

# God's Gift of Israel

Is God a racist? Some have claimed that because He chose Abraham's children for a special role – as an example *to carry His way to the world*, He is a racist, unfairly favouring one race. Deuteronomy 26:19, “and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honour, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”

That sounds like favouritism. But wait, for His further words reveal the Truth. Galatians 3:28, ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are **all one** in Christ Jesus.’ By God's plan, we can all be equal! Romans 10:12 and 9. ‘For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses **all who call on him**,...**If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**’ NIV.

The truth is that all who believe and act on his teaching and example **become** Israel - Romans 9:6-8, ‘It is not as though God's word had failed. For **not** all who are descended from Israel **are Israel**. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, **but it is** the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.’ Even if they are not descended by blood from Abraham, they will enjoy the same Spiritual promises of grace as though they were his physical children. They become Spiritual Israelites.

They access these promises through the New Covenant to Israel, better promises built upon the foundation of the previous covenants, Jeremiah 31:33, ‘**But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel** after those days, saith the LORD; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and **they shall be my people.**’ Yes, we are all Israel, once converted, but realise privileges come with responsibilities too, as a careful reading of the whole chapter reveals. We cannot pick and choose between God's words!

By repentance, baptism and the gift of the holy Spirit they become one with Abraham's converted *physical* children, equal inheritors of the promises, eg., Isaiah 66:19, ‘and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations.’ First, in God's Kingdom, these converts will become God's Ambassadors, and after their own nations are converted, Kings and Priests, Revelation 5:10, ‘**And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**’ Definitely not Racist!

But a new threat has appeared, which is directed at God's People Israel. It undermines that New Covenant promise in Jeremiah 31:33. **'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'**

We have a duty to obey God's Commands if we are God's people, and if we do not, He says He will send strong delusion. In this case, regarding that chapter, the delusion is that we are **not** Israel, but Gentiles, whether physically descended from Israel, or *Spiritual* Israelites redeemed from other races, as we have seen, through the blood of Jesus Christ under the **New Covenant with Israel**. Do you see the connection? *To deny that we are Israel is to deny that we are God's people, a very dangerous delusion!*

The reason this false claim can be believed by some are several confusing verses in Romans chapter 11, which create a common misunderstanding, for the word 'Gentile' *does not actually exist* in any of the original languages in which the Bible was written, Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic, and this has naturally given rise to *political* choices made among the translators, as to what transliteration to use.

In the Old Testament, wherever we find the word 'Gentile', it is a mistranslation of the word GOY, plural GOYIM, Strong's no.1471, 'nation' or 'people'. For example, in Genesis 12:2, God said to Abraham, **"I will make of you a great nation...."** In Hebrew, **"I will make of you a great GOY...."** Obviously, He did not mean, **"I will make of you a great Gentile..."**!

In the New Testament the word translated 'Gentile' is almost always the Greek word ETHNOS, once again: 'nation'. In Luke 7:5 for example, regarding the Centurion who had built the Jews a synagogue, it says, **'For he loves our 'Ethnos' and it was he who built our synagogue.'** The word is Strong's no. 1484, a race, a nation, translated so some 64 times.

So, the word translated 'Gentile' can be used of the Jews – Luke 7:5, 23:2, John 11:48, 50-52. In the plural it can be used for nations other than the Jews, and obviously, if one did not understand how **'the lost sheep of the House of Israel'**, the ten tribes, had been exiled by God from the land of Israel for their sins, and had been **"sifted"** through many nations to NW Europe, one would think that, as they were not Jews, they must be 'Gentiles', but in fact they remained Israel, *sifted* through the nations until they reached the lands God gave them in NW Europe as 'the lost ten tribes of Israel.'

Paul's family, of the Israelite tribe of Benjamin, had migrated to what is now Turkey, where he was born in Tarsus, and in Turkey were found all the churches named in Revelation 2 and 3, because the House of Israel were still relatively fertile ground for

the Gospel message, and at that time many Israelites still lived in Turkey, or Asia Minor as it was then called. These Israelites were the “Gentiles” the Apostle Paul strove to reach, and to whom he wrote his Epistles.

