

Jews and the nations

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Preacher: Steve Ellacott

[0 : 00] Well, as you know, I've been going through Acts off and on, but this particular section! of Acts, which, although we started at chapter 17, in a sense runs from chapter 15.

I've called the gospel in a complicated world, and we started to look at Acts 17 last week. Now, here's a question. Where does the word Gentiles come from? Good question, isn't it? I always assumed it was some Hebrew word. No, it's not Greek either. It's Latin, yeah. And it comes from the Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate. For some reason, the modern translations have kept it. I don't know quite why they have. What words does it translate?

Well, in the Old Testament, it translates the Hebrew word, I can't really pronounce it, something like goi or something, plural goyim, which basically means nations. And usually in the New Testament, it translates the word ethnos, which means nations. Usually nations more with an emphasis on their sort of common culture rather than their genetic relationship. We get the word ethnicity from it, obviously. For some bizarre reason, both the New International Version and even the ESV, the English Standard Version, which usually is more accurate, translates this verse from 1 Corinthians as Gentiles. But what it actually says is Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks. Helen, the word there is Helen, the word for Greeks. But to those whom God called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And we looked at last week at the world and the gospel as it impacted on the Greek, specifically Greek culture in that case, really, but the intellectual culture of the empire, as it were. Now we move on in a sense in chapter 18 to look at the gospel among the nations in perhaps in a more general and more political sense.

[2 : 41] So here's a picture of the world, or at least the Roman world, more or less as it looked in the time of Paul. You probably can't see all the names there. On the next slide I've enlarged the important ones.

But I'd like to look at this chapter. First of all, look at some of the places and look at the people that we meet and then to make them, or begin with P, I've made them political history and Pauline theology.

But really we're going to look at how this, how the gospel was beginning to act on the sort of politics and the state of the Roman Empire, even at that very early stage.

And how Paul's teaching was kind of designed almost to fit into that sort of context as he took the gospel to the nations.

I hope that's what I'm going to do. I hope you will come through it. It's quite complicated, I'm afraid. So here's the places that we particularly refer to in this chapter.

[3 : 54] Rome there is up in the top left-hand corner, of course, the seat of the Empire. Obviously everybody's heard of Rome. Corinth there, as you can see from its location on the map, is the crossroads of the Empire.

If you had travelled about the Empire, you would eventually turn up in Corinth. Because it's like the M25, it's always on the way to somewhere else.

Actually, the city was destroyed in 146 BC by the Romans, but it was in such a strategic location that they fairly soon rebuilt it. If you were heading east, perhaps heading outwards from Rome as Priscilla and Aquila were, what you would do is you would take a boat, ship to Corinth.

And then you could avoid a long sea voyage by crossing the Isthmus, the land bridge, to the eastern side. Corinth is on the western side.

You'd cross over to the eastern side, Kenquia, which is the harbour on the eastern side. And there you would take a ship to Asia Minor, what we now think of as Turkey, so as to save you having to go all the way round.

[5 : 15] And that's what made Corinth such an important place and such an important port. And that certainly made Corinth a wealthy place, but it also had all the problems of a transient population.

A port. Corinth was famous for its sexual licentiousness, even by the standards of the Roman Empire. It was regarded as licentious. And of course, there were sailors in the town, and when you get sailors in the town, what else do you get?

You know the answer to that. You get alcohol and prostitutes, don't you? The Roman province of Achaia is mentioned. That actually basically covers southern Greece, including Athens and Corinth. So when it says Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia, this was the general area in which this is taking place. The other side of the sea, it's the Aegean Sea, isn't it?

Yes. I always get the Aegean in the Adriatic muddled up, but I think that's the Aegean Sea. The other side of the Aegean Sea was Ephesus, which actually was also a seaport, but one that was rather in decline because of the silting up of its harbour.

[6 : 40] Its neighbour, Smyrna, had a much better harbour and so now took most of the commercial traffic, the trade. But Ephesus was still an important meeting point.

It was a point on the tourist circuit for the empire because you would go and visit the Temple of Diana. And as tourists today, you would do, you would visit the kit shop and buy a souvenir.

And the souvenirs that were sold were little silver models, little silver idols of the representing Diana, the goddess. Now one other place is mentioned in this text and that's Alexandria.

