



Covenant Answering Service



Produced by The Federation of the Covenant People,
P.O. Box 830, Honeydew, 2040, SOUTH AFRICA.

ISSUE NO. 4

QUESTION: I have been intrigued over the rash of statements which have appeared in our American newspapers concerning the Ark of the Covenant – some say that there was more than one Ark while others say that it was captured by the Babylonians and melted down. I have read what you have to say about the Ark but is there any more to it?

ANSWER: The study of the things of scripture is no static exercise – it is an ongoing research and while the fate of the Ark of the Covenant remains an enigma with

only the Apocryphal account relating that it was buried in mount Nebo, very little other information is available on it. However, one or two additional points to what has already been written in *The Covenant Message*, may be of interest here. The first feature which gives rise to further research is the fact that according to Exodus 25:18, the LORD commanded that in the construction of the Ark and its “lid” – not “mercy seat” as this appears in the Authorised Version – He said: “And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.” According to most commentaries on Biblical matters the “cherubim”

are said to be beings of "an angelic order" which would make the LORD God in violation of His Second Commandment — "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth . . ." (Ex. 20:4). As the LORD does not break His own Commandments nor does He expect His people to break them, one can only conclude, as with the case of the "mercy seat" which *became* a priestly catchphrase at some later time, this feature of "Cherubims" too was a later addition.

The second feature of interest is whether or not the LORD had it in mind that a great temple — as that of Solomon's — was intended as the final resting place of the Ark? The rings for the staves would appear to indicate the Ark's portability and while it could be argued that this was most convenient for transporting it from place to place, if its destiny was to be the temple, why did the LORD not make reference to the redundancy of the rings at some future time? As has been said earlier, this is an ongoing research and from time to time, comment will be made as further evidence becomes available.

QUESTION: Since Jesus was not a Jew, how does one reconcile the statement: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not"?

ANSWER: Because the Jews rejected Him, it is generally thought that *they* were "his own" and yet, if one considers what He said to and concerning the Jews, this "thought" is no longer tenable. It will be noted that the Lord stated quite categorically that the Jews were "not of God" (John 8:47) and further, that they were not His "sheep" (John 10:26) — not His possession. Thus, as one looks at the Lord's attitude toward the Jews, there can be very little

doubt that one must discard any notion of *them* being "His own".

There are of course some who, recognising the heterogeneous nature of the inhabitants of Judaea, divide the Judaeans into two parts — the one being the true descendants of the tribe of Judah and the other, the mixed multitude who adopted Judaeans nationality through conforming with priestly proselytism. However, one should note that the Lord did not divide the population of Judaea into those two parts but treated them all as a whole. A very significant feature emerges when one considers a statement which He made when visiting Jerusalem which of course, was the centre of the Judaeans nation. In addressing Himself to the Jews, He said: "Ye have neither heard his voice (the Voice of the Father) at any time, nor seen his shape" (John 5:37) which, when one compares this with Israel, is seen as a direct refutation that the Jews had any association with the Covenant People. *Israel* certainly heard the Voice of the LORD at Sinai and in the literal translation of Exodus 24:9-11, one is given to understand that they saw His Shape as well. The point to note here is that the Lord did *not* say: "Some of you have neither heard his voice . . ." — He merely said: "Ye have neither heard his voice" — embracing the Jews collectively.

Having therefore seen who were not His own, one seeks further light from the Gospel accounts and in considering Matthew 13:53-57, one notes that He returned to Galilee which is called His "own country" and taught the people who were amazed at what He said. "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." So then the Lord called Galilee His own country and the people, His own house. It is significant that the context here is devoid of any mention of the Judaeans or Jews and it will be noted that it was the *Galileans* who were "offended in him" i.e. were offended at what He taught. Here was a rejection by the people of "his own country" — a rejection which was extended when, in John 7:5, it is stated: "For neither did his brethren believe him." Thus, in the *local sense*, His own did not receive Him and in a broader *national*

sense, the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" too did not receive Him for the version which they received concerning the Lord and His Advent was different to what actually took place.

QUESTION: As a life-long Christian and believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am puzzled and in extreme anxiety to know the meaning of Luke 11:9-13. What did the Lord mean when He said: "Ask and it shall be given unto you" and then "seek and ye shall find" and then again "knock and it shall be opened unto you"? What is IT? and what did He really mean?

ANSWER: If one takes this statement – or any others which the Lord made – out of its overall context, it becomes the source of manipulation according to whatever persuasion a person may have. Many believing Christians have applied this passage and, receiving no answer, have turned away with shattered faith. However, in approaching the things which the Lord taught, one should take note of the base from which He taught and despite what is taught today, this base was the Law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17). It is an unfortunate fact of life today that the LORD'S Israel people do not believe Him but prefer to wallow in doctrines which divorce them from the LORD. While things are going well with them, they attribute this to "grace" but when stress or crisis comes along, they ask and receive no answer, they seek for an explanation and none comes along, they knock and nothing opens to them – and they wonder why. After all: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13) – what then has gone wrong?

