

PART 2 – Gentiles, take HEART!

Co-heirs of the Abrahamic covenant and promises

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Summary:

Yahweh made promises and covenant with Abraham and his children. Who are Abraham's children today? Can Yahweh also call Gentiles (non-Israelites by birth) "My people"? Why are there no gates in heavenly Jerusalem named after any Gentiles? Are gentiles able to be part of the covenant with Abraham and Israel - - or does that depend on where you are born? Or has Yahweh rejected Israel in favor of Gentiles instead?

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Shalom, brothers and sisters in the Messiah Jesus Christ, Yeshua HaMashiach, to Light on the Rock, where our focus is on Messiah, His life in us, His light, His word – as He in turn allows us to be in the Father through Him, as Col. 3:3 says. This is Philip Shields, a minister of Messiah and your brother in Him, with part 2 of the good news for Gentiles – and for Israel.

(Open with prayer)

We covered a lot last time, and I'll spend just a few minutes in quick review. Be sure to please hear part 1 before hearing this one. I hope you're feeling very encouraged after part 1. So as I review I will also be adding new verses and information.

I'm giving these messages because there are more people than you might realize who really end up promoting the feeling or concept that Gentiles don't quite measure up to Jews or Israelites in God's eyes. It would be easy for Gentiles to feel like they're outside the covenant, looking through a glass window at the "covenant people". I pray this teaching will help bring Gentiles and Israelites together as one body in Messiah.

It's time to let you hear and read what Scripture actually says. Gentiles, you're about to get a big lift, and prize your high calling by your Creator.

Gentiles who believe in Yahweh: be encouraged! Yahweh has a heart for you! He wants you also to be among "the people of God" and to refer to you as "My People". That expression is not reserved just for the nation of Israel. There is a new Israel we'll talk about in depth today – "the Israel of God", spiritual Israel – and *you're* being invited into this new kingdom, this new nation of God.

If you're a believer in Yeshua and Abba – God your Father – you have been given a special invitation to be a part of His holy nation, His special people, His holy saints of the body of Christ. It doesn't matter if you're Asian, Hispanic, African, one of the Island people of Samoa or Fiji, or European or American – you'll see today that we all come before God in exactly the same way today.

I'm very, very excited for you Gentiles who are coming to faith in Jesus, whom I usually call by the name His mama called him: Yeshua.

You, yes you, are being given a responsibility and an opportunity to bring this good news to *your* nations, to your villages, to your people, to your children – and shine *His* light among your people and give them hope. Let them know they can be part of the coming Kingdom of God on earth and citizens of heaven even today!

So many of you have had such poor lives. Well that can change now. You can be rich in Christ, rich in faith. You can be physically poor or weak, but spiritually strong if you believe. If you believe. Did I say “if you believe”? You can do great things, you can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13) – if you believe. And if you come to know in your hearts that you are not 2nd class citizens in the kingdom of Yahweh! No way! You are being called to a very high calling and I hope you will all respond to it.

Share these messages; share this website with everyone you can – because there is hope for you Gentiles. You're coming into your time. Seize the opportunity to let Christ shine in you and through you. True, the “times of the Gentiles” is usually portrayed as a dark part of human history but I also believe there is a bright side to it. Some of the Gentiles – those not being called yet – may do very bad things in the years ahead, but those of you being called now will also have your moment in the sun, your time to be a light in your part of the world. Yahweh's counting on you to step up and use His Spirit too. So are the rest of your “family”.

Gentiles who are being called now by Abba on high:

- We're counting on you to show people that all humanity really is from one man and one woman; we are all “family” in other words! Paul says we come from “one blood”.
- You are being called to speak lovingly of all peoples, for indeed every human is made in the image of Yahweh.

You in Beijing, you are to speak lovingly of the Taiwanese – and vice versa. You in Egypt, you will speak lovingly of Jews and Americans. You in Africa, where there are many hundreds and hundreds of tribes, you will speak lovingly of the Hutus even if you are a Tutsi. The Luo and the Maasai; North and South Koreans, Filipinos and Japanese – if you are a believer, there is no more animosity between you. You speak of one world, one heart, one spirit, one God, one Lord – and we all become one with one another, through the *agape* love of God.

