

GALATIANS INTRODUCTION PART 3

We have gone through two introductions. In the first lesson, we discussed the twelve questions. These questions deal with the author, audience, situations, purpose, and central truth. In the second lesson, we discussed the background of the Jew and Gentile.

Review of the Jew/Gentile Paradigm

Israel was chosen specifically by God. He chose one man out of the nations that were already established. This new nation was to be a light unto all the nations. They were to be the bearer and pillar of truth.

In the Law, there are provisions for Gentiles that come into Israel. There are three types of Gentiles in the Old Testament.

“nēkār” is a foreigner that has a different God. They are not allowed to worship YHWH. They could not eat of the Passover, and they were forbidden to marry an Israelite. They are permitted to do business, but they are not supposed to live in Israel. In the New Testament, the “nēkār” are typically referred to as Gentiles.

“tōšāb” is a foreigner that believes in YHWH and submits to the moral code of the Law, but he has not submitted to the whole Law, nor has he been circumcised. He is not permitted to worship YHWH or marry an Israelite, but he comes under the protection of Israel. In the New Testament, a “tōšāb” is called a God-fearer.

“gēr” is a foreigner that believes in YHWH, has submitted to the whole Law of God, and has been circumcised. They are welcomed and embraced among the Israelites and afforded the same rights and responsibilities as Israelites. They can marry Israelites, but they do not fully have birthrights; they are not Israelites. But in the kingdom, they will be granted an inheritance in the Land. In the New Testament, “gēr” are the proselytes.

Review History of the Jew and Gentiles in the Pharisaical System

The proselytes were welcomed, but they were still treated as foreigners. The Pharisees prized making a Gentile into a proselyte, but, as we established, they were still not permitted to function with the Jews as instructed by the Law.

During the time of the Intertestamental Period, it was still a good and godly benefit to believe in YHWH, get circumcised, learn the truth of God, and follow the Law. The problem comes in when a proselyte follows the false doctrine of the Pharisees. The proselyte system under the Pharisees was corrupt.

It is essential to understand that a proselyte is under the system of the Law. The instruction of being a proselyte is not found during the Church Administration. Today, a person cannot become a true proselyte because the administration of Israel is not currently in effect.

Under the Church Administration, there is neither Jew nor Greek; rather, being in Christ places you into His family. To become a proselyte in this administration is a violation of the economy that God has set up (Galatians 5:1-6; 1 Corinthians 7:17-20)

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Pharisees that Have Believed

Acts 15:5 states that there was a sect of the Pharisees who were believers.

The Pharisees were Orthodox Jews who set themselves up politically as separatists against the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Jews who had adopted Hellenistic philosophy. By definition, this was a good group; but as we have covered in other classes, they emphasized the Talmud and the traditions of men and lost the truth of the Word of God. They would eventually love power and influence over truth, would oppress the people, and place themselves as the authority rather than teach and uphold the Tanakh.

Both during the time of Jesus and during the time of the apostles, there were Pharisees and other leaders who believed in Jesus and attempted to reform Israel. The primary force behind this reformation is James, the brother of Jesus and Jude, who also wrote the letter of James.

John 3:1, 7:45-52, 19:38-42

These Pharisees were zealous for the Law, as they should have been (as long as they didn't use the Law for righteousness). As Jews, they were not to give up the Law, only to understand the proper application of the Law. Also, under Jesus, there were some aspects of the Law that a Jew must not follow (sacrificial system).

Acts 21:17-20

What we know now is that they were struggling with Paul's revelation about the administration of the body of Jesus, the new man, the church. These Pharisees that had believed were still operating under the assumption that Israel was still the administration and the Law was still the economy.

Therefore, for these Gentiles who now believed in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, the Law said that they must be brought into Israel (be circumcised and submit to the Law).

Based on what we can gather from the Acts and Paul's epistles, their initial intent may have been good. In the development of the controversy, it appears that their intent becomes corrupt.

The Goal of the Pharisees

In Acts 15:1, the objective was for them to be saved. This original intent was to save the Gentiles who had believed.

