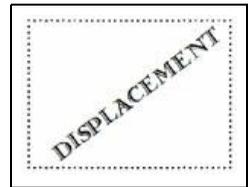
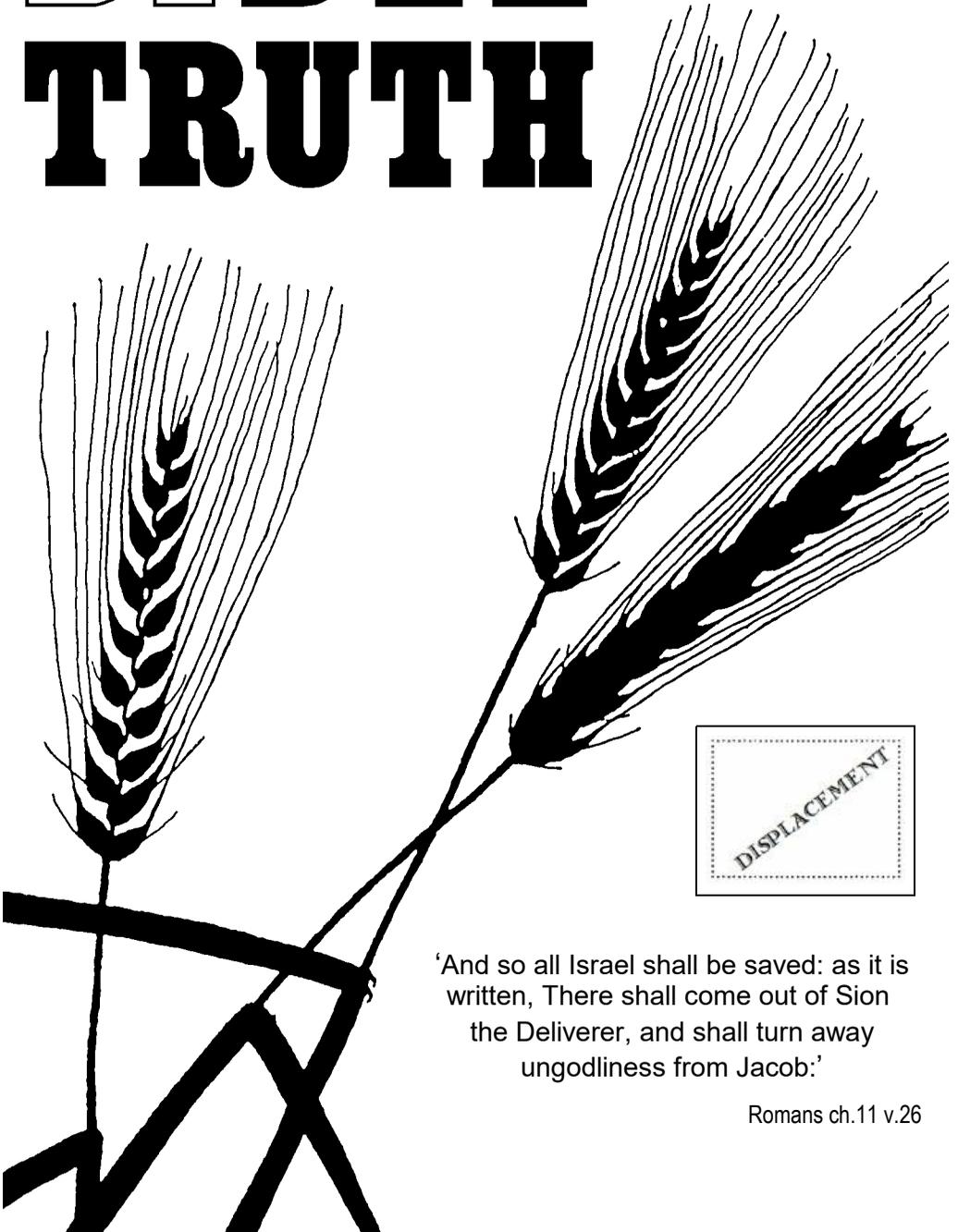


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'And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'

Romans ch.11 v.26

The Displacement Factor & New Israel

By Paul Boyd-Lee



Introduction

Israel is a highly emotive word in today's society. At one time it was the word 'Jew' that was contentious; Jews were barred from some countries and confined to ghettos in others, thus individuals such as Arthur Balfour were moved to provide a homeland for them. They were the grocers, jewellers, bankers and moneylenders, which was strange considering their views on usury. Cohen, Goldstein and Isaaks are Jewish names, St Ivel is an anagram of the name Levi, and so on. They are the people of the Book, the Old Testament; 'why do you sit on the roof' ask the people of the fiddler, 'because of tradition' is the reply which well sums them up. The Orthodox men are often seen to wear long dark coats and black trilby hats, with no tie; more often than not they wear wire rimmed spectacles - why is that I wonder, does anyone know? In short they are easy to identify.

