

IS THE GENTILE NOW A JEW?

by Avram Yehoshua

<http://SeedofAbraham.net>

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The Gentile believer in Messiah Yeshua is part of the Commonwealth of Israel, but that doesn't make him a Jew, Hebrew, Israeli ('Israelite'),¹ or even a so-called 'spiritual Jew.' Yes, the Gentile is part of the Seed that Father Abraham was promised and he has also been grafted into the Olive Tree (Israel; Romans 9–11), but that doesn't change him into a Jew or a Hebrew anymore than when a woman marries a man. The man and his wife become 'one flesh' (Gen. 2:24), but the woman doesn't become a man. The Jewish and Gentile believers are 'one in Messiah' (Gal. 3:28), but the Gentile doesn't become a Jew. He remains a Gentile.

The Apostle Paul speaks of the Gentile believer now being part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:1-12).² What does it mean to be part of the Commonwealth of Israel? Let's take an illustration from the natural realm first, to explain it—let's take an Irishman. He's part of the Commonwealth of Great Britain, but he's not an Englishman (or a Brit, as many Englishmen now like to call themselves). In other words, the Irishman is still an Irishman. He was an Irishman before Ireland came into the Commonwealth of Great Britain, and also after. Being part of the Commonwealth of Great Britain means that both the Irishman and the Brit have the same king (or queen), and their rule of life (law) is built upon the same foundation of English law (the Magna Carta, etc.), but it doesn't mean that the Irishman is no longer an Irishman or that he has become a Brit.

Now for the spiritual application. Let's take the classic Gentile—Ruth the Moabitess. The Covenant was given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their Seed. Those who came on board with them, like Ruth, *remained a Gentile* and became part of the covenant people (i.e. Commonwealth) of Israel. Ruth, after she spoke of being 'one with Naomi, Naomi's people and her God' (Ruth 1:16-18) became part of Israel (without rabbinic conversion, which is an artificial, non-biblical concept), but Ruth remained a Moabitess all the days of her life (Ruth 1:22; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10; cf. 2:10-12), but all the divine laws of Moses that applied to a Jewish woman applied to her, too. She was 'one' with Israel.

Boaz, as the kinsmen-redeemer³ of Ruth, pictures Yeshua as *the* Kinsmen-Redeemer.⁴ Ruth, the Moabitess, the woman from a pagan land, pictures the Gentiles of the nations who leave their father and her mothers, and their gods and become one with Israel through Yeshua, the Kinsmen-Redeemer. These Gentiles, like Ruth, don't become Jews or Hebrews, but are one with Israel through their marriage to the Kinsmen-Redeemer.

Rabbinic conversion is a man-made concept that *artificially* makes a Gentile a Jew. There is nothing in the *Tanach* (Old Testament), nor the New Testament, to support this change of racial identity. Looking at

¹ The term *Israelite* is an archaic term from the Greek New Testament for an Israeli, hence, my use of Israeli instead of Israelite. I will be using these terms (Jew, Hebrew, Israeli) interchangeably. For an article on how the term *Jew* constitutes 'Israel,' ask for the PDF *Jews, Israel and the Jews Today*.

² The ASV, KJV, NASB, NKJV and the NRSV have *Commonwealth*, while the HCSB, NET and the NIV have *citizenship*. Either translation is acceptable, yet, *Commonwealth* is preferred because it speaks of the entity (Israel 'after the Spirit') rather than the individual within the entity.

³ The term relative is used 11 times in the story (Ruth 2:1; 3:2, 9, 12 (twice), 13; 4:1, 3, 6, 8, 14). It can also be translated as kinsmen (KJV, NIV, etc.), which means kinsmen-redeemer.

⁴ Ex. 6:6; Lev. 25:25f.; Hosea 13:14; Rom. 3:24; 1st Cor. 1:10; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:12.