Our dear Abba in heaven – my father and your father -- is counting on you to use His name, His power, His spirit, His love, His mind, His way as you speak of Him in your barrios, in your squares, in your villages, in your hamlets, in your plazas and in your tribal lands.

Gentiles who are now a part of the spiritual body of Christ and Israel of God, don't let Abba, our dear heavenly Father, down. Rise to the occasion. Step up boldly and proclaim the name of Yeshua, the name of Yahweh, and speak of the gifts of His Holy Spirit.

So – my Gentile brothers in the faith – are you ready to hear more about what our amazing Creator and our Kinsman Redeemer Savior has to say about you? OK, Let's roll....

I will review some of the things we covered and also ***add a few new things*** as we go along, so stay with me all the way through:

- **We defined a “Gentile” broadly for our purposes here as anyone not born physically of one of the tribes of Israel.** Judah – the Jews – was but one tribe of 12, remember. All Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews. I realize there are then sub-groups of foreigners and Gentiles, but Paul and others use the one word “*ethnos*” 162x, where we get our word “ethnic” today, so I will speak broadly as well. In the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament), the main word used is “*goyim*” – broadly translated either as nations or Gentiles.
- ***Every single human being is created by our Creator in His likeness and image*** – whether you’re an Israelite or Gentile. There’s no difference in that area. That should cause us to have profound respect for anyone, of any race, tribe, sex or nationality.
 - All of us also come from Adam in whom was breathed God’s breath of life. Therefore we are all “family members” through our mutual ancestors Adam and Eve. It’s time for “the family” to act like family – especially those who now are part of the family of God by His Spirit.
 - All of us have a “spirit in man” that, when we die, goes back to God who gave it, hence YHVH is often called “the God of all spirits”, the “God of all flesh” and “Lord of all the earth” in so many verses I gave last time.
 - YHVH is also called “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” but Scripture is clear, as I’ve said, that He is “God of all flesh” and God of the Gentiles who believe also (Romans 3:29).
- **Then YHVH called a Hebrew named Abram and gave him certain promises in Genesis 12.** One of the meanings of “Hebrew” is “one who crosses over”, though many believe it comes from the simple fact that “Hebrews” are merely descendants of Eber (Gen. 10:21). Anyway, “Abram” is changed to Abraham (father of many nations), and ***Yahweh makes a covenant with Abraham while he was still part of the uncircumcision (a term used to refer to Gentiles) – read Genesis 15.*** Paul makes a big point from this in Romans 4.
- About thirteen years later, Yahweh added the covenant of circumcision in Genesis 17. This became the sign of the covenant and the seal of the promise. However, remember the actual covenant was made in Genesis 15 while he was still uncircumcised.
- **Then Yahweh continued the promises He had made with Abraham to his descendants Isaac and Jacob, renamed Israel, who had 12 sons.** Those 12 sons became 12 tribes eventually, and finally became the nation of Israel.

Israel, the “chosen people, the special treasure”

- When YHVH brought them out of Egypt, He made a covenant with this rag-tag group of former slaves and they became **the NATION of Israel at Mt. Sinai, when and where YHVH gave them His Torah, His laws and His way**, His

teachings. The nation of Israel was to be a special nation, a kingdom of priests, a holy (set-apart) nation as a light to the Gentiles (**Ex. 19:6**).

Exodus 19:3-6

3 And Moses went up to God, and YHVH called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. **5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'** These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

- Up until Messiah, there was no denying it: Israel was God's special people, "above all people". Israelites felt like they were the chosen people because God said they were! *It was important that you were an Israelite or became a resident of Israel if you were a foreigner.* Of course you needed to also believe in Israel's God Yahweh and worship Him. That allowed you to be treated pretty much as a native born. I gave a sermon on "foreigners" a couple years ago that goes in detail into that subject. This is basically **what Ruth did in Ruth 1:16-17** when she became a believer in YHVH and a resident of Israel. She in turn became an ancestor to Yeshua through her descendant David.

