

ROMANS Part 93

Chapter 10:12

Similarities and differences between Jews and Greeks.



For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same One is Lord of all, being rich for all who are invoking Him.

Jesus Christ is Lord of ferns. He is also Lord of dandelions. He is Lord of elephants, zebras, gerbils and mice. He is Lord of grasshoppers, gophers, polliwogs, and the great tyrannosaurus rex. He is Lord of Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleon Dynamite, Genghis Khan, Chaka Khan and whoever invented beer. He is Lord of Neptune,

Venus, Earth, Mars and a planet we've never heard of named ZuZu in a galaxy named FAL-6. I think it is safe to say, then, that He is Lord of both Jews and Greeks, and that individuals from both the Israelite and non-Israelite communities find respite when crying to Him from the valley of the shadow of death common to all.

Certainly, however, the fern is as different from the polliwog as FAL-6 is from the inventor of beer. Yet the same One is Lord of all. Let us throw confetti, then. Fine. Have we done it? Good. We are a common creation. Now that we have celebrated the communion of all these things that thrive and die beneath the one sun and the one Lord (except for ZuZu, which thrives beneath a different sun), let us sweep up the colorful paper bits and soberly consider something else. I wish now to mention important differences. The elephant differs from the mouse in elegant ways, even beneath the one Lord. As long as elephants and mice exist, so will the differences between them. Yet one particular difference makes a world of difference when it comes to "correctly cutting ('rightly dividing'—KJV) the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We all seek peace, and so we latch onto expectations, hoping to keep these expectations. We must be careful, then. I am not talking about elephants and mice any more, but about the difference between Jew and Greek and the varying messages of salvation imparted by God, discriminately, to each.

I mention this for the sake of those who would latch onto the verse at the top of this page and myopically insist that, because Paul says here in Romans chapter ten that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek in the "one-Lord-over-both" department, that therefore there is no distinction between Jew and Greek at all, *especially in the department of the two gospel messages given to humanity*. The reason that I am up at 4:30 in the morning writing about this is that people commit such capricious crimes as this all the time, even at 4:30 a.m. They twist one verse without considering others—to suit

their selfish needs. As with the freewillers in the last section, those with pet theological projects like to isolate passages of Scripture that *seem* to pet their pet projects, but don't. The supposed petting occurs only when every other Scripture passage is ignored. When a wider-angled lens is applied and other verses taken into account, the pet project turns out not to be petted at all, but rather swatted in the rump with a rolled-up newspaper and sent to bed.

MR. UNIVERSAL

Paul cares for the common lot of a mortal humanity in need of a God Who gives life. Why wouldn't he? Of all the writers, Paul is the one who set all humanity under the headship of Adam and then, consequently, Christ. Adam condemns all; Christ justifies all (Romans 5:18-19). No one else in Scripture does it besides Paul. Paul's gospel is different than the one Jesus gave to Peter. In Galatians 2:7 (I'll be getting to it), Paul *calls* it different. But back to Adam. In Adam, all are condemned to mortality, but in Christ, all shall be vivified to live forever with God. Paul wrote this in 1 Corinthians 15:21-28. Paul is Mr. Universal. He is the first and only writer to place all humanity into a common, sinking boat, and then rescue them from the boat using the cross of Christ. The other writers rescue only Israel, setting

up that nation for a one-thousand year kingdom. That's great, but hardly universal. Paul is different. He goes deeper. He rescues all humanity—including the screw-ups among Israel, and there were plenty—and sets them up for eternity. God gave it to Paul to go deeper and then to write deeper about the deepness.



