

Gentile

Romans 2:1-2 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. **Romans 2:6-11** Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

- **Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile**
- **But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile**

A text taken out of context is a pretext and so many verses and passages are used out of context simply because one's denominational theology doesn't match the scriptures. This is particularly true when any denomination doesn't understand the difference between justification, which is 'by faith' from that which is 'through faith' (Rom 3:30).

In the chapter titled, "uncircumcision justified through faith", emphases is placed on what exactly that justification looks like in contrast to that of the circumcision being justified 'by faith'. In this chapter, emphases is on tracing the history of the Gentile as to how the means and method of justification are applied within either a particular time period or to a particular group of Gentiles.

Nations

Depending on the context, the words 'Gentile', 'nations' and 'heathen', are used interchangeably as they can be translated from the same Hebrew word ('אָגָוָה, go'-ee). We are and will remain dependent on the KJB translators to convey the meaning of each within context! The words 'Gentiles' and 'nations', first show up in the same verse in Genesis 10:5, during introduction of the generations of Noah after the flood.

Genesis 10:1 Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

Genesis 10:5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

The concept behind the usage of the words Gentiles and nations is pretty simple as explained within the verse itself.

- divided in their lands
- every one after his tongue
- after their families

Nations are identified according to their borders, languages and decedents.

In Genesis 11, we're shown how God decided to deal with the whole earth being of one language and of one speech after the flood.

Genesis 11:1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. Genesis 11:5-9 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

- and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do
- let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech
- and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth

It staggers my imagination as to how far technology has come in such a short period of time over my own lifetime. I can only imagine what man would have accomplished by now if God wouldn't have intervened in the way that He did at that time.

Why is there a discussion of nations at all?

When God created and placed man in the garden, it was to have a 'by faith' relationship with Himself. Not only did that 'by faith' relationship falter, but so did mankind as a whole which brought about the flood. Only Noah and his family survived and Noah became the flag bearer, in becoming the heir of righteousness which is 'by faith'.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

- and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith

The human nature, being the way that it is, started down the same path as those who followed Adam before the flood. Romans 1 & 2 depict what exactly was happening during that time frame. The deterioration during that time is covered in the chapter titled, "sinned without law", as this chapter is going to deal mostly with how the Gentile could find favor with God although God was to choose a favored people.

Abraham the Hebrew

Just as Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD, because of his testimony, there was a remnant of God-fearing saints, still living 'by faith', though the world in general was in another tail spin. Abraham was one such person who God would call upon to introduce a line of people manifesting a still, 'by faith' relationship with God.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

- By faith Abraham... obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went

Genesis 14:13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

- Abram the Hebrew

I believe that there could be a misconception that as Noah was the only individual living 'by faith' at the end of that era, so Abraham was the only one living 'by faith' in his era. This isn't true and though illustration will be given along the way to demonstrate such, one example will be given here.

Genesis 14:17-20 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

- And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God

After delivering his nephew Lot from the abduction of various kings that looted the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham was met by the king of Salem, Melchizedek. Regardless of whom Melchizedek is reasoned to be, it is evident he and his city had a right relationship to the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.

Gentiles Under the Covenant of Circumcision

When one stops to really think about it, the Bible separates man into one of two categories... the circumcision and the uncircumcision. Today, we would say, Jew and Gentile. Though statistics may vary, a larger percentage of male babies are circumcised today, for health-related issues, than not. However, we must not confuse this health-related statistic today with the distinction the Bible makes between the circumcision and uncircumcision.

Just as a reminder, the nation of Israel did not yet exist when circumcision was put in place. We see the LORD establishing and confirming the Abrahamic Covenant throughout the book of Genesis and a physical mark was instituted through means of another covenant.

Genesis 17:7-14 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. 9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

- he that is born in the house
- or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed
- He that is born in thy house
- and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised

We are going to see a trend, that even though the LORD goes about establishing a physical seed through Abraham, there's an opening for one of another nation to be identified within that seed. Shown in Genesis 17, is that though circumcision was intended for those born within Abraham's physical seed, this rite was also extended to those who were bought with money, of any stranger, which was not of Abraham's seed.

Though with deceit, we see this principle illustrated when Jacob's sons talked a whole city into having their males circumcised over an episode where one of the males defiled a sister.

Genesis 34:11-24 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. 12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. 13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: 14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: 15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; 16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. 18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. 19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. 20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. 23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

- And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us
- But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised
- Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people
- Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised
- and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city

It is important to understand that a stranger, outside of Abraham's immediate seed, could be identified to Abraham's seed... "...and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people."

Job

It must be remembered that even though the Mosaic Covenant wasn't made with the nation of Israel till some 400 years after Israel's deliverance, God was still monitoring the activities of man as to their 'by faith' relationship to Him.

Job 1:6-8 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. 7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

- Hast thou considered my servant Job
- that there is none like him in the earth
- a perfect and an upright man
- one that feareth God
- and escheweth evil?

It is my conviction that Job probably lived sometime between Abraham and Moses.

Gentiles in the Exodus

Obviously, the focus of the Exodus is the deliverance of Israel under the leadership of Moses. What is often overlooked is the mix multitude that exited Egypt along with the Israelites!

Exodus 12:35-38 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. 37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. 38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.

- And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth
- And a mixed multitude went up also with them

The importance of this recognition is dealt with later under the heading dealing with Gentiles that Paul addresses as those, who are of the 'faith of Abraham', living during the Acts transitional period.

Gentiles Under the Mosaic Covenant

As there was a mix multitude, that followed Israel across the red sea towards the promised land, so provision was made at the institution of the Mosaic Covenant for the 'stranger'. Recognizing that the Mosaic Covenant covenanted for righteousness, dos and don'ts were also put in place for the 'stranger', that found themselves in Israel's mix. The same principal of a 'by faith' relationship, that applied between Israel and the LORD, now applied to the 'stranger'.

Following, are a few verses, of many, that deal with rules set in place that applied to 'strangers'.

Exodus 12:48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

Exodus 12:49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.

Exodus 23:12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

Leviticus 16:29 And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

Leviticus 17:12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.

Leviticus 18:26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you:

Leviticus 19:34 But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 24:16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.

Deuteronomy 10:19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 14:21 Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Deuteronomy 23:20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

Deuteronomy 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

The Gentile After Crossing Jordan

Exodus 23:23-25 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. 24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. 25 And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

- For mine Angel shall go before thee... and I will cut them off

A theme that is often ignored is the thought process of the LORD behind the instruction given to Israel when crossing Jordan into the promised land covenanted to Abraham. The Mosaic Covenant was the manifestation of the righteousness of God and this righteousness had long been ignored by the nations to which they were about to invade. As cruel as these instructions may sound to us today, the invaded nations were to be utterly destroyed to thwart any temptation of adopting their pagan practices into Israel's conduct. This is actually the mindset of many Islamic countries today towards any not of their religious persuasion.

Rahab the Harlot

Even within this mindset of the LORD, a ray of hope was given to a Gentile when favor was displayed towards Israel's people.

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

Joshua 2:8-14 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: 13 And

that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. 14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

- And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you
- And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee

As suspected and predicted, Israel succumbed to the ways of the surrounding nations and the word 'heathen', is used to describe their activity. A condemning finger is often found pointing at Israel's kings who betrayed the covenants put in place with the founding fathers.