So let's read a few fresh scriptures to lock this in: Israel indeed was a chosen, special people of God. I didn't read these last time, and I surely don't want anyone thinking that I don't know or don't believe that Israel was the chosen nation originally – *but not because of anything they did, or that they were better than other groups of people, but because of promises made to their forefather Abraham.* We'll see shortly how Gentiles figure into all this. (Remember I do not agree we have any right to change His name – YHVH – to "the Lord", so I say YHVH or even "Yahweh".)

Deuteronomy 7:6-8

6 "For you are a holy people to YHVH your God; **YHVH your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.** 7 YHVH did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because YHVH loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, YHVH has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 14:1-2

"You are the children of YHVH your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. 2 For you are a holy people to YHVH your God, and YHVH has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

- However, Israel did not keep their covenant – which was a marriage covenant. Within a few days they were being unfaithful to their God and Husband when they demanded a gold calf to worship.

THE SAVIOUR of EVERYONE WHO WILL ACCEPT HIS CALLING

- When Messiah came, He came as Savior not just of the Jews or Israelites, but of all who would believe in Him, that they should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Yeshua (Jesus), a Jew, did not die just for Jews, *but for everyone*. God is not willing that ANY should perish but that all come to repentance (**2 Pet 3:9**) so the avenue had to be opened up. By paying the penalty for all humans who repent, that Door to eternal life -- Yeshua himself -- was opened for Gentiles also. In fact, most of the Jews rejected Him and did not recognize their Messiah. Most still don't. But the day is coming when they will. Hallelujah. *So, Yeshua (Jesus) died and continues now to live for Israelites, Jews and Gentiles also in His death and resurrection.*
- **The early believers of called-out ones, were all Jews in the beginning.** Jesus was a Jew. All the apostles were Jews. They even continued going to synagogue for many years! Then, we have the story of the mixed-race **Samaritans** coming to the faith and receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts 8.

After that, a full-blooded **Gentile family members of Cornelius in Acts 10** were all given the holy Spirit even *before* baptism so Peter had to conclude that God was also calling Gentiles to salvation. *This was a bombshell epiphany or realization for the early believers and Peter.* Paul also was soon talking with Gentiles and bringing them into the group of called-out ones, the "ekklesia". *Yahweh, they came to realize, is also the living God of any believing Gentiles. Yes, He is "Lord of all the earth" for people everywhere willing to proclaim Him Lord of their lives.*

Romans 3:29

"Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith."

It was a stunning realization that non-Israelites could be also called "the people of God". They saw prophecies that even Egypt could be God's people, if they repent and come to accept Yahweh as their God also. Yes, **Egypt** --in prophecy-- is called "**Egypt my people**" in **Isaiah 19:25**! So, that verse way back in Isaiah shows that Yahweh's intention was never to limit "His people" to just the physical nation of Israel! But this seems to have been "news" to the Jews in Peter and Paul's day! *It was shocking for Jews at first to realize they didn't have a monopoly any longer on being "God's chosen people",* as you will see more and more clearly as we examine what happens and what is said next.

- **Eventually we come to Acts 15 – the Jerusalem Conference** where Peter, then Paul and Barnabas and finally James, all explain that Gentiles were being called to salvation also. A big contention over circumcision had arisen; some saying Gentiles had to be circumcised for spiritual reasons.

But YHVH had given His Spirit to uncircumcised gentiles. Peter makes a couple huge points in his discourse, where he said God "made no distinction" between Jews and Gentiles and said "we Jews shall be saved the same way" as the Gentiles --which Acts 15:9 says was by faith.

Acts 15:8-11, Peter speaking:

8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, 9 **and made NO distinction between us and them (Gentiles), purifying their hearts by faith.** 10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But **we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.**"

CIRCUMCISION

The decision was made by the Council that Gentiles did NOT have to be circumcised for any spiritual reasons to be part of "the church" – or the *ekklesia*, the called out ones. All of this section is new to this sermon.

They now understood that even the prophets spoke of circumcision of the HEART; that the circumcision of the flesh was only to point to the new heart, to baring our hearts to God! That is wrongly assumed to be uniquely a New Testament teaching! Not so!

