

ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him the plan for the fullness of the times

**TO HEAD UP THE ALL THINGS IN THE CHRIST,
the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, in Him...**

(Ephesians 1:8b-10)

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#64

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The Fullness of the Nations – The Great Commission Goy & Ethnos – All Nations

This article is a follow up to **article #63** on the **Abrahamic Covenant**. If you have not already read this, you are encouraged to do so.

Here is the link: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art63.pdf>

At the outset, it needs be clear that what follows pertains to nations and not individuals per se. Obviously, individuals are included because nations are comprised of people. Individuals are justified by faith and in no way is this meant to be diminished in this article. However, when individuals are joined together to become what we generally think of as a nation, the question arises as to whether the nation of people obediently comes under the sovereignty of God, the Creator of All, or not; whether a nation chooses to be blessed or cursed. In this regard, nations can be saved or lost, as in torn down or cease to exist as a nation. Of course, such a loss does not change the objective position of individual believers in Christ.

It seems to me that God's unconditional promises to Abraham, the father of faith and of nations, is one of the most, if not the most, profound and far-reaching covenants made by God to a man. The fact of the matter is that this covenant is really the basis of the New Covenant inaugurated through God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Another way of stating this is that these promises are the genesis of the New Covenant, for they were unconditionally given before the Law or circumcision, and they are based on faith. **Abraham believed God or believed in the Lord** and, on the basis of this faith, **it was reckoned to him as righteousness** (Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6). Now, those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer, and are **Abraham's descendants**, not by the flesh but by the spirit, **heirs according to promise** (Galatians 3:9, 14, 29).

(8) And, the scripture, foreseeing, that, by faith, God would declare the nations righteous, fore-announced the good news unto Abraham, saying, All the nations shall be blessed in thee. ... (14) In order that, unto the nations, the blessing of Abraham, might come about in Jesus Christ,—in order that, the promise of the Spirit, we might receive through means of the faith. (Galatians 3:8, 14 Rotherham)

Notice that all the nations shall be blessed and that the blessing of Abraham comes about in Christ Jesus and this is based on the promise of the Spirit. This is the good news. This is an

amazing promise, and yet one that seemingly many Christians are seldom taught because it goes against the heaven-hell template held by so many. I think it is safe to make the claim that most Christians do not believe that all the nations shall be blessed, that is, blessed with the faith of Abraham. Instead, it is held that the many will not be blessed with faith but rather will roast and toast forever and ever in a place called *hell*. This is not the good news.

Now, there are other expressions or phrases in scripture that directly speak of or support or further explain all the greatness of the Abrahamic Covenant. These include the *Fullness of the Nations*, *All Israel Will Be Saved*, the *Great Commission*, *All Nations Come to Worship God*, and *By My Oath—Every Knee Will Bow*. Each of these will be taken up in what follows, but before doing so, let us consider the word *nation* as presented through the Hebrew and Greek languages in scripture. We need to clear away some interpretative bias.

For those who study the Bible, it is apparent that translators of scripture often inject their own bias into the text by using certain words over other ones. This is called **interpretative bias**. Since all translations are the work of men, none are perfect and interpretative bias is inherent in practically all; however, some have less bias than others.

Bias is most readily seen in the way certain Hebrew or Greek words are translated. A case in point is the way the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek words *aion* and *aionian* are translated to convey the thought of *forever* and *eternal* when they more accurately speak of *ages* or *eons* and *eonian*, as in *age-during*, or a period of time that is often indefinite in duration.

For further understanding of the words *olam*, *aion*, and *aionian*, please see **article #57**, July 2013, ***Eternal or Eonian?*** Here is the link: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art57.pdf>

Goy and Ethnos

The Hebrew word *goy* [plural, *goyim*], and the Greek word *ethnos* [plural, *ethne*] fall into the same category as *olam* and *aion*. The proper translation of the words *goy* and *ethnos* is the word *nation*; however, at times, they are translated using the words *gentile* or *heathen* in order to make a distinction between the nation of Judah (Jewish) or Israel and the rest of the nations that are non-Jewish.

This is seen in the way these words are defined by *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.

Goy is "a foreign *nation*; hence a *Gentile*; also (figuratively) a *troop* of animals, or a *flight* of locusts: - Gentile, heathen, nation, people."

Ethnos is "a *race* (as of the same *habit*), that is, a *tribe*; specifically a *foreign* (*non-Jewish*) one (usually by implication *pagan*): - Gentile, heathen, nation, people."

Notice how *Strong* defines these words in relation to something foreign to the Jew and makes these people heathen or pagan in their belief system.

Many translations follow these definitions, which leads to dividing the world into two groups of people, the Jews and the rest of mankind. This, in turn, has led to many, especially among the evangelicals of our day, into believing that the so-called or, what could be called, the *apparent* Jews (as opposed to *true* Jews [Romans 2:28-29]) are a special breed of people that are under a special covenant with God that may or may not require faith in God's Son, Jesus. Paul would call this a *systematized deception* [see Ephesians 4:14 *Concordant Literal Version*] that has resulted in the widely held belief of our day that God continues to work along two lines, a Jewish line and a Gentile line. This is not the truth of the good news of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant based on the "better." **God is working only along one line.** Knowing this one truth is essential to understanding God's plan to achieve His ultimate purpose of all in all.