Deuteronomy 4:26-27 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

- I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it
- And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you

2 Kings 17:15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

- And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them
- and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them

Again, on occasion, we see within the Old Testament God granting a Gentile mercy though Israel was His chosen people. Two examples are given.

Esther

Esther is one of the more familiar and heartwarming stories in the Old Testament, while Israel was under captivity. God's providence is seen in the lives of Esther and her uncle Mordecai, as Haman plotted to destroy more Jews.

Esther 3:8-9 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. 9 If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

- There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom
- and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws
- If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed

As the plot thickens with twists and turns, the tide is turned on Haman which leads not only to his demise, but to a revitalization of the Jews throughout the region. Here is a point to be made that is so often left out of the story. The renewal of the Jews, within these provinces, was so profound that many of the people of the land became 'Jews', in accepting their laws, out of the fear of the Jews.

Esther 8:16-17 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. 17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

- And many of the people of the land became Jews
- for the fear of the Jews fell upon them

Nineveh

Jonah 3:1-10 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw

their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

- Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee
- And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown
- So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them
- But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands
- Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?
- And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not

Everyone is familiar with the story of Jonah and the whale, but why would God have mercy on such a pagan environment? Jonah, having certain prejudice knowing what a gracious God would do under circumstances, was his biggest concern.

Jonah 4:1-2 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. 2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

- Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil

The point being made here is that when a people, any people, Israel or otherwise, would repent in earnest, God would then show mercy. Wasn't Abraham's argument, on the behalf of Sodom's destruction, based on the number of the righteous found within? "Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" Genesis 18:24

The Gentile During Israel's Captivities

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have

compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

- **That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee**
- **If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee**

The role of the Gentile, during Israel's captivities, was that of a master as was Pharaoh to Israel in Egypt. Israel would be held captive till 'redemption' would be provided via the 'prophet like unto Moses' would come. The time span between Malachi and Matthew finds both the Jew and Gentile pretty much void of God. Israel found themselves in bondage, under the hand of the Romans, at the arrival of John the Baptist and Jesus.

The Gentile During the Time of Christ

There always seems to be an exception to the rule and there were certainly several exceptions, regarding Gentiles, found during the earthly ministry of Jesus.

Luke 2:30-32 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

The ministries of John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples were directed precisely at the nation of Israel, in preparation for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, back into her hands. Their message was one of confession of sins and the baptism of repentance for remission of sins. After the resurrection, Christ's return was based on Israel's response... "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:" **Acts 3:19-20**

Although focus was on Israel, the Lord Jesus had two separate encounters, with Gentiles, that totally go over the heads of most commentators, because of the lack of understanding regarding justification and righteousness which is 'by faith'. The first encounter we'll look at is with a centurion. The second will be that of a woman of Canaan.

The Centurion

The Centurion **Matthew's Account**

Matthew 8:5-13 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

- The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed
- When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel
- And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven
- But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth

The Centurion **Luke's Account**

Luke 7:1-10 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. 3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

- And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this
- For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue
- Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed
- When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel

A Gentile beseeched the Lord in healing a servant sick of the palsy. Being a centurion, one who understood being in charge and in command of others, did not underestimate the authority and power of the Lord. Upon response from the Lord in volunteering to return to the centurion's house to heal the servant, not only did the centurion confess his unworthiness, but also to Jesus' authority to simply speak the word for his servant's healing. What the Lord addresses next is what is left out of most commentary.

First... this Gentile had what was lacking, which was being looked for in Israel, ... so great faith!

... *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*

Second... not only did this centurion have so great faith, but was living 'by faith'. This is significant! This Gentile feared God as demonstrated in the testimony given of him...

"That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." This principal, of blessing, can be traced back to Abraham... "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." **Genesis 12:3**

Third... the 'many', referenced in verse 11, are Gentiles, ... who will come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

Fourth... the children of the kingdom, that shall be cast out into outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, are representative of the Jew at the second coming of Christ that are rejected of Christ in entering into the kingdom. The Israelites, at the time of Christ, were the children of the kingdom who then rejected the king!

Matthew 21:42-43 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

- Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you
- and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof

Matthew 8:12, cannot be applied elsewhere outside of this context and make bible-sense!

The nation, referenced in Matthew 21:43, are 'strangers' (probably applicable to both Jewish & Gentile Christians) addressed by Peter... "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" **1 Peter 2:9**

The Many From the East and West

Fifth... where exactly are these 'many' Gentiles coming from who shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven? At least part of the answer is in found in Matthew 25.

Matthew 25:31-46 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

- When the Son of man shall come in his glory
- then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory
- And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another
- he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left
- Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world
- For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me
- Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee

- And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me
- Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:
- For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not
- Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?
- Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me
- And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal

So much false teaching has been generated from dishonest and miss-representation of this passage! Correct interpretation can ONLY be deducted in discerning the difference between righteousness which is 'by faith' from righteousness which is 'through faith'. The time frame, of this passage, just precedes and includes the return of Christ, when there is tremendous persecution upon the Jew and nation of Israel. As was with Rahab the harlot, the sheep nations are the ones to come to Israel's aid.

Jesus spoke of other sheep, which were not of this fold. What are the chances that these are the sheep in which Jesus spoke of?

John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Though Paul never directly referenced Gentiles as being sheep, he does make reference to the church of God as being a 'flock'... "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." **Acts 20:28-29**

Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, referred to Jesus as the chief Shepherd.

1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The goat nations oppose Israel while she's in dire need. Admittance into the kingdom here has nothing to do with accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, as outlined in Romans 10. The righteous are righteous because of their response to Christ's brethren, the Jew. These Gentiles do not represent Gentiles living in this dispensation of the grace of God. No twisting of the scripture can force this passage into Pauline truth. These sheep

nations enter into the earthly kingdom of heaven, whereas our hope today is a heavenly hope and calling.

Other prophecies foretold of this day and it was from this perspective that the Apostles understood when the Gentiles would be reached and that being after the establishment of the kingdom back to Israel.

Isaiah 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

- And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem
- And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more

Zechariah 8:22-23 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. 23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

- Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD
- In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you

Zechariah 14:1-9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. 4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of

Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. 5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. 6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: 7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. 8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. 9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

- For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle
- Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle
- and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee
- And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Before returning to the other example of the Lord Jesus ministering to a Gentile, during his earthly ministry, we're going to follow this theme through to the end regarding Gentiles and nations inheriting the kingdom. During the earthly Millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ, covenant promises made to the fathers will be fulfilled which will include Israel reigning among the nations.

After the Millennium, nations are once again recognized in an environment much like what was found in the garden of Eden.

Revelation 22:1-3 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

- and the leaves of the tree
- were for the healing of the nations

Trees of life as was in the garden of Eden?

Peter speaks of the day in which righteousness will dwell in the new heavens and a new earth. We are considering that inheritance which pertains to the earth, during and after the 1,000-year reign of Christ, with perspective on the nations.

2 Peter 3:12-13 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

- Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness

A Woman of Canaan

Matthew's Account

Matthew 15:22-28 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. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 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.

- 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
- But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel
- Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me
- But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs

Mark's Account

Mark 7:24-30 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. 25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. 27 But Jesus said 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. 28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

- For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet
- The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter
- But Jesus said 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
- for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs

- And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table
- Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt
- And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs
- And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter

Jesus' immediate verbal response to this woman was accurate... at this stage, in promoting the kingdom at hand, His mission being the lost sheep of the house of Israel... "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" **Romans 15:8** The mindset, of the Apostles, was exactly that expressed by Jesus... Let the children first be filled.

