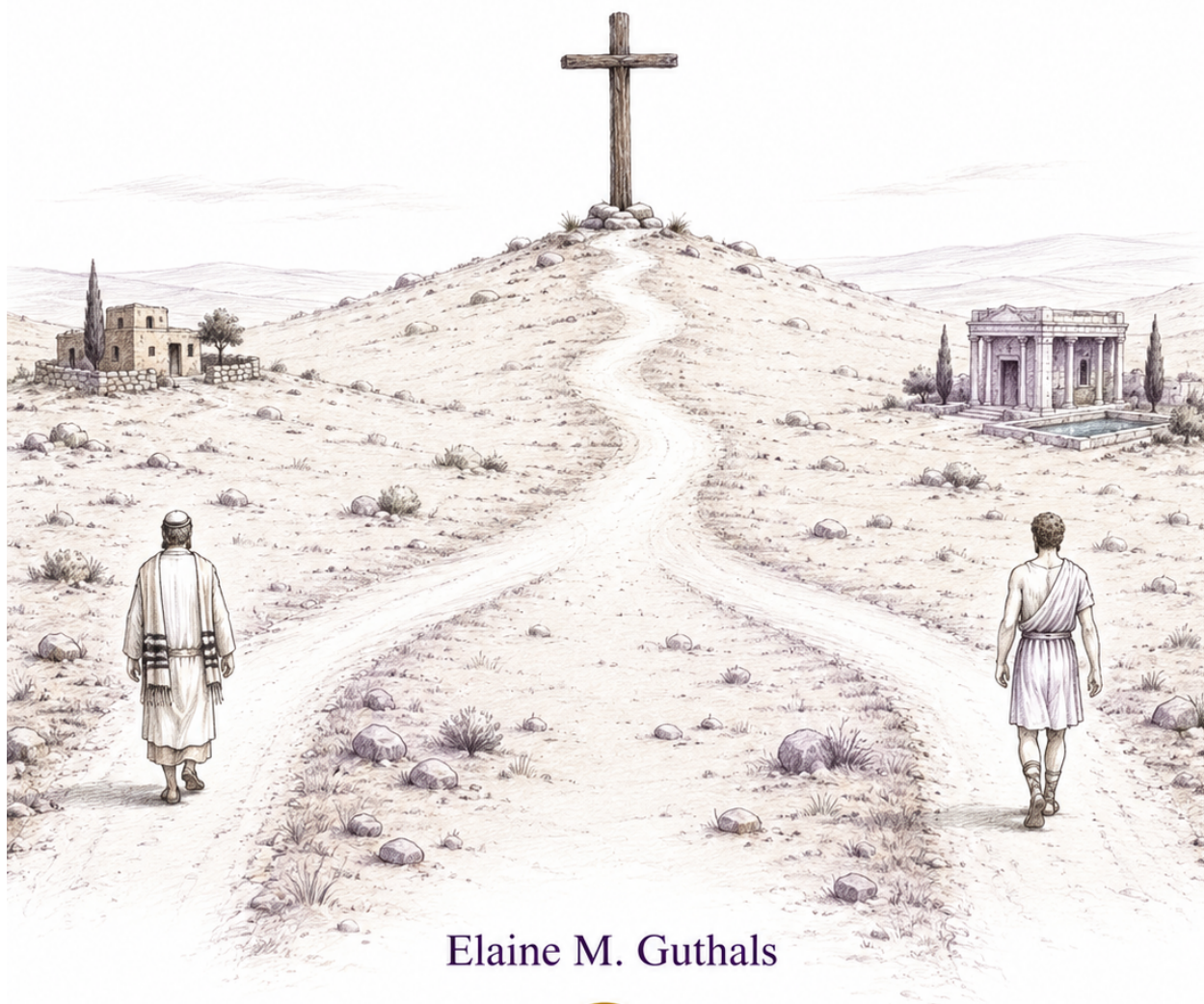


ANCIENT PATHS REFLECTION

Who Did Yeshua Come to Save?



