

Business was booming for Nathaniel and Son Nursery.

The highly prized International Sprig Awards were only six months away. Castles, Estates and public gardens all vied for this prestigious award, in which the winner would hold the title for three years.

Nathaniel and Sons is world renowned for their white ornamental dogwood trees. For generations, their dogwood trees have been hand grown from seeds, maintaining a non-hybrid legacy. The original seeds were passed down from Nathaniel's grandfather, Caleb.

Dogwoods grow about twenty feet high, a graceful tree whose many beautiful branches only grow horizontally. They remind one of a ballerina's graceful arms. When in bloom, the dogwood is a spectacle to behold.

To avoid cross pollination from other types of trees and to keep the line pure, the nursery greenhouses sit in the very center of one hundred and twenty acres. Though it may seem peculiar, they are set apart to maintain their heritage. An underground spring feeds the irrigation system, and the

screened green houses provide all the sunlight they need, while keeping unwanted pests out. Nathaniel's son, Joshua, tends to the day-to-day operations and Nathaniel manages the office work and shipping.

It is quite surprising, the number of orders they receive for the trees, mostly from famous gardens around the world. The Master Gardeners order their trees well in advance so they will be mature for the white spring blooms. (The blooms are really off white in color.) Many have planned years ahead for the Sprig Awards so that the beautiful trees will stand like a sprinkling of grace throughout their gardens. Nathaniel had been fielding calls for days from palaces and estates about delivery dates.

Nathaniel had not been out to the nursery for five years or more, because of his age, and because it took so long to drive across 80 acres. He decided to get out for a drive and visit Joshua. He had been troubled the last two weeks with dreams every night about bright pink dogwood trees walking through the gates of the nursery and fusing with the off white trees. It was so troublesome that he

spoke with his Rabbi about it. The Rabbi laughed and said it was the busiest time of the year and it was all just tension and nerves. Despite my prayers, the dreams continued.

Joshua ran out to meet Nathaniel with a big hug. “What brings you out Dad?” I explained my dreams to him and the color drained out of his face. “Dad, come with me.” We hopped on a golf cart and headed down to a rectangle brick building at the edge of the nursery. “Dad, don’t be angry, but I have been experimenting with some pure, non-grafted seeds from pink dogwoods. That is why this roofless, brick building is here, separating the white and pink trees. Please, just come in and see.”

Expecting to see bright pink trees, instead he saw rows of dogwoods with brilliant white blooms. The blooms were beautiful beyond description. They almost shone in the sunlight. “Dad, I grafted pure white and pure pink trees together, and just look at what they became. How could this be?”

Nathaniel was so shaken up that Joshua drove him back home. Joshua stayed overnight to make sure his Dad was alright. The next morning Nathaniel came downstairs to breakfast in a stupor. "Dad, let me take you to a doctor." "No, son, I'm fine. Just tired from lack of sleep. Take one of the trucks to get back. I'll be just fine."

As soon as Joshua left, Nathaniel got in his car and stopped at the first church he came to. "I'd like to see the minister please."

Pastor Mark was a friendly man and made him feel comfortable. How may I help you, he asked? "I know you may not believe this, but the Lord spoke to me last night." He told Pastor Mark about the dreams and said the Lord told him that a Christian Minister could explain the dreams to him. Pastor Mark opened his Bible, and said "I can show you what it means, it comes out of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The off white trees represent the Jews that have kept themselves as a people honoring God, and the pink trees represent the Christians that recognize Jesus as Messiah, have a relationship with

Him, and the Holy Spirit lives in them. The Lord has grafted the Christians into Israel. Just like you, they serve and worship the same God, Yahweh. Jesus, the Hebrew son of Yahweh, died for the remission of sins. Soon, when Jesus the Messiah returns, He will step down on the Mount of Olives, and the revelation will come to our Jewish brothers. The houses of Judah and Israel will become one, shining for the Lord. Just like your shining white trees.” He read from Ezekiel 37:17-19: “Join the two sticks together so they become one stick in your hand. When your people ask you, “Will you not tell us what you mean by all this?” answer them: Thus says the Lord God: I will take the stick of Joseph, now in Ephraim’s hand, and the tribes of Israel associated with it, and join to it the stick of Judah, making them one stick; they shall become one in My hand.”

Pastor Mark explained the New Testament to him.

Nathaniel sat awestruck. He understood it clearly and He believed it. Tears ran down his face. “The Lord came to me personally so that I might come to Him personally.”

Pastor Mark gave Him a Bible and told him that his door is open anytime to answer questions he might have.

Three weeks later, Nathaniel made an appointment with Pastor Mark. He brought along Joshua, who had confessed to him that Jesus came to him several months back, and he now knows that Jesus is Messiah. Pastor Mark invited a friend of his, Jacob, a Messianic Minister, to join them as well. Pastor Jacob answered their questions and Nathaniel and Joshua said they wanted to be baptized. Pastor Jacob baptized Nathaniel and Joshua, and welcomed them to attend his Messianic church.

The International Sprig Award went to Mayfair Castle, for their use of the new "One House" dogwood trees that were the highlight of the gardens. They were so bright and beautiful that they reminded one of a bridal dress.