That the Gentile wouldn't be reached until after the return of Christ is what threw Peter off guard, when asked to visit Cornelius in Acts 10. Notice how the scripture explicitly points out that this woman was a Greek; a Syrophoenician by nation.

What has been demonstrated in this chapter, dedicated to Gentiles, is that 'crumbs' have been promised to Gentiles that came to Israel's side 'by faith'.

Gentiles Under the Kingdom Gospel After the Resurrection of Christ

Matthew 10:5-7 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: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. **Matthew 10:23** But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

- Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not
- for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come

After the resurrection, the Apostles remained true to their stated mission, even in light of the persecution that surrounded Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). They which were scattered abroad, because of the persecution that arose about Stephen, still preached to the Jew only (Acts 11:19). It was Phillip, not the Apostles, who had first encounter with the Sarmatians, in which Peter and John eventually laid hands on for them to receive evidence of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17). Phillip was only baptizing in the name of 'the Lord' (Acts 8:16), whereas the Apostles were baptizing Jews in the name of 'Jesus Christ' (Acts 2:38). This lays foundation for Peter's surprise encounter with a Gentile.

Cornelius' Household

Peter's Surprise House-Call

Acts 10:1-5 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

- There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius
- A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always
- And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter

Acts 10:9-17 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

- And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance
- And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air
- And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat
- But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean

Acts 10:21-22 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that

feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

- And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews
- was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee

Acts 10:28-29 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

- And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation
- but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean

Acts 10:30-31 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

- Four days ago I was fasting until this hour
- Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God

Acts 10:34-38 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

- Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons
- But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him

Acts 10:44-48 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these

should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

- While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word
- And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost
- Then answered Peter... Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?
- And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord

Most commentary don't cover the details of this passage because they can't without contradicting their view on the 'Great Commission' and theology on justification! We will now reflect and give comment to the various verses noted in Acts 10.

This Gentile is said to be a devout and just man fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people to whom he had good report among all the nation of the Jews. He also prayed to God always. Frankly, this 'seemingly' contradicts everything that commentaries seem to imply about what Romans 3:10-18 is teaching... there is none that seeketh after God... there is no fear of God before their eyes. The correct interpretation of Romans 3, within context, is covered in chapters titled, "sinned in the law" and "sinned without law".

Along this same line of thought, Peter's deduction as to now perceiving that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, 'seemingly' contradicts Paul... "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" **Titus 3:5**

It is somewhat astonishing the certain things that are left out of most commentary on these passages. For instance, why no mention of repentance, walking an aisle or recitation of the sinner's prayer on behalf of Cornelius and his household?

For those who hold stringently to the 'Great Commission', why the reluctance on Peter's part to keep company of one of another nation in considering that it was still an 'unlawful thing'? The way the 'Great Commission' is presented today, by most churches, one would think that Peter would have already understood this?

Continuing on this same line of reasoning, why the surprise from the believing circumcised when Cornelius and his household received the baptism with the Holy Ghost? It is somewhat humorous as to why or how Peter came to resolve in baptizing Cornelius and his household... "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" It MUST be called to attention here that

baptism was performed in the name of 'the Lord', and not in the name of 'Jesus Christ', as commissioned in Acts 2:38! Same was true for the Samaritans (Acts 8:16).

Cornelius was a Gentile living 'by faith', which got himself and his household recognized by God. The EXACT reason, why here in Acts 10, is because God was preparing Peter for the acceptance Paul, his ministry and his gospel. Righteousness, which is 'by faith', was still the norm and in Cornelius receiving the baptism with the Holy Ghost, before being baptized with water, opened Peter's understanding as to what righteousness, which is 'of faith', would look like.

Peter gave to Cornelius' household words whereby... thou and all thy house shall be saved (Acts 11:14). As mentioned elsewhere within this Theme Study, though eternal salvation could certainly come into play, within the Gospel's and Acts time-line, salvation also had to do with avoiding the impending judgement to come preceding the return of Christ.

One other very important thing, to take away from Peter's surprise visit to Cornelius' household, is that of the later recognition, on Peter's part, that God would be opening up the door 'of faith' to the Jew also.

Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Romans 11:5-6 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

NIV Having it Backwards

Again, the NIV both contradicts and confuses a thread, woven in the KJB, proving distinction between God justifying the circumcision from that of the uncircumcision!

we shall be saved

Acts 15:11 (KJB) But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

- we shall be saved, even as they

we are saved

Acts 15: 11 (NIV) No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.

- we are saved, just as they are

'Shall be' and 'are', are not the same tense and means something different in each context. In fact, what point would Peter be making otherwise if salvation was always the same for everyone? How would salvation have been any different? If God would save the Gentile differently from the Jew, what would that look like from Peter's perspective? If the

gospels are the same in Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38 and Acts 20:24, then what point was Peter making?

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

If Paul received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God, then what was John the Baptist preaching? What about Peter & company?

There is no other record of Peter visiting Gentiles other than this trip to Cornelius' household!

Gentiles Under Paul's Mid-Act's Ministry

The kingdom gates were opened to Gentiles in Acts 10. The door 'of faith' was opened to the Gentiles between Acts 13 & 15.

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

- the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them

Acts 14:26-27 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

- And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled
- they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles

As the door 'of faith', was being opened up to the Gentiles in Acts 14, an event is immediately recorded that sets the stage for a turn of events that's about to take place.

Acts 13:5-12 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. 6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and

desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

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- Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God
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- And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?
- And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season

A Gentile seeking counsel of Paul is interfered with by a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew named Bar-jesus, who tries turning him from the faith. Saul, who now is called Paul, accusing him of perverting the right ways of the Lord, blinds him not seeing the sun for a season. Throughout the book of Acts we see the Jew thwarting every effort Paul makes in reaching the Gentiles. Paul even speaks to this blindness, in part, that is pictured here in the opening of the door 'of faith' to the Gentile... "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 11:25** This blindness 'in part', as well as 'Israel' fullness and the 'fullness of the Gentiles', are all dealt with in chapters titled the same.

Gentiles of the Faith of Abraham

The Gentiles, that are saved under Paul's Mid-Act's ministry, are said to be of the 'faith of Abraham'. In the chapter titled, "uncircumcision justified through faith", great detail is given to the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen 'through faith', in preaching before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, "...In thee shall all nations be blessed." (**Gal 3:8**). It is also pointed out that righteousness was imputed, to these Gentiles, on the same bases that righteousness was imputed to Abraham in Genesis 15, that being simply believing that which the LORD promised.

Have you ever wondered who and where these Gentiles, who are of the faith of Abraham, came from? Let's consider some passages.

Acts 13:14-16 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience... **Acts 13:23** Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:... **Acts 13:26** Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.... **Acts 13:38-48** Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. 42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

- and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down
- Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel,
- and ye that fear God, give audience
- And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath
- Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God
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- Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles
- For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth
- And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed

As Paul's custom was, he would minister in and around synagogues on the sabbath day. Notice carefully who Paul addresses... Men of Israel, and ye that fear God. We already pointed out three (3) individual Gentiles that demonstrated faith and confidence in the God of Israel; a centurion, a woman of Canaan and Cornelius. Has the reader ever wondered why the Gentile recipients of Paul's pre-prison epistles all seemed to be familiar with Israel's history and laws? As with Cornelius, the earliest of Paul's Greek/Gentile converts were those that feared God.

We see a trending, throughout the book of Acts, in introducing the Greek/Gentile into the mix...