For further understanding of the one line, please see **article #39**, February 2012, ***Dualism, Reversionism, Graftage***. Here is the link: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art39.pdf>

Notice how *Strong's* definition relates these words to a foreign or non-Jewish tribe. But this raises a very important question: Is not Israel also a nation of tribes, an *ethnos*? The answer is yes, it most certainly is. In the original languages, Israel is referred to as a *goy* and an *ethnos* as are the so-called *heathen* nations.

If we were living in the ancient days of Israel from Moses to Solomon, viewing Israel separate from what could be called *foreign* nations would be justified. After all, Israel was called out as a kingdom of priests, even sons. But what about after 33 AD, that is, after the cross? Is the same distinction justified? No! There is a new covenant, and we need to view the nations from a new perspective.

In order to understand this perspective, let us start at the beginning.

First Mention – Goy

The first mention of the word *goy* or *nation* is found in Genesis 10:5 in reference to the sons of Japheth.

The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. and the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. By these were the isles of the Gentiles [*goy*] divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations [*goy*]. (Genesis 10:2-5 KJV)

It doesn't make much sense to translate the word *goy* as *gentiles* so early in scripture, unless one wanted to establish that the descendants of Japheth are to be called *gentiles*. But to add a level of confusion to the translation, in the same sentence, the same people group is referred to as *nations*. But later, the King James refers to the sons of Ham, Shem, and Noah as nations and not gentiles. So, are the sons of Japheth gentile and the sons of Ham Jewish? This makes no sense.

These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations [goy]. (Genesis 10:20 KJV)

These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations [goy]. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations [goy]: and by these were the nations [goy] divided in the earth after the flood. (Genesis 10:31-32 KJV)

Clearly, using the word *gentiles* instead of *nations* for the first mention of goy, the King James establishes unnecessary interpretative bias right from the start. At this point in history, there were no Jews or Israelites. Besides, how could it be stated, using Strong's definition, that Noah's descendants were foreign, non-Jewish nations when they actually represented the totality of all nations in that day? To be consistent, the translators should have used the word *gentiles* for goy in all of the above verses. Better yet, why inject something so unnecessary? Why not follow the lead of more literal translations?

(5) The coasts of the nations [goy] were divided by these in their lands each by his tongue, by their families, in their nations [goy]. ... (31) These were the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their tongues, in their lands, according to their nations [goy]. (Genesis 10:5, 31 LITV)

Turning to Abraham, we discover the use of the word goy in Hebrew and *ethnos* in Greek. Hebrew words of the Old Testament often define Greek words of the New Testament, and the word goy is a good example of a word that does just that, for it defines the Greek word *ethnos*, as noted below. But again, notice how the KJV injects its bias by using the words *heathen* and *gentile*.

(12:2) And I will make you a great nation [goy], and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing.... (18:18) And Abraham shall become a great and powerful nation [goy], and all the nations [goy] of the earth shall be blessed in him? (Genesis 12:2; 18:18 NASB)

And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations [ethnos-goy] [KJV = heathen] by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham: "All the nations [ethnos-goy] [KJV = nations] will be blessed in you." Gen. 12:3 (Galatians 3:8 LITV)

That the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations [ethnos-goy] [KJV = Gentiles] in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:14 LITV)

All the nations will be blessed in Abraham, whether one labels them Jewish or non-Jewish, heathen or Gentile. It matters not what label or descriptor one places on a community of people united under one government; they are all nations destined to be justified by God through the same faith exhibited by Abraham. The blessing of Abraham is for all nations.

Consequently, defining one nation as *gentile* or *heathen* and another as *Jewish* is not necessary when translating the words goy and *ethnos*. By studying the context around the use of these

words, one can discern if they are, in fact, referring to the ancient nation of Israel or not. Besides, Israel is referred to as a nation (*goy, ethnos*) just like all the other nations of the world, both past and present.

When the Lord called the sons of Israel out of Egypt, He called them a *goy*.

And you shall become a kingdom of priests for Me, a holy nation [*goy*]. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel. (Exodus 19:6 LITV)

In His displeasure over the rebellion of the sons of Israel, the Lord told Moses that He would destroy them and make Moses into a great *goy*.

"I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation [*goy*] greater and mightier than they." (Numbers 14:12 NASB)

As Jesus walked among the Judahites, the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council and questioned what to do with Jesus. They feared that if Jesus established the kingdom in their day, they would lose their place of honor and control over the people.

"If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation [*ethnos*]." (John 11:48 NASB)

In other words, the Judahites of that day saw themselves as a nation, an *ethnos*.

With these few verses (and others not cited), it is apparent that translators do a disservice by injecting their bias into words. As presented, it is best to translate the words *goy* and *ethnos* as *nation(s)* and allow the reader to decide what nation(s) is in view based on the context.

Until the Fullness of the Nations

With this basic understanding, let us consider the phrase *until the fullness of the nations* as penned by Paul in Romans.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be wise within yourselves, that hardness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the nations [*ethnos*] comes in.... (Romans 11:25 LITV)

Many translations use the word *gentiles* instead of *nations*. One translation uses the expression *God's non-Jewish people*, which is very inaccurate and misleading. To this latter point, Paul was not writing about the Jews but about the Israelites, which includes either the ten tribes that went into dispersion from 745-721 BC or all twelve tribes united as one. But, there is one other point that is often not understood. When Paul wrote this, the nation of Israel had lost its national identity and name. They were no more. The descendants of the ten tribes had been assimilated into other nations and were no different than all the other nations of the world. As one commentator has stated, the lost tribes of the house of Israel had been *gentilized*. Given

this, these lost tribes were included in the expression *the fullness of the nations*. This is why Paul continued on with the declaration that *all Israel will be saved*.

