



# **The Salvific Global Mission of Jesus: A Biblical and Apologetical Interpretation of Matthew 15:24**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to refute claims from non-Christian groups and opponents of the Christian faith, such as Muslims that the mission of Jesus was parochial and not global. In doing this, this writer provides three context clues as anchor texts coupled with copious texts to give sufficient condition, history of salvation as promised by God, a walking theory, and conceptual analysis as springboards to correct interpretation of Matthew 15:24 through the lens of context and synthesis principle of biblical hermeneutics approach pneumagogically.

**Keywords:** salvific global mission of Jesus, supranationalistic salvation theory, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Jews, Gentiles

## **Introduction**

Salvation begins with the initiating love of God for humankind when the first man (Adam and his wife, Eve) fell in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3; John 3:16). Salvation is by grace alone through faith (not work) in the person and work of Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>. Thus, Salvation is a gift of God to unworthy people and human effort or merit has nothing to do with it at all. Interestingly, God, in laying His plan for the world, had the purpose of Redeeming Grace in view through Christ for humanity because He hates sin (Eph 1:4-5; cf. 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2). And this plan had been made before the foundation of the world – Jesus had been slain for the world before the world physically killed Him (1 Pet 1:18-20; Rev 13:8). Thus Jesus' salvific mission is global and divine.

The biblical idea of salvation can be subsumed under three major notions: firstly, the rescue from the danger of sin and death; secondly, the renewing of the spirit because man fell from the original condition of moral purity into the state of sin; and thirdly, the restoration of a right relationship with God. True to tell, the journey to man's salvation started in Genesis chapter 3 when sin entered into God's created order. Subsequently, God initiated the promise of salvation through the seed of the woman (Gen.3:15) – the

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<sup>1</sup> Eph 2:8-9; cf. Acts 15:11; Rom 3:24, 5:15; 6:23; 11:6; Titus 3:4-7

promise of a Saviour for the fallen man (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:21-23; Gal 4:4-5). This is the beginning of biblical records about the salvific global mission of God-incarnate, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important to let us know the need to understand the history of salvation to grasp the biblical concept of salvation and the conduit through which this work of grace came to humanity. Immediately after the first man (Adam and Eve) sinned, God approached them with curses and a promise. He promised that one of Eve's descendants would destroy the devil and rescue God's people from sin (Genesis 3:15). This promise regarding Christ began a history of God's speech and actions which prepared the way for Christ to come. The Bible reports this history of salvation as explained by Allen Vander Pol<sup>2</sup>:

*God's words and actions usually follow a specific pattern. First, God said what he would do; second, God did it; and finally, God explained what He had done. We can see an example of this in the captivity of Israel. As early as the time of Moses, God promised to remove His people from the Promised Land if they disobeyed Him. God said in Deuteronomy 30:17, 18: "If your heart turns away and you are not obedient . . . I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess." Many years later God continued to warn His people through the prophets. For example, Amos said to the rich who did not want to obey God's Word, "The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks" (Amos 4:2). Eventually God carried out what He had promised. He brought the Assyrians and Babylonians to invade the Promised Land and take the people captive. Then, the prophets explained God's actions (2 Kings 17:7-23; Lamentations; Ezekiel 1-24). So, the exile provides an example of how God 1) promised what He would do, 2) carried out what He promised, and 3) explained and applied what He did. The Bible as a whole follows this same pattern concerning the coming of Christ: 1) the entire Old Testament contains God's promise of Christ's coming; 2) the gospels show that God kept His Word; 3) the rest of the New Testament explains and applies the coming of Christ. We call this history of the interaction between God's saving Word and His saving actions "the history of salvation." So, God's saving Word belongs to this history of salvation.*

The history of Jesus' life, crucifixion, and resurrection reveals God's salvific mission for humankind. Vander explains further:

*God performed His greatest miracle when He raised Christ from the dead. Christ's resurrection proved that His sacrifice paid fully for all our sins (Romans 4:25). The resurrection of Christ guarantees that the Christian will rise from the dead. As sin and death entered the human race through Adam, forgiveness and resurrection entered the human race through Jesus Christ's resurrection. We learn about these mighty acts of salvation by God only from the Bible<sup>3</sup>.*

#### Context clue 1:

<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. <sup>23</sup> But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. <sup>24</sup> But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>25</sup> Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. <sup>26</sup> But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. <sup>27</sup> And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (Matthew 15:21-28, emphasis mine).

