



BIBLE TALK

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Question: Who are the Heathen?

Answer: The word “heathen” is a Hebrew word meaning “nations”.

The term was used in the Old Testament times to distinguish Israel from the other nations. Often, it is used interchangeably with “Gentiles”. Another use with which we could identify is the term “foreigner”. People in other countries are “heathen” or “foreigners” to our country. The derogatory use has been added in recent years.

Spiritually speaking, reference is being made to those who were or are not Christians. The church is an antitype of Israel (Acts 7:37, 38), also being God’s “chosen people” today (I Pet. 2:5-9). When outside of Christ, Paul made reference to the Ephesians as being “*alien from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*” (Eph. 2:12).

A “heathen” then is a foreigner, stranger or one who by his or her own choice has alienated self from God, God’s people and the promises given to those who are His.

There are definite advantages in not being a foreigner or heathen in the spiritual sense. We are instructed to believe that there are benefits by being in Christ. Paul gave encouragement to the Ephesians (1:3) that “*all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ*”. Peter declared similar truths in 2 Pet. 1:3 that all things that pertain to life and godliness are to be found there as well. Being a citizen of the United States provides us with “certain unalienable rights” to which non-citizens are not entitled to have. The status of being a spiritual “Heathen” can be changed by being added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:38-47).

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