And so all Israel will be saved, even as it has been written, "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Isa. 59:20, 21 (Romans 11:26-27 LITV)

Paul included all Israel in the fullness of the nations coming in. How and why could he do this? He could and he did because all the nations will ultimately be given the faith of Abraham to believe on Jesus. Paul taught that all things will be reconciled to God, things in heaven and things on earth, and in these things are all the nations and the individuals that make up these nations. Paul was simply declaring the truth of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is the genesis of the New Covenant.

Some of this might be redundant, but I want to stress a few points to pull all this together.

First, a search of 25 different translations reveals that, in verse 25, the word *ethnos* has been translated *gentiles* in 19 translations, *God's non-Jewish people* in 1 translation, and *nations* in 5 translations. Clearly, a majority prefer the phrase *the fullness of the gentiles* over *the fullness of the nations*. Clearly, a majority of translators believe that Paul referred to a period of time in which the *gentile* nations, not the Israelite nation, will be saved. But, does this make *the fullness of the gentiles* the more biblically sound rendering, or does its use indicate interpretative bias? I propose it is the latter.

As a reminder, according to scripture, gentiles, heathens, Jews, or any other grouping of people can be nations based on the words *goy* and *ethnos*. The context surrounding the word determines the identity of the people. Or simply, **context determines identity**.

Second, we need to throw off the tradition of men that sees the word *Israel* through the lens of a single Jewish nation, most notably the ancient one that was located in Canaan/Judea and the one now sitting in the Middle East that is presumed to be made up of blood descendants of Jacob and his son Judah but, in fact, is, at most, a highly mixed gene pool of Judahites, Japhethites, Hamites, Ishmaelites, Edomites, and many other *ites*.

The name *Israel* was given to Jacob not when he was born but later in life when he came to see that God rules. The name ***Israel***, meaning "**God rules**," was given to ***Jacob***, meaning "**supplanter**," after he wrestled with the Lord all night. Thus, *Israel* is not a name given based on a certain bloodline but on a certain character or, more specifically, a yielding to the will and sovereignty of God. Jacob was a man ruled by his will and strength, but Israel was a broken man ruled by the will of God who leaned on God for strength. This is seen in Jacob-Israel's hip being dislocated so that he had a limp.

Third, the revived, present-day nation called *Israel* is in the exact same condition that the ancient, historical one was in; both are disqualified from inheriting the Kingdom (e.g., Matthew 8:10-12; 12:31-32; 21:33-42; 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24). The present Israel has failed to bear the

fruit of the Kingdom of God even though its leaves have come forth once again (Matthew 21:19, 43; 24:32).

Many assume that the rebirth of a modern-day nation called *Israel* is to fulfill prophecy that it will be the head of the nations in the coming Kingdom of Christ. It is true that its rebirth is to fulfill prophecy, but not in this regard. It is to fulfill prophecy relating to **the controversy of Zion**, which speaks to the conflict between Jacob and Esau [Idumea, Edom] and Edom's desire to rebuild the desolate places (Isaiah 34:4-8; Malachi 1:1-4). The Lord has allowed Edom to rebuild (i.e., present-day Israel), but He will throw it down once again (Malachi 1:4; also see Psalm 78:60-61; Isaiah 29:1-6; Jeremiah 19:10-12; 7:12).

Israel, as the world presently knows it, had to come forth so that it could be judged in fulfillment of the Lord's promise to judge Jerusalem, which is aligned with mystery Babylon that will fall in an hour (Revelation 18), **the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified** (Revelation 11:8).

At best, this Israel is of the Old Covenant based on the natural seed of Jacob, the circumcision of the flesh, and the letter of the law written on stone. At worst, much of the Israelite population is as secular as the rest of the world. Today, most who call themselves Jews continue in unbelief and reject the same Messiah that the ancient Jews rejected and killed over 2,000 years ago. According to Jesus, as recorded by John, they are liars (Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

I realize that many evangelicals who are Christian Zionists might deny this, but this is the truth. The truth sets people free; it does not leave them in bondage or living in delusion or according to a lie that says they can do no wrong for they are chosen simply based on their gene pool. So-called *Jews* are to be made jealous (Romans 11:11), not made comfortable in a lie.

Fourth, God's *true* Israel is a nation based on the New Covenant, which is based on the seed of God planted within the spirit of a new race, the circumcision of the heart, and the spirit of the law put into minds and written on hearts (Hebrews 8:7-13). A new nation came forth after the cross that bears the fruit of the Kingdom, and this nation that has come forth from among the nations is *spiritual* Israel, the dwelling of God in Spirit (Ephesians 2:22), that in the next age will be made up of many sons brought unto glory (Hebrews 2:10). **Christ in you, the hope of glory!**

Fifth, we need to understand that the name *Israel* refers primarily to **birthright** and **sonship**, not to rulership. Rulership came through the line of Judah (Genesis 49:10) and sonship (birthright) comes through the line of Israel; more specifically, through the line of Joseph (Genesis 48:15-16; 49:22; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Jesus came the first time to do a **first work** in regard to taking hold of the scepter from Judah. This speaks of **Kingship**. He will come a second time to do a **second work** in regard to taking hold of the **birthright** given to Joseph. This speaks of the **Kingdom and Sonship**.