#### Context clue 2:

<sup>24</sup> And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. <sup>25</sup> For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: <sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup> But Jesus said

<sup>2</sup> Allen Vander Pol, The Doctrine of Scripture: An Introduction to the doctrines of Revelation and Scriptural Inspiration from the Protestant Perspective, (MINT, 14401 Old Cutler Road, Miami, FL 33158)pp.22-23

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.p.24

unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.<sup>28</sup> And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.<sup>29</sup> And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.<sup>30</sup> And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed (Mark 7:24-30, emphasis mine).

### Context clue 3:

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:<sup>6</sup> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 10:5-6, emphasis mine).

## Context and Synthesis Approach

Biblical hermeneutics teaches that every statement has a context and a proper understanding of it is essential for correct interpretation. If we attempt to ignore the context, any kind of meaning can be imposed upon what is said. Besides, the Bible is sufficient and comprehensive to interpret itself without an extra-biblical blend. The Reformers' expression: *scriptura scripturam interpretatur*, or "Scripture interprets Scripture" establishes that the Bible is self-interpreter. This means any obscure passage in Scripture must be understood in light of clearer ones. No part of the Bible can contradict any part since the Bible is the Word of God with one divine Author – the Holy Spirit – who inspired the whole Bible, it must therefore be consistent with itself. This is one of the major tools this author employs in this work. Unlike other religious books, the Bible has one marvellous, supernatural unity because it has one divine Author.

One cannot just quote from the Bible and use it without considering the context. This can damage the meaning expressed in the text. This is a mark of eisegesis, not exegesis. This is the method some Christian antagonists, such as Muslims, use many a time to make a mockery of the Word of God. They zealously quote from the Bible and interpret according to their outlook and criticize the quoted text with scornful jocularly. Christians should not be susceptible to such jugglery. One must not build a doctrine on a single arcane or unclear text. In other words, one cannot use a verse of the Bible to launch a new doctrine. We need more related passages with obvious meanings to interpret the seeming arcane one without damaging the context. This is one of the tools this author uses to drive home his points.

## Pneumagogical Approach<sup>4</sup>

As valuable as the principles of Biblical interpretation are, they are useless without the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher who teaches Christian believers all things (John 14:26; cf. John 16:13). It should be noted here that, unlike other religious texts, the Bible is an inspired Word of God. Thus, it takes a spiritual man, who has the Spirit of God in him, to understand the things of the Spirit. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned:

<sup>10</sup> But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.<sup>11</sup> For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.<sup>13</sup> Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.<sup>14</sup> But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:10-14, emphasis mine).

For one to meet the above criteria, one should allow the Holy Spirit to work in one's life. This will put one in a better position to interpret the Scripture accurately. There is no room for flesh here; Bible interpretation is a spiritual exercise; you must allow the Holy Spirit in you to work. What is more, the above-quoted texts 1 Cor 2:10–14 support 2 Tim 3:16 that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." This is clearly explained in 2Pet.1:20:

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<sup>4</sup> This approach brings into focus the centrality of the Holy Spirit in Christian education/theology. This is comprehensively explained in Dele Ilesanmi's recent work titled, "Pneumagogy: A Proposed Theory for Effective Teaching and Learning in Christian Kingdom Education",

<sup>20</sup> *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.* <sup>21</sup> *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Thus, the *pneumagogical* approach is the right way to go in Biblical hermeneutics.

### Contextual Theory: Supranationalistic Salvation Theory<sup>5</sup>

As a build-up to the contextual analysis of this write-up, I would like to propound a theory around the Redeeming Grace (Salvation Plan) of God for the estranged man to succinctly help our understanding of Jesus' statement in Matthew 15:24 to avoid contextomy. This theory, *Supranationalistic Salvation Theory*, states *that the salvific mission of Jesus Christ is primordially and divinely global, primarily exclusive to the lost sheep of the House of Israel but graciously by God's love extended to the entire world (the Gentiles)*. In other words, Jesus' Global Mission was deeply prioritized to fulfil the Old Testament Prophecy by having the House of Israel as the ground zero or the fountain of salvation as a people especially loved, set apart, and chosen by God above all other nations on earth:

*Jesus told her, 'First I should feed the children--my own family, the Jews. It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.' (Mark 7:27, New Living Translation)*  
*For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth (Deut 7:6 cf. Deut. 14:1-2)*

Though *the Supra-nationalistic Salvation Theory* gives preference to the Jew, it does not exclude the Gentile. The Jews were the children of God by national adoption who were first to be filled with the doctrines and miracles of Christ, before the Gentiles who were regarded as dogs – people without hope and God and who were not part of the promise *ab initio* – but by God's love and grace they were grafted into the Spiritual House of Israel (John 3:16; Eph 2:12). Thus, the salvific mission of Jesus is not parochial, limited, local, or national but supranational – it goes beyond the borders of the nation of Israel as confirmed by Acts 1:8:

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (emphasis, mine)*

What is more, Matthew 28:19 is another witness: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Mark gives his testimony in Mark 16:15: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Given the above statements made by Jesus Himself, it is crystal clear that the message of salvation brought by Him (our Lord Jesus Christ) is supranational, it is global, or inclusive as against the misconstruction of His statement in Matthew 15:24 but elucidates in Mark 7:27 to throw away contextomy committed by the enemies of Christianity. With this in mind, anyone, both Jew and non-Jew, who is ready to follow the path of holiness by obeying God and His Word, who is ready to accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world and believe that He is the Son of God and God-incarnate, will be grafted by grace through faith into the House of Israel (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:21-30).

### Biblical Conceptual Analysis: Who Are The Israelites or Jews?

The Jews are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They became a people through a covenant with God over 3,300 years ago. **Jewish people** are an ethno-religious group originating from the Israelites. Thus, the Jews are also the Israelites. For better understanding, let me ask the same question: Who are these people called Israelites? To answer this question, Romans 9:4–5 gives us an insight:

<sup>4</sup> *They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshipping him and receiving his wonderful promises.* <sup>5</sup> *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. **And he is God**, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen (Romans 9:4-5, New Living Translation, emphasis mine).*

<sup>5</sup> This theory is developed by this author to explain Matthew 15:24

## The Israelites are adopted by God

Adoption here means that the Israelites were all taken into the **family of God**, and were called **his sons and first-born**<sup>6</sup>, and this adoption took place when God made the covenant with them at Horeb, seeing them as a separate nation to be regarded as His special people (Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:1-2). They alone of all peoples of earth had the visible glory of God in their place of worship and the promise of that glory for the future<sup>7</sup>. God also made covenants with them<sup>8</sup>. God gave His law only to them (Deut 4:1-8). They along with all people in history had a way of worship given by God Himself<sup>9</sup>. God gave them many promises scattered here and there throughout the Old Testament – promises of great blessings in the future. The Israelites have three major earthly “fathers” those whom God Himself chose to be the founders and leaders of the people. They are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen 12:1–3; Ex 3:6). And Jesus was born an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and David, God in flesh over all creatures and the King of all, not the Jews alone.

## Paul's View of Israel or Israelites

By “Israel” Paul means ethnic Israelites (Jews). In his view, the world was divided into two types of people: Israel (Israelites) and others (Gentiles). In other words, if you are not an Israelite, then you must be a Gentile. According to Paul, Israel comprises the people God set apart for himself, made promises to, established covenants with, and entrusted with his law (Rom 9:1–5). They are Abraham’s descendants—not every last one, but those freely chosen by God’s mercy, like Isaac and Jacob (Rom. 9:6–16), and Paul, who received God’s mercy, (Rom 11:1), with the exclusion of **Ishmael**<sup>10</sup>, are children of the promise. Others are regarded as Gentiles who are children of the flesh, not the children of God (Rom.9:8). This God of Scripture becomes known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. **Ishmael** is not included in this because he was **not part of the promise**, although God did bless him as part of the family (Gen 17:19-21). The Israelites are God’s chosen people, the keepers of His library:

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Heb 8:10; Jer 31:33).*

## Who is “the House of Israel”?

The phrase “**the house of Israel**” is used not less than 146 times in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, and has several possible meanings depending on the context of the surrounding verses in which it is found. It will be good to define this term but before that, let us discover its historical roots or how it originated. That will help us to clearly define the term. According to Natan Lawrence:

Before the division of the united kingdom of Israel after the death of Solomon, this phrase referred to all twelve tribes of Israel. Afterward the death of Solomon, the nation of Israel split into two nations—the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The latter was comprised primarily of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, while the former kingdom was comprised of the remaining tribes of Israel. During this time, the phrase *the house of Israel* as a reference to the Northern Kingdom of Israel was often used in contradistinction to the phrase “house of Judah” about the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In the Testimony of Yeshua, the Messiah refers to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:6; 15:54 [*sic* 15:24]). To which tribes was he referring? All of them or only some of them? Elsewhere in the Testimony of Yeshua, this term refers to all twelve tribes of Israel (Acts 2:36; 7:42; Heb 8:10), and in some references, it refers just to the Northern Kingdom (Heb 8:8). The point here is that the context of the passage of scripture surrounding this phrase determines its meaning. Although this phrase can include all the tribes of Israel and not just the Jews who were largely from the tribe of Judah, in Matthew 10:6, Yeshua seems to equate the *lost sheep of the house of Israel* with the Jews who were living in the land of Israel in his day, and not to the rest of the Israelite

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1; Jeremiah 31:9; Hosea 11:1

<sup>7</sup> Ex 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:11; Ezek 43:2-5; 44:4

<sup>8</sup> Gen 15:18; Ex 24:8; 2 Sam 7:16; 23:5; Jer 31:31-33; 32:40

<sup>9</sup> Read Exodus Chapters 25–40; 1 Kings Chapter 6

<sup>10</sup> Ishmael is not part of the promise. Thus, all who claimed to be his descendants (especially the Muslims) are not part of the promise of God as explained by Paul here. Only those from Isaac-Jacob’s root (the Christians) are the children of the promise.

tribes who were at that time scattered among the Gentile nations. It was Yeshua's priority to take the gospel message first to the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, and then to the rest of the world, and he expected his disciples to follow this same pattern (Acts 1:8). In the larger sense, the Scriptures reveal that *all* of YHVH's people have been like sheep that have gone astray spiritually, every man to his way, because of sin (Isa 53:6). So in the broadest sense, this phrase refers to all the tribes of Israel including Gentiles with which they have mixed themselves through intermarriage. Eventually, the gospel message is for everyone universally. Yeshua demonstrated this when, on several occasions, he ministered to non-Jewish Gentiles including preaching the gospel message to the Samaritan woman in John chapter four, the Syro-Phoenician woman in Mark chapter seven, and the Roman centurion in Matthew chapter eight.

It is clear that Jesus made this statement unequivocally because He has to deal with the sins of God's people first; He has to look for the Lost in the House of Israel first before extending the grace to others. Besides, the lost sheep of the House of Israel are the people who are ready to obey God and keep His commandments, and believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, and God-incarnate. This is the confession the Syrophoenician woman made that grafted her, and her daughter by grace into the spiritual House of Israel. This does not exclude the Gentiles (those who have no God, who have completely gone astray). Jesus understood His salvific mission before the foundation of the world because He is God in the flesh. No wonder He healed the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:21-30); He healed a Roman centurion's (an officer in the Roman army, a Gentile) servant (Luke 7:1-10). He travelled through the Gentile region of the Gedarenes (Mark 5:1) to prove that His mission goes beyond the nation of Israel.

Furthermore, Jesus ministered to a Samaritan woman which culminated in His (Jesus') acceptance by the entire city of Samaria (John 4:1-42). In verse 42, the people of the city made one of the most profound statements ever in the Bible, except in 1John4:14 which corroborates it that Jesus came as a Saviour of the world when they declared unambiguously: "...for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42). Even the disciples were sceptical about spreading the word beyond the Jews until God intervened. It took a while for the early church to recognize that salvation was not limited to the Jews but also available to the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians who fled the persecution in Jerusalem went into the Gentile regions of Phoenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word only to the Jews (Acts 11:19). Peter was very cautious about bringing the gospel to a Gentile household, but God intervened by making it plain that even Cornelius, the centurion, was also one of the elect (Acts 10).

The "House of Israel" Jesus came to save referred to anyone who comes to God in faith, who believes in God's (not man's) plan of redemption through Jesus. Paul goes on to state that ethnic Jews who rejected God's Son were removed from the tree of Israel, and their places were being taken by non-Jews who entered into the house of Israel by faith in Him (Romans 10:1-21). Thus, many will come from the east, the west, the north, and the south and be grafted into the House of Israel that will sit with Jesus in the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:29). As many as received Jesus are the sons of God (John 1:12). There is neither Jew nor Greek.<sup>11</sup> The House of Israel Jesus came to save the people who will receive Him.