Ittai, the Gentile general who served under King David, will reveal that Ittai remained a Philistine all the days of his life, even though he lived in Israel. In other words, Ittai didn't become a Hebrew even though he was 'one' with David and Israel, and even though he lived in Israel.⁵

When David fled from his own son Absalom, who wanted to murder him and assume the kingship over Israel, David and his entourage hurriedly left Jerusalem. In stopping to reconnoiter who was with him David saw Ittai and Ittai's men (soldiers). Scripture records:

'And the King went out with all the people after him and stopped at the outskirts. Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him *from Gath* (Philistines!) passed before the King. Then the King said to *Ittai the Gittite*,

'Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king (Absalom), for you are a **foreigner** and also an exile from your own homeland. In fact, you came only yesterday.⁶ Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I don't know where I'm going? Return and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you.'

'But Ittai answered the King (as Ruth did to Naomi) and said,'

'As Yahveh lives!, and as my Lord the King lives! Surely in whatever place my Lord the King shall be, whether in death or in life, even there also your servant will be!'

"So David said to Ittai, 'Go and cross over!'"

'Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all their children who were with him crossed over.' (2nd Samuel 15:17-22)

Ittai the Gittite's loyalty to King David is truly commendable because Ittai was a Philistine (general) from the Philistine city of Gath, as the *Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* brings out.⁷ Ittai had come to serve the King of Israel, but he remained a Philistine all the days of his life,⁸ as this passage brings out when David says to him, 'you **are** a foreigner,' not, you *were* a foreigner. Ittai was still a Gentile, even though he was an integral part of King David's Israel.

As a Philistine Ittai should have been a mortal enemy of David, but he was now part of the Commonwealth of Israel and would receive benefits, both temporal and eternal, because of his love for King David.⁹ Ittai is a picture of the Gentile believer, while King David is a picture of Messiah Yeshua.

⁵ In one sense, Ittai would be seen as an Israeli, one who *lived* in Israel, but in racial terms, Ittai would never be an Israeli.

⁶ David doesn't literally mean that Ittai came 'only yesterday,' but chooses that phrase to say that Ittai hadn't been with David for a long time. David was trying to give him 'a way out.'

⁷ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, authors; M. Richardson, translator, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* vol. 1 (Boston, MA USA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), p. 206. 'גִּתִּי...of גַּת (Gath) הַגִּתִּי (*haGiti*) 'from Gath; Jos. 13:3 2S 6:10f; 15:19-22; 18:2; 21:19; 1C 13:13; 20:5; pl. הַגִּתִּים (*haGitim*) 2S 15:18.'

Also, גִּתִּי *Hebrew to English Dictionary and Index to the NIV Old Testament*, n.p. (numbers correspond to *Strong's Concordance*) '1785 [1663] גִּתִּי, *gittiy*, a.g. [1781; cf. 1780]. Gittite, *of Gath.*' *Accordance Bible Software*.

⁸ 2nd Samuel 18:2, 5.

⁹ See also Uriah the Hittite, one of King David's champions, as another example of a foreigner residing within Israel who was one with Israel, but wasn't seen as a Jew (1st Sam. 26:6; 2nd Sam. 11:3, 6, 17, 21, 24; 12:9; 23:39; 1st Kgs. 15:5), and the Gibeonites, who were in Canaan before Israel (Joshua 9:Iff.), but Joshua was deceived into making a covenant with them. Four hundred years later, in the reign of King David, they were still seen as

A Gentile who comes to believe in Yeshua, the King of Israel, doesn't become a Jew, or a Hebrew, or an Israeli, but remains a Gentile. Yes, he is part of the Seed that Father Abraham was promised, but nowhere in the New Testament do we see any Gentile being referred to as a Jew, or a Hebrew, or an Israeli. Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that a Gentile believer was anything other than a Gentile believer. All believers are in Messiah's Kingdom, but not all are Jews, yet, all are part of the Commonwealth of Israel, the Olive Tree, and The Seed of Abraham.

