

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

May 14, 2011

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You Are No More Strangers

When the Gentiles (the Nations) were without the Messiah, Paul says they were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” They were, therefore, without hope because they were “strangers from the covenants of promise” of Yahweh:

- 12 That at that time you were without the Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: -Ephesians 2

They were “foreigners,” without the rights of citizenship. However, Paul continues, the Gentiles are “made near” by the blood of Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ):

- 13 But now in the Messiah Yahshua you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of the Messiah. -Ephesians 2

Paul explains that, because of the “blood of the Messiah,” those who were once “strangers and foreigners” (the Gentiles) are made “fellow citizens” of the “commonwealth of Israel” with the other “saints.” Therefore, they are made part of the “household of God!”

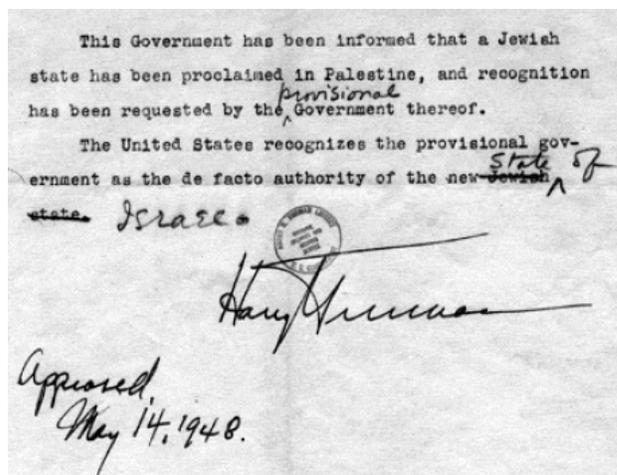
- 19 Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; -Ephesians 2

As we think in only physical terms, many of us cannot grasp how one can be a fellow citizen of the “commonwealth of Israel” that is not a citizen of the modern “State of Israel” or that is not a physical Jew.

The establishment of the modern “State of Israel” was set into motion during World War I. Following many behind the scenes negotiations, a simply-worded letter, known as the “Balfour Declaration,” was sent by Arthur Balfour of the British Foreign Office to a wealthy Zionist Jew named Lord Rothschild on November 2, 1917. It confirmed the will of the British government for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people” (see Robert John, “Behind the Balfour Declaration: Britain’s Great War Pledge to Lord Rothschild,” *The Journal of Historical Review*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 1985-6, http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v06/v06p389_John.html).

However, it was only after the tragedy of another world war that the new state became a reality. After much debate on its name, it was finally called the “State of Israel.” Its creation was recognized in a simple letter by President

Harry Truman of the United States as of 6:01 PM on May 14, 1948, which in Tel Aviv was 12:01 AM on May 15.



Draft of Recognition of Israel, May 14, 1948
(Source: www.trumanlibrary.org)

The political name chosen for the modern “State of Israel” in Palestine was derived from the spiritual name given to Jacob by an unnamed Man, whom he believed to be God:

- 28 And he said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed.
29 And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray you, your name. And he said, *Why is it that* you do ask after my name? And he blessed him there.
30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. -Genesis 32

Many years earlier, Jacob’s grandfather, Abraham, showed his total faith in the promises of Yahweh. He was willing to offer his son, Jacob’s father Isaac, as a sacrifice. Therefore, Yahweh confirmed His promise with Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed:

- 18 And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice. -Genesis 22

So it also was with Jacob. The Man, with whom he had wrestled, blessed him and gave him his new name, Israel, only after he had demonstrated his power to prevail with God and with men by faith. Since that time, Yahweh has referred to His people as the “children of Israel.”

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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It is tempting for many of us to believe that all of those who are born in the flesh as descendents of Jacob are Israel in the eyes of God. However, Paul explains:

- 6 Not as though the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:
- 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.
- 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.
- 9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. -Romans 9

Thus, Paul said that those who are physical Israel, which are the “children of the flesh,” are not the children of God. Instead, he says, the “children of the promise” are counted as the seed of Abraham, which was passed by faith in the promise through Abraham and Sarah, through their son, Isaac, and through Jacob, who was named Israel. The promise of the blessing is the Messiah:

- 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is the Messiah. -Galatians 3
- Therefore, Paul, who was of the house of Judah (a Jew), which was part of the “stock of Israel,” said that his fleshly pedigree meant nothing to him without the Messiah:
- 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:
 - 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
 - 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the congregation; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
 - 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for the Messiah. -Philippians 3

As Yahshua told the religious “ruler of the Jews” named Nicodemus that being born of the flesh, even as a Jew, does not qualify one to enter into the Kingdom of God. He says that each of us who was once born in the flesh (of water) must also be born again in the Spirit:

- 5 Yahshua answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

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6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said to you, You must be born again. -John 3

Through Yahshua the Messiah, both the Gentiles, those which were far off, and the Jews, those which were near, have access to the Father (Yahweh) by one Spirit:

- 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near.
- 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. -Ephesians 2

Paul says that anyone that is born of the Spirit of God through Yahshua the Messiah, regardless of genealogy, social class, or sex, is an heir to the promise given to Abraham:

- 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in the Messiah Yahshua.
- 29 And if you *are* the Messiah's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. -Galatians 3

They are part of the “household of God,” built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, of which Yahshua the Messiah is the chief cornerstone:

- 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yahshua the Messiah himself being the chief corner *stone*;
- 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord:
- 22 In whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. -Ephesians 2

They have access to salvation through Yahshua, the “chief corner stone,” that came in the name of Yahweh!

- 21 I will praise you: for you have heard me, and have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone *which* the builders refused has become the head *stone* of the corner.
- 23 This is Yahweh's doing; it *is* marvelous in our eyes.
- 24 This *is* the day *which* Yahweh has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 Save now, I beseech you, O Yahweh: O Yahweh, I beseech you, send now prosperity.
- 26 Blessed *is* he that comes in the name of Yahweh: we have blessed you out of the house of Yahweh. -Psalms 118

This was fulfilled through Yahshua, the “King of Israel:”

- 12 On the next day many people that had come to the feast, when they heard that Yahshua was coming to Jerusalem,
- 13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord *Yahweh*. -John 12

Therefore, both Jews and Gentiles can be born again of the Spirit of God through faith in the seed of the promise, Yahshua, the King of Israel. As such, they become heirs of the promise and are fellow citizens of the “commonwealth of Israel.” They are no longer strangers with God, but have power with Him.