Can the people of Israel be recognised easily today? The answer to this question can cause great controversy. Some say it is the Church, others, the Jews, whilst The Bible Truth Fellowship finds them amongst the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples. Power politics and so on have all contributed to this confusion.

These are the sort of issues I wish to address in this article.

Displacement Factor and Pyramids

There may be readers who conclude that because 'Displacement Factor' is mentioned in the title, then the subject must be something to do with the Great Pyramid, but that is not the basis of this article. In passing though it is worth mentioning that the Pyramidologist does indeed see displacement as the number 286.1 being the movement of the passage system where it is said to symbolise,

- Man's displacement from his inheritance, and
- Christ's displacement, restoring the spiritual conditions for man to regain his inheritance.

The Displacement Factor in Pyramidology is only one use of the term and there are many others as follows.

In geology the word accounts for the amount that the land moves during an earthquake. For seamen and science students it measures the quantity of water that the weight of a boat occupies. To the computer nerd it is an addition to make a new 'address'. Electronics engineers will tell you that it is a capacitor's rate of change.

The two common factors in all these uses are what is displaced and what fills the void left by the original occupant that still exists somewhere.

So, what has been displaced and what has filled the space?

For the purpose of this study it is simply, those people who were once called Israel that have been displaced by others. There are many people who say that the ancient people of Israel because of their unbelief lost their birthright, their place has been taken by others and they are subsequently lost in history. They are indeed 'the lost tribes of Israel' and indeed the name Israel no longer applies to them, or does it? How true is this?

One significant fact in all this is that apart from the word 'God', 'Israel' is the most frequently occurring name in the Bible, in both Testaments Old and New. Thus anyone looking for a prophetic guide to the future in Scripture needs to have a sound grasp of who the name refers to. But immediately a difficulty arises when the original descendants of Israel are displaced by other people seemingly hijacking their name of Israel.

Problems of identification are further compounded because, not one but, several groups of people have, as the centuries passed, come to be given the name Israel. Though the principle claimants to the name are the Church or the Jews, there are others also. How has this position come about and can some groups of people clearly be discounted whilst others be more certainly identified with it?

A reminder of some definitions may help here.

In terms of theology the names Jew, Judah, Israel, and Judaism all come from the same origin, namely the patriarch called 'Jacob', whose name was changed to Israel. In ancient times, in the 19th c BC, beside a brook in eastern Palestine called Jabok God proclaims this to him,

‘... Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed’.

Genesis ch.32 v.28

This new name Israel is reiterated in Genesis ch.35 v.10.

‘Israel’ means ruling or prevailing with God whereas his former name ‘Jacob’ means supplanter (taking the place of). This name change was rather apt because Jacob, in secular terms, supplanted the birthright of his elder twin brother Esau and for this reason many people have despised him ever since. In spiritual terms though, it is Esau who seems to have despised the things of God whereas Jacob valued them; thus the relevance of his new name of Israel.

From this time forward the name change of one man became a national complexity. Jacob had many children, all of whom produced large families, later becoming tribes in their own right with each taking a dual name; the paternal name such as, Ephraim, Gad, Dan and so on but also their grand-paternal name which was ‘Israel’. In the following centuries and after they had multiplied greatly, they gained national status as the ‘People’ or ‘Kingdom of Israel’.

When one looks at identifying marks of national names today there is usually a particular reason for this, such as religion in the case of the Jews, or geographical position which might describe a European and so on. But there is a double witness as to why these tribes bore the name Israel for it is both by descent from their forefathers as well as their worshipping of the one true God Jehovah.

The word Judah has relevance to this study and it means ‘praise’ (See Genesis ch.29 v.35).

Several centuries after this name Judah was given, the name ‘Jew’ arose. It was initially used in a derogatory sense to indicate ‘little Judah’, for two reasons. First, because they were just a small part of the larger whole People of Israel and second, because their previous power as a notable kingdom had been broken. For example,

‘At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: ...’.

2 Kings ch.16.v.6

After about 732 BC the name ‘Jew’ stuck with the people of the Southern Kingdom (of Israel) when they went into the Babylonian captivity. By 479 BC it could be written of Queen Esther’s uncle,

‘Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain **Jew**, whose name was Mordecai...’.

Esther ch.2 v.5

Within a few years Esther ch.8 v.17 relates that, 'many people of the land became Jews', presumably in all the 127 provinces of the Medo-Persian Empire, stretching from 'India unto Ethiopia'. Thus the number of Jews, by religion rather than birth, increased considerably and in time **Judaism** became the name to describe the religion they pursued.