Elaine M. Guthals



ANCIENT PATHS PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2026 Elaine M. Guthals
All Rights Reserved

First edition

Published by
Ancient Paths Publishing
New London, Missouri

More resources are available at www.ancientpathspublish.com

Reproduction Rights:

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, or posted online without prior written permission from the publisher.

Scriptures quotations marked (NLT) taken from Holy Bible, New Living Translation
Copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House
Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. Used by Permission. All rights reserved.

Who Did Yeshua Come to Save?

Many of the first-century Jews were convinced that the Messiah was going to save and restore Israel. They expected the Messiah's relationship with the Gentile nations to be primarily one of judgment rather than salvation/inclusion.

That isn't exactly what Scripture says. From the beginning, Jehovah made it clear that – eventually – all humans would be called to accept Yeshua as their Savior and Jehovah as their Sovereign God.

Gentile inclusion in that prophecy is obvious from The Fall. “And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3: 15 NLT).

Accepted as the first Messianic prophecy, this addresses humanity as a whole, not just the nation of Israel. So, how did the Gentiles come to be excluded?

Old Testament Exclusion

Part of the reason Israel separated themselves from the world around them was because it was Jehovah's Will. “When the Lord your God hands these nations over to you and you conquer them, you must completely destroy them. Make no treaties with them and show them no mercy” (Deut. 7: 2 NLT).

Some of the first-century Jews would have seen this as a particular directive to limit contact with Gentiles.

Even more relevant are the next couple of verses. “You must not intermarry with them. Do not let your daughters and sons marry their sons and daughters, for they will lead your children away from me to worship other gods. Then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and he will quickly destroy you” (Deut. 7: 3-4 NLT).

The verses in Deuteronomy continue a similar directive found in Exodus. “Be very careful never to make a treaty with the people who live in the land where you are going. If you do, you will follow their evil ways and be trapped” (Ex. 34: 12 NLT).

By the first century, these commands were no longer being applied in the context of conquering Canaan. They were understood as part of the Law governing Jewish life.

“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways” (Lev. 18: 24 NLT).

These ways refer back to the preceding verses. They refer to forbidden sexual practices. In other words, the Israelites were told not to adopt the sexual abominations in the pagan nations around them.

The first-century Jews couldn't carry out the conquest language in their present political circumstances, but they absolutely could apply the intermarriage and separation principles to daily life.

There could be a couple of explanations for the Jewish mindset. A more practical explanation for the Deuteronomy verses was that Jehovah knew those nations were destined to be defeated. Aligning themselves with "the enemy" would be difficult and put the Israelites into jeopardy.

Jehovah, however, was admonishing them to not bind themselves to those who worshiped other gods. The reason was that it would give those who worshiped other gods the opportunity to draw the Jews away from Him.

This would have been more applicable to first-century Jews than the directive to completely destroy the nations. Because they were under Roman occupation, they couldn't engage in war with surrounding nations.

But they could have been intermingling with those of other nations. Romans and Greeks would have been living within Israel's borders, along with people from surrounding nations.

It is possible that the first-century Jews were operating under what I call the Eve Syndrome. In the Garden of Eden, when questioned by the serpent, Eve told him that they were not only forbidden to eat the fruit but were also not allowed to touch it.

Jehovah establishes boundaries for particular purposes. At times, we try to expand that boundary beyond the purpose for which it was given.

This concern was especially evident in Ezra 9-10, when a number of priests were identified as intermarrying with pagan wives.

However, somewhere along the line, separation from idolatry became separation from idolators.

Old Testament Inclusion

However, even when Jehovah called Abram (later known as Abraham) to follow Him, He knew that the restoration from the consequences of the Fall was not going to stop with Israel. This discussion of all people was addressed elsewhere in Scripture.

Yes, Abraham was going to have enough descendants to form a nation. But even people not his descendants were going to be blessed through him.

This blessing was going to be in the Person and mission of Yeshua – the promised Messiah in Genesis 3: 15. Through Him, sin and the one who originated sin would be defeated.

- "... All the families on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen. 12: 3 NLT).
- "May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere." (Ps. 67: 2 NLT).

Scripture has told us that all nations will receive the Gospel message.