Paul explains the depths of the cross and what Jesus Christ's sacrifice meant, not only for humanity, but for every creature in the heavens and on Earth. This includes a lot more creatures than we can now see. I am talking about spiritual beings. Again, Peter and the other disciples never saw this. Jesus didn't give it to them. They thought that the sacrifice of Jesus covered only the sins of a peculiar

people in one small, peculiar nation in the Middle-East. It wasn't their fault that Christ gave them such a contracted, national message. It was meant to be national—and contracted. The Israel nation—and no other nation—was to be born again. The purpose? To shepherd the other nations for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6), bringing these other nations to a knowledge of God. The job of those who walked with Jesus in His humiliation was to pay attention to what Jesus said, remember it all later (the holy spirit would enable them), die horrible deaths, and then be resurrected at the end of this age—spectacularly, by the way—and teach what they had learned in their awful/wonderful humiliation until the knowledge of the glory of God covered the planet Earth as the waters covered the sea (Habakkuk 2:14). This was the plan that God first gave to Abraham—"Through you and your seed shall all the nations of the Earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). But what about the other planets? What about ZuZu way out there in FAL-6? Paul's gospel—and only Paul's gospel—covers them. Paul's gospel—his *message*—is bigger, broader, and deeper than the Circumcision message, and of such latitude so as to defy horizons. Paul nutshells it in Ephesians 1:9-10—

... [God is] making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him), to have an administration of the complement of the eras, *to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth.*

Everything—*everything*—must return to God. Where do you read of that in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter or James? You don't. Where do you read it in John's letters? Will you find it in the book of Revelation? No. Paul's gospel is so distinctly his and *not* the same gospel that Jesus gave to the twelve that Paul has the audacity to call it "my evangel." Paul is either an insufferable egotist or he's onto something different. Paul calls it "my gospel" in Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25, and II Timothy 2:8. The twelve apostles suspected the immensity of this new message, even if they failed to grasp its details. One thing they knew for sure: Paul's gospel differed radically from theirs. It required no circumcision (Galatians 5:6), no baptism (1 Corinthians 1:17), no law-following (Romans 3:21)—and while you're at it, don't even worry about your sins (Romans 5:20; Philippians 4:6), said Paul. The Circumcision disciples must have feared daily for Paul's life. Even the Jews who believed in the Circumcision Jesus wanted Paul dead. They hated the idea of unwashed Greeks not only getting an easier road to God than them,



“The Effulgence of God’s glory disguised Himself in a Jew suit.”

but receiving heaven as a reward rather than earth (Ephesians 2:6). As for the good and reasonable Circumcision Jews (Peter, James and company) I think they liked Paul, but they probably limited their proximity to him. From Damascus road onward, Paul lived inches from a violent death.

A DIFFERENT JESUS

What do I mean by “the Circumcision Jesus”? This was the Son of God Who limited Himself to an Israelite identity for thirty-three long years. It was the Effulgence of God’s glory (Hebrews 1:3) Who, for thirty-three years, disguised Himself in a Jew suit. It was a Man Who, while on Earth, purposely limited His message to Israelites, sending His disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only (Matthew 15:24), and not even willing to bless a woman of the nations until she begged Him (Matthew 15:22-28). He was decidedly *not* trying to save the world during His brief stay here, but only Israelites. He would save the world at the cross, but no one would know about it until He called

the Pharisee Saul a few years later—the worst sinner on the planet at the time (1 Timothy 1:15)—waiting for the man to exit the Israel city limits on his way to Damascus to kill followers of Jesus (of all things), before lavishing him with heretofore unknown quantities of grace (1 Timothy 1:14) with a light brighter than the noonday sun (Acts 26:13).

No more Jew suit for the Son of God! (Paul had never even seen Him in that suit.)

It was a wonder that Jesus Christ didn’t kill Saul on that road instead of lavishing him with grace. That’s what you and I would have done—killed him. So now you get the idea of grace. Grace is favor shown to one who deserves the opposite. Who deserved more the opposite of grace than Saul the Pharisee? What better messenger of grace than a guy who only survived his journey to Damascus because of it? Jesus Christ was laying on Saul—Who He would rename Paul—secrets that had been hid from the world since before time began (1 Corinthians 2:7); secrets as to the eternal destiny of not only every son and daughter of Adam, but every being ever created.