And that's right down at the bottom of the map there. It's on the northern coast of Africa. It's named for Alexander the Great. It was also a Greek colony, as Ephesus was, but a much more successful one.

It was always conceived and built as a university city. And by this time, it actually rivaled Athens as a centre of learning. And in fact, it would soon surpass it.

[7 : 54] I mentioned last week that the second Hellenic period, which started at about 100 AD, actually was much more centred in Alexandria than in Athens.

And Alexandria was particularly famous for its library. Its library was the British Library or the Library of Congress of the ancient world.

And like those libraries today, it tries to have a copy of every book written, every book published. It's perhaps slightly easier in those days than it is today.

But on the other hand, they didn't have the information technology that we had. So they did try and do that. And they tried to keep a copy of every book written, although actually the library there was twice destroyed by fire and many of the ancient texts, unfortunately, were lost.

So those are the places. What about the people that we meet? Now, most of these people we meet were what were known as Hellenistic Jews, Greek Jews, Jews influenced by Greek and Roman thought.

[9 : 07] And they mostly have Latin names. Aquila is actually Latin for eagle. Priscilla actually means little ancient one, which strikes me as a rather strange name to give a woman.

But anyway, that's what she was called. It's a Latin name. Justice and Crispus are obviously Latin names. Sosthenes is actually a Greek name.

Perhaps the strangest name of all is Apollos. Because although this chap apparently was a Jew, he's known for a Greek god.

Apollos means sent of Apollo. Apollo, of course, was a Greek god. Very strange. But that was the way the Hellenistic Jews thought.

And Apollos, as I said, was a scholar from Alexandria, the great southern university city. But he turned up not in, interestingly, not in Athens, as he might have expected, but in Ephesus.

[10 : 14] Now, what about the two Romans that are mentioned? First of all, we meet Claudius. I think this is the first mention in the scripture of the emperor Claudius. Claudius ruled from AD 41 to AD 54.

He suffered from Parkinson's disease or some similar illness. And so he was often described by the historians of the time as mad. But in actual fact, he was a man of considerable learning and was certainly actually rather saner than either his predecessor, who was Caligula, or his successor, who was Nero.

Actually, one of the better emperors of the time. The other Roman mentioned was Gallio.

Also, we know quite a certain amount about him from secular history. He's quite an interesting person. He came from a famous Roman family, but he was actually born in Cordova in Spain. His father was the rhetorician, Seneca the Elder. His brother was a Roman philosopher known as Seneca the Younger. He was adopted by another rhetorician, Lucius Junius Gallio, and took his name from his adopted father rather than his actual father or brother.

[11 : 39] And so Gallio was, I say, his brother was a philosopher, a very, again, doubtless, a very educated man. So those are the people.

And I mentioned the two Romans last because that takes us on a bit to the politics of this. And we saw in Chapter 17 how the new message of Christianity was already starting to interact with the intellectual, the academic history of the empire.

But in Chapter 18, we note it was already starting to impact on the political history of the empire. And it is clear what we have here that Paul is not the only one involved in spreading the message through the empire.

We meet people here who were not converted by Paul. We meet Priscilla and Aquila, and we meet Alexandria. So we meet Apollos from Alexandria.

So we know that the gospel had already reached Rome, and we know that in some form it had reached Alexandria, both places that Paul hadn't visited yet. In fact, as far as we know, he never went to Alexandria.

[12 : 52] And again, there is some interesting secular history that sort of impacts, gives a bit of light onto this. Because as early as AD 41, so that's some nine years before the passage we're reading about in Chapter 18, right at the beginning of Claudius' reign, he had sent a message to the Jews in Alexandria, telling them not to receive certain Jews from Syria.

Now notice, they were not to receive Jews from Syria. He wasn't excluding Jews from Jerusalem, Jews from Syria. So most people who have thought about this think he probably was actually referring to missionaries, Christian missionaries, who would have come either from Antioch or from Caesarea, towns in Syria rather than in Judea itself.

So even as early as AD 41, it seems that the gospel had started to reach Alexandria, but Claudius had rather put a barrier in the way, and that may well be why Apollos was not fully instructed in the way, as we find out was the case.

And what about this edict of Claudius that we read about in the first verse here, or second verse? That actually took place eight years later in AD 49.

And again, we know, or we can be fairly certain from the other, from secular records of the time, that what was actually happened were there were anti-Christian riots by Jews in Rome.

