desolate. No further provision is left to them until they can recognize their Messiah. Paul makes it clear when this will occur.

Romans 11:25-27 NASB

- (25) For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness

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of the Gentiles has come in;

(26) and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

(27) "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

“Until” is a time word. Their condition of partial blindness will continue until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. “Fullness” here does not mean quantity but rather completeness, filled to capacity. [*This is the same word in the original that is used in John 1:16, Romans 15:29, I Corinthians 10:26, Ephesians 1:23, 3:19, 4:13 and Colossians 1:19*] Paul speaks of a time when we “all come into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”. This occurs at His return, which makes our understanding of this an end time necessity.

Applying this means that our traditional interpretation of end time scenarios are in error. We need now to adjust our thinking in these areas. These are some of the things that will be discussed in upcoming lessons. Some of these would include:

1. No requirement for a re-built temple in Jerusalem. While man may do this anyway, it will have nothing to do with God nor His plan.
2. No seven year tribulation period. Daniel's seventieth week has been completed. Messiah was cut off in the middle of the seventieth week. Steven was the first Christian martyr at the end of the seventieth week thus marking the ending of God dealing with Israel as a separate people and nation. [The only place that our traditional teaching gets a seven year period is from Daniel's seventieth week. All other scriptures in Revelation only speak of three and one half years.]
3. Nothing promised by God to physical Israel is unfinished. Everything has been completed. Now the promises are to spiritual Israel, which includes both Jew and Gentile.
4. No tribulation that is just for the Jews. Any end time tribulation will include all of the people of God.
5. No event of the Church leaving the world while God deals with the Jews.

There are a number of other errors that we are faced with in current end time teaching; but, these are enough to get you thinking. God's plan and purpose is a cohesive whole, not fragmented pieces. The sooner that we understand this the quicker we can prepare for the return of the Lord.