

# **Gentiles Past And Present**

***How Gentile Believers Went From Spiritual Poverty To  
Spiritual Wealth***

***A True Rags To Riches Story***

***A study of Ephesians 2:11-13 and Romans 9:4-5***

**By Pastor Art Watkins**

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# Gentiles Past And Present

## *How The Gentiles Went From Spiritual Poverty To Spiritual Wealth*

### *A True Rags To Riches Story*

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#### Ephesians 2

**11 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:**

**13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

Verse 11-12 describes the spiritual and dispensational condition of us gentiles in time past. Verse 13 describes our spiritual and dispensational condition now. In time past, prior to the cross, gentiles like us were without Christ, strangers from the covenants of promise and we were without hope and without God in the world. But, why was this true of us gentiles in time past? It's because we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We were without Christ being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We were strangers from the covenants of promise being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We were without hope and without God being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Why was this true? Because all the blessings and promises in verse 12 belonged to them by promise.

In Romans 9:4-5 Paul wrote: ***Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.***

Every one of these spiritual blessings was given to the commonwealth of Israel by promise in time past. These promises were made to them exclusively.

Every blessing in Ephesians 2:12 was also theirs by promise. The Christ of verse 12 was Israel's Christ or Messiah. The covenants of promise were Israel's. The hope was Israel's hope. The God of verse 12 was Israel's God. And because we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, gentiles like us had no claim to their Christ or Messiah, or covenants of promise, or their hope or their God.

We were in a state of spiritual poverty in time past. But, according to verse 13, verse 12 is no longer true of us. Verse 12 describes our condition in time past, but verse 13 describes us now. A change took place. Verse 12 is no longer true of us. According to verse 13, what we were far off from in time past in verse 12, we are now made nigh to. What does this mean? It means that Israel's Christ is now our Christ. Israel's covenants

of promise are now our covenants of promise. Israel's hope is now our hope and Israel's God is now our God.

### **Israel's Christ is Now Our Christ**

The word Christ means Messiah. See John 1:41. The name Messiah means; Savior, deliverer, provider, and defender. In time past the only people who had a Messiah to save them, deliver them, provide for them and defend them was Israel. Being without Christ means we had no Messiah. But now, he is our Messiah, savior, provider, deliverer and defender.

In Colossians 1:24-27 Paul wrote: ***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: 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 among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:***

God dispensed or revealed to Paul a mystery that was hid from ages and generations and it concerns us gentiles. And the glory and riches of this mystery is that Christ the Messiah now dwells in us, now lives in and among gentiles like us. Gentiles now have a Messiah, savior, provider and deliverer and defender.

The Christ and Messiah of Israel is now the Christ and Messiah of us gentiles. This was a great mystery in time past, but now it is a reality. Christ is the Messiah of both Jews and gentiles. We are no longer without Christ or without a Messiah or without a savior or deliverer. He is as much our Messiah today as he is the Jews.

There is something that gentiles like us should keep in mind today when we say we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ means we believe that Jesus is our Lord and our Messiah. It also means that the body of Christ is the body or church of Messiah. The gospel of Christ is the gospel of Messiah. The second coming of Christ is the second coming of Messiah. The words of Christ are the words of Messiah. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Messiah.

### **Israel's Covenants Are Now Our Covenants**

Notice the covenants we are made nigh to in Ephesians 2:12 are called the covenants of promise. It's the covenants God made with Israel wherein he promised or coveted to bless them in some way. There were two major covenants he made with them wherein he promised or covenanted to bless them that we partake of today.

#### **The covenant and promise he made with Abraham**

In Genesis 22:18 God made a covenant of promise with Abraham. It says: ***And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.***

The writer who interprets this covenant and promise is Paul in Galatians 3. He wrote in verse 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.***

In verse 16 he wrote: ***Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.***

In Galatians chapter 3 we find out who:

The seed of Genesis 22:18 is: Christ- vs.16

Who the nations of Genesis 22:18 are: Heathen nations – Vs. 8

What the blessing of Genesis 22:18 is: Justification – vs. 8

How the heathen nations are justified: Through faith - 8

Notice this covenant of promise God made to Abraham is called the *gospel*. When we preach that God will justify heathen gentiles by faith alone in Christ, we are preaching the gospel God preached to Abraham in Genesis 22:18 and today we call this gospel, the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Christ is based upon the covenant of promise God made to Abraham; that he would justify heathen gentiles by faith in Christ, the seed of Abraham. And notice it says heathen gentiles and not proselytes.