In passing it is worth noting that 'Ju - dei - sm', at least in the way that it is said, is made up of three syllables; Ju = Jew = Judah (praise), dei = God, ism = a sect or group. So by splitting the word in this way one arrives at, 'the group that praises God'.

Regrettably one sometimes hears of Abraham, Jacob and other patriarchs being called Jews. However, how can this be seeing that they lived long before Judah was even born!

Thus it can be seen that there are distinct differences between Judah, Jew, Judaism & Israel, and what they mean or are taken to mean. The words are certainly not interchangeable though some people unfortunately disregard this. It can be particularly so in the way the New Testament is used and the context within which these words occur has to be taken into account in order to clarify who is being referred to.

Have the Jews or the Church now become Israel?

Certainly multitudes in the Western World today think they have been, and this is known as 'Replacement Theology'. In reality there is confusion here because people have been known to use the word Israel to mean the Jews on some days and yet they attach it to the Church at other times.

For example these are some of the things you read and hear.

- 'In general the traditional churches ... have been teaching that the Old Covenant applies to the people of Israel [who are assumed to be the Jews*] and the New Covenant to the Christian Church'.

Mr E. Smit, a Dutchman of the Evangelical Reformed movement in his, *Ministers of the New Covenant*, 3/2/3, 1977.

* *Editor's note*

- In July 2007 *The Daily Telegraph* ran an article about a recent translation of an Assyrian Cuneiform tablet confirming the name Nebosarsekin (Sarsechim) the eunuch found in Jeremiah ch.39 v.3. Someone called Marti commented on the Letters Page.

‘The New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old Testament and Jesus made a new covenant with all people, doing away with the **old Law** and requirements.’

- Eric Woods, Rector of Sherborne, a theological tutor, says, ‘Because of their ungodliness Israel are finally divorced and are no longer His people. There is a New Covenant, there’s a new Bride. A New Covenant is no longer with the Jews but is one with all those that believe in the resurrection. They are the New Covenant people.’
- The text has been altered in Bibles and Church literature to satisfy pressure groups. Thus in the new Anglican Church liturgy of New Zealand, the name ‘Israel’ has been purged as far as possible from the text of the Psalter, to avoid offending Arabs! Instead great offence has been caused to the Jews.
- ‘Even Christians and churches are divided - some believing “replacement theology”, that when the Jews crucified Christ, God gave their inheritance to the Church. Others believe ... that God has not changed His promises concerning Israel despite their rejection of the Messiah!’

David Hathaway, *Prophetic Vision 2007*

These are the ideas that one meets and behind them is the notion that because ancient Israel disobeyed God, they were cast away, divorced and the Church took their place.

Does ancestry or religion define who is to be called Israel?

Astonishingly this question is rarely faced and authors or speakers can seem to change the defining factor according to their whims and fancies, often as already intimated indiscriminately intermixing who they mean.

So for example, a university lecturer in New Testament theology may teach that the descendants of the ancient Israelites still exist and anticipate a Saviour when expounding, Acts ch.26 v.7.

‘Unto which promise our twelve tribes ... hope to come.’

Elsewhere it is taught that the Jews are of two origins, one descended from the ancient tribes of Judah, Benjamin or Levi, the other part being of mixed people such as Edomites, Chaldeans and so on but united by the single religion of Judaism.

Both these statements have truth, but outside the academic world definitions become blurred. For example an Oxford edition of the Authorised Version of the Bible in its 'Subject Index' has an entry, 'Christ's Mission to the Jews' and then gives the reference Matthew ch.15 v.24 which reads,

'... I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel'.

Another entry under 'gospel first preached to the Jews' refers to Matthew ch.10 v.6.

'But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

In both these examples the word 'Israel' has been altered to read 'Jew'. Surely this is an abuse of the words but it is commonplace in modern Bible studies, such as the following examples show.

- In 1 Corinthians ch.12 v.4 'Gifts' becomes 'skills' or 'talents', i.e. Divine blessing becomes personal effort or inherited attributes.
- 'Charity' in 1 Corinthians ch.13 vv 1 & 13 is usually now translated 'love', thus losing its depth of meaning.
- 'Hell' is replaced with 'sheol' or omitted altogether because it is now an unpopular subject.
- The 'New Covenant' in Hebrews ch.8 v.8 (derived from Jeremiah ch.31 v.31) is taken to be with the Church and ignores the words 'with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah' altogether.

Claimants to the name of Israel

With all this change of words, no wonder people are confused about who Israel really are so let us now look at contenders for the name Israel, using racial origin rather than religion as a defining factor. Actually several small groups of people as well as the significantly larger body of Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people claim the name Israel.