- “I will give you to Israel as my personal covenant, and you will be a light to the nations.” (Isa. 42: 6 NLT).
- “The LORD has demonstrated his holy power before the eyes of all the nations. All the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.” (Isa. 52: 10 NLT)

Still other passages had Gentiles called by name.

- “I will also make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Isa. 49: 6 NLT).

New Testament Exclusion

Writings influential in first-century Israel also called for separation of Israel from the Gentiles. Jubilees 22: 16¹ says, “... Separate yourself from the nations, And do not eat with them: And do not according to their works, And become not their associate; For their works are unclean...”

This separation extended beyond religious practice into daily interaction. The Damascus Document extends this concern into rules governing interaction with outsiders.

This was more than just an identity boundary. It was a moral and religious judgment.

Peter acknowledged these laws when Jehovah sent him to Cornelius’ house. “You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you.” (Ac. 10: 28 NLT).

Yeshua’s Mission to Israel: Priority, Not Exclusion

Luke, early in the first chapter of his Gospel, described the coming of light to those in darkness. “to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace” (Lk. 1: 79 NLT).

Soon after, Simeon spoke of salvation being brought to the world. “I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people” (Lk. 2: 30-31 NLT).

With an introduction like that, we might assume that Yeshua would include the Gentiles in His mission from the start. But that wasn’t His mission.

“Then Jesus said to the woman, ‘I was sent only to help God’s lost sheep — the people of Israel’” (Mt. 15: 24 NLT).

¹ Jubilees 22:16, *The Complete Ethiopian Bible*, Solomon Gate’s Press, 2025, p. 54

No, this wasn't meanness or even favoritism. It was covenant fulfillment. "Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors" (Rom. 15: 8 NLT).

This describes the focus of Yeshua's earthly ministry before the cross. He acknowledged before His crucifixion that there was a place for Gentiles in His kingdom. "I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd" (Jn. 10: 16 NLT).

Yeshua had to reach His own people before He reached out to the world. Beyond covenant fulfillment, Yeshua was not on earth long enough to reach everyone worldwide.

While Yeshua came for the House of Israel first, He didn't turn away Gentiles who came to Him in faith. He healed a Roman centurion's servant and declared, "I tell you this, many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 8: 11 NLT).

To the Canaanite woman, Yeshua said, "Dear woman, your faith is great. Your request is granted" (Mt. 15: 28 NLT). He freed a demon-possessed man in the Gentile Decapolis (Mk. 5: 1-20) and revealed His identity to the Samaritan woman: "I am the Messiah!" (Jn. 4: 26 NLT).

Paul later clarified this divine order: "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes — the Jew first and also the Gentile" (Rom. 1: 16 NLT).

Yeshua Foretold the Expansion of Jehovah's Kingdom

Many Jews believed they were children of Jehovah because they were children of Abraham. They believed ancestry was how they were adopted into Jehovah's family.

They trusted in covenant promises.

The covenant promises in which they trusted are everlasting. That tells us several things.

- Israel's covenant promises remain significant.
- Jewish people are not automatically saved merely by being Jewish.
- Israel's present unbelief is described as partial, not total or permanent.
- Paul expects a future salvation of "all Israel."
- God's covenant faithfulness toward Israel has not been revoked.

However, Yeshua announced that ancestry, religious position, and covenant heritage weren't sufficient for the kind of relationship with Jehovah. He told Nicodemus – the teacher of Israel – that even he must be born again (Jn. 3: 1, 10).

Yeshua told a parable that seems to have contradicted that. It warned, "I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit" (Mt. 21: 43, NLT).

Remember, it was always the plan to include Gentiles in the Kingdom. “It was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47, NLT).

Christ’s death and resurrection accomplished that. “He has united Jews and Gentiles into one people... He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups” (Eph. 2: 14-15, NLT).

Conclusion

Even today, we are supposed to be in the world but not of it. That describes the tension found between some believers and non-believers.

Yet our marching orders charge us to take Yeshua’s Gospel to all people (Mk. 16: 15). People of all nations and races are to be given the opportunity to hear and accept His salvation.

We know how essential this is. One day, all people will kneel before Yeshua (Phil. 2: 10-11).