Deuteronomy 10:12-18

12 "And now, Israel, what does YHVH your God require of you, but to fear YHVH your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve YHVH your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of YHVH and His statutes which I command you today for your good? 14 Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to YHVH your God, also the earth with all that is in it. 15 YHVH delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, *you above all peoples, as it is this day.*

16 Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. 17 For YHVH your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, **who shows no partiality** nor takes a bribe.

Deuteronomy 30:1

And the Lord your God will **circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Jeremiah 4:3-4

For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

"Break up your fallow ground,
And do not sow among thorns.

**4 Circumcise yourselves to the Lord,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,**
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench it,
Because of the evil of your doings."

Did you realize all that was in the front half of the book? So that's what the council based it on. The **intent** was not a shortened male part, but a heart that was opened to Yahweh!

So – spiritually – circumcision of the flesh was no longer required. Period. If any of you wish to believe otherwise, then read the following verses on your own time:

The decision in Acts 15:5-20; Gal. 5:1-2; 6:5; Gal. 2:3; 1 Cor. 7:18-19;
Romans 2:25-29; Romans 4:9-10; Col. 3:11.

In fact, Paul teaches in **Col. 2:11** that because we are members of, or a part of, the body of Christ, that all of us were circumcised in HIS circumcision anyway! So how's that!? It's intriguing. Read it!

Colossians 2:11-12

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ...

So that's why Paul goes on to say in **Gal. 5:2-3** that if we insist on being circumcised for spiritual reasons that we nullify what Christ has done! Read it yourself.

I'm saying all this because there are still sabbath keepers who insist that when men of God come to really understand the way of YHVH, they will want to be circumcised. But believers are already "circumcised" in their hearts and that is what counts! Requiring physical circumcision is totally contrary to what Paul teaches in all those verses I just listed, and it's simply not Biblical to enforce circumcision. Even the pastor/evangelist **Titus**, a Gentile, was not forced to be circumcised (**Gal. 2:1-3**). Remember in Exodus 12 we're told only circumcised males could partake of the Passover? I'm sure Titus was allowed to observe the Passover, for he was a grafted in Gentile to spiritual Israel, because He was in fact circumcised in his heart, he had bared his heart before God.

All you uncircumcised Gentile men: you can relax on this point now, if you had been worried! Ha, ha. I'm sure you prefer knowing you won't have to come under the knife in order to worship Yahweh.

As an aside, I know many of you in Africa hear these sermons: please, please stop – if it applies to any of you --stop the very, very wrong practice of **female circumcision**. There is ZERO Biblical basis for that and it is a cruel, painful, even barbaric and wrong-minded thing to do to girls. Please hear me on that and please stop that custom.

**So what happened to "the SPECIAL PEOPLE, THE HOLY NATION",
to Israel's "special" place?**

When Messiah came, it took a while for the early leaders to see this – but eventually they realized that **"the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:15-16)** was now composed of people everywhere who had repented and accepted Yeshua as their Savior – received the Holy Spirit and were being led by God's Spirit. These are now the new children of God, whether Roman, Colossian, Greek, Italian, Macedonian -- or JEW. It no longer matter where you were born in the flesh. What matters is that you were begotten in the spirit – and that is what made you a member of the Body of Christ. In fact, everyone who was to be part of *this* new Israel of God had to come in by only one WAY, by ONE door – and that Door is Christ!

Now we come into one new body – and that new body is *not* the physical nation of Israel anymore, but the assembly of called-out ones, the ekklesia, the "church". We become members of one another, members of His one body, and the body needs all its parts!

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

13 **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body** — *whether Jews or Greeks*, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

There's so much emphasis in some circles about becoming a part of Israel – some even say the nation of Israel – that they seem to forget the many verses which show what we *really* become a part of is the body of our Savior, much more so than we do the body of Israel! *I belong to CHRIST (Mark 9:41), to Yeshua!* I realize there is the Olive Tree Gentiles are grafted into, mentioned in Romans 11, and we'll get to that. But the main thing I'm a part of is the body of my Savior.

