

“I’m a Gentile, not a Jew...”

“I’m only human...” says the man who has fallen on his face, endeavouring to justify his frailties and sinfulness apart from God. A man who declares he has lost confidence in himself, having fallen back into the same entanglements of sin that have troubled him from his youth. His confession declares nothing of God, nothing of His might and power to save, and nothing more in faith than the athiest, because in confession he is practically athiest, although in profession he claims the name of Christ; thus placing him unawares into breaking the third commandment, “You shall not take My name in vain...”. What hope does such a man have? After all, is he only human? Running through the same vein of thought is her sister confession: “We are Gentiles, and not Jews.” Generally, professed Christians will use this as a basis for not keeping the law of God as instructed in Moses, but even this confession, “We are Gentiles...” is a confession little short of athiesm in it’s end result. Are you following? Let’s explain this confession, and it will not take long to unfold the oft-sincere but misguided confession of placing confidence in a man’s humanity.

The argument sounds pretty good to some. “I’m a Gentile, not a Jew” seems like a great description of one’s identity. And that’s exactly right. Both confessions in the above are confessions regarding their identity. So what does it mean that you are a Gentile? Have you thought it very far through? Most who, by saying so, are suggesting by their words the apparently quick-fix to the plague of supposed-Judaism. He who makes such a confession only sees an annoyance to his faith and practice; he who makes such a confession hold the perspective that the laws given by God to the Jews will naturally resulting in the Pharisaical Judaism that plotted to crucify Christ. And understandably so, because it was the self-righteous religious class of that day who were the chief

perpetrators of slaying the Lamb of God. Were they not given the law which made them so self-righteous? Why would someone want to be classed with a group of self-righteous men who claimed to love God so much that they hated Him? But as good as these arguments sound, we want to know what the Bible actually teaches, not just what "sounds good"- Are you "a Gentile"? What does that even mean according to the Bible?

Before looking briefly at this subject, it might be good to unsettle some prejudices from the outset. Let's be fair to note that all of the authors of the Scriptures of the 66 books contained in the Biblical canon had Hebrew roots. More than this, most of the strong spiritual leaders and shining examples of the Bible were at least Israelites, and in a majority of cases, they were of the tribe of Judah (Jews). Therefore when claiming to uphold the Bible, we may definitely say the book is a Hebrew book.

It also would be well to remember that the law that was given to Moses was a law which God Himself both gave and wrote(Exodus 24:12), and that He did not give it for the purpose of crucifying His Son, but gave it rather to reveal the sins hidden in the heart of those which crucified His Son (Romans 5:20). That thought about the law, and that thought alone, should be given time to digest and settle in your mind; because the difference between the two is as far as east is from the west. The logical conclusion of one means the abolition of the law, while the conclusion of the other means the exalting of the law's purpose in the plan of salvation.

So you are a Gentile. The main issue here is what was salvation of the Gentiles to mean? Was it to do away with the law of God so that the Gentiles could continue to practice the same way of life, while professing the salvation of God by grace through faith? Was grace to finally do away with that pestilence of a law that was faulty because man could not keep it, or else if he sought to bring his life in conformity to the precepts delivered by God to His people, he would become an enemy of God as a result? Interestingly enough, this was a strain of thinking that existed in the early church. This

doctrine, called "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans...", was not a doctrine of the apostles, but proceeded from a mingling of Alexandrian philosophy (Greek thinking) with the Christian term of salvation by grace [I say the "term" because the concept was wholly twisted to mean something the apostles or the Bible never actually taught]. This doctrine was reported by the apostles to have been "turning the grace of our God into filthiness" (Jude 1:4), "While promising them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption...For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:18-21). This grace which could do nothing for the Gentile, and had no association with the law of God whatsoever, was a base counterfeit which turned professed followers of Christ into the servants of Satan, and slaves of sin, while professing to be delivered. It should be good to note, that whenever this line of thinking was practiced by the professed people of God, God reproved them, saying, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations"?" (Jeremiah 7:9-10)

Were you saved from your old life without Christ only to continue living in your old life, under a Christian disguise? Christian rap, Christian death metal, Christian fashion, Christian entertainment, Christian competition, Christian homosexuality? Would a Christian Gentile fit in that description? It would surely depend on what is meant by a Gentile.

We are told of a class of people saved from among the Gentiles, but the actual word for "Gentiles" is "heathen" or "foreigner". It means that they are foreigners of the government and citizenship of heaven, and of heaven's God. Scripture clearly says that a convert has a reformation in

heart and life, and the Gentiles "that were sometime alienated and enemies in [their] mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled"

(Col 1:21).

Did you notice that? The Gentiles were alienated, separated, and enemies in their thinking, by wicked works. Did God reconcile the wicked works that separated the Gentile from God? Or did God reconcile the Gentile by separating them from those wicked works, saving them "from their sins" (Matt. 1:21)? We are told that we are saved from our sins, and not in them. We are told of those who were Gentile converts to Christ, "Wherefore remember, that you in time past were Gentiles in the flesh..." (Eph. 2:11). So than what are you when you come to Christ if you are not a Gentile? The answer might surprise you.