### Contextual Question: Why God Chose Israel or the House of Israel?

Why did Jesus say "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24)? Or Let the children (the House of Israel) first be filled (Mark 7:27)? Or Why did God choose the House of Israel? The texts below try to give us an insight:

*<sup>6</sup> For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: <sup>8</sup> But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deut 7:6-8, emphasis mine).*

<sup>11</sup> Gal 3:28-29; cf., 1Cor 12:13; John 17:20-23; Col 3:11.

First and foremost, we must understand that Jesus was a Jew and He was brought up as a Jew. So, the maxim: “charity begins at home” must first be applied. Besides, since the world was divided into two types: the Jewish nation and other nations (Gentile nations), the former represented the people of God and the latter represented the people that had gone astray, without any hope and God. Jesus had to feed the people of God first before attending to others. Furthermore, God’s chosen people who had mixed up with Gentile nations were the lost sheep that needed to be brought to the fold, the House of Israel. Hence, Jesus instructed His disciples not to go and preach to the Gentiles and Samaritans but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matt 10:5–6) because some had gone astray and they were lost sheep without a shepherd as enunciated in the Old Testament.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Jesus’ statement was in line with Old Testament fulfilment.<sup>13</sup> What is more, Jesus’ words to the Syro-Phoenician woman also show an awareness of Israel’s place in God’s plan of salvation (Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30).

Somebody might ask the question in this way: Why the Jew? Paul writes:

*<sup>1</sup> Then what's the advantage of being a Jew? Is there any value in the ceremony of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Yes, there are great benefits! First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God (Rom 3:1-2, NLT, emphasis mine)*

*Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.<sup>23</sup> But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:22-24, emphasis mine)*

We can see clearly why Jesus was sent to the House of Israel and be look for those who have gone astray. These were the people entrusted with the oracles of God, which spoke of God’s written revelation before the time of Jesus. God gave the Jewish people His Word, and that is an indescribable gift! He entrusted them to record, copy, read, and live by His Word from generation to generation. This enabled them to maintain a pure and complete ancestry, traceable back to Abraham and traceable forward to the Messiah (Matt. 1:1-25; Luke 3:23-38). The Jews have this prime privilege for being God’s library keepers and this heavenly treasure was accredited to them.” Even though some of them had gone astray like sheep without a shepherd, God sent His Son to bring them back to the fold, the House of Israel, the nation God had specifically chosen for Himself. Then, it will be a weak argument to believe that God is not the Creator of all but the Creator of the Jews or Israelites alone. God created all things and this was done through Jesus.<sup>14</sup> Let us think about how Paul views Jesus here:

*<sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: <sup>15</sup> Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: <sup>16</sup> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (Col 1:14-17).*

Paul writes further: “Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too” (Romans 3:29). This statement proves that Jesus is not for the Jews alone.

Even though Jesus was seen only as the Jewish Messiah, He had come to offer salvation to everybody. He is not only the Jewish Messiah, He is also the Messiah of the world, who died for all to save those who receive Him as their Saviour.<sup>15</sup> The Messiah, Jesus is also a “light for the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:1-6; 49:6; Lk 2:32). Besides, the name of Jesus serves as a license to salvation to anyone who believes and accepts Him as a Saviour (Acts 2:21; cf., Joel 2:30-32). So Jesus is not for the Jews alone, He is for the entire humanity. One may reframe the above question thus: Why God did not raise a nation or a tribe already in existence four thousand years ago to be His chosen people? Why Israel? We are too infinitesimal as human beings to

<sup>12</sup> Jer 50:6, 17; Ezk 34:6, 8, 16; Ps 119:176; Isa 53:6.

<sup>13</sup> Matt 10:5-6; 15:24-26; Luke 15:3-10; 24:47; cf., Acts 3:26; 13:46; Rom 1:16; Mark 6:34; 14:27; Gal 3:6-9, 14; 1Pet 2:25; Rev 7:17.

<sup>14</sup> Gen 1:1-31; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb 1:2.

