

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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## ***THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD***

**For the true Jew is not the man who is simply a Jew outwardly, and true circumcision is not that which is outward and bodily. But the true Jew is one inwardly, and true circumcision is heart-circumcision--not literal, but spiritual; and such people receive praise not from men, but from God. (Romans 2.28-29 WNT)**

**And all who shall regulate their lives by this principle—may peace and mercy be given to them—and to the true Israel of God. (Galatians 6.16 WNT)**

Perhaps a year ago, I was watching a television broadcast of a well-known pastor-teacher with a large national and international ministry. As he finished his television broadcast, he pointed his finger at the camera and very sternly warned that those who hold to what he called **Replacement Theology** are wrong and that they would have to answer to God for holding such a view because the state of Israel of our day is still the apple of God's eye. Frankly, I thought he was going to tell them they (me included) were "going to hell." I had been meditating on and studying this matter for some time, so when I heard this brother's exhortation, it caught my attention.

The first thing that needs to be established is the meaning of Replacement Theology. It means that the "church," which started at Pentecost comprised of mostly Jews but grew through the centuries by the conversion of gentiles and a remnant of Jews, replaced the natural Jews as the chosen people of God, that is, the apple of His eye. In the strictest sense, this so-called theology holds that the Jews, albeit the nation of Israel that is in the Middle East today, have no claim on being God's chosen people simply because they claim they are descendants of Jacob. As discussed later, I see a slightly different theology that I call **Graftage Theology**.

Like this pastor-teacher, many Christians in our day reject **Replacement Theology**, for they see the natural Jews with uncircumcised hearts, especially ones residing in and migrating to the state of Israel, as the chosen ones that God is going to establish as the head of the nations in the eon to come. They see two lines upon which God is working; one pertaining to the nation of Israel according to the flesh, that is, the Jews or the physical, blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the other pertaining to the church or the spiritual ecclesia of God. I call what they believe **Dualism Theology**. I do not like using the term *theology* and prefer the word *doctrine*, but I will remain with it for the sake of discussion. *Dualism* means that God is working on two separate lines; one is physical and the other is spiritual; one is earthly and the other is heavenly.

However, the Lord Jesus condemned His kinsmen that rejected Him and even demanded that He be crucified. The chief priests declared they had no king but Caesar. In His kingdom parables, Jesus made it very clear that because of their rejection, they would be cast into the outer darkness and would suffer the fate of death and not life when He takes the scepter to reign over the earth.

**"But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire." (Matthew 22.7 NASB)**

**"But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence." (Luke 19.27 NASB)**

**“But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless.”** (Matthew 22.11-12 NASB)

**Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered. ... “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 21.19, 43 NASB)

Those who hold to **Dualism Theology** and reject **Replacement Theology** seem to ignore these kingdom parables that speak of the fate of the natural Jew who rejects Christ. It is as if they believe that He is going to bring the natural Jew in as part of the old covenant that according to Hebrews is obsolete and has been replaced with a new and living way, a new covenant in which He is putting His laws in the minds and writing them upon the hearts of His people. I realize that many would say that they, as well, come in through the new covenant, but their dualism says otherwise.

Part of the problem with **Dualism Theology** is that it is a mixture of the spiritual and the natural flesh. Those who adhere to it seem to have lost sight of the fact that the Lord is and has always been after a spiritual house, not one based on the flesh. Only the Lord knows how many, but it seems that many of His people are looking at matters with earthly, temporal minds and are not seeing beyond the fog of this world and into the spiritual realm or, we could say, the spiritual heart of God. The result is that some look at Israel according to the flesh and, purely on this basis, declare they are God’s chosen people. Others take it a step further to proclaim that Jesus is coming back for a Jewish bride (according to the flesh); consequently, Christians need to align themselves with the Jew and even take on their customs, that is, become Judaized. As Paul exhorted the Galatians: **Who has bewitched you? Having begun by the spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?** (Galatians 3.1, 3). And yet, others align themselves with the Jews according to the flesh, and out of concern for offending them, they will not tell them that the only way to salvation is to believe on Jesus and the finished work of the cross. In other words, they refuse to give them the one message that they need to hear that will make them jealous and lead them to repentance.

Let us be clear that just as there is a true Jew, there is also a true Israel. According to Paul, **the true Israel is the one who boasts in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world, for neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, that is of the flesh, but a new creation** (see Galatians 6.14-16). The true Jew and the true Israel is of **the new creation in Christ born from above by the spirit of God**.

Dear beloved in Christ, there is only one line that God is working on and all are grafted into this line, which is none other than Christ Jesus our Lord. I believe that **Replacement Theology** is the wrong term; it should be called **Graftage Theology**, for grafting is what the spirit of God has been doing since the beginning. There is only one line that runs from the first Adam to the last Adam. It is a spiritual line that is building **a spiritual house** to the glory of God. It is one line that leads to **New Jerusalem, the dwelling of God in spirit**. God has used different means to achieve His purpose over the many millennia since Adam, but the ground upon which He works has not changed, for **God is spirit** and all that He does is spirit in nature. His one line based on His Son is a spiritual line, and all through the history of mankind, like a gardener with pruning sheers, He has been grafting people into this line. It is also like one thread that runs through history; it is like a needle being threaded through a piece of fabric. There is one needle, the spirit of God, and one thread, the Son of God, and everything of God is attached to this one thread, being woven as a beautiful tapestry.

The early Pentecostal ecclesia was made up of mostly natural Israelites who repented and believed in Jesus as Messiah. They were of the line of the true Israel of God, ones with circumcised hearts that became **a new creation**, not on the basis of the flesh but of the spirit. As such, they were not grafted in, for they were a remnant of ancient Israel according to the thought of God; called out of Egypt to be a spiritual nation under God. However, we who believe in this day have been grafted into this spiritual nation by the spirit of God (see 1 Peter 2.4-10), the one new man, the ecclesia of God. This is the true Israel that is growing up in love to become New Jerusalem.