Sixth, Solomon ruled over the Kingdom of Israel and Judah, but after his death, it was divided into two tribes in the south (Judah and Benjamin, along with the Levites) called **the house of Judah**, and the remaining ten tribes in the north called **the house of Israel**. The line of the king went with Judah. This is why Jesus had to be from the tribe of Judah. Again, at the cross, He

took the scepter of Judah. All who believe on Jesus unite themselves with Judah and its King, Jesus. However, entering the Kingdom is a matter of birthright and being placed (adopted) as a son who receives the inheritance of the Father's Kingdom (Matthew 13:38; 43). The line of the son went with the line of Joseph and his sons, which is associated with the house of Israel.

Seventh, following the division of Solomon's kingdom, the two houses were taken into captivity. Judah eventually returned to Jerusalem and remained under foreign control (wooden yoke); however, Israel was scattered among the nations and became known as ***the lost sheep of the house of Israel*** (iron yoke). They lost their national identity and, as such, were lost among the nations of the world. Judah and Israel are reunited only in Christ.

Shiloh – A Second Work

Interestingly, when the King comes a second time, He comes with the name of ***Shiloh***, not the name of *Judah*.

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." (Genesis 49:10 NASB)

(1) Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them. ... (10) And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the sons of Israel according to their divisions. (Joshua 18:1, 10 NASB)

There are differing views among commentators regarding the meaning of *Shiloh* in Genesis 49:10. It might signify *peace* or *tranquility*, which would be in line with the coming of the Prince of Peace to establish His Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness as the King-Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5, 7). For me, this seems to be the proper explanation. But what is most often overlooked is the idea that the scepter of Judah was meant to be temporary, meaning Jesus, as the King of Judah, was to hold Judah's scepter until He comes to do His second work, at which time, the scepter passes to Shiloh, taking on a different nature.

This means that the name *Shiloh* is significant. Shiloh was in the land of Ephraim, which associated it with Israel and the birthright given to Joseph and his two sons. Joshua was also an Ephraimite, which clearly links Joshua to the birthright of the Kingdom. This is made plain in the fact that Shiloh is where Joshua assembled the sons of Israel as the land was subdued before them and as he divided it among the tribes as their inheritance in the kingdom-nation. In type, this speaks of Jesus-Joshua delivering His people, His Body, into their new land of immortal bodies, which is their inheritance in the Kingdom of God. This is part of the second work of Christ when He comes at the end of this age to resurrect and translate His conquerors into His image, redeeming their bodies by translating them into immortality and then seating them on His throne to reign with Him for a thousand years.

As an aside, the word *Judah* appears twice in the *Revelation* (5:5; 7:5), both in reference to conquering or overcoming. The word *Lamb* or, as the *Concordant Literal Version* translates it,

Lambkin appears 30 times. It would appear that on the other side of conquering (i.e., the side of immortality), the conquerors have the nature of a little lamb.

For more on the word *Lambkin*, see *The Upward Call*, issue #03-0922, February 13, 2009, *Lambkin (Arnion)*. Here is the link: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc219.pdf>

Again, we need to be clear that the present-day state of Israel is not the lost house of Israel. The Zionists that founded this state usurped the name *Israel* (and *Zion*) as if they were a reunited kingdom of the two houses. They are not. If they had taken the name *Judah*, at least they would have been closer to the truth, although *Edom* might have been just as accurate.

These points are important in understanding Paul's expression *the fullness of the nations*, so let us return to verse 25.

For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this secret—that ye may not be wise in your own conceits—that hardness in part to Israel hath happened till the fulness of the nations [ethnos] may come in; and so all Israel shall be saved, according as it hath been written, 'There shall come forth out of Sion [Zion] he who is delivering, and he shall turn away impiety from Jacob, and this to them is the covenant from Me, when I may take away their sins.' (Romans 11:25-27 YLT)

The Fullness of the Israelite Nations

In Romans 11, Paul refers to the *ethnos* (nations) 5 times, but this raises a question: What does Paul mean by the phrase *the fullness of the nations*? Was he referring to non-Jewish nations, that is, gentiles, as so many translations imply? I propose that, on a physical level, Paul was actually referring to the nation of Israel, the house of Israel that was dispersed among the nations and gradually became known by other national or ethnic names. I further propose that Paul's words could be rephrased as ***the fullness of the Israelite nations***.

We need to throw off the tradition of men that sees the word *Israel* through the lens of a single Jewish nation, most notably the ancient one that was located in Canaan and the one now sitting in the Middle East that is presumed to be made up of blood descendants of Jacob and his son Judah, as well as Ishmael and Esau.

When Jacob was sick, Joseph went to see his father, along with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob blessed his son with fruitfulness and took Manasseh and Ephraim to be his own as Reuben and Simeon were his own. As *Israel*, Jacob called for the two sons so that he could bless them.

"The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and may my name [Israel] live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." (Genesis 48:16 NASB)

Although Manasseh was the firstborn, Israel placed Ephraim before his brother so that he would be greater than his older brother. In other words, the birthright was primarily given to Ephraim.

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." He blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. (Genesis 48:17-20 NASB)

Notice that Ephraim was blessed to become a multitude of nations, not one nation, and that he was blessed, along with his brother, to possess the name *Israel*. Thus, the stage was set for not only one nation called *Israel* but for many nations that are *Israel*, whether they are called by this name or by any other name.