Why? Christ Himself had been sent to Israel, Matthew 15:24, ‘He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”’ And so were the Apostles, Matthew 10:6, ‘These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ‘but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,”’ but also because they were the people God has chosen to spread the gospel, with the genetic character that made them ideal to eventually carry the Bible all around the world, as in fact they did.

For the most part though, over the centuries since they were taken into captivity, most of these Israelites had lost knowledge of their identity because, unlike the Jews, they failed to retain the identifying signs of God’s people, the Sabbath, circumcision, etc.

Paul however, had been taught directly by Christ, and knew exactly who and where these people were.

Romans 11:1, ‘I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel? **Of course not!** I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin.’

Romans 4:1, ‘What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, **OUR forefather according to the flesh?**’

Gal 4:28, ‘Now you, **brothers**, like Isaac, are children of promise.’

Ephesians 2:12, ‘remember that you were **at that time** separated from Christ, **alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who **once were far off** have been **brought near** by the blood of Christ.

Philippians 1:12, ‘I want you to know, **brothers**, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.’

Colossians 1:2, ‘To the saints and faithful **brothers** in Christ at Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God **OUR Father.**’

1 Thessalonians 1:4, ‘For we know, **brothers** loved by God, that he has chosen you.’

**What was the link here?** All of them had moved to lands around the Mediterranean, Carthage, Spain and on into the islands off the NW of Europe, to which others migrated overland, but all of them are linked by the one word Paul uses regularly in his Epistles to them – the word ‘adelphos’, ‘brethren’ or ‘brother’, from alpha (as a copulative prefix, denoting a kinsman) and delphus (womb).

Thus, ‘blood brother’, Strong’s no. 80, “from the same womb, descended from the same first ancestor.” Verse 14, As Paul said, “**If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.**”

They were predominantly Israelites, descended from the 10 tribes carried away in captivity to Assyria in the 700’s BC, but freed when Babylon conquered Assyria.

In fact, the Apostle Paul not only never **used** the word Gentile, he used the same word the Greeks used for all non-Greek peoples. The word ‘Barbarians’, as in Romans 1:14, where he makes the contrast between the ‘civilised’ world and the rest of the world, between the ‘wise’ and the ‘unwise.’ ‘**I am under obligation both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.**’

Now that we know that Paul targeted His own brethren, and that the word ‘Gentile’ does not exist in Greek, but **simply means nation**, we can figure the meaning of his words in Romans 11 and elsewhere, from the context. We can examine important chapters like Romans 11 and hope to gain the correct understanding, even when Jews, Israelites and the nations of the world are all mentioned together! Peter did say Paul’s writing was hard to understand!

We know that some of the Apostles had specific targets; Peter, the Jews, Paul the “Gentiles”, who were clearly the exiled Israelites. Paul is addressing an Israelite remnant in Romans chapter 11:1-5,

“**I ask then, did God reject His people? Certainly not! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew. Do you [those Israelites he is talking to] not know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he appealed to God against Israel: “Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars. I am the only one left, and they are seeking my life as well”?**

And what was the divine reply to him? “**I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. In the same way, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.**”

We see from the context in the previous verses that Paul is addressing an Israelite remnant here, according to the election of grace – the New Covenant, a covenant made *with Israel*, Jeremiah 31:33. They are a *remnant* because the main body of Israel were hardened, blinded by God until their hearts are ready to receive the gospel, that they might not be lost for ever. Verse 7: ‘**What then? What Israel was seeking, it failed to obtain, but the elect did. The others [King James, “the rest”] were hardened, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see, and ears that could not hear, to this very day.”**

We see that the then current difference is made between an ‘elect’ and the ‘rest’. Paul is showing his brethren that they have joined the ‘elect’, verse 17, ‘**Now if some branches have been broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others to share in the nourishment of the olive root....**’ They, the remnant, are grafted in.

