

THE GENTILES AND THE LAW

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There's a God-given time line in the Bible; the word of God, more specifically in Ephesians 2. This time line consists of 3 time periods: the past: "time past", the present: "but now" and the future: "ages to come".

Time past:

Ephesians 2:11-12

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:

But now:

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Ages to come:

Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

This makes a lot of sense, if we take heed at the instructions given to us in...

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

There are divisions in the Bible, so studying the word of truth rightly divided has to do with distinguishing between those divisions and different time periods. All of the Bible is written for us; for our learning (Romans 15:4), but not all of the Bible is written directly to us! Not everything is our mail.

The "but now" period we live in is called the dispensation of the grace of God, or the body of Christ program. It started with the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, in Acts 9. Saul was later called Paul, and made the Apostle to and of the gentiles: our Apostle. The ascended, glorified Jesus Christ, from his place in heaven, revealed the mystery to him. That's why Paul's epistles are called "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" (Romans 16:25-26). One of the main differences between the "but now" period and the 2 other time periods; "time past" and "ages to come", is that God today ("but now") isn't recognizing any nation above any other nation. Today he's dealing with mankind as a whole; individually, not nationally. During the Kingdom program; in "time past" and "ages to come" the focus was, and will again be, His chosen nation; Israel. There was, and will again be, a distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles (the heathens, the non-Jews).

We who live during the dispensation of the grace of God, Jew or Gentile...makes no difference, are not under the law of Moses, but under grace:

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Does this mean that we, Gentiles, once were under the law?! Absolutely not, and this is where the confusion starts...

Let's take a closer look at Ephesians 2:11-12:

Ephesians 2:11-12

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 [time past] ye [Gentiles] 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:

In time past a Gentile (a heathen or a non-Jew) was "called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands"; the Jews. Someone who was uncircumcised was considered unclean, a dog (Matthew 15:26-27). The gentiles 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:". What a position to be in!!!

What about the Jews?

Romans 9:4-8

4 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;

5 Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

What a contrast compared to what we just read about the gentiles!

We know that God made a covenant (the old covenant) with Abraham:

Genesis 12:1-3

1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

This nation was called Israel.

Abraham-Isaac-Jacob

Genesis 17:1-8

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between **me and thee**, and will multiply **thee** exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with **thee**, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made **thee**.

6 And I will make **thee** exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of **thee**, and kings shall come out of **thee**.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and **thee and thy seed** after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto **thee, and to thy seed after thee**.

8 And I will give unto **thee, and to thy seed after thee**, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Abraham had two sons initially: one by his wife's handmaiden, Hagar, the other by Sarah. The first, Ishmael, was of the bondwoman (Hagar), and the second, Isaac, of the freewoman (Sarah). The first, Ishmael, was not of the Lord, but rather the labor of the flesh, so it was to be cast out.

Galatians 4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Abraham was to cast out Ishmael and his mother, for he was not to be heir even after Abraham pleaded for him.

Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Notice it doesn't say in "all thy seed", but rather in "thy seed", a particular seed line, the one the Lord gave of the freewoman. The seed which came of Sarah: Isaac. This is the seed with which God would establish His covenant.

Genesis 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

Now Isaac has two sons of the same wife. One, Esau, operates in unbelief, has little regard for his birthright and sells it (Genesis 25:27-34) to his brother Jacob. The seed line now passes through Jacob.

Genesis 28:13-14

13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

The seed and the blessings now come through Jacob's seed. However, not all Jacob's seed operates in faith. This is the real issue, this is why not all Israel is Israel! The real seed of

Abraham are those of the faith of Abraham.

Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Abraham responded by faith to what God had to say “and it was counted unto him for righteousness”. It made him right in the eyes of God.

Only the children of the promise, the Jews who took God at his word were and will be true Israel, when God sets Israel at the forefront again, after the dispensation of the grace of God comes to an end. That's why Paul, in Romans 9:6, says that; “For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:”

Romans 9:4-5

4 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;

5 Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

The work of the law?

