



Some sheep do not want to be found

BUT He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 15:24)

Who are these lost sheep of Israel? Are they some racial group related in physical features to the Jews? Are they chosen of God for their race and blood, or by their claims to faith in Jesus Christ, and His foreordained knowledge of them? In other words, who are the children of Abraham and the recipients of that promise of a Redeemer made to Abraham? Since our Lord is the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*, can any come to the Father by any other means than by redeeming faith granted by the grace of God? Does God account any righteous other than those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb sacrificed for us before the foundation of the world? Would God extend salvation to any who reject that great blood offering of His only Beloved and Begotten Son? I think a serious student of the Word of God will know the answers to those questions.

So why did our Lord Jesus Christ go to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile? Though the greater number of Jews did not regard the promise of a Seed that was made to Abraham in any spiritual manner, they did have some legacy of prophetic writings upon which to kindle belief in their Messiah. I believe the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ found it expedient to begin a fire of faith where the smoldering coals of faith could be best gathered into one spot to complement a growing flame. Here is a comment taken from a sound Commentary in answer to the Canaanite woman:

. . . . a speech evidently intended for the disciples themselves, to satisfy them that, though the grace He was about to show to this Gentile believer was beyond His strict commission, He had not gone spontaneously to dispense it.. Yet did even this speech open a gleam of hope, could she have discerned it. For thus might she have spoken: I am not Sent, did He say? Truth, Lord, Thou comest not hither in quest of us, but I come in quest of Thee; and must I go empty away? So did not the woman of Samaria, whom when Thou foundest her on Thy way to Galilee, Thou sentest away to make many rich! But this our poor Syrophoenician could not attain to. What, then, can she answer to such a speech? Nothing. She has reached her lowest depth, her darkest moment: she will just utter her last cry. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

The Old Testament Church was the Church of believers in that Promise of a Seed made to Abraham before its fulfillment in Christ. *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. **This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. (Acts 7:37-39)* Is a lost

sheep any less the property of our Lord than those that are found to be secured in the fold? I think not! The ownership is still vested in Him.

The Jews (primarily the Tribe of Judah and Benjamin) possessed the books of the Law and of the Prophets, but they only interpreted them in terms of worldly benefit.. They sought a Messiah who would rule physically from Jerusalem and subdue, militarily, every enemy of the Jewish state. The God of Abraham was too big for their small understanding. Abraham was promised that ALL nations would be blessed through the promised Seed and, indeed, it is so today. The advances in medicine, science, and the human condition arising out of an enlightened faith in Christ, and informed by it, has truly blessed every creature on this globe.

What of the one lost sheep of the one hundred? *How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.* (Matt 18:12-14) Our Lord, consistent with that truth, departed, for the first time, the borders of Israel and went to the coastal region of Tyre/Sidon. It was not happenstance that led Him there, for none of His works were by chance or of an unknowing but a predestined nature. He went there for a purpose, and one of those purposes was for the opening of the eyes of his disciples to the overriding element of faith in the calling of the Lord. He knew the Canaanite woman would meet Him there just as surely as He knew the Samaritan woman would meet Him at the noon-day hour at Jacob's Well. The people of God are not identified by the blood that flows through their veins, but by that blood of Him to whom they have been drawn by grace and faith. A child was spared the demon's curse, and a woman's faith was kindle to tensile heat.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30)

How are baby lambs born into this world? Do they decide by their own volition to be born, or is a prior act required by their parents to bring about their birth. What of Christians who are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world? Before the quickening and making alive of our spirits, were we not dead in trespasses and sins. It was the express grace of God that warmed our hearts with faith and knowing grace.

Do the dead know anything at all? Can they, through any imagined 'spontaneous generation' bring themselves to life again? No, this can never happen. See in the following text how we were dead in the old man, and made alive in Christ – all beyond our understanding or conscious effort: *1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* (Eph 2:1-7) The Woman of Canaan was made a member of the household of God by her calling and faith. So were you and I if we are of the Kingdom of Heaven – and so are all who are the people of God from Abraham to today.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none 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 thy 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 for the seed. (Romans 9:1-8)

You will note the heaviness of Paul's heart for the people of his own bloodline (Israel) who had been gifted of so many things of God such as the matter of adoption of sons into the household of God, the glory of the past blessings and benefits of God's beneficence, the old covenants, and the law and the prophets. They had every advantage except for the fact that they did not accept that promise made to Abraham of a Promised Seed. But those who did, are accounted the true sons and daughters of Abraham. (Israel). These were bonded over to Abraham and the promise. Those after Abraham who believed that future promise were accounted sons of God in the same sense that those who look back upon the accomplished sacrifice in faith are sons and daughters.

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, Romans 4:13-16 (KJV) God knew us long before we knew Him: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10 (KJV) and, 19 We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

There is no good work that we can do to save ourselves – it is all of God. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph 2:8-9)*

There are so many additional proofs of God's sovereign will over our lives, but space prohibits a deeper discussion in the scope of this devotion. Rejoice in your salvation!