We are told much regarding the grace we receive by faith in Christ from the Scriptures. Nothing in the Scriptures, when read aright, would cause the law to work at war with grace, as though the Jew has only law, and the Gentile has only grace; both of these are extremes which men who have not known the truth have a tendency to take. Regarding the grace that saves, we're told that it is an effectual grace, that works righteousness in them that believe. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus TO good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

" (Eph 2:8-10) While salvation is not by works, salvation produces the fruit of good works that "we should walk in". And what does this walking by grace look like? It looks like Christ. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him...He that saith he abides in Him [Christ] ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

(1 John 2:3-6)

We are not Gentiles, we are Christians. We do not look like Gentiles, separated and alienated from God, we are to look like Christ, connected to Him as a branch to the vine, growing up and revealing His image and likeness.

The old metaphor of the cart and the horse is actually a very suitable one to better illustrate law and grace, and the extreme positions many are taking on one side or the other. Perhaps you have heard it said, "You've put the cart before the horse!" Many have put the cart before the horse when it comes to works. The horse is named Grace, and the cart is named Works. The cart, Works, is carried by the horse, Grace. Some have made the mistake of putting the cart before the horse, and wonder why they get nowhere in their Christian experience. It is because they need grace! Grace! But many today are sitting in the cart (glued to the seat, because a man will always work something, whether good or evil), and saying, "No cart thank you very much, only this horse...only grace"; this also gets them nowhere, because they are no further along in their Christian experience because they fail to grow in grace that produces the fruit of good works. Could you imagine sending your horse off without first strapping it to your cart? The horse runs away, and you are left sitting in your cart. You get nowhere. Both extremes lead to the same conclusion, and is it any wonder there are so many spiritual cripples professing Christ today? We are Gentiles they say, but in actuality, they are saying, "We don't keep the law because we are foreigners of the law." But if you are foreigners of the law, then you are foreigners to the kingdom to which that law pertains to also.

Yet still the old argument lingers, "I'm a Gentile, not a Jew" because you just feel it's dangerous to associate yourself with that law because of the Jews. After all, the Jews that have the law don't have the gospel, do they? Yet the tribe of Judah had the gospel foremost amongst the people of the earth, and it is their faith that the Gentile converts become part of. The Gentiles were expected to give up their sins for the

gospel, not the Jews give up their law for it. The Scripture doesn't teach that the Jews were to forsake their law, but rather, to understand their law in a right relation to the gospel.

So what was the issue of the Jewish people if they had the gospel all along? It was unbelief. Speaking of the Jews as branches of the tree, we are told: "If some of the branches are broken off, and you [A Gentile], being from a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them (the tree which God planted-The faith committed to the Hebrews), and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

(Being fed and nourished by what the Hebrews were fed and nourished with), Boast not against the branches..." (Romans 11:17) Did God cast away His olive tree, the faith which He established and He planted, and plant a different wild olive tree instead? Did God give a new faith based on grace, because the first one he planted, based on law, was faulty? No. For that tree always had law and grace (Gen. 6:8, Exodus 33:13, Zech. 4:7).

He took the branches of a wild olive tree, a completely different faith, and planted them into His olive tree, and the fruitless branches that were dead and failing to receive the nourishment from the tree "because of unbelief were broken off". The nourishment they were to receive is now the vitalizing force of those branches that are grafted in- the branches from the wild olive tree have a new foundation. Therefore you are founded on the faith which God delivered to the Hebrews; Christianity was not a new religion based on Gentiles who disregarded the Scriptural law and foundation of Israel, but rather, Christianity is an old religion dating back to Adam and Eve, the first believers in the Messianic hope of salvation (Genesis 1:15).

But now because I say this, many are you conjure up pictures in your minds of draddles, stars of David, sacrificing animals, and waving palm branches in your hands, but this was not, and never has been, what constituted living faith in Christ; living faith in Christ was pure worship and honor of

the law of God in the order and manner revealed in the law. It consisted not in sacrificing animals, but "spiritual sacrifices"; not in outward observances of the flesh, but the inner-workings of the Spirit of Christ in the heart, producing an outward change of life; to say with David, "O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day!" So you are not in fact a Gentile, but a spiritual Jew, which keeps the law from the heart [This includes the actual keeping of the Sabbath day- See the article The Jerusalem Council & the Law of Moses for more details].

If Christ came to do away with the law, then salvation would not require any change of life, but Christ Himself says, "Do not THINK that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I've come not to destroy, but to fulfill...whosoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so shall be bidden very little into the kingdom of heaven..." (Matt. 5:19).