Romans 2:12-15

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Notice it says “the WORK of the law written in their heart”, not the “law written in their heart”, as many change it to mean. When Paul is talking about the gentiles having the work of the law written in their hearts, he's talking about those who were never placed under the law contract, who supposed their righteousness was coming from their personal goodness. It was 'the moral code' the Gentiles supposed was their 'key to righteousness'. Whether man sets a moral code for himself (his own set of standards), or whether it be God's moral code called the law of Moses, the fact is, no man can merit a righteous standing before God by 'what he DOES'. Salvation is of grace, through faith, and has always been by grace, through faith. This is what Israel never understood, and the religious people of this world don't understand it either.

Circumcision

Let's continue where we left off, in Genesis 17:

Genesis 17:9-14

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, **thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.**

10 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, **between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.**

11 **And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.**

12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 **And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.**

Circumcision wasn't optional, it was mandatory! It was a token of the covenant between God and Abraham. Those who weren't circumcised were cut off from Israel. Being cut off from Israel, was the same as being cut off from God...one and the same thing. Everything God did was through his chosen nation; Israel.

What about all the gentiles who "were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"?! They had to proselyte to Judaism; become a Jewish proselyte. They had to take hold of Israel's covenant. Today there are no proselytes, because there's nothing to proselyte to. The Kingdom program; God's program with Israel, is put on hold in favor of the the body of Christ program, in the dispensation of the age of grace, where God is forming the one new man in Christ...in the person of His Son.

Ephesians 2:13-18

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

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Colossians 2:10-14

10 And **ye are complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

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

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Salvation

The second a lost person believes the Gospel (good news) of Christ they're baptized BY (not with) the Spirit into the body of Christ. The good news of Christ is that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son; the God-man. He died for ALL our sins, was buried and rose again the third day. This resolved the sin issue ONCE and for ALL, where the entirety of the world's sin debt was concerned, in the mind of the one to whom the payment for their sins was made; God the Father! To believe this good news is to be reconciled in your mind (Colossians 1:21, 2 Corinthians 5:20), not God's. It's a SON issue today, not a SIN issue. The issue isn't forgiveness of sin. The issue is believing what the cross work of Christ accomplished in your behalf, in order to be identified with and joined to Christ himself: having His test scores (His righteousness and His faith) written on your paper.

What about the 10 commandments? Have the gentiles ever been under those? Are we under the 10 commandments today? The answer is NO!

The 10 commandments were a part of the law, which in fact contained 613 commandments, not just 10. Some interpret the Bible to make a distinction between the moral and ceremonial law. They claim that while we are not under the ceremonial law, we are under the moral law. The problem with this view is that the Bible never makes a distinction between moral law and ceremonial law. Those who are under the law are bound by every statute; they cannot choose certain parts of the law to obey. Had you broken 1, you had broken all:

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

This is where the nation Israel was in error. They thought they had righteousness in and of themselves, and that they were meriting a righteous standing before God by law-keeping. That's not why God gave that nation the law! The law was given them to show them who they were: sinners. Perfect righteousness is the only righteousness God could and can recognize, and He had to provide it for them, and He would do that if they'd simply recognize that, change their mind (repent), and take Him at His word. We know they didn't. They rejected God the Father through John the Baptist. They rejected the Son: Jesus Christ, and at last they rejected the holy Spirit through Stephen, a man filled with the holy Spirit, in Acts 7. This resulted in the fall of Israel, where God set them aside for a season, and here we are...almost 2000 years after, and the age of grace continues on! Thank God for that!

Today salvation is readily available to all...Jew or gentile...makes no difference: we're all saved the same way. The law-The middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles is broken down. Once someone is in Christ they've put on Christ, and they're a new creature.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Colossians 3:10-11

10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

- 1** We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.
- 2** (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)