[14 : 35] But of course, at the time, Christianity was thought as just another sect of Judaism as far as the Roman authority was concerned. and so Claudius decided to ban all the Jews, exclude all the Jews from Rome.

It's thought actually that it wasn't enforced that rigorously, but anyway, Priscilla and Aquila, who were already well-taught Christian believers, even though they hadn't met Paul before now, had moved their tent-making business east, and so turned up first of all in Corinth.

But Claudius' ban, of course, had simply exported the problem from Rome, hadn't it? And so, it left Galileo and the other sorry, Galileo, Galileo and the other provincial officials to pick up the pieces. And that's what we find Galileo having to do in this passage. And Galileo's approach to the problem was rather more laissez-faire, you notice.

It was hands-off. Sort it out for yourselves, guys. I'm having nothing to do with it. So that was the situation in which this passage takes place.

[16 : 03] And it's an oversimplification to say that the first half of Acts is about Peter and the second half of Acts is about Paul. But it's not that much of an oversimplification.

It certainly is true that in the latter half of his book, Luke restricts attention almost entirely to Paul and his associates. Although it is clear from this very chapter that a lot else was going on.

There were plenty of other games in town, as we say. There were plenty of other missionary teams in the field. So a good question is why does Luke make this choice of focusing almost entirely, but not quite in this passage, but almost entirely on Paul?

Well, a simple answer, of course, is that Luke was an associate to Paul and often travelled with him. But that's not a very good answer, really, is it? That just moves the question one place back.

Why did Luke, led by the Spirit, choose to join Pauline Ministries, Inc., or whatever they called themselves, rather than one of the other missionary teams that he might have signed up for? [17:13] or perhaps just stay behind with the mother church in Jerusalem? And I'd suggest the answer, perhaps, is actually to be found in chapters 15 and 21.

Chapters 15 and 21 of Acts describe Paul's two visits to Jerusalem, and they bracket these missionary journeys. And we find from those chapters that the mother church in Jerusalem was conservative.

It was rather Pharisee-dominated. It was dominated by Hebraic Jews, Jews who were based, basically, in Judea and thought like Hebraic Jews.

Their first language would have been Hebrew, or at least Aramaic, rather than Greek. But the scattered churches that were spreading through the empire were made up largely of Hellenistic Jews and God-fearing Gentiles.

And in chapters 15 and 21, we find out how actually both sides struggled to maintain unity between these cultural strands.

[18:24] In fact, the very problems of Jewish sectarianism, which were tearing the Jews apart, were beginning to pop up within the church. And it's in this debate that Paul was very much a key figure, because Paul was the man with a foot in both camps.

His given name, Saul, was a Hebraic name, not a Greek or Latin one. He was a Pharisee, he tells us in some of his letters, a Pharisee by choice and implication, inclination, and he studied under the respected Hebraic teacher Gamaliel, probably the most respected of the Jewish rabbis in Jerusalem.

He was also mentioned in Acts at one point. But on the other hand, Paul was not actually born in Jerusalem. He was born in Tarsus. He was a pre-born Roman citizen, which most of the Hebraic Jews wouldn't have been.

And as we saw last week, he was well-educated in Greek thought. So Paul is the person who bridges both the cultures. And that may well be why Luke chooses to focus on Paul and the efforts he made indeed to hold the church together in a sense, to understand how the church could work and incorporate both the Hellenistic Jews and the Hebraic Jews, and the Gentile converts.

I'd have switched to the other mic. It was only Chris that it didn't like. It seems to have taken the exception to me now as well. Yes.

[20:26] So why does Luke focus on Paul? We're still crackling. It's the speaker.

going to go back to the other microphone in that case.

Sorry about that. Chris was talking this morning about how technical problems can get in the way. It seems that somebody must have been listening.

I think somebody we didn't want listening was. So why does Luke focus on Paul? Well, you remember that Paul was chosen by Jesus, as he tells us in Acts 9.15, as an apostle to the ethnos, the nations, the Gentiles, to the kings, and to the Jews, interestingly enough, in that order. you might have expected it to be the Jews, Greeks, and kings, but it's not. The order is Gentiles, kings, and Jews.

[21:40] And so Paul was a key figure, if you like, in working out, perhaps, you might say, of the theory of how the church could operate in this kind of culture.