The ‘rest’ of Israel have stumbled, but through their [only temporary] fall, salvation is come to the nations of the world; their loss becomes the riches of those nations, Romans 11:12, ‘**But if their trespass means riches for the world, and their failure**

means riches for the Gentiles [nations], how much greater riches will their fullness bring. The Israelites Paul is addressing will, over the centuries bring about widespread Christianity.

In verse 13, we come to the crux of the mistranslation. Let us remind ourselves of the truth about this word “Gentile.” It does not exist in the Greek, but should be translated ‘Nation’, ‘Race’ or ‘People’ of the same genus. Thus the translation: *‘I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry’ is wrong!*

If we insert the correct words, the meaning is:

*‘Now I am speaking to you [my] people. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Nation, I magnify my ministry:’* (Paul is speaking to his ‘blood brothers’, ‘adelphos’, as we have learned) verse 14, *‘if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.’* He is **not** talking to ‘Gentiles’!

Their conversion provides eternal life from their dead spiritual condition, verse 15, *‘For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?’* Berean Study Bible.

The Jews had been replaced after their rejection of their Messiah as the chosen of Israel, and as Matthew 21:43 tells us, God turned it over to a **nation** (Greek Ethnos) which was to bring forth a witness to the nations of the world. And it did, mainly through Britain’s (Ephraim’s) Empire. *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”*

The Jews were the branches broken off the good olive tree, verse 17, *‘But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, [Paul’s ‘blood brothers’] although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree’,* (by their new faith) verse 20, *‘That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith’.*

Verse 21, They must not become proud, *‘So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you’.* God had never divorced the Jews, unlike Israel.

Then Paul considers the Jews, who were broken off, verses 23-24, *‘And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut from a wild (uncultivated) olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into one that is cultivated, how much more readily will these [Jews], the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!’* Berean Study bible.

So, God has hardened the hearts of Israel (though not ALL of Israel, verse 5, an elect remnant existed) that blindness in part has come to them, verse 25, *‘Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial*

**hardening** has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in'. We see the evils of the atheist nations rising before our eyes, today, but it will not be full until the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal of Revelation, when Israel will be in captivity for their sins.

Final proof that God is here addressing the repentant remnant of Israel, not the Gentiles, is found in verse 30.

'For as **you** were once **disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience...**' The 'Gentiles' or nations were unable to be disobedient, they simply knew nothing of God's Laws. The Ten Tribes of Israel *were* disobedient though, as the Jews later became.

Thus, from what we have seen, there is no excuse for believing that there is no access for Israel to salvation at this time, and no point in pretending that we, who **are** Israel are not Israelites, or Spiritual Israelites, for as we have seen, God has not cast away His people. This is confirmed in Hosea 1:9-10, '**And the LORD said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God."** Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God."

And 1Peter 2:10, "**Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**' Note the present tense.

Paul's extensive travels provide evidence that he sought out his "**flesh**" in their dispersion: Romans 4:1, I Cor.10:1-5, Gal. 4:28, Eph. 2:12, 6:10, Philippians 1:12, Colossians 1:2, 1Thes. 1:4. Paul's life-threatening ministry, and our own commission (Matthew 28:19) prove that there is fruit to be gained for the Firstfruit Resurrection even now in Israel. That God has not forgotten Israel's special witnessing role and that it *still* exists, is made clear by His End-Time command to **Ephraim, a leading tribe in Israel**, in Jeremiah 31:6-10, **for those who love the truth!**

One would have to be blind to see nothing special about the promised birthrights of Abraham's physical and Spiritual children! Esau, and Ishmael still deeply envy our heritage, and yet some redeemed Israelites have begun to spurn the honour of God's blessings by denying His special relationship with His people. There is no place here for pride, only grateful thanksgiving for the gifts as heir of that ancient covenant with Abraham, and a refusal to despise those blessings by denying that relationship and rejecting that God given name, Israel, which marks us out as His People!

We have been called. We have been chosen, but only those who **love God's words** and keep them, will be counted as faithful. Revelation 17:14, "**They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.**"

They will not be deluded by either rejecting their heritage or their sacred responsibilities as chosen and redeemed people – Israelites ALL, white, black, or yellow! ‘Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if **you do these things** you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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