

CHAPTER 4:6 ISRAEL AND THE OTHER NATIONS

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem - The Way of G-d 2:4:6

That's not to say that non-Jews are dispensable, though, G-d forbid. No one is. It's just that they were assigned a lesser role, but only as a consequence of Adam and Eve's error ¹. Still and all, having been created in the image of G-d ², they too have souls, though unlike our own ³. And they too were bestowed with some mitzvahs that provide them spiritual and material well-being as well, which are known as the "Seven Noachite Mitzvahs" ⁴.

In any event, the way things would have been had Adam and Eve not sinned, and the way things are now that they did sin was all set in place from the first ⁵. As such, their relative status and assignment are like all other instances of harm and retribution that come about as a consequence of one thing or another, as our sages point out ⁶.

Footnotes:

¹ See *Adir Bamarom* p. 469.

² See *Pirkei Avot* 3:14.

³ Zohar 47a.

⁴ See Genesis 2:24, 9:37, *Sanhedrin* 56b, and M.T. *Hilchot Melachim* 9:1. Also see *Adir Bamarom* p. 380 and *Klach Pitchei Chochma* 30.

The seven mitzvahs include bans against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, incest and related sexual deviations, robbery, and against eating flesh torn from a live animal; the seventh mitzvah is the imperative to establish a judicial system to enforce the other six.

⁵ This accentuates the point that Adam and Eve were indeed free to choose to sin or not, since "alternative universes" were arranged from the first to accommodate either reality.

⁶ *Avodah Zarah* 5a.