### **The New Covenant of Promise**

In Hebrews 8:6-13 Paul describes the New Covenant of promise God made with Israel in Jeremiah 31:

***But now hath he (Christ) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he (Christ) is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. (Notice the connection between covenant and promises) For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.***

***For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:***

***Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.***

***For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:***

***And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.***

***For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.***

***In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.***

There are two things to notice in these verses; (1) Jesus is a minister and the mediator of the New Covenant in verse 6.

(2) The New Covenant has better promises than the Old Covenant in verse 6.

There are two other things we should notice about the New Covenant:

(1) Paul was also a minister of the New Covenant.

In 2 Corinthians 3:6 he wrote: **Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter (old), but of the spirit (new): for the letter (old) killeth, but the spirit (new) giveth life.**

(2) Gentiles are now partakers of the promises of the New Covenant. Ephesians 2:13: **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.** (Made nigh to the covenants of promise in verse 12.)

Romans 15:27: **For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.**

Gentile believers are now partakers of Israel's spiritual things. Israel's spiritual things were the spiritual blessings and promises God made to Israel and the greatest was the blessings and promises of the New Covenant. It contained more blessings and promises than all the other covenants he made with them and gentile believers are now partakes of them all.

### **The promises of the New Covenant**

\*A new and better Spirit - 2 Cor.3:6-8, 17, Ezek. 36:26

(The indwelling Holy Spirit)

\*A new and better heart - Ezk.36:26, 2 Peter 1:4

(The new nature)

\*A new and better birth- 1 Peter 1:23, John 3:1-8

(A second spiritual birth)

\*A new and better sacrifice – Hebrews 9-10

(Christ's all sufficient sacrifice)

\*A new and better hope – Heb.11:16, Heb.12:22

(A heavenly hope)

\*New and better laws - Heb.8:10 (The laws of Christ)

\*A new and better priesthood - 1 Peter 2:5

(The spiritual priesthood of all believers)

\*A new and better High Priest - Heb.3:1 (Christ)

\*A new and better city - Heb.11:16

(The Heavenly City New Jerusalem)

\*A new and better mediator –Heb.8:6, 1 Tim.2:5 (Christ)

\*A new and better intercessor – Heb.7:25, Rom.8:34 (Christ)

\*A new and better temple – Heb.8:2, 9:24 (Heavenly)

\*A new and better mercy seat and propitiation who is Christ.– 1 John 2:2, Rom.3:25

\*A new and better altar – Heb.13:10 (Christ)

\*New and better promises – Heb.8:6 (Spiritual)

\*A new and better understanding—Heb.8:11, 1 Cor.2:9-13  
(Spiritual understanding)

\*A new and better salvation – Heb.5:9 (Eternal salvation)

\*A new and better redemption – Heb.9:12 (Eternal redemption)

A new and better calling – Heb.3:1 (Heavenly)

The New Covenant is truly a covenant of many promises. No other covenant has as many promises as the New Covenant. In time past, gentiles like us were strangers from the blessings and promises of the New Covenant, but now we are made nigh to them and partake of them by grace through faith without becoming proselytes to Judaism.

### **Israel's Hope Is Now Our Hope**

The hope in Ephesians 2:12 is the hope of resurrection, but not just any resurrection. In the Bible there are two resurrections. In John 5:28-29 The Lord shows us what they are: ***Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.***

In Acts 24:15 Paul called them the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust.

In Rev. 20 John called them the first resurrection and the second resurrection.

In time past, under the Law, the only people who had the hope of being raised in the resurrection of life and of the just, was Israel and Jewish proselytes. That hope was theirs by promise and covenant. At that time Gentiles like us were without hope. We had no hope of being in the resurrection of life and of the just. But now, their hope is our hope, which means we are no longer without hope. Israel's hope is now our hope.