But it's also worth pointing out that Paul, although Paul rarely quotes Jesus directly, and some critics have said that Paul made this stuff up, in my view, Paul's teaching is entirely based on that of Jesus and the other apostles.

I can't see any alternative. The radical change from his previous Pharisaic position can have no other explanation than having learned of the Lord Jesus and learned from the other apostles.

But Paul is the man who bridges the gap, and it's Paul's genius under the Holy Spirit. Now, we couldn't think of a word in a discussion with Brenda, so I'm going to say recontextualize, perhaps rebuild, refurbish, however you want to, no word seems quite adequate.

But Paul was to reinterpret or recontextualize the gospel for his Greek educated cosmopolitan hearers, while at the same time embedding it firmly and deeply in Jewish salvation history.

[23:02] I think both of those are important. But I say it's important to realize this wasn't just Paul's idea, something he dreamed up on the back of a camel or something.

In fact, if we look back, and here's a verse, but don't look actually. Here's a verse from Acts 15, verse 10, which says, Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples

a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?

Referring, obviously, to the ritual law. Now, you might have thought it was Paul said that, or one of Paul's associates, but it was actually Peter. So it wasn't a case that sort of Paul ignored what the other apostles were saying, and made it up as he went along.

It's the same gospel, the same teaching, but it probably is true that it's Paul's genius to set it down and see under the Holy Spirit how it might all work together.

But again, as in a sense, Peter and Paul set aside some of the rituals of the Old Testament, well, pretty much all the rituals of the Old Testament, it is worth reminding ourselves that it was Jesus himself who declared all foods clean.

[24 : 29] That was in Mark 7, 19. It was Jesus himself who permitted his disciples to pick ears of corn on the Sabbath, Mark 2, 23.

But still, it is true, I think, of the apostles. It was perhaps Paul and John who saw most clearly how to make this all work in practice. And so I think we need to keep these things in mind as we study the theology of this passage and see how it might apply to us.

I said it was a bit complicated, I'm sorry about this, but it is a bit complicated. So the first thing we want to notice from this passage in verse 6 is that the gospel must be preached first to the Jews. Although Paul had been commanded to go to the Gentiles, kings and the Jews, he actually did it in the reverse order. He went to the Jews first, he always did.

There is a real sense, in fact, in which the new covenant in one sense is plan B. Plan A, as it were, as you might have thought as set out by Moses, was that the nations would inherit the blessing to the people of God, the Old Testament people of God, demonstrating how the rule and love of God worked in their community, and the other nations would say, yeah, this is good, I'll come and sign up for that.

[26 : 00] But it hadn't happened. It hadn't worked. And so, in fact, in one sense, preaching to the Jews first, this was, as it were, the last chance, if you like, for plan A.

But the Old Testament ends with a curse, a curse of Malachi, in fact, which says that when the Messiah comes, he will turn the hearts of the people to one another and to the Lord, or, and it ends with an or, I will strike the land with a curse.

and when Paul shakes the dust of his clothes in this passage, he's really, it's really that same curse just expressed in picture language.

And he says, doesn't he, you've had your chance, I'm free of responsibility for your blood now, I'm going to the nations. But does that mean plan B is second best?

Does that mean the new covenant is worse than the old one? You know, God really wanted to do it that way but it didn't work so he thought he'd better think of an alternative.

[27 : 27] Actually, that's not the way it's presented at all. Plan B is, if you like, is plan A improved. The gospel is the real covenant, the new covenant is the true covenant.

Actually, Paul says quite a lot about this elsewhere, as you may well be aware, but actually he doesn't pull on that thread here particularly, so I thought we would do the same and not go into that in more detail.

But instead, look at the last passage, this bit from verse 18 to 28, particularly the last passage, which doesn't involve Paul interestingly enough. Paul isn't even present.

Well, for much of it, sorry, it's not quite true, he is present for some of it, but he's not present for all of it. The first bit he is present for, and we see that he had taken a Nazarite vow.

That's puzzled commentators ever since. Why? Well, to be honest, we don't know the answer to that. We do know that it was a Nazarite vow, because number six required that you cut your hair off after the vow was completed.

[28 : 45] And it was supposed to be burned, whether he actually did that, I don't know, but he certainly cut his hair off, we're told that, when the vow was completed. If it tells us nothing else though, it tells us Paul hasn't entirely abandoned his Pharisaic roots, but it's come to think about it in a different way.

