

# Old Testament Saints

## When Were Sins Forgiven? Part 2

### Part 1 was printed in the March 29 bulletin

What about people who were not descendants of Jacob (Israel)? Could their sins be forgiven, and how was this made possible.

The Bible shows that people who were not descendants of Jacob (Israel) could have their sins forgiven. While the covenant given at Sinai applied specifically to Israel, Scripture demonstrates that God always allowed Gentiles to receive mercy when they turned to Him in faith and obedience. Ultimately, their forgiveness, like that of Israel, was made possible through the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Below are six key biblical principles.

Firstly, God has always been the God of all nations. From the beginning, God intended His blessing to reach beyond Israel. God told Abraham, *“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* Genesis 12:3. This promise shows that God’s plan of redemption was never limited only to Israel. Israel was chosen as the nation through whom the Messiah would come, but God’s concern was always for all mankind.

Secondly, Gentiles could turn to God and be accepted. Even under the Old Testament period, Gentiles who turned to God could receive mercy. For example, Ninevah. The people of Ninevah repented when Jonah preached repentance. *“Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them.”* Jonah 3:10. They were not Israelites, yet God spared them because they repented.

For example, Rehab. A Gentile woman named Rahab from Jericho, believed in the God of Israel and was spared. *“For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”* Joshua 2:11. She later became part of the lineage of Christ. Matthew 1:5.

For example, Ruth. A Moabite woman named Ruth committed herself to Israel’s God. *“Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”* Ruth 1:16. She also became part of the lineage of Jesus. Matthew 1:5.

Thirdly, Gentiles were accountable to God’s moral law. Even without the Law of Moses, Gentiles were still accountable to God. The apostle Paul explains this principle, *“For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law...their conscience also bearing witness.”* Romans 2:14-15. This means that all people possess a moral awareness that reflects God’s standards. Because of this Gentiles could be judged for sin and Gentiles could also respond to God in faith and repentance.

Fourthly, some Gentiles joined Israel and worshipped God. The Law of Moses even provided a way for foreigners to worship the God of Israel. Exodus 12:48-49 allowed foreigners to join Israel’s covenant through circumcision. *“When a stranger dwells with you*

*and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord...let him come near and keep it. One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.”*

Additionally, the temple included an outer court given to the Gentiles, referred to in Revelation 11:2 as the Court of the Gentiles, showing that non-Israelites could worship the God of Israel. King Solomon acknowledged this when dedicating the temple. *“Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel...when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place.”* 1 Kings 8:41-43.

Fifthly, Christ’s sacrifice made forgiveness possible for everyone. While Gentiles could turn to God in the Old Testament period, the true basis of forgiveness for both Jews and Gentiles was the sacrifice of Christ. Scripture explains that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. *“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* 1 John 2:2. This fulfilled the promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his descendant.

People who were not descendants of Jacob could have their sins forgiven because God is the Creator and Judge of all nations, not just Israel, Gentiles could turn to God in faith and repentance, some Gentiles joined Israel and worshipped God, and ultimately, forgiveness for everyone, Jew or Gentile, was made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

~Ron Josselet (Assisted by ChatGPT)