Paul preached the hope of Israel throughout his ministry. In Acts 28:20 he said: ***For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.***

The hope of Israel Paul was bound for, was their hope of resurrection. See the following verses:

Acts 23:6: ***But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.***

Acts 24:14-15: ***But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.***

Act 24:21: **Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.**

Acts 26:6-8: **And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?**

The hope of Israel that Paul preached was their hope of resurrection. But, why did they persecute Paul for preaching it? For the same reason they persecuted the other apostles for preaching it.

Acts 4:1-2 says: **And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.**

What Paul and the apostles preached about the resurrection disagreed with both the Sadducees and Pharisees. The Sadducees were mad because they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees were mad because they preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead and they believed he was an imposter.

Paul preached a future resurrection of saints and he said their resurrection was made possible by the past resurrection of Christ. If Christ was raised from the dead as Paul said, then he was the Son of God as he claimed to be and that means the Pharisees murdered their own Messiah. This is why the hope of Israel was opposed by both Sadducees and Pharisees.

The hope of Israel is the resurrection of life God promised them in the prophets. If that is so, then the resurrection Paul was persecuted for preaching and the one he wrote about in such places as 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, is the hope of Israel. If that is so, that means it's found in the prophets, because that is where God made the promise of resurrection.

Therefore, when Paul wrote about resurrection, he based it upon what the prophets wrote in the Old Testament. For example he said in 1 Thessalonians 4:15: **For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.** What Paul wrote in this chapter about Christ's coming and the resurrection in this chapter, is based upon *the word of the Lord*. That makes spiritual sense, because this hope is the hope God promised Israel in the Old Testament prophets.

But where is this resurrection found in the Prophets? Paul shows us where in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55: **So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**

These verses plainly say that when the Lord comes at the last trump and the dead are raised and those alive are caught up without dying, **THEN** two prophecies in the word of the Lord will be brought to pass and he quotes Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14.

In time past, the only people who had this hope was Israel. But now, it's ours. So we are no longer without hope. We have the absolute hope of being in the first resurrection of life. This is why it's called the blessed hope. It's blessed because the second resurrection is a resurrection of damnation.

## Israel's God Is Now Our God

The true and living God has not always been the God of the gentiles. Consider these verses from the Old Testament.

Exodus 3:5-6: ***And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.***

Exodus 3:15-16: ***And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:***

In the Old Testament, the true and living God was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children only. He was never called the God of heathen gentiles like us. At that time, we were without God according to Ephesians 2:12.

But now, he is the God of gentile believers. In Romans 3:29-30 Paul wrote: ***Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.***

In time past, the God of the Bible was the God of the Jews only, but not anymore. He is the God of all believers, Jew or gentile. The Jews in Paul's day thought he was their God only and they still do. As far as they were concerned, gentiles like us were still without God. But, we are made nigh to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is as much our God as theirs.

Ephesians 2:12-13 are very important verses in Paul's epistles, for they show us a major change has taken place as far as gentiles like us are concerned. What was once true of us is no longer true. By the death and shed blood of Christ, Israel's Christ is now our Christ. Israel's covenants of promise are now our covenants of promise. Israel's hope is now our hope and Israel's God is now our God.

We have gone from spiritual poverty to spiritual riches. We have gone from rags to riches and it's because of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection. Ephesians 2:13-14

says: ***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.***

God has reconciled Jews and gentiles together today in one body, the church, and made us gentiles partakers of the promises he made to the Jews in time past. The Christ of the Jews is now the Christ of the gentiles. The covenants of promise that once belonged to the Jews now belong to the gentiles. The hope of the resurrection of life is now the hope of Jew and gentile believers. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is now the God of us gentiles.

## Part Two

In Romans 9:4-5 Paul wrote concerning Israel in time past:

***Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.***

These are more blessings and promises the commonwealth of Israel had in time past that gentiles like us did not have because we were aliens from them. But now in Christ, as in Ephesians 2:13, we partake of.

## Israel's Adoption Is Now Our Adoption

It means to take someone who is not born in your home and place him in your home and treat him as a son born in the home. In time past, under the law, the only people God adopted and called his sons was Israel. God said in Hosea 11:1: ***When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.***

As Jehovah was never called the God of heathen gentiles in time past, he was never called their father either. God adopted the Israelites only to be his sons and gentiles like us were never considered to be a part of the household of God. The only way a gentile could become a son of God and get into the house of God in time past, was by becoming a Jewish proselyte. Heathen gentiles like us could not get in the door. The door to the household of God was locked to us.

