

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Isaiah Message 147*  
*February 20, 2022*



The Transfiguration of Christ by Raphael Cir 1516-1520

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The Book of Isaiah

One-Hundred-Forty-Seven

THE GENTILES SERVE IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

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Isaiah 66:21

*<sup>21</sup> And of them also will I take for priests and for Levites, saith Jehovah (ASV, 1901).*

Continuing the infusion of the Gentiles into the Messianic Kingdom God now says that they will be brought into serving the household of faith. He will appoint them to the highest offices of ministry in His kingdom. Under the Mosaic law only one tribe, the Levites, were admitted to the priesthood, and the Gentiles could not offer sacrifices, and were not even permitted access to the Tabernacle or the successor Temple. Priests and Levites among the Jews were determined by law, and by regular genealogical descent, from the descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother as the Lord told Moses. There was no provision for substituting any in their place.

Exodus 28:1

*<sup>1</sup> And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons (ASV, 1901).*

Deuteronomy 10:18

*<sup>18</sup> At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day (ASV, 1901).*

Deuteronomy 18:5

*<sup>5</sup> For Jehovah thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of Jehovah, him and his sons for ever (ASV, 1901).*

The services of God would no longer be performed only by the descendants of Aaron, or be limited to them, but would be performed by others from the Gentile nations who should be called to this office from the heathen world. This merging together as one people group began to develop in the Church Age.

Under the Gospel in the Church Age all without national distinction are admitted to serve in all offices in the Church. The Lord Jesus' death and resurrection opened the door for both Jews and Gentiles to worship together in a new entity called the Church. God's servants in the Old Testament language, were called priests, though never in the New Testament; but elders, bishops, overseers, presbyters, pastors, and teachers. The first preachers of the Gospel were Jews, as the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, Paul and Barnabas, and others; but when the Gospel was

preached, and churches planted in the Gentile world, then emerged the overseers, bishops, pastors, or elders, who were taken out from among them, and ordained over the churches everywhere; and which have continued, more or less, ever since. In fact, the apostle Peter referred to us as a Royal Priesthood!

I Peter 2:9

*<sup>9</sup> But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (KJV).*

IN THE MOSAIC LAW THE GENTILES WERE OUTSIDE OF GOD'S CHOSEN

Ephesians 2: 11

*<sup>11</sup> Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands (KJV)*

Previous to Christ's sacrifice there were two people groups in God's economy. They were Jews and the rest of the world's population God called the Gentiles, or the nations, and sometimes the New Testament uses the term Greek. God called the Jews to a special position in this world.

Deuteronomy 7:6

*<sup>9</sup> But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (ASV, 1901).*

Paul makes a clear distinction to the flesh and not the spirit in this delineation by saying "in the flesh." The Jews had been elected as God's chosen people. The males were required to be circumcised on the eighth day of life as a sign of obedience and belonging to the covenanted people and symbolically cutting off the old life of sin, purifying one's heart and dedicating oneself to God. The practice of circumcision provided the visible separation from the Gentiles with whom the Jews lived. It was first given to Abraham by God about 2350 B.C. (Genesis 17:10) and made part of the Mosaic Covenant for all Jewish males (Leviticus 12:3). Before conversion the Gentiles had no relationship with God. Before their conversions, they were Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by the Jews. Jews looked down at all non-Jews by calling them the "uncircumcised." This physical difference between Jews and Gentiles affected every area of their lives. A great social and spiritual division existed between them as far as the Jews were concerned. The great error the Jews committed was their reliance on the "physical" and their status as God's elect as sufficient to make them godly and in God's good graces for their salvation. They failed in large measure to promote inner renewal by changing their hearts. This is why Paul uses the terms "flesh made with hands." He knew the Jews hearts were hard and they relied on the physical. The physical meaning they practiced the Law but did not take it to heart and have a Godly conversion. When Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) He addressed this very issue throughout the entire message.