What was the concern of this group? The word *save* (σώζω *sōzō*) is a very diverse word (save, keep safe, preserve, rescue, make well). It is driven by the context. What was the Hebrew understanding of *save* (σώζω)?

Going back to the Hebrew Text, we have two main words that express *save* or *salvation*.

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mālat – this word is primarily used for escape. Reviewing only the concept of God saving, we have these verses:

Isaiah 46:1-4 – Israel will be preserved and saved from the captivity of Babylon

Jeremiah 39:15-18 – YHWH will save Jeremiah from death

Joel 2:32 – The entire context of Joel 2 demonstrates that this escape is from the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Daniel 12:1-2 – Three categories of Israelites: Those who live through the distress, those who die but are resurrected to everlasting life, and those who die but are awakened to everlasting destruction.

yāsha – This word with its cognates is the primary word group for salvation and is the primary word translated into “σῴζω” in the LXX.

Genesis 49:16-18 – This is probably a lament for Dan. The literal translation is “I have waited for your salvation.” To wait is to endure the tension of a difficult situation. Dan’s destiny is set, but his preservation is met with great difficulty.

Exodus 14:13, 30 – YHWH saved Israel from the Egyptians.

Deuteronomy 33:29 – This verse sums up the use of save in the Torah. God saved Israel from her enemies.

In Joshua, Judges, and the entire Hebrew Narrative, save is used perpetually for delivering Israel from the oppression of foreign armies. Even in very familiar verses, the context dictates a physical deliverance (2 Samuel 22; Psalm 18).

Isaiah 11:15-12:3 – This is in respect to the remnant surviving their enemies.

Isaiah 25 – Keeping this historical and not allegorizing the text, we must conclude this is about the future restoration of Israel under the preservation of the Messiah, and Israel will be established on this earth.

Don’t pull verses out of context. It may seem that there are verses in the Hebrew Scriptures that indicate a spiritual salvation. Still, the word is used exclusively for the preservation and restoration of Israel.

There are so many verses that could be reviewed. I will disclose my conclusion from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Salvation is in respect to either an immediate physical deliverance from enemies or the preservation of the nation of Israel.

An individual who will be part of restored Israel will either enter into the kingdom as a human or as a resurrected saint. But the idea of salvation does not include the

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concept of heaven. The eternal salvation of the Lord always includes the restoration of Israel.

In the Greek New Testament, the idea of *save* does not change in the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke present salvation as an eschatological promise. The problem with Israel is her perpetual unfaithfulness to YHWH and disbelief in the person and promise of YHWH.

Jesus entered Israel to save His people from their sins so that Israel could be restored and the kingdom of heaven could be established.

Jesus entered the world so that He would save the world and restore creation to its intended state.

Acts through Revelation present salvation as a proclamation of Jesus Christ to Israel and the whole world. We have been very narrow when determining the meaning. Is this saved from hell, saved from the power of sin, or saved from the presence of sin?

The more I study the concept of salvation in the New Testament, the more I am convinced that salvation refers to the complete package of the deliverance of God through Jesus Christ.

Being saved from hell and judgment is only one small aspect of salvation. We are saved by grace through faith. This includes the inheritance of the kingdom of God, not of Israel but the ruling and reigning of the world.

But the Jew would not have limited salvation to “saved from hell.” This concept is not found in the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Narrative of the Greek New Testament.

Salvation to them would have been an entrance into and an inheritance of the kingdom in the restored Messianic Kingdom that will also be over all the nations. In their understanding of the Law and under the administration of Israel, how was this accomplished for the Gentile?

Believers must be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses, becoming proselytes.

The problem is that certain believers of the sect of the Pharisees do not yield to Paul as an apostle of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, nor to the truth that God has saved (in all implications) the Gentiles; the evidence is that they received the Holy Spirit and performed many good works and signs.

Acts 11:15-18

Acts 15:5-19

The conclusion of the council is that the believing Gentiles do not need to become proselytes to be saved.