The word *Jew* or *Jews* in the New Testament *always* refers to the person who was racially born from the Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.¹⁰ God cements this concept in the New Covenant by saying that the Gentile believers weren't to be circumcised like the Jews (Acts 15:1f.; 21:20-24; 1st Cor. 7:17-19; Gal. 2:3, etc.). The Pharisees who believed in Yeshua wanted the Gentiles to (artificially) become Jews via physical circumcision (Acts 15:1-5f.), but God, through Peter and James, overruled them (and rabbinic conversion), reestablishing the biblical concept that Gentiles who align themselves with Israel are one with Israel, but don't become Jews.¹¹

BUT DOESN'T "GENTILE" MEAN PAGAN?

Some Gentile believers are offended by the term because among Jews it can mean someone who is a pagan (heathen). The term Gentile, or *Goy/goy* in Hebrew, can be a pejorative term among the Jewish people because all the peoples or nations, other than Israel, were pagan, but the term can also be used in a neutral way to describe someone who isn't Jewish. The Jews were the only people or nation that didn't worship idols (when they were following the Lord).

Originally the term *goy* in the Bible was used of any nation or people, even the Jews. The *Hebrew and English Lexicon* says that *goy* means, a 'nation or a people...of the Seed of Abraham...of Israel and Judah and...of non-Hebrew people.'¹² In other words, biblically, the term *Gentile* was used of both Jews and people of other nations, without any inference to paganism.

The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament speaks of *goy* as a people or a nation and says that the two (people and nation) are interchangeable.¹³ The *Wordbook of the Old Testament* also states that the term *Gentile* refers to both Israel and the other nations:

"*Gentile, heathen, nation, people...*The term גוי (*goy*/Gentile) "is used especially to refer to specifically defined political, ethnic or territorial groups of people without intending to ascribe a specific religious or moral connotation. Thus, in Gen 10:5" it "speaks of defined

strangers in the midst of Israel, yet one with Israel (2nd Samuel 21:1-2f.).

Also, read *Two Different Kingdoms? The Stranger and the Native-Born*, the Appendix in *The Lifting of the Veil: Acts 15:20-21* at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Lifting-of-the-Veil.pdf> for the Old Testament distinction between the Gentile who became part of Israel (the *ger*; translated as *stranger* in the NKJV and NASB, etc.), and the natural Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The schematic diagram of the five different types of Gentiles can also be found online in the article *Gentile Circumcision?* at <http://seedofabraham.net/Gentile-Circumcision.pdf>.

¹⁰ Gentiles who mistakenly convert to Judaism via the Rabbis are called proselytes and even though the Rabbis say that 'they are now Jews,' they are not, according to God's Word.

¹¹ See Acts 15:7-10, 14, 16-17, 19, especially v. 23 where these Gentile believers are still called Gentiles.

¹² Dr. Francis Brown, Dr. S. R. Driver and Dr. Charles A. Briggs, based on the lexicon of Professor Wilhelm Gesenius; Edward Robinson, translator and E. Rodiger, editor, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1978), p. 156. גוי

¹³ Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* vol. 1, p. 183. גוי, *Goy* used of Israel: Gen. 18:18; Is. 60:22; Ezk. 35:10; Ps. 106:5. *Goy* used of pagan peoples: Ex. 34:24; Lev. 18:24; Ezk. 5:6-8.

groups of people according to their territories. When God speaks to Abraham about Egypt as a strong nation the term גוי (*goy*) is used...In this general ethnic sense the term” is “used of Abraham’s seed...God said to Abraham, ‘I will make of you a great nation’ (*goy*) i.e. a political, territorial, identified people (Gen 12:2; 17:20; 21:18). In Ex 33:13 Moses, referring to Israel, a distinct body of people, says, ‘This גוי (i.e., nation) is thy people (אֶמְ) *ahm*; people). In Deut. 4:6-7, Moses speaks of the Israelite nation as a political, ethnic body (גוי *goy*) which is a wise and understanding people’ (*ahm*) existing as, and recognized by other nations as, a specific national identity (Ps 83:4 [H 5]). It is necessary to stress that the Scriptures speak of Israel’s existing as a distinct nation in Moses’ time because of the widespread misapprehension that Israel became a nation only after entering Canaan. Israel was a nation in Moses’ time, just as it was in Joshua’s time (Josh 3:17; 4:1; 5:6). So also in Jeremiah’s time and thereafter, in spite of the exile (Jer 31:36).”¹⁴