Please, we must be focusing on Yeshua the Messiah, on Jesus Christ, far more than on Israel. YES, I totally believe we become what Paul calls "a Jew inwardly" – of the spirit – or in other words, a spiritual Israelite or a spiritual Jew. But a Gentile is still in the flesh a Gentile! Spiritually he is now of Israel and heir of the promises, as we'll see over and over.

Galatians 6:15-16

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails *anything*, **but a new creation.**

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the **ISRAEL OF GOD.**

I firmly believe that this "Israel of God" is referring in context to all believers who are led by His spirit. He says in verse 16 "as many as walk according to this rule". What rule? That you are a new creation, something that never existed before.

The Israel of God are those who are part of the "New creation" – the new man, the converted person who has repented and changed. What avails anything, what counts, is being a new Creation in Christ. Paul calls it "the new man" the "new you" who is in Christ now. Now it is whoever [whether you are German, Brazilian or Russian or Ugandan] calls on the name of YHVH shall be saved", whether Jew or Greek or Gentile (**Romans 10:11-12**).

Children of God, Israel of God NOW includes anyone led by Yahweh's spirit.

Notice what Paul says to the predominantly Gentile church in Rome:

Romans 8:14-17

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Remember that Yeshua himself was quite upset that Gentiles were being barred from getting too close to the temple. There was that despicable wall of separation that kept them separated, far away. Yeshua angrily reminded everyone that His father's

house was supposed to be “a House of Prayer for all nations” – not just ISRAEL!!! (Mark 11:15-17). He was quoting from Isaiah 56:3-9. We read that last time.

WHEN A JEW IS NOT A “Jew” Spiritually

I was on a chat room discussion recently where the comment was made that “we become children of the covenant one of 2 ways: either we are born a Jew or Israelite, or we are grafted into the nation of Israel”.

That is not correct. That’s the way it used to be, but after Messiah’s resurrection, everyone who wants to be “in Him” has to have faith. Each one has to believe in Messiah and accept His sacrifice and life in your stead – and the proof of that of course is a new life we each live. Obediently, like Yeshua would if He was right here beside you. This applies to Jews as much as it applies to Gentiles.

But in the way I’ve just explained it, even Jews – who are born Jews – cannot assume they are part of this Israel of God, as I’ll prove. No, no. Even Jews have to come to faith, faith in their Messiah, to be part of this new “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15-16).

Romans 2:28-29

For he is NOT a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 ***but HE IS A JEW WHO IS ONE INWARDLY***; and ***circumcision is that of the HEART, in the Spirit***, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

Let this sink in! So who are the “***people OF GOD***” or “***Children of God***” today? In Deuteronomy, that clearly was Israel. But let’s see today. And again, who are “Israel” in the New covenant – physical Jews and Israel, or someone else? It’s still “Israel” – but it’s the spiritual Israel now, not flesh-and-blood Israel.

Now it no longer matters if you are Israelite or Gentile physically. It no longer matters if you were born and live in Tel Aviv or Rio de Janeiro. What matters is that you believe, and you’re a new creation. If so, you are a part of the covenant people.

Galatians 3:26-29

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

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. 29 ***And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

Romans 9:6-8

6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. ***For they are NOT all Israel who are of Israel (repeat)***, 7 *nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham*; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.”

8 **That is, those who are the children of the flesh [i.e. Israel, Judah], these are NOT the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.**

Let's read verse 8 again!

Galatians 3:7-9

7 Therefore know that ONLY those who are of FAITH are sons of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles **by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham** beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations (*goyim* in Gen 12, gentiles) shall be blessed." 9 **So then those who are of faith are blessed WITH believing Abraham.**

You can read all the verses in Galatians 3 – but let's jump now to verse 14.

Galatians 3:14

"that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles (HOW?) in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

So Messiah came and abolished what had been a horrible wall barring even Gentile *believers* from getting too close to the temple.

THE MIDDLE WALL torn down!

So Paul was adamant that Jesus (whom I usually call by the name His mama called Him – Yeshua, meaning "Salvation") tore down that middle wall of separation and made Gentiles and Jews all one, part of His body, in Him, and heirs of the promises made to Abraham.

