

Test your Bible Knowledge

1. Ishmael was the:

- a. son of Adam and Eve
- b. father of Hagar
- c. son of Isaac
- d. son of Hagar

2. How old were Moses and Aaron when they spoke to Pharaoh?

- a. between 40 years of age
- b. 80 and 83 years of age
- c. between 84 and 48 years of age
- d. between 34 and 40 years of age

3. The phrase, "cause His face to shine upon us" is found in Psalm:

- a. 65
- b. 66
- c. 67
- d. 68

Scriptures:

- 1) Genesis 16:3-4; 25:12
 - 2) Exodus 7:7
 - 3) Psalms :1
- Fred Singleton

Private Bible studies available anytime!!

Schedule:

Sunday Bible Study - 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship - 11:00AM

Sunday Evening Worship - 5:00 PM

Wednesday Night Bible Study - 7:00 PM

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"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16

Did the Ancient Gentiles Have the Hope of Salvation?

The Bible student is aware of the fact that the law of Moses was given to the nation of Israel. It was intended to regulate the Jews' conduct and to provide a mode of forgiveness (through the Levitical sacrificial system) when they transgressed the law.

Where does this leave the Gentiles who lived before the coming of Christ? Were they excluded from Jehovah's magnificent plan of human salvation? Why was so much attention given to the Jews over the Gentiles?

The primary theme of Old Testament history had to do with the Hebrew nation in view of **their role** in preparing the world for the coming of the Messiah (John 4:22). Nonetheless, Heaven's interest in non-Hebrews is underscored many times in the body of Old Testament literature.

Gentile Accountability

That the ancient Gentile world was religiously and morally culpable before the Creator is most obvious from the testimony of both Old and New Testaments. In literature of the Old Testament, the idolatry of the pagans is condemned repeatedly, and judgments from God were visited upon these peoples.

(1) Gentile idolatry is condemned as sin by the prophets of God (see Exodus 20:3-5; 32:35; Numbers 25:1-9; Deuteronomy 5:7-9; 6:4, etc.). The captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah was attributed directly to the worship of the false gods of the Gentiles (2 Kings 22:17). For an extensive array of information on this theme, see Helmbold 2003, 697-708.

(2) Gentile immorality was exposed and rebuked by the Old Testament writers. For example, in Amos 1:3 - 2:3, the prophet denounced Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, and Edom for their brutality toward their neighbors. The Ammonites "ripped open pregnant women" in their vicious conquests, etc. See also the extensive material presentation of judgments against the heathen nations contemporary with the prophet Jeremiah (chapters 46-51).

(3) In his epistle to the Christians in Rome, Paul describes the religious-moral conditions of the Roman world.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error (Romans 1:24-27, ESV).

From these facts, therefore, one may conclude: (1) Sin is a transgression of divine law (1 John 3:4); conversely, where there is no law, there is no sin (Romans 4:15). (2) But the Gentiles were indicted as sinners. (3) Consequently, they were amenable to a law, and they had violated that law. That their actions were designated as sin likewise implies that they were under **divine** law.

The Inward Law

The ancient Gentiles were not judged by the same rule as the Jews due to the fact that the Hebrews had a **written** revelation from God (the law of Moses, and eventually the completed body of the Old Testament Scriptures), while the other nations did not; the Gentiles, therefore, were evaluated by a more **general** standard than the Jews. Paul wrote:

[F]or when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:14-16).

From this text, as well as supplementary data, the following facts can be deduced: (1) While the Gentiles did not have a **written** law (e.g., the law of Moses) certainly on occasions they had communications from Jehovah (cf. Genesis 3:9; 4:6; 6:13ff; 12:1ff, etc.), and divine traditions surely were echoed across the centuries.

(2) There is something “written within the heart,” i.e., in the human psyche, that “by nature” (physis) urges one to do what he perceives to be right and refrain from what he feels to be wrong. It has been defined as the “natural sense of what is right and wrong” (Thayer 1958, 661). This moral sense cannot minutely **define** right and wrong, but it can initiate some broad and strong inclinations.

This certainly is evidenced by the fact that Adam and Eve felt **guilt** after having eaten the forbidden fruit, even before confronted by God (Genesis 3:7-10). “Condemned by their own consciences, they were ashamed and afraid to meet their benefactor and friend—an inevitable consequence of sin” (Campbell 1958, 32).

“There is no witness so terrible—no accuser so powerful as conscience which dwells within us” (Sophocles). “Man’s conscience is the oracle of God” (Lord Byron).

(3) There is a fundamental fact of human history. Humanity was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). This does not have reference to the physical features of humankind, for God is not physical (Matthew 16:17; John 4:24; Luke 24:39); rather, as noted above, it alludes to intangible qualities that were created resident in the spirit of the person. This aspect of human personality is what Paul called conscience. The English word derives from the Greek term, *syneidesis*, a compound term signifying “to know together.” It reflects a common knowledge that human beings share with one another of a sense of religious and moral culpability.

As one scholar noted: “According to Romans 2:14-15 conscience is innate and universal. It is not the product of environment, training, habit, race impression, or education, though it is influenced by all these factors” (Rehwinkel 1999, 136). The ancient Gentiles, therefore, were not judged by the same rule as the Jews, but they were not void of law and culpability. Elsewhere the matter has been described in this way:

[T]he threefold workings of the law, in that the guidance of their heart predisposes them to know the right, the testimony of their conscience bears witness with their heart that the right is preferable, and lastly, after the deed is done, their thoughts or inward reasonings accuse or excuse them according as their act has been wrong or right. These well-known psychological phenomena, observable among the Gentiles, are proof conclusive that they are not without law, with its power and privilege of

justification (McGarvey and Pendleton n.d., 313). -
Wayne Jackson; More next week