Although today the Hebrew term *goy* (Gentile) means a non-Jew, when used by a Jew, the term itself basically means someone belonging to a distinct people (e.g. Babylonians, Hebrews, Egyptians, Canadians, etc.). By New Testament times the word had come to be applied to peoples other than Jews, and that’s how it’s used in the New Testament, which uses the Greek term ἔθνος *ethnos*, which means, a ‘nation, people or a Gentile.’ The *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says that it is used for ‘*non-Israelite Christians, gentiles* of Christian congregations composed of more than one nationality.’¹⁵ There is no inherent evil in the term *Gentile*.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

The Gentile believer never stops being a Gentile (‘one of the nations’).¹⁶ *The Israel of God* is mentioned only once in the New Covenant (Gal. 6:16). Paul doesn’t teach on it as much as use it to highlight a response to the Judaizers, and as a sign-off. The Judaizers wanted the Gentile to be circumcised in order to be saved and to become part of the Jewish people (the people of God) the rabbinic way, but God had another way—through the death of His Son, which brings about the circumcision of the heart for those who believe. The Israel of God could also be called the Israel ‘after the Spirit,’ as opposed to the Israel ‘after the flesh’ (1st Cor. 10:18). The Gentile believer is part of this Israel ‘after the Spirit.’

In Acts the Gentiles who came to Christ were still called Gentiles. After the decision of James in Acts 15, that the believing Gentiles weren’t to be physically, covenantally circumcised, Scripture still calls them Gentiles:

“They wrote this letter by them: ‘The Apostles, the Elders, and the Brethren: ‘To the *Brethren who are of the Gentiles* in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings!’” (Acts 15:23)

“*But concerning the Gentiles, who believe*, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.” (Acts 21:25)

¹⁴ R. L. Harris, editor; Gleason Archer, Jr. and Bruce Waltke, associate editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. I (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), pp. 153-154. גוי

¹⁵ Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 218. ἔθνος

¹⁶ See Rev. 7:9; 15:4; 21:24, 26; 22:2 where *nations* can equally be translated *Gentiles*.

NKJV)¹⁷

In Romans the Apostle Paul speaks about the Gentiles who had come to believe in Jesus. According to Paul they were still Gentiles:

“that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that *the offering of the Gentiles* might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:16)

“who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all *the congregations of the Gentiles.*” (Romans 16:4)

The concept of the Gentile remaining a Gentile is a constant theme throughout both Covenants.¹⁸

REMEMBER THAT FORMERLY YOU, THE GENTILES...

No other term is ever used for Gentile believers except perhaps ‘uncircumcised,’ to contrast the Gentiles with the circumcised Jews, as Paul does in Ephesians. In this passage some wrongly think that Paul is using the word *formerly* to mean that that’s what the Gentiles used to be called (Gentiles), but nowhere in this passage, or anywhere else, are the Gentiles given another designation—they are still Gentiles:

¹¹“Therefore *remember*, that *formerly you*, the Gentiles *in the flesh*, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands—¹²*remember* that you were at that time *separate from Christ*, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:11-12 NASB; see also Eph. 3:6; Colossians 1:9-23 especially vv. 12, 21-22)