But now, God has adopted gentiles like us and placed us in his household as children: Ephesians 1:5 says:

***Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.***

Predestination means; to predetermine, foreordain before hand by an unchangeable purpose. When God chose us before the foundation of the world, he also predestinated us to become his adopted sons. Remember, adoption is to take a stranger into one's family as a son and an heir. It is to take one who is not a child and treat him as one, giving him a title to the privileges and rights of a child. The idea of our adoption is that we who were by natural birth children of Adam and heathen gentiles, have now been adopted into God's family and are now treated by him as his natural Son.

God made this decision before the foundation of the world, but no one fully understood it until he began to save and adopt gentiles like us. The first uncircumcised gentile saved and adopted into the household of God was Cornelius in Acts 10. Soon after, in Acts 13-14 during Paul's first missionary journey, God opened the door for all gentiles to become his adopted sons. Acts 14:27 says the door of faith was opened unto all gentiles without exception and distinction and they became the adopted sons of God by the 1000's.

### All But One Of God's Children Are Adopted

John 3:16 says: ***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***

This verse does not say that Jesus is God's only son like the perverted Bibles say. I am a son of God and so are all those who are saved. The Holy Spirit is careful to say that Jesus Christ is God's ***only begotten*** Son. God has many sons, but Jesus Christ is his only begotten Son. All the rest are adopted.

### Adopted Sons Of God Have The Same Birthright And Privileges Of A First Born Son

Romans 9:4 says that Israel was God's adopted sons in time past, but Exodus 4:22 says: ***And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me:***

Romans 9:4 says Israel was God's adopted sons, but Exodus says they were his first born sons. Is that a contradiction? No, this shows us something very important about divine adoption. When God adopted us and them, we were given a place in the house of God as that of first born sons. Why is that important? Because it was the first born son who was given the right to the inheritance of the father. Read Deuteronomy 21:15-17

The first born son was the son who had the rights to the inheritance of the father. When God adopted us he not only made us his sons, but gave us a place in his house as first born sons. Being counted as first born sons makes us heirs to the inheritance of the Father. Romans 8:15-17 says:

***For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.***

We become children of God by adoption and being children we become heirs of God like a first born son. What belongs to God becomes ours such as; his Spirit, righteousness, love, care, protection, security, provision, freedom, etc

God is now adopting gentiles outside of the commonwealth of Israel and placing them in his house and giving them an equal standing with the Jewish sons who were in the house before them. Ephesians 2:18-19 says: ***For through him we both (Jew and gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye (Gentiles) are***

**no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, (Jews) and of the household of God.**

We who were once strangers and foreigners from the household of God are now adopted into household of God with the Jews who were adopted before us. God has always had a spiritual house, but under the Law his children were Jews only. But now God has opened the door into his house to gentiles like us. God opened the door to his household to Gentiles like us in Acts 10 and especially Acts 13-14. And in his house we are now counted as his sons by adoption just like the Jews. The adopted children of God are no longer limited to the commonwealth of Israel. It has expanded to include any and all who call on the Lord for salvation.

## **Israel's Glory Is Now Our Glory**

The glory of God is his divine spiritual presence. In time past, God's glory and divine spiritual presence dwelt in and with the commonwealth of Israel only.

The glory and divine spiritual presence of God filled the tabernacle Moses built in the commonwealth of Israel

Exodus 40:34-35: ***Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.***

The glory and divine spiritual presence of God filled the temple Solomon built in the commonwealth of Israel.

1Kings 8:10-11: ***And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.***

Jesus Christ was filled with the glory and divine presence of God when he lived and preached to the commonwealth of Israel.

***John 1:14: and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.***

But, what about mortal men like us today? Can it be said, that we are filled with the glory and spiritual divine presence of God today? Is this even possible? Search and see. In John 17:20-23 Jesus prayed for his apostles and their converts:

***Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.***

The glory he gave them in verse 22 is not the future glory of the saints in heaven. It was his Spirit he gave them to make them one with him. Read 22-23 slowly.

