



Jew and Gentile—Fellow-Citizens

I. Introduction

- a. Confusing and controversial: the relationship between Jew and Gentile in the Messianic Jewish movement
- b. Question of legitimacy of the movement
 - i. Christian critic: How, if it maintains a distinction between Jew and Gentile?
 - ii. Jewish critic: How, if congregations are filled with Gentiles acting like Jews?
- c. The key question from the previous session: What kind of Gentile are you, and what kind of Gentile is Adonai calling you to be? Foreigner? Temporary Resident? Sojourner?
- d. Does this mean that some Gentiles will be in “true unity” with Jewish believers, while others are not?
- e. Questions we hope to resolve in this session:
 - i. What is the relationship between Jew and Gentile in the Body?
 - ii. Are Gentile believers now part of Israel?
 - iii. Should Gentiles keep the Torah?
 - iv. Are Gentile believers “spiritual Jews” or “spiritual Israelites”?
 - v. If there is no longer “Jew or Gentile,” how can the Messianic Jewish movement continue to maintain Jewish distinctions?
 - vi. What does it mean for Jew and Gentile to be “one in Messiah”?

II. Only to the Lost Sheep of Israel

- a. Canaanite Woman
 - i. Matthew 15:21-23
 - 1. Canaanite woman—a Gentile
 - 2. She affirms his Messiahship—“Son of David”
 - 3. What was Yeshua’s response?
 - ii. Matthew 15:24, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.”
 - 1. Initially refused to help her because she was a Gentile.
 - 2. Why? Did he not like Gentiles? No—he just had a clear, narrow directive for His ministry
 - iii. Matthew 15:25-28
 - 1. Affirmed Yeshua’s present-day mission to the Jews
 - 2. Also believed by faith that His ministry was to her as well
 - 3. By her faith, he made a “prophetic exception” for her
- b. Roman Centurion
 - i. Luke 7:3-5
 - 1. Despite Roman occupation
 - 2. Called on Messianic Jewish elders to represent him
 - 3. He “loves” Israel
 - ii. Luke 7:6-10—faith played a part

- c. During His earthly ministry, Yeshua was sent only to Israel—to the exclusion of Gentiles (with the exceptions noted)
- d. Matthew 28:19 changed everything—major paradigm shift
 - i. This would only be understood in hindsight—the disciples still thought Yeshua’s ministry only concerned Israel (Acts 1:6ff)
 - ii. Acts 2:5—the testimony had gone to all the nations, but only to the Jews of those nations—the disciples thought everything was going according to plan
 - iii. It would still take divine intervention for them to comprehend the full weight of the Master’s command

III. The Call of the Goyim

- a. Acts 10
 - i. Cornelius—devout man, feared God; had a preexisting relationship with the Jewish people and the God of Israel
 - ii. Acts 10:10-15
 - 1. Keifa was “reflecting” on the vision; “perplexed” by it
 - 2. The shocking vision and voice were trying to tell him something important, but it wasn’t about food
 - iii. Keifa reveals his understanding, “God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean”—extra-Scriptural Jewish law concerning association with Gentiles was wrong
 - iv. Acts 10:34—“God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.”
 - v. Acts 10:44—everything wasn’t all about Israel after all! God wanted salvation to go to the Gentiles.
- b. Acts 11:17-18
 - i. God welcomes anyone from any nation who fears Him and does what is right.
 - ii. God gave the Gentiles the gift of the Ruach in the same way as he had the Jews—implication of equality with regard to holiness
 - iii. “God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.” (11:18)

IV. The Gentile “Problem”

- a. Acts 15:6-11
 - i. Keifa reminds the apostles and elders about how the outpouring of the Ruach upon the Gentiles set a new precedent
 - ii. Keifa argues that since Gentiles can be forgiven of sins by faith, and saved by grace, they should not be burdened with the yoke of Torah. Keifa opposed the requirement of Gentiles to adhere to Torah.
- b. Acts 15:13-20
 - i. Ya’akov cites David’s rebuilt Tabernacle as prophecy being fulfilled among the Gentiles
 - ii. Ya’akov concurs with Keifa—it would be troublesome to heap the requirement of Torah on the Gentiles
 - 1. The council issued a limited number of instructions
 - 2. Circumcision was not one of them; nor was it a requirement for salvation