***Israel* is a multitude of nations; it is in this context that Paul referred to the fullness of the nations.**

But how did Ephraim become a multitude of nations known as *Israel*? It started when the Lord scattered the house of Israel. It needs to be added that, according to the prophets, *Ephraim* and *Israel* are synonymous. This scattering was actually a sowing; something revealed through Hosea the prophet. The Lord spoke against the house of Israel as He commanded Hosea to take a wife of harlotry who gave birth to a son.

And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God." (Hosea 1:9 NASB)

In the day of Moses, the Lord told His people that, if they rebelled against His commands or were unfaithful to Him, He would scatter them among the nations (Leviticus 26:33; Nehemiah 1:8); a warning that He repeated many times. Israel became a harlot and was cast out of the land and scattered among the nations, just as the Lord had promised. Although this might seem to be a great tragedy, it actually was part of the plan of God to bring forth a multitude of nations.

Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and 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." And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. (Hosea 1:10-11 NASB)

Verse 10 explains it very clearly; Israel was to be scattered among the nations with no name that identified them as belonging to the Lord. In other words, "You are not My people." However, it is in this place, that is, among the nations, that it will be said of them "You are the

sons of the living God." It is here that both the house of Judah and the house of Israel are reunited after being separated since the division of Solomon's kingdom. Again, they are reunited in one leader, God's King. The Lord, as the Sower of seed who seeks for a great harvest, scattered Israel throughout the earth to reap them there.

And I will sow her to Me in the earth. And I will have mercy on No Mercy. And I will say to Not My People, You are My people! And they shall say, My God! (Hosea 2:23 LITV)

The same picture is given of this sowing in the parable of the Sower in which Jesus sows the good seed in the field, which is the world, in order to reap a great harvest of sons of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:18-23; 37-43). Thus, the sowing is to produce sons, which is what *Ephraim* signifies.

When His disciples questioned why He spoke in parables regarding the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens, Jesus responded by quoting Isaiah 6:9-10 and stating it was being fulfilled. The people were blind, deaf, and dull (Matthew 13:10-17). Paul picked up this theme in Romans 11:25 by declaring that a partial hardening has happened to genealogical Israel. They were blind to the truth. But why? It was so the scattering would continue until the appointed time set by the Father, which is when the promise to Ephraim is completed. The sons of Israel had to become as the sand of the sea. By the way, the sea is often a reference to the nations.

Down through the millennia, the house of Israel that was scattered in the earth has become many nations. Undoubtedly, countless descendants of Israel helped to form many of the nations on earth today, especially those that sprung up in Europe and in other lands, such as North America, Australia and South Africa. Of course, only God knows how the sowing has progressed, so this is not an exclusive list. But the point is that the fullness of the nations refers to the nations (plural) of Israel coming forth out of the earth, which, in turn, means that these nations must be brought into the Stone Kingdom with Jesus as King, until the Kingdom fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:35).

Keep in mind that becoming an Israelite, on an individual level, is not a matter of bloodline but of a changed heart, one that believes on Jesus and declares Him to be Lord and King. **It is not about a gene pool; it is about a heart pool.** On the national level, a nation becomes one of the nations of Israel by coming under the sovereignty of God and declaring His Son Jesus as King over the nation. Based on its founding, the United States had great potential of this happening, but like all that have gone before, we too have failed. Why? So that **He may show mercy to all** (Romans 11:32)!

Only when all the nations have come into the Kingdom of Christ to become Israelite nations will Paul's prophetic word be fulfilled: **So all Israel will be saved.** Thus, the fullness of the nations refers to the full complement of the nations coming under the Kingship of Jesus. This is the true Israel on a national level; the nations that declare God rules and willingly submit to His righteous rule.

If you have read article #63 on the Abrahamic Covenant, the next section may be a bit redundant for you, but I am reminded of Paul's word to the Philippians: **To write the same things to you truly is not tiresome to me, but safe for you** (Philippians 3:1).

Abrahamic Covenant

The fullness of the nations must be viewed in light of the promise God made to Abraham.

For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. (Romans 4:16-18 ASV)

It is true that Abraham brought forth many nations through his physical seed; consequently, he has many descendants, perhaps, even countless numbers in our day. Only God knows who they are. However, Paul knew that the many nations were based on faith, not on bloodline.

Paul defines the seed of Abraham not only as the physical seed but the spiritual seed of God that comes from faith. In fact, even those who might have a claim on being a descendant of Abraham must have faith to be a fulfillment of the promise of many nations. Abraham is the father of us all who have the same faith that he exercised, and all who have this faith are of the seed of Abraham, the seed of faith, and are included in the many nations. John concurred with Paul and called it *the seed of God*.

Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. (1 John 3:9 ASV)

Paul received his understanding of the faith of Abraham through the book of beginnings.

And I will make you a great nation [goy], and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing.... (Genesis 12:2 NASB)

And Abraham shall become a great and powerful nation [goy], and all the nations [goy] of the earth shall be blessed in him. (Genesis 18:18 NASB)

Notice that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him, which means that, ultimately, no nation will be left out. Why? Because eventually, all the nations will have the faith of Abraham, the faith he had before he was circumcised. Again, Paul reiterates this great truth.