Once again, one should remember the base from which the Lord taught namely, the Law. If one considers Proverbs 28:9 one reads: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall

be an abomination" – which is precisely what happened to Israel when it turned away from the LORD'S Directive and placed the whole emphasis of national life on the priestly ordinances (Isa. 59:2). In the New Testament and in 1st John 3:22 one reads: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because we keep his commandments*, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Being the Word incarnate in the flesh, one should not think of "his commandments" as being a different set of Laws than those given at Sinai. They were the same. Here then is the answer. Faith, without the works of keeping the Law is dead (James 2:20-26) – a lesson derived from the history of Israel who had faith in the ordinances but who lacked the works of the Law.

QUESTION: According to our belief, God is doing all the terrible things in the world today – according to Revelation – because we have gotten so bad and gone against God's laws and that is the reason He is doing this. Is this so? – would appreciate an answer.

ANSWER: This question has been answered in the Kingdom Cassette Service recording number 65 but for those who do not have this, the following facts will assist. In summarising the giving of the Law to the new generation of Israelites who were about to enter the land of Canaan, Moses said: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;..." (Deut. 30:15). Israel therefore had two options open to it – obey the Constitution and enjoy the promised blessings – disobey and experience the "death and evil" clause.

The statement which accompanies this question, namely, that "God is doing all the terrible things in the world today" is not quite correct. One should be careful not to blame God for events when, in point of fact, the nation Israel is responsible. As a Christian company of nations, the true modern development of Israel are saying exactly what Israel was saying just prior to their removal into captivity – "Is not the

LORD among us? none evil can come upon us" (Mic. 3:11). Today, the statement is: "We are Christians and the Lord is among us – none of this evil can come upon us." When it does as indeed it is doing, the people blame the LORD – *not themselves* – forgetting that He warned what would happen if the nation, which is His own peculiar possession (Isa. 43:1), refused to be guided by His Will. What is happening today is that the consequences of Law-violation are in operation and Israel has only itself to blame – not God.

QUESTION: The subject of the "Gentiles" has always intrigued both my wife and myself. We have noted in the shorter Oxford English Dictionary that the word "gentile" is a Middle English (c.1150–c.1450 A.D.) word adapted from the Latin "gentiles" from "gent" or "gens", meaning "nation". We find it difficult to reconcile today's usage of the word – could you elaborate?

ANSWER: If one considers the vocabulary used by today's generation, one sees that the older generation are called "squares" implying that they are not "with it" – whatever IT may be. Until recently, one finds that the word "square" as applied in a social sense, meant: "Just, equitable, honest, honourable, straightforward, precise, steady and reliable." Future generations will therefore find it difficult to understand how the word "square" could be given a range of meanings so diametrically opposed to the dictionary definition. One has precisely the same problem with the word "Gentile" as indeed with many other words recorded in the scripture.

In considering the Latin dictionary – the question rightly states that the English "Gentile" originates from the Latin language – one finds the following definition. "Gens, gentis (root gen, gigno, that which belongs together by birth or descent), a race or clan embracing several families united together by a common name... Originally only patrician, but after the granting of the connubium between patrician and plebeians,

also plebeians..." The word "Gentilis" is defined as: "Of or belonging to the same clan, stock or race – a person belonging to the same family or gens, a relative bearing the same name..."

The Greek word embodying the same meaning is *ethnos* while in Hebrew, the equivalent word is *gōwy*. At some stage in history, the three words, *gōwy*, *ethnos* and *gentilis* were given secondary meanings which, with the passage of time, excluded the primary meaning completely. The source of this change may be historically traced to the Jews. When *Israel* was in the land i.e. before the captivities, they were entirely indifferent to their neighbours and had no particular name for those who had a faith different from their own. The surrounding nations were simply called *gelil ha-goyim* which literally translated, meant "circle of the nations" and which carried no stigma castigating their belief. Thus, *Israel* looked on the neighbouring nations simply in the light of geography and nothing else.

However, after the Judaeon nation had established itself – bearing in mind that it was a "nation" only in the political and not the racial sense – *they* introduced a secondary meaning for the Hebrew *gōwy* in that anyone who practised a faith different to theirs was labelled with the secondary meaning and implied "a heathen". Thus, to the Jewish mind and in the Jewish vocabulary, the Hebrew word *goy*, irrespective of its primary meaning of "nation", became synonymous with everyone who did not belong to their faith. Later, when the scriptures were translated into Latin, Jewish thought still prevailed and the ecclesiastics took the Latin *gens* and gave it a secondary meaning which has survived to the present day in the word "Gentile". Individuals, groups and nations who are not of the Jewish faith are therefore called "Gentiles" thus perpetuating the Jewish practice of coining secondary meanings which are advantageous to their masquerade.

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