- c. Circumcision according to Paul—symbolic for “becoming a Jew”
 - i. 1Corinthians 7:18-20, “Was any man called when he was already **circumcised** [that is, already a Jew]? He is not to become **uncircumcised** [that is, give up his Jewishness]. Has anyone been called in **uncircumcision** [that is, called as a Gentile]? He is not to be **circumcised** [that is, become a Jew]. **Circumcision** [becoming Jewish] is nothing and **uncircumcision** [being Gentile] is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God [which Paul says in Romans 2:14-15 the Gentiles does not by keeping the letter of the Law, but by virtue of the Torah being written on his heart]. Each man must remain in the condition in which he was called.”
 - ii. Galatians 2:3—Paul did not teach nor compel his Gentile friends and disciples to become Jews and obligate themselves to Torah
 - iii. Galatians 5:1-6—neither circumcision nor obligating oneself to the Torah was beneficial to the Gentile; on the contrary, they were harmful because of their perversion and misuse
 - iv. This did not mean that Paul was against circumcision or Torah. Paul circumcised Timothy in Acts 16:3—Timothy was Jewish (mother). Paul’s prohibition against circumcision was for Gentiles.
- d. The Ruling: Gentiles did not have to become proselytes to Judaism in order to be saved
- e. Still existing today: confusion about the coexistence of distinguishable ethnicity and indistinguishable standing before God.

V. Review from “The Gentile Believer in a Jewish Movement”

- a. When Torah was given (1500 yrs before Yeshua), Gentiles related to Israel in essentially three ways: foreigner, temporary resident, sojourner
- b. Sojourner—in virtually every way— was considered as a native-born Israelite. With generational intentions, he attached himself specifically to a family or tribe within Israel, and leaving his people and culture behind, assimilated into and became a part of the people of Israel.
- c. Why this is a big deal: the issue of unity (spiritual or otherwise) between Jew and Ger (sojourning Gentile) was a non-issue! The Jew and Ger were one people—there was no question whatsoever.
- d. As for Torah, the Ger was obligated to it in most respects as the native-born Israelite. The Ger did not become an Israelite, but still participated as full members in Israel’s family.
- e. Key: How the Ger and Israelite relate to one another—even in today’s Messianic Jewish movement—is not a spiritual one, but a practical one.
 - i. Not based on salvation in Messiah, but literally on geography and social proximity. The spiritual connection is an aspect, but the main purpose of sojourning was not to make a spiritual connection, but a physical one.
 - ii. This is an entirely different situation than the one Paul and Jerusalem Council were having to deal with once the Good News began to be preached among the Gentiles! The message to the Gentiles was not about leaving one’s culture and family and becoming part of Israel—it was about leaving one’s former way of life in sin and becoming part of the Household of God (Body of Messiah), which is spiritual.

1. Being a member of the household of Israel is not primarily spiritual, but physical.
2. Being a member of the household of God is not primarily physical, but spiritual.
- iii. Replacement theology has taught us that Israel and the Household of God are the same thing (i.e. New Israel, Spiritual Israel); but Scripture upholds their distinction. It just so happens that Jews who believe in Yeshua are members of both.

VI. The Household of God

- a. Ephesians 2:11-12
 - i. The Jewish and Gentile believers in Ephesus were experiencing animosity toward each other
 - ii. The “bad news” for Gentiles
 1. Before they were saved
 - a. Separate from Messiah
 - b. Excluded from citizenship in Israel
 - c. The covenants of promise were completely foreign
 2. Because of this condition, they were
 - a. Without hope
 - b. Without God in the world
 3. Had no way of salvation because they had no access to God through the “covenants of promise”. What is the promise?
 - a. Genesis 22:18, “In your seed [Av’raham] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...”
 - b. How? Jeremiah 31:34, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
 4. They were strangers because these covenants (Av’rahamic and Chadashah) were made exclusively with Israel—they had no access to them.
 - b. Ephesians 2:13—the “Good News” for Gentiles—“But now in Messiah Yeshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.”
 - i. “Far off” from and “brought near” to what?
 - ii. God, Messiah, the covenants of promise—which by definition, requires them to be “brought near” to Messianic Jews!
 - c. Ephesians 2:14-16
 - i. By the blood of Messiah, hostility between Jew and Gentile is destroyed; he has made us one new man.
 1. Israel has not become the Church
 2. The Church has not become the “new Israel”
 3. Gentiles have not become Jews
 4. Jews have not become Gentile Christians
 - ii. Not a physical body—a spiritual one
 - d. Ephesians 2:17
 - i. Jews are near to God by mere virtue of birth. Cf. Romans 9 of the people of Israel: “theirs is the adoption as sons, the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the Torah, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs and from them is traced the human ancestry of Messiah...”