<sup>15</sup> Isa 42:1; John 4:42; 1 John 4:14; 1 John 2:2; John 1:29; 1 Cor 15:3-4; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 Tim 2:6; 4:10; Heb 2:9; cf., 9:28.

question God. The finitude cannot query infinitude; He does whatever pleases Him (Ps 115:3). You cannot report Him to anyone. That is why He is God. As explained above, the world was (and still is) divided into two parts: the House of Israel (Jews, now Christians) and the Gentile nations (Non-Christians). Now, let us ask ourselves, why God chose Israel and why Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The answers to these questions are not far-fetched:

1. The Israelites are peculiar people, set apart, and chosen by God Deut 7:6; 14:2; cf. Exo 19:5-6; Lev 11:45; 19:2; 20:26; Deut 26:18-19; 28:9; Isa 62:12; Titus 2:14; 1Pet 2:9;
2. The House of Israel is God's chosen nation above all other nations on the face of the earth (Deut 7:6; 14:2; Deut 26:18-19) – no one can query God for that.
3. God loved them (Deut 7:8; cf., Jer 31:3)
4. Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22)
5. It was through the Jews that God issued His Law, preserved His Word, and sent His Son.
6. They are the custodians of the rules of heaven as revealed by God in the Torah Code, instructing the children of Israel to separate themselves from the practices of the heathen nations. Thus, they were God's library keepers.
7. The Hebrews, the House of Israel had a moral and ethical code that marked them as a nation for God.
8. God entrusted them to record, copy, read, and live by His word from generation to generation because He has chosen them to be His.

### **Why did God not choose other Nations (Gentiles)?**

God decided to choose the House of Israel for the reasons earlier stated. Besides, He is God. He can decide to do what pleases Him (Ps 115:3). Other nations surrounding ancient Israel are heathen nations. They practised sexual immorality, idolatry, child sacrifices, and unclean living, the tribes and other nations were a mixture of intermarriages among the Gentile nations and other ungodly things.

### **Who are “the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel” Jesus is looking for Today?**

First, God's chosen people who have gone astray are the original lost sheep of the House of Israel. Second, the Gentiles who have no God will be grafted into the House of Israel if they are ready to obey God who created them and accept Jesus as His Son and their Saviour. By God's love and grace through faith, the following will be grafted into the House of Israel Jesus was sent to regardless of their location, tribe, language, colour, or nationality:

1. God's chosen people who have gone astray and are ready to make a U-turn
2. The sinners who are ready to accept Him
3. Those sheep who have no shepherd and/or God but who are ready to accept Jesus
4. Those sheep whose shepherds have led them astray but decided to follow Him
5. Those who are ready to obey God and believe that Jesus is the Son, the Word of God, and God in the flesh.
6. Who are ready to ask for mercy and follow the path of righteousness
7. Those who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Note that being a Jew or from the nation of Israel does not qualify anyone as part of the House of Israel, God's chosen people. Only those who accept Jesus as their Saviour both Jews and non-Jews will have their parts in the Kingdom of God<sup>16</sup>.

### **Jesus' Restriction Order**

Jesus hit hard and insisted on “the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel”?

*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: <sup>6</sup> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 10:5-6)*

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<sup>16</sup> Luke 13:29; Col 3:11; Gal. 3:28; cf., John 17:20-23; 1Cor 12:13.



For Jesus to tell His disciple to go and preach to the lost sheep that originally belonged to the House of Israel proves the fact that there is no assurance of unconditional eternal security for anyone who rejects God and His Son Jesus Christ, whether you are a Jew or non-Jew ( a Gentile). The same God will judge all.

*<sup>29</sup> Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: <sup>30</sup>Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith (Rom 3:29-30).*

In other words, there is only one true God, thus the Jews should not think that He (God) will save them in one way and Gentiles in some other way. God has only one way of saving anyone who believes in His Son and that way is through faith in Christ Jesus. Jesus said, without mincing words: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). There is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek:

*<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:28-29; cf., 1Cor 12:13; John 17:20-23; Col 3:11).*

The moment you are in Christ you are part of God's people who belong to the spiritual House of Israel.

