

## **On Missions and Foreigners**

### **Clarification of terms:**

#### **Hebrew words:**

**Mishpachah:** families; circle of relatives, a tribe or a people.

**Gêr, Gêre:** a guest; a foreigner; a stranger; a sojourner; an alien.

**Tôshâb:** alien, a dweller, a foreigner, stranger.

**Go'ee:** a foreign nation; a Gentile nation.

**Am:** a people, a congregated unit; a tribe (as those of Israel).

**Lehome:** a community; a nation, a people

#### **Old Testament Witness and texts:**

God's mandate to Adam and Eve, the first people on earth, was that they should rule on the earth and have dominion as God's image bearers and representatives. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:27, 28 NKJV)

After the global flood when God destroyed the earth except Noah and his family, God gave the same mandate to them. "So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. " (Genesis 9:1 NKJV)

God was sovereign in giving different languages to the peoples of the world and scattering them all over the earth, and so He made them in effect strangers to each other. God said: "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of

all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth." (Genesis 11:7-9 NKJV). God's purpose for the human race was fulfilled to fill the earth (Genesis 1:27,28) only after God sovereignly gave them different languages.

Abraham was a stranger in the land of Canaan. God promised that all the families (peoples) of the earth would eventually be blessed through Him. "Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great, And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you, all the families (Hebrew: Mispachah) of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV)

The Israelites of old were not allowed to mistreat strangers. 'And if a stranger (Hebrew: gêr, gêrê) dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:33, 34 NKJV).

Excess of food had to be left for the poor and the strangers in Old Israel. 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger (Hebrew: gêr): I am the Lord your God.' " (Leviticus 23:22 NKJV)

Strangers had to be helped and supported in Israel. 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner (tôshâb), that he may live with you" (Leviticus 25:35 NKJV).

God sees His children as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you" (Leviticus 25:23, 35 NKJV).

God's plan has always been that strangers and people from other ethnic groups be part of His kingdom. "Moreover, concerning a foreigner

(Hebrew: tôshâb), who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple; then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name” (II Chronicles 6:32, 33 NKJV).

All the families of all ethnic groups shall worship God. “All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the Lord, And all the families (Hebrew: Mishpachah) of the nations (Hebrew: go’ee) Shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord ’s, And He rules over the nations” (Psalms 22:27, 28 NKJV).

God's desire is that all the peoples praise Him. “God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations (Hebrew: go’ee). Let the peoples (Hebrew: Am) praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations (Hebrew: lehome) be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. God shall bless us, And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him” (Psalms 67:1-5, 7 NKJV).

God protects strangers. “The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; The Lord raises those who are bowed down; The Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers (Hebrew: gêr); He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down” (Psalms 146:8, 9 NKJV).

God's Commission to the Messiah and His children still stands today. “Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles (Hebrew: go’ee), That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” (Isaiah 49:6 NKJV).

## **Clarification of terms:**

### **Greek words:**

**Ethnos:** nation, people, tribe

**Ethne:** ethnic groups

**Xenos:** foreigner, alien, a guest, a stranger.

**Xenizo:** a guest.

**Parepidemos:** foreigner, pilgrim, stranger.

**Poroikos:** foreigner, stranger, sojourner.

**Ktisis:** creation, creature.

**Pantachon:** universally, everywhere.

**Pas:** all

**Laos:** people

**Glossal:** language

**Phule :** tribe

### **New Testament witness and texts:**

The Gentiles will put their trust in Jesus Christ. “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; And in His name Gentiles (Greek: ethne) will trust.” (Matthew 12:18, 20, 21 NKJV).

In Matthew 25:31-46 At the last Judgement God will divide the people like sheep from the goats and to the sheep on His right hand He will say: “I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger (Greek: xenos), and you took Me in; and they will say: 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ (Matthew 25:35, 38, 40 NKJV).

By being hospitable implies that you will make friends with strangers. "Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers (Greek: xenizo), for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:1, 2 NKJV).

God sees His children as strangers in this world. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims (Greek: parepidemos) of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied" (I Peter 1:1, 2 NKJV).

God sees His children as pilgrims and strangers in this world. "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners (Greek: poroikos) and pilgrims (parepidemos), abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11 NKJV).

God's Great Commission states that we should make disciples of all nations (Greek: ethne: ethnic groups). And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (Greek: ethne) baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV).

Jesus last command included that we should preach the gospel to every person living on the earth. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Greek: ktisis)" (Mark 16:15 NKJV).

Again Jesus commanded that we should preach the gospel to all ethnic groups (nations in Greek: ethne:) Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48 NKJV).

The other sheep in this portion refer to God's elect in other ethnic groups around the world. Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd, and I know My sheep and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me,

even so, I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:14-16 NKJV).

Jesus told his disciples that through the agency of the Holy Spirit His followers will be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. ‘Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”’ (Acts 1:6-8 NKJV)

With the Coming of the Gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost God gave the disciples the ability to preach in other languages. The implication is that the gospel is meant for people in other ethnic groups. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation (Greek: *ethnos*) under heaven. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:4, 5, 7-11 NKJV). In this event, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on different ethnic groups, the prophecy was fulfilled that was given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 by Abraham).

God has overlooked the times of ignorance but NOW commands all men everywhere to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked,



but now commands all men everywhere (Greek: pantachon) to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:26, 27, 30, 31 NKJV).

God's message must be proclaimed to all people. For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:13-15 NKJV)

Jesus ransomed people to Himself out of every tribe, tongue, people group and nation. "Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every (Greek: pan) tribe (Greek: phule) and tongue (Greek: glossal) and people (Greek: laos) and nation (Greek: ethnos), And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:8-10 NKJV).

God's vision and purpose are all the people groups in the world. “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations (Greek: ethnos), tribes (Greek: phule), peoples (Greek: laos), and tongues (Greek: glossal), standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9, 10 NKJV).

In heaven, there will be people saved from all ethnic groups (nations: Greek: ethne). “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and

the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations (Greek: ethne) into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:22-27 NKJV).