Acts 14:1-2 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

- they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews
- and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed
- But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles

Acts 16:12-14 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

- And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side
- a certain woman named Lydia,... which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul

Acts 17:1-4 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of

the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. 4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

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- And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures
- And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few

Acts 17:10-12 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

- who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews
- Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few

Acts 17:15-17 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. 16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

- Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews
- and with the devout persons
- and in the market daily with them that met with him (vs 18-34)

Third Group Audience

The Heathen

Listing of Act's passages is interrupted here to point out that a third group of people are now introduced into this mix. Along with religious Jews and devout persons (Greeks), Paul now takes opportunity to address 'all Athenians and strangers' (Acts 17:18-34) who are apparently clueless of Israel's God and history and would certainly fall under the category of 'heathen'. Unlike Paul's witness to the Jews and devout Greeks, Paul's message is completely void of trying to trace God's covenant promises back through to the 'fathers'. Think about it... would Paul be arguing here the 'faith of Abraham'? Who is Abraham? In

observing the erection of many altars and in particular the one, 'TO THE UNKNOWN GOD', Paul presents a case of the one true creator and Godhead. While some mocked at the resurrection 'from' and 'of' the dead, others believed... "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." **Acts 17:34**

We now move on...

Acts 18:1-8 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

- And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks
- And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ
- And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean:
- from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles
- And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue
- And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house;
- and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized

Before turning our attention to Paul's last synagogue visit, in this last passage we see both Jews and Greeks/Gentiles coming to the Lord, as well as mention of those who worshipped God. Even a chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord, with all his house, and many believed and were baptized.

Post Act's 18 Gentiles

All They Which Dwelt in Asia... Both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles)

Paul's Last Synagogue Visit

Acts 19:9-10 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

- he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus
- this continued by the space of two years;
- so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus
- both Jews and Greeks

Another pause is taken here to show further trending in Paul's ministry and outreach. This is the last record of Paul ministering in a synagogue of the Jews. Paul spent 3 months in the synagogue at Ephesus and when 'divers were hardened, and believed not', Paul then set up camp in 'the school of one Tyrannus', where he continued for a space of two years. The comment that follows is significant... "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Outside of a 'religious' setting, the message of the Lord Jesus went forth to both Jews and Greeks, the devout and non-devout!

From the School of One Tyrannus

Acts 19:17-18 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

- And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus
- and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified
- And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds

Acts 20:17-24 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the

ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

- Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ
- that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God

Who is the Heathen?

The Scripture Foreseeing...

We started this chapter with acknowledgement that a same Hebrew word can be used for the terms Gentiles, nations and heathen. Also stated, was that context would come into play in determining what is being implied by each. Before proceeding on to salvation being sent unto the Gentiles, as stated by Paul in Acts 28, we're going to dive into who these Gentiles are. Who exactly are the heathen referenced in Galatians 3:8? "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." **Galatians 3:8**

- And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith
- preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed

The words 'Gentiles', 'heathen' and 'nations', are found a total of ten (10) times in the book of Galatians:

- A.** Gentiles - seven (7) times (Ga 2:2, 8, 12, 14-15; 3:14)
- B.** heathen - three (3) times (Ga 1:16; Ga 2:9; Ga 3:8)
- C.** nations - one (1) time (Ga 3:8)

Similar to that in the OT, all three of these terms are translated from the same Greek word; $\xi\theta\upsilon\omega\varsigma$ éthnos, eth'-nos. Again, trusting the KJB translation, context comes into play!

With little doubt, the reader notices that I make distinction between different groups of Gentiles within this chapter, as well as throughout the Theme Study. Perhaps it is with some resistance, on behalf of the reader, in seeing the same distinctions at times? One of the struggles that I have had over the years, on this subject, is in trying to keep my personal perception, of a particular word or theme, from interfering with the scriptural interpretation of that word or topic. In other words, one's personal understanding of something, may or may not be the scriptural application? This certainly comes into play in trying to determine any doctrinal issue!

The heathen is depicted very clearly in the LORD's warning to the nation of Israel. We'll parallel God's warning with that of Paul's description of same group.

Among the Heathen

Exodus 20:1-5 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

- Thou shalt have no other gods before me
- Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
- Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them

Deuteronomy 4:26-28 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

- the LORD shall scatter you among the nations
- ye shall be left few in number among the heathen

The Nations Who Became Fools

Romans 1:18-25 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness
- And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man
- and to birds
- and fourfooted beasts
- and creeping things

God's Description of the Heathen

Along with the commandments, given to Israel, is a warning of God of being scattered among the nations to then fall victim of the heathen. It is important to keep this discernment, between the two terms, for within this study!

Roman's 1:18-25, is Paul's general description of those nations that were left outside of the covenanted promises made to Israel.

We can now give the KJB's definition to the term 'heathen'.

KJB Definition: 'heathen' – Those, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, that change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

When exactly, in the stage of God's timeline, did the Scripture foresee this prophecy of God justifying the heathen through faith, begin to come into play? By process of elimination, I'll now ask the reader to investigate along with me.

Were All Gentiles Heathens?

From outside of Peter's present understanding, of the progression in which the Gentile would be reached via the kingdom gospel, God calls upon him to call upon a Gentile household. Though we've already covered this story in some detail, here are a few passages extracted from that experience for other consideration.

Acts 10:1-4 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Acts 10:21-22 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

Acts 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Acts 10:34-35 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Acts 11:13-15 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Here are a few points to be made from Peter's visit to this Gentiles' household that were living 'by faith'. These are to be weighed against those who the Scriptures consider to be a 'heathen'.

1. Cornelius, from the perspectives of those around him, as well as the Lord's, was that of... A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.
2. The subject of 'nations' is brought up; not the heathen.
3. In spite of the fact that this Gentile being a devout man and feared God with all his house, words, whereby he and all his house shall be saved, were delivered by Peter. Though there's more in view to this 'salvation', other than how we would limit it, a 'salvation' is brought into the picture.

Here's the first question for our consideration... Would this devout, God-fearing Gentile, identified within the nations, fall under the biblical classification of being a heathen? Would Peter, at that time, view Cornelius and his household as heathens? I think not. What does the reader think?

Let's back up to those we've already covered. What about the Canaanite woman, who was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation, who recognized the Lord as the Son of David, in asking to intervene with her daughter that was grievously vexed with a devil? Jesus definitely identified her as one among the 'nations', along with comment... "it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs". Would she fall under the Bible's classification of a heathen? Did Jesus think so? I think not. What about the reader?

Then there's the centurion, thought worthy by others because he loved Israel and built the Jews a synagogue. He sought the Lord to heal a servant (Lk 7:2-9). Would he fall under the biblical classification of being a heathen? I don't think so. Does the reader?

Now, let's fast forward past Peter's experience with Cornelius and into the early ministry of Paul. Here we find Paul ministering in and around the synagogues, to both pious Jews and Greeks (Gentiles), who were devout and feared God. Being reminded that we're not talking about a need for 'salvation' per say, do these Jews and Gentiles fall under the Bible's definition of a heathen? Again, I think not. How about the reader now?

First Clear Evidence?

Where do we find first clear evidence of Paul ministering to those who would truly qualify as being 'heathen'? I would argue Acts 17 (at Athens), followed by his ministry, outside of synagogues, now from the school of Tyrannus... "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both **Jews** and **Greeks**" **Acts 19:10.**

Acts 19:17-19 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

- many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds
- Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together
- and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver

Would the reader agree with me that those, in the marketplace at Athens, as well as those throughout the regions of Asia and dwelling at Ephesus, would scripturally fall under the KJB's definition of a 'heathen' (Acts 17 & 19)?