## Ephesians 2: 12

*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (KJV):*

The Gentile's lack of the external sign of circumcision also meant that they lacked five privileges that God had given the nation Israel:

1. They were separate from Christ personally (true also of most Jews).
2. They were excluded from citizenship (commonwealth) in Israel. They did not belong to the theocratic state of Israel. Though some Gentiles were admitted into Judaism as proselytes, Gentiles as a whole were excluded; they were thus alienated. The few who were admitted were required to immediately be circumcised before they could participate in the Passover (Exodus 12: 48) and then the other components of the Jewish Covenant.
3. They were foreigners to the covenants of the promise. They were mostly deprived of direct participation in God's covenants and thus had no hope of future glory and blessing as Israel did. Israel's "covenants" include the Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18-21; 17:1-8), the Land (Deuteronomy 28-30), the Davidic (II Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:1-4), and the New (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-30). These covenants—all pointing to "the promise" of the Messiah and of blessings through Him—assured Israel of a national existence, a land, a King, an earthly future Kingdom and spiritual blessings.
4. The Gentiles were without hope. Unlike Israel they had no expectation of a personal Messiah-Deliverer and the Messianic Age.
5. They were without God in the world. The Gentiles were in a desperate situation. They had no meaning, hope, purpose, or direction in life.

Such is the condition now of all people in the world who are without Christ. They are without hope and this existence is all they have. It ends when their life ends and they will experience an eternity of pain and suffering. This bleakness *does* have a remedy because God Himself intervened in time and space to provide for the Gentiles.

As the world's apostasy grows, the light of Christ gets increasingly dimmer which will plunge the world into great darkness before the Tribulation comes on the earth. We must try and reach all those within our sphere of influence before the apostasy's dark curtain drops at the final call.

## WE ARE ALL ONE BODY

## Ephesians 2: 13

*<sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (KJV).*

Paul now speaks of the new nearness to God by bringing them into the fellowship by Christ's shed blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). This begins

the dispensation of grace as the old covenant, the Mosaic Covenant is fulfilled. The Gentiles who were “far away” from both God and the Jews are now “brought near”. Because of Christ the Gentiles are now fellow heirs of the promises of the New Covenant being in one body with the believing Jews; Spiritually in the Church Age and physically in the Messianic Kingdom. The *now* he speaks of is:

1. *Now*, In which the surpassing riches of God’s grace are made known.
2. *Now*, After corporate Israel rejected the King and Savior.
3. *Now*, When He is sitting on God the Father’s throne at His right side.
4. *Now*, When the Holy Spirit is active doing His work on the earth.
5. *Now*, During the present age.

Ephesians 2: 14

*<sup>14</sup>For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us (KJV).*

Christ has done the unifying work of bringing together the world’s two people groups Jews and Gentiles. He has given us the peace of God (Philippians 4: 7) and enabled us through belief to finally make peace with God (Romans 5: 1). Further since the Jews despised the Gentiles the so-called wall of partition between the two groups Paul speaks of has been removed. In the Church the hostility between Jews and Gentiles has been removed. This of course refers to genuine believers who love God and trust in His Son in *practice* as well as verbal proclamation. Remember the true Church of Christ is invisible. Christ destroyed this enmity so Jewish and Gentile believers must not have any hostility toward each other.

Ephesians 2: 15-16

*<sup>15</sup>Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; <sup>16</sup>And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (KJV).*

Paul now described how and why this hostility ended. The animosity between *believing* Jews and Gentiles was ended because by Christ’s physical death (Colossians. 1:22). He rendered the ceremonial aspects of the Law “inoperative.” in believers’ lives. Jews and Gentiles were enemies because the former sought to keep the Law with its commandments and regulations (Colossians 2:14, 21-23), whereas Gentiles could care less about them. This difference was the large barrier between them. But now that the Law is inoperative (“Christ is the end of the Law” [Romans 10:4]), Jewish-Gentile hostility is gone. The Law was the *cause* of the enmity. Christ “destroyed” the barrier (hostility) by making the Law inoperative.

Christ had two purposes in ending the hostility:

1. The first purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace. This “new man” (Ephesians 2:15), or “new humanity,” is also called “this one

body” (16), the church. In the church, Gentiles do not become Jews, nor do Jews become Gentiles. Instead believing Jews and Gentiles become Christians, a whole new creation of God.

2. The second purpose in destroying the enmity was to reconcile both Jewish and Gentile believers to Himself in . . . one body (3:6). This reconciliation was accomplished through the cross, by which Christ killed (put to death) the enmity between people and God. Though *He* was put to death, He in turn put to death the Jewish-Gentile hostility. In 2:14 the reconciliation is between Jewish and Gentile believers, and in verse 16 the reconciliation is between people and God. Reconciliation (removal of enmity) between man and God is mentioned elsewhere by Paul (Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:18-20; Colossians 1:20).

