



Covenant Answering Service



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ISSUE NO. 9

QUESTION: I have a few problems with the word "Gentile" and while I know that you dealt with this subject in one of your earlier editions of *The Covenant Answering Service*, if you have the time, I would appreciate clarity on one or two points. I have heard several of our Identity teachers emphasise the fact that the "Gentiles" in the Epistles

are the Israel nations and this creates the first of my problems — when did the transformation take place? By this I mean, Christ chose twelve apostles — and told them to ignore the “Gentiles” and to concentrate on the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”. “Gentiles” and “Israel” cannot therefore be the same.

Another point that bothers me is this matter of the “Gentile Church” which, as I understand it, means a Church of all believers no matter who or what they are. As I read my Bible, there is no room for a “church” in Israel and certainly no such thing as a “Gentile Church” and yet this seems to have replaced Israel entirely. Can you enlarge on this subject because quite frankly, I cannot accept what I hear about the “Gentiles”.

ANSWER: As this subject was dealt with in our 4th issue of *The Covenant Answering Service*, there is no need to reiterate the facts relating to the Hebrew and Greek words which have been translated as “Gentiles” in our English versions. However, judging from the current usage of this word, it would appear that certain theologians are of the opinion that instead of meaning a “nation” comprising people descended from a common ancestor, the word “Gentile” carries a status meaning which, in effect, indicates a person’s relationship to the LORD. If, through sin, one is divorced from the LORD, one is said to have become a “Gentile” just as Israel in Old Testament times is said to have become “Gentilised” when it was taken into captivity. By what right anyone can transpose a word — either Hebrew or Greek — which clearly means “nation” into a word indicating relationship is just one of those theological mysteries which theologians alone can explain.

In continuing with this theme of “Gentiles”, Identity teachers who hold that the “Gentiles” in the Epistles are the Israel

nations in dispersion, invariably use Paul as their authority for this. This being so, attention is now focussed on the Epistle to the Romans — with particular reference to the 11th chapter which, without a doubt, contrasts the Gentiles with Israel. In verses 11 and 12 of this chapter, Paul states: “I say then, Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their (Israel’s) fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world and the diminishing of them the richness of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?” As one looks at these two verses, one cannot escape the conviction that Paul was differentiating between “Israel” and the “Gentiles” and that under the circumstances, it is impossible to identify Israel as the “Gentiles” here. According to Paul, the “stumbling” and the “falling” of Israel was aimed at enriching the “Gentiles” — contention which has absolutely no foundation when one researches the Old Testament scriptures. In point of fact, while Paul makes free use of the writing of the prophets — which at times he confuses with the Law (1st Cor. 14:21) — one finds that more often than not his version of the Old Testament is somewhat different from what the actual prophets wrote — one instance of which is to be found in Romans 1:17 which is supposed to be a quote from Habakkuk 2:4, but in which Paul saw fit to act as censor.

If one passes on to the 13th verse in Romans 11, it will be seen that Paul makes a specific claim within the context of those “Gentiles” whom he says were enriched by Israel’s fall in that he wrote: “For I speak to you Gentiles, *inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles*, I magnify mine office . . .” As Paul claims to be the “apostle of the Gentiles” and as the “Gentiles” are clearly established as other than Israel, it naturally follows that whatever Paul created would be associated with his “Gentile” office. It was

within this that the so-called "Gentile Church" was formed which is built almost exclusively on Pauline doctrine and not on the teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord.

IN SUMMARY: While the Hebrew *goy* and the Greek *ethnos* literally indicate nations, theology has changed this – without scriptural authority – and insists that it indicates those who are in need of reconciliation with God – which even a most elementary knowledge of the two languages concerned, will show to be without foundation.

QUESTION: I need some help on a subject which is very emotive and which is very definitely being used to hide Identity facts from God's People. All through my studies – and this goes back through more years than I care to remember – I have understood that God was very "anti" when it came to other people being mixed with His Israel People and that He came down very hard on the nation when it began to relax on the Laws which secured Israel's continued separation. Yet when I mention this, I am told that Jesus Christ ushered in a new dispensation – a dispensation of Missionary endeavour in which all people lose their natural identity when they are "born again" through faith in Christ.