And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations [goy] by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham: "All the nations [goy] will be blessed in you." Gen. 12:3 (Galatians 3:8 LITV)

That the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations [goy] in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:14 LITV)

How will the nations be blessed? God will justify the nations by faith. How will the nations be blessed in Abraham? They will be blessed through justification by faith, which is in Christ Jesus. In other words, to fulfill the promise to Abraham, the nations must be justified, and for this to happen, they must be brought to faith in Christ. The blessing comes through Jesus and this requires faith in Jesus.

All the nations will be blessed in Abraham, whether one labels them Jewish or non-Jewish, heathen or gentile. It matters not what label or descriptor precedes a community of people united under God's Kingdom; all are destined to be justified by God through the same faith exhibited by Abraham. The blessing of Abraham is for all nations, and when all nations are brought to this point, it can be said that *all Israel will be [i.e., has been] saved*.

Jacob was a supplanter, a man of the flesh, and this could be said of all mankind and of all nations. After all, the nation that came from the loins of Jacob turned into a rebellious nation, a people of the flesh.

A day is coming when all the nations will be reconciled to God, because God was **in Christ *conciliating the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them*** (2 Corinthians 5:19), and **through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven** (Colossians 1:20).

The death and resurrection of the Son of God is an absolute, 100% success in reconciling all mankind and all nations to God, not all at the same time, but all eventually.

Consider how Paul concludes Romans 11.

For God shut up all into disobedience, that He may show mercy to all. O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who became His counselor?" Isa. 40:13 (35) "Or who first gave to Him, and it will be repaid to him?" Job 41:11 (36) Because of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen. (Romans 11:32-36 LITV)

Paul was caught up in the unsearchable riches of Christ. He saw that all have been shut up in disobedience so that, at ***the consummation of the ages***, no one and no nation will be able to take any credit for entering the Kingdom of God and being grafted into the glorious olive tree and partaking of its rich root (Romans 11:17). It all will be of God and His Son.

For more on shutting up all in disobedience and on the olive tree, see articles: #49, April 2012, ***Mercy to All***; #50, April 2012, ***Let some Say, But Scripture Says All***; and #34, November 2011, ***Olive Tree in Scripture***.

Here are the links:

Mercy To All: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art49.pdf>

Let Some Say: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art50.pdf>

Olive Tree: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art34.pdf>

Let us be encouraged, even rejoice, that all the nations, meaning all mankind, will be saved. All the nations shall be blessed in Abraham because all the nations will eventually have the faith of Abraham, even if they must go through the discipline of the lake of fire. In the eyes of God, this will be the true Israel that has always been in His heart and mind. This is the fullness of the nations!

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. It all comes from Him and goes to Him in glory. To Him be the glory!

The Great Commission

This leads to what is commonly called the *Great Commission*.

And approaching the Jesus, spoke to them, saying: Has been given to me all authority in heaven and on earth. Go forth disciple All the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things which I have enjoined upon you. And behold, I am with you all the days, till the end of the age.
(Matthew 28:18-20 Diaglott-NT)

I see this so-called *commission* being much more than "getting people saved" and discipling them in our present wicked age. I am not denying that Christians have a responsibility to reach out to individuals to share the good news and then disciple them to the truth. However, what I am proposing is that this commission is actually to the nations and not to individuals per se. It is a call to change the heart and mind of nations and to teach them about God's Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness. This type of discipling has pretty much failed in our present age. The good news is that it will kick into high gear, so to speak, in the next age with the manifestation of the sons of God, the rulers of the Kingdom of Christ. I believe this is what Jesus had in view when He commanded His disciples.

Let us underline a few points.

All Authority

The first thing to underline is the fact that Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Many verses support this, but here are two more, according to Paul and Peter.

Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet.... (Ephesians 1:20-22 NASB)

Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, messengers and authorities and powers, having been made subject unto him. (1 Peter 3:22 Rotherham)

Teach All Nations

The second thing to underline is the fact that Jesus commanded His disciples to go forth as teachers, as ones who teach all the nations. **To disciple** means **to teach**. It is more than making people into something called a *disciple*; anyone can take on a name and produce a business card with a title printed on it. It is more about them coming into "the know," that is, to know the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth and what this means to them and to all the nations of the world. It is coming into a mature knowledge of God and His Son and of God's plan to achieve His ultimate purpose. God wills that *all* will come into **the knowledge of the truth** (1 Timothy 2:4).

In Matthew, the word *all* is an all-encompassing term, speaking of the whole and leaving nothing out. The word *nations* is the Greek word *ethnos*, as has been discussed throughout this article.

It is safe to assume that when most Christians read Jesus' command to go forth and see the word *nations*, they immediately think of individuals; that is, we are commanded to reach individuals. Some would add to this that these individuals are people groups, meaning nations of different language, culture, etc. Of course, to round out the common thinking, we must not simply "get them saved," but we must also disciple them to Christ, that is, teach them. Again, I do not challenge such thinking, for it is quite true that the Body of Christ is built one person at a time and each must be taught to grow up in Christ.

However, having agreed to this point, I must add a caveat to this agreement. We don't "get people saved"; only the Spirit of Truth opens eyes to the truth and only Jesus saves. After all, He is the Savior of the world, not us. Also, unfortunately, most discipling is about educating people in a denomination or man's ministry based on an emphasis or the traditions of men, and not into Christ Himself and how to seek Him on their own and to hear His voice on their own. The common type of discipling leads to followers of men, not of Christ.

