

DID JESUS CARE ABOUT ARABS AND OTHER GENTILES?

Actually Jews are genetically a special type of Arab, and probably related distantly to all the others in the region.

When the Jews returned to Palestine around 450 BC, Ezra 9:1-2 mentions they lived among and intermarried with people from many ethnic groups, including:

- Arabs who were not semitic- like Canaanites, Phoenicians (Aegean Europeans), & Egyptians
- Semitic Arabs descended from Shem, a son of Noah- Hittites (Turkish Europeans)
- Semitic Arabs descended from Shem through Abraham's nephew Lot- Moabites (like Ruth) and Amorites (both Jordanian Arabs) and more closely related Ammonites (Jordanians or Palestinians)

The next 400 years brought non-Arabs like Persians (Iranians) and more Greeks and North Africans to mingle with Jewish families as well.

Did Jesus mind that most Jews were mixed blood? In his mission description Jesus referred to God helping the Phoenician widow of Zarephath and the Syrian general with miracles (Luke 4:25-27). He warned proud purer-blood Jews that their ancestry did not guarantee blessings.

The hated Samaritans of Jesus' day were Jews mixed with Assyrian and others- possibly part Ishmaelite. Jesus reached out to them in special ways. He used a Samaritan as an example of love (Luke 10:25-37). When he healed 10 lepers, he noted the Samaritan one returned to say thanks (Luke 17:12- 19). Jesus met a special Samaritan woman at a well. She shared the truth with her whole village and Jesus stayed two days to continue teaching (John 4). He visited other Samaritan villages as well (Luke 9:52).

An unusual proportion of the stories in the gospels are about interactions with non-Jews.

Jesus went out of his way to minister to a Syrian and his whole village- the Gerasene demoniac (Matthew 8:28-34). He had in-depth discussions with a Canaanite woman seeking healing for her child (Matthew 15:24) and with a Centurian probably of Roman descent (Matthew 8:8-10). He also met with Greeks (John 12:23), and foretold that 'many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 8:11).

It has taken 2000 years for Jesus' followers to learn to understand all the descendants of Noah, including Ishmael. Isn't it about time to more fully share God's promises with them?

For more information about how outreach to non-Jews was central to Jesus' mission, read Goerner's article 'Jesus and the Gentiles'.

<http://centerfieldproductions.com/downloads/crucomm/Luke/6lastchancea.pdf>