Now, this I find somewhat confusing because, as I read in Amos 3:7, the Lord says that He will do nothing unless He first reveals his intention through His servants the prophets. I think that I know "Moses and the prophets" pretty well, but I have never found any mention of a "new Missionary dispensation" in their writing. As I read the Old Testament, the last Book assures me

that my God is an unchanging God and as He made no reference to any change through His prophets, I guess I go along with James believing that there is "no variableness neither shadow of turning" in my God (James 1:17). Now, as I read the New Testament, I find the Son saying that He couldn't do anything that He had not seen the Father do and as the Father didn't change His National Plan in Israel, I fail to see how a new doctrine of racelessness in "born again" Christians can be true. What is this "born again" doctrine and how is it that the Father never mentioned it? Please, I need some help.

ANSWER: At the outset we should note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ who warned of the practice of the Pharisees – "... in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Insofar as the "born again" doctrine is concerned and notwithstanding the account in John 3:3, this doctrine derives from the theology of men and not from God. Before looking into this subject, it would serve to note the record of John 3:3 as it appears in the Authorised Version of the Bible. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Well then, there it is – what could be plainer? Fair enough. Let us take a look at some other translations and see what comes up. Moffat's translation of the Bible reads: "Truly, truly I tell you, no one can see God's Realm unless he is born from above", and as must be obvious in this translation, the Authorised Version's "again" has been replaced by the expression: "from above". Ferrar Fenton's translation puts it this way: "Most assuredly I tell you," replied Jesus, "that unless any one is born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" – once again the replacement of "again" with "from above". One final translation and this from The Jerusalem

Bible which reads: "I tell you most solemnly, unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Thus, as one looks at John 3:3 one may see something of the theologian's dilemma in the varied translations which have laid the foundation for doctrines which were certainly not intended by the Lord when He spoke to Nicodemus. Now, Nicodemus was, of course, a "master" or teacher in Israel and even he was somewhat perplexed and one has only to read his response to what our Lord said to realise that he too approached the subject with preconceived notions. "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" In the light of this statement, there can be very little doubt that Nicodemus was under the impression that the Lord intended to convey a "second birth" which has naturally led to the notion of a second or "spiritual rebirth". The question therefore arises as to whether or not the Lord did intend to convey this notion or something else.

The simple expediency of resorting to a Concordance will show that Nicodemus, in responding to the Lord's statement, used a word which is not found in Christ's initial statement. He correctly understood the Greek word *gennao* as meaning "birth" but from that point he deviated by saying "... can he enter the second time into his mother's womb? The word used by Nicodemus here was *deuteros* which literally translated means "a second time" or "a second occasion" while in John 3:3, the Lord used the expression "*gennao anothēn*" which by no stretch of the imagination is the same as Nicodemus' question. If one passes to verse 31 in John 3, it will be seen that John the Baptist, in speaking of the Christ, said: "He that cometh from above (Greek, *anothen*) is above all..." which clearly shows the true meaning of *anothen*

and which does not and cannot mean a second or a spiritual rebirth. Literally, the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Unless a person is begotten from above (*anothen* — Aorist or Present tense), he cannot see the kingdom of God." This, say some people, is contradicted by verse 5 which speaks of spiritual rebirth through water baptism: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This does not refer to water baptism but rather the plain statement that unless physical life and its spiritual counterpart are both inherited at birth, that person cannot enter the Kingdom of God. While this may not be acceptable to many within the pentecostal fraternity, all that one has to do is to examine the Greek text and this feature becomes an inescapable fact.

What in fact the Lord was saying to Nicodemus, who it will be recalled was a teacher in Israel and who should have been acquainted with the facts of Israel's formation, was that the LORD had formed Israel in the womb (Isa. 44:2) and if one goes back to Genesis 21:1 one is able to see Sarah giving birth to the seed which had been "begotten from above" — a fact which, far from abolishing race within the concept of being reborn, establishes the continuity of Israel — the people who are to be called "the sons of the living God" (Hos. 1:10). And thus, as in so many instances when one researches the Biblical story, one is able to see the Israel story running through — hidden at times by translation errors but brought to light if one takes the trouble to "search the scriptures".

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