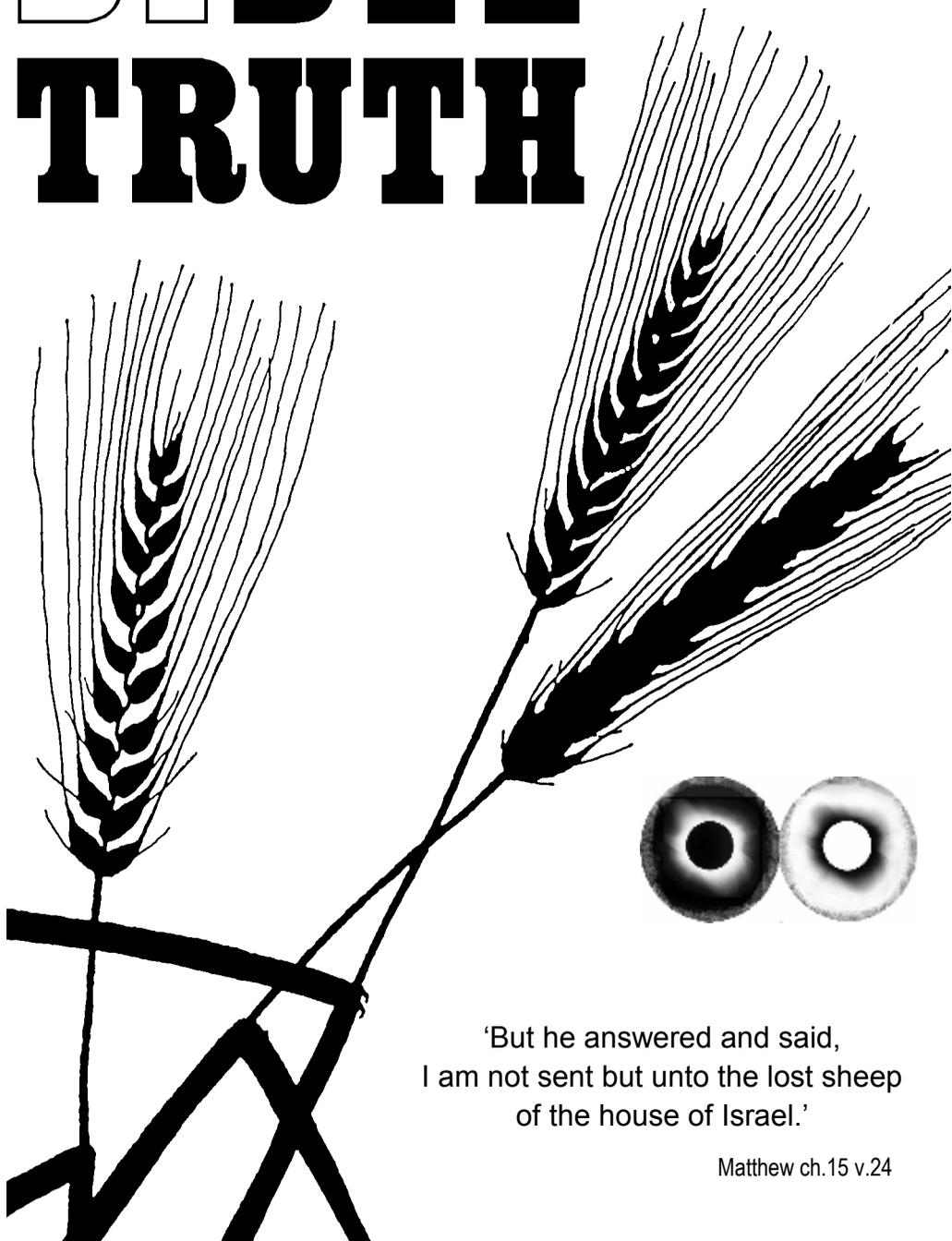


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'But he answered and said,
I am not sent but unto the lost sheep
of the house of Israel.'

Matthew ch.15 v.24

THE 'ME-ME' GOSPEL

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From Genesis to Revelation we have the story of Israel. Whether it be the past or the future, the primary message is national and not personal. Even the unit of society is the family and not the individual.

Other nations that are mentioned are referred to only as Israel crosses their path. For example we have the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. Most of this interaction with other nations mainly occurs because of Israel's sins and the consequences of captivity. This is where the curses of Deuteronomy ch.28 apply.