So, in a sense, what is proposed does not necessarily contradict the common view of this commission, but it does challenge or, perhaps, adds another dimension to the traditional way of looking at this particular set of verses.

A National Commission

Given this, the third thing to underline is the fact that Jesus referred to *all the nations*, and it is my opinion this places the commission on a national level, and not so much on the individual level. It is a commission to reach the nations to bring about the fullness of the nations, to bring in the spiritual Israelite nations.

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, a *nation* is defined as: 1. a stable, historically developed community of people with a territory, economic life, distinctive culture, and language in

common; 2. the people of a territory under a single united government; country; state; 3. a people or tribe.

Even the most primitive hidden away, few in number people meet this definition of a nation, so it is all-inclusive of defined communities of people, even people groups. Jesus commanded that all nations be disciplined or taught.

Keep in mind that Matthew wrote with the Jews in mind, and to those reading Matthew 28:28-30, even the disciples, at least at that point in time, most likely believed He was referring to the lost sheep of the house of Israel that had been scattered among the nations and became nations under new names, no longer identified as *Israel*. This is explained in my article on the Abrahamic Covenant, so I will leave this for those who desire more understanding of this critical topic.

Why all the nations? Because this is where the lost sheep of the house of Israel resided in that day, and even to our day. After all, Jesus said: **"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"** (Matthew 15:24). Later, both James and Peter sent letters to these sheep (James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1). Also, we need to be reminded that the central theme of Matthew is the ***Kingdom of the Heavens*** and it coming from heaven to earth; the will of God being done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Surely, the eleven disciples that were with Jesus that day still had an old covenant mindset. They had not been completely delivered out of Judaism (if at all at this point) nor had they accepted the fact that the gospel was now open to all the nations, not just a Jewish or Israelite nation of the flesh. It took the blinding road to Damascus and a zealous Jew named *Saul* to bring the light of the good news to all the nations.

Here is what I see and propose through the lens of the New Covenant.

Jesus' Great Commission is a command to teach the nations of the earth the truth of the Kingdom of God, or more specifically, the Kingdom of Christ, or as John penned, the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

It is a much higher level command than simply going forth to preach the good news to individuals or to tell people how to "get saved" or about the "church." It is a command to reach the nations of the world; to reach the kings, the princes, the presidents, the legislators, the administrators, etc. to teach them God's way of governing according to His Divine Law, not man's law. It is to teach them about God's judgments, so that they will learn righteousness and how to govern the people of the earth with righteousness, justice, impartially, mercy, etc. Only in this way will the nations and its citizens learn that God's way is the best way, and that God's love for all mankind is perfect, and it will never fail to produce **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law** (Galatians 5:22-23 NASB).

Isaiah seems to capture the spirit of the Great Commission: **For when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness** (Isaiah 26:9 NASB). In this

context, it is clear that this must be done by the Lord Himself; nonetheless, it speaks to the heart of reaching the nations with the righteousness of God.

Given we are still in corruptible bodies of flesh, our attempts to reach the nations have their limitations. It doesn't stop us from going forth as the Spirit leads, but we must recognize that we live in an age of leaven and we only have an earnest of the Spirit.

Immersing Them (Nations)

The fourth thing to underline is discovered in the word *immersing*, which, in most translations, is the word *baptizing*. In the translation selected, it reads: **immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

This translation was chosen for its use of the word *immersing* rather than *baptizing*. It is safe to assume that when most Christians read the word *baptizing*, they immediately think of the ritual to immerse new believers in water. As before, I am not challenging the act of baptism that we undergo as a symbol of a spiritual reality. However, I am proposing that we look at this verse from a much higher level, again through the lens of the New Covenant.

When the Lord's disciples heard this, they most likely thought that they needed to perpetuate the ritual of water baptism as John the Baptist and later others did. I find it rather curious that, although Paul taught on water baptism, he also seemed to downplay it to the Corinthians. Well, I will leave that.

The point is that if we take a macro view of Jesus' command in light of all the nations, it seems to me He was commanding that the nations be immersed in the name of God the Father and His Son, Jesus, recognizing that the heart of the Kingdom of God is spiritual; it is a spiritual Kingdom led by the Spirit of God. This was Jesus' way of telling us to immerse the nations in the spiritual Kingdom of God; fully dip them into God's way. The result will be that the nations will have the name of God written upon them. Simply, they will be God's people and citizens of His Kingdom.

Observe All

The fifth thing to underline is that the nations need to be taught **to observe all**. Most translations read this way, although one uses the expression *keep the rules* and others add the word *things* to *all* to make it *all things*. The word *observe* comes from the Greek word *tereo* [G5083], which means "to watch over, guard, or in a deeper sense, to keep, to observe, give heed to."

Given this, the command is to teach the nations all that they need to know to keep or guard. From a national level, this *all* must pertain to the Divine Law of God, for it is the only way that a Kingdom nation knows how to rule or govern righteously. The Spirit of God is presently putting the laws of God into minds and hearts of individual believers who, by the way, are also called *Israel* (Hebrews 8:10). But here is the really good news: **"And they shall no more teach each one their neighbor, and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord; because all shall know**

Me, from the least of them to their great ones" (Hebrews 8:11). This is the hope set before all mankind. When all know the Lord in this fashion, then the Son will **hand over the Kingdom to the God and Father** (1 Corinthians 15:24). But to reach this end, the nations must be taught and immersed, taking on the name of God, meaning they must submit to His sovereignty and come under the rule of Jesus the King.