In trying to keep with the Bible's definition of a 'heathen', in view of the Scriptures foreseeing that God would one day justify the heathen 'through faith', here is what I personally see happening, in the book of Acts, via the ministry of Paul.

Before Paul begins fulfilling his call to minister to the 'heathen', God is granting first dibs, of the gospel of Christ, to the pious Jew and God-fearing Gentiles, such as represented in the Canaanite woman, a centurion and Cornelius' household. This is accomplished by ministering first, in and around the synagogues and in having established churches as result.

Yes, I could give account of the groves, set up in high places for idol worship (1 Kings 14:23) and stress the fact this was a large cause of Israel's demise under the OT. Also, I can easily point out the failure of the Jew's religion (Mt 15:3-6; Gal 1:13-14) and outright rejection and opposition to Paul's ministry, in preaching the gospel of Christ throughout Acts. However, though I am convinced that many Jews got consumed in the paganism, within the nations, I don't believe that Israel is the focus of Galatians 3:8! The target, being the heathen, are the nations that were discriminated against, in the establishment of the Law, that were the idol worshipers as described and warned against in Deuteronomy 4 and Romans 1.

From the People unto the Gentiles

In the last two passages, coming up at the end of this segment, we not only see Paul's testimony as to what God's purpose was for his life, but also God's purpose in the setting aside the nation of Israel and turning to the Gentiles.

Acts 26:15-21 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

- Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee
- To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Cf. Eph 2:1-3)
- that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me

Acts 28:16-17 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. 17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. **Acts 28:23-31** And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. 25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these

words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. 30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

- And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together
- some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not
- And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers...
- Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it

As a whole, not only did the Jew reject Paul's gospel, they also fought every effort of Paul in both spreading his gospel and in reaching Gentiles. The return of Christ was pivotal on Israel's repentance, which obviously was in jeopardy by now. The last mention of Peter is chapter Acts 15 and agreement was reached between Peter and Paul that Peter would focus on the circumcision, as Paul, whose apostleship was the uncircumcision, would now go onto the heathen... "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." **Galatians 2:9**

Has the reader ever found it interesting that the book of Acts, which starts out with twelve Apostles, ministering to the nation of Israel, ends with one man's indictment of Israel whose dedication is now Gentiles?

A statement of Paul's, that has always intrigued me, is in him saying... 'Delivering thee from the 'people', and from the 'Gentiles', unto 'whom' now I send thee'. Obviously, the people are the Jew. Is it possible that, from the 'Gentiles', are those Gentiles he ministered to up till now and unto 'whom', are the heathen coming up next in line? Look how Paul ends this statement... "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." The 'whom', sounds like referencing the 'heathen', next in line? What does the reader think?

Gentiles Addressed in Paul's Prison Epistles

Though the focus here will be on the book of Ephesians, other of Paul's prison epistles are also taken into account. It has been shown that Paul had ministered to both Jews and Gentiles while at Ephesus; both in and out of the synagogues. However, Ephesians is addressed to Gentiles! Paul's intent in doing so, is to show God's eternal plan and purpose for these Gentiles.

That there are two separate groups of Gentiles, addressed by Paul in his epistles, can easily be demonstrated in the following comparison.

Pre-Prison Epistle to Gentiles
I will eat no flesh...

1 Corinthians 8:10-13 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

- But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ
- Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend

Prison Epistle to Gentiles
Let no man judge you in meat...

Colossians 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

- Let no man therefore judge you in meat

More distinctions, of Paul's actions and conduct during the Acts period, are covered towards the end of this chapter.

There is also a subtle distinction, found in both Ephesians and Colossians, that gives definite clue as to where Paul is coming from in identifying these Gentiles.

who were dead in trespasses and sins...

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

- And you... who were dead in trespasses and sins

that were sometime alienated and enemies...

Colossians 1:21-22 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unrepentable in his sight:

- And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works

- Wherein in time past **ye** walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience
- and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others

Obviously, the human nature is what it is and proof being can be traced from Adam till today, with our own consciences bearing witness. However, Zacharias and his wife were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD blameless (Lk 1:5-6) and Paul addressed those Gentiles, who feared God (Ac 13:16) as well as others who were 'devout' (Ac 13:50; 17:4, 17). The Gentiles, that Paul addresses in his prison epistles, are directly linked to those Gentiles that are identified in Romans 1, as to God having **given up** and then turned **over** to a reprobate mind (Rom 1:24, 26, 28).

It was mankind, identified in Romans 1:19-31, that was eventually discriminated against in the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant, that covenanted for righteousness, for the nation of Israel. After the gospel of Christ was introduced and proclaimed to both Jew and the Greek, found in and around the synagogues, it stepped outside the bounds in which the mercy of God once did not allow.

Introductions to Converted Non-Covenanted Gentiles

In further building the case as to exactly who these Gentiles are, we're going to lay two parallel passages together addressing same group. It is VERY IMPORTANT to pay close attention as to how Paul uses pronouns throughout these two epistles.

Introduction to the Ephesians

Ephesians 1:7-18 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted,

Introduction to the Colossians

Colossians 1:14-27 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 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: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 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. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things

after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

- In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins
- Having made known unto us the mystery of his will
- according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself
- That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him
- In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ
- In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:
- in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise
- Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession
- Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints
- That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him

unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; 24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins
- 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
- 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
- And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven
- And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled
- Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God
- Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints
- To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery

- The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory

As we're going to be investigating numerous passages, from within Ephesians and Colossians, we want to take just a few things from these introductory chapters to these two books.

First... considering the pronouns, note how Paul seems to both identify with and yet distinguish himself from the people he addresses; particularly in Ephesians. Paul classifies himself with those who first trusted in Christ, followed by comment regarding their conversion... "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:" It's as though he may never have personally met some of the recipients of this epistle... "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:" **Ephesians 3:2**. We see something similar in **Ephesians 2:21**... "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Again, it appears that he's giving instruction to a group of people, perhaps for the first time, though having lived and visited there several times before.

Second... Paul's focus, in the Colossians' introduction, is Christ being the creator of all things for him and by him, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. His attention turns immediately to Christ being the head of the body, the church, that now includes these Gentiles that were sometime alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works. That Christ would be in these Gentiles was a mystery hid from generations now revealed through Paul... "according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God."

In the Ephesians' introduction, there's a slightly different emphasis. Whereas, in Colossians the mystery unveiled is Christ in these Gentiles, in Ephesians, the emphases is these Gentiles being in Christ. Again, focus then turns to the church which is His body (Eph 1:22-23).

NOBODY was 'in Christ' before Christ! In the dispensation of the fullness of times, which I believe is the period covering the Millennium, God is going to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. Unlike so many others that have similar views, as I do on dispensational divide, I do start the body of Christ in Acts 2; the head, the Lord Jesus Christ, was in place at the right hand of the Father (Acts 5:31; Heb 10:12; 1Pet 3:22; Eph 1:20-23). What I see is that the 'all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth', represent two hopes and callings within one body, not two bodies with different hopes and callings. Paul says... "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," **Ephesians 3:15**. Other positions taken, on when the body of Christ starts, are typically based on obvious distinctions seen between Paul's ministry from that of the Apostles' ministry and kingdom gospel; from that directed to Israel in comparison to Paul's focus on the Gentile. The question that needs

answered is... are there two separate bodies 'in Christ', one on earth and the other in heaven? Or, is there one body 'in Christ', with separate hopes and callings... one on earth and the other in heaven? One must also factor in the New Jerusalem and an apparent realm far above all heavens in the filling of all things (Eph 4:10)!