The glory he gave them made them one with him and he with them. But, what makes us one with Christ and Christ one with us? His Spirit who lives in us. His Spirit in us binds us together with him and with one another. In John 14:16-20 Jesus said:

***And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.***

In these verses, the Spirit of Christ who came in Acts 2 makes us one with him and he with us, whereas in John 17:22 it's called his glory that makes us one with him and he with us. The way the word glory is used by Christ in John 17:22 is the way it is used in Romans 9:4-5. It's the divine spiritual presence of God that now dwells in all believers because all believers have the Spirit of Christ living in them. The glory or divine spiritual presence of God now dwells in the saints of God as it once dwelt in the tabernacle Moses built and the temple Solomon built. The church is the temple of God on earth today, so it is not farfetched to say his glory and divine spiritual presence dwells in his temple today which is the church. Ephesians 2:20-22 says:

***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.***

God dwells among men on earth in temples such as the one Moses and Solomon built. He also dwelt among men in the temple of Christ's body. Today, we are the temple of God and he inhabits and dwells in us through his Spirit. God's glory or divine spiritual presence that was once confined to the commonwealth of Israel, is now manifest in the gentile members of his temple which today is the church, the body of Christ.

## **Israel's Service of God is Now our Service of God**

The service of God was the service provided by the priests of God in the temple of God. It was the priesthood who did the service of God in the tabernacle of God. Hebrews 9:6 says: ***Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.***

The service the priests provided was essential to the salvation of the people they served for two main reasons.

- (1) They made intercession to God in behalf of the people.
- (2) They offered sacrifices for the sins of the people.

No one can be saved if they do not have access to God. No one can be saved without a sacrifice to atone for their sins. This is why the service the priests provided was

essential to the salvation and preservation of the people. Under the Old Covenant the only men God ordained to be priests to intercede and offer sacrifices for sin were those who were of the tribe of Levi only. Therefore, the only people who had access to God were the commonwealth of Israel. The only people who had sacrifices that God would accept as atonement for their sins was the commonwealth of Israel.

In time past, Gentiles like us did not have a priest to intercede in our behalf to God and this is why we were without God. Gentiles like us did not have a sacrifice God would accept as atonement for our sins and this is why we were without hope.

But, even though Israel had priests to intercede for them and to make atonement for their sins, there were faults with the priests and the sacrifices. The fault with the priests was they all died and had to be replaced continually. The fault with the sacrifices was they could not take away sin forever and that is why they had to be offered over and over again. So, God made a New Covenant with Israel and in the New Covenant he gave them a perfect High Priest and a Perfect Sacrifice and it was a person. Jesus Christ is both the High Priest and sacrifice of the New Covenant. He is the perfect High Priest because he ever lives to make intercession for sinners and his sacrifice is perfect, because it forgives all sins and sinners forever. That is why he offered himself once for unto God for sin.

But, even though the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant, there was still a problem with the New Covenant as far as us gentiles are concerned. What was the problem with the New Covenant? The New Covenant was made with the same people the Old Covenant was made; the commonwealth of Israel. (Hebrews 8:8) And because we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, we were strangers from the covenants of promise and the New Covenant was the ultimate covenant of promise. This left us without a High Priest to intercede for us to God and without a sacrifice to atone for our sins. This is very serious problem because the only way anyone under either covenant can gain access to God is through a High Priest, for it is the High Priest who makes intercession to God in behalf of the people. The High Priest is the mediator between God and men. And the only way anyone can get their sins forgiven is for a High Priest to offer a sacrifice for them.

No man under either covenant has access to God without a High Priest to make intercession for him. No man under either covenant can get his sins forgiven without a priest or High Priest offering a sacrifice for him. The only sacrifices God has ever or will ever accept as atonement for sins are those offered by the priests and High Priests he has ordained under both the Old and New Covenants. And he made both covenants with Israel. That leaves gentiles like us without hope under both covenants.

But, God in his mercy solved that problem by making us gentiles nigh to the covenants of promise according to Ephesians 2:13 and partakers of Israel's spiritual things in Romans 15:27. Even though the New Covenant was not made with us gentiles, God made us partakers of it because it is essential to our salvation. There is no salvation today outside of the New Covenant. Why? Because in the New Covenant is found the

only High Priest who can intercede to God in our behalf. In the New Covenant alone is found the only sacrifice that can atone for our sins. There is no intercessor or atonement today outside of the New Covenant. The one and only way a man can be saved today is by the High Priest and sacrifice of the New Covenant.

