

Simply Christ
Gospel Newsletter
Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

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Fellowheirs

Many of the promises of redemption were spoken in such a way that it would seem they are given exclusively to the natural children of Israel. One example is the promise of the “*New Covenant*” where God said, “*But this shall be **the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel**; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*” Jeremiah 31:31-34. Another example is the promise of God giving us a new heart and spirit. He said, “*Therefore **say unto the house of Israel** ...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...*” Ezekiel 36:22-26. With such statements tying these promises to Israel, is it then true that these promises can only be fulfilled upon the natural seed of Abraham? The Apostles’ answer to this question was a resounding “**Absolutely not!**”

In his epistle written to the Gentile churches, the Apostle Peter addresses this question head-on as he writes of the prophets who spoke of the grace which would come to us through “*the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow...*” He says, “*Unto whom it was revealed, **that not unto themselves, but unto us** (the church) they did*

minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven..." | Peter 1:10-12. Peter is clear that the glorious promises which were brought about through the sufferings of Christ are extended unto us all.

An example of this "extension of promise" is found in God's promise to Israel at Mt. Sinai. He said if they would obey his voice and keep his covenant they would be "*a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*" Exodus 19:5-6. Because of their unbelief, Israel never obtained this promise, but Peter declares it to be fulfilled upon the Gentile believers, saying, "*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: Which **in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God...***" | Peter 2:9-10.

The Apostle Paul also addresses this issue in a straightforward manner. He writes to the Gentiles, saying, "*...at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and **strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope (expectation), and without God in the world:"* Ephesians 2:12. Because the covenant promises were spoken directly to Israel, the Gentiles had no reason to expect that these promises would ever belong to them. They were "*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*" so

they had no covenant and no promise. Paul's next words tell us how all of this changed. He writes, "**But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**" Ephesians 2:19.

Paul was sent to unveil a great secret which he called "*the mystery of Christ.*" He tells us that this mystery "*...in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*" Ephesians 3:5. This mystery was of such a nature that the preaching of it enraged the Jews, provoking them to envy and anger. Acts 13:45, Romans 10:19. What was this great mystery?

In the next verse, Paul explains the mystery which had been hidden from Israel's understanding for over fifteen-hundred years. It was "***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:***" Ephesians 3:6. There is not a separation between Jews and Gentiles in the redemption because both are made to be "***of the same body.***" Paul says that Christ has "*...broken down the middle wall of partition between us.*" Ephesians 2:14. All the covenant promises of redemption which were spoken to Israel are now also extended to the Gentiles. **We are made "*fellowheirs*" of the promises.**

Paul confirms this to the Gentile believers at Galatia, saying, "*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" Galatians 3:29. God accounts Abraham's seed to be those who believe the gospel of Christ. It is to these, Jew or Gentile, that he gives the

promises which were made to the fathers. For this reason, Paul refers to this *“one body”* Ephesians 4:4, the Church, as *“the Israel of God.”* Galatians 6:16. This is the great mystery which was *“hid from ages and generations”* Colossians 1:26, and today is still a mystery to many.

In closing, I recall a recent conversation in which someone shared how unacceptable it was for a lay-person to question the ministers which he worked among. I spoke firmly to this person and said, “Question everything we say! Measure it by the word of God. If it is the truth, we have no reason to fear being questioned.” I encourage our readers to question everything they read, hear, believe, or teach, and let it stand or fall based upon the record of God’s word.