The phrase *formerly you, the Gentiles* doesn’t mean that the Gentiles were *formerly* called Gentiles, and now in Messiah they aren’t Gentiles any longer. *Formerly* applies to their former position as Gentiles *in the flesh—separated from Christ*, excluded from the Commonwealth of Israel, and having no hope of salvation. This is brought out with the NASB using *remember* before *formerly*, and also, after *human hands*, so as to reconnect Paul’s initial thought back to what he was saying: ‘*remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh...remember that you were...separate from Christ.*’ Paul is speaking about the condition of the Gentiles before they came to Christ. He’s not saying that they’re no longer Gentiles. The Gentiles were Gentiles before *and* after they came to Messiah. This is evident from Paul saying that they are (*still*) called *Uncircumcision*. (See also Eph. 3:1, 6; 4:17 and 1st Thess. 4:4-5 where Paul speaks to the Gentile believers not to act like Gentiles who don’t know God).

¹⁷ This doesn’t mean that the Gentiles only have four rules and no others from the Law of Moses. See *The Lifting of the Veil: Acts 15:20-21* at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Lifting-of-the-Veil.pdf>, the chapter titled, *Acts 21:25—Observe No Such Thing!* for the Hebraic interpretation of this passage.

¹⁸ See also Acts 11:1, 18; 13:48; 15:3, 17; Rom. 1:13; 3:29; 11:12-13; 15:7-12, 16, 18, 27; 16:4 Gal. 2:12; 3:8, 14; Eph. 3:1, 6; 4:17; 1st Tim. 2:7; 2nd Tim. 1:11.

CIRCUMCISION IS NOTHING

The concept of the Gentile believer remaining a Gentile is also seen in what the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians concerning physical, covenantal circumcision:

¹⁷‘Only as the Lord has assigned to each one, *as God has called each, in this manner let him walk*. And so I direct in all the congregations. ¹⁸Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. *Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised.*’¹⁹

¹⁹‘Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the Commandments of God. ²⁰*Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.*’ (1st Corinthians 7:17-20)

First, in vv. 17-18 Paul speaks of the Gentile staying as God has made him—an uncircumcised Gentile. He wasn’t to be circumcised. This is reiterated in v. 20 where the Apostle commands the Gentile to *remain in that condition in which he was called*. Obviously, there’s no change of ethnicity here—the Gentile remains a Gentile and the Jew remains a Jew.

Second, Paul says in v. 19 that circumcision *is nothing*, not because he doesn’t ascribe any value to circumcision, but in the light of eternity it doesn’t matter if a Gentile is circumcised. It’s the circumcision of the heart, made without human hands (Col. 2:11) that matters for both Gentile and Jew. Paul isn’t throwing circumcision away for the Jew. He upholds it (Acts 21:20-24), because it’s God’s divine order.

Third, Paul says that it is the doing of God’s commandments that matter (v. 19) more than if one is a Jew or a Gentile (circumcised or not), but how can the Apostle say to both groups ‘to keep the commandments (of the Law/Torah) if he’s just said that the Gentile must not be circumcised, a major commandment of the Torah? He’s able to do that because physical, covenant circumcision has given way to the New Covenant’s sign of water/Spirit baptism in the name of Yeshua. The Jew continues to physically circumcise his sons because he is still literally a part of the covenant that God gave to Abraham (Gen. 17:9-10f.). The Gentile isn’t.²⁰ The Gentile, although Seed of Abraham, was never part of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Gentile believer remains a Gentile.

¹⁹ Paul isn’t speaking figuratively to the physically circumcised Jewish believer. There was in the days of Paul an operation that would re-attach foreskin to make the Jew look uncircumcised. Jews had been doing that since the days of the Maccabees, in order to fit into Greek and Roman society. For more on this ask for the PDF, *1st Corinthians 7:18—Removing the Mark of Circumcision*.