Ephesians 2: 17-18

*<sup>17</sup>And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (KJV).*

Not only is Christ “our peace” (v. 14), but He also preached peace. The peace that was preached was on the basis of Christ’s death rather than during His life on earth. Peace is supplied both to those who were far away (Ephesians 2:13), that is, Gentiles (who were without Christ and alienated from Israel and her covenants, v. 12) and to those who were near, namely, Jews (who have “the covenants of the promise,” v. 12).

As a result of this message of peace both Jewish and Gentile believers have access to God the Father by one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). This must be understood that Christ gives believers access. Here believers have access to God the Father through the Holy Spirit because of Christ’s death on the cross.

In Ephesians 2:14-18 Paul emphasized that the two (Jew and Gentile) have been united in four ways:

1. “The two” are made “one” (v. 14)
2. “One new man” is created “out of the two” (v. 15)
3. “In this one body . . . both” are reconciled (v. 16)
4. “Both” “have access . . . by one Spirit” (v. 18). Nothing could be clearer than the fact that this new union replaces enmity.

The Gentiles were formerly outside God’s household, but in the Church Age they are now one “new man” with Jewish believers. This new entity is like a temple that is structured on the apostles and prophets, with Christ being the chief Cornerstone; God indwells it through the agency of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:19–22).

SERVING TOGETHER IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

The beautiful truth here expressed is that not only will those who escaped the judgment in the valley of Jehosaphat be used of God as apostles to bring into the household of faith their brethren from among the Gentiles, but also these Gentile converts themselves will be chosen by God, taken

especially by Him, for the purpose of serving as priests and Levites, i.e., as ministers to serve Him in the preaching of the Gospel.

God is saying that I will give to them an honorable place in my public service; that is, I will make them ministers of the kingdom's religious ceremonial practices where they become priests and Levites. The services of God would no longer be performed only by the descendants of Aaron, or be limited to them, but would be performed by others who will be called to this office from the heathen world.

In the Old Testament the religious servants, were called priests, though never in the New Testament; but elders, bishops, presbyters, overseers, pastors, and teachers. The first preachers of the Gospel were Jews, as the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, Paul, Barnabas, and others. When the Gospel was preached, and churches planted in the Gentile world, then bishops, overseers, presbyters, or pastors, or elders, were taken out from among them, and ordained over the churches everywhere; and which have continued, more or less, ever since. The leaders work and office *now* is not to offer up slain beasts, as the priests of old; but to point to the sacrifice of Christ, to the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world and to teach the knowledge of a crucified Christ. With the restoration of Temple services and the Messianic Kingdom Law both Jews and Gentiles will be serving as Levites and Priests. When the sacrificial services begin anew in the Messianic Kingdom they will be for the purpose of honoring and remembering what the Lord Jesus did for the world.

Not only will the people of the nations be pure vessels in which to carry the offerings of God, but some of them will be Levitical priests. This thought is so shocking to the unsaved Jews today that many rabbis think that it was unintentionally written or scribal error. It is of the same order as saying that a eunuch or a foreigner is a servant of God (Isaiah 56:5–6). It flies in the face of the teaching of the Torah. Not even every member of the house of Israel could be a priest, much less any Gentile! This word from the Lord can only herald one who is greater than Moses, one who can fulfill the Torah by breaking it (see Jesus' teaching concerning the Sabbath, Matthew 12:1–14), one who can extend the election of Israel and Levi to the farthest limits of earth. Nothing else could as effectively symbolize the breaking down of the barriers between Jews and Gentiles. If a Gentile can become a Levitical priest, a Gentile cannot be excluded from anything. It is not necessary to speculate on whether at some future date such a thing will literally happen. Isaiah is here using language with which his hearers would be familiar to make a point that they could only have found shocking in the extreme. In the Messianic Kingdom there is only one High Priest, but in Him all who enter in are invited to share the benefits of the New Covenant.

What the Lord is expressing here is a completely new order of things: the inclusion of Gentiles in the service of the LORD, without regard to race or descent. The only condition implied is the acceptance of Him as the LORD of the world.

Next message: THE GENTILES IN THE KINGDOM PART II

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