1. It does not mean that Jews don't have to outwardly confess and receive Yeshua as Messiah
2. It just means that as God's covenant people, we are near to Him by birth in a way that Gentiles (by birth) are not.
- ii. Despite the Jew's natural "nearness," Messiah preached to both Jews and Gentiles, that we may both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
 1. This is incredible news!
 2. The Gentile, who is not by birth part of God's covenant people, now has access to the Father by the blood of Messiah.
- e. Ephesians 2:19; 3:3-6
 - i. With regard to God, the Messiah, the covenants of promise and the Jewish people, Gentile believers are no longer strangers and aliens
 - ii. The Mystery: Gentiles did not have to become part of Israel in order to be brought near—the Gentile believer receives Israel's promises without becoming Israel.
 - iii. Same concept to the Romans—Romans 11:17-18, "But if some **branches were broken off** [that is, Jewish unbelievers], and you, being a **wild olive** [that is, Gentiles by birth], were grafted in among **them** [the Jewish believers] and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you."
 1. What is the root? Av'raham? The Patriarchs? The Scriptures? Messianic Jews? Yeshua?
 2. Regardless, the message is the same as that of Ephesians: the "grafting in" results in the Gentile being "brought near" so that, in spite of the continuing reality of being a "wild olive" branch—born of a different seed than the natural branches—they partake of the things of God that were formerly "far off."
 - iv. A Gentile believer does not become a member of the house of Israel, but along with Jewish believers becomes a fellow-citizen in the household of God!
 1. Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members not of Israel, but of the Body (God's household)
 2. Along with Messianic Jews, become fellow partakers of the promise in Messiah—not through circumcision or by keeping the Torah, but through the Good News!
- f. Paradigm Challengers
 - i. Gentiles should not seek to become Jews
 - ii. The Church has no need to consider itself the New or Spiritual Israel
 - iii. Being a modern-day Ger and a Gentile who believes in Yeshua are two completely distinct concepts. While all Messianic Geriym are also Gentile believers in Yeshua, that does not mean the inverse is true.
 - iv. The point was never citizenship in Israel—it was always about membership in the household of God, in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for [we] are all one in Messiah Yeshua" (Galatians 3:28)

VII. One in Messiah (Neither Jew nor Gentile?)

- a. The Messianic Ger (sojourner)—not just co-members with Messianic Jews in the Household of God, but tangible relationship as “sojourners” in Israel.
- b. What about the rest of the Body? How do they relate to Israel and the Torah? How are Messianic Jews “one” with all other Gentile believers?
 - i. According to Christian critics: by insisting on maintaining our ethnic and cultural distinction as Jews (not to mention Torah observance) we’re accused of re-erecting the barrier of the diving wall which Yeshua has broken down.
 1. Indeed, Romans 10:12-13 says, “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all... for whoever will call on the name of Adonai will be saved.”
 2. And what about Colossians 3:11, there is no “Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised... but Messiah is all, and in all.”
 3. And again Galatians 3:28, “there is neither Jew nor Greek... for [we] are all one in Messiah Yeshua.”
 - ii. Our lack of distinction is not found in ethnic or national identity, but in our salvation in Messiah. But despite our equal standing before God, our salvation has no effect on our physical state or ethnicity. More importantly, ethnicity has no bearing on our salvation.
- c. Ethnicity, gender, anything physical—they neither help nor hinder us when it comes to salvation.
- d. Being “one in Messiah” has nothing to do with being a sojourner, or keeping Torah, or being part of Israel. Jew and Gentile are one in Messiah because we are one new man despite our enduring distinctions!

VIII. Jew and Gentile—Fellow Citizens

- a. Acts 13:47, “For so Adonai has commanded us [Jews], ‘I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.’”
- b. The Messianic Jewish movement stands as a unique testimony to the promises of the God of Israel. If we encourage and foster the spirit and lifestyle of the Ger within our Messianic Jewish communities, we will be able to legitimately overcome the challenge to our Jewishness.
- c. Our restoration to the fullness of who we are as Messianic Jews will result only in the fullness of the Gentile Church and the salvation of the world. “... if [the Jews’] rejection [of Yeshua] is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15)
- d. The unity of Jew and Gentile is a core exhortation—but equal standing does not come at the expense of our distinctions. We have been given membership in a new family—not one that replaces Israel, but one in which Israel must participate in order for it to properly function.
- e. God’s plan was never to make it all about Israel—to convert all the Gentiles of the world into sojourners with the Jewish people. God’s plan was for the covenants of promise to Israel to be made available through Israel to all the families of the earth.
- f. Galatians 3:26-29