

Prophecy: Devo #6 – Jews, Gentiles, Church

“Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (I Corinthians 10:32 KJV).

The New Testament divides humanity into three groups: the Jews, the gentiles, and the church. Each group is distinct from the other in God’s dealings. They are dealt with separately in history and prophecy. Each entity serves a distinct purpose in the overall plan of God. The clear teaching of the New Testament is that the church is a separate entity made up of both Jews and gentiles (non-Jews) and is referred to as the body of Christ. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles... (I Corinthians 12:13 KJV).

We will first look at the Jews in God’s prophetic plan. The study of Israel begins with God’s covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, where several specific promises are given to Abraham, and by extension to Israel: (1) A great nation, (2) blessing, (3) a great name, (4) to be a blessing, blessings to those who bless Abraham (and his seed), (5) curses on those who curse Abraham (and his seed), (6) blessings on all the families (nations) of the earth. In Genesis 15 God reestablished His covenant with Abraham, including a land including the entire area between the River of Egypt and the Euphrates River (18-21). The Book of Hebrews expands on God’s promise to Abraham, explaining that Isaac and Jacob would be heirs of the same promise. Isaac, of course, is Israel. The land represented God’s promise, not only for the Old Testament kingdom of Israel, but to the future kingdom of Christ on earth. Isaiah 11:1-2 reveals this. Isaiah 14:1 predicts Israel will be set in their own land. Isaiah 43:5-7 prophesies the regathering of Israel from the four corners of the earth to their own land. Isaiah 66:20 says Israel will be brought from the ends of the earth to the Promised Land in the beginning of the millennium. Jeremiah 16:14-16 continues with the same prophecy. Jeremiah 30:1-7 describes the great tribulation. Ezekiel continues with the same prophetic theme, describing the judgment upon Israel and the millennial kingdom (20:33-38). The prophecy concerning the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 is a picture of the regathering of the disenfranchised of Israel back to their land in unbelief. Most of the minor prophets continue this prophetic theme (Hosea 3:4; Joel 3:20; Amos 9:11ff; Obadiah 17; Micah 4:1-8). Zephaniah 3 and Zechariah speak at length on the future blessings of Israel. James, at the Jerusalem council, proclaimed there would be blessings on the Gentiles before the restoration of Israel and the rebuilding of the tent of David (Acts 15:15-18). These prophecies concerning the Jews (Israel) are future. We must keep our eyes on Israel to understand God’s future plans for earth and eternity.