²⁰ Certain commandments of Torah shift or are revised in the New Testament. For instance, Torah speaks of only the Sons of Aaron, from the Tribe of Levi, were to become high priests after their father (Ex. 6:18, 20; 28:1; Num. 20:28; 25:13), but the New Covenant declares that Yeshua, from the Tribe of Judah, not the Tribe of Levi, is our High Priest (Heb. 5:1–7:28). This doesn’t do away with the earthly High Priest from Levi, but it highlights the temporal and eternal Kingdoms of Israel, in Canaan, and in the New Jerusalem, respectively. The (High) Priest Melchizedek is seen in Gen. 14:18-20 (and God *swears* that Messiah will be a [High] Priest like Melchizedek in Psalm 110:1, 4), so this *shift* is there in seminal form in Torah. In another example, circumcision of the heart is also seen in Torah: “Moreover *Yahveh your God will circumcise your heart* and the heart of your descendants, to love Yahveh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.” (Dt. 30:6)

THE SPIRITUAL JEW

Paul writes in Romans of the spiritual Jew. Some Gentiles take this passage, which speaks of a ‘true Jew’ being one *inwardly*, and having the circumcision of the heart, to mean that they are now *spiritual Jews*:

²⁸‘For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter, and his praise is not from men, but from God.’ (Romans 2:28-29)

It’s obvious that the term *Jew* in Rom. 2:28 is not a Gentile. Does Paul’s focus change for the next verse? Excluding v. 29 for a moment, the term *Jew* or *Jews* occurs 190 times in the New Testament,²¹ and in every instance it speaks of literal Jews. Are we to now understand that Romans 2:29 is an exception, speaking of the Gentile as a spiritual Jew?²² Of course not.

Paul is using two male Jews as an illustration. Both of them, obviously, are circumcised in their flesh, but only the Jew who believes in Yeshua is ‘a Jew who is one inwardly,’ whose (true) circumcision is of the heart, by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the *real Jew* is the one who believes in Yeshua. Paul is not making all Gentile believers into *spiritual Jews*.

Paul immediately turns around to those who would put down the *circumcised in the flesh only Jew*, and writes in Romans 3:1-4a:

‘Then what advantage has the Jew?! Or what is the benefit of circumcision?! Great in every respect! First of all, that they were entrusted with the Word of God. What then? If some did not believe, *their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God*, will it?²³ May it never be!’

Spiritually the Gentile is part of the Seed of Abraham, but just not the Jewish part. Father Abraham is just as much the Father of the believing Gentile, though, as he is the Father of the believing Jew.

“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a Father of *many nations*. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you a Father of *many nations*.” (Genesis 17:4-5)

“After these things I looked, and behold! A great multitude, which no one could number, *of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues*, standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the Throne and to the Lamb!’” (Revelation 7:9-10)

The Gentile believer is part of the Seed that Father Abraham was promised, and the Commonwealth of Israel. He has the same King that the Jewish believer has and he should keep everything in Torah that the Jewish believer keeps, except for physical, covenantal circumcision.²⁴

²¹ *Accordance Bible Software* (Altamonte Springs, FL: OakTree Software, 2011).

²² Some Gentile believers also say that because Jesus is a Jew, they are (spiritual) Jews, too, but this finds no scriptural support in either Covenant.

²³ The *faithfulness of God* means that even though the majority of the Jews haven’t believed in Yeshua yet, God will still keep His promise to Abraham that his Seed would have Him for their God (Gen. 17:7-8; Ex. 6:6-8). This is powerfully brought out in Rom. 11:25-31.

²⁴ See *Gentile Circumcision?* at <http://seedofabraham.net/Gentile-Circumcision.pdf> for why the Gentile believer must not be physically, covenantally circumcised ‘in order to keep Torah.’

DR. LUKE

Paul's sense of 'Jew and Gentile' is also seen when he begins to close his letter in Colossians four. He speaks of Onesimus (Col. 4:9) as 'one of you,' which means that he was either a Gentile, like them, or had been/was a part of their congregation.

In 4:10-11, Paul writes of Aristarchus, (John) Mark and a certain Jesus who was also known as Justus, being the only Jews with him that 'send their greetings,' with the obvious inference that the rest are Gentiles:

¹⁰“My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

¹¹Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are *the only Jews* among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.” (Colossians 4:11 NIV)

Paul then goes on to mention Epaphras and 'Luke, the beloved physician,' as well as Demas (vv. 12-14). How could Paul even think about making such a distinction if all the Gentiles were now Jews?