With You

The sixth thing to underline is that Jesus has promised to be with all who teach the nations, meaning those who go forth as led by His Spirit will have no fear and will bear the fruit of the Kingdom, whether we openly manifested or not. In other words, He is invested in this commission to reach the nations and bring them into His Kingdom.

To the End of the Age

Finally, the seventh thing to underline is that this commission goes to the end of the age. This poses two questions. To what age is Jesus referring? Does this commission end with the consummation of our present age?

At one time, I would have said it refers entirely to our present age. Without doubt, it includes this age, but I no longer see it restricted to this age. Recall that Matthew was written to Jews and that it deals with the Kingdom of the Heavens that they were looking for to come about in their day through a political Messiah. They were looking for a new age, a Messianic Age.

In answering a question about the resurrection posed by the Sadducees, Jesus spoke of the age to come or that Age. In Matthew's account (22:23-32), Jesus did not reference the age, but He did mention it in the complement to this verse in Luke 20:35: **But those who are considered worthy to attain to that Age and the resurrection from the dead.** This will occur at the end of our present age or, if you will, with the commencement of the next age.

I believe Jesus included both ages in His commission, and that the age He had in view in Matthew 28:28 is the same age the Jews that heard Him would have had in view. In other words, He was looking through and beyond the sixth day (about 2,000 years remaining when He spoke these words) to the end of the seventh day, which is His 1,000-year reign over the earth with His conquerors seated upon His throne. Of course, He is with His conquerors in this age, for He is in them, but in the next age He will be in them in the fullest possible measure, for they will be conformed to His image – fully spiritual, fully immortal, fully heavenly, fully glorified, and fully the Complement or Fullness of Christ.

It is during the next age that the nations will truly learn God's righteousness and how to govern according to His Divine Law, for the conquerors will teach *all* the nations to observe *all* the law that has been written on their hearts. Today, we can only achieve a limited level of success that, as the end of our present age draws near, seems to be more on the order of failure than success. This is the result of the leaven that infected the Kingdom of the Heavens (Matthew 13:33). However, in that Day, there will be far more success than failure, for **then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father** (Matthew 13:43). This will be the age

of the great harvest that many are mistakenly looking for in our present age. The great harvest will be when **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea** (Habakkuk 2:12).

Christ's commission to all the nations will not fail. Be encouraged, the best is yet to come.

In closing, there are two more sets of scriptures that add to the fullness of the nations coming in through the Great Commission based on the Abrahamic Covenant.

Song of Moses and of the Lambkin – All the Nations Will Come

Here is the good news of the Abrahamic Covenant, and the fact that all the nations will come, or we could say, when the fullness of the nations come in.

"Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! [ages] "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for ALL THE NATIONS [ethnos] WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED." (Revelation 15:3-4 NASB [literally ages, not nations])

This song is sung by the conquerors.

And I perceived as it were a glassy sea, mixed with fire, and those who come off conquerors from the wild beast, and from its image, and from the number of its name, standing on the glassy sea, having the lyres of the Lord God." (Revelation 15:2 CLV)

All the nations will come! This is a direct quote from Psalm 86:9. All the *goys-ethnos* will come!

Consider this verse: **For the kingdom is the LORD'S and He rules over the nations** [goy] (Psalm 22:28). There are many like this in scripture, but this should be enough to make the point that the nations (not the church or individuals per se) are, what I would call, a higher level view of the Great Commission. This speaks to the fullness of the nations coming in.

"I Have Sworn: Every Knee Will Bow"

"I have not spoken in secret, in some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a waste place'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, declaring things that are upright. "Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, you fugitives of the nations; they have no knowledge, who carry about their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save. "Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. "They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put

to shame. "In the LORD all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will glory." (Isaiah 45:19-25 NASB)

These verses speak directly to all that has been presented in this article. God Himself has made an oath that every knee will bow and every tongue will swear allegiance. There is no condition attached to this oath, for God declares that He is going to do it. He alone will bring all to bow the knee willingly and freely. I explain this in the following link:

Every Knee Will Bow: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc343.pdf>

Paul quoted Isaiah and enlarged upon it by declaring to whom every knee will bow.

Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow," of heavenly ones, and earthly ones, and ones under the earth, and "every tongue should confess" that Jesus Christ is "Lord," to the glory of God the Father. Isa. 45:23 (Philippians 2:9-11 LITV)

The Great Commission will succeed to reach all the nations until the fullness of the nations come in. Thus, the promises to Abraham as fulfilled in his seed, that is, in Christ shall be gloriously achieved.

The kindness of God will lead all nations to repentance (Romans 2:4), that is, to change their minds, their ways, and their laws to the mind of Christ and God's Divine Law written on hearts and in minds. In that glorious day, it will be said:

Because this is the covenant which I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord, giving My Laws into their mind, and I will write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." "And they shall no more teach each one their neighbor, and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord; because all shall know Me, from the least of them to their great ones. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and I will not at all remember their sins and their lawless deeds." LXX-Jer. 38:31-34; MT-Jer. 31:31-34 **In the saying, New, He has made the first old. And the thing being made old and growing aged is near disappearing.** (Hebrews 8:10-13 LITV)

Thus, the full complement of nations will come in, all Israel will be saved, and all nations will be blessed.

Praise God for the good news!