Psalm 83 v.4 (see quote on page 2) refers to those who wish to cut off Israel so they will no longer be in remembrance. Attempts to carry out this cutting off have been carried out in many ways down through history. This article will refer to just one of the methods used to replace Israel as a nation with a message that is strictly personal and can only be applied to the Body of Christ, that is Christians. It is my opinion that this view of the Church is misunderstood. The generally accepted idea is that the 'Ecclesia' is the same as the 'church'. What is overlooked is the fact that the Ecclesia was present in the Old Testament and is closely linked in with the plan and purpose for Israel.

'This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:'

Acts ch.7 v.38

It is my belief that the phrase, Bride of Christ, is an Israel issue, whereas the phrase the Body of Christ can embrace people of all races for we are told this,

'This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church'.

Ephesians ch.5 v.32

As a result of the view that the Bride of Christ has been replaced by the Body of Christ of whom Christ is the head, we have wiped out the existence of Israel as a nation.

'And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.'

Colossians ch.1 v.18

On the other hand for those who teach that the Israeli State is the fulfilment of the Jews returning to the Promised Land there is added confusion, because the majority of Jews today are not of the tribe of Judah, Benjamin nor Levi. Also for many today, to be Jewish is more to do with a religious belief. This replacement theology has done more to cut off true Israel from the Covenants and the Promises than any other teaching.

‘Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;’

Romans ch.9 v.4

It is rather strange that in applying the Covenants to the Church they have not accepted the curses of the Palestinian Covenant.

Because of the above points nearly all sermons only have a personal message. Even the Parables of the Kingdom are expressed in the form of a psychological analysis of our sins and how we all fall short of God's perfection. It soon becomes obvious that most preaching today is no further advanced than the ‘milk of the word’.

‘For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.’

Hebrews ch.5 vv 13-14

‘I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.’

1 Corinthians ch.3 v.2

It is like repeating the times table in High School. This constant inward searching of the soul is what I call the ‘me-me’ gospel. The wider issues of the nation are almost completely overlooked. As far as the Law of God is concerned, about the only mention you will hear is that of the Ten Commandments. All the laws pertaining to money and the economy are sadly overlooked, except the law of tithing or that of the freewill offering. This is rather strange. The Psalms are very clear about the law, judgements and statutes and that if we obeyed them as a nation we would not experience the curses of disobedience. But before this is to occur we are to have a broken and contrite heart.

‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.’

Psalms 51 v.17

There is no doubt that sermons that reflect our need to repent are vital and even as rational human beings we need reminding of our failings. Nevertheless, it is still vital to know that the Parables and the vast content of the Bible pertains to Israel as a nation. There is something terribly wrong when you realise there has never been a time in history when so much has been written about so-called Christianity and yet we see society, especially in the West, crumbling at a rate that is almost unheard of in history.

Christ asks the question,

‘... shall he find faith upon the earth?’

Luke ch.18 v.8

In conjunction with other verses the implication is that there will be very few standing fast in the faith. There will be only a remnant who will be watching and strong in the Lord.

‘Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.’

1 Corinthians ch.16 v.13

‘Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.’

Ephesians ch.6 v.10

Those contending for the faith once delivered unto the Saints are referred to in the letter to Jude vv 3-4.

‘Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.’

These Saints mostly refer to those living in the Old Testament period. In v.4 of Jude there is a reference to those who have crept in unawares. This process of decaying from within has been going on ever since time began. These tares that are in the wheat field are to be taken out by the angels (Matthew ch.13 vv 25-40). Nothing much has changed since the time Deuteronomy ch.32 v.20 was written.

‘... I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.’

The Book of Habakkuk ch.2 v.4 reveals to us that ‘... the just shall live by his faith’.

Even though the Bible might be one of the most read books in the world, it is certainly the most misunderstood. There is very little study of the scriptures. What is invariably uttered from the pulpit is believed without question. There is not a great deal of difference between this situation and the times when the Roman Catholic priest uttered edicts of the Church to a people in England who could hardly read. You certainly find out that the above is true when you start questioning the sermon or put another point of view. With so many translations and teachings that leave out the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, there has arisen so much confusion. Because the Bible has been spiritualised so much, the historical significance of true Israel and the relevance of the Body of Christ to that of the Bride of Christ has been replaced by a plethora of 'isms'. These many 'isms' and the continual preaching of a 'me-me' gospel has distracted even the most sincere from the greater plan of God because it has prepared the groundwork for an ecumenical multi-faith agenda. Instead of accepting the Biblical theme of separation, the world leaders of the many churches are engaging in a world forum of unity.

To conclude this article I have used a quote by Sir Isaac Newton to show how much he believed in a literal interpretation of the Scriptures.

'About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamour and opposition.'

Maybe that time has come.