### **Jesus' Restriction Order Removed**

Then, why did Jesus remove the restriction to Gentiles and the rest of the world? There is time for everything: “To everything, there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven” (Eccl 3:1). The same Jesus who instructed His disciples not to go and preach to the Gentiles and Samaritans (Matt 10:5-6), the same commanded them to go and preach and teach everyone, all nations (including Gentiles and Samaritans) without any restriction<sup>17</sup>. There is time for everything. Similarly, the same Jesus who sent the disciples out to preach without taking along anything for their journey (Matt 10:9-10), the same instructed them in Luke 22: 35-36:

*<sup>35</sup> And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. <sup>36</sup> Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.*

### **Why Jesus Remove the Restriction Order?**

Anyone may ask this question: Why Jesus decide to remove the restriction order “For salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22)? “For salvation is of the Jews” does not mean that salvation is only for the Jews. Note the phrase “of the Jews” and “not for the Jews”. “For salvation is of the Jews” means that through the Jewish people, came the Word of God (God's revelation) and, as well, the Son of God (Jesus), who alone brought salvation, out of the love of God, to the world (John 3:16), and did so by going to the cross and died for all<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, why did Jess remove the restriction order? This He did because:

1. Salvation is not only for the Jews but for all who receive Him
2. Jesus died for all (1John 2:2; 4:14; John 1:29; 6:51; 2Cor 5:14; 1Tim 2:6; Heb 2:9)
3. He came to save anyone who believes in Him (John 3:16)
4. God is love and He loves the whole world (1John 4:8, 16; John 3:16)
5. He created all things (John 1:3; 1Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2)
6. He has other lost sheep who were not originally part of the lost sheep of the House of Israel that will still be grafted into the House of Israel because they will receive Him in the future (John 10:16)
7. Many will still come from the east, the west, the north, and the south that will, not only the Jews, receive Him and be part of the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:29)
8. There is no Jew or Greek anymore, all will be accepted into the House of Israel because they will still receive Him (Gal. 3:28-29; cf. 1Cor 12:13; John 17:20-23; Col 3:11; cf., Acts 10:34:36; Isaiah 11:10).

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<sup>17</sup> Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke. 24:47; Acts 1:18

<sup>18</sup> 1John 2:2; 4:14; John 1:29; 2Cor 5:14; 1Tim 2:6; Heb. 2:9; Rev 5:9

9. The Old Testament prophecy concerning Him as a Root of Jesse must be fulfilled. He will be the banner for the people and the Gentiles will seek Him (Isaiah 11:10).
10. Other prophecies concerning Him must be fulfilled (Isaiah 42:4; Zechariah 9:9-11)

### Conclusion

This paper has been able to establish that Jesus' salvific mission is not parochial, local, or exclusive to the Jews, but rather, it is global or supranational. Little wonder, His first disciples travelled all across Asia, Europe, and Africa to spread His message among the nations. Today, His message is still spreading like wildfire supra-nationally. *The supranationalistic Salvation Theory* corroborates the salvific global mission of our Lord Jesus Christ that the salvific mission of Jesus Christ is primordially and divinely global, primarily exclusive to the lost sheep of the House of Israel but graciously by God's love extended to the entire world. The paper also established that the choice of the Jews or the House of Israel as the ground zero or fountain of salvation to the world is predicated on the love of God for the Jew because God's choice of Jacob over Esau did not occur because of Jacob's good character or life. God chose Jacob despite his sinfulness. Only later did God make Jacob a holy man. God's choice of Jacob helps us to comprehend His choice from eternity of each individual who comes to Christ by faith (Romans 9:10-13, 19-21; Ephesians 1:3, 4). Similarly, God's choice of the Jews did not occur because they were holy. No, God can use anyone or anything to achieve His aim. No one can arrest Him or report Him to anyone. He has the exclusive power to do and undo. That is why He is God. This work further enlightens us that the application of the principles of biblical hermeneutics without the application of *pneumagogy* or *pneumagogical approach* will be useless because there is a need for illuminating the power of the Holy Spirit before we can correctly interpret the Scripture. Only the spiritual man can understand the things of the Spirit of God and the Bible is God's inspired Word then, it implies that the natural man cannot interpret it correctly. Even though the Bible is sufficient to interpret itself without extra-biblical literature, the interpreter must be filled with the Spirit of God. Hence, the need for a pneumagogical approach to avoid the errors of interpretation and contextomy. Thus, this paper has succeeded in establishing the facts and removing doubt about the salvific global mission of Jesus Christ on earth by interpreting Matthew 15:24 biblically and apologetically.

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