Let me hasten to add: **I'm not saying Abba has rejected all the Jewish people or Israel.** Neither am I saying Gentiles are better than Jews – or vice versa. NO, NO, NO. It's just that it's a level playing field now – and we all come to be part of the new ISRAEL, the "Israel of God" by FAITH. That's what Peter said in Acts 15 remember: "that we shall be saved in the same manner as they" – by faith. The same rule for the Jew as it is for the Gentile. **Then we all become "spiritual Israel" by faith in our Redeemer.**

We ALL DO have to become a spiritual Israelite to enter into the promises.

In **heavenly Jerusalem**, there are 12 gates of pearl (**Revelation 21:12**) named after the 12 tribes of Israel. *There are NO gates named after any Gentile nations.* That does not mean Gentiles can't enter; nor does it mean they are unwanted. It means all the redeemed from all the nations including Israel itself -- have to come through faith to become Spiritual Israel – the Israel of God – in order to get into and out of the city of our God.

So YES, we become spiritual Israel, but I believe the focus in most of the post-resurrection scriptures is focused even more on becoming a part of the body of Messiah than anything else.

Now let's see what Paul teaches the Gentiles in Ephesus, in Ephesians 2:11 to the end of the chapter. **Here he speaks of a "middle wall of partition" or "separation".** In the temple mount, if you were a Gentile convert who wanted to worship Yahweh, you could go only so far. As you approached the temple, there literally was a wall several feet high. On

that wall signs were posted which basically stated that if any gentile was found beyond this wall of separation, he/she would be killed. And yet Yeshua, the Savior and Son of God, preached that the Temple was to be God's House, a House of prayer "FOR ALL nations". We'll read that before we're done today – and see the context of where He was quoting from. So now let's see what Paul says

Ephesians 2:11-22 (Apol. Study Bible)

11 So then, remember that at one time you were **Gentiles** in the flesh—called "the uncircumcised" by those called "the circumcised," done by hand in the flesh.

12 At that time you were without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, with no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah.

14 For He is our peace, who **made both groups ONE** and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In His flesh, 15 He did away with the law of the commandments in regulations, so that He might **create in Himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace.**

16 He did this so that He might **reconcile both to God in one body** through the cross and put the hostility to death by it.

17 When Christ came, He proclaimed **the good news of peace** to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you [Gentiles] are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. 21 The whole building is being fitted together in Him and is growing into a holy sanctuary in YHVH, 22 in whom YOU [Gentiles] also are being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:1-7, ESPECIALLY V. 6

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — 2 if indeed you have heard of the *dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for YOU*, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

Now that Yeshua (Jesus) has come, and believers are called members of His BODY, we should be emphasizing a love for MESSIAH and the spiritual body of Messiah – even much more than a love for the physical nation of Israel.

- It is **through HIM that we have access** to God the Father (Eph 2:18), not through the nation of Israel that we have access.

- We should be copying HIS life – not the lives of rabbis in Israel who won't profess or confess their Living Savior.
- It is what HE teaches that should form our beliefs, not what synagogues in Israel are doing and teaching – at least when there is any conflict. I'll give you a couple examples:
 - Yeshua said they were nullifying the power of God's commands by their traditions and rituals (Mark 7:1-15). So why would anyone want to copy Jewish rituals of Judaism? Why go through ritual hand-washing when this is the very matter that Yeshua condemned in Mark 7? I will refer to HIS example 1000x more than I will what Jews practicing Judaism are doing. I am NOT one who believes in Judaism.
 - Yeshua condemned the practice of LONG tzit-tzit, so if you wish to wear tzit-tzit, keep them very short (see Matthew 23:4-5) if you want to follow Yeshua.
 - Yeshua said NOT to refer to people as "rabbi", (word picture: My great one) or "His eminence" or similar titles, for ONE is our great one – and that is God (Matt 23:8-10).
 - Yeshua condemned long public prayers or repetitious written-out prayers (Matthew 6:5-7) and told us to pray from the heart, so why would we be repeating old written-down prayers written by some "rabbi" who didn't even know Yeshua?
 - Paul taught a man should NOT pray with his head covered (1 Cor. 11:4) but in Judaism, men DO cover their heads. I'll follow the new covenant word of God over traditions of men. I could go on and on and on.
 - I will give a sermon sometime soon showing that **"the Religion of Moses was not Judaism"**!! So although I've learned some things in the Hebrew roots groups, especially in the area of "Hebrew word pictures", I recoil against rituals, emphasis on physical traditions, Jewish prayers that are repetitiously said over and over...