I’m pretty sure that Peter had to order a beer when Paul told him about the new message that he received from Jesus Christ. James must have said, “Make it two.” I don’t think this pair of Circumcision giants could have talked to Paul for very long without severe brain strain and greater need for alcohol.



The “secret of Christ” was that the humble Nazarene also happened to be the Firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15; given that place by His God and Father), Who had not only created everything, but would eventually reconcile the same everything to His God and Father, through the cross (Colossians 1:20). Paul became the administrator of this secret. In other words, he was the man made responsible for its dissemination, chiefly among the non-Israelite population. Ephesians 3:8-10—

To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations (“untraceable” = doesn’t appear anywhere except in Paul’s letters—*MZ*), and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret (the secret of Ephesians 1:10—*MZ*), which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia.



DIFFERENT GOSPELS

Concerning this disparity of scope, vision and purpose between Paul's message and that of the Jerusalem disciples, Paul wrote in Galatians 2:1-9—

Thereupon, after the lapse of fourteen years, I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also along with me. Now I went up in accord with a revelation, and submitted to them the evangel which I am heralding among the nations, yet privately to those of repute, lest somehow I should be racing or ran for naught. But not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, is compelled to be circumcised. Yet, it was because of the false brethren who were smuggled in, who came in by the way to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they shall be enslaving us—to whom, not even for an hour do we simulate by subjection, that the truth of the evangel should be continuing with you.

Now from those reputed to be somewhat—what kind they once were is of no consequence to me (God is not taking up the human aspect)—for to me those of repute submitted nothing. But, on the contrary, perceiving that I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision (for He Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations), and, knowing the grace which

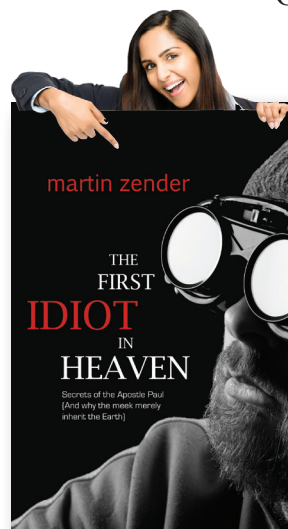
is being given to me, James and Cephas and John, who are supposed to be pillars, give to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we, indeed, are to be for the nations, yet they for the Circumcision.

I like the phrase that Paul uses in Romans 10:12 concerning all who are invoking Christ. For such people, Christ is “rich for all.” Paul loves putting this to parchment, seeing as he is the same writer who condemned the entire race back in 3:12, saying, “All avoid Him: at the same time they were useless. Not one is doing kindness: there is not even one!” You have to admire Paul's range. But the range is already there; God loves extremes. Those invoking the Lord here in 10:12 came from the pool of the useless in 3:12. The refreshing change of pace is due to the cross of Jesus Christ. The same principle applies in Romans 11:32, when Paul writes, “For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.” What happened to change the “all” being locked up to the “all” receiving mercy? The cross.

Paul unlocks a long-held secret as to the eternal destiny of not just Israel but all humanity. The Circumcision, on the other hand, is Israel-centric. The same Lord directs both programs, much as a fruit salesman sells both apples and oranges.

I am trusting that, armed with this information, you will no longer (if you ever did) misjudge the phrase “for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek” in Romans 10:12, supposing it to mean that there is no difference *at all* between these two opposing parties. There is no difference in two aspects only, clearly explained by Paul in this passage: 1) there is one Lord directing both organizations, and 2) this Lord answers everyone invoking His name, irrespective of national distinctions.

Other than that, there are distinctions out the wazoo. —MZ



GET THE BOOK!

...that explains everything.

“Few scholars grasp Paul's distinct message. None of them are funny. Zender has delivered another classic of substance and style.”

—Clyde L. Pilkington Jr.
Study Shelf Books