

# The Arrogant Branch

by Lynn Andrew

Most Christians for most the Christian era have taken for granted that the church, called the bride of Christ, has superseded Israel; during this age, at least, Israel has been set aside. While our Bible was written by Israelis almost exclusively—and most of it concerned Israel when it was written—there was an ultimate purpose in all things Jewish that has its fulfillment in the church. Israel was the foundation; the Christian church is the edifice. Israel may be the root, but the church is the tree.

This is not far from the truth if the limitations are understood, but throughout the Christian era it has often been taken in a spirit which makes it false. The wrong spirit is easy to detect because it manifests in arrogance toward the Jews. And it misappropriates Jewish writings.

In order to understand the Hebrew Scriptures, we must accept that the Christian church is a branch grafted to an eternal vine. When the New Jerusalem is seen in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the names of twelve tribes of Israel are on its gates. The arrogant branch, considering itself a tree in its own right, considers these signs merely a symbols—a formal anachronism. But what do the Scriptures say? The vine Israel and the Vine Jesus Christ are inseparable and were wed long before the church began. The vine is dormant, not dead.

When we permit ourselves the humility of being a branch grafted onto the vine, we become satisfied with Scriptures that say what they say. We give up our “chronological snobbery” toward the Old Testament and allow literal Israel, the bit of earth that has gotten the name Palestine, to be forever his beloved land. We give up trying to find direct messages to us in the Jewish prophets because we understand we are not Israel. We are audience, not actors in Israel’s romance with God. Sit back and relax; learn about her lover! The show is put on for the benefit of the audience.

If the church is a tree, it is the tree that expanded to host evil in its branches. Let us be a mere branch, satisfied with our privilege of being grafted onto the Vine and not denying him his first bride.