And it might be actually connected with the fact that we read in verse 19 that he reasoned with the Jews. The Greek word *dialogos* here is important in itself, because we can actually compare Paul's behavior with that of the Jewish leaders.

The Pharisaic reaction, the reaction of the Jewish synagogue leaders who rejected Paul, was to impose the law on others, wasn't it? Whether others really believed it or not, otherwise their action

makes no sense.

How does it make sense for a pagan Roman proconsul to be asked to support the Jewish law and impose it by Roman authority?

It doesn't really make sense, does it? But it does, if you kind of think that the law can be imposed by force. But Paul, on the other hand, reasoned.

[30 : 12] He wanted to convince people, not just force them to an outward obedience, but to convince people as to what is right. Gallio, we noticed, very sensibly declined.

He wasn't going to be drawn into this. In Paul's view, this action is actually entirely pointless.

Outward obedience to the law means nothing if it's not treasured in the heart, if it's not persuaded, people are not fully persuaded that that's what they should be doing.

It can only happen by persuasion with the help of the Holy Spirit. And again here I would suggest to you that Paul's teaching is clearly in line with the teaching of Jesus himself.

Because he says, I tell you, Jesus said, I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The outward obedience of the Pharisees and scribes was not enough. Because in their hearts they had hate and disobedience.

[31 : 24] And the whole Sermon on the Mount is really about that, isn't it? It's what's in the heart that matters. What comes out from the inside, not what goes in from the outside, is what really matters.

So now let's move in finally into this last bit, which I say doesn't involve Paul at all as it happens. He's already left. this question of Apollos in particular, the baptism of John, which is mentioned in verse 25.

And again, in this passage, I'll just point out briefly that the translations don't quite do, certainly the New International Version doesn't quite do justice to the text.

I think the ESV is better here, because it's actually the same word in verse 25 and verse 26. It says he spoke the word accurately.

The NIV there says he was taught it more adequately. But actually it doesn't say that. It says accurately and then more accurately. So bear that in mind as we think about it.

[32 : 34] And there is this business of the baptism of John. What exactly was it that was wrong? With the gospel, the word that Apollos was teaching.

And again that's puzzled commentators. But I think we can do a bit more about it than we can perhaps about this Nazarite vow.

And a good way to know what the baptism of John was about might be to think about what John the Baptist actually said about his own baptism. And that might give us a clue what was missing from Apollos' presentation.

John's baptism was about repentance. His message was repent for the kingdom of heaven is near. Not necessarily here but near.

It's an outward sign that may or not be mirrored in inward conversion because the Baptist himself understood this. So Matthew 3, 7-4 says the following.

[33 : 42] When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing he said to them you brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the coming wrath.

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were prepared to sign up for the outward sign. It seemed like a good religious thing to do. But it was only an outside thing. It wasn't in the heart. And John himself understood that that was possible with his baptism. Here's something else that John said. John the Baptist said.

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I whose sandals I'm not fit to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. So what's missing from John's baptism and presumably from Apollos' presentation is the baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

[34 : 59] Christian baptism is about new birth, isn't it? new life, a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. Christian baptism is Trinitarian.

Christians have always baptized people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And while we don't want a doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that baptism is how you get the Spirit, it is actually true that in the New Testament, Christian baptism is associated with the coming of the Spirit.

It's not that the act of baptism brings about baptism in the Spirit. That really wouldn't work in terms of new covenant theology at all. But it is true that believers' baptism symbolizes baptism in the Spirit.

spirit. And this is what John the Baptist had predicted as we've just read. If he knew only John's baptism, what Apollos didn't understand was the need for baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire. And so Apollos had an accurate knowledge of the historical facts about Jesus, but it seems he hadn't quite grasped the point. The Gospel is about participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, not just acknowledging it outwardly.

[36 : 32] It's about faith and obedience in the heart, not just going through the rituals outwardly. It's not so much about a religious lifestyle or a set of religious rules.

It's much more about life in the Spirit. And once Apollos had been put right on that score, he really was able to refute the Jewish arguments and properly proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, as the Christ, as he did in verse 28.

But back in Jerusalem, a more Pharisaic version of Christianity still had influence and we certainly see that if we turn over to chapter 21 verses 20 to 26.