When we are in the body of Messiah, it shouldn't matter AT ALL if you are American, Polish, Jewish, Mexican, British, Ukrainian or Swedish or Tunisian. In Christ we are all the same – children of God. In Messiah, we are all ONE, one body. ALL of you, ALL of us, are children of God – but ONLY through Christ.

You who are Gentiles need to take hope in the fact that all the "New Testament" scriptures were written to include you! We've read a lot about that already. Here's more – Col 1:24-29. Remember it was written to a church that was made up mostly of Gentile converts.

Colossians 1:24-29 Apol. Study Bible

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for His body, that is, the church. 25 I have become its minister, according to God's administration that was given to me for you, to make God's message fully known,

26 *the mystery hidden for ages* and generations but now revealed to His saints. [And he's about to say – "saints", i.e., holy ones, includes you Gentiles!"]

27 God wanted to make known to those among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this *mystery, which is Christ in YOU, the hope of glory.*

28 *We proclaim Him*, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature *in Christ*. 29 I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

Now how about Romans 11 and the Olive tree and being grafted in to Israel?

You're about to be surprised. I so often hear that we have to be grafted in to the *nation* of Israel. Is that really what its saying? *Should I want to be grafted in to a nation that for the most part does not obey God's laws, does not recognize their Savior who came as one of their own?* NO. I DO want to be grafted in to "the Israel of GOD" however.

ROMANS 11 AND BEING GRAFTED IN

Remember that after the resurrection, Yeshua told His disciples to go to all the nations, to Samaria and the ends of the earth, and not just Israel (**Acts 1:8**). He said to preach and make disciples of ALL nations – which you can read at the end of Matthew 28. So now we come to Romans 11. The nation of Israel is twice called an Olive tree in the "Old Testament", or Hebrew scriptures.

This Romans 11 olive tree has the early Fathers as their root (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). The people of Judah, Jews – and presumably all Israelites -- are referred to as the "branches" here. Some of the "branches" – not all – were cut off, to allow room for Gentiles to be grafted in.

Paul is using a metaphor of the old olive trees that at times would begin to have unfruitful branches. Those old unfruitful branches are cut off. Then new productive branches from young olive trees are grafted in. God started His new group of believers with Jews. But many refused to believe and so some of the Jews (the branches) were cut off.

Romans 11:13-33

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh [Jews] and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root (presumably Abraham) is holy, so are the branches [the Jews, Israelites]

17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and **you [Gentiles], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and *with them became a partaker of the root*** and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches [Jews]. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." [i.e, God broke off the Jews, to allow for Gentiles.]"

20 Well said. Because of [their, the Jews'] unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but

toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. *Otherwise you also will be cut off.*

Now, all of you who believe that the Olive Tree of Romans 11 IS the physical nation of Israel, read carefully verse 23. Do natural born Jews get a free pass?

Remember unbelieving Jews were broken off THIS Olive tree. Now this is critical. Though the covenant was made with the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai, the "Israel of God" now – in my strong view/opinion – is the body of called-out ones. ANYONE – whether Jew or Gentile – will have to be grafted in to THIS olive trees. Yes, even the Jews. Let's read it.

What I'm saying is that Jews are not already in this olive tree of Romans 11. Let's read it.

Rom. 11:23: **And THEY [JEWS] ALSO, IF they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.**

Did you catch that? IF they start believing, the presently unbelieving Jews also will be grafted back in! If this olive tree is about the NATION of Israel, then why would they have to be grafted in v. 23-24? This is why Peter says in Acts 15, when referring to the Gentiles who were being called and saved by FAITH, Peter says "we Jews shall be saved in the same manner as they" – these Gentiles – by grace through faith (**Acts 15:11**). *That's why our emphasis has to be on Yeshua, and not on the nation of Israel.* We are created new in HIM. We are one body with HIM. HE is our holiness and righteousness.

