

CHAPTER 4:7 ISRAEL AND THE OTHER NATIONS

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem - The Way of G-d 2:4:7

Righteous non-Jews also earn a place in the world to come¹. But their experience there would be unlike our own².

They'll serve a supplementary and subservient role there, though, like clothing to a body³. As that is all they could ever hope for, given the phenomena we'd cited above⁴.

Footnotes:

¹ See Sanhedrin 105a, *Hilchot Teshuva* 3:3; though also see *Zohar Chadash* 78d and T.Y. *Berachot* 9a.

A "righteous gentile" is defined classically as a non-Jew who accepts the seven Noachite Mitzvahs (see 2:4:6) with certain conditions (see *Hilchot Malchim* 8:11). In any event, this underscores the idea that an individual can be judged for his own actions, rather than one of a multitude of descendants of a particular "branch".

² Thanks to the merits of our ancestors and to the eternal covenant that G-d and we entered into. See more about this in *Avodat Hakodesh* 2:41, *Reishit Chochma* "Yirah" 13, and in a number of other traditional sources.

³ This arresting image can either be off-putting (a piece of clothing rather a full human being) or perhaps even flattering (along the lines of "clothing makes the man"), but Ramchal has a wholly unexpected take on it in *Adir Bamarom*. He speaks there (p. 609) of humankind having been born with souls and *clothing* at first, and that the latter had to be removed once Adam and Eve sinned and to be "converted" (i.e., returned to their native purity by becoming a part of the Jewish Nation), which would ultimately happen (see p. 353 there) and be the ultimate act of rectification.

⁴ That is, given our people's role in the wake of Adam and Eve's sin and in the course of G-d's intentions for humanity.