

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF GOD

PART II

There are **three groups** spoken to in the Bible. They are the **Jew**, the **Gentile** and the **Church of God**. In I Corinthians 10:32, all three are mentioned. As one reads the Bible it becomes very evident that **more than half of its content relate to one nation, the Israelites**.

The Jews have a distinct place in the dealings and counsels of God. Separated from other nations, they are taken into covenant with Jehovah who gives specific promises not given to any other nations. Israel's history is told in Old Testament narrative and prophecy. Other nations are only mentioned as they came in contact with Israel.

As you read through the Old Testament, you will find that the promises and blessings to the nation of Israel are primarily **physical and earthly**. If faithful and obedient, the nation is promised earthly greatness. **See Deuteronomy 28:1-14**. If unfaithful and disobedient Israel was to be scattered **“among all people, from one end of earth even unto the other;” (Deut. 28:64)**. **See Deuteronomy 28:15-68**.

In the Old Testament there was very little spiritual revelation. **In I Corinthians 1:22**, you are told that the Jews required a sign because they were unbelieving. **In I Corinthians 14:21-22**, you see where the sign gift of tongues was for the unbeliever, the Jew. In the Book of Acts when sign gifts used, these were used by an Apostle in connection with an unbelieving Jew. The signs were for the Jews and for establishing the unwritten word or revelation of God.

Today, we do not need the sign gifts because the **1)primary mission of the church is not to the Jew but to the Gentile and 2)we have the completed Word of God**. As the Bible says in I Cor. 1:22, **“the Jews require a sign and the Greek seek after wisdom”** The Greek or the Gentile given wisdom in the form of the Bible, the written revelation of God.

All through the Old Testament, the emphasis with Israel is on physical and earthly blessings. When the godly Jew died under the Old Testament, he went to Abraham's Bosom (**See Luke 16:22-23**), because Christ had not yet died for sin. These Old Testament saints were taken to the third heaven when Christ was resurrected (**See Ephesians 4:8-10**). In Ephesians 4:8, this is referred to as **“he (Christ) led captivity captive...”**. Abraham's Bosom was located in the center of the earth with a gulf between it and hell (**See Luke 16:19-31**). However, now under New Testament grace, when a Christian dies he goes straight to heaven.

In the Old Testament Israel was promised great physical blessings and promise of a future literal physical earthly kingdom.

Promises to Israel: Genesis 12:1-2 - Promise of literal future physical earthly kingdom; Deuteronomy 8:7-9 - Promise of earthly home; Deuteronomy 28:8 - Promise of earthly protection; Deuteronomy 28:13 Promise of Israel to be above all nations. All these promises and more shall be fulfilled one day.

Contrast - Today if a person is obedient to the gospel and written revelation he is given (other words if person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, gets saved, born-again) spiritual and future heavenly rewards.

Hebrews 3:1 - The Christian calling is heavenly; Matthew 8:20 - As a Christian no earthly home; I Corinthians 4:11 - No certain dwelling place; I Peter 1:4 - Christian has an inheritance reserved for them in heaven.

Contrast between Jew Vs. Church: Jew - Old Testament very little spiritual revelation; Signs given to unbelieving; Great physical blessing and future literal earthly kingdom promised based on **obedience**. Church - Given great spiritual revelation in the completed Word of God; and Emphasis on spiritual and future heavenly rewards.

Beginning of Israel and the Church:

Israel - call of Abram unto a land - Genesis 12:1. Church - Some believe church began before or during the earth life of Christ. Matthew 16:18, Jesus says, upon this rock I will build my church" Not "have built" or "am building" but "will build". Also, if read Ephesians 3:5-10, you will find that the church is not once mentioned in Old Testament prophecy, but those ages, a mystery "hid in God" (Eph. 3:9). **Scripturally birth of the Church is in Acts 2, the day of Pentecost and will terminate at rapture in I Thessalonians 4.**

Today, Jew and Gentile are saved the same way by an exercise of faith on the Lord Jesus Christ whereby both are born again (John 3:3,16).

In the church the distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:14)

Contrast Israel Vs. Church in Rules Given for Conduct:

Israel: Man could avenge self - See Deut. 7:1-2; Exod. 21:24-25; & Deut. 21:18-21.

Church: Church not to avenge self - See I Cor. 4:12-13; & Rom. 12:17-21.

Worship Contrasted:

Israel could worship in but one place, and at a distance from God, only approaching Him through a priest.

The church worships wherever two or three are gathered, has boldness to enter into the holiest, and is composed of priests (each believer is a priest).

Israel:

Leviticus 17:8-9 - Tabernacle one place to worship

Luke 1:10 - Shows distance from God. **“without”**

Number 3:10 - Needed a priest

Church:

Matthew 18:20 - Wherever two or three gathered.

John 4:20-24 - Worship God in spirit and in truth.

Hebrews 10:19-20 - Direct access to God.

I Peter 2:5 - Believers are priests.

Look at Future - Contrasted

Church:

John 14:2-3 - The Church & each Christian's future dwelling place.

I Thessalonians 4:15-17 - Rapture of the Church

Philippians 3:20-21 - Christian promised new glorified body.

I John 3:2 - Christian promised he will see Christ & have a resurrected body like Christ.

Revelation 19:7-9 - Marriage of Church to Christ.

Revelation 20:6 - Second death no power over Christian & promise to reign with Christ.

Israel:

Zechariah 13:8-9 - These verses reference the great judgment by God upon the nation Israel during the Tribulation. As always with the nation Israel. God will preserve a remnant.

Malachi 3:2-6 - These are other verses which reference that great judgment by God upon the nation Israel during the tribulation.

Joel 2:28 - This will occur at the second coming of Christ when the nation Israel will be born again as a nation not as an individual.

Isaiah 66:8 - This is another reference which tells us the nation Israel will be born again at the end of the tribulation.

Ezekiel 36:24-30 - These verses reference the regathering of Israel into the land not only in 1948 but future after being dispersed during the tribulation and then

regathered at the beginning of the Millennium (verse 24). Then we see God cleansing the temple which the antichrist had desecrated during the tribulation and after that God will cleanse the nation Israel from all its idols (verse 25). Also, we are told in verses 26-29 how the nation Israel will be born again. In verse 30, we are told about all the physical blessings that will be give to Israel.

Review:

Israel:

Physical blessings
Incentive to live godly lives - earthly blessings

Promised Future:

Earthly physical bodies
Tribulation, Coming King and Kingdom
Millennium (Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth)

Church

Spiritual blessings
Incentive to live godly lives - rewards in heaven

Promise Future:

Spiritual bodies
Rapture, Judgment Seat of Christ
Come with King & Rule with King
New Jerusalem