

THE JEW, THE GENTILE, AND THE CHURCH

There are many different ways of dividing men. We might divide them politically into Communists, Capitalists or Christians. We might divide them as to race. They would fall into the categories of Asian, Negroid or Anglo-Saxon. Denominationally, they might be divided into Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics—maybe more than 700 different preferences. We could also divide men into two distinct groups: saved men on their way to Heaven and lost men on their way to Hell. However, the Bible clearly divided men into three groups: The Jew, the Gentile, and the church. Paul speaks to us in I Corinthians 10:32, saying, "*Give none offense to the Jew, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.*" In this message, I would like to deal with those three divisions. First of all . . .

I. The Jew

Jews fall into four categories. There is first the extreme orthodox. Most of these are in Palestine today. Second, there is the orthodox. Third, conservative. And fourth, reformed. Someone has said the word "JEW" stands for "Jehovah's Eternal Witness."

The Jews have been around a long time. There are 6.1 million of them in the United States, 2.7 million of them in Israel and 2.6 million Jews in Russia. However, their religious influence seems to be declining. Synagogues are closing in the United States at the rate of 25 per year. Out of 8 billion people in the world, only 14 million are Jewish (one third of one percent of the population).

It is interesting to note that in the last few years 12 percent of the Nobel Prize winners in physics, chemistry, and medicine have been Jews. Karl Marx, the father of Communism, was a Jew; but so was Jesus Christ, the Father of Christianity. When Disraeli, the English statesman, was taunted by an English lord because of his Jewish birth, he replied, "Sir, my ancestors were princes and kings in the earth when yours were raving savages."

The Jews have the purest blood on earth today. For almost 5,000 years, they've maintained their identity. Their average lifespan is one third longer than ours. They have eaten and lived according to the laws given to Moses by God. Frederick the Great asked a court preacher for the unanswerable proof of the inspiration of the Bible. He answered, "The Jew, my master, the Jew."

In a day of spreading anti-Semitism, no Christian will hate the Jew. He taught you of your God, your Christ and gave you your Bible. The Bible makes a distinction between a Hebrew, an Israelite, and a Jew. A Hebrew is a descendant of Abraham; an Israelite denotes those of Jacob, and a Jew denotes those of Judah. The Jew has been around a long time. Water failed to drown him—consider Moses. Gallows failed to hang him—consider Mordecai. Fires failed to burn him—consider the Hebrews in the fiery furnace. Lions failed to eat him—consider Daniel. Persecution has failed to destroy him—consider the Israelis and their Six-Day War.

It all started in Genesis 12:1. Adam was not a Jew. Noah was not a Jew. Abraham was a Jew. God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and promised to make his seed as the sand of the sea, the stars of the sky and the dust of the earth (see Gen. 12:2,3; 13:16). Abraham gave birth to Isaac after the experience with Hagar and Ishmael. At Mount Moriah it appeared that God had changed His mind and would do away with Isaac, the promised seed; but the deliverance of Isaac through a miraculous experience made way for Jacob and Esau to be born. From Jacob came the twelve tribes of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Zebulun, Judah, Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher, Joseph and Benjamin.

After the twelve tribes were being assigned their ground in the land of Palestine, it was not long until they were under the reign and rule of judges. People tired of the judges soon and wanted to do that which was right in their own eyes. They began to cry out for a king. God gave them Saul and then David, then Solomon.

The prophets also were very prominent on the scene, giving the prediction of that which would come to pass in the history of Israel and giving us a preview of things to come in the future. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of a virgin of the tribe of Judah, from the house of David, soon was involved in the story of the Jew.

I suppose the saddest words in all the Bible can be found in John 1:11: "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*" Because of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah, Jews are put completely out of the picture. Romans, chapters 9, 10, and 11 tell us that Israel has been blinded in part. Individually, some Jews are being saved, but the nation of Israel has rejected the Messiah; and as a whole, they are in spiritual darkness. During the tribulation period on the earth, the two witnesses who are resurrected from the dead, spoken of in Revelation, chapter 11, will win 144,000 Jewish evangelists. They will go forth and win the nation of Israel to Christ in a day. They will accept Him as their own personal Messiah. Following that, they will play a very definite and prominent part in the thousand-year reign upon the earth. God will turn back to the Jew during the tribulation and during the millennium.

II. The Gentile

The story of the Gentile begins in the book of Daniel, chapter 2, with the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Babylon was descended from the people who built the Tower of Babel, whose tongues were confused. The image that Nebuchadnezzar saw and couldn't remember until Daniel came and revealed the meaning to him, was a giant statue with a golden head, silver shoulders, brass mid-section, iron hips, and iron and clay feet and toes. He watched until a great stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, came down from Heaven, smashed against the image, and broke it to pieces. Then it ground the image to powder and blew it away like chaff from the threshing floor.

Daniel explained to the king that the golden head was the Babylonian Empire. The silver represented the Medo-Persian Empire that would come on the scene after the first empire was dissolved. The brass represented the great

Greek Empire under Alexander the Great. The iron represented the Roman Empire that would conquer the world and rule from the East to the West. Iron and clay feet and toes seemed to suggest a communistic, capitalistic conflict between the ten countries of the ten sections of the Roman Empire.

Those ten divisions of the Roman Empire were absorbed into the history of the world, until recently when the nations of the European Common Market began to bring it all back into focus.

For about two thousand years now, there has been a discontinuation of the prophecy recorded in Daniel, chapter 2. This is the Period of Grace or the Church Age that was revealed to Paul in Ephesians, chapter 3. The stone cut without hands was the beautiful experience of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in great power and glory to overcome the remaining kingdoms of the world, grind up the teachings of their culture and philosophies, and spread them out to the corners of the earth. He will replace them with the beautiful kingdom of God on earth for one thousand years of millennial reign.

III. THE CHURCH

In Acts, chapter 2, we read of those who were added to the church. Jesus, of course, began to gather people together and plant them into a family or into a kingdom. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and launched the church into action. At Pentecost, three thousand Jews became a part of a local assembly. In Acts, chapter 10, a second Pentecost experience is referred to as the Gentile Pentecost because a great host of people were baptized into that same union. Local churches began to spring up everywhere the disciples went. As people received Christ as Saviour, they were baptized into the local church.

In Romans 3:9 we read that there is no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile: "*They are all under sin.*" In Romans 10:12,13 we read that there is no difference, "*for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" If a Jew

or Gentile comes in his sin and flees from judgment to receive Christ as his personal Saviour and Messiah, he is born into a third group.

The Lord is working now to gather people into His family during the church age. At His return He will take all of His children to Heaven by way of the Rapture or the Resurrection. They will all appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ and then enjoy the marriage feast with Jesus. Then they will return to the earth for the millennial reign. It is imperative that, whether a person be Jew or Gentile, he become a member of the family of God by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Messiah.

Years ago, I read of the tragedy of the dew. I had never thought of dew as being tragic. It is beautiful! It sparkles on the meadows at night when the moon is shining, and it looks like diamonds over the meadow when the sun touches it early in the morning. Yet the article said that as the process of evaporation was discontinued in the cool of the evening, some of the water that was being transferred to heaven by the rays of the sun was cut off because of the temperature change. That moisture fell back to earth. The author called it "water that started for heaven too late"; and, of course, it missed out. It is likely that some of the readers of this article may wait too late to get the matter settled in your heart about what is going to happen to you when you die. I trust you will not be like the dew.