How long had Luke been a believer? According to Luke he had 'perfect understanding from the very first' (Lk. 1:3), which seems to imply that he was one of the first Gentiles to come to Christ in Antioch (Acts 11:19-20), which is dated about 41 AD.²⁵ How many years had Dr. Luke been with Paul when he wrote Colossians? Luke first 'appears' in Acts 16, with the beginning of his 'we' passages that speak of Luke writing of Paul's events first hand.²⁶ Acts 16 is seen to have taken place about 48-49 AD. The letter to the Colossians is said to have been written from Rome about 58-62 AD.²⁷ Luke had been with Paul for at least nine years, and had been a believer for at least 17 years. Why hadn't this Gentile man 'become a Jew' in all that time, if Gentiles coming to Christ were no longer Gentiles, but now Jews?²⁸

ONE LAST POINT

There is one place in Scripture that seems to speak of a Gentile becoming a Jew, and that's in the book of Esther, which was written after the Babylonian captivity. This takes place in ancient Persia (modern Iran). The Hebrew word is מְתִיבֵדִים (mit'yahadim) a *hitpa'el* masculine plural participle:

“And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land *became Jews* because fear of the Jews fell upon them.” (Esther 8:17 NKJV)

It seems that some Gentiles became Jews, but *HALOT* brings out that it would be better translated that they had 'embraced Judaism,' or even 'posed as Jews.'²⁹ This is supported by the *NIV Exhaustive Concor-*

²⁵ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 25th printing, 1976), pp. 486-488.

²⁶ Acts 16:10, 11, 12, 13, 16; 20:6, 13, 14, 15; 21:8, 10-12, 14, 18; 27:1f., etc.

²⁷ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, general editor; Everett F. Harrison, Roland K. Harrison and William Sanford LaSor, associate editors, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. one (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 692. *ISBE* has 58 AD.

Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 233. *Unger's* has 61-62 AD for when Colossians was written.

²⁸ For why Luke is a Gentile see *Luke the Jew?* at <http://seedofabraham.net/Luke-the-Jew.pdf>.

²⁹ Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* vol. 2, p. 393. יָהֵד, denom. from מְתִיבֵדִים...: to pose as a Jew (Ehrlich; KBL; alt. to embrace Judaism, TWNT 6:73; Bardtke 376) Est. 8:17.”

dance which says that the Hebrew word ‘can mean to join the Jewish faith or simply to act like a Jew.’³⁰ Therefore, Esther 8:17, the one cite in Scripture that seems like it might have supported a Gentile *becoming* a Jew, and no longer being a Gentile, cannot be used to defend that position.

CONCLUSION

Racial identity doesn’t change when a woman comes into a marriage, and it doesn’t change when a Gentile becomes part of Israel after the Spirit.

The term Gentile, although able to have a negative connotation of ‘pagan,’ is never used that way of non-Jewish believers in the New Testament, and nowhere does the New Testament call them Jews or Hebrews. They are *one* in the Body of Messiah, the Commonwealth of Israel, with their Jewish counterparts and as such, they should observe the same laws as their Jewish brothers and sisters, except physical, covenant circumcision for the male Gentile, which is only for the Jew who has lineage back to Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Gentiles remain Gentiles. Dr. Luke is an excellent example of this. After many years of traveling with Paul, the Apostle doesn’t speak of Luke as a Jew, but includes him with other Gentiles.

³⁰ *Hebrew to English Dictionary and Index to the NIV Old Testament*, n.p. 3366 [3054] יָהַדְּ, *yahad*...[3374; cf. 3373].

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Acts 21:25—Observe No Such Thing!

*Two Different Kingdoms? The Stranger and the Native-Born.*³¹

³¹ This article was revised on 7 May 2016.