

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE GENTILES THRU THE AGES

Text: Acts 17:24-26

INTRO: In the Bible the same word in the original languages is translated into 3 different English words: Gentiles, nations, & heathen. The context is the best means of determining the best rendering in each passage.

I. DURING THE PATRIARCHAL AGE, GOD DEALT WITH MANKIND THRU THE HEADS OF FAMILIES.

- A. Adam, Gen 1-2
- B. Noah, Gen 6-9
- C. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.
 - 1. Abraham's father had been an idolater before God called Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees.

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham & the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River [Euphrates] in old times; & they served other gods.'" (Josh 24:2).

- 2. God called Abraham from among the nations & gave him the covenant of circumcision, Gen 17:10.
 - 3. Abraham was to be the father of the Hebrew nation & indeed of many nations, Gen 22:18, but the Hebrew nation did not begin as yet.

D. Even after Abraham's special call, God did not deal exclusively with Abraham's family.

- 1. Melchizedek was a priest of God, Gen 14:8.
And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.
(Heb. 5:4).
- 2. The king of Egypt understood God's marriage law, Gen 12:14-20.

3. Abimelech in Gerar also understood God's marriage law, Gen. 20:1-11.

II. GOD MADE A NATION OF ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS THRU ISAAC & JACOB & GAVE THEM THE LAW OF MOSES AS A NATIONAL LAW.

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes & judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them & be careful to observe them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive. (Deut. 5:1-3).

A. Israel was God's chosen people, but their chosenness was to a purpose & did not guarantee them eternal salvation. 1 Cor 10:1-12; Heb 3:7-11.

B. Moses' law was never given to Gentiles as such. Those who chose to live among the Israelites were allowed to become proselytes. Exodus 12:48-49.

C. During the time God was dealing with Israel thru the Law of Moses, He continued to take note of the Gentiles as well.

1. Balaam was a Gentile prophet sent to Gentile people, Numbers 22.

2. Jonah was a Hebrew prophet sent to the Assyrian people of Nineveh.

3. Daniel was a Hebrew prophet, exiled in Babylon. He prophesied to Babylonian kings. & later to Persian King Darius.

4. Cyrus, king of Persia was foretold 300 years before his birth, called "My shepherd" (Isa 44:28) and "the Lord's anointed" (Isa 45:1).

5. Isa 13-23 and Ezek 25-32 are addressed to Gentile nations. The book of Obadiah is addressed to Edom

D. Thus it is evident that tho God didn't give the Law of Moses to Gentiles--never gave the Sabbath law or the Levitical priesthood--neither did He ignore them. He dealt with the Hebrew nation on the basis of His purpose for them (to bring Christ into the world), & He dealt with the Gentile nations on the basis of His purposes for them.

III. WHEN CHRIST CAME & USHERED IN THE GOSPEL AGE, GOD ONCE AGAIN BEGAN TO DEAL WITH JEWS & GENTILES ON THE SAME BASIS. THE HEBREW NATION HAD SERVED ITS PURPOSE AS A SPECIAL PEOPLE & WOULD NO LONGER RECEIVE ANY SPECIAL TREATMENT.

A. The O.T. had foretold that the Gentiles would be mutually blessed in some future age. Gen 12:3; 22:18; Isa 62:2; Isa 11:10, etc.

B. During His earthly ministry, especially at its close, Jesus revealed that the gospel was for Gentiles as well as Jews, tho His statements were not understood at the time. MT 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16.

C. In the first gospel sermon the availability of God's promise to Gentiles (those afar off) was preached, Acts 2:38-39, but not properly understood till about 11 years later, Acts 11:19.

D. The full realization among the early church of the will of God regarding Jew/Gentile relationships became evident with the conversion of Cornelius, Acts 10:34-35

1. These newly understood facts were further underscored in the "council of Jerusalem" Acts 15:9.

2. Jews as a whole had ignored the miracles worked by Christ & His apostles, & had ignored their

claims of inspiration, so God sent them a sign they couldn't ignore--in 70 AD the destruction of Jerusalem.

3. In the destruction of Jerusalem, the O.T. system was gone forever. Their records of ancestry were destroyed. The Levitical priesthood was gone forever. The sacrificial system of the O.T. law was gone forever. The temple worship was gone forever.

IV. TODAY JEWS & GENTILES ALIKE NEED SALVATION IN JESUS & ITS CONDITIONS ARE THE SAME FOR ALL.

READ EPHESIANS 2:11-16; GALATIANS 3:26-27

La Porte, TX, December 7, 1980

Exton, PA, March 3, 1985

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, March 14, 1993

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 8, 1998

Fairfield, PA, November 15, 2001