Our Inheritance Versus His Inheritance

Paul speaks of 'our inheritance', as well as 'his inheritance'. What Paul is doing is explaining to these Gentiles how exactly 'their inheritance' is fitting in with 'his inheritance'. The purchased possession is obviously the church, the body of Christ.

More detail will be given, as to exactly who these Gentiles are, but one point of distinction will be given here. Although these Gentiles were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, in which I have no problem tracing back to Genesis 15, I do raise question as to whether these Gentiles made same claim as being of 'the faith of Abraham', as detailed in epistles addressed to Gentiles in Romans and Galatians. That there is no misunderstanding regarding last comment, let be clearly stated that... "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise", is the same gospel, with promise, as preached to both groups! Abraham is not mentioned in any of Paul's prison epistles, but great emphasis on salvation by grace and through faith without works is.

The Hope and Calling of These Converted Non-Covenanted Gentiles

We are now going to consider the hope and calling of these Gentiles.

Ephesians 1:16-23 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers
- The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling
- and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints
- Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places

- Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come
- And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church
- Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all

What was the hope of his calling and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance for these saints? These answers can be found in combining two passages together within this chapter... In verse 3, Paul states... "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" **Ephesians 1:3**. Just how and when did this all come about? "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." **Ephesians 2:5-7**

In linking verse 10 with verses 22 & 23, we see exactly what God is up to during this dispensation of the grace of God for us Gentiles.

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

- That in the dispensation of the fulness of times
- he might gather together in one all things in Christ
- both which are in heaven
- and which are on earth
- even in him

Ephesians 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- And hath put all things under his feet
- and gave him to be the head over all things to the church
- Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all

There were those who were 'in Christ' before Paul (Rom 16:7) and to those members of the church, which is his body, the earth is their inheritance, as I believe their function to be a ruling body. Peter & company, will be sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mat 19:28). The fullness that filleth all in all encompasses both heaven and earth and these Gentiles are God's inheritance pertaining to a heavenly abode. Paul writes to the Colossians... "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." **Colossians 3:1-2**

Must we be reminded that there was a great vacancy, within the heavens, from a first rebellion? Also, it would be amiss not to point out that the New Jerusalem, whether one places it arrival before or after the Millennial Reign of Christ, could or would also be associated with an heavenly position?

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Revelation 21:1-2 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **10-12** And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: **14** And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. **24-26** And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

Who Exactly Are These Ephesians' Gentiles?

Ephesians 3:1-10 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

- For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward
- Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ

- Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit
- That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
- Whereof I was made a minister
- Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ
- And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ
- To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God

...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The 'unsearchable' riches of Christ, in this context, is that which Paul is presenting as present truth not prophesied. The question that the reader needs to answer, for themselves, in comparison of 'apparently' two distinguishable groups of Gentiles, is as to whether the Gentiles ministered to during the Acts period can be traced; are they subject of prophecy?

Process of Elimination

When Paul states that he is writing to... 'you Gentiles', just which Gentiles was he referring to? First, from above text, it is obvious that these Gentiles were fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel that Paul was made a minister. In other words, the first thing that can be eliminated is that these Gentiles were not a product of the kingdom gospel preached by the Apostles. This includes any and all efforts of trying to make Matthew 28:19-20, fit into Paul's program!

A second elimination, that can be made regarding these Gentiles, is found in Ephesians 2:11-12.

Ephesians 2:11-12 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

- That at that time ye were without Christ
- being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
- and strangers from the covenants of promise
- having no hope, and without God in the world

Within this chapter, great detail is given to the fact that the Scriptures foreseen that God was going to justify the heathen through faith and that the blessing of Abraham might

come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (Gal 3:14). The seed and promise, was Christ and the Holy Spirit, and promises were made before either Israel or the Old Covenant ever came into play. In other words, there was a group of Gentiles that had hope based on promises.

Just as a 'mixed multitude' accompanied Israel, across the red sea into the wilderness towards the covenanted promised land, so Gentiles were being added into the body of Christ throughout Paul's ministry, during the Act's period, while the kingdom was yet being offered to Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

- all our fathers...
- were all baptized unto Moses

This can't be missed... Paul, in addressing these Gentiles, makes reference to 'all our fathers', which would point back to Abraham, to then include other patriarchs since! This 'baptism unto Moses', parallels 'the baptism into Christ', which is emphasized over and over in Paul's epistles to Gentiles, regarding their then current relationship to the Jew being saved, since after the resurrection. As was the requirement for the 'stranger', to be physically circumcised to become a member of the physical seed of Abraham, now a spiritual circumcision was required of the Gentile (Col 2:11).

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

- we all baptized into one body
- whether we be Jews or Gentiles

Galatians 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 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. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ
- There is neither Jew nor Greek
- for ye are all one in Christ Jesus
- And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed,
- and heirs according to the promise

Galatians 4:25-28 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

- But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all
- Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise

Galatians 6:15-16 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

- For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature
- as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God

Consider the following statements of Paul:

1. all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea
2. by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles
3. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise
4. then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise
5. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all
6. as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God

Does all of this sound like Gentiles, who fit outside of covenant promises and without hope of God? No, these Gentiles, though outside of the mindset of the Apostles, were very much a part of God's plan during the kingdom offer to Israel! Just as 'strangers', were members of the Israel of God under the Exodus, so these Gentiles were reckoned with the 'Israel of God', being called out during the mid-Acts' period.

Once again then... who exactly are these Gentiles being addressed in Ephesians, that were outside the covenant promises of Israel and having no hope of God?

Beyond the Scope of the Synagogues

Focus now is going to turn to converts reached who were not associated, in one way or another, in or around the synagogues as typically was throughout Acts. Where else better to minister effectively to the Jew than within the synagogues on the Sabbath or to devout Greeks who were proselytes or friends of Israel?

We're going to trace Paul's steps back to his first visit to Ephesus, at the beginning of his second apostolic journey.

As already noted, just prior to Paul's first visit to Ephesus, Paul took opportunity to witness Christ to Athenians and strangers based on the idea of a one true creator... "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." **Acts 17:29** The end result of this witness was... "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." **Acts 17:34** Here is a clear example of a Gentile, represented of the nations that surrounded Israel at the time of the institution of the Mosaic Covenant, that would fall under the classification of an heathen.

Watch as a continuing trend is about to change as observed in Paul's next two trips to Ephesus.

Acts 18:19-21 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

- but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews
- When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not

Tradition is just now about to be broken...

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,... **Acts 19:8-10** And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

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Tradition was now broken! There is further resistance, on behalf of the Jews, as Paul's course of instruction, on the dispensation of the grace of God, is to be carried on in the school of one Tyrannus. This continues for a space of two years, but what's more important to be noted is that... "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Being away from the confines of the synagogues would give indication that many of these would certainly fall under the category of the 'heathen'. This will be born out in the passages to follow.