The small groups would include

- The Nestorians, most of whom have now died out apart from a few south of the Caspian Sea, the area of the Captivities. Some of these say they are the residue of the Tribes who migrated through the area at the time of the Assyrian captivities of Israel.
- Second, are the Waldensians in the Alps. Again, the claim is that they are a remnant of the tribes of Israel whilst migrating across Europe.

- The white Ainu of Japan, are said to be another remnant of the dispersion, but this time to the East rather than the West.
- Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia claimed to be 'The Lion of the Tribe of Judah' tracing his lineage back to the offspring of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.
- From Myanmar (Burma) come people who say they descend from Manasseh, one of the Israel tribes.

Randolph and Winston Churchill alluded to the larger group in their book, *The Six Day War*, writing, 'Many people including Admiral Fisher, have claimed that the British are ... of the Lost Tribes'.

However, many members of the Christian church have for half a century or more acted in a schizophrenic way by seeing the Jews as Israel on the one hand and themselves as Israel on the other.

Perhaps they have come to this conclusion because through Bible prophecy they saw the Jews as being God's people returning to the Promised Land. In believing this they see it as heralding the Second Coming which is a comforting thought at a time of world conflict.

Even so, 50 years have now passed and nothing has happened except the Jewish Zionist State has become increasingly embroiled with the Palestinians. These matters, no return of Christ and continuing Middle Eastern unrest, have caused unease to those of this view.

Perhaps this worry strengthened their resolve to see themselves as Israel, or at least a 'New Israel'. This is ironic considering the Church often castigates Jacob (Israel) as being the usurper in taking the birthright from his brother Esau, whilst at the same time they claim the name of Israel for themselves rather than allowing it to continue with the descendants of Jacob.

The Church naming itself Israel, rather than the Jews, or the Lost Tribes causes a dilemma and a way round this needed to be found. The solution was in coining the term 'New Israel'. Though the name 'New' Israel is completely missing from scripture, nonetheless it is used as if it was there.

The error can be compounded by linking 'New Israel' with the 'New Covenant' found in Hebrews ch.8 v.8. The New Covenant clearly states that it is with the House of Israel and the House of Judah (i.e. two separated nations, not all one international body). It is not made with the Church which is comprised of people from all nations but sadly this is frequently ignored by those who think otherwise.

One can understand the feeling that because of ancient Israel's apostasy they lost their inheritance and because the Church follows God they can claim it instead. But, God is long suffering, ever merciful and promises to restore Israel of the Old Testament. In this respect one cannot ignore the redemptive power of the risen Lord.

Perhaps even the High Priest Caiaphas recognised this when he uttered,

'... Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die **for that nation**; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad'.

John ch.11 vv 49-52

As St John points out, at the time the Gospels were written the original nation of Israel was seen to be distinct from other believers and the people of Israel would be redeemed.

The Apostle Paul majored on the same subject in saying,

'Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise **raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:**'

Acts ch.13 vv 23

It is true that Paul in Romans talks of grafting others into Israel, but remember that the root stock remnant of Israel must still remain for there to be something to graft into.

'And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. ...

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.'

Romans ch.11 vv 23 & 25

There are clear reasons why the Church has not replaced Israel

- The Bible equates the relationship between Christ and Israel as a wedding to take place between man and wife. In this relationship Christ is the head of the body, which is the Church.

'For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: ...'

Ephesians ch.5.v.23

'... he is the head of the body, the church: ...'

Colossians ch.1 v.18

- The bride is taken to be Israel. For the symbolic picture to work the Church cannot be both the man's body (bridegroom) and the bride (Israel), at the same time.

- In future they come together as one, i.e. the bride and groom.

'... man ... shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.'

Ephesians ch.5 v.31

As the root and graft become one, so does a husband and wife.

- The Book of Revelation shows that Israel of the Old Testament has a place in the future Kingdom.

'And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand **of all the tribes of the children of Israel.**'

Revelation ch.7 v.4

'... at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:'

Revelation ch.21 v.12

- The apostle Paul has no doubts as to Israel being the actual descendants of Jacob.

'I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. **God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.**'

Romans ch.11 vv 1-2

Note that in each of these texts they are not generic in as much as they are aimed at any believer but rather they refer to specific groups of people - 'of all the tribes of the children of Israel', 'the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel', 'an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin'.

In all seriousness, by displacing Israel as a nation from their rightful possession there is -

- No kingdom for Jesus to rule over,
- Nothing for Christians to be 'fellow heirs' over.

By recognising their identity, one realises that Israel as a national body still have a calling, an exceedingly important task in these closing chapters of history. David Hathaway, in a recent edition of *Prophetic Vision 2007* put it this way -

'... If you love Israel and believe that God will restore and forgive them then the Bible challenges you to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.'