Many are thinking that Christ came to replace to religion instituted by God, simply because there is not the same outward ritualistic observances any longer, as were instituted by God to shadow forth the good things to come in Christ. I remember when discussing this issue with a sincere brother of mine about the issue. He said that regarding times of worship, God was insulted to be worshipped according to the times outlined in the law. When I cited the fact that the apostles were observing all the times of worship outlined in Scripture, he responded that I needed to remember that they were also Jews and did not fully understand what happened at the cross. He then said that unlike the Jewish apostles, we can see more clearly their error today. This confused me, so I asked him if he realized that the whole new testament basis for his arguments were written by the ones he said had a faulty understanding, thus making them teach something contrary to their profession and practice. He didn't respond. How could he? While this brother was sincere, there are many who I believe are sincerely reading into the Scriptures the idea that they are Gentiles, and have nothing to do with the law of

God any longer.

So Christ says not to think He came to destroy but to fulfill the law. What is the argument used by those who want to do away with the law, when Christ says those words? They say, "He fulfilled the law, so we do not have to, because we can't." They say, "We're only human..."... remember? This idea they are promoting actually teaches men that Christ does not have any more power to save men from their sins than they have to stop committing them. Thankfully nothing could be further from the truth for the Christian who is in close connection with Christ. Christ has all power in heaven and earth, and those in living connection with Him through faith in the gospel will find Him as the source of strength, and divine might to walk in a way that, in their own human strength, would be impossible. Christ came to fulfill, not just in the days of His flesh on earth, but He came to fulfill the law to the uttermost in all those He came to save. Through His Divine Spirit, He will do what divinity did in the days of His flesh, except it shall be in my flesh, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit...For to be fleshly minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the fleshly mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." His divinity meets my humanity, and thus in co-operation by His Spirit, man cannot say, "I'm only human" as an excuse to sin, but rather, "By Christ, I am a son of God." It is the privilege of Christians in deep connection with Christ to say, "When you've seen me, you've beheld Christ." Even as Christ said to Philip, "When you've seen Me, you have seen the Father. Believest not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" The Divine Son of God who bound Himself to flesh, will through His Spirit, make His abode in our hearts, and so identify Himself with us that we may be called the sons of God (1 John 3:1); He calls us His brethren (Heb. 2:11-13), and calls His God our God, and His Father our Father (John 20:17).

Those who teach that Christ fulfilled the law because we can't

have not tasted of Christ fulfilling the law in us; they have not tasted of divine power indwelling the human vessel to enable us to walk in obedience to all of God's commandments. The Hebrews who held the word of God, His law, and His promises, also knew in part of His promise of salvation from sin. They knew what it meant to be saved by grace through faith and to believe in Christ for salvation; it was the Gentiles who "were without Christ, being aliens from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world;" (Eph. 2:12). They were WITHOUT CHRIST, and WITHOUT GOD, because they were ALIENS from the citizenship of Israel, but Israel were not without God or Christ, so long as they did not lose sight of the gospel.

Speaking of Israel, we are told that the gospel was given to them also, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Hebrews 4:2) It was unbelief in the gospel which cut them off from the tree, but having the gospel committed to them is what it meant to be part of the tree which God planted. Yet without faith in the gospel, they did not receive the Spirit which was to prepare them to receive Christ; all of their lawkeeping was filled with self, and all of their righteousness was human and tainted with sin. It did not meet the divine standard brought to view by the gospel, and for this cause they crucified Christ. The Jews, contrary to popular opinion, was not to be caught up in a round of Christless Jewish traditions and ceremonies. Christless as they were because of unbelief is actually the definition of what a Gentile is. And no wonder professed Christians don't want to be associated with such Jews- they were Jews outwardly, but inwardly, they were Gentiles without faith, and thus without God and Christ. Nevertheless, the tree which God planted was rooted firmly in the soil foundations of the God's Word (and still is), Christ Himself being the the root and Tree from which the branches ever received nourishment (John 15:1, Isaiah 11:10, Rom.

15:12). Those Hebrew branches who fought against Christ, and sought to keep the law apart from the grace of Christ were able to do no good thing, for Christ says, "Without Me, ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) It is little wonder that they sought to kill Christ if they were not cleansed inwardly from sin through faith in Him. They still had hatred and murder in their hearts- the gospel had not done it's work. The law of God which they observed outwardly had not traced His righteousness upon their hearts by the divine finger! The cart therefore, without the horse, was nothing, and the horse without the cart profits nothing. Those who claim either are without Christ as Gentiles indeed, stuck within a cart that will move no further until it recognizes the work of Christ in relation to both the law and grace. Whether it is the outward Jew (who is a Gentile in their heart), or the Gentile separated from the divine enabling of keeping the law, the results are the same. Separation from Christ one way or the other. The only true thing to say is "By grace, I'm a Jew inwardly, delighting in the law of God by Jesus Christ my Savior, who works in me both to will and to do of the Father's good pleasure." Amen.