Acts 19:11-20 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

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- And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds
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Acts 19:21-41 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost

throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. Acts 20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

- but he himself stayed in Asia for a season
- For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen
- Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:
- So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth
- And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians
- when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

It is now evident that Paul's gospel has now infiltrated into the lives of those Gentiles that truly fit under the category that Paul describes, in his epistle directed to the Ephesians, as once being outside the covenant promises and without hope of God! As it was Paul's custom to witness Christ from synagogue to synagogue, it had then become Paul's custom to witness Christ publicly and from house to house.

Acts 20:16-38 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

- And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church
- And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house

- Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ
- But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God
- Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men
- For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God
- Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood
- And now, brethren, I command you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified

We now turn back to Paul's prison epistle, to the Ephesians, to bring out a point that's most often missed in commentary, while once again reminding the reader to pay close attention to pronouns.

Ye Who Sometimes Were Far Off

Ephesians 2:13-22 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were **far off** are made nigh by the blood of Christ
- For he is our peace, who hath made **both** one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us
- Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace
- And that he might reconcile **both** unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby
- And came and preached peace to you which were **afar off**, and to them that were **nigh**

- For through him **we both** have access by one Spirit unto the Father
- Now therefore **ye** are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God
- And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone
- In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord
- In whom **ye** also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit

The 'ye' and 'you', in this passage, are the Gentiles that not only were outside the covenant promises, but had no hope and was without God, as result of God having given them up (Rom 1:18-31) and discriminated against as set forth in the law of commandments and ordinances. The references to 'far off' and 'nigh', are in respect to those who were outside the realm of those covenant promises, in contrast to those to whom that realm pertained; Jew versus Gentile. The terms 'far off' and 'afar off', MUST NOT be confused with the 'afar off' identified by Peter in Acts 2:39, who in this context, are the 'nigh'!

Now comes that which is most overlooked concerning these Gentiles in this passage. In Christ, these Gentiles find themselves as fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God, but on a different plain. The foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, pictures a building fitly framed together as an holy temple in the Lord. What exactly is being missed, in most commentary, that Paul is emphasizing here? What is missed is that phase, of the temple, that God is putting together and that being non-covenanted Gentiles for an habitation of God through the Spirit... "In whom **ye** also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Paul is addressing Gentiles, in his prison epistles, not Jews! As it was Israel's responsibility to bear the light under covenant promises, it is now these Gentiles' responsibility to be light bearers as ones who are called unto a heavenly hope... "The eyes of **your** understanding being enlightened; that **ye** may know what is the hope of **his** calling, and what the riches of the glory of **his** inheritance in the saints," **Ephesians 1:18**

Nowhere in prophecy (the unsearchable riches of Christ), was the day seen in which God, through an act of grace, would dwell in non-covenanted Gentiles, in becoming part of the household of God!

Ephesians 3:8-9 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

- Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given
- that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ**
- And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery

- which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ

This mystery, unlike the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, hid in the scriptures of the prophets, since the foundation of the world (Rom 16:25-26), was 'hid in God' from the 'beginning of the world'.

What's Written to Whom?

One of the biggest hindrances, in trying to understand the Bible, is trying to apply something that was written to somebody else, to oneself. There are principles that most certainly apply across every dispensation in the Bible, especially in the moral arena. Psalms and Proverbs are great devotional readings with practical applications. Reminders of the past are lessons for the present (1Co 10:6, 11). However, things make a lot more sense when understanding the audience, which in turn will correct certain misconceptions and doctrine. The student of the scriptures will do well if keeping in mind the following when reading the Bible.

1. The teachings of Christ, as found in the beatitudes, were to the New Covenant saint, what the Old Covenant teachings were, to the Old Covenant saint. The beatitudes and commandments of Jesus were the doctrine of the Apostles (Acts 2:42). The commandments of Jesus is a major focus of John, written to the circumcision and yet relevant in Revelations (Joh 14:15,21; Joh 15:10; 1Jo 2:3-4,7-8; 1Jo 3:22-24; 1Jo 4:21; 1Jo 5:2-3; 2Jo 4-6; Rev 12:17; Rev 14:12; Rev 22:14).
2. Paul's pre-prison epistles, to the Gentiles, were to that Gentile, what the beatitudes and commandments of Christ, were to the Jewish kingdom saints.
3. Paul's prison epistles, are to the converted non-covenanted Gentile today, what Paul's pre-prison epistles were to the Gentiles, which were of the faith of Abraham.
4. The General (non-Pauline) Epistles were to the Jewish Christians, what Paul's pre-prison epistles were to the Gentiles, which were of the faith of Abraham. I also believe that the General Epistles will play some role yet in the tribulation period.

This certainly doesn't mean that something written to one group of people can't apply, in some way to another group, but there are most certainly things written to one group of people that either doesn't or can't apply to another.

With this in mind, we're going to consider doctrine written explicitly for the church, the body of Christ, today. Israel has been set aside and the 'imminent' return Christ now in limbo till once again God begins dealing with the nation of Israel, on basis of prophecy. What and where are the instructions for the converted non-covenanted Gentile till then? As much as the denominational institution focuses in on the beatitudes, the

commandments of Jesus and the Gospels, one would think that's all that's needed? And... **why not?** If all were to live up to the 'golden rule', why then do we need another line of written doctrine?

In general, the Pauline prison epistles are greatly neglected today and this is unfortunate because it is within these epistles that explicit instruction is given for the church today. In Ephesians, not only does Paul give a *Statement of Faith*, but also statement as to the works "...which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:10). We will first deal with the *Statement of Faith*.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Church's Statement of Faith, for the Body of Christ today, is found in Ephesians 4:4-6. We will list it in context.

Ephesians 4:1-6 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

- I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called
- With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love
- Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

There is:

1. one body
2. one Spirit
3. one hope of your calling
4. One Lord
5. one faith
6. one baptism
7. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all

First, a synopsis is going to be given to reason behind each point of this *Statement of Faith*.

One body

In Genesis 10, there is first mention of nations. In Genesis 12, a nation is created to be distinguished above all nations. Circumcision (Gen 17) and the law (Ex 19) were distinguishing features of this nation. A physical representation of a spiritual body (the church, the body of Christ) is created in Acts.

One Spirit

Prophesied promise of God's spirit was first given to the nation of Israel (Isa 59:21; Ez 36:27) in Acts 2. The Gentile received this promise, of the spirit, on the basis of 'of faith'; the faith of Abraham (Gal 3:5-7).

One hope of your calling

There are several hopes and callings to be distinguished between the various members of the body of Christ; their hope is qualified.

One Lord

Starting with the ministry of John the Baptist and continuing with the ministries of the disciples/Apostles, salvation was presented to the nation of Israel through one Lord, Jesus Christ.

One faith

Paul makes distinction between justification 'by faith' and 'through faith'; their faith is qualified.

One baptism

There are numerous baptisms in the Bible. There are three found alone in Matthew 3:11... with water, with the Holy Ghost and with fire. On top of this, there is a baptism unto Moses, a baptism into Christ, a baptism 'by' the Spirit, as well as a baptism of death and for the dead; theirs's is qualified.

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all

This is stated in behalf of the fact that after the flood, mankind pretty much went the same way as those who lived before the flood and was judged for their wickedness. The non-covenanted Gentile became vain in their imagination changing the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. God gave them up and turned his attention to a man named Abram that led to the formation of Israel. For that converted non-covenanted Gentile, all that has changed!