I won't read it now but it talks basically about the Jewish believers all of whom were zealous for the law. As I said, these bracketing chapters 15 and 21 indicate how both sides almost leant over backwards to maintain unity.

And the issue, in a sense, wouldn't be fully resolved until the martyrdom of the Jerusalem leader, James, who was probably a brother of Jesus. James the Apostle was the first to be martyred, of course.

[37 : 55] This is a different James who is thought probably to have been one of Jesus' brothers, who was the elder and the leader of the church in Jerusalem. He was martyred, sown from the city wall, the tradition says, and then stoned.

And in a sense, the final word, outworking of Malachi's curse, was the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Because then with no tabernacle or temple to meet at, to sacrifice at, full obedience to the Mosaic law actually became impossible, didn't it?

There was no tender meeting anymore. And the book of Hebrews and the later writings of Peter and John, support this global vision and support this centrality of faith and love which Paul had made as the centre of his message.

And even in the letter that was written by James, and we do have one letter in the scriptures written by James, and people read it and say, oh, he didn't believe in justification by faith, but it does.

[39 : 11] He just doesn't read it properly if you think that. James comes down exactly on the side of the importance of faith, properly understood, the importance of heart religion.

What James is against in his letter is faith that is just an outward faith, an outward ascent to a set of predicates, of propositions.

He says, that faith won't save you, and he's quite right. It is faith in the heart, obedient faith, faith that lives and comes from and changes the heart, that is saving faith.

And so this isn't a different doctrine that Paul is teaching. This is the doctrine of Peter and of John and even of James, properly understood.

But it is perhaps to some extent true that it was Paul who most clearly grasped the theory of it, how it would all work out in practice.

[40 : 24] Jesus had promised, hadn't he, that the apostles would be led into truth by the Spirit. But it didn't happen instantly.

It did take a while for them to work through the implications of Jesus' teaching and its relation to the old covenant. And it ended, as it were, this working through, as it were, ended with the death of the last apostle, John, and that's why Revelation closes the canon of scripture.

Because it died with John, as it were, because he was the last of the apostles. And John warns us, doesn't he, not to add to the prophecy, and Christians have normally taken it to mean not just to add to the book of Revelation, but not to add to the scripture at all.

Because with the death of the last apostle, new scripture was no longer possible. But during that transitional period, there was a working out. And it's because it was worked through that we can understand how the teaching of Jesus applies in practice in our lives, and how it is worked out in the church, and how to make a church that can exist in a different culture or a different situation.

salvation. But let us make sure that it is the same gospel, that it is rooted as Paul's teaching was firmly in Jewish salvation history.

[42 : 05] It is a Jewish king that we serve. So the foundations of a truly global church are set down in these intermediate chapters, and we see how they operated amid all the complications of cultural diversity and Roman law.

And as I said, verse 5b actually says, I will go to the nations. It's got translated, I will go to the Gentiles, but it actually says, I will go to the nations.

And I will say, the word nations ethnos here is one that emphasizes the cultural diversity of nations. And that's what Paul did.

He said, I'm going to take this message of a Jewish king, a Jewish Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'm going to take it to nations. They're going to be new children of Abraham.

Abraham was born not of human descent, but of grace and the Spirit. And John tells us, doesn't it, all nations will bring their treasure into the holy city.

[43 : 21] That's Revelation 21, 26. And yet nothing impure will enter it. And it is still the holy city. It is still Jerusalem. Jerusalem. we all serve a Jewish king, but let's make sure like Apollos, we're able to present the gospel of Jesus Christ more accurately and at the same time more coherently and clearly to the culture and world in which we find ourselves today.

So, it was a coincidence, but Chris finished his sermon this morning with a quotation from his last hymn.

I decided to do the same. It wasn't a, I decided that already before I'd heard Chris's sermon. True, I wrote these notes about three or four days ago, so I came to the same conclusion independently.

But our last hymn is going to be that hymn, Thomas Oliver's, and one verse of that hymn says, what I quoted here is the original, it's slightly different in our hymn book, but it says there in Jerusalem, in Zion, dwells the Lord our king, and it's in Jerusalem, on Zion's sacred height, his kingdom he maintains, and glorious with his saints in light.

Forever reigns. The king reigns in Jerusalem, but it is the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city where the king reigns. So let's sing this hymn, as I say, it's slightly different in our version.

[45 : 03] We've updated the language a bit, but it's the same thought.