



# QUEST 52

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## Jesus on Gentile Inclusion

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There are several indications that Jesus intended the kingdom to extend to Gentiles even though his personal ministry was directed primarily to Israel (Matt 10:5; 15:24).

1. Jesus had Scriptural precedent for interpreting God's rule as universal (cf. Isa 42:6; 49:6; cf. *1 En.* 48.4, "And he shall be the light of the Gentiles"; *T. Levi* 14:3, "For our father Israel shall be pure from the ungodliness of the chief priests who shall lay their hands upon the Savior of the world. Pure is the heaven above the earth, and ye are the lights of the heaven as the sun and the moon. What shall all the Gentiles do if ye be darkened in ungodliness? So shall ye bring a curse upon our race for whom came the light of the world, which was given among you for the lighting up of every man"; Sib. Or. 3.195 "And then a message of the mighty God was set within my breast, and it bade me proclaim through all earth and in royal hearts plant things which are to be"; Luke 2:32).
2. Jesus promised some Gentiles entrance into the kingdom: Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba (Matt 12:41–42/Luke 11:31–32); Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt 10:15/Luke 10:12; Matt 11:24); and Tyre and Sidon (Matt 11:22/Luke 10:14). All nations would stand before the throne (Matt 25:31–46).
3. Some Gentiles were attracted to Jesus: the crowds of Gentiles that flocked to him (Mark 3:7–10/Matt 4:24), especially those in the temple (John 12:20–22), the several Gentiles Jesus healed (Centurion's servant [Matt 8:5–13/Luke 7:1–10], Syro-Phoenician woman [Mark 7:24–30/Matt 15:21–28], the Gerasene demoniac [Mark 5:1–20/Matt 8:21–34/Luke 8:26–39], and the leper [Luke 17:16]), not to mention John's comment that Jesus said he had sheep outside the fold of Israel (John 10:16). And Jesus deliberately engaged the Samaritan Woman (John 4).
4. Jesus' parables indicate the radical expansion of the kingdom which well could include Gentiles (e.g., Matt 13:38, 47–48) and a Samaritan was featured in one parable as the quintessential "saved" person (Luke 10:25–37).
5. Jesus "cleansed the temple" to make room, according to Isaiah 56, for the nations (Mark 11:17).

Hence, the Evangelists are likely correct in portraying Jesus as a missionary to the Gentiles (Matt 4:15–16 [=Isa 8:23–9:1]; 12:18–21 [=Isa 42:1, 4]; Luke 2:32; 3:6 [=Isa 40:5], 38; 4:25–27; John 4:1–42; 10:16; 12:20).