Now we understand why God made Paul a minister of the New Covenant according to 2 Corinthians 3:6. Even though he is the apostle of the gentiles, God made him a minister of the New Covenant, because the only hope that Jews or gentiles have today of being saved is in the New Covenant. It's in the New Covenant only we find a High Priest to intercede for us and it's in the New Covenant only we find a sacrifice God will accept as atonement for our sins. If we were not made partakers of the New Covenant we would end up in hell!

Think about this: Could a man living under the Old Covenant get to God by a High Priest other than the one God ordained in the Old Covenant? No. Could he get his sins forgiven by a sacrifice other than the sacrifices God ordered in the Old covenant? No. Were there two ways of getting saved under the Old covenant? No.

Can a man today get to God by another way other than the High Priest God ordained in the New Covenant? No. Can a man find a sacrifice that will forgive his sins other than the sacrifice God ordained in the New Covenant? No. Are there two ways of getting saved under the New Covenant? No, it's either by the High Priest and sacrifice of the New Covenant, or no way at all. And this is why it is religious insanity to say we do not partake of the New Covenant!

The reason we are told to observe the Lord's Supper today is because we are saved by the High Priest and Sacrifice of the New Covenant and the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the New Covenant according to 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

## **Israel's Promises Are Now Our Promises**

In time past, under the Law, most of the promises God made to bless his people were made with the commonwealth of Israel according to Romans 9:4-5, but now gentile believers partake of them according to Romans 15:27 which says: ***It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.***

Gentile believers have been made partakers of Israel's spiritual things or spiritual promises. Their spiritual and notice it says spiritual blessings and promises are now ours. Listed below is a list of some of their spiritual blessings and promises we now partake of.

**The Gospel of Christ  
Christ living in us and we in him  
Hope of resurrection  
God our Father  
Inheritance in the Kingdom of God**

**The indwelling Spirit of God**  
**Justification by faith**  
**Righteousness by faith**  
**Citizenship in the heavenly city New Jerusalem**  
**Freedom from the law**  
**A New nature**  
**A New Birth**  
**A divine Great High Priest**  
**All sufficient, once for all sacrifice for sin**  
**A divine heavenly mediator**  
**An eternal heavenly intercessor**  
**A heavenly hope**  
**A heavenly temple**  
**A divine mercy seat and propitiation**  
**A divine spiritual altar**  
**Divine Spiritual understanding**  
**Eternal salvation**  
**Eternal redemption**  
**A heavenly calling**  
**A throne of mercy and grace**  
**Reconciliation for sin**  
**Spiritual blessings**  
**Heavenly citizenship**  
**Peace of God**  
**The grace of God**  
**Adoption as children**  
**Habitation of God**  
**Light and salvation**  
**Spiritual circumcision**

All of these promises have two things in common. (1) They are all church blessings we now partake of and enjoy. (2) They were all originally promised to Israel in the Old Testament. The great mystery Paul revealed is that gentiles can receive them by faith alone without circumcision, keeping the law or works of any kind. Gentiles like us receive these promises by grace, whereas the Jews by covenant.

I thank God, he made us gentiles partakers of Israel's spiritual promises for if it were not for their promises, gentiles like you and I would have none of our own. Think about this the next time you preach the gospel, justification by faith, righteousness by faith, the indwelling Spirit of God and our inheritance in the kingdom of God.

## Israel's Father Is Now Our Father

Even though Abraham is the father of Israel, God counts him the father of us gentiles also. Romans 4:11 says: ***And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:***

There is a very good reason Abraham is counted as the father of us gentiles. Galatians 3:16 says; ***Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.***

Galatians 3:29 says: ***And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

Because we are Christ's we are counted as the seed of Abraham. Being the seed of Abraham makes us heirs to the promise and promises God made to his seed. The promise singular is the promise of justification by faith in verse 8 and the promises plural are listed in the previous point.

We should thank God Abraham is our father because it made us poor poverty stricken gentiles rich! Now that Abraham is our father we are heirs and partakers of all the spiritual blessings and promises of Romans 15:27, Romans 9:4-5 and Ephesians 2:12.

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