A *Statement of Faith*, for the converted non-covenanted Gentile today, would look something like this:

The Church of the Justified Non-Covenanted Gentiles

Statement of Faith

We, the justified non-covenanted Gentiles, in this dispensation of the Grace of God, solemnly pledge to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In acknowledgment of the completeness signified by the number 7, throughout the scriptures, we seek to promote and defend these seven doctrines of 'ones'.

There is...

One Body

We believe in the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all when God raised Christ from the dead setting him at his own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body.

Ephesians 1:20-23 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

One Spirit

We believe in one Spirit, that through Christ we have same access unto the Father as did the circumcision and that we are being built together for a habitation of God through this one Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Ephesians 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

One hope of our calling

We believe in one hope of our calling, even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints, which is Christ in us Gentiles, the hope of glory. That having been raised up together, and being made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. We believe that in the dispensation of the fullness of times we will be the heavenly representation of that which is in heaven of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Colossians 1:26-27 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Ephesians 2:4-7 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Ephesians 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

One Lord

We believe in one Lord, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time that God our Saviour would have all men (both Jew & Gentile), to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth that there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. We believe this truth to be revealed to and through Paul, ordained a preacher, and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

1 Timothy 2:3-7 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

One faith

We believe in one faith which is 'of faith', through the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that we are saved by grace, through faith and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. We believe in the word 'of faith' which Paul preached... that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Romans 10:4-13 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

One baptism

We believe in one baptism, which is through the faith of the operation of God, making us complete in Christ. We believe 'by' one Spirit we are baptized into Jesus Christ being identified in his death, burial and resurrection and whether Jew or Gentile, have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Colossians 2:10-12 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the

circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Romans 6:3-6 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Ephesians 2:14-16 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

We believe that baptism with water, for the remission of sins, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost, were components of the kingdom gospel (Acts 2:38; Heb 6:5) that ceased at the setting aside of Israel. The baptism with fire is reserved for judgement at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt 13:40-42; 25:41-46).

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

We believe in one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. We believe in the Godhead (Trinity) that is recognizable in these seven points of unity: v4 The Spirit; v5 The Lord Jesus Christ; v6 The Father. We believe in the eternal planning of God our Father in the execution and preservation of our hope and calling through the Lord Jesus Christ and indwelling Spirit.

Ephesians 1:10-13 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Ordained unto Good Works

We now turn from the doctrinal statement, for this day in which we live, to the subject of 'good works'. Paul, the apostle to us Gentiles, did not leave us guessing as to what is expected of us in this dispensation of grace regarding good works. One could perhaps few the following as the By-Laws for the Church today.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- Not of works, lest any man should boast
- For we are his workmanship
- created in Christ Jesus unto good works
- which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

'Works' play an exact opposite role between those under the Old Covenant to those today justified through Christ and are in Christ. Under the Mosaic Covenant, hundreds of laws were put in place to be lived out and in doing so was Israel's righteousness (Dt 6:24-25). Remember... a just man was one who was righteous before the LORD and righteousness was based on faithful obedience. Many of the laws that were put in place got one excommunicated, from the congregation, if broken. If the law has no effect on one's righteousness today and the handwriting of ordinances, that was against and contrary to us, were nailed to the tree... then what 'works' are expected of the justified non-covenanted Gentile in Christ today?

What Paul is certainly clear on is that 'works' play NO role in one's obtaining salvation today! What Paul is just as clear on, but unfortunately missed in most commentary, are the works that were before ordained that the justified non-covenanted Gentile should walk in. Before revealing these works, a totally false narrative, on following passage, is addressed... "we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus". In recent years, it's been promoted that the 'good works', 'ordained that we should walk in them', pertain to the calling or a job in which God predestined each individual to fulfill. Wrong! There's not one element of truth to this concept!

If God ordained hundreds of dos and don'ts for a circumcised nation to walk in, then one would think that God was able to look ahead to the day of a spiritually circumcised people (Col 2:11-13)? He Did!

Paul's prison epistles are written on behalf of the justified non-covenanted Gentile, his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works and these ordained good works are spelled out within these epistles.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live

soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

- that he might redeem us from all iniquity
- and purify unto himself a peculiar people
- zealous of good works

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

- and these things I will that thou affirm constantly
- that they which have believed in God
- might be careful to maintain good works

Colossians 1:9-10 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing
- being fruitful in every good work

Again, Paul states... "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." **Ephesians**

2:10 Within Paul's prison epistles, he deals explicitly with the 'good works', ordained of God, for us today from the perspective of having been created in God's own image... "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." **Genesis 1:27**

The following is a brief outline that touches on the comprehensiveness of Paul's instruction as to how the believer is to live today, in relationship to good works.

The Church of the Justified Non-Covenanted Gentiles

By-Laws

I. The Ordained Good Work of Male Responsibility

Titus 2:6-8 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity,

sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Young men... In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works:

1. in doctrine shewing uncorruptness

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

2. gravity

3. sincerity

4. sound speech... that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Notice carefully the instruction for 'aged men':

Titus 2:2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

What do all these characteristics point to? They point to a man's character which is a reflection of godliness.

2 Timothy 2:19-21 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

- If a man therefore purge himself from these
- he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use
- and prepared unto every good work

Today, God has not ordained a particular man unto a particular occupation, but calls men unto a godly character... he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

II. The Ordained Good Work of Female Responsibility

1 Timothy 5:9-10 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the

saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

1. if she have brought up children, (motherhood)
2. if she have lodged strangers, (hospitality without/witness)
3. if she have washed the saints' feet, (hospitality within/ministry)
4. if she have relieved the afflicted, (hospitality directed to the needed) ...if she have diligently followed every good work.

Titus 2:3-5 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

- That they may teach the young women to be...

5. sober, (sound mind)
6. to love their husbands, (devoted to the needs of their husband)
7. to love their children, (devoted to the needs of their children)
8. To be discreet, (self-controlled; moderate as to opinion or passion)
9. chaste, (properly clean, i.e. (figurative) innocent, modest, perfect)
10. keepers at home, (domestically inclined)
11. good, (benefit)
12. obedient to their own husbands,

- that the word of God be not blasphemed.

The appearance of a professing Christian woman testifies to a woman's intent!

1 Tim. 2:9-10 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

- that women adorn themselves in modest apparel,
with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array
- (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works

Unless belonging to a particular segment of a denomination or religious sect, the appearance of professing Christian women has become a non-issue today. Those who do try to set a standard are accused of legalism. According to Paul, a woman's appearance and mannerism is the cloke of what she professes to be. In today's society, it's virtually impossible to distinguish the 'believing' woman from the 'unbelieving', unless they walk through a church door and then that really doesn't mean much.

III. The Ordained Good Work of Work

Genesis 2:8-9 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

- the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden
- there he put the man whom he had formed

After creating man, God placed them in a garden planted by God Himself. After the fall, man was responsible for planting (Gen 3:17-23).

Work was ordained of God so 'man' could be a provider:

For His Household > "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." **1 Tim. 5:8**

For Others > "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." **Eph. 4:28**

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

- Charge them that are rich in this world...
- That they do good, that they be rich in good works
- ready to distribute, willing to communicate
- Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life

IV. The Ordained Good Work of Leadership in the Church

Office of a bishop

1 Timothy 3:1-5 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

- If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work

Office of a deacon

1 Timothy 3:8-13 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience
- For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree

Not to minimize the importance of women in the church, but man is given the direct responsibility and oversight of the local assembly to lead and nurture the flock. One of the greatest responsibilities of both the bishop and deacon is... **Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience**. Unfortunately, this would disqualify the majority of those holding these offices today.