Romans 11:23-29 continuing:

23 And THEY [Jews] ALSO, IF they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (repeat).

24 For if you [Gentiles] were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches (the Jews), ***be grafted into their own olive tree?***

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that **blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. **29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**

I hope we're getting it. There's been so much emphasis on the physical and that's gotta stop. But in the end, all Israel is saved (V. 26)!

Now there are many prophecies about THE PHYSICAL nation of Israel and Judah as well. That's for another sermon. But they will be brought down to humble them in the coming years. Many will go into captivity and be scattered among the nations. In their captivity they will repent – and Christ will return and land on the Mt. Of Olives. He will then call them back, a trumpet will sound and they will all return to the land of their

forefathers. Yes, that's coming too. The nation of Israel will be the first to repent and accept their Messiah this time. Then one by one the nations will come to worship. You gentiles being called now are being called to help bring your nations, your people, your villages, to come worship the king.

The Gentiles Shining the Light

But for now... you already are a part of a spiritual nation, you already – if you have God's spirit – are being formed into the Body of Christ.

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 **who once were not a people but are now the people of God**, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

We're all looking for the same land and city that our Father Abraham looked for. Remember that all of us, if we are of faith, have Abraham as our father. He was a sojourner – and so are we. AS we come to the feast of Tabernacles, we remember we are also sojourners, dwelling in tents – even our bodies are called tents in the Bible. This is not our real kingdom. We are like our father Abraham – who sought a city whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11)

In the end, many of you Gentiles stand up and come through. There is coming a great tribulation. Some Gentiles will abuse Jerusalem – not good. But many more of you Gentiles will come to repentance and will lead many others to repentance.

Revelation 7:9-17

9 After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude** which no one could number, **of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing** before the throne and before the Lamb, *clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands*, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen."

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "**Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?**" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17

for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

YOU, you Gentiles hearing this word today – will lead your people to the resurrected Son of God coming to rule the earth. YOU will teach your friends and your neighbors and give them hope. You are the ones scriptures speak of who will lead your people to come to a personal relationship with the living GOD. Hallelujah!!

Zechariah 8:20-23

20 "Thus says YHVH of hosts:

'Peoples shall yet come,

Inhabitants of many cities;

21 The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying,

"Let us continue to go and pray before YHVH,

And seek YHVH of hosts.

I myself will go also."

22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations

Shall come to seek YHVH of hosts in Jerusalem,

And to pray before YHVH.'

23 "Thus says YHVH of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

Psalms 22:27-31

27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to YHVH,

And all the families of the nations shall worship before You.

28 For the kingdom is YHVH's, And He rules over the nations.

29 All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship;

All those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him,

Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

30 A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of YHVH to the next generation,

31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,

That He has done this.

Romans 15:7-12

7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [the Jews] for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

"For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name."

10 And again he says:

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"

11 And again:

"Praise YHVH, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, ALL you peoples!"

12 And again, Isaiah says:

"There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In HIM the Gentiles shall hope." [Their hope is not in the nation of Israel, but in HIM folks!]

Gentiles – my brothers in the faith, members of the holy body of Christ – those verses are about you.

Yahweh is your God also. Abba Yahweh is your Father also. Yahweh sent His son to die for you and me, to pay the penalty for our sins and for everyone else who believes. Believe. Seek Him. He has risen – and wants to live in you, yes, in you.

So my Gentile brothers, members of the household of God, citizens of heaven, sons of Abraham by faith – hear your Master Yeshua say to you, "WELCOME, my brothers, welcome to my kingdom I've prepared for YOU."

Until next time, this is your brother who also has had a big need for a savior and Redeemer – who also has to be a member of the body by faith, just like you – until next time, may Yahweh smile on you, bless you and keep you in the faith. Amen.

[Remember the fall holydays are coming up. Be checking my website if you need an explanation on any of these holydays.]